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RICHARD HILLIER: 'BAPTISMAL EXEGESIS IN ARATOR'S HISTORIA APOSTOLICA'
Ph.D. Thesis submitted 1990

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Historia Apostolica (AD 544) not as an example of 'biblical epic' nor as a literary paraphrase but as a commentary on The Acts of the Apostles, and in particular to signal Arator's concern to explain the text in terms of its baptismal significance.

The opening chapter reviews previous approaches to the H.A. and is followed by a survey of Arator's interpretation and interpolation of baptismal material, showing both how those episodes in Acts which deal specifically with baptism are given extended exegetical attention, and how baptismal significance is frequently divined in passages which have no obvious baptismal connection.

The central chapters examine in detail the episodes of the poem which are of most baptismal importance. Two deal with Arator's exegesis of explicitly baptismal situations: Simon Magus' failure to receive the Spirit is presented as being prefigured in the failure of the raven to return to the ark, a parallel also drawn by Augustine; the Ethiopian eunuch is presented in accordance with the 'Ethiopian' exegesis first formulated by Origen. Four more chapters examine episodes which Arator deems of implicit baptismal significance: the ascension is interpreted in terms of the baptism and 'ascent' of the individual; the healing of the paralytic is explained as the baptismal healing of the wounds of circumcision; Paul's speech at Antioch becomes an exposition of the typological significance of the crossing of the Red Sea; the name Aquila prompts a digression on the baptismal implications of the rejuvenation of the eagle.

The aim is not to discover indisputable sources for all of Arator's ideas, but rather to place the H.A. in its exegetical context, and to trace the development and popularity of baptismal symbolism in the first six centuries AD.

BAPTISMAL EXEGESIS IN ARATOR'S HISTORIA APOSTOLICA

RICHARD JOHN HILLIER

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

1990

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- 2 -



25 JUN 1991

CONTENTS

Chapter One	Arator: Poet or Exegete?	5
Chapter Two	Baptism, Acts and Arator	25
Chapter Three	<u>Divinus Odor</u> : Co-Ascension and Baptismal Participation	71
Chapter Four	<u>Lotus sed non Mundus</u> : Simon Magus and the Raven	105
Chapter Five	<u>Eunuchi Fecunda Fides</u> : Gentiles, Sinners and Song of Songs 1:5	133
Chapter Six	<u>Saucius Infans</u> : Baptism and Circumcision	181
Chapter Seven	<u>Iustis Via, Sontibus Unda</u> : The Crossing of the Red Sea	227
Chapter Eight	<u>Aquila</u> : The Rejuvenation of the Eagle	276
Chapter Nine	Postscript	296
Bibliography		305

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

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CHAPTER ONE: ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?¹

In the introduction to his recent translation of Arator's poems, Richard Schrader notes the importance of the themes of conversion and renewal in the Historia Apostolica, but until now the baptismal exegesis of Arator has received little, if any, attention.² Indeed, the study of the place of Arator's work in the exegetical tradition as a whole has not been one which has attracted the efforts of many scholars, though it has often been observed, as we shall see, that this might be one of the most productive approaches to the H.A..

Casual surveys of the H.A. have generally concluded that there is little of interest in the poem for the modern reader. One of the most savage judgements comes from the pen of E.M.Young:

The Historia Apostolica is entirely devoid of poetic merit. The language is obscure, the treatment bald, the style vicious, and even where it is impossible for the author to help rising with his narrative, he does his best to quench its divinity by the introduction of undignified conceits, far-fetched metaphors, and long-winded digressions. The admiration accorded to him by his contemporaries is a mournful proof of the vitiated taste of the age.³

The clue to this attitude comes in the opening sentence. It is the overwhelming opinion of scholars that Arator's poetic ability is not of the highest quality, a judgement which it would be foolish to dispute.⁴ However, too many scholars have set this as the only criterion by which a work might be deemed worthy of study. Thus F.J.E.Raby:

The poem is badly constructed, and it can hardly fail to weary a modern reader...Arator shows none of that feeling for style which links a Prudentius or a Paulinus of Nola to the classical poets, and in its lack of structure, its faults of prosody, and its intellectual feebleness, the work is a prelude to the decline of culture which made the seventh century the darkest period of the Middle Ages.⁵

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

Raby here reveals the genuine reason for the condemnation of Arator as one of the darkest products of a dark age, namely a seemingly obligatory comparison with the classical poets, a comparison from which he has little chance of emerging unscathed. But as Jacques Fontaine has observed, the evolution of the Latin language made it impossible for a sixth-century poet to produce verse worthy of a Virgil, however familiar he was with that master:

La réalisation pratique de ces préférences esthétiques se heurte déjà à l'aspérité d'un latin tardif en pleine évolution...L'obscurité naît souvent, dans ces vers, d'une rencontre dissonante entre une recherche extrême et un état de langue qui ne possède plus la souplesse nécessaire pour se plier à la réussite de ces tours.⁶

It was not only the disintegration of the Latin language which posed problems for the later Christian poets; in the words of W.P.Ker:

In Latin there was no opportunity for such triumphs and glories as came later in the new languages. Here success meant obedience to the old models, or if rebellion took its chance and tried to make something new, it was always something exceptional, and often turned out to be exceptional in a hackneyed way after all.⁷

However, with one or two notable exceptions, scholars in the first half of this century were concerned only with discussing Arator in relation to the epic poets of classical antiquity and triumphantly proving his 'dependence' upon them, and thus by implication his inferiority, by citing example after example of the subdeacon's so-called borrowings: 'huius creberrimae imitationis prima causa est imbecillitas et infirmitas poetae eiusque inopia verborum, quae ad carmen faciendum vix suffecit; itaque carmen suum ubique veterum elegantibus dictionibus exornavit, ut operi maiorem auctoritatem conciliaret.' Thus the conclusion of Alfred Ansorge, whose study, following closely on a similar study by Johann Schrödinger, consists almost entirely of, admittedly impressive, lists of verbal

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

reminiscences of the classical poets in the work of Arator.⁸ Interesting though these may be, it is inevitable that the modern reader will want to question the point of such investigations. For example, if Arator really intended his reader to be reminded of phrases from the classical poets, should we also be asking ourselves whether such acts of recall are intended to colour our reading of the passages of Arator in which such 'parallels' are to be found?

This is a question with which Schrödinger does not concern himself unduly. Although he acknowledges that many of Arator's 'borrowings' are unconscious, he nonetheless argues that many were included deliberately, for no other reason, it seems, than to appeal to the classical tastes of his readers:

Er hat auch mit Absicht aus Vergils reichem Sprachschatze geschöpft um sein Werk in den Augen der Gebildeten vollwertiger zu machen; er hat sein Epos absichtlich mit Wendungen aus dem princeps carminum geschmückt um denselben einen klassischen Anstrich zu geben.⁹

Ansorge would go further: he attempts, briefly and unconvincingly, to prove that Arator intended the verbal reminiscences to inspire a general recollection of the original contexts from which they were drawn, which would in turn affect the attitude of the reader to the passage of Arator before him.¹⁰ The same is done by Schrader, who comments:

A good many quotations and echoes of the classics were doubtless unconscious, but judging such cases is difficult. Too many have intriguing parallels in the context of the original and were probably designed to provide a pleasurable shock of recognition.¹¹

However, such an approach leaves aside the basic question of whether these lists of 'parallels' prove anything at all. The modern reader

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

would be wise to heed the warning of M.L.W.Laistner:

Many of the so-called parallel passages are only remotely, if at all, relevant, that is, the supposed resemblance to Arator is so superficial or involves phrases that had long since become the stock-in-trade of any versifier, that it is fanciful to assume a conscious reminiscence...The type of scholar who assumes borrowing by A from B on the slightest pretext, forgetting that even a second-rate poet does not compose his lines like a schoolboy looking up tags in his Gradus ad Parnassum, may be tempted to see a direct relation between two or more poets when the likeness is purely fortuitous. The result will be that Arator will be credited with a wider knowledge of pagan poetry than he possessed.¹²

Since any judgement on this question will ultimately and inevitably prove subjective, it would perhaps be safest to conclude with Schrödinger that the parallel passages, whether consciously or unconsciously appropriated, are no more and no less than one of the elements by means of which Arator attempted to impart a klassische Anstrich to his poem.¹³

Since, as we have seen, the study of Arator as a poet would seem unavoidably to be linked with his position vis-à-vis his classical predecessors, such an approach is understandable but it is nonetheless irrevocably flawed. Perhaps then one should leave Arator the poet aside and examine some aspect of the Historia Apostolica other than its place in the history of versification. This is no new conclusion. Such was the advice of the author of the first 'modern' scholar of Arator, G.L.Leimbach:

Wäre nun das Werk des Arator nur eine 'poetische Metaphrase' der Acta...so würde es der Mühe wohl kaum werth sein, dasselbe auf seinen Inhalt näher anzusehen; höchstens würden wir in sprachlicher oder in ästhetischer Beziehung das Gedicht einer Prüfung zu unterwerfen für nöthig halten, und dann wahrscheinlich über den Dichter des 6. Jahrhunderts, den Schriftsteller des eisernen Zeitalters erbarmungslos den Stab brechen; die Bilder würden als Schwulst, die classischen Phrasen als hohle Nachahmung, das Gute als nicht neu, das Neue als mislungen bezeichnet, Geist und Originalität geleugnet werden, und die Recension wäre fertig und der arme, einst gefeierte Dichter und Mensch vor dem Forum der Kritik unseres Jahrhunderts vernichtet; in diesem Falle wäre es besser, der vergessene Dichter bliebe vergessen.¹⁴

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

It is then most unlikely, to say the least, that Arator will emerge with any credit from a study which concentrates solely on the poetic merit of the H.A. How then ought we to approach the text of the H.A.? The clue lies for Leimbach in the very nature of the work: he rejects the title of paraphrase, preferring to describe it, for want of a better expression, as a 'praktischen Commentar der Apostelgeschichte in poetischem Gewande', a description which has generally been found appropriate.¹⁵ To examine the H.A. as a commentary on Acts, might, he suggests, prove more worthwhile, whatever the results:

Denn entweder ist der Erfolg ein mehr oder minder günstiger und wir empfangen aus dem Studium des Gedichtes viele oder einige neue Winke, Aufschlüsse, tiefere exegetische Gedanken, - oder das Resultat ist ein rein negatives: nun dann haben wir wenigstens einen Beitrag zur Würdigung des Standes der Exegese in dem 6. Jahrhundert; in beiden Fällen aber dürfte die Untersuchung keine vergebliche sein.¹⁶

Yet, even when scholars are prepared to acknowledge that the H.A. was intended principally as a commentary and accept that its heroic metre is of only secondary importance, there is still a tendency to forget this when studying the detail of the text itself. Thus Schrödinger condemns Arator for his 'arbitrary' approach to the text of Acts:

Er gibt nur den Hauptinhalt, übergeht ganze Partien, erweitert manches und kommt nur an einigen Stellen dem biblischen Verfasser im Ausdruck nahe...Arator berichtet nicht die einfache Handlung, sondern zerreiht fortwährend den Zusammenhang teils um seiner Stimmung Ausdruck zu geben teils um sich in Raisonsments zu ergehen.¹⁷

Yet in the following sentence, he recognises, if only by default, that 'Er will nicht bloss erzählen, sondern in erster Linie erklären und belehren...Man sieht, dass der Dichter nicht an seiner Vorlage klebte, sondern frei über seinen Stoff verfügte und denselben originell behandelte'.¹⁸ To complain then that the narrative unity of

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

the poem has somehow been disrupted by an inordinate quantity of interpretative material is entirely to miss the point. It is not Arator's aim to tell the story but to explain it. As Kartschoke observes, the former option was fully available to Arator; the very nature of Acts might even be thought to recommend such a course:

Die Apostelakten sind ein in der Theologie wenig behandeltes, dogmatisch ungleich weniger Buch des Kanons, als es die Evangelien sind. Eine episch-rhetorische Paraphrase ohne viel theologisches Beiwerk wäre durchaus möglich gewesen, hätte sich in diesem Fall geradezu angeboten. Daß Arator diesen Weg nicht beschritten hat, daß er im Gegenteil die epischen Momente ganz entschieden zurückdrängt, die geistliche Interpretation dafür überwiegen läßt, ist aus der Entwicklung der neutestamentlichen Bibelparaphrase zu erklären.¹⁹

It will then be fruitless to berate Arator for failing to retain the narrative flow of Acts: simple narrative is something which Arator never intended to provide.²⁰

Fontaine correctly notes that the two poems of the H.A. fall into forty-three sections, each comprising around fifty verses: 'chacun fait donc moins d'une Bucolique!'²¹ Arator was not the only Christian poet to adopt this technique of dividing the biblical narrative into episodes, as Roberts observes (though he too cannot resist taking the opportunity of bemoaning Arator's failure to maintain a narrative):

It is characteristic of all three New Testament poets (sc. Juvenius, Sedulius, and Arator) to dissolve the biblical narrative into a series of disparate episodes with only the slightest temporal and local connection with what precedes and follows. This, combined with the tendency to omit individualizing details within a narratio, undermines the sense of the biblical narrative as a sequence of events taking place in a chronological continuum, in a definite cultural and geographical setting. The events of the Gospels and Acts become timeless manifestations of divine power, set against a generalized backdrop. The reader is inclined to see here the influence of Christian figural interpretation, which typically detaches biblical events from their historical context and elevates them to their status of universal truth.²²

But what influenced Arator in his decision to adopt such an episodic

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

structure? Fontaine ascribes this feature to 'la tendance hellénistique': 'L'épopée des Actes des deux grands Apôtres...se trouve ainsi répartie en médaillons d'une "Anthologie" sacrée: c'est comme "la couronne des Apôtres".'²³ Again, a classical viewpoint is evident. Nearer the mark would seem to be Roberts, who notes: 'The liturgical practice of breaking the Gospel texts into discrete pericopes is likely to be influential here, too.'²⁴

A commentator whose aim is to disclose the inner meaning of a text has of course no need to maintain a continuous narrative, as Charles Witke points out: 'The stories are agreed-upon conventions; the poet need only sketchily situate the event, and then can launch a full-scale interpretative evocation of it.'²⁵ Thus Roberts refers to the fact that 'the regular alternation between literal narrative and mystical interpretation becomes a principle of composition...The poet detects a figurative meaning in every episode of Acts that he records'.²⁶ What then is the true model for the episodic structure of Arator's poem?

Short passages of narrative are followed by longer sections of interpretation. The procedure is that of the commentary or exegetical sermon. The poet now speaks as a praedicator rather than a narrator. In this way New Testament poetry is revealed in the H.A. as a hybrid genre, a cross between traditional epic, the persuasive techniques formulated for forensic oratory and the exegetical methods of the Christian sermon.²⁷

It is clear then that Leimbach's original description of the H.A. as a commentary on Acts in poetic form is as accurate a definition as is possible to make.²⁸ The Acts of the Apostles was of course fertile, if not virgin, territory for Arator to exercise his exegetical ingenuity upon, since it had hitherto attracted the attention of

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

relatively few commentators.²⁹

However, it is not the fact that Arator intended to write a commentary which has attracted the criticism of most scholars; rather, it is the method of that commentary, namely that of allegorical interpretation.³⁰ The opinion of Ansorge is not unrepresentative: 'Licet haec mystica interpretatio nonnullis quidem locis vera atque acuta sit, saepissime poeta nimio allegoriarum vel "figurarum", ut ipse dicit, studio abreptus in nugae atque ineptias prolabitur.'³¹ His interpretations are censured for their lack of originality and theological importance.³² But very few scholars have based such criticism on a thorough examination of Arator's use of allegory.

Now, although we should always bear the warning of G.W.H.Lampe in mind -

Their [sc. the Fathers'] ingenuity in finding typological material in the most unlikely quarters is often little more than a rhetorical trick, designed to stir the interest and admiration of their audiences...We ought not always to treat their fancies too seriously³³

- neither should we fall into the trap of dismissing Arator's use of typological material as fanciful without giving it due consideration. As Leimbach observed, at the very outset of modern Aratorian studies, the H.A. gives us an opportunity to study the gradual disintegration of exegetical practice in the sixth century:

Hauptsächlich aber wird der exegetische Gehalt der Schrift für uns insoweit von Interesse sein, als wir hier ein Urtheil über einen der letzten selbständigen exegetischen Ausläufer der alten Kirche, um die misdeutbare Bezeichnung Nachblüte zu vermeiden, über den Standpunkt der selbständigen Exegese im Stadium des Verfalles, des Erlöschens gewinnen können.³⁴

ARATOR: POET OR EXEGETE?

The worthy example set by Leimbach (although his study of Arator's exegesis tends itself rather more towards paraphrase than analysis)³⁵ of examining exactly what Arator says rather than condemning it for the manner in which it is expressed, has not in general been followed by later critics. A signal exception is Olindo Ferrari, whose article published in 1914 appears to be the only work in which Arator's use of allegory is given any serious treatment.³⁶ We must, of course, acknowledge that his study is by no means exhaustive,³⁷ but in the few examples which he selects as worthy of consideration, his close study of the text frequently prompts a not unfavourable response.³⁸

In the course of the article Ferrari identifies three themes which predominate in Arator's allegorical exegesis: the church, faith and its prerequisites, and the sacraments in general but baptism in particular.³⁹ The first of these themes was recognised earlier by Leimbach, who spoke of Arator's devotion to the church: 'Ueberdies ist seine Frömmigkeit und seine Treue gegen die Kirche mit ihren Schwächen und den Kirchenglauben, den er mit seinen Irrtümern unerschütterlich festhält und theilt, überall ersichtlich.'⁴⁰ The importance of the church to Arator (though perhaps not his fondness for ecclesiological allegory) and in particular his emphasis on the primacy of Peter has been frequently noted,⁴¹ but very little attention has been paid to his treatment of baptismal themes. Yet, as Ferrari observes, Arator's interest in baptism springs naturally from his preoccupation with the church: 'Uno dunque dei requisiti per entrare nella Chiesa è il Battesimo. E anche a proposito del Battesimo come della Chiesa, il poeta trova modo di esporre allegorie e simboli.'⁴² It is from Ferrari's identification of this final theme

that this study will take its starting-point.

The subsequent chapters of this thesis will study the way in which Arator emphasises the importance of baptism as a pervading theme in The Acts of the Apostles, particularly the way in which episodes which appear to have no direct connection with baptism are made to divulge baptismal significance when subjected to allegorical interpretation. When analysing Arator's use of symbolism, we must inevitably make some inquiries, as Ferrari (despite his stated intentions) does not,⁴³ as to the sources of that symbolism. However, it is not the aim of this thesis to indulge in a series of Quellenforschungen, although it may on occasion be impossible to resist the temptation of speculating as to a direct source for Arator's exegesis;⁴⁴ rather, the aim is to trace the general exegetical background against which Arator's commentary was written and the way in which he was influenced, or not, by traditional treatments of the baptismal themes with which he is concerned. As a result, it is hoped that we may reach a conclusion as reasoned and reasonable as that of Ferrari:

In queste sue allegorie...non è sempre originale il poeta (s'accosta infatti spesso a S.Agostino) e non è sempre felice. Pure non è raro il caso che guizzino fra di esse veri lampi di poesia, senza dire che vi si nota quasi sempre precisione di rapporti e sobrietà di espressione. Sicchè, tenuto conto anche dell'età in cui il Nostro scrisse, possiamo concludere che, e per qualche altro pregio, e per ciò che riguarda la trattazione poetica dell'allegoria, Aratore non è del tutto indegno di quella fama che godette a lungo nel Medio Evo.⁴⁵

NOTES

1. The text of Arator used in this study is that edited by A.P.McKinlay for the Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum in 1951 (CSEL 72), which replaced the only other readily available edition, that of H.J.Arntzen (Arator, édition nouvelle, [Zütphen, 1769], reprinted by Migne in PL 68, 45-252). (I have been unable to consult the edition of G.L.Perugi [Venice, 1909],

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

described by Paolo Angelucci, in his recent survey of Aratorian scholarship ['Aratore nella critica dell'ultimo secolo', Cultura e Scuola Roma (Ist. del Enciclopedia Italiana) 22 (1983), 43] as 'modesta ma non inutile'.) McKinlay's edition was generally welcomed as providing a text from which further investigations into the author might take their point of departure, but not all reviewers were over-impressed by the text itself. Thus Wallach (in Speculum 29 [1954], 150): 'The shortcomings of the present recension make it clear that it is not a definitive edition of Arator...Professor McKinlay's work will serve as the basis for further investigation of Arator's language, prosody, and sources.' Angelucci, however, describes McKinlay's text as 'la sua ottima edizione' and even, which is not entirely true, as 'molto apprezzata dalla critica', although it did, admittedly, 'risveglio d'improvviso l'interesse per Aratore' (43-44).

Several emendations were suggested in other review articles which followed the appearance of this volume, namely those by A.Hudson-Williams ('Notes on the Text and Interpretation of Arator', VigChr 7 [1953], 89-97; see also his review in CR NS 3 [1953], 206-207), M.L.W.Laistner (in AJPh 75 [1954], 210-212) and J.H.Waszink ('Notes on the Interpretation of Arator', VigChr 8 [1954], 87-92). Where I have adopted their suggestions, or ventured my own, I have indicated at the appropriate point.

2. Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles (De Actibus Apostolorum), edited and translated by Richard J.Schrader with Joseph L.Roberts III and John F. Makowski (Classics in Religious Studies 6) (Atlanta, 1987), 8. This introduction is, as the author admits (15), substantially a reworking of an earlier article, 'Arator - Revaluation', Classical Folia 31 (1977), 65-77, on which see Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 46): 'il cui taglio è senz'altro indicativo della maggior serenità di giudizio con cui si rivolge oggi ad Aratore.' But although Schrader acknowledges Arator's preoccupation with discovering 'shadowings-forth of baptism' (8), he makes no attempt to investigate further.

The title of the work has always been disputed, as K.Thraede observes ('Arator: Nachtrag zum RLAC', JbAC 4 [1961], 188). McKinlay's decision, following Arntzen, to choose De Actibus Apostolorum has not met with universal approval. I have followed Ludwig Bieler (review of CSEL 72 in Scriptorium 9 [1955], 167) and the majority of manuscripts in preferring the alternative title of Historia Apostolica; Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 44-45) covers the same ground and concludes 'Pertanto il titolo del poema sacro di Aratore fu quasi certamente Historia Apostolica'. Thus also Jacques Fontaine (Naissance de la poésie latine chrétienne du IIIe au VIe siècle [Paris, 1981], 261n) and Michael Roberts (Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity. ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 16 [Liverpool, 1985], 113n). For an opposing view, see François Chatillon, 'Arator déclamateur antijuif I: Approches', RMAL 19 (1963), 12n. Schrader too (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 15) accepts Arntzen's title without argument, whilst acknowledging that 'in the MSS it is called Historia Apostolica'.

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

For a recent judgement on previous approaches to the H.A., see Angelucci ('Aratore dalla critica', 46), who bemoans 'la mancanza assoluta di studi sulla lingua, sullo stile, sulla tecnica poetica, sul pensiero, sui suoi rapporti con la tradizione teologica ed esegetica cristiana'.

3. In Smith and Wace ed., A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines, 4 vols (London, 1877-1887), I, 152. Such was the standard view of Arator at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Thus, with marginally less venom, J.Tixeront (A Handbook of Patrology, trans. S.A.Reemers, 4th ed. [London/St Louis, 1930], 356), who describes the H.A. as 'a composition which numbers so few fine verses and which, though it exhibits here and there passages full of movement and life, forsakes history for exaggerated allegorism, and is, as a whole, heavy and awkward'. For an exhaustive catalogue of such references see François Chatillon, 'Arator déclamateur antijuif I. Approches', RMAL 19 (1963), 9-14. The most balanced short account is that which appears in Martin Schanz, Carl Hosius, Gustav Krüger, Geschichte der römischen Litteratur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian, 4 parts (Munich, 1920), IV.2, 393-394.

4. See for example, M.L.W.Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe AD 500-900, 2nd ed. (London, 1957), 112:

Unhappily, not content with singing the achievements of Peter and Paul, Arator tried also to shine as a commentator. But this attempt to combine an epic narrative with an exposition of Acts destroys the unity of the poem and impairs it as a work of art. He was evidently well read in the chief classical and the earlier Christian poets. Yet his mastery over the hexameter is not perfect, nor can his ear have been very sensitive to rhythm, seeing that we find as many as eleven consecutive lines (i, 695-705) with the same caesura.

G.L.Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', TheolStudKritik 46.1 (1873), 268) is rather kinder to Arator: 'Seine Verse sind vollständig ebenso gut, wenn nicht besser, als die seiner christlichen Vorbilder und gleichzeitiger Dichter, so gut, als man sie eben im sechsten Jahrhunderte erwarten kann.'

5. A History of Christian Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1927), 119-120.
6. Naissance de la poésie, 263. Whatever the reason, there can be no disputing the fact that Arator's use of language is often difficult to construe. Thus Ansorge (De Aratore veterum poetarum Latinorum imitatore [Breslau, 1914], 9): 'Ceterum Arator his in argutiis captandis nonnumquam sermone tam turgido atque obscuro utitur, ut difficillimus sit intellectu'; see also Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 14): 'Arator's Latin presents many problems'.
7. The Dark Ages (Periods of European Literature 1), (Edinburgh/London, 1923), 21. Even the Latin hymn, generally regarded as the only original literary form of Christian

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

antiquity (see Raby, A History of Christian Latin Poetry, 36, 'They are a true effort of original creation, in which the Christian spirit controls the artistic form, and not a series of imitations in which the form controls the content of the verse'; also D.Kartschoke, Bibeldichtung: Studien zur Geschichte der epischen Bibelparaphrase von Juvencus bis Otfrid von Weissenburg, [Munich, 1975], 79, 'In der Hymnendichtung - zumal seit sie liturgisch geworden war - besaß die Christenheit eine unzweifelhaft eigene und unbezweifelbare, nämlich biblisch legitimierte Literaturgattung'), suffered from the same disadvantage:

Even in the Latin hymns, the greatest achievement of the language of those times, there is an uncertainty and intermittent character about their production, unlike the energy with which new types of poetry are taken up, and exhausted, where the conditions are more favourable.

8. A.Ansorge, De Aratore, 80. See also J.Schrödinger, Das Epos des Arator De Actibus Apostolorum in seinem Verhältnis zu Vergil (Weiden, 1911). Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 43) notes that 'il filone di studio che ha risentito maggiormente dell'impronta positivista, così come è accaduto, in quegli anni, per tanti altri autori antichi, è stato la ricerca dei modelli di Aratore, soprattutto classici'. However, he concludes that 'il carattere pionieristico di questi lavori, tuttavia, non consentì una precisa comprensione della natura e delle finalità di tali ormeggiamenti'.
9. Schrödinger, Das Epos des Arator, 6. This was of course an essential part of all Christian literature of the early centuries. In the words of G.Boissier (La Fin du paganisme, 7th edition, 2 vols [Paris, 1891], II, 4):

Pour les convaincre que le christianisme n'était pas une religion de barbares, tout à fait incompatible avec les lettres, il fallait leur montrer des oeuvres où l'art fût plus accusé et qui fussent véritablement littéraires. C'est ce qui a donné à la poésie chrétienne une importance particulière: elle a plus servi que la prose à vaincre les dernières répugnances des lettrés, et voilà pourquoi elle mérite d'être spécialement étudiée.

For similar thoughts see also Raby, A History of Christian Latin Poetry, 76 and Laistner, 'The Christian Attitude to Pagan Literature', History 20 (1935-1936), 49.

10. To this purpose Ansorge devotes Pars I (13-29) of his dissertation. His attempts to prove a deliberate linking of contexts are largely inconclusive, if not unconvincing. A representative example comes when he confidently draws a parallel (De Aratore, 25) between et dona gerens (H.A. 1.416: describing the gold which is laid at the feet of the apostles at Acts 4:37) and the famous et dona ferentes of Aeneid 2.49:

Quo in versu scribendo poetam illo Aeneidis loco, quo Vergilius Laocoontem sacerdotem de famoso Danaorum dono dicentem induxit...exemplo usum esse nemo mihi non concedet. Sane durior est locutio Aratoris, qui de auro ipso quasi

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

de homine donante loquitur. Arator enim suo loco, si quid video, aurum, quod omnibus temporibus hominibus tam perniciosum fuerit, tamquam periculosum humani generis inimicum, de quo nihil boni venire possit, animo sibi fingit.

One cannot query Ansorge's interpretation of the passage, but its validity stems from its context in the H.A. rather than some possibly Virgilian parallel. Indeed, as Ansorge himself goes on to say, the topos of inimicorum dona was common even before Virgil (25-26).

11. Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 5. See also Thraede, 'Arator', 193.
12. In his review of McKinlay's edition, AJPh 75 (1954), 212. Thus also P. Riché, (in REL 31 [1953], 458): 'Deux mots ou une expression courante rencontrés également chez deux écrivains ne prouvent pas une influence, et l'index scriptorum de la page 225 peut être alors en partie trompeur.' Ansorge too (De Aratore, 10-11) is aware of this danger: 'Nam verborum Latinorum non modo quasdam formas sed etiam structuras ut certis hexametri pedibus maxime idoneas ne dicam necessarias ab omnibus poetis Latinis libentissime iterum atque iterum repetitas et quasi commune omnium bonum propagatas esse satis constat.' Although he claims to have omitted all such references, he asks to be forgiven if he has included any unwittingly (80): 'Quod in libello meo complures attuli locos, quibus poeta noster haud dubie fortuito verba veterum repetivit, venia mihi dabitur.' On this point see also P. Hunter Blair, 'From Bede to Alcuin', in Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede, ed. Gerald Bonner (London, 1976), 239-60: he suggests that, even where one author appears to be familiar with the work of another, scattered references do not prove acquaintance with anything but extracts from any particular work. Bede for example, he argues, may not have known any passages of Virgil but those contained in his Latin grammars at Wearmouth and Jarrow. See also the comments of Hudson-Williams ('Virgil and the Christian Latin Poets', VirgSocProc 6 [1966-1967], 20):

A vast proportion of their imitations, however, consists of brief echoes of phrases, expressions, or indeed whole sentences, and they were doubtless to a large extent utilized without conscious borrowing. Many of them had come to be part of the poetic vocabulary. Virtually all poets after Virgil, from the epic poets to Martial and Juvenal, contain echoes of his work, and these in turn they passed on to others and so ensured their further employment.

Chatillon too ('Arator déclamateur antijuif', RMAL 24 [1968/1977], 20) laments the fact that critics appear obliged to study Arator from a classical viewpoint, although he ascribes this failing in part to the classically-orientated stock of many libraries:

Nous touchons du doigt une des graves déficiences dont souffre encore l'équipement de nos laboratoires et centres d'études qui se voudraient médiévistes ou seulement un peu mieux éclairés du côté patristique et théologique: l'outillage dont ils disposent est, dans l'ensemble, orienté du côté classique.

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

The classical viewpoint is evident even in Raby (A History of Christian Latin Poetry, 85): 'The schools had fallen, and with them departed every opportunity for the serious study of the old classical language and literature...In Italy, Arator palely reflects in the sixth century the ancient tradition.' It is a classically-based view also that insists on studying the H.A. as an example of the genre of 'biblical epic'. Yet, as Kartschoke (Bibeldichtung, 80) observes, by the Christian era the fact that a poem is written in hexameters no longer guarantees an epic content: "Episch" sind sie zunächst nur, insofern als sie sich alle des versus heroicus bedienen - wenngleich der Hexameter der Zeit der Entstehung christlicher Poesie diese gattungsbestimmende Funktion längst eingebüßt hatte.' See on this point Thraede ('Arator', 188). Thus also Charles Witke (Numen Litterarum: The Old and the New in Latin Poetry from Constantine to Gregory the Great [Leiden and Cologne, 1971], 223): 'Arator has moved from epic of the Latin tradition to a cosmological poetry which has little except form to do with the ancient genre.' We can, then, if we must, search for evidence of the influence of Virgil, or the other epic poets, on the 'epic' works of the Christian poets, but we must, with Hudson-Williams ('Virgil and the Christian Latin Poets', 17), be aware that 'in those of dogmatic and theological content it is bound to be less prominent', and indeed less significant.

13. Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 45) comments: 'Da allora il problema dei rapporti di Aratore con i suoi modelli attende ancora una sistemazione, che ne metta in luce le reali proporzioni, le modalità e il significato.' This 'sistemazione' is what he has given the poem in his latest article ('I modelli classici di Aratore. Per una tipologia dei rapporti poeta-fonte', BStudLat 15 [1985], 40-50). He argues, in his conclusion (49-50), that Arator's use of classical models is very carefully thought-out:

La sua vasta preparazione culturale e la piena padronanza di tutti i procedimenti di orneggiamento, frutto senz'altro di arte, ma anche di gusto, fanno risaltare la sua correttezza 'morale' nei confronti dei modelli classici; ed in particolare, quella rinuncia ad ogni compromesso formale e di contenuto, quale è il frutto della 'ripresa di versi quasi completi' e dell' 'imitazione di passi' da modelli classici, per evitare note certamente efficaci, ma estranee allo spirito del suo canto, rivelano una sua profonda coerenza d'intenti e d'azione.

His attempts to classify Arator's 'borrowings' are interesting, but I tend to side with Laistner (see n12) in being wary of ascribing such 'borrowings' to a conscious process of selection.

14. 'Über den Dichter Arator', 230-231. These are exactly the terms in which Arator is lambasted by Schrödinger (Das Epos des Arator, 7):

Im Gegensatz zu der einfachen Sprache der heiligen Schrift ist Arators Stil geschraubt und schwülstig: er greift zu jeglichem Mittel seiner Darstellung Glanz zu verleihen; er liebt rhetorischen Prunk...Der christliche Dichter benützt jede Gelegenheit zu Ausfällen gegen verschiedene Laster...Auf diese

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

Weise fällt die Handlung, die stellenweise von Reflexionen überwuchert ist, in lauter Einzelheiten auseinander.

15. *Ibid.*, 231. Thus Ansorge (*De Aratore*, 8), 'Itaque hoc opus commentarium in actus apostolorum versibus expressum dicere malim, quam poeticam Lucae libri paraphrasin' (and also C.Weyman's review in *HJb* 35 [1914], 464-465) and Kartschoke (*Bibeldichtung*, 93), 'Was Arator von seinen Vorgängern trennt, was sein Gedicht zu einem folgerichtigen Endpunkt der altchristlichen Entwicklung macht, ist die durchgehende Theologisierung und vor allem die systematische Anordnung des exegetischen Materials, die den Eindruck eines Verskommentars vermittelt'; see also Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, 179n.
16. *Ibid.* Leimbach goes on to express his optimism: 'ja ich hoffe, wir erfahren aus dem Gedichte mehr, als mancher und ich selbst erwartete.'
17. 'Das Epos des Arator', 7.
18. *Ibid.*, 7-8. Similar criticism is found in Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 266): having identified two strands in the *H.A.*, the desire both to celebrate the deeds of Peter (and thus to emphasise his primacy) and also to produce a commentary on Acts, he claims that the resulting work fails as a poetic whole:

Es hat ein episch-didaktisches Gedicht werden sollen, aber die Sucht, Allegorien nachzuweisen, anzuknüpfen, zerreißt den Faden der epischen Erzählung, zerstört die Einheit des Gedichtes, und die höchst prosaischen Uebergänge zwischen historischer und moralisch auslegender Erzählung und der Allegorie stören außerordentlich den sonst poetischen Fluß des Gedichtes.

(Leimbach seems here to be ascribing to Arator the prose *argumenta* which precede each section of the poem, a view to which Thraede ['Arator', 188], Fontaine [*Naissance de la poésie*, 262], and Kartschoke [*Bibeldichtung*, 53] all subscribe. The summaries are thought to be the work of Arator neither by Arntzen [*PL* 68, 57], who omits them from his text, nor by McKinlay [*CSEL* 72, 155] and Schrader (*Arator's on the Acts of the Apostles*, 13), who include them. Thus also Hudson-Williams ['Notes', 91] and Roberts [*Biblical Epic*, 90-91]: 'The most conclusive evidence is that the earliest witness to the text of Arator, a seventh-century fragment preserved in *Bodl.Ms.e Mus.* 66, includes no *argumenta*.')

Fontaine (*Naissance de la poésie*, 262) identifies the same two strands as Leimbach and draws the same conclusion: 'La matière du récit lucanien est ici soumise à un double traitement littéraire, qui en altère la limpidité.' Schrader (*Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles*, 8) would appear to be thinking along the same lines when he complains that although Peter and Paul are the main subjects of the poem they are 'too often dissolved into the spiritual level'. See also the words of Laistner in n.4 above.

19. *Bibeldichtung*, 93.
20. See *Ep. ad Vigilium*, 19-22:

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

Versibus ergo canam quos Lucas rettulit Actus,
Historiamque sequens carmina vera loquer.
Alternis reserabo modis quod littera pandit
Et res si qua mihi mystica corde datur.

The two strands identified by Leimbach are clearly set out in advance by Arator: versibus...canam implies not only that he will versify the deeds of the apostles but celebrate them (see Lewis and Short, 'cano' II.B.a); lines 21-22 equally clearly reveal his intention to interpret both the literal and the mystical meaning of the biblical text. But line 20 is no less interesting: in the light of the structure of the H.A. itself, Historiam...sequens, surely means something like 'following the story through'. Here is no commitment to retell the story in full: his aim is to produce carmina vera, not just 'real poetry' but 'poetry which contains the truth' (see Lewis and Short, 'verus' II.B). Roberts' translation (Biblical Epic, 90), 'and following the narrative shall compose a true poem' reveals little but his determination to study the H.A. as an example of a verse paraphrase and nothing else. However, he does admit (115) that 'his use of the summarizing style reflects the primacy in the H.A. of interpretation over narrative'.

21. Naissance de la poésie, 262. Although Arntzen attempts to provide a continuous narrative by omitting the prose argumenta and making each section of verse continue directly on from that which precedes it (see his comments in PL 68, 57), it is fairly clear that Arator intended the poem to fall into the shorter capita in which it appears in McKinlay's edition.
22. Biblical Epic, 180.
23. Naissance de la poésie, 262. He adds: 'On pense à l'analogie avec l'éclatement tardif de l'épopée médiévale hispanique en romanceros, ou collections de courts romances.'
24. Biblical Epic, 180n.
25. Numen Litterarum, 223.
26. Biblical Epic, 172.
27. Ibid., 179.
28. As Roberts admits (ibid., 179n). See n15 above.
29. Thus Kartschoke (Bibeldichtung, 53;93), Raby (A History of Christian Latin Poetry, 119), and Laistner (Bedae Venerabilis Expositio Actuum Apostolorum et Retractio [Cambridge, Mass., 1939], xiii]. The great exception to the paucity of commentaries on Acts was of course the Homilies on Acts of John Chrysostom (contained in PG 60). The fact that such an exegetical void existed was one of Chrysostom's motives for writing these homilies, as his translators (John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, trans. J.Walker, J.Sheppard and H.Browne, rev. G.B.Stevens [The

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series Vol. xi, ed. P.Schaff], [New York, 1889], ix-xii) observe:

The Acts of the Apostles, though read in the churches in the season between Easter and Pentecost, were seldom preached upon; and we find St. Chrysostom complaining in the opening of these Homilies, as also on an earlier occasion at Antioch, that this portion of the Scriptures was not as much read as it ought to be, nay, that there were 'many to whom this book was not even known'...As a commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, this Work stands alone among the writings of the first ten centuries. The Expositions of St.Clement of Alexandria (in the Hypotyposes), of Origen, of Diodorus of Tarsus, and St.Chrysostom's teacher, Theodore of Mopsuestia, as well as of Ammonius and others whose materials are used in the Catena, have perished.

See Homilia in Actus Apostolorum 1 (PG 60, 13), for Chrysostom's complaint about general ignorance of Acts. A Latin translation of Chrysostom's Homilies was commissioned by Cassiodorus (as he records at Institutiones 1.9, ed. R.A.B.Mynors [Oxford, 1937], 32-33); this however does not survive and it is doubtful whether it was widely known in the Middle Ages (see Dom Chrysostomus Baur, S.Jean Chrysostome et ses oeuvres dans l'histoire littéraire [Louvain, 1907], 66). Chrysostom's translators (Homilies on Acts, x) see little trace of Chrysostom in Cassiodorus' own Complexiones in Actus Apostolorum (PL 70, 1381-1406); I similarly can find no evidence in the case of Arator (pace McKinlay's index scriptorum [CSEL 72, 236], which lists eleven 'parallels').

30. Arator's claim (H.A.2.890-891) that scripture has a three-fold meaning (historicum, morale, typicumque volumen) is not really supported by his own attitude to the text of Acts (though Thraede ['Arator', 190] unconvincingly attempts to take Arator at his word). As Roberts observes (Biblical Epic, 91n), Arator's belief appears, more simply, to be that 'every passage must have a figurative as well as a literal sense'.
31. De Aratore, 8. See also the judgements of Young, Tixeront (both n3 above), Laistner (Thought and Letters, 112): 'The modern reader is also likely to be wearied by the poet's fondness for allegorical interpretation'; and Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 267): 'Er mag manchmal treffende Allegorien haben, viele sind deren nicht; matte, gesuchte, gekünstelte sind häufiger, und die größere Mehrzahl ist entweder falsch, oder geschmacklos, oder sonst verwerflich.' Thus also F.Cayré (Manual of Patrology and History of Theology. trans. H.Howitt. 2 vols [Tournai, 1936-1940], II, 213): 'he has been reproached with sacrificing historic accuracy to allegory'; similarly V.C.de Clercq ('Arator', NCE 1, 738-9), who describes the H.A. as 'an amalgam of faulty prosody, uninspired rhetoric, excessive allegory, and the mystical interpretation of numbers.' Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 7) is more sympathetic, speaking of the "mysticism" which it has been the modern affectation to despise'.
32. Thus F.Charlier (in his review of CSEL 72 in Antiquité Classique 22 [1953], 472), although he acknowledges that the H.A. is not

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

totally without theological interest: 'L'oeuvre d'Arator n'a par elle-même aucune portée dogmatique, bien qu'on y perçoive nettement l'écho des controverses arienne et nestorienne.' See also Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 269): 'auch in Bezug auf die Mitwirkung des Menschen neben der göttlichen Gnade könnte man hin und wieder semipelagianische Spuren nachweisen. In Bezug auf die Gnadenwahl, Erbsünde und allegorische Schriftauslegung ist Arator geradezu antipelagianisch.'

33. 'The Reasonableness of Typology', 36, (in G.W.H.Lampe and K.J.Woolcombe, Essays on Typology [London, 1957]).
34. 'Über den Dichter Arator', 269.
35. Such a criticism is voiced by Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 42), who commends Leimbach for revealing 'il ruolo primario svolto dalle interpretazioni mistiche, simboliche e allegoriche nell'opera del Nostro', but adds the qualification 'anche se solo per esemplificazione'.
36. 'Le Allegorie del Poeta Aratore', Athenaeum 2 (1914), 417-434. Ferrari immediately sets himself two questions (417), neither of which has been but rarely addressed by subsequent scholars: 'da chi attinse il Nostro le allegorie che abbondano nel suo poema? In che modo e con quali intenti artistici egli le svolse?' H-l.Marrou (in his review of CSEL 72 in Gnomon 25 [1953], 255), though he has no time for Arator ('Arator hélas n'est qu'un auteur d'importance mineure, minime'), yet acknowledges grudgingly that his allegorical exegesis might be worthy of study: 'Cette paraphrase des "Actes"...n'offre d'original que quelques interprétations spirituelles.'
37. Thus the criticism of Angelucci ('Aratore nella critica', 43).
38. His comments are so far removed from the hysterical condemnation of some of the critics referred to above that they merit repetition. For example, when Arator (H.A. 2.198-218) sees a reference to the fact that the church will contain both Jew and Gentile in the two separate healings of the lame men (that by Peter at Acts 3:1-10, and that by Paul at Acts 14:8-10): 'Il rapporto è calzante, persuasivo: nulla vi si sente di troppo lambiccato: tutto procede facile e piano ('Le Allegorie', 426).' Similarly, when Arator applies the same interpretation to the two boats of Luke 5:1-11: 'Anche qui tutto è rivelato con arte sobria, anche qui i confronti sono giustamente proporzionati e persuasivi (ibid., 428).'
39. Ibid., 423: 'Il gruppo più numeroso di allegorie è quello che riguarda la Chiesa.'; 431: 'Un altro gruppo di allegorie trova il poeta a proposito della Fede e dei suoi requisiti'; for baptism see below.
40. 'Über den Dichter Arator', 268.
41. See Leimbach, 'Über den Dichter Arator', 262-266; Fontaine, Naissance de la poésie, 262-263; Roberts, Biblical Epic, 89;

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

- 113;177; Kartschoke, Bibeldichtung, 94-96; Thraede, 'Arator', 189.
42. 'Le Allegorie', 430.
43. Ferrari limits his comparisons to several passages from the works of Augustine, and not quite as many from the Carmen Paschale of Sedulius.
44. The question of exactly which works Arator was able to consult will be considered in the final chapter of this thesis. For the moment, one must recall, with Chatillon ('Arator déclamateur antijuif II', RMAL 20 [1964], 218), that as a subdeacon of Pope Vigilius, Arator presumably had 'toutes les possibilités d'accès aux scrinia, aux bibliothèques'.
45. 'Le Allegorie', 434.

CHAPTER TWO: BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is, in basic terms, to prove our hypothesis, namely that, in writing the Historia Apostolica, Arator was particularly concerned to emphasise and explain the role of baptism in The Acts of the Apostles. This section will indicate the content of subsequent chapters of this thesis, chapters in which individual episodes of baptismal importance will be examined, tracing in particular the traditional interpretative patterns which may have influenced Arator in his exegesis.

The first task must be to look at the baptismal content of both the Historia Apostolica and The Acts of the Apostles. For all that Acts is the single fullest account of the missionary work of the Church in its earliest days, its explicit descriptions of and direct references to baptism are extremely few. Perhaps the clearest way to show the how Arator highlighted the baptismal perspective to an extent which transcends any notion of a mere paraphrase of Acts is to list side by side in tabular form baptismal references and sequences in both the Historia Apostolica and Acts:

Historia Apostolica

Acts

1.21-68:	Ascension compared with baptism;		
1.69-83:	Peter's baptismal role as fisher of men;		
1.110-118:	Number of apostles prescribed by baptismal calculation;		
1.119-159:	Descent of Spirit as baptism of fire;	1:5:	Christ foretells baptism with Holy Spirit 'before

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

			many days';
1.160-163:	Peter's baptismal role as fisher of men;		
1.198-210:	Offer of baptism; baptismal significance of the number three thousand;	2:38-41:	Offer of baptism and baptism of the three thousand;
1.293-294:	Number of men 'robed in white' now five thousand;	4:4:	Five thousand men had heard the word and 'believed';
1.440-441:	Peter's appeal for believers to hold fast orthodox baptism;		
1.511-514:	Those cleansed in the earthly church will be led by Peter to the heavenly;		
1.552-556:	Seven deacons elected to administer sacraments;	6:2-4:	The Seven elected specifically to look after the poor;
1.624-671:	Baptism of Simon Magus;	8:9-24:	Baptism of Simon Magus;
1.672-707:	Baptism of Ethiopian Eunuch;	8:26-40:	Baptism of Ethiopian Eunuch;
		9:19:	Baptism of Saul;
1.741-745:	Basket in which Paul escapes from Damascus represents baptism and martyrdom;	9:25	
1.754-801:	Healing of Aeneas given baptismal interpretation;	9:32-35	
1.840-845:	Raising of Tabitha from dead is like baptismal resurrection;	9:36-42	
1.846-850:	Cornelius was righteous even before baptism;	10:1-2	
1.854-865:	Baptismal significance of ninth hour;	10:3	
1.874-877:	Baptismal significance of three messengers;	10:7-8	
1.886-890:	Baptismal significance of sixth hour	10:9	
1.931-965:	Baptism of Cornelius;	10:24-48:	Baptism of Cornelius;
1.973-1006:	Peter defends Gentile baptism;	11:1-18:	Peter defends Gentile baptism;
1.1027-1046:	Baptismal significance of Peter's side;	12:7	
2.40-95:	Paul's speech at Antioch: the Red Sea and baptism;	13:16-43:	Paul's speech at Antioch: Christ as fulfilment of O.T. prophecies;
2.135-155:	Paul's speech on following sabbath: the Jews have been overtaken by the Gentiles on the road to baptism;	13:44-47:	Paul's speech on the following sabbath: since the Jews have rejected Christ, the apostles have turned to the Gentiles;
2.242-306:	Superiority of baptism over circumcision;	15:1-21:	The circumcision debate;

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

		16:11-15:	Baptism of Lydia;
2.421-442:	Baptism of Paul's jailer;	16:29-34:	Baptism of Paul's jailer;
2.506-550:	Baptismal interpretation of the name Aquila;	18:2-4:	Baptism of Corinthians;
2.565-6:	Peter's baptismal role as fisher of men;		
2.569-618:	Baptism of John's disciples;	19:1-7:	Baptism of John's disciples;
2.662-669:	Baptism of Ephesians;	19:17:	<i>Ephesians extol Christ and become believers;</i>
2.674-687:	Baptismal significance of fifty (thousand);	19:19	
2.753-825:	Baptismal significance of fall and revival of Eutyohus;	20:7-12	
2.945-969:	Refusal of Jews to accept baptism;	22:22-24	
2.1005-1017:	Jews spurn sacramental typology by refusing food and drink;	23:12-15	
2.1131-1155:	Baptismal interpretation of Paul's shipwreck;	27:27-44	
2.1184-1205:	Baptism saves Paul from the viper's poison;	28:3-6	
2.1237-1245:	Baptismal mission of Peter and Paul. ¹		

Superficially at least, our hypothesis has been proved already: from the tabular analysis constructed above, it is clear that Arator's poem includes more baptismal references than the biblical text on which it is based. Indeed, the baptismal sequences in Acts are in fact very few (although, of course, many passages of Acts concern 'conversion' and therefore implicitly involve baptism), explicit sequences being limited to Christ's promise to the apostles of the imminent descent of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent Pentecostal baptisms; Peter's defence of Gentile baptism and the 'model' baptisms of the Eunuch, Paul himself, Cornelius, Lydia and Paul's jailer; the 'failed' baptism of Simon Magus and the 'rebaptism' of the disciples of John the Baptist.

However, it is important at this point to examine exactly how Arator

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

expands the baptismal perspective of the biblical text and determine what his attitude to the text of Acts was.

1. Interpretation of explicitly baptismal passages

First, and most obviously, Arator expands passages which are already baptismal in their biblical context. In this category we can place the Pentecostal narrative (1.119-159; 198-210), the baptism of Simon Magus, the Ethiopian Eunuch (1.624-707), and Cornelius (1.931-965), Peter's defence of Gentile baptism (1.973-1006), the baptism of Paul's jailer (2.421-442) and of John's disciples (2.569-618).²

However, although all these passages bear in common the fact that are inspired by biblical episodes which in themselves deal with baptismal subjects, they differ quite dramatically amongst themselves in the way in which Arator paraphrases and interprets the biblical text. In some cases, Arator uses the biblical episode as a starting point for a moralising sermon, which nonetheless always keeps its point of departure in mind; such 'sermons' therefore contain little if any allegorical interpretation by way of either illustration or contrast, maintaining on the contrary the literal significance of the text. Of the passages listed above two fall into this category, the baptisms of Cornelius and that of the disciples of John the Baptist.

In his account of the conversion of Cornelius, Arator is concerned to explain a feature of the biblical account which is in real need of explanation. The problem arises when Cornelius and his household receive the gift of the Spirit, speaking in tongues even before they

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

have been baptized (10:44-48). In terms of the apostolic mission being described in Acts, the explanation is clear enough: the fact that the Spirit is given to Cornelius, even though he is not baptized, is evidence for Peter, and 'the believers among the circumcised' who came with him from Joppa, that God intends all men to be baptized, both Jew and Gentile.³ Arator however, since he obviously has no need to convince his audience of the justice of Gentile baptism, intends the message to impart a more universal message: baptism in itself is no guarantee of salvation.⁴

To this end, Arator begins his account of Cornelius' conversion by stressing his natural piety and virtue, following the way in which he is introduced in Acts, 'a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, and prayed constantly to God' (10:2). Here was a man:

quem dedita causis
Vita piis sacrauit aquis, coepitque gerendo
Credere qui gessit quicquid baptismate lotis
Consuevit praestare fides (1.847-850).

Whom a life devoted to good causes marked out for the waters, and who became a believer through what he did; for he did those things which faith usually keeps for those who have been washed in baptism.

In other words, the unbaptized Cornelius is as righteous as any baptized Christian. Arator however goes on to advise us to use Cornelius as a model, who for all his righteousness was still baptized :

Et ferat exemplum meritis qui praebuit undis (1.873)!

And take an example from him who afforded us one in the waves he deserved.

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Arator proceeds to develop this line of thought, as Peter arrives at the centurion's house:

Descendere Petrus

*Dicitur ad plebem veniens gentemque novellam
Quae necdum cognorat aquam; pars mersa profecto est
Sacro fonte carens, cuius via ducit euntes
Ad patriae melioris opem, qua pergere cessans
Non intrat quo vita vocat (1.936-941).*

Peter is said to have gone down as he came to the people and that new nation which was not yet acquainted with the water; some however had been 'immersed' even though they were as yet without the holy spring, whose path leads men on the way towards the succour of a better homeland; he who has ceased to proceed by this path cannot enter whither life calls him.

Here we reach the heart of Arator's message; just as there are some men, like Cornelius, who are so righteous that they are mersus even though they are as yet unbaptized,⁵ so men who have already been baptized cannot be sure of salvation unless they keep to the narrow way: baptism must change man's inner being or it can assure nothing. But Arator also advises against taking false hope from Cornelius' example: he recognises that this event had no precedent (1.958-959), and warns that in the normal order of things the Spirit descends only to those who have been reborn in the spring (1.959-961):

*gerit ista vicissim,
Ne quisquam putet esse suum meritisque venire
Quod variat qui sponte parat; nam Spiritus alius
Nescia mensurae fert praemia, plusque ministrans
Quam sperantis erat praecedat gratia votum (1.961-965).*

It [the Spirit] performs things in this order to stop men thinking that that which bestows its differing gifts unilaterally is their rightful possession and will reward their good deeds. For the gentle Spirit offers rewards which know naught of reckoning, and its grace which ministers more than we can hope surpasses that which we desire.

Arator then draws a twofold conclusion from the story of Cornelius. On the one hand he warns against complacency for the Spirit is given

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

to no one by right: all one can do is pray. On the other hand he offers in consolation the fact that Spirit is 'wont to give more than either we desire or deserve.'⁶

The account of the baptism at Ephesus of the disciples of John the Baptist is used as an excuse for a homily on the significance of Christ's own baptism at the hands of John:

*formam facit omnibus ad se
Currere fonte pio, sacram ne deserat undam
Ulterius mortale genus, quam corpore mundo
Et Dominus dignatus erat cum diluit amnem
Per famulum mergente Deo (2.589-593).*

He set a pattern for everyone to run to him through the pious spring, so that the mortal race should no longer abandon the sacred wave which even the Lord deemed worthy, though his body was clean, when he himself washed the stream as God was immersed at the hands of his servant;⁷

and also on the nature of heretical baptism. Arator addresses himself to those who cite Paul's baptism of John's disciples as biblical support for the view that those who have been baptized by heretics need in addition to receive orthodox baptism to be sure of salvation. His argument runs as follows: John's baptism, being merely a precursor of Christ's (by which it was destined to be replaced), was fundamentally different from baptism in the name of the Trinity (2.593-610);⁸ to accuse Paul of having carried out a geminum baptisma (2.604) is to misunderstand the different nature of the two baptisms. Therefore the passage has no relevance as regards the church's teaching on rebaptism, that is, that no man who has been baptized nomine trino (2.614), even if accompanied by dogmata prava, need undergo a second baptism.⁹

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Arator also maintains the literal truth of the account of the baptism of Paul's jailer; the parallels by means of which his story is told are based on the events of Acts: when he realises that the prison doors are open (16:27) his first reaction is to want to kill himself:

sed non licet illi
Paulo teste mori, cuius solamine vitam
Repperit atque suo meruit de carcere solvi (2.424-426).

But he is prevented from dying by the presence of Paul, in whose comfort he found life and deserved to be freed from his own prison.

How will the jailer find this life and freedom from his spiritual prison?

Descendensque domum sacris fomenta ministrat
Vulneribus liquidamque parat sibi redditus undam
Caelestem tacturus aquam (2.427-429).

And going down into his house he applies dressings to the holy wounds, and, restored to himself, he prepares the clear wave so that he might touch the heavenly water.

The jailer finds his freedom, is restored to himself, in the waters of baptism, paralleled by the water with which he washes the wounds of Paul and Silas.

Parallels are also to be found in Arator's versions of the other passages of explicit baptismal importance in Acts. In these cases, however, the parallels are typological ones adduced by Arator in illustration of his explanation. The baptism of Simon Magus and that of the Ethiopian Eunuch will be discussed in detail in later chapters, where an attempt will be made to trace the history of the typological traditions reflected by Arator.¹⁰ Peter's defence of the baptism of the Gentiles (11:1-18), in which Arator abandons Peter's

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

biblical justification (the account of his vision) in favour of an allegorical interpretation of the two fishing boats found in Luke 5, will be discussed later in this chapter, together his emphasis on Peter's baptismal mission.

The only passage of explicit baptismal importance in Acts on which we have as yet failed to comment is the Pentecostal descent of the Spirit, of which the apostles were given warning in strictly baptismal terms at Acts 1:5, and Peter's subsequent offer of baptism to the Jews. Arator expands the baptismal perspective by drawing a contrast between the confusion of tongues after the fall of the tower of Babel and the many tongues at Pentecost which everyone could understand. The baptismal nuance comes in the way in which he introduces his account of the Babel episode:

Dudum vetus aequoris arca
Cum superasset aquas (1.129-130)...

When long ago the ancient ark had overcome the waters of the ocean...

The inclusion of the ark is no mere mise-en-scène but demands a baptismal interpretation. The result of this original deliverance from the water, by the water, was imperfect; the men of Babel were punished for their pride:

Confusio linguae
Consimili tunc gente fuit; nunc pluribus una est...
...humilisque recolligit ordo
Quod tumidi sparsere viri (1.133-134;137-138).

Then there was a confusion of tongues, though they were of the same race; now there is one tongue though the peoples are many...and the humble band gather together what those haughty men spread abroad.

The contrast is clear: the baptism of Pentecost restores men to their

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

pre-Babel position. After contrasting the fiery Spirit which descends at Pentecost with the dove of the Spirit which hovered over Christ in the Jordan,¹¹ Arator turns to the accusation made by those who were present that the apostles were drunk:

Hos etiam musto typica ratione moveri
Error verus ait, quos ebria fonte recenti
Complevit doctrina poli (1.148-150).

A revealing mistake reports with figurative reasoning that these men were also influenced by new wine, men whom the intoxicating teaching of heaven had filled with its fresh spring.¹²

The use of the word fons immediately enhances the baptismal perspective: the apostles are intoxicated through their baptism in the fiery spirit. The reference to wine inspires Arator to give another mystical explanation: the apostles are the new vessels which contain the new wine of Christ the vine,

Unde rubent quas vertit aquas (1.154).

Whence the waters which he transformed turn red.

The obvious reading is to see this a reference to the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11), but the waters which turn red are bound to strike additional resonances: the blood and water which flowed from Christ's side, the waters of the Red Sea, both of these allusions have baptismal connections and neither can be ruled out as accidental here.¹³

Peter's subsequent offer of baptism to the Jews (2:38) becomes a motif for Arator:

Si solvere cura est
Fecundi crementa mali, felicibus undis
Exstinctum reparare genus; spes una remitti
Debite supplicii post orimina velle renasci (1.198-201).

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

If you are concerned to absolve the increase in your abundant evil, restore your lifeless race in the propitious waves; your one hope of remitting the punishment due to you after your crimes is to be willing to be reborn.

Baptism serves as the Jews' only hope not just of personal but racial salvation.¹⁴

2. Interpretation of implicitly baptismal passages

There are other passages in Acts in which, although no explicit mention of baptism is made, yet it may reasonably be inferred that baptism played some part. In these cases Arator makes explicit what in Acts remains implied. This category comprises the reference to the five thousand baptized (1.293-294), the response to Paul's second speech at Antioch (2.138-140), and the baptism of the Ephesians (2.662-669).

The first passage is Arator's rewriting of Acts 4:4, where the number of believers is reported to have been 'about five thousand'. There is no explicit mention of baptism, but it would not seem unreasonable to assume that these five thousand were indeed baptized. This is certainly what Arator appears to be suggesting:

*Agmine iam niveo per milia quinque virorum
Ecclesiae crescebat apex (1.293-294).*

In snow-white file, the peak of the church now began to increase to five thousand men.

Here Agmen niveum clearly refers to the white robes worn by baptismal candidates in the early church.¹⁵

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

After Paul's second speech at Antioch, Acts tells us that as many Gentiles 'as were ordained to eternal life believed'. Again no mention of baptism; again Arator makes it explicit:

Gentiles stupere globi fontemque secuti
Sumere promissae cupiunt novitatis honorem
Et lypha genetrice sati meruere renasci (2.138-140).

The Gentile throngs were amazed and in pursuit of the spring wish to receive the honour of this new promise and deserved to be reborn, begotten in the mothering spring.

The baptism of the Ephesians will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, together with Arator's use of numerology.

3. Baptismal interpolation in nonbaptismal passages

This category is in some ways similar to that which immediately preceded it; but whereas the last category dealt with passages of Acts which could reasonably be interpreted as containing implicit references to baptism, this one will examine those which contain no hint whatsoever of baptism but in which nevertheless Arator's introduction of baptismal material does not seem entirely arbitrary. Included in this category are the frequent references to Peter's baptismal mission as fisher of men (1.69-83; 160-163; 2.565-566; see also 1.511-514; 2.1237-1245), the addition of baptismal elements to Peter's teaching (1.440-441), the addition of administration of the sacraments to the tasks of the Seven (1.552-556), and the assertion of the superiority of baptism over circumcision (2.242-306) (which will be studied in a later chapter).¹⁶

Most of the other examples need little comment. The sudden deaths of

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) understandably prompt Peter, in Arator's version, to emphasise the need to uphold the church's teachings if they wish to be baptized:

Qui iure venitis
Ad latices, hoc state loco (1.440-1).

You who approach the waters with justice, maintain this position.¹⁷

Similarly, though Acts says that the Seven were elected specifically to look after the poor, it is not unreasonable, though it perhaps demonstrates less than a full understanding of the biblical text at this point,¹⁸ for Arator to emphasise their role in administering the sacraments:

Quam splendida coepit
Ecclesiae fulgere manus quae pocula vitae
Misceat et latices cum sanguine porrigat Agni (1.554-556)!

What a splendid band of the church began to shine forth, to mix the cups of life and hold out the water with the blood of the lamb!

We must however examine in some detail Arator's recurring treatment of Peter's baptismal mission.

Arator introduces his version of the speech made by Peter to the apostles at Acts 1:16, urging them to appoint a replacement for Judas Iscariot, by reminding us of his original call to follow Jesus (as for example at Matthew 4:19, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'):

piscatio Christi
Discipulum dignata rapit, qui retia laxet
Humanum captura genus (1.72-4).

Christ's fishing seizes the disciple, deeming him worthy to let down his nets to catch the human race.

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

The fishing imagery is inspired by the gospel original and we find similar versions in both Juvencus:

Nunc, inquit, pisces capitis maris aestibus altis,
Sed me si libeat sectari, fortis vobis
Provenient hominum praepulchra indagine luca (1.425-7).

Now, he said, you catch fish from the deep currents of the sea, but if you follow me, real profits will come to you from the more glorious hunting of men.

and Sedulius, who calls the disciples:

viros ex piscatoribus aptos
humanas piscari animas (2.220-1).

men suited from their experience as fishermen to fish for human souls.

Thus far the versions of the 'epic' poets appear quite similar, adding as they do very little to the biblical donnée. However, what follows in Arator's version indicates that we are to take notice of an element which does not occur in the verses of the other two poets: the means by which human 'fish' are to be caught:

quique aequoris imi
Ardebat madidas ad litora vertere praedas
Et spoliis implere ratem, melioribus undis
Nunc alia de parte levat nec deserit artem
Per latices sua luca sequens (1.75-9).

and he who was so eager to turn towards the shore the soaking spoils of the deep ocean and fill his boat with his booty, lifts it now in another place from better waves and does not abandon his skill as he pursues his gains through the waters.

It is clear that the whole of the preamble to Peter's speech is to be understood on a baptismal level. Arator has deliberately highlighted this, the first appearance of Peter in the Acts narrative, by the introduction of a digression which serves not only to emphasise Peter's primacy but also to stress the importance of his part in the baptismal mission.¹⁹ This is confirmed by another passage where

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Arator compares Peter with Paul, pointing out the suitability of their earthly skills to their apostolic duties:

Pisces Petrus agens homines capit; aequoris hospes
In sacris persistit aquis. Habitacula Paulus
Dum terrena levat, docet ut caelestia condat
Factaque saepe manu nunc construit aetria verbo (2.565-8)

Peter, who pursues fish, catches men; the friend of the sea remains in the holy waters. While Paul raises up earthly homes he teaches us that he builds heavenly ones, and the halls which he used to build with his hands he now constructs with words.

Peter the fisherman is the baptizer, the converter; Paul's main role is as teacher, helping the baptized to reach their heavenly home. Peter then continues to exercise his fisherman's skill in the sacrament of baptism, clearly figured in the words mellioribus undis (77).²⁰ However it is also evident that the water is not just the means of salvation but also integrally involved in the hunting of the prey - the pursuit of the would-be convert. Arator reveals here just how deeply his thought is enmeshed in the catechetical tradition. It is not enough to say that he is merely alluding to the idea of Christians as the pisciculi finding their way to the great Ichthys, although this of course is part of it.²¹ Surely there is a notion here of the human race being delivered by baptism from the sea of the devil? Enough has been said elsewhere to make redundant any discussion of this idea other than as it appears in the pages of the Historia Apostolica.²²

However, the fullest account of Peter's baptismal role as fisher of men comes in Arator's version of his justification for the baptizing of the gentiles (1.973-997). According to Acts 11:1-18, Peter returned to Jerusalem to the criticism of 'the circumcision party',

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

who questioned his association with the uncircumcised; in the biblical text, Peter answers their criticism by relating the vision he experienced in the city of Joppa. Arator briefly reports the worries of those in Jerusalem:

plebs cuncta requirit
Gentibus unde salus (1.967-8).

All the people are asking whence comes salvation to the Gentiles.

However, Peter's reassurances make no reference to his vision at Joppa but are limited instead to a general expression of the way in which no one should be excluded from the grace of God:

aperit quibus omnia doctor
Subiungensque monet numquam fas esse negari
Quae veniunt bonitate Dei (1.968-970).

The teacher reveals everything to them, and adds in warning that it is never right for those things which come from the goodness of God to be withheld.

Arator then launches into an attack on 'the circumcision party' for failing to recognise the authority of Peter, which Christ himself had made clear

cum litore naves
Prospiciens adstare duas praecoepa ministrans
In Petri vult puppe vehi (1.977-979)

when, seeing two ships standing at the shore as he was ministering his teachings, he wished to travel in Peter's boat.

Arator clearly refers to the passage at Luke 5:2-3: 'And he saw two boats by the lake...getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.' However, Arator expands his exegesis at this point to include a traditional interpretation of the

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

significance of both boats:²³ the boat which remains on the shore represents the Jews, the other the Church:

*Synagoga profecto
Sicca remansit humi postquam doctrina Magistri
Ecclesiae dedit alta sequi; stat perfida terris
Iam pelago currente fide (1.979-982).*

The synagogue for certain remained dry on the land when the teaching of the Master allowed the Church to follow the deeps; it stands faithless on the land, while faith now runs in the ocean.

The Jews remain high and dry while the Church pushes out into the deep waters of faith, the waters of baptism. We encounter here the ambiguity which lies at the very heart of all baptismal typology and which we will explore further in later chapters: the waters of baptism are life-giving but dangerous. To remain earth-bound, like the Jews, is to rely on a false sense of security and to reject the chance of salvation:

*Pars haec defigitur arvis
Quae cecidit terrena sequens (1.985-6).*

This party, which fell, is fastened to the ground in its pursuit of earthly things.

Arator goes on to give a baptismal interpretation of the miraculous catch of fish, as described at Luke 5:4-11, after the night during which the disciples had been unable to catch any fish at all. Perhaps 'baptismal interpretation' is insufficiently accurate; rather, the entire miracle is retold in baptismal terms:

*Nam tempore lucis
Lux quia Christus adest, spoliat vada salsa draconis,
Ut cunctos ad litus agant sacra retia fontis
Et de caerulei rapiantur fauce profundis.
Nam mare mundus erat, cuius de gurgite Petrus
Humida lina trahens verbo pisicante carinas
Complevit maiore sinu, quia turba duobus
E populis ventura foret; gentesque levavit*

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

Tunc famulante salo pleneque in puppe fatetur
Ecclesiam (1.988-997).

For when day dawns, because Christ the Light is at hand, he [Peter] plunders the salt shoals of the dragon so that the sacred nets of the spring may drive them all to the shore and so that they may be snatched from the gullet of the blue deep. For the sea was the world, from whose whirlpool Peter, drawing in the wet lines, fishing with his words, filled the boats with a greater fold, since the congregation will come from two peoples. Then, with the salt sea as his servant, he lifts up the nations and acknowledges the church in his full ship.

The sea then is the domain of the devil which man, if he is to have any chance of salvation, is compelled to endure until he is rescued by the nets of baptism²⁴ and the sea has been forced into submission. As often in Arator the issue is somewhat confused by his use, in close proximity, of two not entirely complementary traditions. The two boats referred to line 993 (carinas) are clearly made to represent the Jewish Christians on the one hand and the Gentiles on the other; presumably we are meant to have appreciated but set aside the earlier interpretation which required one boat to remain unmoved on the shore.²⁵

Why then does Arator introduce such a digression at this point? The reason is twofold: first, he obviously wished to avoid repetition of Peter's vision, which he had given ample treatment at H.A 1.878-930; but, secondly, he still wished to convey the same message, that the Gentiles too were to be welcomed into Christ's church. To this end he included his baptismal interpretation of Luke's narrative, emphasising not only the way in which the Gentile Church had been mystically foretold but also the fact that it was Peter who had been specifically designated by Christ as leader in the baptismal mission.

However, before we conclude our examination of Arator's use of this

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

tradition, there is one other short introductory passage which requires comment. At H.A.1.160ff, Arator includes more fishing imagery in the preamble to Peter's Pentecostal speech (Acts 2:14ff), a speech which itself includes the call to baptism (2:38-40):

Primus at ille Petrus, cui servit in aequore gressus,
Retia iam cupiens hominum vibrare saluti,
Ut piscator ovans levet has de fonte catervas,
Rettulit aethereos populo mirante triumphos (1.160-3).

But first, that Peter, to whom going on the ocean made itself subject, now wishing to shake out his nets for the salvation of mankind, so that as an exultant fisherman he might lift these flocks from the font, to the people's amazement recounted the splendours of heaven.

Here again we see that the imagery of fishing is inextricably entwined with the language of baptism: Peter will now raise his catch not from the sea but from the waters of baptism. Arator's use of the word fons in line 162 demonstrates the extra richness which Christians had given the Latin language. Far from being just a poetic synonym for aqua, as found in classical Latin verse²⁶ (although of course it is that as well), the word fons immediately places the passage in a baptismal perspective without the need for any more specific amplification.

However, the real item of interest in this section comes in the first line:

cui servit in aequore gressus (160).

I have purposely left my translation as nebulous as the Latin. The most obvious, and thus perhaps the right, interpretation is that the 'going on the sea' refers to Peter's skill as a fisherman. However, if this is the case, it seems a needlessly obtuse mode of expression

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

(although, since the author is Arator, this objection would hardly disqualify such an interpretation). But, what then does servit mean? That he was good at it? So good that the sea subjected itself to him? Possibly.

Yet, another interpretation also offers itself. Perhaps gressus really does mean what its grammatical root demands, 'going' in the sense of 'walking'. In this case servit makes perfect sense: Arator is referring to Peter's walking upon the water (until his faith deserted him), reported at Matthew 14:29.²⁷ Yet why should such a reference appear at this point, just as Peter prepares to baptize the multitude? The answer surely lies in the fact that the story of Christ's walking upon the water is frequently found as a baptismal type in the Latin sacramentaries, depicting as it does the crushing under foot of that ancient inhabitant of the sea, the devil.²⁸ Although even the earliest sacramentaries must be dated later than the Historia Apostolica,²⁹ can it be that Arator is reflecting catechetical material which was already current at the end of the sixth century? Certainly this interpretation is in no way at odds with the rest of the passage: Peter's crushing of the devil as he walks upon the water especially enables him to undertake the baptismal mission described in the following lines.

Arator then emphasises an element which never receives explicit or implicit statement in Acts, the baptismal mission of Peter, largely by means of illustration, using images from the Gospels, interpreted according to traditional baptismal typological patterns.

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

4. Baptismal interpretation of nonbaptismal passages

By far the most frequent method by which Arator amplifies the baptismal aspect of the text of Acts is his baptismal interpretation of passages which, in a literal sense, have nothing to do with baptism whatsoever. In this category fall the baptismal account of the Ascension (1.21-68), the interpretation of the basket in which Saul escaped from Damascus (1.741-745), the baptismal interpretation of the healing of Aeneas (1.754-801) and the restoration to life of Tabitha (1.840-845), the baptismal significance of Peter's side (1.1027-1046), Paul's first speech at Antioch (2.40-95), the baptismal nomenclature of Aquila (2.506-550), the significance of the fall and revival of Eutychus (2.753-825), the sacramental interpretation of Paul's shipwreck (2.1131-1155), his survival of the viper's poison (2.1184-1205), and of course the frequent numerological interpretations. The majority of these passages will receive detailed analysis in later chapters;³⁰ this section will examine Arator's exegetical technique in just two areas: first, his account of Paul's shipwreck (and his subsequent encounter with the viper), and secondly, his incorporation of baptismal material in his numerological interpretations.

The Acts account of Paul's shipwreck has in itself obvious typological intentions as M.D.Goulder has observed:

Going down in a storm was the metaphor par excellence in scripture for death, and being saved from one for resurrection: when St Paul speaks of his shipwrecks in these terms, how can Luke have thought otherwise?...as the climax of the Gospel is the death and resurrection of Christ, so the climax of Acts is the thanatos and anastasis of Paul.

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

But although he goes on to note, in relation to the breaking of bread at 27:35, that 'the eucharistic overtones are obvious', he fails to complete the typological circle and make the connection with baptism.³¹ Arator did not intend to miss such an opportunity. Arator takes Paul's reference to the number fourteen ('Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food', 27:33) as the starting-point for his mystical commentary:

Tempore quo primi fulserunt lumina mensis
Hoc numero corrente die de carnibus agni
Turba iubetur ali, quarum munimine tacto
Libera Niliacas meruit vitare tenebras;
Hinc spatium simili Paulus de gurgite mundi
Quos auferre cupit secum convivere suadet
Et sacrum libere cibum, vestigia Moysi
Observata legens; quorum speculantibus actum
Haec duo sunt diversa locis sed proxima causis,
Et repetita salus uno de fonte levatur:
Agnus Christus inest, panis quoque Christus habetur
De caelo, quod et ipse docet; qui corpore lesum
Sumpserit hoste caret, nec iam sua iura Pharaeo
Aegyptusque tenet; mox omnia daemonis arma
His merguntur aquis, quibus ille renascitur infans
Qui captivus erat; salsa quoque fluctus abyssi
Linquntur, et tetri superantur stagna draconis,
Ereptoque gregi largitur pasqua Christus,
Nominibus propriis, pastor iam verus edenti (2.1133-1151).

When the light of the first month shone forth and when the day of this number arrived, the crowd was commanded to be fed from the flesh of a lamb; freed by the taste of this protection it deserved to avoid the Egyptian darkness. In this case, Paul, after a similar period, persuaded those whom he wished to rescue from the whirlpool of the world to eat with him and to make an offering of the consecrated food, having studied and observed the tracks left by Moses. To those who examine their actions, these two things differ in their situation but are related in their causes, and the repeated salvation is lifted from one and the same spring. Christ the Lamb is involved, and Christ the Bread is also received from heaven, as he himself taught. He who consumes Christ within his body has no enemy; no longer do Pharaoh and Egypt retain their powers. Soon the whole armoury of the devil is sunk in these waters in which that child, who was held prisoner, is reborn. The floods of the salt abyss too are left behind, and the pools of the black dragon are overcome, and Christ bestows food to his rescued flock by their own names, now as the true shepherd to his feeding flock.

For Arator, Paul's shipwreck was of multi-layered sacramental significance. First, the breaking of bread which preceded the

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

shipwreck is seen as the typological fulfilment of the Passover meal (likewise occurring after fourteen days of 'the first month' [Exodus 12:6]), which offered protection from the Egyptians to the Israelites before they committed themselves to the waters of the Red Sea. And this was no coincidence: Paul is portrayed as consciously copying the precedent set by Moses (1139-1140). However, this is no simple case of sacramental sequence, such as we see in many interpretations of the fact that the crossing of the Red Sea is followed by the miraculous provision of food in the wilderness.³² For, naturally, the eucharist must follow baptism, not vice versa, though clearly Arator is alluding to this sequence in the final lines of the passage above: Christ feeds those who have been torn away from the domain of the devil (1151-1152). Rather, there are two separate parallels: one is in the protection offered against the forces of evil, represented by Pharaoh and the Egyptians (1145-1146), both by the Passover and by the eucharist, the other is in the salvation uno de fonte (1142) offered both by the crossing of the Red Sea and by the shipwreck of Paul.

But, secondly, Arator also offers an interpretation of the ambivalent nature of the waters of baptism, which are both lifegiving and dangerous. The sea is clearly the domain of the devil, stagna draconis (1149); yet all men who wish to be reborn must endure the danger of the abyss, which paradoxically delivers them from their sins, daemonis arma (1146), by which they have been held captive (1147-1148). This ambivalence, which lies at the heart of all baptismal typology, will receive further discussion in later chapters.³³

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

In the following episode, Arator discusses the protection which is offered, this time, by baptism. The discussion comes in his explanation of why Paul remained unharmed by the viper's poison (Acts 28:3-6):

Iam tunc de corpore Pauli
Virus abest oculis cum squameus exiit horror
Quem serpens antiqua dabat; purgatus in amne
Aethereo Christique oruci sua membra relegans
Nescit ab angue mori; vorat haec quae flamma venenum
A sacris vim sumpsit aquis, quibus ustus anhelat
Qui dolet ad patriam veteres remeare colonos (2.1184-1190).

The venom had already left Paul's body at that time when the scaly trembling, given by the ancient serpent, departed from his eyes. Cleansed in the heavenly stream, and dedicating his body to the cross of Christ, he did not know how to die from a snake. The poison is consumed by that flame which takes its power from the holy waters, burnt in which the snake gasps and moans that the old inhabitants are returning to their homeland.

The argument of the first five lines is clear: since the devil's poison, man's inborn sin, had been cast out of Paul at his baptism, it no longer had any power over him.³⁴ The closing lines are however more interesting: the fire which burns the snake in Acts is merely a figure of the fire of the Spirit which dwells in the waters of baptism. This is the flame which destroys the devil and condemns him to return to his homeland. And what is his homeland? What, if not the water which is his natural terrain? We think back to the ambivalent water of the shipwreck: the waters of baptism destroy the devil in each of us and condemn it to the abyss.

One area in which Arator's obsession with baptism is most strikingly evident is in his belief in mystica vis numeri (1.210), the mystical interpretation of numbers. It should not strike us as surprising that the poet delighted to such an extent in his numerological

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

explanations, such a pastime was common in the Fathers, but it is tempting to dismiss such attempts as an exercise in pointless ingenuity. However, in many cases Arator's interpretation is far from pointless; frequently he is intent upon exposing a 'hidden' link with the subject which was to prove his main concern: baptism and conversion.

The first example provided by Arator of a numerological explanation comes at H.A. 1.110-118. The passage concerns the election of a twelfth apostle to replace the unfortunate Judas Iscariot. What is the significance, asks Arator, of the number twelve? At first he refers to the twelve signs of the zodiac:

Duodena refulgent
Signa chori terrisque iubar iaculantur Olympi (1.110-111).

Twelve are the signs of the band which glitter and spread heaven's splendour over the earth.

He is not content, however, to leave it there. There is a more important reason why the apostles should number twelve in all:

Quattuor est laterum discretus partibus orbis;
Trina fides vocat hunc, quo nomine fonte lavatur;
Quattuor ergo simul repetens ter computat omnem
Quam duodenarius circumtulit ordo figuram,
Discipulisque piis, quibus hoc baptisma iubetur,
Mystica causa dedit numerum remeare priorem (1.113-118).

The world is divided into four different regions. It is summoned by the threefold faith, in whose name it is cleansed in the spring. Therefore if we multiply four three times we calculate the whole picture which the twelvefold rank encompassed: a mystical reason compelled the dutiful disciples, to whom this baptism was commended, to regain their former number.

As Leimbach observes, Arator has deliberately chosen to avoid other more obvious interpretations, the twelve tribes of Israel, for

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

example, or the twelve months or hours.³⁵ Rather, for him, the number of apostles is determined by a mathematical calculation: the fact that they must travel throughout the four regions of the world is multiplied by the fact that they must baptize in the name of the Trinity. Leimbach concludes: 'Es ist schade um den Scharfsinn, welcher aufgewendet werden mußte, diese Entdeckung zu machen.'³⁶ This judgement seems to me needlessly harsh. Arator's exegesis is ingenious, yes, but not entirely arbitrary. For Arator the apostles' baptismal role is paramount; rather than give just an explanation of their number which serves as little more than simile (as indeed he does by referring to the signs of the zodiac), he is concerned to interpret it in a way which adds to its significance.

The multiplying power of the Trinity figures in several of Arator's numerologies. As a result of Peter's address after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 'those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls' (Acts 2:41):

nam trina potestas
Colligit hanc prolem numerum partita per aequum.
Perfectum est quod mille sonat; sic denique saeculis
Ponimus aetates cum tempora dicimus orbis.
Res perfecta semel ter iungitur, et facit agmen
Mystica vis numeri (1.205-210).

For the threefold power gathers together the newly born and divides them into equal numbers. One thousand is the sound of perfection; indeed, it is in this way that we give ages to the centuries when we speak of the eras of the world. This fact, which in itself is perfect, is joined together three times and the mystical force of that number fashions the multitude.

This time, then, the calculation concerns the multiplication of perfection by the power of the Trinity. The threefold power brings

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

together the crowd (it is no coincidence that they are described as proles, that is, offspring, being newly born in baptism); each person of the Trinity, being in Himself whole and perfect, has a 'perfect' share of the three thousand. This, the first baptismal sequence in the Acts narrative, is presented by Arator as a model of perfection:³⁷

Hic primum post iussa Dei baptismatis usus
Exoritur data iura probans (1.204-5).

Here it was that the rite of baptism first originated, according to God's ordinances, and demonstrated the laws which had been given.

Arator again avails himself of the trina potestas when he comes to explain the significance of 'the ninth hour of prayer', the time at which the angel appeared to Cornelius, instructing him to send for Peter (Acts 10:3):

Nona fuit tunc hora, magis qua rectius hora
Prodiret iam trina fides: Quod tertia simplex,
Hoc iterum ter trina docet, sacramque figuram
Singula ter faciunt, et ter triplicata fatentur.
Haec est nona potens oculos quae reddidit orbi
Post tenebras remeante die cum protulit ortum
De radiis lux nata crucis cunctosque replevit
Hoc sine fine iubar; nam mundum constat onustum
Gentibus esse locum, quibus in baptismo lotis
Plena repurgato fulserunt lumina mundo (1.856-865).

It was then the ninth hour, since the threefold faith springs up more fittingly at that hour: what three times one reveals, three times three reveals again; three times one creates a sacred figure, and three times three declares the same. This is the powerful ninth hour, which gave eyes to the world when day returned after the darkness, when the light born from the rays of the cross brought forth the dawn, and this endless radiance filled all men. For it is certain that the world is a place which is weighed down with the nations; upon them, washed in baptism in a cleansing of the world, the ample light has shone.³⁸

The first four lines (856-9) involve some very complicated and dubious Latin in explaining a simple point: the significance of the number nine is the same as that of the number three. However, it is

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

the following section which provides more interest: Arator makes a cross-reference to the crucifixion of Christ, and the hour of his death (see, for example, Matthew 27:45-50). Just as light returned to the earth after the three hours of darkness (which Arator interprets as the light of Christ radiating from the cross), so are the baptised similarly enlightened, as the light of baptism sweeps across the world. The notion of baptism as illumination is too well-known to need further attention here.³⁹ Suffice to say that the conjunction of light imagery with baptismal interpretation at this point enables Arator to draw the essential link between baptism and the cross: each baptismal candidate must experience his own death on the cross to achieve full enlightenment.⁴⁰

A few lines later Arator turns to the three messengers (two servants 'and a devout soldier') whom Cornelius sent to Joppa to fetch Peter (Acts 10:7-8):

Confessio trina

*Sic veniet generantis aquae numerumque per ipsum
Europae atque Asiae Libyaeque tenebitur oris (1.875-7).*

In this way the threefold confession of the life-giving water will proceed and will be observed, because of this same number, on the shores of Europe, Asia and Africa.

The three messengers who will summon Peter to baptize their master symbolise not only baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit but also the three continents of the ancient world towards which the earliest missionary activity was to be directed. Again the symbolic interpretation is designed to convey a message: Cornelius is the first Gentile to be baptised after Peter has received his vision affirming that no man is to be considered 'common or unclean'. Thus,

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

the messengers symbolise the nations to whom the faith will eventually be spread.

Arator's most extended treatment of the allegorical significance of the number three is found in his explanation of why it was from a third storey window in particular that Eutychus fell to what was very nearly his death (Acts 20:9). He begins by asking why it was that Eutychus fell asleep in such a precarious position:

poteras meliorem cubili
In verbo recubare Dei Pauloque monente
Eius velle aditum cui limine pervia recto
Ianus nomen inest, per quam de fonte levatae
Ad vitam gradiuntur oves (2.771-5).

You could have reclined on a better couch, listening to the word of God, and on the advice of Paul have wished him to draw near who is called the Door, which is entered over the threshold of righteousness, through which the sheep which have arisen from the spring proceed to life.

Already then, before he has given any interpretation of the significance of the third storey, Arator opens up a baptismal perspective on the passage: Eutychus' surest and safest route to salvation was through listening to Christ's teachings, being baptized, and proceeding through his open door. This gives a clue to what follows. Eutychus' fall from the window and his subsequent restoration to life by Paul are described in terms of a descent into hell and a resurrection which, though not explicitly baptismal, are surely meant to suggest the possibility of a baptismal interpretation. There are two further aspects which support such a reading of the text. First, Arator's account of the boy's revival is followed by a long apostrophe in which he addresses Christ, describing Christ's descent into hell and subsequent resurrection

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

(2.789-796). This passage contains many of the features seen so often in accounts of the Descensus,⁴¹ in particular the reference to the spoiling of hell and the emphasis placed on the release of the flesh held captive by death:

Caro corpore matris
Virginis orta tibi regnum spoliavit Averni
Vivaque de proprio revocasti membra sepulcro (2.789-791).

Your flesh, sprung from the body of your virgin mother, raided the kingdom of hell; you recovered your living limbs from their own tomb.⁴¹

Arator then turns immediately to the recovery of Eutychus:

Interem felix surgit de morte cadaver
Et meliore via tria per cenacula sospes
Ducitur ad Paulum, cuius conspectibus insons
Coepit adesse puer vitae iam dignus honore
Cum leti convertit iter (2.797-801).

Meanwhile the lucky corpse rises from death and is guided safely up three storeys by a better path to Paul, in whose sight the boy, unharmed, begins to regain consciousness, worthy of the honour of life now that he has turned the road of death back on itself.

Eutychus' death and resurrection are thus explicitly compared with those of Christ: the implication is that they are somehow an allegorisation of the baptismal experience. It is at this point that Arator has recourse to his numerological explanation, which provides us with a second indication that the poet intended this passage to have baptismal overtones:

Fulta tribus cameris Noe describitur arca
Ecclesiae documenta gerens; stetit ordine prima
Pars hominum, pecudesque gradum tenere secundae,
Tertia sors addicta feris; quae cuncta per undas
Arca quadrata tulit, velut in baptismate fontis
Omnibus est nunc una salus, sed moribus unus
Non valet esse locus (2.803-9).

The ark of Noah, which is a type of the church, is described as being held up by three decks; the human race was housed on the upper floor, domestic animals took up position on the second, and the third was allotted to the wild beasts. The

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

four-sided ark carried them all through the waves, just as in the baptism of the font there is now one salvation for all, but the same place is not suitable for all kinds of men.

The house then, from which Eutyclus has fallen, reminds Arator of the ark, that well-known baptismal type:⁴³ its three storeys correspond to the three storeys of the ark. Arator now adds further detail to his interpretation: just as the humans and animals in the ark, though all were saved, were allotted positions of varying importance on her three storeys, in the same way, though all men who undergo baptism are offered the chance of salvation, their eventual fate will depend on their inner nature:⁴⁴

*Quisquis virtutis amator
Iungitur alta potens Noe; stat proximus infra
Ingenio brevior minor; sors dedita saevis
Tartareum tenet ima sinum (2.812-5).*

Whoever loves goodness and seeks the heights joins Noah; just underneath stands the lesser man who is of a lower nature; that bottommost place, which was allotted to the wild beasts, contains innermost hell.

Eutyclus then lost his place on the upper storey and found himself amongst the lowest members of creation:

*Sic Eutyclus ergo
Prima parte cadens inferni perditus oris
Haesit et humana vacuus ratione ferarum
Coepit habere locum; cui postquam pectore Paulus
Incubuit verbumque suum sapientia fudit,
Ore levans animam carnali lege peremptam,
Ad Dominum de morte redit (2.815-821).*

In this way, therefore, Eutyclus, in falling from the uppermost region, stuck fast in the shores of hell and began to take his place amongst the wild beasts, empty of human reasoning; but when Paul lay upon his breast and wisdom infused his word, raising up through his speech a soul which the law of the flesh had torn away, [the boy] returned from death to the Lord.

Arator intended the passage to be read on several levels. The basic text of course tells how Eutyclus fell to his death but was restored

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

to life by Paul. Nothing in Arator's paraphrase and commentary invalidates this, the literal meaning of the biblical text. However, a second reading is also possible: in falling asleep, Eutychus ceased to hear the teaching of Paul and succumbed to the demands of the flesh (carnalis lex), thus becoming no better than the wild beasts, devoid of any human intellect (humana vacuus ratione). However, the early reference to baptism (774), the traditional features of the Descensus, and the baptismal imagery connected with the ark also provide the possibility of a baptismal interpretation. The mystical significance of the three storeys of the ark, and particularly that of the the lowest floor as representing the infernal regions, reinforces the interpretation of Eutychus' fall and subsequent revival as a baptismal Descensus and resurrection. Such a reading is supported by the additional, though not unexpected, numerological interpretation to which Arator returns in the lines which close the passage:

Super ardua trina
Promeruit iam stare puer, quia dogmate trino
Comperit aeternae quae sit substantia vitae (2.823-5).

The boy now deserved to take his place three flights up, since through the threefold teaching he discovered the essence of eternal life.

Just as the fall represented Eutychus' descent into hell, so his restoration to a position on the third floor perhaps represents the enlightenment provided the catechete by the baptismal teaching of the trinum dogma. On this occasion Arator's interpretation of a number affects not just a small detail of a passage but his interpretation of a the passage as a whole.⁴⁵

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

However, Arator's baptismal numerology is not confined solely to his interpretation of the number three, which through its association with the Trinity is in its essence of baptismal significance; other numbers contained in the text of Acts receive a baptismal interpretation, not because they are of intrinsic baptismal significance but because they remind Arator of occasions when the same number has been associated with a baptismal situation. Such an occasion arises when Arator is called upon to explain the significance of the sixth hour, the time at which Peter received the vision of the 'great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth' (Acts 10:9-16). He gives three examples of the significance of the number six: the first concerns the sixth age, the age in which Christ deigned to come into the world (1.881-3), the second the six days in which God created the earth (1.883-6). The third makes the connection with baptism:

sic denique sexta
Fertur et illa geri, fessus de calle Magister
Cum putei super ora sedens per vasa puellae
Pocula quaerit aquae, requiem facturum ubique
Ecclesiae de fonte suse (1.886-890).

And finally these things too are said to have happened at the sixth hour, when the Master, tired from his journey, sat on the side of a well and he who was to give rest to everyone with the spring of his church sought a cup of water from the jars of a girl.⁴⁶

Just as it was at the sixth hour that Christ paradoxically asked the woman of Samaria for water (John 4:6-7), paradoxically because it was he who was to supply water for the world from the spring of baptism, so it was at the sixth hour that Peter received the vision which convinced him that Christ's baptism should be available to all men. The baptismal connection is not of prime importance here, but it

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

cannot be denied that it adds a subtle undertone to the passage.

Another occasion on which Arator gives a seemingly meaningless number a baptismal interpretation comes when he is discussing the significance of a passage from Acts 19:18-20: 'Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who practised magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.' The passage in Acts, though it refers to 'believers', makes no reference to baptism; Arator's version however is immediately given an explicitly baptismal context:

Concurrere gaudent

In latices intrare pios maculasque vetustas
Fonte lavare novo sanctisque nitescere lymphis,
E quibus una datur simul insons omnibus aetas.
Ast alii magicis ponunt incendia libris,
Ut mereantur aquas, et vitant ignibus ignes (2.664-9).

They rejoice to come together and enter the gentle waters and wash their old stains in the new font and become shining in the holy springs, from which the same guiltless life is given at the same time to all. Yet others set fire to their magic books so as to deserve the waters, and by those fires avoid the fires.

The one-time practitioners of magic arts burn their books in order to be worthy of baptism. Given the explicit baptismal slant added to the passage by Arator, it is not surprising that the fifty thousand pieces of silver are also given a baptismal interpretation:

Lege sacer numerus delicta resolvit, ut olim
Diluit in toto David sua crimina Psalmo
Contractusque fugat (2.675-7).

This number, holy by law, annuls transgressions, as once when in a whole psalm David washed away his offences and put his wrongdoings to flight.

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

The 'fifty thousand' has turned Arator's mind to Psalm 50 (51), which he correctly categorises as a penitential psalm. He would appear to be thinking particularly of verses 4 ('Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, Et a peccato meo munda me') and 9 ('Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor; Lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor'), both of which have obvious baptismal implications. Verse 9 in particular is associated by Ambrose with the moment when the baptismal candidate received his white robes.⁴⁷ After a second non-baptismal illustration of the importance of the number fifty (a reference to the jubilee which God ordered Moses to proclaim in the fiftieth year [Lev. 25:10]), there follows a further baptismal interpretation:

Quinquaginta etiam cubitis distenditur arca,
Quae depressa vadis atque aequore tuta salutem
Sub numero pietatis agit servataque crescit
Per spatii parcentis opem, quia Christus ubique
Condidit Ecclesiam venia fabricante capace,
Quae sic coepta fretis latissima funditur arvis (2.682-7).

For fifty cubits also stretches the ark, which, weighed down in the waters yet safe from sea, brings about salvation through this gracious number, and begins to grow, saved through the help of this merciful distance; for Christ, with mercy as the builder, has built his capacious church everywhere, which, born in this way in the waters, spreads out with its great expanse upon the earth.

Yet again the ark is used as a baptismal type: the great size of the ark proved to be man's salvation. So in Ephesus the Church, ever-increasing in size, continues its baptismal mission. So Arator uses the numerological explanation as a relevant illustration of the episode in Ephesus, emphasising the continuing baptismal mission and highlighting the rapid growth of the Church.

It is impossible to end our discussion of Arator's baptismal use of numerological explanation without glancing briefly at a passage from

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

towards the end of the second book of the Historia Apostolica, where Arator rebukes the forty Jews who swore 'neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul'. The basis of Arator's rebuke is that the Jews have chosen the wrong numerological justification for their actions:

Pocula sunt, Iudaea, tibi meliora cruoris
Quam laticis, nullasque volens contingere menses
Esuris ad facinus saturamque cadavere iusti
Quaeris habere famem. Non haec ieiunia Moyses
Condedit exemplo tot consummata diebus,
Ut memoras, quot tela moves (2.1005-1010).

You prefer cups of blood to water, Judaea, and, while you refuse to touch any table, you are hungry for crime and seek to satisfy your hunger with the corpse of a righteous man. That fasting, which lasted for as many days, as you recall, as the number of you who are brandishing your weapons, was not instituted by Moses as an example.

It is important to note the reference to baptism which Arator includes right at the beginning of the extract: the Jews are rebuked for being thirsty for blood rather than baptism (pocula...laticis). Arator then tells them that they are following the wrong example and goes on to supply them with the correct one:

totque inspicias annis
Secretas patuisse vias ubi divite nimbo
Fluxerunt de rore cibi rupisque vicissim
Arida fudit aquas. In quo meruere parentes
Divina bonitate frui donisque supernis
Enutrire animas, numero crudelis ab ipso
Tu saevire venis pollutaque foedera iungis
Agminis, ut plures faciat mors una nocentes (2.1010-1017).

In the same number of years you can see that the hidden paths were revealed, when as the cloud bestowed its riches, food flooded from the dew and the dry rock in turn poured forth waters. In that very number in which your parents deserved to enjoy the goodness of God and nourish their souls with gifts from above, you in your cruelty come to savage and seal the polluted pacts of your band, so that one death may make even more men guilty.⁴⁸

The baptismal element is immediately clear: the numerological example

BAPTISM, ACTS AND ARATOR

which the Jews should have recalled is what happened during the forty years in the wilderness, the falling of manna from heaven and the spouting of water from the rock, familiar symbols from their use in traditional sacramental typology.⁴⁹ Yet again the Jews have failed to recognise and interpret correctly the messages encoded in the Scriptures.

NOTES

1. This analysis omits any reference to passages or phrases which are ambiguous, that is, passages of which a baptismal interpretation might be possible but is not one of the most obvious interpretations. Such passages include those which use the word fons. In the schematic analysis only those examples which are indisputably baptismal have been included; for a discussion of the other occurrences of this word see note 25 below.
2. It must be noted that, of the explicitly baptismal sequences in Acts, Arator hardly mentions the baptism of Saul and omits entirely the baptism of Lydia. His reasons for doing so can only be surmised. Lydia occurs only briefly in the narrative of Acts and is of little interest for Arator: she is not of the significance of, say, Cornelius, nor does her name provide him with an excuse for a digression in which to exercise his ingenuity, although one would think he might have been tempted by her profession: 'a seller of purple goods'! His omission of the baptism of Saul, however, is more easily explicable: Saul's threeday blindness, following his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, and the subsequent restoration of his sight gave Arator ample opportunity to give full rein to his penchant for the light/darkness antithesis (1.718-730). When Saul recovered his sight and 'something like scales fell from his eyes', Arator thinks immediately of snakes:

Iudaea venenum

*Semper ab ore vomit crudelior aspide surda;
Perfidiae coluber Synagogae sibilat entro...
Vipereum iacit ante nefas et proelia doctor
Mox meliora gerit (1.733-735; 738-739).*

It is only after this antisemitic polemic (on which see Chatillon's comments in 'Arator déclamateur antijuif', *RMAL* 25-34 [1969-1978], 15-16) that Arator turns to baptism in his mystical interpretation of the basket in which Paul escaped from Damascus:

*Sporta solens texi iuncis palmisque vicissim
Tegmina dat Saulo retinens in honore figuram*

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

*Ecclesiae, nam iuncus aquis et palma coronis
Semper inest: iuvat Ecclesiam baptismatis unda
Martyriique cruor (1.741-745).*

The components of the basket thus represent both Saul's recent baptism and his eventual martyrdom. Knowing that he will end the episode with such an aphorism, Arator chooses to concentrate on the symbolism of Saul's conversion, rather than expound the details of his baptism (which are not provided by Acts anyway).

3. As Haenchen (The Acts of the Apostles, 359) observes, 'This event settles the question of Gentile baptism'.
4. Arator refers to this theme on a number of occasions, as Thraede notes ('Arator', 190); see the discussion of the Eutychus episode (2.753-825) in the final section of this chapter, and also Chapter 4: Lotus sed non Mundus: Simon Magus and the Raven.
5. Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 52) follows the medieval gloss 'in baratrum in inferno' (CSEL 72, 68) in translating mersa as 'immersed [in hell]'. However, given the baptismal context and the recent emphasis on Cornelius' iustitia naturalis, this reading seems to introduce an unnecessary perspective.
6. Cornelius was commonly regarded as possessing iustitia naturalis; see, for example, Chromatius of Aquileia, Tract. 9.2 (CCL 9A, 233) and Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 60: De Symbolo 5.1 (CCL 24, 335).
7. I have followed J.H.Waszink, 'Notes', VigChr 8 (1954), 91, in moving McKinlay's comma from before to after fonte pio in 2.590.

For the intransitive use of mergo (2.593), especially in a baptismal situation, see Ambrose, De Sacr. passim, for example 2.7.20 (SC 25, 84), 'Dixisti: CREDO, et mersisti, hoc est, sepultus es'.

8. Thraede ('Arator', 190) recognises that Arator is determined to tackle a true exegetical problem in this section. It must be said, however, that Arator is notably unsuccessful when he turns his hand to logic:

*Dissona non iterant; repetitio rem tenet ipsam,
Non aliam, bisque illa foret quae primitus esse
Coepit et ipsa redit; nam cum discordet origo
Principii finisque sequens, et singula dici
Et patet esse semel (2.605-609).*

This passage, adduced to support his claim that the baptism given by John is quite different from that given by Christ, is presumably intended to 'explain' the idea that if two things are different then one cannot be a repetition of the other.

9. McKinlay is surely wrong in his interpretation of 2.611-612,

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

Cum tamen haeretico nigredine plenus Avernii
Polluitur quicumque lacu...

which he glosses 'lacus Avernii de peccato' (CSEL 72, 208). But surely the words haereticus lacus intend a reference to someone who is 'polluted by heretical baptism' rather than 'heretical sin'? The water is described as emanating from hell since that is where the 'baptized', if he continues to be nigredine plenus, will without doubt eventually find himself.

10. Namely Chapter 4: Lotus sed non Mundus and Chapter 5: Eunuchi Fecunda Fides: Gentiles, Sinners, and Song of Songs 1:5.
11. For discussion of the simplicitas of the dove see Chapter 4.
12. McKinlay, needlessly confining himself to the classical usage of ebrius ('drunken'), wrongly glosses ebria fonte as hausta ex fonte. It is here surely better, with Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 29), to translate ebria actively as 'intoxicating' (see, for example, Dracontius, Carmen de mensibus 19 [MGH.AA 14, 227], where ebrius imber serves as a periphrasis for vinum).
13. See Chapter 7: Iustis Via, Sontibus Unda: The Crossing of the Red Sea, especially §3: Flumina de ventre Christi. These subtleties are not recognised by Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 57), who refers only to John 2:1-11.
14. Chatillon ('Arator déclamateur antijuif', RMAL 24 [1968/1977], 18) comments: 'Mais - et c'est là-dessus que la tirade s'achève - par le baptême, elle [sc. la Judée] se racheter, s'épargner le châtement que son crime lui avait valu.' He fails however to see the significance of this theme in the poem as a whole. See also H.A. 2.945-69: the Jews refuse to accept the offer of baptism, preferring to be nocentes (945); they cleave to their former ways and thus prevent themselves from being reborn:

primi quia poena parentis
Est cognata tibi veterisque in corpore portas
Transgressoris onus, contraria fontis honori
Ne renoveris aquis (2.966-969).

15. Chatillon ('Arator déclamateur antijuif', RMAL 25-34 [1969-1978], 11) correctly identifies the agmen niveum as 'la troupe des nouveaux baptisés'. For the tradition of wearing white robes see, for example, Ambrose, De Myst. 34 (SC 25, 174).
16. See Chapter 6: Saucius Infans: Baptism and Circumcision §2.
17. McKinlay speculates as to the source of this quotation, 'forsitan in deperdita parte Actorum Petri' (CSEL 72, 38).
18. Marcia Colish (The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, Vol. 2: Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century [Studies in the History of Christian Thought 35] [Leiden, 1985], 94) makes a similar observation about

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

Arator's version of Paul's sermon to the Athenians:

Arator's treatment of this scene raises some questions about his grasp of Stoicism and the theology of Acts alike. Arator comments on how Paul has triumphed over the sects and dogmas of paganism, listing Epicureanism and Stoicism as examples. He does not appear to notice that the Paul of Acts stresses the harmony between pagan and Christian monotheism. Instead, he presents the Stoics, like the Epicureans, as atheists and as totally inimical to Christian doctrine.

19. Roberts, Biblical Epic, 114n, recognises this but fails to relate Peter's role as fisher of men to baptism.

See also Ep. ad Parthenium 77-80:

*Incidit ille mihi, quem regula nominat Actus,
Messis apostolicae plenus in orbe liber,
In quo nos Dominus Petro piscante levavit
De gremio salsi caeruleique maris.*

The baptismal mission of Peter was obviously one of the most important themes of Acts for Arator: the Lord rescued us through Peter from the sea of the devil.

20. As recognised by Leimbach, 'Über den Dichter Arator', 234n.
21. See for example Tertullian, De Baptismo 1.3 (CCL 1, 277), 'Sed nos pisciculi secundum ἰησοῦν nostrum Iesum Christum in aqua nascimur nec aliter quam in aqua permanendo salvi sumus'.
22. See P.Lundberg, La Typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne église (Leipzig/Uppsala 1942); in particular chapter 2, 'La mer de la mort et le Jourdain', 64-166.
23. For the interpretation of this episode see principally Ambrose, Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 4.77-78 (SC 45, 181-2). He agrees that Peter's boat represents the Church ('ab una enim plures ecclesiae derivantur'), but is not so sure about the other. He records the theory that it represents the synagogue: 'Hi igitur de synagoga ad navem Petri, hoc est ad ecclesiam convenerunt, ut implerent ambas naviculas; omnes enim in nomine Iesu genu flectunt, sive Iudaeus sive Graecus; omnia et in omnibus Christus'. However, he himself prefers the theory that it represents the heretics: 'oportet enim et haereses esse, ut probentur boni'. For a fuller treatment of this episode, much of which however is derived from Ambrose, see Maximus of Turin, Sermo 49: De Duabus Naviculis in Evangelio (CCL 23, 193):

Ergo Petri navem elegit Moysi deserit, hoc est spernit synagogam perfidam fidelem adsumit ecclesiam...Vacua enim synagoga relinquitur in litore, quia Christum cum prophetarum amisit oraculis; onusta autem ecclesia in altum adsumitur, quia dominum cum apostolorum doctrina suscepit. Synagoga, inquam, remanet ad terras quasi terrenis inhaerens operationibus; ecclesia autem in altitudinem revocatur tamquam caelorum profunda sacramenta discutiens.

The sequence of the argument bears a close resemblance to that of

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

Arator, a resemblance which is reinforced by several verbal parallels: the synagogue is perfida and is held back by its terrenae operationes. The following section reinforces the link further: 'Quid enim tam profundum quam quod ait Petrus ad dominum: Tu es Christus filius dei vivi? Quid tam terrenum quam quod de domino dixerunt Iudaei: Nonne hic est filius Ioseph fabri?'

Arator makes the same references in distinguishing between the two boats:

sua quippe figura
Haesit utrique rati: Ioseph Iudaeae vocabat
Hunc natum cui Petrus ait: 'Tu, Christe, proberis
Filius esse Dei' (1.982-5).

The same explanation of in altum is to be found in Ambrose, Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 4.71 (SC 45, 180): 'Quid enim tam altum quam altitudinem divitiarum videre, scire dei filium et professionem divinae generationis adsumere?'

24. Ambrose goes to great lengths to explain that Peter's nets and hooks will cause no distress (Exam. 5.6.15-16, CSEL 32.1, 151): 'bonum piscem nec retia involvunt, sed elevant, nec amus internecat atque interficit, sed pretiosi vulneris perfundit sanguine...noli igitur, o bone piscis, Petri amum timere; non occidit, sed consecrat.'

25. Arator refers to this tradition again at 2.201-2:

Ecclesiae duo sunt populi per verba duorum,
Cui plenas captura duos facit esse carinas.

26. See for example, Virgil, Aeneid 12.119, 'alii fontemque ignemque ferebant'.

Despite the fact that McKinlay lists only three examples of places in the H.A. where fons is used de baptismate (CSEL 72, 205), wherever the word fons occurs in Arator, there is always the possibility of a baptismal undertone even if this is not the primary meaning in the particular context. For instance, after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, Arator declares:

Quo fonte cucurrit
Haec probitas quaeve illa fuit bonitatis origo,
Hinc canere incipiam (1.219-221).

The primary meaning of fons here must be 'source', but, since the descent of the Spirit was also conceived of as a baptism, the undertone must surely also be intended. The same is true of his summary of the importance of the death of Stephen:

Sors prima revelat
Exemplumque creat quod talia bella gerenti
Hoc de fonte fluit (1.620-622).

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

Stephen's fate reveals not just what being a Christian (hoc de fonte) can mean, but also that the ultimate implication of baptism must be the willingness to accept martyrdom. Such a sentiment seems to be implied at 1.744-745:

Iuvat Ecclesiam baptismatis unda
Martyriique cruor.

The only context which would appear to preclude any baptismal interpretation of fons comes at 2.338, where ex veteri...fonte must mean the Old Testament.

27. This seems to be the view of the medieval gloss (C), which opines cui praebuit se mare calcabile, and also of McKinlay (CSEL 72, 21). Arator refers again to Peter's walking on the water at Ep. ad Vigilium 11-14, where again a baptismal implication suggests itself:

Transferor ad niveas Petri sine turbine caulas
Et fruor optati iam statione soli.
Litoris ille sinus ad carbasa nostra parevit
Fluctibus in mediis cui via sicca fuit.

28. See Lundberg, La typologie baptismale, 232 for the formula used for the consecration of the water in the Bobbio Missal, the Gelasian Sacramentary and the Manuale Ambrosianum, all of which include the phrase 'qui pedibus super te ambulavit'.
29. Not before the eighth century. See H.Ashworth, 'Sacramentaries' in NCE 12, 792-800.
30. For the Ascension, see Chapter 3: Divinus Odor: Co-Ascension and Baptismal Participation; for the healing of Aeneas, see Chapter 6: Saucius Infans 81; for Peter's side and Paul's speech at Antioch, see Chapter 7: Iustus Via, Sontibus Unda; for Aquila, see Chapter 8: Aquila: The Rejuvenation of the Eagle. The Tabitha episode is discussed in detail by Roberts (Biblical Epic, 172-179), although he does not emphasise the baptismal element in Arator's interpretation.
31. Type and History in Acts (London, 1964), 39, although he (94) recognises the resurrectional implications of the conversion of Saul:

Then, at the hands of Ananias, the scales fall from his eyes, and he enters into the kingdom of light: 'He arose and was baptized.' We do not need to be told that his baptism itself was a symbolic dying and rising again with Christ.

He later (166-167) even draws the parallel between the shipwreck and the crossing of the Red Sea:

Paul's 'death' here is the same as that of the Israelites at the Red Sea - he must pass through the water. Then the waters were divided into two, and the children of Israel went through the midst on dry ground. So now Paul's ship falls into a place where two seas meet, and strikes ground, and the whole

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

company comes safe to shore...We have already noted the implication made that the meal was a kind of eucharist - and if a eucharist then a kind of Passover feast.

But he again stops short of making the baptismal connection. Haenchen gives references to other modern commentators who have seen eucharistic overtones (707), but himself dismisses such views: 'Luke describes only the blessing before the meal, which for Jews and Christians was a matter of course.'

32. For examples of this sacramental sequence, see Chapter 7.
33. For discussion of the ambivalent nature of the waters of baptism, see both Chapter 4 and Chapter 7.
34. We find the same interpretation in Ambrose, Exameron 6.6.38 (CSEL 32.1, 229-230):

sed et ipse dominus ad omnes ait: qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit hic salvus erit; qui vero non crediderit damnabitur. signa autem credentium haec dixit fore, ut serpentes manu mulceant, venena his atque omne mortiferum, etiamsi biberint, nocere non possint.

35. 'Über den Dichter Arator', 235.
36. Ibid.
37. Leimbach (238) sees another significance in the millenary perfection: 'Die Zahl der Vollkommenheit aber bildet den endlichen vollständigen Sieg der Taufe und des Evangeliums auf der ganze Erde vor.' I remain unconvinced that the idea of a perfection signified by the ultimate victory of baptism and the gospel is contained in this particular passage.

38. In this passage I have followed the guidance of Leimbach (247):

3 x 1 ist eine heilige Figur, aber nicht minder 3 x 3. Beide Zahlen erinnern an die heilige Dreieinigkeit, jene Zahl (3 x 1 = singula ter faciunt) bildet das Geheimnis ab, diese bestätigt dasselbe (3 x 3 = ter triplicata fatentur).

39. See especially T.Halton, 'Baptism as Illumination', IrThQ 32 (1965), 28-41.
40. Arator's interest in the contrast between darkness and light has been often noted. See Roberts, Biblical Epic, 178:

This movement from darkness to light has a twofold significance in Arator's exegesis. It represents the replacement of the old law by the new day of Christian Salvation and for the individual the promise of his own Salvation through baptism in the Church.

See also McKinlay's list of Antiphrases inter lucem et umbram, (CSEL 72, 181).

41. See, for example, J.H.Bernard, 'Descent into Hades', DAC 1, 291: 'but we have now to notice the remarkable similarity between the

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Historia Apostolica (AD 544) not as an example of 'biblical epic' nor as a literary paraphrase but as a commentary on The Acts of the Apostles, and in particular to signal Arator's concern to explain the text in terms of its baptismal significance.

The opening chapter reviews previous approaches to the H.A. and is followed by a survey of Arator's interpretation and interpolation of baptismal material, showing both how those episodes in Acts which deal specifically with baptism are given extended exegetical attention, and how baptismal significance is frequently divined in passages which have no obvious baptismal connection.

The central chapters examine in detail the episodes of the poem which are of most baptismal importance. Two deal with Arator's exegesis of explicitly baptismal situations: Simon Magus' failure to receive the Spirit is presented as being prefigured in the failure of the raven to return to the ark, a parallel also drawn by Augustine; the Ethiopian eunuch is presented in accordance with the 'Ethiopian' exegesis first formulated by Origen. Four more chapters examine episodes which Arator deems of implicit baptismal significance: the ascension is interpreted in terms of the baptism and 'ascent' of the individual; the healing of the paralytic is explained as the baptismal healing of the wounds of circumcision; Paul's speech at Antioch becomes an exposition of the typological significance of the crossing of the Red Sea; the name Aquila prompts a digression on the baptismal implications of the rejuvenation of the eagle.

The aim is not to discover indisputable sources for all of Arator's ideas, but rather to place the H.A. in its exegetical context, and to trace the development and popularity of baptismal symbolism in the first six centuries AD.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

language used about the Descensus and that used about baptism.' If we are right in thinking that Arator intended much of his poem to have baptismal implications, it may well be that the opening passage of the poem, Arator's resurrection narrative (1.1-20), is also to be read on a baptismal level. It certainly contains three of the features which Bernard considers essential for such an account: i) the idea of descent (dignatus ut ima/Tangeret inferni, 1.4-5); ii) the release of captive souls (Solvit ab aeterna damnatas nocte tenebras, 1.6); iii) the restoration to Paradise (moriente veneni/semine, florigero sua germina reddidit horto, 1.19-20).

42. Throughout the poem Arator uses every opportunity to emphasise Christ's assumption of human flesh. (See Fontaine, Naissance de la poésie, 262, 'les mots et les idées de gloire et de triomphe abondent'.) Thus in the resurrection narrative:

complevit opus rerumque Creator
Hoc quod ab humanis sumpsit sine semine membris
Humana pro stirpe dedit...
Maiestas cum carne redit speciemque coruscam
Umbrarum de sede refert ut ab exule limo
Interclusa diu patriae repetatur origo (1.2-4; 15-17).

For the way in which Arator includes this theme in his ascension tableau, see Chapter 3: Divinus Odor. Elsewhere the theme occurs whenever Arator calls upon either Peter or Paul to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, often without any prompting from the text of Acts itself. Thus see also 1.164-168:

Venit ad occiduas carnaliter editus oras
Humana sub lege Deus, qui temporis expers
Principium de matre tulit nec vile putavit
Maiestate potens terreni sumere formam
Corporis;

1.318-319:

Infernum Dominus cum destructurus adiret,
Detulit inde suam spoliato funere carnem;

1.358-360:

Christus
Subdere pro mundi voluit sua membra periculis,
Ut carnale malum caro solveret;

2.98-9; 127-130:

Postquam signa Dei carnis vestitus amictu
Christus ubique dedit...
...hunc quaerite cuius
Sanguine mundati regno sociamur herili,
In cuius iam parte sumus sub pignore carnis
Quam voluit portare Deus.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

See also 1.535-6; 2.228-230; and 2.478.

43. For Arator's treatment of this theme see Chapter 4: Lotus sed non Mundus.
44. As the chapter referred to in n43 above will make clear, Arator was quite sure that baptism alone was no guarantee of a place in heaven.
45. Arator's fondness for the number three is noted by Ferrari ('Le allegorie', 419): 'Nel poema di Aratore sono frequentissimi gli accenni al simbolismo del numero tre, il numero perfetto, il numero della Trinità.' Thraede too ('Arator', 194) reports the frequency of trinitarian allegorizations. For instances where the number three is given a trinitarian, but non-baptismal, interpretation see 1.156-159, where the time of the descent of the Spirit, the third hour, is thus interpreted; 1.916-930, where the voice which accompanies the vision of Acts 10 calls to Peter three times, thus signifying the Trinity (Arator takes this opportunity to give a list of heretics who disputed the three persons of the Trinity); 2.888-912, where Paul tells the elders of the church (Acts 20:31) that he has admonished them for three years (for Arator this signifies, as well as the Ecclesiae tria dogmata [890], the three levels of scriptural interpretation, Historicum,, morale...typicum [891], the ternae..metretae of wine held by the jars in John 2 [ignoring the doubt shown by John over exactly how much they held], two scriptural references to three loaves of bread, those being carried as an offering at I Samuel 10:3 and those referred to by Christ in his teaching at Luke 11:5, and also the fig tree of Luke 13:7 [representing Iudaea vacans (909)] which has not produced fruit for three years; all of these point to the mystery of the Trinity). For Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 261-262), Arator's interest in the Trinity stems from his determination to defend the orthodox faith: 'Die Auslegung ist eine dem Standpunkte orthodoxen, occidentalen Kirchentumes entwachsene, gegen Arius und Sabellius gleich frontmachende, namentlich die Trinitätslehre mit großem Eifer verteidigende, endlich vorwiegend allegorisch.'
46. I have followed J.H.Waszink ('Notes', 88) in substituting a comma for McKinlay's semi-colon after geri (887), thus making the subsequent cum clause dependent.
47. See for example De Myst. 7.34 (SC 25, 174), 'Accepisti post haec vestimenta candida, ut esset indicio quod exueris involucrum peccatorum, indueris innocentiae casta velamina de quibus dixit propheta: Adsparges me hysopo et mundabor, lavabis me et super nivem dealabor', and also De Sacr. 4.2.6 (SC 25, 104). While Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 78) and Ferrari ('Le allegorie', 421: 'il cinquantesimo è il salmo della penitenza') fail to realise the baptismal implications of the fiftieth psalm, Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 257) fails to appreciate the reference to the Psalm at all.
48. I have followed Hudson-Williams ('Notes', 97), in reading rupis as nominative (1012), inserting a fullstop after aquas (1013) and

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

a comma after animas (1015): 'The whole point of the line lies in the rhetorical contrast between the favourable and unfavourable application of the number forty.'

49. See Chapter 7: Iustis Via, Sontibus Unda.

CHAPTER THREE: DIVINUS ODOR:

CO-ASCENSION AND BAPTISMAL PARTICIPATION

Historia Apostolica 1.21-42

Translation

And the Lord, through clear signs shown over forty days, had already granted faith to those who looked upon him, whom he commanded to be his witnesses on the path which extends to the ends of the world. For miraculous events could not conceal God. What proof of his resurrection could he give so sure as eating? For it is in this respect that human bodies prove their life. About to make for heaven, he proceeds to wander through the olive grove, for in its sacred seed it is a place of light and peace; he wishes to return thence to that place whence the divine aroma commends the creature which shines with its sealed forehead. When the chrism, which takes its name from that of Christ, has washed more inwardly those who have received the anointing from on high, he is raised up to return victorious into the star-bearing sky, and he takes with him that which he assumed: O new display of triumph! God made for the earth, man for the stars. What a thundering was given to him from the airy region, and how loudly the heavenly choirs echoed in his praise when the ruler of Olympus carried back to the heights what he had received in the depths, and, entering the sky accompanied by the trophy of his flesh, he places in the citadel of light the spoils snatched from the throat of the black deep, and stretches out his earthly limbs! He departed in the mercy with which he had received him on whose account he had come.¹

Introduction

Cette méditation sur l'Ascension se trouve accentuée en un sens triomphal, et approfondie en un sens baptismal, par le maniérisme d'Arator au VI^e siècle. Ses vers reprennent et filent ad nauseam les grandes images du triomphalisme théodosien, mais avec l'intention d'une sorte de catéchèse baptismale continuée. Ce maniérisme peut agacer, mais il n'est pas sans grandeur.²

Thus does Jacques Fontaine sum up the passage translated above, correctly recognising the two interwoven strands of Arator's narrative: man participates in the divine both through his share in Christ's corporeal ascension and through his own spiritual ascension experienced at baptism. The latter is a pattern of the former: man's baptismal ascent is an image of the co-ascension with Christ which he will achieve at his death. Fontaine goes on to ponder the layering

DIVINUS ODOR

effect of Arator's exposition and the two-tiered possibility of its interpretation:

S'agit-il du seul Christ, ou également de ces membres de son Corps que sont tous les hommes, et donc les bénéficiaires de la Descente aux enfers aussi bien que tous les baptisés - qui, avant la chrismation, viennent de faire l'expérience sacramentelle de la descente de la mort et de la remontée dans la vie? Tous ces plans se superposent et se confondent, en ce 'transparent' poétique d'un étonnant baroquisme.³

Fontaine appears to be maintaining that, in Arator's view, the ascension promises not just the future ascension of the baptized but of all men. His reading would seem to me to be mistaken. Certainly, the ascension of Christ guarantees the co-ascension of all those who are members of his body, but the members of his body are not 'all men' but all men who are members of Christ's church, that is the baptized. It is precisely this point, surely, that Arator is attempting to illustrate in his 'double' exposition.

This said, however, Fontaine correctly recognises the fact that the notion of baptismal ascent is totally dependent upon the baptismal interpretation of the descent into hell. In baptism, man dies with Christ before rising and ascending with him. While much attention has been devoted to the baptismal significance of the descent and resurrection,⁴ little has hitherto been paid to the baptismal interpretation of the ascension, something influenced in part, no doubt, by the general lack of interest in the ascension itself.⁵ Man's redemption came as a result of Christ's death and resurrection: consequently the ascension might seem otiose, at least in its application to men, since its significance is very much subsumed into that of the resurrection: when man is raised to eternal life, he is

DIVINUS ODOR

raised through Christ's resurrection rather than through his ascension.

The object of this chapter will be to explore the ideas which lie behind Arator's exegesis of the ascension. There would seem to be three main features which require more detailed examination than is given by Fontaine: first, the notion of participation through co-ascension; secondly, the rite of chrismation and its link with participation and ascension; and thirdly, the image of the divine aroma, divinus odor, as used to illustrate both the participation of God in man through the incarnation, and of man in God through baptism and ascension.

1. Co-ascension

Before we examine the notion of co-ascension, it is necessary first to emphasise that it is not the intention of this section to examine the tradition of the ascent of the soul⁶ nor the idea of mental ascension as a contemplative aid as found in certain of the eastern fathers;⁷ rather, the aim is to examine the traditions which may have influenced Arator in interpreting Christ's ascension as one in which all members of Christ's church can share.

If the fact of Christ's ascension is to have any significance for man, if it is to be something more than the glorification of Christ and God's removal of his physical presence from earth, then it must be understood as a guarantee of man's own future ascension. This is the message underlined by the author of the letter to the Ephesians

DIVINUS ODOR

(2:6): 'And in union with Christ Jesus he raised us up and enthroned us him in the heavenly realms.' And as Eph 2:6 shows, this co-ascension is dependent upon our union with Christ: Christ ascended as man so that all men might ascend with him. The ascension is thus inextricably linked in its significance with the incarnation. Thus J.H. Bernard:

The doctrine of the Incarnation does not teach that Christ assumed human nature, body and spirit only for the years of His visible ministry, and then abandoned it like a discarded cloak. In the light of the Ascension it means that He is still Man, and that as Man He is in communion with Deity. This is the significance of the Ascension when Christ resumed His heavenly condition, the same yet not the same, for He had become man, who thenceforth may dwell in Him, as He in man.⁸

This is clearly the significance which Arator too has marked. The beginning of the passage translated above makes this very evident: the signs and actions performed by Christ in the forty days preceding his ascension declared him to be both God and man.

The ascension had long been interpreted in this way. Thus when Irenaeus elaborates his theory of recapitulation, man's co-ascension is ensured by the fact that God was made man:

I have said: 'Ye are gods and ye are all the sons of the Most High; but ye shall die like men.' Undoubtedly he is speaking to those who do not perceive the gift of adoption, but deny the incarnation of the pure birth of the Word of God, cheating man of that ascension which is towards God and offering no thanks to the Word of God who was made flesh for them. For on account of this the Word of God became man, and he who was the Son of God the Son of Man, so that man, mingled with the Word of God and perceiving adoption, might become a son of God.⁹

Sonship is effected by man's ascension, in turn effected by the incarnation. Irenaeus goes on to explain the link in more detail: in the incarnation God gave man a sign for which he did not ask nor even hope. Christ descended to seek the sheep that was lost,

DIVINUS ODOR

and ascended into the height, offering and commending to the Father that man who had been found, making in his very self the firstfruits of the resurrection of man, so that just as the head rose from the dead, so too the remaining body of every man who is found in life, when the time of damnation for his disobedience is completed, may rise, uniting in its joints and connections, and strengthened by the addition of God, every single one of its limbs having its own suitable position in the body. For there are many dwellings with the Father, because there are also many limbs in a body.¹⁰

Although in this passage the significance of the ascension is very much subsumed, as we remarked earlier, into that of the resurrection, it offers us one of the first instances of an exegesis which was to find great popularity: just as Christ partook in the nature of man, so we men are the limbs of the mystic body of which he is the head. Thus when he ascends, we ascend with him.¹¹

At this point we must make it clear that we do not intend explicitly to examine the notion of divinisation or deification. Any idea of co-ascension inevitably borders upon such a notion, especially when ascension terminology is used to illustrate it, and often the distinction between the two ideas is unclear: it is not always apparent whether co-ascension is a mystic experience achieved in this life, or something which awaits the righteous man at his death, or an eschatological ascension to be effected at the Last Judgement. The aim of this section is to establish that there was a tradition of exposition which saw the ascension as guaranteeing union with God, not whether or not this implies deification and when or where this deification will take place, except when the discussion of the ascension directly involves this. For instance, the passages of Ambrose and Augustine examined below do not imply deification of man on earth, quite the opposite.

DIVINUS ODOR

The difficulty is clearly shown by a hymn of Hilary of Poitiers, whom Emil Mersch shows quite definitely to have held a theory of man's divinisation upon earth:¹²

The nature of our flesh is connate with God; through it let me climb joyfully into the high heavens, rising up with my glorious body. With what great hopes have I faithfully believed in Christ, who in being born raises me up in him through the flesh! I am reborn - O beginning of a joyful life - and as a Christian I live in accordance with new laws. The eternal gift of God affords this to his saints, that they live on after this life (post haec) in like body. Let fear of your death at last depart, O Death; the patriarch receives me joyful in his bosom. Let me live on after this life (post haec), set in the heavens, certain that my flesh sits at the right hand of God. O Christ, when you return victorious into your heaven, remember my flesh in which you were born. Rising up in this body let me gladly sing eternal hymns with the choirs of angels. Once Satan was zealous for me in death; let him see me reigning with you for all eternity.¹³

It is immediately clear that Hilary hopes for some kind of ascension and union with Christ which is found not in this life but in the next.¹⁴ It is conceivable that he refers to a resurrection of the dead at the Last Judgement, meaning by post haec something like 'after this world's life'; however the final two lines would seem to negate the possibility of this reading: death quite clearly will have no dominion, even temporary.

Returning then to Irenaeus: already in the second century we have a clear pattern of exposition, Christ ascended in his incarnate state that men, sharing in his earthly form, might also ascend. Man's ascension is the direct result of Christ's incarnation.

This explains the great emphasis laid by the Fathers on Christ's corporeal ascension, something which some modern critics have found rather distasteful:

A gross carnality, as distinct from the materialism which is proper to incarnational Christianity, was fast becoming the basis of Christian hope in the

DIVINUS ODOR

after-life...Such an understanding of the nature of the resurrection body inevitably affected the formulation of the doctrine of the Ascension, and hence the many references to the 'body', to the 'flesh' or to the 'covering' which Christ took with Him into heaven. We who cannot accept such an interpretation must perforce reinterpret the teaching of the Fathers...¹⁵

However, since the guarantee of man's salvation to a great extent lay in proving that Christ ascended as a man, such emphasis and detail was inevitable. This is exactly what we find in Arator. In lines 25-27 he offers the usual proof of Christ's bodily resurrection, that he joined in the eating of a meal, as at Acts 10:41; at line 34 he emphasises again his earthly form,

Et secum quod sumpsit habet

and again at 37-41:

cum rector Olympi
Evehit excelsis quicquid suscepit ab imis
Ingrediensque polum carnis comitante tropaeo
Exuvias atri raptas de fauce profundi
Lucis in arce locat terrenosque erigit artus!

And the final line, for all its obscurity, again makes explicit the connection between incarnation and ascension:

Qua pietate capit, propter quem iverat, ivit.

In piety Christ took upon himself the form of man, the reason for his descent to earth, and in the same piety, and presumably with the same earthly form, he departed.¹⁶

These are the lines which Fontaine calls 'les grandes images du triomphalisme théodosien',¹⁷ and show the same influences as Ennodius' Hymnus de Ascensione Domini, one of the few of his hymns

DIVINUS ODOR

which found their way into any of the medieval hymnaries:

This displays more power of thine, o Holy One, that thou takest our nature and hidden in the garb of a slave carriest us on to triumph, than if from thy dazzling abode thou shouldest scare the guilty with thy brightness. God is completely revealed, separated by no veil.¹⁸

However, Arator's thought and language in this respect show a clear debt to one writer in particular to whom we must now turn, Ambrose of Milan: Christ ascends in glory, carrying with him the spoils of the flesh to the amazement and applause of the heavenly hosts. Thus Ambrose, in De Fide ad Gratianum: 'For the visitor came, wreathed with his new-found spoils, the Lord in his holy temple; there preceded him angels and archangels, marvelling at the booty gained from death.'¹⁹ So stunned are the celestial powers that the heavenly gates are compelled to lift up their heads: 'A new way needed to be prepared for the new victor...There were however still even amongst heavenly creatures those who were astounded, who were amazed at the new display, the new glory.'²⁰ The sequence of ideas is as in Arator: Christ ascends with exuviae and spolium, with the result that the caelestes marvel at the nova pompa. Arator's version reads almost as a paraphrase: What nova pompa triumphi! The caelestes chori sing Christ's praises as he ascends with his tropaeum and exuviae.

Ambrose leaves no doubt as to exactly what the pompa was at which the angels marvelled, as he explains in De Mysteriis: 'For even the angels doubted when Christ arose, the powers of heaven doubted when they saw that flesh was ascending into heaven.'²¹ (It is interesting to note that this passage follows immediately after the robing of the neophytes in their white vestments. Ambrose is thus implicitly

DIVINUS ODOR

drawing the link between baptism and ascension: Christ ascending in the flesh is a pattern followed by man at his baptism.) Ambrose clearly sees that the ascension of Christ in the flesh represents the entrance into heaven of all men: 'For not just one man but the whole world was entering in the redeemer of all.'²²

Of course, the spoil terminology, with its 'crude and realistic images',²³ is in no way exclusive to Ambrose, but the particular nuances of his ascension tableau are clearly recognisable in Arator's exposition. For Ambrose, when Christ puts on the spoils of his earthly flesh the emphasis is less on the triumph involved in winning them from the devil than on the galvanising effect which results when divinity is joined to humanity. Thus in the hymn Intende qui regis Israel: 'Coequal with the eternal Father, you gird yourself with the trophy of the flesh, strengthening the weakness of our body with your perpetual power.'²⁴

We see, then, the importance of such 'crass carnality': man must be able to recognise his own flesh in the glorified body of Christ. Such an emphasis was, of course, useful for other reasons: the ascension homilies of Eusebius 'Gallicanus' (Faustus of Riez?)²⁵ stress the mingling of human and divine in argument against the Monophysites:²⁶

Today an earthly body is placed in an act of awe-inspiring newness upon the heavenly thrones; the mud of human flesh, which had carried God on earth, is carried to the abodes above as God conveys it upwards; the human is mixed with the divine, the earthly is joined to the heavenly; bones which were humbled and a short time before shut up within the confines of the tomb are fixed among the stars; mortal nature is transfused into the lap of immortality.²⁷

The second characteristic which indicates Arator's dependence upon

DIVINUS ODOR

Ambrose is the way in which his narrative stresses the identification of the ascension of Christ with the future enthronement of all men, and that this enthronement is the result of Christ's incarnation. Line 35,

Arva Deus petiit, homo sidera

describes both the beginning and end of Christ's ministry on earth, 'As God he made for the earth, as man for the stars', and also fixes the link between his incarnation and man's redemption, 'God made for the earth (so that) man made for the stars'. The dual significance and very linguistic means is undeniably Ambrosian. Take for instance the flurry of antitheses employed by Ambrose in contemplation of the Christ-child in the manger:

He therefore was a baby, he was a young child, so that you could be a complete man; he was wound up in swaddling, so that you might be freed from the snares of death; he was in a manger, so that you might be on the altar; he was on the earth, so that you might be in the stars (ille in terris, ut tu in stellis); he had no other place in that inn, so that you might have many dwellings in the heavens.²⁸

And again, the picture of Christ on the cross inspires a similar outburst, encompassing the whole of his redeeming work:

And he became poor, although he was rich, so that we might be made rich by his poverty; he was powerful and so offered himself to be despised that Herod scorned him and ridiculed him; he moved the earth and hung on the wood; he covered the heaven with darkness, he crucified the world and was crucified; he bowed his head and the Word went out, he was made void and he filled everything; God descended, man ascended (descendit deus, ascendit homo); the Word was made flesh so that the flesh might claim for itself the throne of the Word on the right hand of God.²⁹

Here again is the possibility of the same dual interpretation that we found in Arator. Ambrose is unwavering in his conviction that the ascension of every man is the natural result of the incarnation: 'For he thus took upon him the flesh so as to stretch out a way to heaven

DIVINUS ODOR

for us. Finally he says I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.³⁰ John 20:17 thus assures Ambrose of the possibility of man's own ascension; in his reading Christ implies that we are to follow on after him.

It is to reassure his correspondent Irenaeus of this fact that Ambrose writes to him in 387, in a letter explaining the significance of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which contains, as we have seen, the scriptural text upon which any theory of man's ascension must be based: it is man's participation in the body of Christ that enables him to ascend:

Then the apostle proposed that not only was a return to paradise restored to us through Christ, but also that the honour of the heavenly throne was bestowed upon this flesh through its participation in the body of Christ; so that you might no longer be doubtful of the possibility of ascending, you who realize that your participation in the flesh of Christ cleaves to the heavenly kingdom; that reconciliation of everything which is either on earth or in heaven has been made through the blood of him who came down to fill everything; that through his apostles, prophets and priests, his love is the strengthening of all things and the gathering of the nations, but the fulfilment of our hope, so that we might be increased in him in everything; for he is the head of all things, to whom we all according to the measure of our activity rise into one body through the building of love.³¹

Ambrose is nowhere explicit on the notion of deification and his language remains strictly scriptural: following Ephesians 2:6, we are enthroned with Christ in the heavenly realms. It is not entirely clear when this 'enthronement' takes place. However, rather than subscribing to a theory of the deification of man on earth, Ambrose seems more to be suggesting that in the bodily ascension of Christ the 'possibility' of our flesh is enthroned with him, as the guarantee of our future ascension, to follow at our death. This indeed had been an interpretation current from the time of

DIVINUS ODOR

Tertullian:

For just as he left us the surety of the Spirit, so he too received from us the surety of the flesh, and carried it to heaven as a pledge of that whole sum which is at some time to be restored there. Be assured, flesh and blood: in Christ you have gained both heaven and the kingdom of God.³²

The idea of a two-fold surety guaranteed by the ascension and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is also found in Severian of Gabala: 'We therefore have the surety of him above, that is his body which he took from us, and the Holy Spirit below with us.'³³

For Ambrose this surety gives new life and hope to our existence here on earth:

Finally, just as we sit in him at the right hand of the Father (not because we sit with him, but because we sit in the body of Christ, of which we will say more later), just as, I say, we sit in Christ through the unity of our body, so too through the unity of our body do we live in Christ.³⁴

That is, through our unity in the mystic body of Christ, we can follow him in his ascension, not in body but in heart:

You indeed descended as the Son of Man, and yet you were not absent from the Father when you descended; but you descended for us, that we might see you with our eyes and minds, so that we might believe in you. Therefore you also ascended for us, that we might follow you in our minds whom we cannot see with our eyes.³⁵

Ambrose's thought on co-ascension, then, is not entirely clear, but there would appear to be two aspects to it: first, Christ's ascension guarantees the possibility of our own (presumably at our death, although this is not made clear); and secondly, contemplation of Christ's ascension adds a new dimension of faith to our life on earth.

DIVINUS ODOR

These two aspects of Ambrose's thought are clearly recognisable in the writings of Augustine, albeit much developed and clarified.³⁶ They are best seen in one of Augustine's sermons on the ascension:

For today, as you have heard, brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven: let our heart also ascend with him. Let us hear the apostle as he says: If you have risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God: know the things which are above, not those which are on the earth. For just as he has ascended and yet has not departed from us; so too we are already there with him, although that which is promised to us has not yet happened as regards our body. He has already been raised above the heavens. Neither ought we to despair of the perfect and angelic heavenly habitation because of this, for he said: No one ascends into heaven except him who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. But this was said on account of the unity whereby he is our head and we are his body. He who came down from heaven does not begrudge us heaven; but in some way he cries: 'Be my limbs, if you wish to ascend into heaven.'³⁷

Here then are the two aspects which we saw in Ambrose: we ascend in heart in mind, in the mystic body of Christ, until that time when we shall make our promised ascension in the flesh.

Augustine goes on to answer those critics who see the fact of Christ's corporeal ascension denied by John 3:13: Christ took his human form from the earth, how then can he carry it back to heaven?

This refers to the person, not to the vesture of the person. He descended without the covering of the body, he ascended with the covering of the body. No one however ascends except him who descended. For if he joined us to himself as his limbs in such a way as to be himself the same, even though we were joined to him, how much more is that body which he assumed from the Virgin unable to possess a different person in him? For who would say that a man who went up either onto a mountain or a wall or some higher place would not be just that same man who came down if, although he had come down naked, he were to go up clothed? Or if, although he had come down unarmed, he were to go up armed?³⁸

Thus Augustine concludes: 'Although he descended without body, he ascended with his body, and we too will ascend not through our own power, but through the unity which is betwixt us and him.'³⁹

DIVINUS ODOR

Implicit in Augustine's thought, however, whatever we are promised, is the notion that much effort is still required on man's part if his ascension is to be assured:

The resurrection of the Lord is our hope, the ascension of the Lord is our glorification. For today we celebrate the ceremonies of the ascension. Therefore, if with righteousness, if with faith, if with devotion, if with holiness, if with piety we celebrate the ascension of the Lord, let us ascend with him, and lift up our heart.⁴⁰

We see the same in Eusebius 'Gallicanus':

Let us therefore strive with all the strength of our faith, so that, just as the Lord today climbs on high with our body, so may we too, being made his limbs, now follow our head through the practice, desire and pursuit of good works;⁴¹

and in Caesarius of Arles:

Let us ascend, meanwhile, with Christ in our heart; when his promised day arrives we too will follow in body. We ought however to realise that pride does not ascend with Christ, nor greed nor wantonness; none of our vices ascends with our doctor. Therefore, if we wish to ascend after our doctor, let us hasten here to cast off our faults and sins. For all our iniquities oppress us as if they were shackles, and hurry to bind us with the nets of sins.⁴²

Thus too for Leo, although through Christ's ascension 'we have been confirmed as possessors of paradise',⁴³ the conduct of our lives is still very much under observation:

Let us thus resist, dearly beloved, this wickedness, so ruinous is it, and let us pursue that love without which no virtue can shine; that on that road of love by which Christ came down to us, we too might ascend to him.⁴⁴

It is no coincidence that Augustine uses ascension terminology in his letter to Honoratus, the Liber de Gratia Novi Testamenti, 'an admirable expression of the Augustinian doctrine of man's deification by adoption, by participation in God through the mediation of Jesus Christ';⁴⁵ man's bodily ascension is the ultimate means by which

DIVINUS ODOR

union with God will be effected:

Thus he descended that we might ascend (descendit ergo ille, ut nos ascenderemus), and, remaining in his own nature, he became a partaker of our nature so that we too, remaining in our own nature, might be made partakers of his very nature.⁴⁶

The opening phrase of this passage, like so much of Augustine's teaching on the significance of the ascension, is recognisably reminiscent of Ambrose; but whereas Ambrose presented a notion of man's 'enthronement' which is somewhat hazy and formless (though one might equally say that it is all the richer for its temporal and spatial ambivalence), it took Augustine to shape it into a systematic theory of deification.

Arator, then, was following a traditional pattern of exposition in broadening his treatment of Christ's ascension to encompass the co-ascension and enthronement on high of the faithful. So much, then, for the 'triumphalisme', Fontaine's first characteristic, but what about the 'catéchèse baptismale continuée'? How does the baptismal strand of this passage fit in? What connection, if any, did the early Church see between baptism and ascension? These are the questions to which we must now turn.

2. Baptismal Participation and Ascension

It may well be that a link was perceived between Christ's baptism and ascension as early as the writing of Mark's gospel:

The description of Christ ascending from the water, which represents His death, may possibly point forward to the Ascension, when the Spirit bestowed by anticipation upon the Servant-Messiah at the Jordan was received by Him from the Father so as to be poured out on all those who should henceforth be baptized in His name. The New Testament use of ἀναβαίω supports this exegesis...and is used

DIVINUS ODOR

seven times with reference to Christ's Ascension, one instance being in Eph. iv.8-10, a passage whose thought of the Ascension as the prelude to the sending down by Christ of the blessings of the Spirit is closely parallel to the Marcan picture of Christ $\delta\upsilon\alpha\beta\alpha\iota\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon$ and the Spirit $\chi\alpha\tau\alpha\beta\alpha\iota\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon$.⁴⁷

However, in this connection the gift of the Spirit is very much subsequent to the ascent, whether it be of Christ out of the water or of Christ into heaven. The sequence in Arator is that the ascension follows the anointing:

Cum desuper unctos
Abluit interior Christi de nomine chrisma,
Tollitur astrigerum rediturus victor in axem (31-33).

The meaning of these three lines is clear: the candidate is anointed with the chrism and subsequently 'ascends'. Having established this, how then do the two preceding lines fit in,

vult inde reverti
Unde creaturam signata fronte micantem
Divinus commendat odor (29-31)?

Some cyclical notion is evident here: the anointing chrism is on earth, but the divinus odor comes from above; the chrism may be an earthly substance, but when consecrated its fragrance is from heaven. Thus the divinus odor descends upon the candidate and then effects his ascension, commending him to heaven.⁴⁸

There are, then, two elements to Arator's conception of co-ascension: first, man achieves ascension with the incarnate Christ through his participation in the mystic body, but, secondly, the neophyte receives a mystic ascension, granted by baptism in advance of, and perhaps in preparation for, the 'real' ascension which will follow later. This then is in line with the two aspects which we saw in the

DIVINUS ODOR

writings of Ambrose and Augustine; Arator however adds a sacramental dimension: contemplative 'ascension' is gained through baptism, and more specifically through the rite of chrismation.

Where then did Arator obtain his idea of baptismal ascension? The language of participation is a common feature of the catechetical writings of the Fathers; and its association with chrismation, something aided by the obvious common etymological root of the words 'chrism' and 'Christ',⁴⁹ is nowhere more evident than in the Mystagogical Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem:

Having therefore become sharers in Christ, you are fittingly called 'christs', and concerning you God said Touch not my anointed ones. You have become anointed ones by receiving the sign of the Holy Spirit...He was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, that is with the Holy Spirit which is called the oil of gladness, because he himself is the cause of spiritual gladness. You have been anointed with ointment since you have become partakers and sharers in Christ.⁵⁰

The grafting of the wild olive in Romans 11 is similarly used as an image of participation:

Then, having put off your clothes, you were rubbed with exorcised oil from the topmost hairs of your head to your toes, and you became partakers of Jesus Christ the cultivated olive tree. For having been separated from the wild olive tree, you were grafted onto the cultivated olive tree, and became partakers of the richness of the true olive. Therefore the exorcised oil was a symbol of your participation in the richness of Christ, which puts to flight every trace of the powers that oppose you.⁵¹

For Cyril too the consecration of the chrism effects its change from earthly ointment to divine gift:

But see that you do not regard this as mere ointment. For just as the bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is no longer plain bread but the body of Christ, so also this holy ointment is no longer simple nor might one call it ordinary after the invocation, but it is the grace of Christ, and through the presence of the Holy Spirit has become productive of his divinity. Wherefore it is anointed upon your brow and your other organs of sense symbolically. The body is anointed with the visible ointment, but the soul is sanctified by the holy and

DIVINUS ODOR

life-giving Spirit.⁵²

Here then we find support for our interpretation of Arator's reference to the divinus odor which comes from above. When the earthly chrism is consecrated its fragrance descends from heaven: it becomes the grace of Christ, filled with the gift of the Spirit.

We can therefore conclude that chrismation was often interpreted as an outward sign of the participation involved in baptism: by participating in the chrism we participate in Christ. In interpreting chrismation, then, as symbolic of the union with Christ effected by baptism, Arator was following a traditional pattern of exegesis. There would also seem to have been a tradition of representing this participation in the form of an ascension, whether a mystic one experienced in this life or one consequent on the end of our mortal existence. Participation is a theme frequently referred to in the three baptismal homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia;⁵³ the following passage, in addition, sees baptism as mirroring the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ:

That is why the 'I believe' is followed by 'and I am baptized', for it is with faith in that which is to come that you advance towards the gift of holy baptism, intent on being reborn, on dying with Christ and being raised with him, in order that, having thus received a second birth in place of your first, you might obtain a share in heaven. In effect, as long as you are by nature mortal you cannot reach your home in heaven; but when you discard this [mortality] in baptism, and are raised with Christ by baptism, and receive the sign of this new birth which awaits you, then you show yourself to be a citizen of heaven, then you become a fellow-heir of the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁴

Participation is clearly achieved by attaining heaven, and our ascension thither is made possible through Christ's own. Through baptism man partakes both in the resurrection and the ascension:

DIVINUS ODOR

But as it is, it is in heaven that he (Christ) exercises his priesthood and not on earth, since he died, rose again and ascended into heaven in order to raise us also and to make us ascend into heaven; and such is the covenant which he made for those who believe in him, to make them participate in the resurrection from among the dead and ascend into heaven.⁵⁵

Arator would seem to have been influenced by this kind of baptismal exegesis. As we remarked earlier, the significance of the ascension was frequently integrated into that of the resurrection when applied symbolically to baptism. However, as Theodore and indeed Arator show, when it was necessary to illustrate the notion of the participation granted by baptism the idea of ascension could play an illuminating role.

3. Divinus Odor

We have thus established that Arator's notion of baptismal ascension was made up of two elements: first, the extension of the idea of participation through chrismation to encompass some kind of union with Christ through co-ascension; and secondly, the natural extension of baptismal resurrection to include participation through ascension. We must now move on to consider the part played in this thought by the image of the divinus odor.

As we saw, in Arator it is this divine aroma which commends the anointed neophytes to heaven. In the catechetical writings of both East and West the aroma of the chrism is related to the notoriously difficult passage of 2 Cor 2:15: quia Christi bonus odor sumus Deo. For Cyril of Jerusalem the neophyte is entitled to say this when he has been anointed with chrism upon the nostrils;⁵⁶ the same is true

DIVINUS ODOR

in the case of Ambrose:

Why upon the nostrils? So that you might receive the goodly aroma of everlasting piety, so that you might say We are the goodly aroma of Christ to God just as the holy apostle said; and that there might be in you the full fragrance of faith and devotion.⁵⁷

The central image in this particular baptismal rite is again participation: through the symbolic aroma of the chrism we are made to participate in Christ's own bonus odor. Whichever line of modern exegetical opinion we choose to follow, interpretation of the Corinthians text would seem to support this view. Cyrille Argenti, in a recent article, actually claims that 'This metaphor would be very strained and artificial unless it recalled a rite familiar to Christian readers; it is by chrismation that we are the aroma of Christ',⁵⁸ but his argument has no weight of evidence to support it. Kingsley Barrett, following the same line of thought as the translators of the New English Bible which renders the passage: 'We are indeed the incense offered by Christ to God', lists the Old Testament parallels which support a sacrificial reading of the text and concludes: 'Its meaning can hardly be other than sacrificial here...the apostles are the smoke that arises from the sacrifice of Christ to God, diffusing as it ascends the knowledge of God that is communicated in the cross.'⁵⁹ Rudolf Bultmann however declares: 'The expression rather rests on the ancient idea that fragrance is a sign of the divine presence and the divine life',⁶⁰ supporting his claim with quotations classical, biblical and patristic.

For Arator the divine aroma descends first in order to commend the neophyte to heaven; the aroma of the chrism becomes the bonus odor of

DIVINUS ODOR

the grace of Christ in which we participate at baptism and which effects our ascension. This is in full accordance with the Corinthians text, whichever interpretation we follow: we partake in Christ, whether we ascend in the fragrance of his divinity or as the incense of him who offered himself as sacrifice for us. 'We are the goodly aroma of Christ': it is Christ's participation in human life and form which allows our participation in him, and thus our ascension.

Gregory of Elvira makes explicit the link between the significance of the consecrated chrism and Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, when commenting on Song of Songs 1:12:

My nard, it says, gives forth its aroma. Nard is an oil mixed with wood, which both is of benefit in healing the body and affords the fragrance of a goodly aroma. For nard declares the grace of chrism which is completed by the virtue of the cross, whence the Lord also affords the goodly fragrance of the knowledge of himself to his believers, as the apostle says, We are the goodly aroma of Christ; and thus My nard, that is the gift of the chrism caused by the suffering of the cross, gives forth its aroma.⁶¹

The sacrament and grace of baptism are made possible only through Christ's sacrifice upon the cross.

However, the image of the bonus odor was used not only to illustrate our participation in Christ but also his assumption of our humanity in the incarnation. It is in this connection that we must turn to two passages of Ambrose, who, as we saw earlier, exerted such an influence on Arator's exegesis of the ascension. The first is part of an elaborate sequence expounded in exegesis of the Septuagint text of Gen 49:4:

But he also expressed his incarnation wonderfully, saying You have arisen from my

DIVINUS ODOR

seed, in that like a shoot in the earth he germinated in the womb of a virgin, and like a flower of goodly aroma (ut flos boni odoris) he arose for the redemption of the whole world, sent forth from his mother's womb in the brightness of a new light, as Isaiah said: A branch shall come out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall arise from the root. The root is the family of the Jews, the branch is Mary, the flower of Mary is Christ. Rightly then does the branch, which is of royal race from the house and country of David, whose flower is Christ who destroyed the stench of earthly decay, pour forth the aroma of eternal life. Thus you have the incarnation.⁶²

Christ then is the flower and thus the goodly aroma of redemption: he clears away the filth of sin and replaces it with his own aroma, that of eternal life - an expression he uses again in De Mysteriis: odorem vitae aeternae.⁶³

However, this image of Christ as the flower and aroma exuded by Mary's branch, while establishing the metaphor of the bonus odor as being closely connected with the incarnation, is set very firmly within the extended allegory of the branch of Jesse; we find no allusion here to the anointing aroma which descends from above. The second passage of Ambrose, however, could not be more relevant to our discussion; here he comments on Song of Songs 7:4:

Your nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon which gazes upon the face of Damascus, in that the perfume of the true priest, which descends from the head into the beard, that is, that divine aroma (odor ille divinus), the aroma of spiritual grace which was from the Father in Christ and descended to the world through the sacrament of the incarnation, so that everything might be filled with the suffused perfume, that perfume is revealed in the power of lofty discernment and fills the nostrils of the soul, so that it may distinguish those things which smell good and those which stink; the sweetness of the saints who can say: For we are the goodly aroma of Christ to God, and the stench of sins.⁶⁴

The divine aroma descends to earth in the person of Christ that all men might participate in his suffused perfume. It is the aroma of this perfume which ensures eternal life, a reward gained only by those able to distinguish things suavia and faetida. The references

DIVINUS ODOR

to anointment and the inclusion of the Corinthians text are clearly intended to reveal the importance of baptism in such participation. It is baptism which ensures that we can distinguish between the two, and thus may say with the saints: We are the goodly aroma of Christ.

Now at last we can fully understand Arator's reference to the divinus odor which descends from above to commend the anointed heavenwards, and the clue lies in his choice of words which deliberately echo those of Ambrose. Arator's exposition of Christ's ascension forms a tableau whose purpose is both to illuminate the real importance of the ascension and to describe the way in which it is mirrored in the sacrament of baptism, or more specifically chrismation. The ascension is the necessary adjunct of the incarnation: Christ descended and took the form of a man, and in ascending in human form he guaranteed the eventual ascension of all the human faithful. It is to this end that Arator places such emphasis on Christ's corporeal resurrection and ascension. It was no longer necessary to be God to ascend into heaven, Christ had made it a realistic goal for men: just as Christ was enthroned on high without losing his assumption of mortal form, so too might mortal men be enthroned with him.

However, Arator then looks at such ascension from a sacramental perspective. The divinus odor may remind us that the incarnation promised our own ascension, but it also reminds us of the place of baptism in such a scheme. We do not participate automatically, but, initially at least, symbolically through the rites of chrismation and baptism. The symbolic perfume of the chrism becomes the very aroma which is Christ, who descended in order to commend us to heaven.⁶⁵

DIVINUS ODOR

The image of the divinus odor, then, is given a dual function: to illustrate the participation involved both in ascension and in baptism.

This image of the divine aroma was very carefully and specifically chosen, linking as it does both incarnation and ascension through the participation effected by baptism. That Arator considered the link with the incarnation of supreme importance is confirmed in the final lines of this particular episode, not included in the section translated above:

tunc femina feta periculum,
Nunc tumuit paritura Deum, mortalia gignens
Et divina ferens, per quam Mediator in orbem
Prodiit et veram portavit ad aethera carnem (1.65-68).

Then a woman was pregnant with danger, now she is swollen in preparation for the birth of God, both begetting the mortal and bearing the divine, through whom the Mediator has appeared to the world and carried genuine flesh to heaven.

Mary, the virgo secunda, made amends for the crime committed by Eve; in the incarnation a unique combination of the mortal and the divine was brought forth, completely man and completely God;⁶⁶ thus he was born and thus he ascended: 'We cannot separate the Ascension and the Incarnation. As the Ascension necessarily presupposes the Incarnation, so without the Ascension the Incarnation is incomplete.'⁶⁷

NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 11-12.
2. 'Images Virgiliennes de l'Ascension céleste dans la poésie latine chrétienne', Jenseitsvorstellungen in Antike und Christentum: Gedenkschrift für Alfred Stuiber (JbAC, Ergänzungsband 9, 1982), 65.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

3. Ibid., 65-66.
4. See especially J.H.Bernard, The Odes of Solomon (Cambridge, 1912), 32-39; J.A.MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine (Edinburgh, 1930); P. Lundberg, La Typologie baptismale.
5. With the signal exception of P.Benoft, 'L'Ascension', Exégèse et Théologie, 2 vols (Paris, 1961), 1, 363-411.
6. See A.F.Segal, 'Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and their Environment', ANRW 2.23.2, 1333-1394.
7. See for example Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. 16: De S.S. 23 (PG 33, 949), 'Μη μείνης λοιπὸν ἐπὶ γῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄνω ἀνάβηθι· ἀνάβηθι μοι τῇ διανοίᾳ καὶ εἰς πρῶτον οὐρανὸν...'; and Gregory of Nazianzus, Th.Or. 4.21 (The Five Theological Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus edited by A.J.Mason [Cambridge, 1899], 143), 'ἔχεις τὰς τοῦ υἱοῦ προσηγορίας. βιάδιζε δι' αὐτῶν, ὅσαι τε ὑψηλαί, θεικῶς, καὶ ὅσαι σωματικαί, συμπαθῶς· μᾶλλον δὲ ὅλον θεικῶς, ἵνα γένη θεὸς κάτωθεν ἀνελθὼν, διὰ τὸν κατελθόντα δι' ἡμᾶς ἄνωθεν'.
8. 'Assumption and Ascension', ERE 2, 156.
9. Adv. Haer. 3.19.1 (SC 211, 372-374):

Ego dixi: Dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes; vos autem sicut homines moriemini. Ad eos indubitate dicit qui non percipiunt munus adoptionis, sed contemnant incarnationem purae generationis Verbi Dei, fraudantes hominem ab ea ascensione quae est ad Deum et ingrati existentes Verbo Dei qui incarnatus est propter ipsos. Propter hoc enim Verbum Dei homo, et qui Filius Dei est Filius hominis factus est, <ut homo>, commixtus Verbo Dei et adoptionem percipiens, fiat filius Dei.

10. Ibid., 3.19.3 (SC 211, 380-382):

et ascendere in altitudinem, offerentem et commendantem Patri eum hominem qui fuerat inventus, primitias resurrectionis hominis in semetipso faciens, ut quemadmodum caput resurrexit a mortuis, sic et reliquum corpus omnis hominis qui invenitur in vita, impleto tempore condemnationis eius quae erat propter inobaudientiam, resurgat, per compagine et coniunctiones coalescens et confirmatum augmento Dei, unoquoque membrorum habente propriam et aptam in corpore positionem. Multae enim mansiones apud Patrem, quoniam et multa membra in corpore.

See also Proof of the Apostolic Teaching 38, trans. J.P.Smith (ACW 16) (Westminster, Maryland/London, 1952), 71-72.

11. For a close examination of this theme in Irenaeus see E.Mersch, Le Corps Mystique du Christ, second ed., 2 vols (Paris/Brussels, 1936), 1, 315-340.
12. Ibid., 1, 410-437.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

13. Hymnus 2: De resurrectione Christi, 28-46 (CSEL 65, 213-214):

natura carnis est connata cum deo.
Per hanc in altos scandam laeta cum meo
caelos resurgens glorioso corpore.
Quantis fidelis spebus Christum credidi,
in se qui natus me per carnem suscipit!
Renata sum - o vitae laetae exordia! -
novisque vivo Christiana legibus.
Sanctis perenne munus praestat hoc dei,
conformi secum vivant post haec corpore.
Terror recedat mortis tandem, Mors, tuae;
sinu me laetam patriarchae suscipit.
Vivam locata post haec in caelestibus,
dei sedere carnem certa a dexteris.
Xriste, reversus caelos victor in tuos,
memento carnis, in qua natus es, meae.
Ymnos perennes angelorum cum choris
in hoc resurgens laeta psallam corpore.
Zelavit olim me in morte satanas:
regnantem cernat tecum totis saeculis.

See also Tract. in Ps. 67.19 (CSEL 22, 294): Christ ascends on man's behalf to assure doubting mortals that their own ascension is possible.

14. Perhaps 'hopes' is the wrong word; all the first person verbs translated above as subjunctives could just as well be translated as being in the future tense: 'I will live on after this life...'. Perhaps Hilary is more confident? On balance, I have opted for the subjunctive on the support of the third person verbs in lines 37 and 46.
15. J.G.Davies, He Ascended into Heaven: A Study in the History of Doctrine (Bampton Lectures 1958), 146. Presumably Professor Davies also includes in his criticism the Fourth Article which lays the same emphasis on the 'body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature'.
16. Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 26) repunctuates this line as an exclamation, translating 'With what mercy He receives him on account of whom was His coming and His going!'. The repunctuation of course causes no problem, but it does involve an awkward asyndeton at the end of the line (venerat, ivit!). I have preferred to follow Arntzen (PL 68, 92), who comments 'Qua pietate in peccatores ductus Christus venit, eadem pietate ob quam venerat, ivit in coelum, ut apud Patrem intercedendo peccata suorum dilueret'.
17. 'Images Virgiliennes de l'Ascension', 65.
18. Lines 17-24 (Text and translation in A.S.Walpole, Early Latin Hymns [Cambridge, 1922], 162:

plus istud est potentiae,
quod nostra, sancte, suscipis

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

et veste servi absconditus
nos ad triumphum provehis,

quam si e coruscis sedibus
reos terrores fulgore,
Deus patens per omnia
nullo remotus tegmine.

19. De Fide 4.1.6 (CSEL 78, 159-160), 'Veniebat enim novis victor redimitus exuviis dominus in templo sancto suo, praeibant angeli et archangeli mirantes spoliū ex morte quaesitum'.
20. De Fide 4.1.7-10 (CSEL 78, 160-161), 'Debut tamen novo victori novum iter parari...Erant tamen adhuc et in caelestibus, qui stuperent, qui admirarentur novam pompam, novam gloriam'. For the surprise of heaven at the entrance of human flesh see also Rufinus, Expos. Symb. 29 (CCL 20, 164-165) and the fourth-century homily Sur la sainte Paque (après Hippolyte) 61 (SC 27, 187-189), in which the angels marvel not at the ascent of man but at the unique mingling of God and man. The element of surprise is however absent in Chrysostom, In Asc. D.N. Iesu Christi 4 (PG 50, 448): the entrance of the flesh into heaven is what the angels had long desired to see.
21. De Mysteriis 7.36 (SC 25, 174), 'Dubitaverunt enim etiam angeli cum resurgeret Christus, dubitaverunt potestates caelorum videntes quod caro in caelum adscenderet'.
22. De Fide 4.1.7 (CSEL 78, 160), 'Quia non unus homo, sed totus in omnium redemptore mundus intrabat'.
23. See G.Aulén, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement, trans. A.G.Herbert, new edition with foreword by Jaroslav Pelikan (London, 1970), 158; see Aulén also for standard references to this theme.
24. Lines 25-28 (Walpole, Early Latin Hymns, 55-56):

aequalis aeterno Patri
carnis tropaeo accingere
infirma nostri corporis
virtute firmans perpeti.

25. Thus B.Leeming ('The False Decretals, Faustus of Riez and the Pseudo-Eusebius', StudPatr 2: TU 64 [1957], 122-140); and more recently E.Buytaert (L'héritage littéraire d'Eusèbe d'Émèse, [Louvain, 1949], 159ff) and E.Griffe ('Les sermons de Fauste de Riez. La "Collection Gallicana" du Ps-Eusèbe', BLE 61 [1960], 27-28.

26. See Davies, He Ascended into Heaven, 145.

27. Hom. 27: De Asc. Dom. 1.5 (CCL 101, 315):

Hodie stupenda novitate super caelestes thronos, terrenum corpus imponitur;
limus carnis humanae, qui deum portaverat in terra, in supernas sedes deo

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

subvehente portatur; divinis humana miscentur, caelestibus terrena sociantur; ossa humiliata et intra sepulcri angustias paulo ante conclusa, sideribus inseruntur; in gremium immortalitatis, mortalis natura transfunditur.

28. Expos. ev.sec. Luc. 2.41 (SC 45, 91):

Ille igitur parvulus, ille infantulus fuit, ut tu vir possis esse perfectus: ille involutus pannis ut tu mortis laqueis absolutus: ille in praesepibus, ut tu in altaribus: ille in terris, ut tu in stellis: ille alium locum in eo deversorio non habebat, ut tu plures haberes in caelestibus mansiones.

29. Expos. Ps. 118.3.8 (CSEL 62, 45):

et pauper factus est, cum dives esset, ut nos illius inopia ditaremur, potens erat, et despiciendum se praebuit, ita ut Herodes sperneret eum et inluderet ei, terram movebat, et haerebat in ligno, caelum obducebat tenebris, mundum crucifigebat, et crucifixus erat, inclinabat caput, et exibat verbum, exinanitus erat, et replebat omnia, descendit deus, ascendit homo, verbum caro factum est, ut caro sibi verbi solium in dei dextera vindicaret.

30. De Fide 3.7.50 (CSEL 78, 126), 'Ideo enim carnem suscepit, ut ad caelum nobis sterneret iter. Denique ait: Ascendo ad patrem meum et ad patrem vestrum, ad deum meum et ad deum vestrum'.

31. Ep. 16 (76).3 Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem (CSEL 82.1, 115):

Deinde subiecit [sc. apostolus] non solum in paradysum reditum nobis reformatum esse per Christum, sed etiam caelestis solii honorem per consortium Christi corporis carni huic esse impertitum, ut de ascendendi possibilitate iam non dubites, qui consortia tua in carne Christi regno caelesti adherere cognoscas, per sanguinem eius reconciliationem factam omnium quae vel in terra vel in caelo sunt - qui ideo descendit, ut inpleret omnia - per eius apostolos, prophetas, sacerdotes confirmationem universorum et congregationem gentium, finem autem esse spei nostrae caritatem ipsius, ut augeamur in ipso per omnia, quia ipse est caput universorum, ad quem omnes secundum mensuram operationis in unum corpus aedificatione caritatis adsurgimus.

32. De Res. Mort. 51.2-3 (CCL 2, 994), 'Quemadmodum enim nobis arrabonem spiritus reliquit, ita et a nobis arrabonem carnis accepit et vexit in caelum pignus totius summae illuc quandoque redigendae. Securae estote, caro et sanguis, usurpastis et caelum et regnum dei in Christo!'. Thus also Jean Daniélou, Christ and Us, trans. W.Roberts (London, 1961), 157-158:

Through the Ascension, the Manhood of Christ was exalted above every creature and introduced by the Word into the inaccessible sanctuary of the Trinity. But the Manhood of Christ tends to attract everything else to it...Christ has only entered the heavenly sanctuary as a forerunner. The presence of His Manhood in the sphere of the Trinity is the guarantee of the possibility that is henceforth ours to attain. The impassable gulf is henceforth overcome, the impossible has become possible.

33. In Asc. D.N.I.C 16 (PG 52, 789), 'Ἐχομεν οὖν τὸ ἐνέχυρον αὐτοῦ ἄνω, ἧγουν τὸ σῶμα, ὃ ἐξ ἡμῶν προσελάβετο, καὶ κάτω τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα μεθ' ἡμῶν'.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

34. De Fide 4.10.134 (CSEL 78, 204-205):

Denique sicut in illo sedemus ad dexteram patris, non quia cum ipso sedemus, sed quia sedemus in Christi corpore - de quo postea dicemus plenius -, sicut, inquam, sedemus in Christo per corporis unitatem, ita et in Christo vivimus per corporis unitatem.

35. Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 10.159 (SC 52, 208), 'Descendisti quidem filius hominis, nec patri, cum descenderes, afuisti, sed descendisti nobis, ut te oculis ac mentibus videremus, ut in te crederemus. Ergo et ascendisti nobis, ut te sequeremur mentibus, quem oculis videre non possumus'. See also Maximus of Turin, Sermo 44: De Pentecosten 2 (CCL 23, 179), 'et licet ad deducendum salvatorem visio humana deficeret, fidei tamen devotio non deficit. Usque ad nubem enim Christum deducunt oculi, usque ad caelos autem cum Christo fidei devotione comitantur'. Maximus also compares the ascending Christ who carries mortality on high to the eagle flying skywards with its prey (Sermo 56: De Pentecosten 2 [CCL 23, 225]), an image perhaps derived from Gregory of Elvira (?) (De Salomone 5.11 [CCL 69, 254-255]).

36. For the influence of Expos. ev. sec. Luc. on Augustine see P. Rollero, 'L'influsso della "Expositio in Lucam" di Ambrogio nell'esegesi agostiniana', Augustinus Magister, 3 vols (Paris, 1954), I, 211-220. See especially 217 where Rollero compares the respective exegesis of Ascendo ad Patrem vestrum, Deum meum et Deum vestrum at Tract. in ev. Ioh. 121.4 and Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 10.180: God is Christ's father by nature, ours by grace.

37. Sermo 263.2 (PL 38, 1210):

Hodie enim, sicut audistis, fratres, Dominus noster Iesus Christus ascendit in caelum: ascendat cum illo et cor nostrum. Audiamus apostolum dicentem, Si consurrexistis cum Christo, quae sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens: quae sursum sunt sapite, non quae super terram. Sicut enim ille ascendit, nec recessit a nobis: sic et nos cum illo ibi iam sumus, quamvis nondum in corpore nostro factum sit quod promittitur nobis. Ille iam exaltatus est super caelos. Neque enim propterea nobis desperanda est perfecta et angelica caelestis habitatio, quia dixit, Nemo ascendit in caelum, nisi qui descendit de caelo, Filius hominis qui est in caelo. Sed hoc dictum est propter unitatem, qua caput nostrum est, et nos corpus eius. Cum ascendit in caelum, nos ab illo non separamur. Qui de caelo descendit, non nobis invidet caelum: sed quodam modo clamat, Membra mea estote, si ascendere vultis in caelum.

See also Enarr. in Ps. 123.1 (CCL 40, 1825) and Mersch, Le Corps Mystique, II, 122-125.

38. Sermo 262.3 (PL 38, 1211):

Hoc enim ad personam, non ad personae habitum retulit. Descendit sine corporis indumento, ascendit cum corporis indumento. Nemo tamen, nisi qui descendit, ascendit. Nam si nos sibimet tanquam sua membra ita coaptavit, ut etiam nobis coniunctis idem ipse sit; quanto magis illud corpus, quod de virgine assumpsit, aliam non potest in illo habere personam? Quis enim vel in montem, vel in murum, vel in aliquem superiorem locum dicit non eum solum qui

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

descenderit ascendisse, si cum descendisset exutus, ascendat indutus; aut cum descendisset inermis, ascendat armatus?

39. Sermo 262.3 (PL 38, 1211), 'Quamvis sine corpore descenderit, cum corpore ascenderit, ascensuris et nobis non virtute nostra, sed nostra et illius unitate'.
40. Sermo 261.1 (PL 38, 1202), 'Resurrectio Domini, spes nostra; ascensio Domini, glorificatio nostra. Ascensionis enim hodie solemnia celebramus. Si ergo recte, si fideliter, si devote, si sancte, si pie ascensionem Domini celebramus, ascendamus cum illo, et sursum cor habeamus'.
41. Hom. 27: De Asc. Dom. 1.9 (CCL 101, 320), 'Totis itaque fidei viribus nitamur ut, sicut dominus in hac die nostro cum corpore ad superna conscendit, ita nos quoque, membra eius effecti, caput nostrum officiis, desideriis ac bonorum operum studiis iam sequamur'.
42. Sermo 210: De Asc. Dom. 1 (CCL 104, 837-838):
- Ascendamus cum Christo interim corde; cum dies eius promissus advenerit, sequemur et corpore. Scire tamen debemus, quia cum Christo non ascendit superbia, non avaritia, non luxuria; nullum vitium nostrum ascendit cum medico nostro. Et ideo, si post medicum desideramus ascendere, hic studeamus vitia vel peccata deponere. Omnes enim iniquitates nostrae quasi quibusdam conpedibus nos premunt, et peccatorum nos retibus ligare contendunt.
43. Tract. 73: De Asc. Dom. 4 (CCL 138A, 453), 'paradisi possessores firmati sumus'.
44. Tract. 74: De Asc. Dom. 5 (CCL 138A, 461), 'Resistamus ergo, dilectissimi, huic tam pestifero malo, et caritatem, sine qua nulla virtus potest nitere, sectemur, ut per hanc, qua ad nos Christus descendit, dilectionis viam, etiam nos ad ipsum possimus ascendere'.
45. G.Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', JTS NS 37.2 (1986), 380.
46. Ep. 140.4.10 (CSEL 44, 162), 'descendit ergo ille, ut nos ascenderemus, et manens in sua natura factus est particeps naturae nostrae, ut et nos manentes in natura nostra efficeremur participes naturae ipsius'.
47. 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 (London, 1951), 42-43. Christ's baptism is directly connected with man's co-ascension by Gregory of Nyssa (In Bapt. Christi [PG 46, 580]) - according to whom Christ was baptized to bring down the Spirit from above and lift man into the heavens - and also by Ambrose (Expos. ev.sec. Luc. 2.91 [SC 45, 115-116]) in familiar terms: 'Unus enim mersit, sed elevavit omnes; unus descendit ut ascenderemus omnes.'
48. Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 26), translates

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

lines 29-30: 'He wished to return [to heaven] from that place, from which the divine fragrance makes agreeable a gleaming person with signed forehead.' Certainly this is half of the meaning, drawing as it does the connection between the oil of the chrism and the Mount of Olives (as drawn, for instance, by Prudentius at Tit. Hist. 44, 173-176 [LCL, Prudentius, II, 366]):

Montis oliviferi Christus de vertice sursum
ad Patrem rediit signans vestigia pacis.
frondibus aeternis praepinguis liquitur umor,
qui probat infusum terris de chrismate donum.).

However, the connection with the Mount of Olives does not adequately explain Arator's reference to 'the divine fragrance' and 'the anointing from above'. The tableau he is constructing is far more complex in its meaning.

49. For an early example of such etymological exegesis see Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 3.18.3 (SC 211,350), where the name 'Christ' signifies the working of the Trinity: 'in Christi enim nomine subauditur qui unxit et ipse qui unctus est et ipsa unctio in qua unctus est.'

50. Mystagog. 3.1-2 (SC 126, 120-124):

Μέτοχοι οὖν τοῦ Χριστοῦ γινόμενοι, χριστοὶ εἰκότως καλεῖσθε, καὶ περὶ ὑμῶν ἔλεγεν ὁ θεός· 'Μὴ ἄπτεσθε τῶν χριστῶν μου.' χριστοὶ δὲ γεγόνατε, τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος τὸ ἀντίτυπον δεξάμενοι... 'Ἐκεῖνος ἐλαίῳ νοητῇ ἀγαλλιᾶσθως ἐχρίετο, τοῦτ' ἔστι Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, ἀγαλλιᾶσθως καλουμένῳ ἐλαίῳ, διὰ τὸ αἴτιον αὐτὸ τῆς πνευματικῆς ἀγαλλιᾶσθως τυγχάνειν· ὑμεῖς δὲ μύρῳ ἐχρίσθητε, κοινωνοὶ καὶ μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ γινόμενοι.

A similar interpretation is found in the early Egyptian church. See, for example, Serapion's 'Prayer for the chrism with which the baptized are anointed' from the Euchologium (F.E.Brightman, 'The Sacramentary of Serapion of Thmuis', JTS 1 [1900], 265): 'καὶ οὗτοι μέτοχοι γίνωνται τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος.' (Bernard Botte questions the authenticity in 'L'Eucologe de Sérapion est-il authentique?', OrChr 48 [1964], 50-56.) That the interpretation of chrismation as participation was popular also in the Western church is evident from the Missa Crismale of the eighth-century Gelasian Sacramentary (Sacramentarium Gelasianum, ed. K.Mohlberg, third edition (Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 1/2) (Münster Westfalen, 1971), 75: 'Unde unxisti sacerdotes, reges, prophetas et martyres, ut sit his qui renati fuerint ex aqua et spiritu sancto, crisma salutis, eosque aeternae vitae participes et celestis regni facias esse consortes.'

51. Mystag. 2.3 (SC 126, 106-108):

Εἶτα ἀποδυθέντες, ἐλαίῳ ἠλείψασθε ἐπορκιστῆ ἀπ' ἄκρων κορυφῆς τριχῶν ἕως τῶν κατατάτων, καὶ κοινωνοὶ γίνεσθε τῆς καλλιελαίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐκκοπέντες γὰρ ἐκ τῆς ἀργιελαίου, ἐνεκεντρίζεσθε εἰς τὴν καλλιελαίον, καὶ κοινωνοὶ γίνεσθε τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἀληθινῆς ἐλαίας. Τὸ οὖν ἐπορκιστὸν ἐλαίον σύμβολον ἦν τῆς κοινωνίας τῆς πίστεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ, φυγαδευτήριον τυγχάνον παντός



CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

ἔχοντες ἀντικειμένης ἐνεργείας.

52. Ibid., 3.3 (SC 126, 124):

Ἄλλ' ἔρα μὴ ὑπονοήσης ἐκεῖνο τὸ μύρον ψιλὸν εἶναι. Ὅσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἄρτος τῆς εὐχαριστίας, μετὰ τὴν ἐπίκλησιν τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, οὐκ ἔστι ἄρτος λιτός, ἀλλὰ σῶμα Χριστοῦ, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἅγιον τοῦτο μύρον οὐκ ἔστι ψιλόν, οὐδ' ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις κοινὸν μετ' ἐπίκλησως, ἀλλὰ Χριστοῦ χάρισμα καὶ Πνεύματος ἁγίου παρουσίας τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητος ἐνεργητικὸν γινόμενον. Ὅσπερ συμβολικῶς ἐπὶ μετώπου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων σου χρίεται αἰσθητηρίων. Καὶ τῷ μὲν φαινομένῳ μύρῳ τὸ σῶμα χρίεται, τῷ δὲ ἁγίῳ καὶ ζωοποιῷ Πνεύματι ἡ ψυχὴ ἀγιάζεται.

53. See especially III^e Homélie (Les Homélies Catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste ed. R.Tonneau and R.Devreesse [Studi e Testi 145] [Città del Vaticano, 1949], 417), 'Telle est la vertu du saint baptême: il te donne l'espérance de ces (biens) à venir, il t'offre une participation à ces (biens) attendus'.

54. II^e Hom. sur le baptême 14 (Les Homélies, 393). See also Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 40: In S. Bapt. 9 (PG 36, 369), 'Συνταφόμεν οὖν Χριστῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος, ἵνα καὶ συναναστῶμεν· συγκατέλωμεν, ἵνα καὶ συνυψωθῶμεν· συνανέλθωμεν, ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν'.

55. I^{ere} Hom. sur la Messe 15 (Les Homélies, 487). See also 16 (489-491); implicit in Theodore's thought is the idea that Christ continues his redeeming work even in heaven. The reconciliation between God and man achieved by his death on the cross is continually reinforced by his mediation on man's behalf in heaven.

56. Mystag. 3.4 (SC 126, 126), 'Εἶτα ἐπὶ τὴν ὁσφρησιν, ὅπως τοῦ θεοῦ ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι μύρου λέγητε: "Χριστοῦ εὐδία ἐσμεν τῷ θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις.".'

57. De Sacr. 1.3 (SC 25, 62), 'Quare nares? Ut bonum odorem accipias pietatis aeternae, ut dicas: Christi bonus odor sumus deo, quemadmodum dixit apostolus sanctus, et sit in te fidei devotionisque plena flagrantia'. See also De Myst. 1.3 (SC 25, 156), 'Aperite igitur aures et bonum odorem vitae aeternae inhalatum vobis munere sacramentorum carpite'.

58. 'Chrismation', Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry ed. M.Thurian (Faith and Order Paper 116) (Geneva, 1983), 51.

59. A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (London, 1973), 99.

60. The Second Letter to the Corinthians ed. E.Dinkler, trans. R.A.Harrisville (Minneapolis, 1985), 64.

61. In C.C. 3.1 (CCL 69, 192-193):

Nardum inquit neum dedit odorem suum. Nardum est oleum ligno permixtum, quod et curationi corporis prodest et boni odoris fragrantiam praestat. Nardum

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

enim crismatis gratiam dicit crucis virtute perfectam, unde et bonum odorem notitiae suae dominus credentibus praestat, sicut apostolus ait: bonus odor Christi sumus; et ideo nardum meum, i.e. crismatis donum passione crucis confectum dedit nobis odorem suum.

See also In C.C. 1.13 (CCL 69, 174), where the fragrance of chrism is said to surpass the perfumes of the Old Covenant. See also Ambrose, Expos. Ps. 118.3.8 (CSEL 62, 45): the crucified Christ pours out the 'odorem remissionis peccatorum et redemptionis'.

62. De Patr. 4.19 (CSEL 32.2, 135):

mirifice autem et incarnationem eius expressit dicens: ex germine mihi ascendisti, eo quod tamquam frutex terrae in alvo virginis germinav(er)it et ut flos boni odoris ad redemptionem mundi totius maternis visceribus splendore novae lucis emissus ascenderit, sicut Esaias dicit: exiit virga ex radice Iessae et flos ex radice ascendet. radix familia Iudaeorum, virga Maria, flos Mariae Christus. recte virga, quae regalis est generis de domo et patriae David, cuius flos Christus est, qui factorem mundanae conluvionis abolevit, odorem vitae infudit aeternae. habes ergo incarnationem.

63. See above n57.

64. Expos. Ps. 118.5.34 (CSEL 62, 101):

nares tuae sicut turris Libani prospiciens faciem Damasci, eo quod unguentum veri sacerdotis, quod de capite descendit in barbam, hoc est odor ille divinus, odor gratiae spiritalis, qui de patre in Christo erat et sacramento incarnationis descendit in terras, ut omnia fuso replerentur unguento, emineat praecelsi potestate iudicii et nares repleat animae, ut bene olentia discernat et factida, suavia sanctorum, qui possunt dicere: Christi enim bonus odor sumus deo, factida peccatorum.

65. For the use of the verb commendo in reference to Christ's ascension see Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 3.19.3 (SC 211, 380): Christ ascends 'offerentem et commendantem Patri eum hominem qui fuerat inventus'.

66. I differ here from Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 27), who translates mortalia gignens/et divina ferens: '[Eve] begetting mortal things and [Mary] bearing divine.' Surely the point is that Mary gives birth to Christ, who is both man and God?

On the relevance of Mary here see Goulder, Type and History in Acts, 53-54:

In the incarnation Christ came down from heaven: in the ascension he went up to heaven...Christ's ministry is like a suspension bridge. Two great towers stand at the water's edge on either side, the birth and the death, Christmas Day and Good Friday-Easter. Between them stretches Jesus' life in this world...The ascension stands in his [sc. Luke's] mind against the conception...The presence of 'Mary the mother of Jesus' in the apostles' company provides a confirmatory echo.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

This 'confirmatory echo' is highlighted in the H.A. by the description of Mary as Porta...Dei (1.57). She is both the gate whereby God descended to the world and the gate through which we might ascend to God. See Richard Hillier, 'Joseph the Hymnographer and Mary the Gate', JTS NS 36.2 (1985), 311-320.

67. W. Milligan, The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord (The Baird Lecture 1891) (London, 1908), 33. See also Daniélou, (Christ and Us, 146): 'Thus the Ascension appears as the counterpart of the Incarnation...The Ascension therefore marks the completion of the movement begun at the Incarnation, the climax of the action of the divine agape in seeking for man to lead him into the realm of the Trinity.'

CHAPTER FOUR: LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS: SIMON MAGUS AND THE RAVEN

(Historia Apostolica 1.624-666)

Translation

Peter often made John his companion, for a virgin is pleasing to the church; in his company, then, making for the region around Samaria, he signed the sheep which had been cleansed in the waves of baptism, to whom the nurturing Spirit drew near and made differing tongues to come forth. Here was a man who was indeed washed in the spring but was not clean in his heart - Simon, that magician whose subsequent punishment revealed to the world that he did not know the faith; he wished to place the gifts of God on a level with the transaction of gold, and with his money to compare them to what a merchant buys at a price. Seeing him attempt such things, Peter said: 'What madness has driven you to such ends, you wretch? Do you think that what the grace of God grants is for sale? That is bought not with gold but with understanding, nor may corrupt money, which the wordling adores, seek after heaven; no rest, to be sure, remains for you who are polluted by deceit, who, swelling with the gall of a bitter heart, seek the possessions of another; for the Spirit comes upon those halls of the mind which shine in their simplicity.' From this speech there is the clear light of a sacred meaning:

A device constructed once in the time of Noah afforded an image of the church, which alone took in every species, and, bearing them in its confines as in baptism, when the fickle crowd suffered the fatal storms, turned the waters into life. It washed at the same time both the dove and the raven, but no concord of mind made both identical; a gullet full of spoils enticed the latter away from the path, and in its desire to feed from death it could follow nothing life-giving; but the bird which is inclined towards the fruits of the earth returns, and though shipwrecked, does not yield to the waters, fearing to take sustenance from death; and by her effort she gives proof of her dutiful toil and the great love with which her faith is held firm, more devoted to the task; the token in her humble beak was an olive - love always bears the fruit of peace in its mouth. Both are tossed in the floods from one holy bosom, cleansed in the womb of their salvation mid the surrounding sea; yet one becomes an outcast and perishes without returning: the cleansing wave is thus not sufficient for salvation unless he who is born from the waters is the dove without gall. This Simon had touched the wave of baptism, but he was the raven seeking his own gain, which never merited God, who is wont to ward off tradesmen from the threshold of the temple.¹

Introduction

Arator's decision to pass over the difficulties of this passage of Acts - the separation of baptism from the laying on of hands and the gift of the Spirit, which apparently Philip did not or could not bestow - and instead to concentrate on the nature of that gift and

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

the conditions necessary for its bestowal, is in peculiar accord with modern theological criticism. Kingsley Barrett, for example, acknowledges that the separation of baptism from the imposition of hands may have arisen 'simply out of Luke's manipulation: he needed to connect Peter with the Magus, and separated the gift of the Spirit from baptism and invented a new occasion for it in order to make the connection'.² But he considers the passage important for the light it, and Simon Magus, shed on the very nature of the conferment of the Spirit. It is Simon

who provides the clue to Luke's fundamental conviction, which is that the Spirit does not respond to certain stimuli, such as the laying on of hands, more or less in the manner of Pavlov's dog, but is given solely ubi et quando visum est Deo. It is God, not magicians or even apostles, who gives his own Spirit.³

Similarly, Arator is at pains to point out that baptism is no magic remedy which dissolves the stains of sin and ensures eternal salvation. Simon may have been fonte lotus, but, being non in pectore mundus, he does not receive the Spirit, a gift which not even the holy sacrament of baptism can ensure.

This was in accordance with the opinion of exegetical tradition that Simon had been baptized with water but not with the Spirit. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem:

He was baptized, but not enlightened; he indeed dipped his body in the water, but he did not enlighten his heart with the Spirit. His body did indeed go down and come up again, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor was it raised up with him.⁴

According to John Chrysostom, Simon did not receive the Spirit because 'he did not intend a worthy purpose, but displayed much indolence';⁵ in other words, the Spirit was wasted on him. However,

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

Cyril of Jerusalem, amongst others, was certain that Simon's sin was not simply one of omission resulting from indolence: 'He did not say Give me too the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, but Give me its power, so that he might sell to others that which he himself did not possess.'⁶ Augustine too interpreted Simon's sin as lying in his lust for power: observing Philip, he 'longed not for grace, but for his power; not so that he might be freed, but so that he might be extolled'.⁷ When he saw Peter and John bestowing the Spirit by the laying on of hands, 'the power of the apostles attracted him more than the righteousness of Christians...he wanted to be able to do such things, not to be such a man'.⁸

Augustine's fullest treatment of the problems surrounding the case of Simon Magus, however, comes in the sixth of his Tractatus in Ioannis Evangelium,⁹ which without doubt is the source of Arator's exposition of the passage. This particular tract takes as its text John 1:32-33, the appearance of a dove at Jesus' baptism, and deals with the pious nature of the dove and its suitability as a pattern for Christian behaviour, in stark contrast to that other bird sent out from the ark, the raven.¹⁰

Inspired by Augustine's identification of Simon Magus with the raven, Arator elaborates an exposition of the passage which is both neat and highly pertinent. Just as in the days of the flood both the dove and the raven were cleansed in the ark, so in Samaria both true penitents and the sinful Simon were baptized; however, both raven and magician fail to find salvation. Since Arator is not particularly interested in the dove (after all, the passage in Acts does not present us with

any one example of a true convert with whom it might be equated), it need not be discussed here;¹¹ its symbolism was obvious, but that of the raven was at once more obscure and intriguing, and had already inspired a rich tradition of exegesis in the works of earlier Christian writers.

1. The Raven as Sin and Sinner

Perhaps the raven was doomed from the beginning: while it is listed at Lev 11:15 and Deut 14:14 amongst those birds which were to be considered unclean (although, as we shall see, the list itself did not of necessity guarantee an unsavoury reputation: the eagle at least would not appear to have suffered unduly from its inclusion), it may well be that the raven's greatest disadvantage lay merely in the fact of its colour. Black signified evil, as for Philo: 'the raven is a blackish and reckless and swift creature, which is a symbol of evil, for it brings night and darkness upon the soul;¹² and also sin, as for Gregory of Elvira: 'for the raven signified the pleasures of a deceiving and impure soul, and by the stigma of its black colour indicated the unrighteous vices of sinners.'¹³ Augustine however hints that the disadvantage of the raven's colour may perhaps be remedied by penitence: 'that they are black, then, is significant: that is, they are sinners not yet made white through the remission of their sins,'¹⁴ although Cassiodorus sees no such hope: 'Ravens are impious men, who are inseparably clothed with the blackness of their sins, and do not shine with any brightness of conversion.'¹⁵

Thus, merely from the fact of their colour, ravens became symbolic of

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

sinners themselves, and worse: 'the raven is the blackness of the sinner or the devil' wrote Eucherius.¹⁶ For Jerome too the raven is the devil:

The raven is therefore sent out from the ark and does not return, and afterwards the dove announces peace to the earth. Thus also in the baptism of the church, when the foulest of birds, that is the devil, is driven out, the dove of the Holy Spirit announces peace to our earth.¹⁷

It was then to be expected that the Fathers would choose to interpret the raven's failure to return to the ark not as a navigational error but as a deliberate and conscious sin. So Hilary:

We remember that the raven was shaped in the form of a sinner at the time when, sent out from the ark, it did not return. For even though there was nowhere any place to stand, because the waters were spread everywhere, it did not return, although the dove which afterwards found no rest did return. For since that ark has the form of the church, he who deserts the church, although he can never stand anywhere else, in him is shaped the example of the sinner who, although he has no other rest in the world besides that of the church, prefers nonetheless to linger in the voids of the world.¹⁸

As Jerome tells, while the tempest rages the raven is happy to take shelter in the ark, but for no longer than is strictly necessary:

For the man who is a raven cannot be saved. The raven is sent out of the ark and does not return. In the flood it is there along with the others; after the flood it is let go in a state of happiness, that is, once there is calm, it cannot remain in the ark of God. If ever there is a storm, if ever there is a flood, the raven is in our midst: calm returns and the raven flees.¹⁹

According to Ambrose however, the raven considers the ark more as a prison than a place of refuge:

Finally, the unrighteous man believes that he has escaped as if from chains (when it is the righteous man who has cut him off from his company), being acquainted with deluge, as it were, and corruption, like the raven which, although it found dry land nowhere, did not return but remained.²⁰

For Pelagius the raven's forgetfulness is sin enough, like that of

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

the virgin he is chastising: 'and like the raven, you do not remember the Lord who freed you from the flood.'²¹

Of course, as Ambrose, following Philo, points out, it was quite natural, according to the classical tradition at least, for Noah to send out the raven: 'for many people regard the raven as it were a herald of things to come, and pay heed to its calling, and examine its flight.'²² However, he goes on to give what becomes the standard interpretation of Noah's reason for sending out the raven:

However, a deeper meaning indicates that the mind of a righteous man, when it begins to cleanse itself, first casts away from itself that which is dark and unclean and rash; for if all shamelessness and guilt is dark and feeds on the dead like a raven, yet close to light is goodness which shines in the purity and simplicity of the mind. And thus it is as if guilt is cast out and put to flight and separated from innocence, so that nothing dark might remain in the mind of the righteous man.²³

So also Gregory of Elvira: 'for when it says that the raven sent out from the ark did not return again, this shows that the impure pleasures of men are to be expelled from the church and are not to return again;'²⁴ and the Pseudo-Cyprian Ad Novatianum:

The raven, which reading this we find was sent out and did not return again, really carries the significance of men who are unclean and destined for perpetual darkness along the world's broad path, and those who are to be apostates, feeding on unclean things and no longer returning to the church. Therefore those who are found to be like this bird, that is, the unclean spirit, cannot return again to the church: if any of them wish to, the Lord will forbid it, who speaking to Moses ordained: 'Cast out of the camp all that is inconstant and unclean.'²⁵

It would then appear that the raven was widely accepted as a figure of the sinful man, although the reasons for doing so varied slightly, some commentators viewing that it was cast out because of its sin, others that its sin lay in its failure to return.

2. The Raven as Scavenger

However, the raven's story and significance do not end with its leaving the ark: speculation was rife as to the subsequent fate of the bird, be it exiled or fugitive:

The question usually arises whether the raven died or whether it was able to live on in some way. For certainly, if there had been any land on which to rest, the dove too could have found rest for its feet.²⁶

Since we may be sure, with Ambrose, that 'the raven is certainly not of the same kind as those other birds which are accustomed to live their lives in the waters',²⁷ it is quite possible to see why, as Augustine reports, 'it is assumed by many that the raven was able to rest upon a corpse, something which the dove by nature abhors';²⁸ a view which had gained a great deal of credence by the beginning of the sixth century.

We have already seen that, according to Ambrose, 'all shamelessness and guilt is dark and feeds on the dead like a raven';²⁹ so Pelagius warns the wayward virgin to whom he is writing: 'for the raven, when it was sent forth, followed the flesh, which you also wish to follow with the result that you do not return to the door of Christ.'³⁰ Prudentius also is familiar with the tradition: 'for the raven, captivated by the loathsome corpses, adhered unto gluttony';³¹ as is Alcimus Avitus, who chooses this detail as the basis for his interpretation of the raven as representing the faithless Jews:

When the bird sought the shining air on its outstretched wings, catching sight of corpses packed together in every land, inclining towards the flesh and soon forgetting to return, it abandoned its pilot, becalmed in the abode they once shared. Thus, Jewry, do you not know how to keep faith with your master, thus sent forth do you love the flesh, thus is no gratitude ever repaid to the Lord and

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

guardian of life. Thus loosed, with inconstant mind do you depart, thus have you broken the compacts of the law and, traitor, violated the first covenant. When, after a period of time, the old man deduced that the sluggish bird would by then have been quite able to return to its confines (since he was unaware of its slow return and the reason for its delaying), in case the wave had turned back and devoured it, weary in its woven wings, and had united it with those who were perishing, he straightway sends forth from its abode the white dove.³²

Arator himself refers to the theory that the raven was seduced by the attractions of the readily available carrion:

hunc guttura plena rapinae
Subduxere vias cupiensque in funere pasci
Nil potuit vitale sequi (1.650-652);

a passage which may indicate acquaintance with Sedulius' description of the raven:

alesque rapinis
Deditus atque avido saturans caeva guttura rostro.³³

While recognising the large part this detail played in securing the raven's repugnant reputation, we ought, however, to note that for Chrysostom at least it was no bad thing that the raven found corpses from which to take food and rest; indeed, it was in this very hope that Noah had sent it out:

Perhaps when the waters had abated, the bird remained, since, being unclean and chancing upon both human bodies and those of dumb beasts, it found nourishment which was suitable for it; and this very thing offered no small sign of good hope for the righteous man. For, had this not happened, and had it not found any small consolation, it would have returned. And because this is true, having then furthermore a good expectation, the righteous man sends forth a dove.³⁴

Nevertheless, Augustine too not only records the popularity of the tradition but also subscribes to it himself, in part at least, and, in the language he uses to contrast the eating preferences of the raven with those of the dove, his influence on Arator is quite

apparent: 'for ravens feed on death, a characteristic which the dove does not possess; it lives on the fruits of the earth, its nourishment is innocent.'³⁵ Thus Arator:

redit ales amica
Frugibus et nullis succumbit naufraga lymphis,
Nutriri de morte timens (1.652-654).

3. The Raven as Heretic

The passage last quoted would also appear to indicate that Arator was familiar with Augustine's alternative theory of the raven's failure to return: that the raven succumbed to the lure of the waters, was rebaptized and died in the waves. In Contra Faustum Augustine gives both theories equal credence:

That the raven which was sent out after forty days did not return, being either certainly carried off by the waters or enticed by some floating corpse, signifies that men who are so foul from the uncleanness of their desire, and as a result are too keen on those things which in this world are outside, are either rebaptized or seduced and possessed by those men outside the ark, that is, outside the church, whom baptism destroys.³⁶

However, in the sixth tract on John, Augustine concentrates on the supposition, which would appear to be his own, that, although the raven may have fed and rested on floating carcasses, nevertheless it finally met its end in the waves, succumbing to the enticement of the heretical waters:

The dove was sent out and at first found no rest for its feet; it returned to the ark, for everywhere was full of water, and preferred to return rather than be rebaptized. But that raven was sent out before the water had dried up, and being rebaptized did not wish to return; it dies in those waters. May God avert from us that raven's death! For why did it not return unless because it had been taken off by the waters? But the dove, on the other hand, on finding no rest for its feet, when the water cried to it from all sides 'Come, come, dip yourself here', just as those heretics cry 'Come, come, you can have it here', since it found no rest for its feet, returned to the ark.³⁷

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

Augustine also expresses a characteristic affection for a third theory: that the raven is an example of the man who continually postpones baptism, and who, imitating the call of the raven, cries: 'Cras, cras - tomorrow, tomorrow;'³⁸ but it was the theory of rebaptism and its inherent folly and destruction which formed part of his most forceful arguments against the heretics.

Cyprian had used the figura of the ark to support his conviction that, since baptism outside the church was invalid, there could not be such a thing as rebaptism:

For as in that baptism of the world in which its ancient iniquity was cleansed, he who was not in the ark of Noah could not be saved by water, so neither can he now appear to be saved by baptism who has not been baptized in the church, which is founded in the unity of the Lord, according to the sacrament of the one ark.³⁹

Which argument Augustine attempts to refute by means of the same metaphor:

Or how are they saved by water who, making bad use of baptism although they seem to be inside, continue to the end of their life in dissolute and abandoned fashion? Or how are they not saved by water, who in the past Cyprian himself records were simply admitted into the church with that baptism which they had received in heresy? For the same unity of the ark saved them, in which no one is saved except by water...If not by water, how in the ark? If not in the ark, how in the church? But if in the church, then in the ark, and if in the ark, then by water.⁴⁰

We shall return shortly to the ambiguity inevitably involved when using the ark and flood as baptismal metaphor.

4. The Raven and Simon Magus

Arator, however, although he alludes briefly to Augustine's idea of succumbing to the heretical waters, does not wish to overload his

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

Et reditu cessante perit; non ergo saluti
Sufficit unda lavans nisi sit sine felle columba
Qui generatur aquis (1.648-650;658-663).

At face value both dove and raven have been baptized, but no outward manifestation can hide the innate difference between them.

The ambiguous word vallante in line 660 suggests that Arator was well aware of the difficulties involved in using the ark as a baptismal metaphor. 'Aucun thème n'est plus fréquent chez les Pères de l'Église que la symbolisme de l'arche de Noé, figure de l'Église qui sauve les hommes du jugement de Dieu par le moyen de l'eau', declares Jean Daniélou,⁴⁴ and his emphasis is exactly right: the image of the ark as a safe refuge was very popular; however, exegetes less frequently attempted to explain exactly how the menacing waters of the flood approximated to the saving waters of baptism, as Henri Leclercq observes: 'Ce symbolisme du baptême n'est pas toutefois celui qui prévalut le plus généralement; on lui préféra le symbolisme de l'Église dans laquelle le chrétien trouvait le salut qu'il ne pouvait rencontrer en dehors d'elle.'⁴⁵

The reason for this is quite simple: it is far easier to explain the ark as a type of the church than to establish how the waters of the flood relate to baptism. Is Noah being saved by the waters or from the waters? Augustine explains the dilemma thus: 'for the water of the flood was saving for those placed inside the ark, but was deadly for those outside the ark; yet it was the same water.'⁴⁶

It is this ambiguity which Arator attempts to convey by his use of

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

the word vallante, whose basic meaning of 'surround' encompasses both the protective sense of 'defend' and the hostile sense of 'hem in'. The water acts both as defensive buttress and as menacing blockade. Perhaps it was this very ambiguity which ensured the popularity of the flood as a baptismal metaphor. The dual nature of the water preserved a sense of mystery and danger: the initial step towards baptism, or any act of total commitment, is indeed fraught with danger; but once a person is received into the ark, the waters of the flood, which before threatened destruction, instead become the waters of salvation. So for Arator, the ark 'turned the waters into life':

Ad vitam convertit aquas (1.648).

However, not even baptism can ensure salvation; for the water to be effective he who is reborn must be 'the dove without gall'. This seals the fate both of the raven and of Simon Magus. McKinlay refers us quite rightly to Sedulius' Carmen Paschale 2.171, where the dove of Christ's baptism is called 'the bird which is without gall'.⁴⁷ However, Arator's main source is once again Augustine. Although the text of Acts itself says that Peter perceived Simon to be 'in the gall of bitterness' (8:23), it is Augustine who points out that this gall is completely alien to the dove, and moreover an insuperable obstacle to receiving the gift of the Spirit:

He was in possession of baptism, but he did not cling to the inwards of the dove...the dove does not possess gall, Simon did; therefore he was separated from the inwards of the dove. What benefit was baptism to him? Do not then boast of your baptism, as if that alone were sufficient for salvation.⁴⁸

Arator clearly had this final phrase ('quasi ex ipso salus tibi sufficiat') in mind when writing:

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

non ergo saluti
Sufficit unda lavans nisi sit sine felle columba
Qui generatur equis (1.661-663).

However, Arator's identification of Simon Magus with the raven, and the reason he gives for the failure to receive the Spirit, do not rest solely upon the possession of an inner gall which might have no outward manifestation; the reason Simon cannot benefit from baptism is his pursuit, whether patent or cunningly concealed, of selfish ends:

Simon hic baptismatis undam
Contigerat, sed corvus erat sua luora requirens
Quae numquam meruere Deum, qui limine templi
Vendentes arcere solet (1.663-666).

It is this factor which points most unequivocally to Augustine as the source of Arator's exposition; for Augustine asks: 'Who are the ravens? Those who seek their own ends. Who are the doves? Those who seek the things which are Christ's.'⁴⁹ This too is the characteristic by which Augustine finally identifies Simon Magus specifically as a raven, referring to 'that Simon, who was not a dove in the church but a raven, for he sought those ends which were his own, not those which were Jesus Christ's'.⁵⁰

This pursuit of material profit at the expense of spiritual reward underlies Arator's comparison of Simon's attempt to buy the ability to dispense the Spirit with the tradesmen whom Jesus drove from the temple; which comparison again has its basis in Augustine, this time in the Enarratio in Psalmum 130:

He was one of those men who enter the temple to buy and sell; he wished to buy what he was arranging to sell...The Lord drove out from the temple those who sold doves; now the dove signifies the Holy Spirit; thus Simon wanted to buy the dove

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

and to sell the dove. The Lord Jesus Christ, who dwelt in Peter, drew near and drove out the wicked tradesman with the lash of a cord.⁵¹

However, it would seem that Augustine was not being entirely original in identifying Simon Magus with the raven. The idea first occurs in the second sermon of Chromatius of Aquileia:

As a type of this Simon we clearly recognise the raven which long ago was sent out into destruction from Noah's ark. This man too had been received into Noah's ark, that is to say Christ's church, since he believed and was baptized. But because, after he had been baptized, he refused to be changed through the grace of Christ, he was cast out into destruction as being unworthy. For this ark of Noah, that is the church, does not know how to keep within it men of this kind. Now, this ark had also received into it Judas Iscariot; but because he did not deserve to be changed, or rather, because like the raven he persisted in the blackness of his sins, thrown out from the apostles' boat, as if from Noah's ark, he incurred the deluge of eternal death.⁵²

There is however no evidence to suggest that Arator knew Chromatius' sermon on the passage: he makes no allusion to the equation of the raven with Judas Iscariot, and, more importantly, the particular points which, as we have seen, show Augustine's influence - the feeding on corpses, the seeking of selfish ends, the identification of Simon with the traders driven from the temple - are not to be found in Chromatius. This earlier sermon may be Augustine's source, but it is not Arator's.

It is clear, then, that, although Arator's identification of Simon Magus with the raven draws its specific inspiration from Augustine, the episode as a whole is unavoidably set in the context of previous symbolic exegesis of the raven, which through its sin cannot remain in the ark, and thus the church.

5. Exegetical problems: Ps 146:9 and 1 Kings 17:1-7

However, this traditionally negative interpretation of the raven's character imposed certain problems on commentators on the scriptures: at the ninth verse of Psalm 146 we read that the Lord 'feedeth the young ravens that call upon him'. Why did the bird, which had proved so fickle and perfidious, deserve any such preferential treatment? No little ingenuity was needed to explain away the apparent contradiction.

Augustine gives an example of the solution which found general acceptance:

The Israelites used to say that they alone were righteous, because they had received the law; they used to say that all other men of all nations were sinners. And indeed, all nations were involved in sin, in idolatry, in the worship of stones and wood. But have they remained thus? Even if the ravens themselves, our fathers, did not, yet do we ourselves, the young ravens, call upon God.⁵³

Our sinful ancestors, then, were the ravens, but we are their offspring who have cast off the sin of our parents and call upon the Lord. Thus Prosper:

For our fathers, who worshipped idols, had the form of ravens, for they pursued dead and unclean things; whose young, that is sons, call upon the true God and feed on the nourishment of the Holy Spirit. For, since our ancestors did not call upon God, but continued in their obstinacy, future generations have believed what the ancients refused to know.⁵⁴

Jerome too distinguishes ravens from their young by means of the sustenance they take:

I think ravens, which are black in colour, which always pursue the corpses of the dead, which are always preparing brawls in the most raucous of voices, are devils; and those who serve devils also receive themselves the colour of ravens, just like ravens. Therefore our ancestors, as we have already said, who served idols and devils, were ravens. For they are not found except where there is carrion and

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

uncleanness and filth and the corpses of the dead. But we who are born from ravens do not wait for corpses, but for the dew. For young ravens are said to live on dew.⁵⁵

However, Jerome then refers to another incident in the Old Testament where the raven is portrayed in a quite different light: 'Elijah (which is interpreted God the Lord), Elijah (that is our Lord and Saviour) suffers persecution from the Jews and is fed by the ravens, the people of the Gentiles.'⁵⁶ Hilary had already interpreted the passage at 1 Kings 17:1-7 in a similar way: when the Jews, the chosen people, reverted to sin, those who, like the raven, had earlier been considered sinners were left to call upon the Lord:

We read, in the feeding of Elijah, that this bird was also reckoned to have been wont constantly to bring him food; this, at a time when all people were behaving most wickedly and most impiously. This bird therefore, which was shaped in the form of a sinner, was chosen to serve so great a prophet. For when the former people were found to be undeserving, then the preaching of God, which is both the nourishment and the hunger of prophets, was performed through the services of those who were sinners. For we, as others before us, being begotten and born of shameless and insolent and unclean and blood-thirsty men, call upon God like young ravens, in recognition, acknowledgement, and service.⁵⁷

Ambrose and, later, Caesarius of Arles interpret the feeding of Elijah similarly.⁵⁸

Did then the raven eradicate the memory of its former sin by the service it later rendered Elijah? Sedulius certainly thought so, and draws the specific parallel between Elijah's ravens and that of Noah:

Once the ministering ravens fed Elijah, and in unprecedented fashion furnished him with a feast; and the bird, given to plundering and filling its hollow throat with greedy beak, handed over the food unharmed as its own jaws went hungry. Now, that good raven of Elijah, which once was treacherous to Noah, washes away on land the sin it committed in the waves.⁵⁹

However, the Fathers were in general agreed that the church could not

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

avoid containing both doves and ravens, reformed or otherwise. Augustine is convinced of the fact: 'That ark contained both of these two species; and if the ark signified the church, then you see that it is necessary in this deluge of our age that the church contain both species, both the raven and the dove.'⁶⁰

Didymus of Alexandria also acknowledges that of all the members of the church some are doves and some ravens. However, he is not convinced that the ravens which fed Elijah underwent a permanent change of character:

But this very man, the one, I mean, who has a raven-like nature, even if he seems to be under the control of the righteous man, once he goes out to be tried in the struggle, he does not return...he is not solid and cannot bear the storm of the trial.⁶¹

Chromatius too prays that all ravens might become doves, and does not doubt God's ability to transform them, as he did the penitent robber crucified with Christ. However, if, like Simon, they refuse to be transformed, such ravens cannot remain in the church.⁶² However, he issues a stern warning to those who think they can pass as doves but have undergone no real change:

But if you persist like the raven in the uncleanness of the flesh, or in the blackness of your sins, even if you escape notice inside the church, you are outside. You may seem inside according to men, but according to God, whose notice nothing escapes, you will be found to be outside.⁶³

Chrysostom, however, has more confidence in the saving power of the church, as he demonstrates in this example:

But while the ark merely preserves, the church does something more: for example, the ark took in dumb beasts and kept them dumb; the church took in dumb men, and not only saved them but also changed them. The ark took in a raven and sent out a raven; the church takes in a raven and sends out a dove. It takes in a wolf and sends it out a sheep. For when a grasping greedy man enters in there, he hears the

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

teaching of the divine pronouncements, changes his resolve, and becomes a sheep instead of a wolf.⁶⁴

Whether or not Simon Magus turns from raven into dove, Acts and Arator leave open to speculation. However, Arator's reference to Simon's poena sequens (l.631) would seem to make sense only if, according to Arator, Simon were banished from the church, never to become a true believer - his fate as handed down in the apocryphal tradition which has ensured, rightly or wrongly, that Simon Magus remains a raven for posterity.

It is then clear that for Arator the chief difficulty, and thus the main interest, of the Simon Magus story was why, although he had been baptized, Simon nonetheless failed to be saved, and as a result his explanation of this problem constitutes the greater part of this episode. In choosing the baptismal metaphor of the flood he was using a figure which would have been well-known to his listeners, as would have been his use of the raven to depict a sinner. Whether or not his audience would have recognised the debt he owed to Augustine it is impossible to tell. We may speculate as to whether he intended to claim the passage as being entirely of his own devising, but, since the allusions are so precise, we equally cannot rule out the possibility that he hoped that at least a few might realise their source.⁶⁵

However, the length to which Arator elaborates the episode ensures that it is not at all necessary to know Augustine's original in order to appreciate the poet's new version. The passage on the contrary succeeds on its own merits as an exegesis both of the significance

LOTUS SED NON MUNDUS

of the raven's departure from the ark, and of the light it sheds on the failure of Simon Magus to respond to the sacrament of baptism.

NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 50-52.
2. C.K.Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit from Simon Magus', Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie, ed. J.Kremer (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 48) (Gembloux-Louvain, 1979), 284.
3. Ibid., 293.
4. Procatech. 2 (PG 33, 336), 'ἐβαπτίσθη, ἀλλ'οὐκ ἐφώτισθη· καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα ἔβαψεν ὕδατι, τὴν δὲ καρδίαν οὐκ ἐφώτισε Πνεύματι· καὶ κατέβη μὲν τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἀνέβη, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ οὐ συνετάφη Χριστῷ, οὐδὲ συνηγέρθη'. See also Jerome, Comm. in Hiezech. 4.16.4/5 (CCL 75, 164), 'baptizatus quidem est in aqua sed nequaquam baptizatus est in salutem', and Adv. Iov. 2.1 (PL 23, 295), where Jovinian exempts Simon from his belief that 'qui fuerint baptizati, a diabolo non posse tentari' on the grounds that he was baptized 'aqua tantum, et non spiritu'.
5. Catech. 5.21 (SC 50, 211), 'οὐκ ἀξίαν δὲ γνώμην εἰσήνεγκεν ἀλλὰ πολλὴν τὴν ῥαθυμίαν ἐπεδείξατο'.
6. Catech. 16 De S.S. 1.10 (PG 33, 929), 'Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, Δότε κάμοι Πνεύματος ἁγίου κοινωνίαν, ἀλλ', ἐξουσίαν, ἵνα ἄλλοις πιπράσκη τὸ ἄπρατον, ὃ αὐτὸς μὴ ἐπέκτητο'.
7. Enarr. in Ps. 30 Sermo 2.14 (CCL 38, 212), 'desideravit istam, non gratiam, sed potentiam; non unde liberaretur, sed unde extolleretur'.
8. Enarr. in Ps. 130.5 (CCL 40, 1901), 'plus illum delectavit potentia apostolorum quam iustitia christianorum...voluit talia facere, non talis esse'.
9. CCL 36, 53-67.
10. For a table charting the development of Augustine's symbolic treatment of the dove, see A-M. La Bonnardière, Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne (Paris, 1965), 32-33. For a modern study of the significance of the raven see the brief account in J.P.Lewis, A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature (Leiden, 1968), 173-174.
11. However, see 1.657-671 where Arator follows Jerome in interpreting Simon Bar-Jona as filii columbae; see Lib. Interpr. Hebr. Nom. (CCL 72, 135).

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

12. Quaest. et Sol. in Gen. 2.35 (LCL, Philo Supplement 1, 114).
13. De Arca Noe 25 (CCL 69, 153), 'Corvus enim subdolae et impurae animae significabat voluptates, et nigri coloris infamia peccatorum infilusta vitia demonstrabat'.
14. Adnot. in Iob 38 (CSEL 28.2, 615), 'significantur ergo nigri, hoc est peccatores nondum dealbati remissione peccatorum'. Does Cyprianus Gallus intend 'nigrantem pectora corvum' to imply 'black-hearted' as well as 'black-breasted' (Hept.: Lib. Gen. 300 [CSEL 23, 12])?
15. Expos. in Ps. 146.9 (CCL 98, 1308), 'Corvi sunt irreligiosi viri, qui peccatorum nigredine inseparabiliter vestiuntur, nec aliquo splendore conversionis elucescunt'.
16. Form. Spiritual. Intell. 3: De Animantibus (CSEL 31, 23), 'corvus nigredo peccatoris vel daemonis'.
17. Altercatio Luciferiani et Orthodoxi 22 (PL 23, 185), 'Emittitur itaque de arca corvus, et non redit, et postea pacem terrae columba nuntiat. Ita et in baptisate ecclesiae, teterrimo alite expulso, id est diabolo, pacem terrae nostrae columba Spiritus sancti nuntiat'. See also Ep. 69 Ad Oceanum 6 (Budé, Jérôme 3, 200).
18. Tract. in Ps. 146.12 (CSEL 22, 852-853):
- corvum in formam peccatoris constitutum esse tum, cum ex arca emissus non redit, meminimus. cum enim consistendi nusquam locus esset aquis in universa diffusis, ipse columba postea non reperta requie revertente non rediit. cum enim illic arca ecclesiae formam habuerit, is, qui ecclesiam, cum nunquam alibi posset consistere, derelinquit, peccatoris in eo exemplum est constitutum, qui, cum nullam aliam praeterquam ecclesiae requiem habeat in saeculo. mavult tamen in inanibus saeculi demorari.
19. Tract. de Ps. 146.9 (CCL 78, 333):
- Qui enim corvus est, salvati non potest. Corvus de arca dimittitur, et non revertitur. In diluvio cum ceteris est: post diluvium in felicitate proicitur, hoc est, eo tempore quando tranquillitas est, non potest esse in arca Dei. Si quando tempestas est, si quando diluvium, corvus in medio est: tranquillitas redit, et corvus fugit.
20. De Noe 17 (CSEL 32.1, 458), 'denique evasisse se credit iniustus tamquam de vinculis, cum iustus ab eius se consortio separaverit, diluvii cuiusdam et corruptelae familiaris, ut corvus, qui, cum siccitatem terrae nusquam invenerit, non reversus est, sed remansit'.
21. Ep. ad virginem devotam 2 (PL 17, 582), 'sicut et corvus, non memoraris Dominum, qui te de diluvio liberavit'. See also Alcimus Avitus, Lib. 4 De diluvio mundi 567-568 (MGH.AA 6.2, 251):

et mox oblita reverti

Rectorem placidum communi in sede reliquit.

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

22. De Noe 17 (CSEL 32.1, 458), 'quia plerique quasi adnuntium futurorum corvum aestimant et voces eius observant volatusque rimantur'. See Philo, Quaest. 2.35 (LCL, Philo Supplement 1, 114), 'As for the literal meaning, the raven is said to be a sort of heralding and fulfilling creature. Wherefore down to our own time many observantly attend to its flight and its voice when it caws (as though) indicating something hidden'.
23. De Noe 17 (CSEL 32.1, 458):
- sensus autem altior significat quod mens iusti, quando mundare se incipit, quae tenebrosa et immunda et temeraria sunt primo a se repellit, siquidem omnis inpudentia atque culpa tenebrosa est et mortuis pascitur sicut corvus, lumini autem vicina virtus, quae mentis puritate et simplicitate resplendet. et ideo tamquam emittitur et fugatur culpa et separatur ab innocentia, ut nihil remaneat in viri iusti mente tenebrosum.
24. De Arca Noe 25 (CCL 69, 153), 'Nam quod corvum dicit de arca emissum non fuisse ultra reversum, hoc ostendebat impuras voluptates hominum de ecclesia expellendas et non esse ulterius reversuras'.
25. Ad Novatianum 2 (CSEL 3.3, 55):
- qui corax vere hominum immundorum et in tenebris perpetuis futurorum per saeculi latam viam et immunda vescentium apostatarum futurorum et ad ecclesiam se amplius non vertentium figuram portabat, quem sicut legentes invenimus emissum et non amplius reversum. huic ergo avi id est immundo spiritui quique fuerint similes inventi ad ecclesiam amplius reverti non poterunt: qui et si voluerint, Diminus prohibebit qui Moysi praecepit dicens: omne varium et immundum eice foras extra castra.
26. Augustine, Quaest. in Hept. 1.13 (CCL 33, 5), 'quaestio solet oboriri, utrum corvus mortuus sit an aliquo modo vivere potuerit. Quia utique, si fuit terra ubi requiesceret, etiam columba requiem potuit invenire pedibus suis'.
27. De Noe 18 (CSEL 32.1, 459), 'et certe non est huiusmodi corvus ut aliae aves, quae in aquis conversationem habere consuerunt'. Compare Philo, Quaest. 2.39 (LCL, Philo Supplement 1, 117), 'For the raven was neither an artawazahawd nor an ibis nor yet one of those (birds) that dwell in the water'.
28. Quaest. in Hept. 1.13 (CCL 33, 5), 'conicitur a multis, quod cadaveri potuit corvus insidere, quod columba naturaliter refugit'.
29. De Noe 17 (CSEL 32.1, 458), 'omnis inpudentia atque culpa tenebrosa est et mortuis pascitur sicut corvus'.
30. Ep. ad virginem devotam 2 (PL 17, 582), 'nam corvus dimissus carnem secutus est; quem tu quoque vis sequi; ut non revertaris ad ianuam Christi'.
31. Tit. Hist. 3: De Noe et Diluvio 11-12 (LCL, Prudentius 2, 348):

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

corvus enim ingluvie per foeda cadavera captus
haeserat.

Pace H.J.Thomson, who translates: 'For the raven being possessed with voracity had stayed among the loathsome bodies'; ingluvie is far more likely to be dependent upon haeserat, which is regularly followed by the ablative, than on captus; similarly per foeda cadavera captus makes far better sense, both grammatically and from the structure of the sentence.

32. De diluvio mundi 565-579 (MGH.AA 6.2, 251-252):

Ales ut extensis nitidum petit aera pinnis,
Adspiciens plenis stipata cadavera terris,
Carnibus incumbens et mox oblita reverti
Rectorem placidum communi in sede reliquit.
Sic nescis, Iudeae, fidem servare magistro,
Sic carnem dimissus amas, sic gratia numquam
Custodi vitae dominoque rependitur ulla.
Mente vaga sic laxus abis, sic foedera legis
Rupisti et primum violasti perfide pactum.
Temporis ut spatio senior collegit inertem
Iam potuisse satis corvum se reddere claustris,
Ignarus tardi reditus causaeque morandi,
Ne fors innexis fessum consumpsit alis
Iunxerit et cunctis pereuntibus unda recurrens:
Protenus albentem mittit de sede columbam.

For discussion of this passage see Roberts, Biblical Epic, 195-196. He refers to Claudius Marius Victorius, Alethia 2, 498-499 (CCL 128, 164), where the same explanation is found:

iamque niger patula speculator missus ab arca
aëra prodiderat placidum praedaque reperta
detentus.

33. Carm. Pasch. 1.171-172 (CSEL 10, 28).

34. Hom. 26 in Gen. 4 (PG 53, 234):

Ἴσως ληξάντων τῶν ὑδάτων ἀκάθαρτον ἐν τῷ ὕρνεον, καὶ σάμασιν ἐντυχὸν τοῖς τε ἀνθρωπίνοις, τοῖς τε τῶν ἁλόγων, καὶ τὴν κατάλληλον εὐρὸν ἑαυτῷ τροφήν, ἀναπέμεινεν· ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μικρὸν ἐγένετο τῷ δίκαιῳ τεκμήριον τῆς χρηστῆς ἐλπίδος. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τοῦτο ἦν, μηδὲ εὖρε μικρὰν τινα παραμυθίαν, ὑπέστρεψεν ἔν. Καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἀληθές, ἐντεῦθεν λοιπὸν τὴν χρηστὴν προσδοκίαν ἐσχηκῶς ὁ δίκαιος ἐκπέμπει τὴν περιστερὰν.

35. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.4 (CCL 36, 55), 'Nam corvi de morte pascuntur, hoc columba non habet; de frugibus terrae vivit, innocens eius victus est'. Henri Leclercq ('Arche', DACL 1.2, 2719-2720) refers to a bas-relief from the ruins of Cuiculum, which shows the raven 'se repaissant de cadavres', and concludes 'c'est évidemment le commentaire de saint Augustin qu'a voulu traduire le sculpteur'; however, whether it was Augustine who influenced the sculptor or vice versa, or whether, as seems more

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

likely, both are merely evidence that such a notion was current, as Augustine himself reports, it is impossible to say. Was Prudentius (see n31 above) referring to a similar painted or sculpted representation of the tradition? See A. Baumstark, 'Frühchristlich-palästinensische Bildkompositionen in abendländischer Spiegelung', *ByzZeitschr* 20 (1911), 179-187.

It also seems probable that the peculiar phrase at H.A. 1.657-658,

dilectio semper in ore
Fructum pacis habet,

a reference presumably to the eucharistic kiss of peace, is an indication that Arator had in mind the further distinction between dove and raven drawn by Augustine in the same passage: 'Unde ergo discernuntur oscula corvorum ab osculis columbarum? Osculantur corvi, sed laniant; a laniatu innocens est natura columbarum; ubi ergo laniatus, non est vera in osculis pax; illi habent veram pacem, qui ecclesiam non laniaverunt.'

36. Contra Faustum 12.20 (CSEL 25.1, 348):

Quod post dies quadraginta emissus corvus non est reversus, aut aquis utique interceptus aut aliquo supernatante cadavere inlectus, significat homines immunditia cupiditatis teterrimos et ob hoc ad ea, quae foris sunt in hoc mundo, nimis intentos aut rebaptizari aut ab his, quos praeter arcam, id est praeter ecclesiam baptismus occidit, seduci et teneri.

37. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.19 (CCL 36, 63-64):

Missa est columba, et primo non invenit requiem pedibus suis; rediit ad arcam; plena enim erant aquis omnia, et maluit redire quam rebaptizari. Corvus autem ille emissus est antequam siccaret aqua, rebaptizatus redire noluit; mortuus est in his aquis. Avertat Deus corvi illius mortem. Nam quare non est reversus, nisi quia aquis interceptus est? At vero columba non inveniens requiem pedibus suis, cum ei undique clamaret aqua: Veni, veni, hic tinguere, quomodo clamant isti haeretici: Veni, veni, hic habes; non inveniens illa requiem pedibus suis, reversa est ad arcam.

38. See Enarr. in Ps. 102.16 (CCL 40, 1467): Sermo 82.14 (PL 38, 512) and Sermo 224 In die Paschae 4 (PL 38, 1095). See also Caesarius of Arles, Sermo 18.6 (CCL 103, 86).

39. Ep. 74.11 (CSEL 3.2, 809; see also 751-752 and 820):

nam ut in illo mundi baptismo quo iniquitas antiqua purgata est, qui in arca Noe non fuit non potuit per aquam salvus fieri, ita nec nunc potest per baptismum salvatus videri qui baptizatus in ecclesia non est, quae ad arcae unius sacramentum dominica unitate fundata est.

40. De Baptismo 5.28 (CSEL 51, 296):

aut quomodo salvi fiunt per aquam, qui sancto baptismate male utentes, cum videantur esse intus, usque in finem vitae in flagitiosis et perditis moribus perseverant? aut quomodo non sunt per aquam salvati, quos in praeteritum cum

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

eo baptisate, quod in haeresi acceperant, in ecclesiam simpliciter admissos Cyprianus ipse commemorat? eadem quippe arcae unitas eos salvos fecit in qua nemo nisi per aquam salvatus est...si non per aquam, quomodo in arca? si non in arca, quomodo in ecclesia? si autem in ecclesia, utique in arca, et si in arca, utique per aquam.

41. However, see 2.604-618 and the discussion of this passage page 31 above.
42. PL 68, 149.
43. See Barrett, 'Light on the Holy Spirit', 291: 'though Luke does not say so, and probably found the thought embarrassing.'
44. Sacramentum Futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique (Paris, 1950), 55.
45. 'Arche', 2710.
46. De Bapt. 6.40 (CSEL 51, 336), 'aqua enim diluvii constitutis intra arcam salutaris fuit, extra arcam vero mortifera fuit; eadem tamen fuit'. See also Contra Faustum 12.17 (CSEL 25.1, 346) and Lundberg, La Typologie baptismale, 73-116.
47. CSEL 10, 56, 'volucrem quae felle caret'.
48. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.18 (CCL 36, 63), 'Iam baptisma habebat: sed columbae visceribus non haerebat...Columba fel non habet, Simon habebat; ideo separatus erat a columbae visceribus. Baptisma illi quid proderat? Noli ergo de baptisate gloriari, quasi ex ipso salus tibi sufficiat'.
49. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.2 (CCL 36, 54), 'Qui sunt corvi? Qui sua quaerunt. Qui columbae? Qui ea quae Christi sunt quaerunt'.
50. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.18 (CCL 36, 63), 'Simon ille, qui non erat in ecclesia columba, sed corvus, qui ea quae sua sunt quaerebat, non quae Iesu Christi'.
51. Enarr. in Ps. 130.5 (CCL 40, 1901):

Erat ergo de telibus qui in templum intrant ad emendum et vendendum; emere volebat quod vendere disponebat...Dominus illos expulit de templo qui columbas vendebant; columba autem Spiritum sanotum significat: volebat ergo Simon emere columbam, et vendere columbam; accessit Dominus Iesus Christus, qui habitabat in Petro, et flagello restiulae expulit foras malum mercatorem.

52. Sermo 2.5 (CCL 9A, 9-10):

In huius plane Simonis typo iamdudum de arca Noe corvum dimissum in perditionem cognoscimus. Et hic quidem receptus in arca Noe fuerat, id est in ecclesia Christi, cum credidit et baptizatus est. Sed quia, <postquam> baptizatus est, mutari per Christi gratiam noluit, ut indignus foras eiectus est in perditione. Haec enim arca Noe, id est ecclesia, nescit in se huiusmodi retinere. Denique et Iudam Scariothem in se haec arca susceperat;

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

sed quia mutari non meruit, vel potius quia in peccatorum suorum nigritudine, tamquam corvus, permansit, de apostolorum cymba, quasi de arca Noe, eiectus, diluvium aeternae mortis incurrit.

53. Enarr. in Ps. 146.18 (CCL 40, 2136):

Israelitae se solos iustos esse dicebant, quia legem acceperant; ceteros omnes omnium gentium homines peccatores dicebant. Et vere omnes gentes in peccato, in idololatria, in adoratione lapidum atque lignorum erant; sed numquid sic remanserunt? Etsi non ipsi corvi patres nostri, tamen pulli corvorum nos ipsi invocamus Deum.

54. Expos. Ps. 146.9 (CCL 68A, 202):

Patres enim idola venerantes corvorum habuerunt figuram, mortua et immunda sectantes. Quorum pulli, id est filii, Deum verum invocant, et Sancti Spiritus pascuntur alimonia. Quia parentibus non invocantibus Deum, sed in sua obduratione manentibus, credidit posteritas quod ignoravit antiquitas.

55. Tract. de Ps. 146.9 (CCL 78, 333):

Ego puto corvos nigri coloris, qui semper persequuntur cadavera mortuorum, qui semper voce raucissima rixas conperant, daemones esse; et quicumque daemonibus servierint, iuxta corvos et ipsi colorem corvorum accipiunt. Igitur nostri parentes, sicut iam diximus, qui idolis serviebant et daemonibus, corvi erant. Non enim inveniuntur nisi ubi cadavera et inlucies et spurcitia et cadavera mortuorum. Nos vero qui de corvis nati sumus, non cadavera expectamus, sed rorem. Pulli enim corvorum dicuntur de rore vivere.

Whence Cassiodorus on the same place: Expos. in Ps. 146.9 (CCL 98, 1308).

56. Tract. de Ps. 146.9 (CCL 78, 334), 'Helias, qui interpretatur Deus Dominus: Helias, hoc est, Dominus noster atque Salvator a Iudaeis persecutionem patitur; et a corvis, gentium populo, pascitur'.

57. Tract. in Ps. 146.12 (CSEL 22, 853):

hanc quoque avem legimus in pastum Heliae deputatam cibos semper ei fuisse solitam inferre et hoc tum, cum impiissime omnis populus et inreligiosissime deversaretur. In famulatum ergo tanti prophetae haec avis, quae in formam peccatoris erat constituta, delecta est. cum enim anterior populus inprobabilis repertus est, tum dei praedicatio, quae cibus et esuritio est prophetarum, per eorum, qui peccatores erant, officia expletur. nos enim vel ceteri ante nos ex inpudentibus et procacibus et imundis et cruentis geniti atque nati tamquam pulli corvorum deum invocamus agnitione, confessione, famulatu.

58. See Ambrose, Expos. Ev. sec. Luc. 2.72 (SC 45, 104): the ravens feed Elijah 'ut indicio foret populos nationum taetro squalentes colore meritorum, qui ante cibum faetidus in cadaveribus requirebant, nunc de se advecticiam prophetis alimoniam praebituros; cibus enim prophetarum divinae voluntatis effectus est'. Caesarius too, Sermo 124.1 (CCL 103, 515), sees the ravens as representative of the Gentile Church, quoting Song of Songs

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

1:5, which is 'nigra per naturam, formosa per gratiam'. For the blackness of the Gentiles and the application of the Song of Songs text see Chapter 5: Eunuchi Fecunda Fides: Gentiles, Sinners and Song of Songs 1:5.

Elsewhere Ambrose refers to the young ravens without feeling any need to explain away their parentage; commenting on Song of Songs 5:11, where the beloved's hair is 'black as a raven', he tells us that this refers to the wisdom of teachers: 'et huiusmodi disputatores crines ecclesiae sunt, sicut pulli corvorum, quibus dominus escam dat...hos altos ac profundos ubertate doctrinae pascit dominus caelestibus sacramentis' (Expos. Ps. 118.15.12 [CSEL 62, 337]).

It would appear that exegetes in the East were less concerned with such difficulties than their Western counterparts. See Theodoret, In Ps. 146.9 (PG 80, 1981), which makes no distinction between ravens and their young: the ravens are fed because they call out of necessity, not from any calculation of their reward. Thus Luke 12:24: 'Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.'

59. Carm. Pasch. 1.170-175 (CSEL 10, 28-29):

Meliam corvi quondam pavere ministri
Praebentes sine more dapes, alesque rapinis
Deditus atque avido saturans cava guttura rostro
Tradidit inlaesam ieiunis morsibus escam.
Nunc bonus Meliae, qui perfidus antea Noe,
Abluit in terris quidquid deliquit in undis.

60. Tract. in Ioann. Ev. 6.2 (CCL 36, 54), 'utrumque hoc genus arca illa continebat; et si arca figurabat ecclesiam, videtis utique quia necesse est ut in isto diluvio saeculi utrumque genus contineat ecclesia, et corvum, et columbam'. Indeed, the notion that the Church must contain both is central to Augustine's arguments against the Donatists.
61. In Gen. 8.7 (SC 244, 128), 'Οὗτος δ' αὐτός, ὁ τοιοῦτός φημι καὶ κατὰ τὸν κόρακα τρόπον ἔχων, κἄν ὑπὸ τὸν δίκαιον δοκεῖ τυγχάνειν, ἐξεληθὼν ὡς ἐν ἀγῶνι πρὸς πειρασμὸν οὐκ [ὑ]ποστρέφει...ἀβέβαιός τις ὢν καὶ ζάλην ἐνεργεῖν πειρασμῷ οὐ δεδυνημένος'.
62. Sermo 2.5-6 (CCL 9A, 10).
63. Ibid. 6 (CCL 9A, 10-11), 'Verum si immunditia carnis, vel in nigritudine peccatorum, ut corvus, permanes, etiam si intus in ecclesia lateas, foris es. Intus quidem secundum hominem videris, sed secundum Deum, quem nihil latet, foris inveneris'.
64. De Lazaro Concio 6.7 (PG 48, 1037-1038):

'Ἄλλ' ἢ μὲν κιβωτός θῶσκε μόνον, ἢ δὲ Ἐκκλησία πλέον τι ἐργάζεται. Οἶόν τι λέγω. Ἐλαβεν ἢ κιβωτός τὰ ἄλογα, καὶ θῶσεν ἄλογα. Ἐλαβεν ἢ Ἐκκλησία ἀλόγους ἀνθρώπους, καὶ οὐ σώζει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μεταβάλλει. Ἐλαβεν ἢ κιβωτός κόρακα, καὶ κόρακα θῆκε. λαμβάνει ἢ Ἐκκλησία κόρακα, καὶ ἐκπέμπει

CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

περιστεράν· λαμβάνει λύκον, καὶ ἐκπέμπει αὐτὸν πρόβατον. Ὅταν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ ἐνταῦθα ἄνθρωπος ἀρπάζων, πλεονεκτῶν, ἀκούσῃ δὲ τῶν θείων λόγιων τῆς διδασκαλίας, μεταβάλλει τὴν γνώμην, καὶ ἀντὶ λύκου γίνεται πρόβατον.

For variations on the same theme see De Laudibus S. Pauli Apost.: Hom. 1.5 (SC 300, 120) and De S. Hieromartyre Phoca 2 (PG 50, 702). For Prudentius, Paul who was the wolf is clad in a woolly fleece, and gains the power to turn ravens into doves with his preaching (Tit. Hist. 48: Vas Electionis 189-192 [LCL, Prudentius 2, 368]):

Hic lupus ante rapax vestitur vellere molli:
...fit apostolus ac populorum
doctor et ore potens corvos mutare columbis.

65. McKinlay, however, did not. At 1.664, 'sed corvus erat', he refers us to the apocryphal Acta Petri and Simon Magus' attempt to fly which was brought by Peter to such an ignominious end (Actus Petri cum Simone 32 [Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, ed. R.A.Lipsius and M.Bonnet, 2 vols (1891-1903, reimpr. Hildesheim, 1959), I, 831]. His attempt thus to connect Simon and the raven, presumably by their common ability to 'fly', would appear to be clutching at straws.

CHAPTER FIVE: EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES:

GENTILES, SINNERS AND SONG OF SONGS 1:5

(Historia Apostolica 1.672-707)

Translation

An angel commands Philip, full of virtue, to hasten along the southern road, where an Ethiopian eunuch, who faithfully guarded the wealth of a queen in her hall, was travelling with his yoked horses. He flies on speedy chariot, seeking his certain joys, and will deserve from that very vehicle to cast out the wheels of his misdoings. O what great seeds of good things you will gather, you who are coming to receive such precious gifts of baptism, and who conceal in your sterile body something to reap with a more fruitful reward! Take unto you Philip, 'he who speaks from his heart' as the Hebrew says, whose name bears witness to the worth of his soul. It is beneficial to hear this teacher, for he teaches through his right as disciple; he himself will reveal of whom the words of the prophet speak, and when once he has done all this, if you hear and believe, in that part, in which He has now been sown, He will also be born to you, and you will then be born again to Him. Having caught sight of the waters, the fertile faith of the eunuch speedily began to blaze, who, having been immersed in the pool, cast off the burden of the serpent and hastened away in his cart, contemplating the departure of Elijah.

No small reason for this figure shines behind the image of this dusky area: the Almighty sanctioned the fact that Moses had joined an Ethiopian woman to him in the bond of marriage, for the Scriptures record that afterwards he spoke with his mouth in even closer proximity to the Lord. What is surprising if His love of the law then began to increase when it was joined to the church? Nor do the Canticles hide the fact that the eternal bride comes rather from this people, she whom they call dark and beautiful. She comes up from the South wind which scorches the soil of the Ethiopians, in the sight of Solomon to praise her Peacemaker, by which name that name which Christ bears was long ago confirmed. Now, under obligation to the world, she sends forth the guardian of her wealth, by which token she might begin to bring forth her jewels. What greater treasure does she have than the honour of the spring, what richer gold than the abundant faith of the heart? How fittingly then does the eunuch precede her; for when she comes forth, lust is cast out and chaste men receive the kingdom of heaven!¹

Introduction

In his exposition of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, Arator's main concern is to set the eunuch, or rather his mistress, Queen Candace, in her place at the end of a list of types which prefigure the conversion of the ecclesia ex gentibus; hence the list of

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

precedents which he cites: the Cushite wife of Moses (Num 12:1), the 'black and beautiful' bride (Song 1:5) and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10).

However, in addition to this, Arator's chief line of exegesis, the poet also enters into a not entirely serious examination of the effect of baptism, given the obvious physical condition of the eunuch, and alludes in the last line of the passage translated above to Christ's teaching concerning eunuchs and chastity at Mt 19:12: 'and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.'

Early interpretations of Mt 19:12 will not be examined here, since Walter Bauer has treated the thought and teaching of the early church concerning eunuchs in particular detail, and in his article supplies copious references.² It is, however, interesting to note that, since the verse is so frequently interpreted as advocating chastity rather than self-castration, there is very little room for the citing of biblical types such as the Ethiopian in Acts or his Old Testament counterpart, Abdimelech (Jer 38), examples of 'good' eunuchs, even if not eunuchs by choice.

Jerome, however, is an exception. Twice he refers both to Abdimelech and to the chancellor of Candace: although their chastity was, as it were, enforced upon them, yet through their goodness it became something undertaken voluntarily for the sake of the kingdom of heaven:

It is a mark of great faith, and of great goodness, to be the purest temple of

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

God, to offer one's whole self as a sacrifice to the Lord, and, according to the same apostle, to be holy in body and spirit. Such men are eunuchs, who, although they consider that on account of their sterility they are but a withered tree, hear through Isaiah that instead of sons and daughters they have a place prepared for them in the heavens. A type of these men is Abdimelech, the eunuch in Jeremiah, and that eunuch of Queen Candace in the Acts of the Apostles who, on account of the strength of his faith, obtained the name of 'man'.³

The idea that a eunuch's enforced sterility can be completely transcended is also found in Peter Chrysologus:

The eunuch too was born on the road, so that he whom human temerity had castrated for the service of men, and an unwilling chastity had placed within a royal hall, a voluntary and longed for chastity might promote and transfer to the glory of the heavenly hall, to the allegiance of the eternal king. Blessed is that man to whom it is permitted not to lose his palatial office but to change it.⁴

Jerome, however, implies rather more than this, as the last line of the passage quoted above and his second reference make clear. The eunuch's baptism and conversion not only transform his enforced sterility into a voluntary chastity, but also transform his entire self, from eunuch into man:

He is no mere eunuch; on the contrary, that eunuch is considered an Ethiopian man, since he has received the addition of manhood. For, because he was a eunuch of Christ, and had made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven, therefore he had not lost the name of 'man'.⁵

Arator does not worry himself with any such problematic analysis. He is more concerned to explore the ironic image of the seeds of faith growing to fruition in an otherwise sterile body:

O quanta bonorum
Semina percipies qui tam pretiosa lavacri
Sumere dona venis sterilique in corpore condis
Quod fructu meliore metas (1.677-680)!

Such self-indulgence in exploiting the ironic potential of the eunuch's 'fecunda fides' is reminiscent of the rather heavy-handed

style of Arator's sometime mentor, Ennodius of Pavia. Here is his fourth and final attempt to encapsulate his wit in an epigram about a certain eunuch called Tribunus, who was fond of travelling:

The eunuch, in his quandary, asks for a shameful way of life, for he is unable to bring forth seeds for the earth. The countryside, though its parts too are severed, retains its great seeds, and an increased harvest returns with its offspring. But in vain does he, himself cut off, smite the furrows with his ploughshare, unless, while he cleaves, he can scatter a wheaten stock.⁶

Thus Ennodius mocks the futile existence of the eunuch, even if the edge of his malice is blunted, if not obscured completely, by the near opacity of his language.

Arator, however, uses the same technique not merely as an end itself but in order to highlight the unexpected benefits which the eunuch will now receive: Philip's instruction enables him to reap the reward of baptism, the harvest sprung from the seeds of his diligent application to the scriptures:

Qua fuerit nunc parte satus, si credulus audis,
Et tibi nascetur, tuque inde renasceris illi (1.685-686).

1. The Exegetical Background

In general, however, commentators were less concerned with explaining the grounds for baptizing a eunuch than with pointing out this particular man's eminent suitability and natural preparation for baptism. Tertullian was slightly worried that the haste with which Philip baptized the eunuch might be misunderstood, for he is at pains to point out that baptism and the gift of the Spirit are not to be granted rashly. Thus, having drawn his reader's attention to the

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

injunctions against temerity contained in Mt 7:6, 'Cast not your pearls before swine', and 1 Tim 5:22, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man', he explains why baptism was so speedily effected in this particular case:

Let us recognise that the clear and express deigning of the Lord had intervened: the Spirit commended Philip to make for that road, and the eunuch himself was found to be not slothful, nor as one who had of a sudden desired to be dipped, but as one who had set out for the temple to pray and was intent upon divine scripture - thus must the man be found to whom God of his own accord had sent an apostle, whom the Spirit again ordered to join the eunuch's chariot. Scripture coincided exactly with his faith, he is summoned and received, the Lord is shown, faith does not delay, water is not found wanting, the apostle, his business over, is caught away.⁷

For John Chrysostom, as for Tertullian, it was the diligence and application displayed by the eunuch that made him such a suitable candidate for baptism. Chrysostom frequently uses the Ethiopian eunuch as an illustration of the effort that is required of a reader if he is fully to understand the scriptures:

However, his desire and great eagerness removed all obstacles, and he held fast to his reading, and did not say, as so many now say: 'I do not understand what is implied, I cannot fathom out the depth of the scriptures. Why do I foolishly endure this labour in vain, reading but having no one who can guide me?' He considered none of this, he who was a barbarian in tongue but a philosopher in intellect. But, considering that it should not be overlooked but that he would soon have the benefit of a decision from above, he held fast to his reading, in the hope that he might display his thoughts to the best of his ability.⁸

Elsewhere Chrysostom stresses the fact of the eunuch's modesty as well as his application: he knew that he needed Philip's help to understand the meaning of the passage he was reading, and was prepared to admit the fact: 'He shows his wound to the doctor; for he understands that he both knows these things, and is willing to teach them.'⁹ This eunuch, then, is a model for us all: 'In the meantime, let us feel ashamed before the eunuch, who was enlightened but still

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

read on.¹⁰ However, it is not only his application and modesty which are to be admired, but also the humanity and lack of haughtiness he showed in inviting Philip up into his chariot in the first place:

Marvel more at what happened before he climbed up: how a foreign and alien man, swollen with power (for he administered no small command), called unto him a poor man, a beggar, a stranger who had never before entered either his sight or his presence, appearing to him then for the first time; he called him unto himself, and took him up and sat him down with him.¹¹

Yet in another passage the eunuch is the one who is raised up, being made the object of contrast in exposition of Mt 19:30:

For Judas too was a son of the kingdom, and heard with the disciples Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, but he became a son of hell. But the Ethiopian, although he was a foreign man and one of those from the rising and setting sun, will enjoy for himself the crown with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And this is happening amongst us now: For many that are first shall be last, he said, and the last first.¹²

Chromatius of Aquileia contrasts the story of the eunuch with that of Simon Magus, who occupies the preceding episode in the Acts narrative: for Chromatius their natures are diametrically opposed:

Thus this eunuch, since he is a dove, is chosen, but Simon the magician, since he is a raven, is rejected; for the former believed with his whole heart and whole faith, but the latter drew near, doubting in his mind and all full of faithlessness. And therefore one was received and the other cast out; one was commended and the other condemned.¹³

Consequently it is the example of the faithful eunuch we are urged to follow, and not that of the faithless magician:

For thus we too are called to divine knowledge, to the grace of Christ; we ought to believe in Christ with our whole heart and our whole faith, so that we are not rejected along with the doubting and impious minds, but with God's saints and chosen deserve to be received by Christ the Lord in the glory which is to come.¹⁴

Chromatius also compares the eunuch with Cornelius the centurion in Acts 10: both were Gentiles, but both gained the reward of baptism on

account of their iustitia naturalis:

That holy centurion Cornelius affords us an example of this case, revealed from his own self, who, although he was restrained by no bond of divine law, yet, living in natural righteousness, fulfilled the commands of the law...That eunuch of Queen Candace also affords us no different example. Since he was of the Gentiles, it was on account of his natural righteousness that he deserved that holy Philip the deacon was sent by the Lord to baptize him.¹⁵

Chromatius is clearly alluding to Rom 2:14-15:

When Gentiles who do not possess the law carry out its precepts by the light of nature, then, although they have no law, they are their own law, for they display the effect of the law inscribed on their hearts.

Cornelius and the eunuch, though they have not received the law, nonetheless act in accordance with it, and are thus rewarded for their righteous conduct with the gift of baptism.

Peter Chrysologus too compares the story of the eunuch with that of Cornelius, together with that of the Canaanite woman of Mt 15:22-28 and that of the penitent robber crucified with Jesus, and uses their combined examples to form his own literary motif: if all these people received what they sought, how can he refuse to respond to the reader who wishes him to expound the faith?

If the Canaanite woman, with her sudden cry, her unexpected faith, and Christ travelling by, both received what she requested, and obtained what she had been denied; if the Ethiopian eunuch found the secret of life-giving baptism as he passed by, grasped it on the road, and carried it off on his journey; if the centurion Cornelius attained the Spirit before he had even entered into baptism; if the robber reached paradise and life at the very moment of death; who will deny you what you ask at this point in time? From faith therefore receive faith, and strive as time passes to be able to understand the mystery of faith.¹⁶

In the same manner Peter compares the conversion of the eunuch with that of Paul, thankful for the reassurance such examples offer ordinary men such as himself:

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

If the sudden and unexpected conversion of the blessed Paul did not comfort me, I should scarcely believe how easily you can be transformed from earthly ruin into heavenly glory...Nor does the example of that eunuch inspire me less, whom faith carried off unto grace before his chariot could recall him to India and his mistress.¹⁷

The passages examined above, then, do not appear to follow any one line of exegesis in particular, but rather commentators seem to cite the episode whenever it suits their individual needs, and interpret it accordingly. Thus both John Chrysostom and Peter Chrysologus use the story of the eunuch as an exemplum for their own rhetorical ends: Chrysostom cites it as an example of the rewards merited by diligent application to the scriptures, and Chrysologus as an example of the bountiful grace of God which is 'wont to give more than either we desire or deserve'.

However, from an early stage the baptism of the eunuch was commented upon, not because he was a eunuch, but because he was an Ethiopian, a Gentile.¹⁸ Consequently the tradition arose that after his baptism the eunuch returned to preach the gospel in his own country. Thus Irenaeus:

He was also sent into the land of Ethiopia, to preach what he himself had believed, namely, that there was one God preached by the prophets, and that his Son had indeed made his advent as a man, and had been led like a sheep to the sacrifice and whatever else the prophets say about him.¹⁹

The same tradition is recorded by Eusebius and Cyril of Jerusalem.²⁰ Arator does not refer explicitly to this tradition, but he clearly considered the eunuch to be the forerunner of all those Gentiles who were to become Christians, as the closing lines of this passage indicate:

Quam denique recte

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Praevius huic spado est (1.705-706).

Instead Arator concentrates on the fact that the eunuch was an Ethiopian, a member of a race which had supplied several other biblical characters which traditionally had represented the ecclesia ex gentibus. He thus aligns himself with those commentators who saw the Ethiopians in general as signifying all Gentiles, not a line of exposition which all his exegetical predecessors had followed.

2. The Ethiopians as Sinners

From the very beginnings of Christian scriptural exegesis biblical Ethiopians had been interpreted in either, or both, of two ways - as signifying sinners, or as representative of the Gentiles. Both traditions have a common source in Origen's Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum as translated by Rufinus.

The first instance of the former tradition of exposition, that the blackness of the Ethiopian skin signifies the blackness of the sinner's soul, occurs when Origen comments upon Zeph 3:10: 'From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering', which for Origen prefigures the forgiveness of sins:

For it seems to me that he is called beyond the rivers of Ethiopia who is discoloured by excessive and overflowing sins, and, being infected by the black dye of wickedness, has turned black and dark; and yet the Lord does not spurn even these, but all men who offer to God the sacrifices of a troubled spirit and a humbled heart, who, that is to say, are turned to him in the name of confession and penitence, are not spurned by him.²¹

We must straightaway be entirely sure of what Origen, and those

commentators who follow him, are saying. He is not trying to establish through scriptural proofs that the colour of an Ethiopian's skin signifies that that same Ethiopian is a sinner, albeit one whose sins might be forgiven; on the contrary, the Ethiopian's corporeal blackness is presented a foreshadowing our own spiritual blackness.²²

This tradition had an extremely strong following in the succeeding centuries. Thus Ambrose, recounting the significance of Geon, the second river of paradise, by which the law concerning the observance of the Passover was first brought when the Israelites were in Egypt, describes its name as meaning 'a gap in the earth':

Therefore, just as a gap swallows up the earth and whatever dirt or filth is in it, so too is chastity accustomed to wipe out all bodily passions, and quite rightly was the regulation of the observance first made there, for through the law is carnal sin swallowed up. Geon therefore, which holds the meaning of 'chastity', is well said to flow around the land of Ethiopia in order to cleanse its worthless body and put out the fire of its most vile flesh; for Ethiopia signifies, when translated into Latin, 'worthless and vile'. Now, what is more worthless, what is as similar to Ethiopia as our body, which is also black, as it were through the darkness of our sins?²³

Ambrose's point is not that the Ethiopians are cleansed of their filth by chastity, but rather that Ethiopia stands for all that is dark and stained in our own hearts. His exposition thus aims to explain the cleansing effect of chastity upon us all.

For Jerome too the Ethiopians signify the inner blackness of sinners, an exposition which recurs several times in his psalm commentaries. Thus the fourth verse of Ps 86, 'Behold, the foreigners, and Tyre, and the people of the Ethiopians, these were there', that is, within the holy city, refers for him not, as one might most probably think, to receiving the Gentiles into the fold of the church,²⁴ but to the

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

forgiveness granted to those who were once black in heart:

We were once Ethiopians, Ethiopians through our faults and sins. Who? Us? For our sins had made us black. But afterwards we heard, Be washed, be clean and we said, Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. We therefore who were Ethiopians were turned into brightness.²⁵

Jerome writes similarly on the thirty-second verse of Ps 67: 'Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God'; again, instead of giving the more obvious exposition, that it prefigures the conversion of the Gentiles, Jerome views the verse as assuring salvation for repentant sinners: 'Because we were black through our sins and passions, we precede the Israelite people, and believe in the Saviour, just as she who had the issue of blood preceded the daughter of the leader of the synagogue, and was healed.'²⁶

Jerome is quite clearly influenced here by his translation of Origen's two homilies on the Song of Songs; Origen-Rufinus too explains the verse by playing on the basic meaning of praevenio: 'For just as in the gospel that woman with the issue of blood preceded the daughter of the leader of the synagogue in her healing, so also was Ethiopia healed while Israel remained sick.'²⁷ For since Christ came into the world not to save the righteous but to call sinners unto repentance, so the sinful Ethiopians are healed before the righteous Jews.

Such then is the background against which Jerome interprets the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts: it signifies the power of God to change even seemingly immutable facts of nature, whether it be the darkness of the Ethiopian's skin or the blackness of the sinner's

soul: 'The eunuch of Queen Candace is prepared for the baptism of Christ by his reading of the prophets: contrary to nature the Ethiopian changes his skin and the leopard his spots.'²⁸ Similarly Jerome imagines how Paula, reaching the place of the eunuch's baptism on her journey through the Holy Land, would have reflected to herself 'how the Ethiopian eunuch, prefiguring the people of the Gentiles, changed his skin'.²⁹ Here we see that even Jerome cannot avoid the obvious interpretation which the episode demands, namely that the eunuch is representative of the Gentiles.

However, when he comes to offer an exposition specifically of Jer 13:23, in his unfinished commentary on that prophet, his interpretation, based again on the notion that the Ethiopians signify sinners, warns expressly against reading into this verse any false reassurance that man's sin is natural and cannot be changed:

Those who wish to defend their contrary natures use this evidence against the church, and say that either the blackness or the diversity of their sins is so great that it cannot turn into whiteness and the beauty of a single colour, but they do not pay attention to what follows: Then also you can do good, although you have learnt evil. For whatever is learnt does not belong to nature but to inclination and self-will, which in some way is turned into nature by the excessive habit and love of sinning. But what might be impossible for men is possible for God, so that, although the Ethiopian and the leopard can in no way seem to change their nature, yet He can change it who is at work within the Ethiopian and the leopard; as the apostle says: I can do all in Christ, who comforts me.³⁰

Jerome combines the Jeremiah reference with Ps 67:32 and 71:9, 'The Ethiopians shall bow before him', to explain Amos 9:7, 'Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel?'. However, the exposition is based mainly upon Song 1:5-6, 'I am black and beautiful...for the sun has discoloured me', a passage to which we shall return later in the chapter. It is sinners, the sun-burnt

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Ethiopians, who shall be saved by the advent of Christ:

For bodies which are withered through shade and sloth cannot bear the trials and agitations of this world; but those which are prepared for the struggle and the contests, sun-dried overcome the injuries of the world, and receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, which says to the righteous: The sun shall not burn you by day, neither the moon by night. Thus are Ethiopians turned into the sons of God if they are penitent, and the sons of God are transformed into Ethiopians if they come into the depth of sins.³¹

Thus, just as the Ethiopian, who is accustomed to the sun, does not burn in its heat, so the sinner, who has experienced life's struggles, is more prepared for the trials encountered on the path to salvation.

Jerome's exposition of the Ethiopians then is quite patent: the Ethiopian's bodily blackness signifies the sinner's spiritual blackness. However, since Christ came to save sinners, he who repents will be among the first to receive salvation.

In one passage, however, when he comments on Hab 3:7, 'I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble', Jerome sees the Ethiopians rather as representative of devils, adducing in his support the fourteenth verse of Ps 73:

The Ethiopians, since they are black and love darkness, are removed from all light and feed on the flesh of the serpent, of whom it is written: Thou hast given him to be meat for the people of the Ethiopians; they are construed as demons, whose tabernacle is made up of those in this world who toil on account of honours and riches.³²

Jerome describes the lengths to which such men go, how 'they endure things which even the rank of a slave would scarcely endure'³³ in order to amass their private fortunes, with the result that 'as a reward for their labours, they are become the lodging of demons, and

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

those who ought to have been the temple of God are become the tabernacle of the Ethiopians'.³⁴

However, the verse of Habakkuk in question indicates for Jerome the future of such men:

For when they have become rich and have climbed through right and wrong to the highest rung, then in consciousness of their sins they will always be afraid of death, always of judgement, and like robbers in jail, will in a slight fever groan about eternal punishment. Now, Midian in our language means 'in judgement', that is 'condemnation', and that is proved, because, through fear of judgement and eternal punishment, they are continually afraid, and the tortures, which they think they deserve, they endure in their daily terror.³⁵

Such then are the men who are become the tabernaculum Aethiopum.

Jerome's exposition of the Ethiopians does then differ here from the one he gives in the passages cited earlier. However, one should not be too ready to bring a charge of inconsistency. It was standard practice for scriptural exegetes to offer two or more expositions of a passage without feeling the necessity to relate them to each other. Nor were such expositions necessarily mutually exclusive; it was more a question of offering the reader more than one line of interpretation.

Thus Theodoret of Cyr interprets Zeph 2:12, 'You also, O Ethiopians, shall be slain by my sword', in two ways: 'These words signify both the mass of demons destroyed at the approach of the saving cross, and also those men, black in soul and godless, who are wounded by the godly blow';³⁶ while on Hab 3:7 he concentrates, like Jerome, on the first interpretation: 'For after Christ's saving passion, he saw in his descent the race of demons who, imitating in their character the

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

natural complexion of the Ethiopians, deceive the souls of men.'³⁷ Theodoret is not being inconsistent: the scriptures could be, and were, read on many levels.³⁸

The other major commentator to follow Origen's interpretation of the Ethiopians as sinners was Cassiodorus, who did so at every available opportunity in his Expositiones in Psalmos. Thus on Ps 67:32:

Egypt and Ethiopia, on account of the dark blackness of their inhabitants, are always held in bad repute. This figure of speech is called synecdoche, that is the whole from a part; for it signifies the world which, being subservient to the devil, was oppressed by the thick darkness of sin. But being enlightened by the light of the Lord, it deserved to gain the gifts of eternal life.³⁹

Cassiodorus sees the stretching forth of hands as a metaphor drawn from the terminology of battle, where the vanquished stretch forth their hands to their conquerors, pleading for their life: 'Thus Ethiopia too is warned not to delay in handing herself over to God, so that she who was soiled in her liberty might flourish in defeat.'⁴⁰

Ps 71:9 similarly foreshadows the repenting of sinners:

We ought to realise that the Ethiopians are sinful people; for just as they are clothed in the foulest skin, so are the souls of transgressors darkened by the shadow of their misdeeds. Thus those Ethiopians, who are sinners, fall down before him when they prostrate themselves in the humility of penitence.⁴¹

And again, for Cassiodorus Ps 86:4 offers the hope that repentant sinners might be received into the company of the saints: the Ethiopians may be sinners

but they are gathered together in that city of the Lord, that from them may be made up the number of the shining saints in that land. Behold, these are the very things which the previous verse predicted: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. For what is more glorious than that such great foulness of previously

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

erring people should converge into the one beauty of the holy city?⁴²

However, perhaps Cassiodorus' most original thought, whilst still keeping within this same tradition, is his exposition of Ps 73:14. How does the converted Ethiopian take the devil as his food? The constant harrying of the devil gives strength to the Christian's faith, and is the sustenance which spurs him on to the glorious crown of martyrdom, the most desirable reward of all:

We remark that the Ethiopians are certainly sinners, who were once most foul in the darkness of their mind; but when they are turned unto the Lord they begin to take the devil as their food...Thus it happens that he who once commanded the veneration of the pagans is now chewed up by the Christian jaws of repudiation. Or rather, the already converted faithful can take the devil as their food when they benefit from his machinations and temptations; for when he is in pursuit they become martyrs, and when he oppresses them they are crowned with the gift of suffering. Wherefore the devil is rightly called the food of them whom he leads through frequent exhaustions to their longed for desires.⁴³

Cassiodorus, like Jerome before him, in following this particular exegetical tradition, that the Ethiopians signify sinners, repeatedly ignores what would often be the more obvious exposition, that the Ethiopians are representative of all the Gentiles who are to be called to Christ's church.

2. The Ethiopians as Gentiles

This, the second tradition in the exegesis of the Ethiopian, also stems from Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs. The passage under consideration is the verse of Ps 67 already cited:

For if you consider that salvation comes to the Gentiles through Israel's offence and that her failing gave the nations a way to come in, you will realise how the hand of Ethiopia, that is the people of the Gentiles, precedes and arrives at God before those to whom the sayings of God were first given.⁴⁴

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Hilary records two current interpretations of the first half of the verse, 'Princes shall come out of Egypt': first the more obvious explanation, that it prefigured the coming of the Magi, and secondly that it referred to those foreigners who heard the apostles' inspired preaching after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. The second half of the verse, however, is directly related to the Ethiopian eunuch and the conversion of the Gentiles:

Now, Ethiopia precedes in its confession of faith through the eunuch of Candace; for while he demanded for himself the grace of baptism, saying, See, there is water, who will prevent my being baptized?, he so anticipated with his hand that very sacrament of baptism in the desire of his impatient longing, that, desirous of his own salvation, he exacted from a deacon the ministering of an apostolic duty. And because thenceforth the preaching of divine knowledge dawned upon almost all people - for both will all kingdoms understand, albeit late, that Christ the Lord is God, and every tongue will confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father - it longs for the consummation of that time, saying, O ye kingdoms of the earth, to God, sing to God, praise the Lord.⁴⁵

Augustine too explains the verse as indicating pars pro toto the conversion of all the Gentiles.⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that Cassiodorus clearly follows Augustine in labelling the figura synecdoche, but whereas Augustine means 'representative of all Gentiles', Cassiodorus attaches it to the former tradition - as representative of all sinners.⁴⁷ Augustine however remains firmly within the latter tradition, as his exposition, again pars pro toto, of Ps 71:9 shows: the verse refers to all Gentiles

to whom the catholic church was foretold, not that it would be in any particular area of the earth, like any of the schisms you please, but that by multiplying and growing in the whole world it would reach even the Ethiopians themselves, who are indeed the most distant and foulest of men.⁴⁸

Augustine gives the same emphasis in his exposition of Ps 73:14. We remember that for Jerome the Ethiopians ate the devil and assumed his character, while for Cassiodorus the converted Ethiopians were 'fed'

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

by the devil in their pursuit of martyrdom. But for Augustine the devil is devoured by the believing Christian:

How shall I interpret the Ethiopian people? How, if not by them all the Gentiles? And fittingly by people who are black; for the Ethiopians are black. Those people who were black are the very ones who are called to faith. They indeed, that it might be said to them: For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. They indeed are called black, but not so that they might remain black; for from them is made the church, to whom it is said: Who is she who comes up made white? For what became of her who was black if not what was said: I am black and beautiful? And how do those men take that serpent as their food? I think rather that they take Christ as their food, but Christ that they might consummate themselves by him, the devil that they might consume him...Therefore let the body of the devil be understood thus, it is this: he is devoured by the Gentiles who have believed, he has become food for the Ethiopian people.⁴⁹

The converted Gentiles, then, will consume and destroy the devil, but receive sustenance and consummation in the body of Christ.

Sometimes, of course, the two traditions of interpretation are interwoven and the distinction between them blurred: the Ethiopian may be tainted by sins committed in the course of being a Gentile, in particular the sin involved in the worship of idols.

Thus Philip the Presbyter, a pupil of Jerome, commenting on the precious jewels and colours of Job 28:16:

For amongst people where there is no fear of the true God their religion is counterfeit and in some way earthbound; for, under the pretext of the name of God, it is composed in the deceit of wrongdoing and in the differing and varied colours of speech, like a picture, and may shine in its eloquence like a precious stone or glitter with the name of a deity; and India or even Ethiopia signify the blackness or darkness of sins which is particularly involved in the worship of idols.⁵⁰

Didymus of Alexandria similarly explains the darkness of the Ethiopians in Ps 67:32, but sees Song 1:5 as referring to their repentance: 'That Ethiopia really does represent all the Gentiles, the bride who speaks about repentance demonstrates: I am black and

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

beautiful, on the one hand black and ugly through my idolatry and actual sin, but beautiful through forsaking them.'⁵¹

Thus, while some exegetes produced a peculiar hybrid compounded from the two interpretations, there were for the most part two separate traditions involved in the exposition of the biblical Ethiopians: for one line of commentators the blackness of the Ethiopian represented the heart of the sinner, made dark through sin, for the other the heart of the Gentiles who had not yet seen the light of Christ. Such darkness was dispelled from the former by penitence, and from the latter by faith.

Arator wrote his exposition of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch against a background in which both traditions were firmly established: Ethiopia might represent the Gentile and his conversion, or the sinner and his repentance. However, in accordance with his general view of Acts in which the emphasis is placed on baptism and its promise of salvation to the Gentiles, it is the former interpretation which he chooses to stress.

Arator announces his intention in very general terms:

*Non parva figurae
Causa sub obscurae regionis imagine lucet (1.690-691).*

The significance of the 'dusky area' will 'shine forth'. However, the poet does not intend to offer an exposition of the country, or even the race in general, illustrating its conversion with suitable texts such as the psalm-verses examined above. On the contrary, his aim is

to set the eunuch, and his queen, in their context as Gentiles justified through their iustitia naturalis, righteous individuals who, without the aid of the law, stand out from the mass of their fellow 'Ethiopians'.

3. Song of Songs 1:5: The 'Good Ethiopian'

There was already a well-established list of 'good Ethiopians' on which Arator was able to draw. Jerome was forced to give such a list at the beginning of his commentary on Zephaniah in order to extricate himself from the problems raised by his careful etymological interpretation of that prophet's name. Having expounded Zephaniah's glorious meaning, he declares that the prophet was a son of Cush, following Zeph 1:1, which name he interprets as 'humility' or 'my Ethiopian':

After such great merits, how can the name of 'Ethiopian' sound like praise? And if indeed scripture had said 'Cush', that is 'Ethiopian', it would seem an insoluble question, for Cush was indeed born from Ham. But in the fact that it says 'Cushi', that is 'my Ethiopian', there seems to sound a mystery, namely that he who had once been an Ethiopian has been turned unto penitence.⁵²

As scriptural proofs Jerome cites Ps 67:32, 71:9, the bride in the Song of Songs, and the two Ethiopian eunuchs, Abdimelech (Ebed-Melech) and the chancellor of Queen Candace. A little later he also cites the Queen of Sheba and Moses' Cushite wife.⁵³ Note that these 'good Ethiopians' are not offered as proof of the conversion of the Gentiles, but of the repentance of sinners.

However, the list of stereotyped 'good Ethiopians' can be traced back further than Jerome, indeed right back to the beginning of the third

century, to a work which, as we have seen, provided both main traditions of 'Ethiopian' exegesis, Origen's Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum.

The passage in question is Origen's interpretation of Song 1:5, 'I am black and beautiful', which we have already seen Augustine, Jerome and Didymus apply to the Ethiopians in general.⁵⁴

Origen illustrates the passage by gleaning from the Old Testament all scriptural references to those who might reasonably be considered 'black and beautiful'. Origen's aim, however, is not to present a 'theology of negritudo'. He begins the second book of his commentary by summarising the situation which, at face value, the verse describes: the speaker defends her colour against the reproaches of the daughters of Jerusalem, since her body 'is lacking neither in natural beauty nor in that which is acquired through practice'.⁵⁵ This, however, is only the superficial meaning of the text, as he explains:

This is what the tale, as recorded, comprises, and the outward appearance of the story as set down. But let us return to the mystical level. This bride, who speaks, has the character of the church from amongst the Gentiles.⁵⁶

In other words the entire exposition which is to follow will interpret the text on a mystical level. Thus the bride tells her detractors:

I am indeed black...because I do not descend from a stock of famous men, nor did I receive the enlightenment of the law of Moses, yet I have my own personal beauty. For in me too is that primal element which was made in me according to the likeness of God; and now, drawing near to the word of God, I have received my appearance.⁵⁷

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

She is black through the fact of being a Gentile.

Origen continues this interpretation when considering the next verse, 'Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has scorched me', and, by a not entirely convincing distinction between the meanings of adspicere (or respicere) and despicere, confirms that it is the blackness of the soul, not of the skin, which is under consideration: Ethiopians are black because the sun has looked at them, but the bride is black in soul because the sun has looked askance at her: 'Blackness of the soul...is acquired not by birth but by neglect; and thus just as it is drawn from sloth, so is it repelled and driven away by effort.'⁵⁸ She herself is the cause of her own blackness, for the Sun of Righteousness found her not standing straight, and thus looked askance at her, leaving her soul in darkness, 'disobedient and unbelieving'.⁵⁹ 'But', she continues:

when I shall stand upright before him and not be crooked in anything...then he who is himself upright shall look at me and there shall be no crookedness nor any reason for him to look askance; and then my light and my splendour shall be restored to me, and that blackness, which you now reproach, shall be driven so far away from me that I shall even deserve to be called the light of the world.⁶⁰

It is then clear that Origen is talking of spiritual rather than bodily blackness. Such blackness of soul, as we saw above, can imply both sin and unbelief, as Origen admits: 'Now, it can also be said about each and every soul which after many sins is converted to penitence that it is black through sins but beautiful through penitence and the fruits of penitence.'⁶¹ The same interpretation is found in Origen's two Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum translated by Jerome: 'But if you are penitent, your soul will indeed be black through your old offences, but through your penitence will have

something, so to speak, of an Ethiopic beauty.'⁶²

There is thus no reason to think that Origen adduced his texts for the purpose of showing that all people with dark skin are potentially 'good'; his aim was to identify them as passages which similarly prefigured the ecclesia ex gentibus, in the persona of someone who was both nigra et formosa:

But since we are in this area, where the church which comes from the Gentiles says that she is black and beautiful, although it may seem a long and laborious task to gather from divine scripture where and how the meaning of this mystery might previously occur, however, it seems to me that it should not be entirely omitted, but be recorded as briefly as is possible.⁶³

a) Moses' Cushite Wife

The first character on whom Origen lights is the Cushite woman whom Moses marries at Numbers 12:1. The Song of Songs bride is made to identify herself explicitly with this Aethiopissa, as she addresses her audience thus:

How is it that you do not remember what is written in your law, what Miriam suffered when she reproached Moses for taking a black Ethiopian woman as his wife? How can you be unaware that the outline of that type is now truly fulfilled in me? I am that Ethiopian woman, I am indeed black through the obscurity of my birth, but beautiful through penitence and faith.⁶⁴

Origen again stresses that this blackness is not to be taken at its face value: Miriam and Aaron did not complain because the woman was black but because they realised her mystical significance:

In this it seems to me that they understood what had happened more according to the mystery, and saw that Moses, that is the spiritual law, was now entering into marriage and union with the church gathered from among the Gentiles.⁶⁵

For Miriam, representing the synagogue, and Aaron, signifying the

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

carnal priesthood, realised that the kingdom was being taken from them, an interpretation also proffered by Origen in his commentary on Numbers.⁶⁶ Proof of God's approval of the marriage followed in the fact that, immediately afterwards, Moses spoke with the Almighty face to face: 'Then even Moses himself, of whose faith and endurance such great and wonderful works are recorded, was never exalted with such high praise from God as he was now, when he took the Ethiopian woman as his wife.'⁶⁷

This interpretation, showing God's approval, would not appear to have been widely followed by commentators, who were more concerned with explaining the significance of Moses' marriage than with what happened next. The same idea, however, does reappear in the passage of Arator before us:

Comprobat Omnipotens taedarum foedere Moysen
Aethiopam sociasse sibi, quem dogmata produunt
Postea cum Domino vicinius ore locutum.
Quid mirum si legis amor tunc crescere coepit
Ecclesiae cum iuncta fuit (1.692-696)?

The Almighty shows his approval when Moses, the law, is joined to the Ethiopian woman, the church of the Gentiles. Perhaps Arator knew at first hand Rufinus' translation?⁶⁸

In his comment on Zeph 2:12, Jerome uses the example of Moses and his wife to indicate the salvation which awaits sinners who cast off the blackness of their sins, and offers new hope to those 'Ethiopians' whom Jer 13:23 would appear to condemn:

There will be the hope for those Ethiopians who are converted to better things that no one who wishes to repent will be unworthy of salvation. Whence even the soul which was once polluted and soiled with the stains of its offences says I am

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

black. And later, at the end of the Song of Songs, it is written of the same soul, now cleansed and washed through penitence: Who is she who comes up made white? Moses also, that is the spiritual law of the Lord, took an Ethiopian wife from among the Gentiles.⁶⁹

Miriam and Aaron are identified as in Origen, and the scene interpreted as the fulfilment of Ps 67:32. The verse of Zephaniah in question is finally interpreted thus: 'Therefore the divine word now threatens those who, adhering unto sin and defiled with the stains of their offences, refuse to be converted unto better things and wash off their dark colour; it threatens them with a sword.'⁷⁰ Jerome is well aware of Origen's exposition but subordinates it to his own preferred interpretation.

Quodvultdeus compares Miriam and Aaron with those who at Lk 6:30 reproached Jesus

for eating with tax collectors and sinners. When he said Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, he showed them that he had received that Ethiopian woman, the church from among the Gentiles, which says I am dark and beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem.⁷¹

For Quodvultdeus, then, the Ethiopian woman, though personally representative of the church from among the Gentiles, also signifies all sinners to be called unto repentance, just as she did for Jerome.

Theodoret of Cyr, in a very sophisticated exposition of Song 1:5, identifies the bride not only with Moses' wife but also with the foreign princess of Ps 44:10-14:

I am not only black but also beautiful; for I who was once blind now see, and I, who once wore ancient rags, am now surrounded and adorned with a garment of wrought gold; I hold royal honour and stand next to the king, displacing you who rage upon the king and have handed him over unto death, defiling the chamber with your crowd of adulterers. Do not then reproach me for the blackness of my skin,

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

nor bring up my past sins. For I am black, I confess, but beautiful and acceptable to my husband. Beware the example of Miriam, for she reproached Moses for taking an Ethiopian woman as his wife and became as leprous as snow...I too, then, am that Ethiopian woman, but also the bride of the great lawgiver. I am also the daughter of the priest of Midian, an idolatrous man, but I have forgotten my own people and my father's house; wherefore the king desired my beauty.⁷²

Theodoret also tells us the reason for the bride's blackness: whereas for Origen it resulted from the fact that the Sun of Righteousness looked askance at her because she was not standing upright, according to Theodoret the Sun of Righteousness shone on her all the time; the bride's blackness resulted from the failure of her perception, her failure to perceive the true creator and the true sun:

For I became black in the service of creation, removed from the creator, and through falling down before this perceptible sun instead of the Sun of Righteousness. But I saw the difference between them, and, abandoning what was made, fell down before the maker. Do not look at me then because I am black...black through my former impiety, beautiful through penitence; black through my unbelief, beautiful through faith.⁷³

Again we see that the distinction between Gentile and sinner is blurred. The bride does not offer the excuse that she had never before seen the true sun, rather she admits her fault in failing to recognise it. Thus her unbelief is impiety, and her faith must be accompanied by penitence.

Caesarius of Arles, however, presents Moses' wife very clearly as the church from among the Gentiles, whose blackness does not result from any conscious wrongdoing but from her original sin:

Realise, brethren, that this is no small mystery: that Ethiopian woman whom the blessed Moses took as his wife was from among the Gentiles, for Christ too was to join to himself the church from among the Gentiles. Moses abandons his own people and is united in far-off parts with an Ethiopian woman; Christ too, having abandoned the people of the Jews, is joined to a church from the remotest parts, indeed to that which says in the Psalms: From the ends of the earth have I called to you. Hear from the character of the church in the Song of Songs. The church says I am black and beautiful. What is this I am black and beautiful? Black

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

through nature, beautiful through grace; black through original sin, beautiful through the sacrament of baptism.⁷⁴

We shall return to the baptismal application of Song 1:5 shortly.

b) The Queen of Sheba

The second character whom Origen presents is the Queen of Sheba who visits Solomon at 1 Kings 10 (an account repeated at 2 Chron 9), and who, according to Mt 12:42 and Lk 11:31, 'will arise at the judgement with this generation and condemn it': 'Thus she comes, or rather, in accordance with her type, the church from among the Gentiles comes to hear the wisdom of the true Solomon and the true Peacemaker, our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁷⁵ The identification of Moses' wife with the Gentile church was arrived at in close conjunction with the interpretation of the other characters involved in the particular situation of Numbers 12 - Moses, the spiritual law, embraces the church despite the protests of, or even in place of, the synagogue; the Queen of Sheba, however, who is 'nihilominus "Aethiopissa"',⁷⁶ earns her significance through the universality she represents, in contrast with the exclusiveness of the Jewish people:

Thus she comes to Jerusalem, that is to say to the vision of peace, with a large following and many good things; for she comes not merely with one nation, as the synagogue before contained only Hebrews, but with the people of the whole world, also bringing gifts worthy of Christ...With this show, then, she enters unto Christ the peacemaking king and opens her heart to him, namely in confession and repentance of her past sins.⁷⁷

Central to the identification of the Queen of Sheba with the Gentile church is that of Solomon as a type of Christ, an identification which owed much of its origin to the etymological interpretation of

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Solomon's name: the church from among the Gentiles does not arrive bringing precious stones and spices, 'but faith, the perceptible incense, and offering the sweat of her good works and the blood of martyrdom; for it is in such gifts that the true Solomon delights, who is Christ, "our peace". For Solomon is interpreted "peaceable"'.⁷⁸

This identification was very frequent in biblical commentary,⁷⁹ and underlies the inclusion of the Queen of Sheba in Arator's list of types: the Queen of the South arrives .

Salomonis in ore
Pacificum laudare suum, quo nomine dudum
Signatum est quod Christus habet (1.699-701).

Just as Moses is united with the Ethiopian woman, the bride with her beloved, the Queen with Solomon, so is the church united with Christ.

Ambrose, commenting on Lk 11:31, considers that the stories of Jonah and the Queen of Sheba indicate the mystery of the church: the people of Nineveh are gathered in through their repentance, and the Queen through her pursuit of wisdom:

Therefore that mystery is a profound one, which concerns Christ and the church, but this however is greater, for that occurred before in a metaphor, but now the mystery is fulfilled in truth; for there it was the mere type of Solomon, but here it is Christ in his own body. The church therefore consists of two things, that you should either know how not to sin or leave off from your sin; for repentance wipes out the offence, wisdom guards against it. This is what the mystery entails.⁸⁰

The Queen of Sheba, in her pursuit of wisdom, was representative of those Gentiles who avoided sin through their natural observance of the law. It was to this end that Theodoret quoted Rom 2:14, the great

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

justification of the Gentile church, and continued:

For, although she herself was a foreigner and had neither received the divine law nor enjoyed the care of the prophets, she was content with the law of nature, and was amazed at his righteousness and praised his righteous judgement, and through him who had received the gift of wisdom she hymned the great Giver.⁸¹

Similarly Paulinus of Nola, in making the Queen an example of those who were as yet invisitatae but still visitandae, refers to 2 Cor 3:3 'not having the law of the letter, but having faith in the law which is cut upon the fleshly tablets of the heart by the spirit of reason and piety'.⁸² Just as Theodoret intertwined the characteristics of the foreign princess of Ps 44 with those of Moses' wife when identifying her with the Song of Songs bride, so Paulinus ascribes them to the Queen of Sheba:

Robed with many colours, in a garment of wrought gold, forgetting both her people and her father's house, she came running, barbarian in race but not in soul, outwardly a foreigner but inwardly a Jew, she longed to become a fellow-citizen of the saints.⁸³

Thus is she found worthy, 'for, marvelling at Christ in Solomon, she had fulfilled a true impression of the heavenly queen in the mystic form of the provident church'.⁸⁴

Paulinus, like Origen, Ambrose and Theodoret, interpreted the passage as directly prefiguring the union of the ecclesia ex gentibus with Christ. Gregory of Nyssa, however, gives a more general exposition: why did the Queen cross the great distance which separated the Ethiopians from Solomon? 'For who does not know that the church from among the Gentiles was black from idolatry before becoming the church, travelling the great distance between ignorance and knowledge of the true God?'⁸⁵ When the moment of salvation arrived, the Jews,

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

who were near, drew back, and the Gentiles, who were so far-off, gained the advantage:

But when the grace of God appeared, and his wisdom shone out, and the true light sent out its ray to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, then, as Israel closed its eyes at the light and stood back from participation in what is good, the Ethiopians advanced, running in faith from among the Gentiles, and those who were once far-off drew near, washing away their blackness in the mystic water.⁸⁶

The Gentiles draw near in faith, washed in the mystic waters of baptism:

Christ came into the world to make those who are black shine, for he did not call righteous men unto him but sinful men unto penitence, whom he made shine like lights in the laver of regeneration, washing away their dark form in the water.⁸⁷

As we saw in the case of Caesarius earlier, this was the natural progression of the Song of Songs exposition: if the stains of sin are to be removed, then how better than by the waters of baptism? Origen, as translated by Rufinus, since he is primarily concerned with the Gentiles, talks more of enlightenment than cleansing, but in the homilies translated by Jerome there is some emphasis placed on the ablution of sins. Because the bride is 'not yet cleansed from every stain of sin, nor yet washed unto salvation, she is called black; but she does not remain in her black colour; she also becomes shining'.⁸⁸ Jerome himself also speaks frequently of washing away the Ethiopians' sin.⁸⁹ Gregory of Elvira too makes explicit the link with baptism; speaking of the church from among the Gentiles, he refers to Eph 5:27, which occurs in a passage which compares human marriage with the union of Christ and his church:

For now it is washed in the waters of baptism, now it is cleansed from every spot or wrinkle, as the apostle says: that he might present to himself the church without spot or wrinkle, that is, no spot of sin, no wrinkle of perverse doctrine; now it is rosy with the blood of Christ, now fashioned by the enlightenment of the

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Holy Spirit, now adorned with the gifts of anointing.⁹⁰

While for Gregory baptism enlightened the heart of the Gentile, for Ambrose it cleansed the heart of the sinner; he thus places 'I am black and beautiful' in the mouth of John as he reclines next to Jesus at the last supper, to great dramatic effect:

'Black through my fault, beautiful through grace.' The flesh too says 'I am black and beautiful, black through the worldly dust I have collected in my striving, beautiful through the spiritual oil with which I have wiped away the dust and squalour of this world; black through sin, but now beautiful through baptism which washes away every offence'.⁹¹

No less effective is the passage in De Mysteriis where Ambrose refers to the white robes of the neophyte:

The church, possessing these garments which it put on through the laver of regeneration, says in the Song I am black and beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem. Black through the fragility of the human condition, beautiful through grace; black because from among sinners, beautiful through the sacrament of faith.⁹²

3. Abdimelech

The last character whom Origen offers up as evidence is Abdimelech, the Ethiopian eunuch who secures the release of Jeremiah from the cistern at Jer 38:

And I think that it does not seem unsuitable to say that that foreigner and man of a dusky and lowly race, that is the people of the Gentiles, who rescued from the pit of death him whom the princes of Israel had condemned and handed over to the pit of death, believing that is to say in the resurrection from the dead, that man by his faith recalls and brings back from hell him whom they had handed over unto death.⁹³

Thus Origen identifies the eunuch who rescued Jeremiah from the lacus mortis with the Gentile church which trusts in Christ's resurrection from the dead.

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Origen then offers us two reasons for the fact that Abdimelech is called a eunuch: either 'because he had castrated himself for the kingdom of God or even because he had no seed of wickedness in him'.⁹⁴ He also presents us with an etymological interpretation, servus regum,⁹⁵ which is perhaps a slip on Rufinus' part since the correct translation, as Jerome records, is servus regis.⁹⁶ Origen, however, makes no real attempt to explain the significance of this interpretation, unlike Ambrose who would appear to know a quite different tradition: 'Therefore you too will be "Abdimelech", that is "taken up by the Lord", if you lift the word of God out of the depth of Gentile ignorance.'⁹⁷

Ambrose does not attempt to push the identification of Abdimelech with the ecclesia ex gentibus as far as Origen, and for this reason his exposition is more successful:

For we who were indeed sinners from among the Gentiles, once black through our offences and at one time infertile, we have lifted out of the deep the word of the prophet, which the Jews had thrust down as it were into the filth of their own mind and flesh.⁹⁸

The exposition is much simpler than Origen's: the Gentiles, sinful as they were, responded to Christ while the Jews did not. Ambrose sees the conversion of the Gentile church prefigured in Ps 67:32 and in the Song of Song passages; his exposition of the latter is given in his favoured antithetical form already noted above, contrasting man's sin with God's pardoning grace:

Black through its fault, beautiful through grace; black through its condition, beautiful through redemption; or perhaps black through the dust of its exertions, and thus black while it was fighting, beautiful when it was crowned with the marks of its victory.⁹⁹

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

Jerome does not reach this far in his commentary on Jeremiah, although he clearly intended to comment on it;¹⁰⁰ and although he offers Abdimelech as a 'good Ethiopian' at the beginning of his commentary on Zephaniah we learn no more than that 'he was pleasing to God'.¹⁰¹

Origen's exegesis of Abdimelech, then, had very little influence on subsequent commentators. His identification of Abdimelech with the ecclesia ex gentibus, unlike that of Ambrose, is far from convincing for two reasons: first, the situation in which Abdimelech is involved, unlike that of the two preceding types, offers no ready parallel. Jeremiah, in this instance, cannot really be interpreted as a type of Christ, and even if he could it was not the Gentile church which secured Christ's resurrection from the dead. Abdimelech is forced into action precisely because he knows that Jeremiah cannot escape from the cistern by his own means. Origen's solution, that Abdimelech is representative of the trust of the Gentile church in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, is no solution at all. Secondly, even if there were a parallel available, the fact that Abdimelech is not a woman obviously weakens his claim for inclusion in a list of types which are interpreted as prefiguring the union of Christ with his church through some human union, in particular that of marriage.

Abdimelech is certainly a 'good Ethiopian' who can well be interpreted as representative of those Gentiles who are justified through their iustitia naturalis, and therefore of the ecclesia ex gentibus itself, but he, like the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8, can

EUNUCHI FECUNDA FIDES

have no place in an exposition such as Arator's.

Arator is compiling a list of types of the Gentile church which are drawn ultimately from Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs. However, he is not interested in offering general proof of the conversion of the Gentiles by means of such texts as the 'Ethiopian' psalm-verses examined earlier; his concern is to present a list of types which must needs be entirely female, for his exposition depends upon a series of unions: the Cushite woman is married to Moses, the eternal bride of the Song of Songs is joined with her beloved, the Queen of Sheba comes to marvel at Solomon. To these traditional figures, in what would seem an original move, Arator adds Queen Candace; she is both the final type in the series, a New Testament counterpart of those Old Testament characters, and also the very fulfilment of those types. She is not, like them, merely representative of the Gentile church which will at some point turn to Christ, but, through the baptism of the eunuch, she becomes that church of the gentiles which the Old Testament figures foretold would be united with Christ.¹⁰²

Thus Arator's somewhat obscure term debita mundo (1.701) can now be understood. The Gentile church is what the world had been promised through the Old Testament types examined above. Now at last she comes forth, sending before her 'the guardian of her wealth'. The riches which the eunuch receives in his baptism reveal the hidden wealth which the Gentile church possesses: a readiness to receive baptism, founded on its iustitia naturalis.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 52-54. McKinlay's question mark at the end of 707 should surely be emended to an exclamation mark. The unfamiliar, though appropriate, expression errorum rotas is ultimately derived, as Arntzen (PL 68, 151) recognised from Ecclesiasticus 33:5: 'Praecordia fatui quasi rota carri, et quasi axis versatilis cogitatus illius.'

I do not understand either Schrader's translation (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 45) of lines 684-685:

cumque omnia fecerit olim,
Qua fuerit nunc parte satus

'and since [Christ] has performed everything in the past in the place in which He will now be reborn' (surely Arator means merely that the eunuch has already read about Christ but that he will need the instruction of Philip [the subject of fecerit] if those seeds are to spring to life?); or his need to introduce Philip as the awkward subject of cucurrit (689).

For discussion of this episode, see Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 244-245), especially on Arator's interpretation of Philip's name. Elsewhere (263) he notes that this is the only episode in which Arator departs entirely from the two central characters of Peter and Paul: 'Allein hier scheint Arator durch die Wichtigkeit der an dieser Geschichte haftenden Allegorie hingerissen zu sein.'

Throughout this chapter eunuchus and spado alike will be rendered 'eunuch', a word having no ready synonym in English.

2. 'Matth. 19,12 und die alten Christen', Aufsätze und kleine Schriften, ed. G.Strecker (Tübingen, 1967), 253-262.
3. Adv. Iov. 1.12 (PL 23, 239):

Grandis fidei est, grandisque virtutis, Dei templum esse purissimum, totum se holocaustum offerre Domino; et iuxta eundem Apostolum, esse sanctum et corpore et spiritu. Hi sunt eunuohi, qui se lignum aridum ob sterilitatem putantes, audiunt per Isaiam, quod pro filiis et filiabus locum in coelis habeant paratum. Horum typus est Abdemelech eunuchus in Ieremia; et spado ille reginae Candacis in Actis apostolorum, qui ob robur fidei viri nomen obtinuit.

4. Sermo 56: De Symbolo 1.2 (CCL 24, 315):

Eunuchus etiam generatur in vis, ut quem castraverat humana temeritas ad hominis servitutum, et intra regis aulam invita castitas collocaret, voluntaria castitas et votiva ad caelestis aulae gloriam, ad aeterni regis promoveret et transferret obsequium. Beatus isto, cui datum est ut palatii infulas non amitteret, sed mutaret!

5. Comm. in Soph. 1.1 (CCL 76A, 657), 'Et non solum eunuchus; sed cum [CCL's eum must surely be a misprint; read cum with PL 25, 1404] additamento viri ponitur, eunuchus vir Aethiops. Quia enim eunuchus erat Christi, et se eunichizaverat propter regnum

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

caelorum, propterea viri vocabulum non amiserat'. See also Ep. 53 Ad Paulinum Presbyterum 5 (Budé, Jérôme 3, 14), 'In Actibus apostolorum sanctus eunuchus, immo vir - sic enim eum scriptura cognominat'. For Jerome this proves that even eunuchs are not 'externi a salute Dei', In Esaiam 15.56.3 (CCL 73A, 631). But see Comm. in Mat. 3.19.12 (CCL 77, 168).

6. Carm. 2.72 De Eunuchio Tribuno nomine peregrino omnia perambulante (MGH.AA 7, 161):

Eunuchus turpem poscit per conpita victum:
Semina telluri non habet unde ferat.
Grandia proscissis rus servat germina membris,
Fetibus et messis multiplicata redit:
Incassum sectus proscindit vomere terga,
Ni findens spargat triticeam subolem.

Does Ennodius have in mind Lucretius, De Rer. Nat. 4, 1272-1273:

Eicit enim sulcum recta regione viaque
Vomeris atque locis avertit seminis ictum

where the poet uses the same ploughing imagery to describe the attempts of some women to avoid conception? The four preceding versions of the epigram contain wordplay as risqué, for example, the ambiguity of sine teste at Carm. 2.70 (161); see also 2.69 (160).

7. De Bapt. 18.2 (CCL 1, 292-293):

recogitemus manifestam et exertam dignationem domini intercessisse: spiritus Philippo praeceperat in eam viam tendere, spado et ipse inventus est non otiosus nec qui subito tingui concupisceret, sed ad templum orandi gratia profectus scripturae divinae impressus - sic oportebat deprehendi cui ultro deus apostolum miserat - , ad quem rursus spiritus ut se curriculo eunuchi adiungeret iussit; scriptum ipsius fidei occurrit in tempore, exhortatus adsumitur, dominus ostenditur, fides non moratur, aqua non expectatur, apostolus perfecto negotio abripitur.

8. Hom. in Gen. 35.1 (PG 53, 322):

ἀλλ' ὄμως ὁ πόθος καὶ ἡ πολλὴ σπουδὴ πάντα τὰ καλύματα ἀποδῶν ἐποιεῖτο, καὶ εἶχετο τῆς ἀναγνώσεως, καὶ οὐκ ἔλαγε ταῦτα, ἃ νῦν πολλοὶ λέγουσιν· οὐ νοῶ τὰ ἐγκείμενα, οὐ δύναμαι συνιέναι τὸ βάθος τῶν γεγραμμένων· τίνας ἔνεκεν ἀπλῶς καὶ εἰκὴ τὸν κάματον ὑπομενῶ, ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οὐκ ἔχων τὸν ὀδηγῆσαι δυνάμενον; Οὐδὲν τούτων ἐλογίσαστο ὁ βάρβαρος μὲν τὴν γλῶσσαν, φιλόσοφος δὲ τὴν διάνοιαν· ἀλλ' ἐννοήσας ὡς οὐ περιοφθήσεται, ἀλλὰ ταχέως ἀπολαύσει τῆς ἄνωθεν ροπῆς, εἰ τὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ εἰς δύναμιν ἐπιδειξάιτο, εἶχετο τῆς ἀναγνώσεως.

See also Hom. in quaedam loca N.T. 2 In illud, Pater si possibile est 1 (PG 51, 31), De Lazaro Concio 3.3 (PG 48, 995) and Gregory of Nyssa, De Bapt. (PG 46, 421). For the significance of the text the eunuch was reading, see Jerome, Ep. 108 Epitaphium S. Paulae 11 (Budé, Jérôme 5, 170), 'et dum vetus relegit instrumentum, fontem repperit evangelii', and In Esaiam 14.53.8/10 (CCL 73A,

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

592), 'et statim baptizatus, in agni sanguine quem legebat'.

9. Hom. in Acta 19.2 (PG 60, 151), 'Ἐπιδεικνύει τὸ τραῦμα τῷ ἰατρῷ· συνείδεν, ὅτι καὶ οἶδε ταῦτα, καὶ βούλεται διδάξαι'.
10. Hom. in Acta 19.3 (PG 60, 154), 'τέως τὸν εὐνοῦχον αἰσχυρθῶμεν, καὶ φωτιζόμενον καὶ ἀναγινώσκοντα'.
11. Hom. 10: In illud, Messis quidem multa (PG 63, 522):

μᾶλλον δὲ πρὸ τῆς ἐπιβάσεως ἐκείνο θαύμασον, πῶς ὁ βάρβαρος καὶ ἀλλόφυλος καὶ φλεγμαιῖνων ἀπὸ τῆς δυναστείας (οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ἀρχὴν μετεχειρίζε), τὸν πένητα, τὸν πτωχόν, τὸν ἀγνώτα, τὸν οὐδέποτε αὐτῷ οὔτε εἰς ἔσπιν οὔτε εἰς συνουσίαν ἐλθόντα, τότε πρῶτον φανέντα, τοῦτον καὶ ἐκάλεσε καὶ ἀνεβίβασε καὶ ἑαυτῷ συνεκάθισε.

See also Basil, Hom. in S. Bapt. 6 (PG 31, 437).

12. Hom. in Matt. 26.5 (PG 57, 339):

Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Ἰούδας υἱὸς βασιλείας ἦν, καὶ ἤκουσε μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν, Ἐπὶ δάδεκα θρόνους καθιεῖσθε, ἀλλὰ γέγονεν υἱὸς γεέννης· ὁ δὲ Αἰθίοψ, βάρβαρος ἄνθρωπος ὢν, καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν, μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἀπολαύσεται τῶν στεφάνων. Τοῦτο καὶ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γίνεται νῦν. Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἔσονται, φησὶ, πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι, καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.

13. Sermo 2.8 (CCL 9A, 11):

Hic ergo eunuchus ut columba electus est; Simon vero magus ut corvus reprobatur, quia hic toto corde et tota fide credidit; ille dubia mente totus perfidiae plenus accessit. Et ideo hic susceptus est, ille eiectus est; hic probatus, ille damnatus.

14. Ibid.:

Quia ergo et nos vocati sumus ad cognitionem divinam, ad gratiam Christi, toto corde et tota fide Christo credere debemus, ut non cum dubiis et profanis mentibus reprobemur, sed cum sanctis et electis Dei suscipi in futura gloria a Christo Domino mereamur.

For the identification of Simon Magus with the raven, a tradition seemingly initiated by Chromatius, see the preceding chapter.

15. Tract. 9.2 (CCL 9A, 233):

Et huius rei sanctus ille Cornelius centurio apertum nobis ex sese praebet exemplum, qui cum nullo divinae legis vinculo teneretur, naturali tamen iustitia vivens, praecepta legis implebat... Non dissimile nobis praebet exemplum etiam eunuchus ille reginae Candacis. De gentilibus cum esset, propter iustitiam naturalem meruit ut ad baptizandum eum sanctus Philippus diaconus a Domino mitteretur.

16. Sermo 60 De Symbolo 5.1 (CCL 24, 335):

Si Cananitis mulier clamore subito, repentina fide, vivante Christo, et quod petebat accepit, et quod negabatur extorsit; si Aethiops spado archanum

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

vitalis lauari praeteriens invenit, in via reperit, tulit in transitu; si Cornelius centurio, antequam intraret baptismum, pervenit ad spiritum; si latro in ipso momento mortis paradisum pervadit et vitam: vobis in articulo temporis quod quaeritis quis negabit? Ex fide ergo accipite fidem et, ut fidei mysterium scire possitis, accessu temporis laborate.

17. Sermo 61 De Symbolo 6.1 (CCL 24, 341):

Nisi me solaretur beati Pauli subita et inopinata conversio, vix crederem tam facile vos de terrena labe in caelestem posse gloriam commutari...Nec minus animat me illius spadonis exemplum, quem fides ante reperit ad gratiam, quam currus ad Indiam dominamque revocaret.

18. It is not the intention of this chapter to attempt to establish exactly what the Fathers understood by 'Ethiopia'; as Edward Ullendorff, (Ethiopia and the Bible [The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1967] [London, 1968], 5) observes, 'It is clear, therefore, that the Biblical "Cush" is a vague term connoting the entire Nile Valley, south of Egypt, including Nubia and Abyssinia'; and later (15): 'her location remains imprecise, and her people's characteristics vary from utter remoteness and awareness of their black skin to an innocent piety reaching out for God's mercy.'

On the question of whether or not the Ethiopian really was a Gentile see Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 314. He believes that Luke does not mention the fact so as not to preempt Peter's conversion of Cornelius in the following chapter.

19. Adv. Haer. 3.12.8 (SC 211, 214-216), 'Qui et missus est in regiones Aethiopiae, praedicaturus hoc quod ipse crediderat, Deum quidem unum per prophetas praedicatum, huius vero Filium fuisse secundum hominem adventum et ut ovem ad victimam ductum et reliqua quaecumque prophetae dicunt de eo'. See also Adv. Haer. 4.23.2 (SC 100.2, 696), 'agebat iter gaudens, praeco futurus in Aethiopia Christi adventus'.
20. Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. 1.1.13, as translated by Rufinus (GCS 9.1, 109), 'hunc opinio tenet ad patriam terram regressum scientiam dei summi et salutarem domini nostri praescientiam indigenis gentibus, sicut sibi tradita fuerat, praedicasse'; Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. 17: De S.S. 2.25 (PG 33, 997), 'διδάξας τὸν Αἰθίοπα, καὶ βαπτίσας, καὶ εἰς τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν Χριστοῦ κήρυκα πέμψας'. Both writers see the eunuch's baptism as fulfilment of Ps 67:32, for which see below. However, it is generally agreed that the Church did not reach Ethiopia until the fourth century, whatever tradition records. See E.Coulbeaux, 'Éthiopie (Église d')', DTC 5, 922.
21. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 122):

Videtur enim mihi quod 'ultra flumina Aethiopiae' esse dicitur ille, qui nimis et superabundantibus peccatis infuscatus est et atro malitiae furo infectus niger et tenebrosus est redditus; et tamen ne hos quidem repellit Dominus, sed omnes, qui 'sacrificia contribulati spiritus et humiliati cordis' offerunt Deo, confessionis scilicet ac poenitentiae titulo ad eum

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

conversi, non repelluntur ab eo.

22. Admittedly the language of certain commentators can be confusing. Philo of Carpasia, for example, when commenting on Song 1:5, explains quite clearly that the bride's blackness and beauty are not corporeal but result from idolatry and the other deceits of folly; he then, however, offers as proof the case of the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8, a perfect example of corporeal blackness (Enarr. in C.C. 10, PG 40, 45).
23. De paradiso 3.16 (CSEL 32.1, 275-276):
- Sicut igitur terram et quaecumque vel purgamenta vel sordes in ea sunt hiatus absorbat, ita castitas omnes corporis passiones abolere consuevit meritoque ibi primum observantiae consuetudo, quia per legem absorbetur carnale peccatum. bene ergo Geon, in quo figura est castitatis, circumire terram Aethiopia dicitur, ut abluit corpus abiectum et carnis vilissimae restinguat incendium; Aethiopia enim abiecta et vilis Latina interpretatione signatur. quid autem abiectius nostro corpore, quid tam Aethiopiae simile, quod etiam nigrum est quibusdam tenebris peccatorum?
24. See for instance Gregory of Nyssa, Comm. in C.C. Orat. 2 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera ed. W. Jaeger and H. Langerbeck, 9 vols and supplement [Leiden, 1960-1972], VI, 49), 'κάκει γὰρ φυλέται τῆς πόλεως γίνονται οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι καὶ Ἱεροσολυμίται οἱ Βαβυλώνιοι καὶ παρθένος ἡ πόρνη καὶ λαμπροὶ οἱ Αἰθίοπες καὶ Τύρος ἡ ἄνω πόλις'.
25. Tract. de Ps. 86.4 (CCL 78, 114), 'Nos quondam Aethiopes fuimus, Aethiopes vitiis atque peccatis. Qui? quoniam peccata nos nigros fecerant. Sed postea audivimus "Lavamini, mundi estote", et diximus "Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor". Nos ergo Aethiopes versi sumus in candorem'.
26. Tract. de Ps 67:32 (CCL 78, 47), 'Quoniam nos nigri eramus peccatis et passionibus, praevenimus populum Israeliticum, et credimus in Salvatorem: quemadmodum illa quae fluebat sanguine, praevenit filiam archisynagogi, et sanatur'.
27. Hom. in C.C. 1.6 (SC 37, 72), 'quomodo enim in evangelio "mulier" illa, "quae sanguine defluebat, archisynagogi filiam" curatione praevenit, sic et "Aethiopia" Israel aegrotante sanata est'.
28. Ep. 69 Ad Oceanum 6 (Budé, Jérôme 3, 201), 'Eunuchus Candacis reginae lectione prophetica Christi baptismati praeparatur: mutat contra naturam "Aethiops pellem suam et pardus varietates suas"'.
'
29. Ep. 108 Epitaphium S. Paulae 11 (Budé, Jérôme 5, 170), 'quomodo eunuchus Aethiops gentium populos praefigurans mutaverit pellem suam'. In only one other place does Jerome interpret the Ethiopians as Gentiles, and that is when commenting on Zeph 3:10: 'O Israel, o synagoga quondam filia, quam in toto orbe dispersi licet invidias, licet aemulatione crucieris, tamen de Aethiopia mihi victimae deferentur, id est de gentilium populo', Comm. in Soph. 3.10/13 (CCL 76A, 703).
30. Comm. in Hier. 3.22.1-2 (CCL 74, 134):

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

Hoc testimonio utuntur adversus ecclesiam, qui diversas cupiunt asserere naturas, et tantam dicunt esse vel nigredinem vel varietatem peccatorum, ut in candorem et unius coloris pulchritudinem transire non possint non attendentes hoc, quod sequitur: et vos poteritis bene facere, cum didiceritis malum. Quicquid enim discitur, non naturae est, sed studii et propriae voluntatis, quae nimia consuetudine et amore peccandi quodammodo in naturam vertitur. Sed hoc, quod hominibus impossibile est, deo possibile est, ut nequaquam Aethiops et pardus suam videantur mutare naturam, sed ille, qui in Aethiopo operatur et pardo, dicente apostolo, omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat, Christo.

31. Comm. in Amos 3.9.7-8 (CCL 76, 342):

Corpora enim umbris otioque mercantia, tentationes et aestus saeculi ferre non possunt; quae autem ad luctam et ad certamina praeparantur, sole siccata superant mundi iniurias, et benedictionem sancti Spiritus consequuntur, dicentis ad iustum: Per diem sol non uret te, neque luna per noctem. Aethiopes ergo vertuntur in filios Dei, si egerint poenitentiam, et filii Dei transeunt in Aethiopes, si in profundum venerint peccatorum.

32. Comm. in Abacuc 2.3.7 (CCL 76A, 629), 'Aethiopes tetri et amantes tenebras, et ab omni luce alieni, qui draconis carne vescuntur, de quo scriptum est: Dedisti eum escam populis Aethiopum; daemones intelleguntur, quorum fit tabernaculum quicumque in hoc saeculo propter honores et divitias laborarit'.

33. Ibid., 'pati omnia quae servorum conditio vix patitur'.

34. Ibid., 'pro laboribus suis efficiuntur hospitium daemonum, et qui templum Dei esse debebant, fiunt tabernaculum Aethiopum'.

35. Ibid.:

Postquam enim ditati fuerint, et per fas ac nefas ad altissimum gradum conscenderint, tunc conscientia peccatorum suorum, semper mortem, semper iudicium formidabunt, et ad levem febriculam, quasi latrones in carcere, ita de aeternis suppliciis suspirabunt. Madian autem in lingua nostra sonat ex iudicio, id est condemnationem, et ostenditur quod metu iudicii aeternarumque poenarum semper in formidine sint, et cruciatus quos sentiunt se mereri, pavore cotidiano sustineant.

36. Interpr. in Soph. 2.12 (PG 81, 1852), 'Σημαίνει δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων τὸ στίφος καταλυθὲν τῇ τοῦ σωτηρίου σταυροῦ προσβολῇ· καὶ τοὺς μέλανας τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ ἀντιθέους ἀνθρώπους, τῇ θείᾳ τρωθέντας πληγῇ'.

37. Interpr. in Hab. 3.7 (PG 81, 1828), 'Ἀλλὰ γὰρ μετὰ τὰ σωτήρια παθήματα εἶδον κατοπεπτωκὸς τῶν δαιμόνων τὸ γένος, οἱ τὴν φυσικὴν τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν χροῶν ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει μιμούμενοι, τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξαπατάσι ψυχάς'.

38. See Marvin H. Pope (Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary [The Anchor Bible vol. 7C] [New York, 1977], 310), who, misunderstanding Origen's commentary (through following Ernst Benz, for whom see below n63), accuses him of inconsistency for allegedly switching from blackness of skin to

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

blackness of heart: 'Thus, by dint of some fancy exegetical footwork, Origen outdid himself again, and undermined his own positive approach to the theology of negritude.'

39. Expos. in Ps. 67.32 (CCL 97, 601):

Aegyptus, Aethiopia pro incolarum suorum tenebrosa nigredine semper in malo ponuntur. Quae figura dicitur synecdoche, id est a parte totum; significat enim mundum, qui densis tenebris vitiorum diabolo premebatur obnoxius. Hic Domini clarificatus lumine ad aeternae vitae meruit munera pervenire.

40. Ibid., 'sic et Aethiopia commonetur ne se tardet Deo tradere, quatenus victa floreat, quae in sua libertate sordebat'.

41. Expos. in Ps. 71.9 (CCL 98, 653), 'Aethiopes peccatores populos debemus advertere; nam sicut illi teterrimo corio vestiuntur, ita animae delinquentium scelerum obscuritate tenebrantur. Ergo isti Aethiopes, qui sunt peccatores, ante illum procidunt, quando se paenitentiae humilitate prosternunt'.

42. Expos. in Ps. 86.4 (CCL 98, 791):

sed in ista Domini civitate collecti sunt, de quibus refulgentium sanctorum numerus in illa patria compleatur. Ecce ipsa sunt quae praedixit versus ille superior: Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitas Dei. Nam quid gloriosius, quam ut tanta foeditas prius errantium populorum in unam sanctae civitatis pulchritudinem conveniret?

43. Expos. in Ps. 73.14 (CCL 98, 680):

Aethiopes bene peccatores advertimus, qui ante fuerant tenebrosa mente teterrimi; sed ad Dominum conversi, escam coeperunt habere diabolum...Sic fit ut qui pagani ante venerabiles, nunc a Christianis detractionum morsibus corrodati. Sive conversi iam fideles escam possunt habere diabolum, quando per ipsius machinamenta tentationesque proficiunt; ipso enim persequente martyres fiunt, ipso affligente patientiae munere coronantur. Quapropter merito diabolum illorum esca dicitur, quos fatigationibus crebris ad desideria votiva perducit.

44. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 122), 'Si enim intuearis, quomodo "ex delicto" Istrahele "salus sit gentibus" et quod "illorum lapsus" introeundi viam nationibus dedit, advertes, quomodo "praevenit" et praecedit "Aethiopiae manus", hoc est gentium populus illos "ad Deum", quibus primis data sunt eloquia Dei'.

45. Tract. in Ps. 67.33 (CSEL 22, 308-309):

Aethiopia vero in eunucho Candace fidei confessione praevenit; manu autem sua, dum ipse baptismi gratiam sibi postulat dicens: ecce aqua, quis me prohibet baptizari? sacramentum ipsum baptismi adeo impatientis desiderii cupiditate praeveniens, ut a diacono ministerium apostolici officii salutis suae cupidus exigeret. et quia exinde per omnes fere gentes praedicatio divinae cognitionis inluxit - quia et omnia regna dominum Christum deum intellectura licet sero sint, et omnis linguae confitebitur, quia dominus Iesus in gloria dei patris sit - consummationem temporis huius exoptat dicens: deo regna terrae: cantate deo, psallite domino.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

Peter Chrysologus interprets the verse as referring to the Magi, who signify the credulitas of the Gentiles as opposed to the crudelitas of the Jews; however, he records that in the verse is fulfilled that which 'multi de spadone et de Aethiopia suspicantur', Sermo 160 De Epiphania 4.2 (CCL 24B, 990-991).

46. Enarr. in Ps. 67.40 (CCL 39, 897).

47. Expos. in Ps. 67.32 (CCL 97, 601).

48. Enarr. in Ps. 71.12 (CCL 39, 980), 'quibus catholica ecclesia praenuntiata est, non in aliqua parte terrarum futura, sicut quaelibet schismata, sed in universo mundo fructificando atque crescendo, usque ad ipsos Aethiopes, extremos videlicet et teterrimos hominum, perventura'.

49. Enarr. in Ps. 73.16 (CCL 39, 1014-1015):

Quomodo intellego populos Aethiopes? Quomodo, nisi per hos, omnes gentes? Et bene per nigros; Aethiopes enim nigri sunt. Ipsi vocantur ad fidem, qui nigri fuerunt; ipsi prorsus, ut dicatur eis: Fuistis enim aliquando tenebrae; nunc autem lux in Domino. Ipsi prorsus vocantur nigri; sed ne remaneant nigri; de his enim fit ecclesia, cui dicitur: Quae est ista quae adscendit dealbata? Quid enim de nigra factum est, nisi quod dictum est: Nigra sum, et speciosa? Et quomodo acceperunt isti in escam draconem istum? Puto quia magis Christum acceperunt in escam, sed Christum quo se consumerent; diabolum quem consumerent...Intellegatur ergo et modo corpus diaboli: hoc fit; devoratur a gentibus quae crediderunt, factus est esca populis Aethiopibus.

50. Comm. in Iob 28.16 (PL 26, 701):

quia in gentibus ubi timor veri Dei non est, fuata et quodammodo terrena religio sit: quae sub praetextu nominis Dei in errorum mendacio, diverso ac vario sermonum colore velut pictura componitur, et quasi lapis pretiosus eloquio splendeat, sive nomine fulgeat deitatis, et India sive etiam Aethiopia, nigredinem, vel tenebras peccatorum significant: quae specialiter in idolorum culturis habentur.

51. Expos. in Ps. 67.32 (PG 39, 1449), "Ὅτι γε μὴν Αἰθιοπία πάντα τὰ ἔθνη δηλοῖ, παρίστησιν ἢ διὰ μετανοίας λέγουσα νόμφη· "Μέλαινα εἶμι καὶ καλή·" μέλαινα μὲν καὶ δυσειδῆς διὰ τὴν εἰδωλολατρείαν καὶ τὴν κακίαν τὴν πρακτικὴν· καλή δὲ διὰ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀναχώρησιν'.

52. Comm. in Soph. 1.1 (CCL 76A, 657):

post tantas virtutes quomodo nomen Aethiopsis sonare poterit in laudem? Et siquidem scriptura dixisset Chus, id est Aethiops, videbatur indissolubilis quaestio; Chus quippe natus est de Cham. Sed in eo quod ait, Chusi, hoc est Aethiops meus, videtur sonare mysterium; quod ille qui quondam Aethiops fuerat, versus in paenitentiam.

53. Comm. in Soph. 3.10/13 (CCL 76A, 703). See also 2.12/15 (CCL 76A, 690).

54. See references at n31, 49 and 51.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

55. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 113), 'sive naturalis sive exercitio quaesita corpori pulchritudo non desit'.

56. Ibid., 'Haec continet historicum drama et propositae fabulae species. Sed redeamus ad ordinem mysticum. Haec sponsa, quae loquitur, ecclesiae personam tenet "ex gentibus" congregatae'.

57. Ibid., (GCS 33, 114):

'nigre sum' quidem...pro eo, quod non descendo de stirpe clarorum virorum neque illuminationem Moysi legis accepi, habeo tamen pulchritudinem meam mecum. Namque et in me est illud primum, quod 'ad imaginem Dei' in me factum est; et nunc accedens ad Verbum Dei recepi speciem meam.

On this passage see H.Crouzel, Théologie de l'image de dieu chez Origène (Paris, 1956), 178-179.

58. Ibid., (GCS 33, 125), 'animae nigredo...neque nascendo, sed negligendo conquiritur; et ideo sicut ignavia assumitur, ita industria repellitur et propulsatur'.

59. Ibid., (GCS 33, 126), "'inoboedientem" et incredulum'.

60. Ibid., (GCS 33, 127):

Cum vero recte stetero ante eum et non fuero obliquus in aliquo...tunc et ipse rectus me respiciet et nulla erit obliquitas nec erit causa ulla despectus et tunc reddetur mihi lux mea et splendor meus et in tantum propelletur a me, quam nunc exprobratis, ista nigredo, ut etiam 'lux mundi' merear appellari.

61. Ibid., (GCS 33, 125), 'Potest autem et de unaquaque anima, quae post peccata plurima convertitur ad paenitentiam, dici quod "nigra" sit pro peccatis, "formosa" autem propter paenitentiam et "fructus paenitentiae"'.
'

62. Hom. in C.C. 1.6 (SC 37, 72), 'Si vero paenitentiam egeris, "nigra" quidem erit anima tua propter antiqua delicta, propter paenitentiam vero habebit aliquid, ut ita dicam, Aethiopici decoris'.

63. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 114-115):

Verum quoniam in his locis sumus, ubi ecclesia, quae 'ex gentibus' venit, 'nigram' se esse dicit 'et formosam', quamvis longum videatur esse et operosum colligere ex scripturis divinis, in quibus vel qualiter sacramenti huius forma praecesserit, tamen non mihi penitus omittendum videtur, sed quam potuerit breviter memorandum.

Quite clearly the readings of such critics as Ernst Benz ('"Ich bin schwarz und schön" (Hohes Lied 1,5): Ein Beitrag des Origenes zur Theologie der negritudo', Wort und Religion: Studien zur Afrikanistik, Missionswissenschaft, Religionswissenschaft. Ernst Dammann zum 65. Geburtstag ed. H-J.Greschat and H.Jungraithmayr [Stuttgart, 1969], 225-242) are misconceived. Benz introduces his analysis thus: 'Er [Origen] hat die Auslegung des Verses 1,5...zu

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

einem ausführlichen Traktat ausgebaut, in dem er zum ersten Mal in der Kirchengeschichte und wahrscheinlich zum letzten Mal für die nächsten tausend Jahre eine Theologie der negritudo entfaltet hat' (288). Certainly Origen's exposition of this verse was a great influence upon subsequent commentators, but, as has been shown, he was in no way intent upon presenting a 'Theologie der negritudo'. Such a literal interpretation takes up only his opening paragraph. Benz would appear to be foisting upon Origen the interpretation which he himself wishes to find. By his own admission (225-226), Benz is writing against the background of student demonstrations against racial segregation in America in the 1960s, and is attempting to find a scriptural basis upon which to reassert the identity of black Christians, some of whom have begun to see Christianity as an extension of white domination. It is in this context, contributing to a collection of studies 'zur Afrikanistik, Missionswissenschaft...' that Benz attempts to make Origen's interpretation 'relevant' for its original audience:

Diese Theologie der negritudo wurde in der Alten Kirche in Alexandria von einem Lehrer der dortigen Katechetenschule verkündet, und in seinen Predigten einer Gemeinde dargelegt, in der sich Griechen, Römer, Judenohristen, Ägypter, Inder, Araber und Äthiopier brüderlich vereinigten (242).

It is an interesting conjecture, but one which has no basis in Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs.

64. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 114):

Quomodo non meministis quod in lege vestra scriptum est, quid passa sit 'Maria', quae 'derogavit Moysi', cur 'Aethiopissam' nigram 'accepisset uxorem'? Quomodo ignoratis illius imaginis adumbrationem in me nunc veritate compleri? Ego sum illa 'Aethiopissa', ego sum 'nigra' quidem pro ignobilitate generis, 'formosa' vero propter paenitentiam et fidem.

65. Ibid., (GCS 33, 117-118), 'In quo mihi videtur secundum mysterium magis intellexisse, quod gestum est, et vidisse quod iam Moyses, id est spiritualis lex, in nuptias et conjugium congregatae "ex gentibus" migrat ecclesiae'.

66. See especially In Num. Hom. 6.4 (GCS 30, 36) and 7.2 (ibid., 39).

67. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 118), 'Denique et Moyses ipse, cum tanta et tam magnifica eius opera fidei ac patientiae referantur, numquam tantis a Deo elatus est laudibus ut nunc, cum "Aethiopissam accepit uxorem"'.

68. This particular detail does not appear in Jerome's translation of the homilies; see Hom. in C.C. 1.6 (SC 37, 72).

69. Comm. in Soph. 2.12/15 (CCL 76A, 690):

Aethiopibus ad meliora conversis spes erit, nullum qui voluerit agere paenitentiam, a salute alienum fore. Unde et prius anima polluta, et delictorum sordibus inquinata, dicit: Nigra sum. Et postea in fine cantici cantioorum, de eadem iam purgata et lota per paenitentiam scribitur: Quae est

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

ista, quae ascendit dealbata; Moyses quoque, id est lex Domini spiritalis, Aethiopiissam de gentibus duxit uxorem.

70. Ibid., 'Comminatur itaque nunc sermo divinus his qui peccatis inhaerentes, et oblitii sordibus delictorum, nolunt ad meliora converti, et tenebrosi colorem eluere, et comminatur eis gladium'.

71. Lib. Promiss. 2.9.15 (CCL 60, 86):

quod cum publicanis et peccatoribus vesceretur. Quibus cum dixisset: Non est opus sanis medicus sed male habentibus; non veni vocare iustos sed peccatores in paenitentiam, ostendit illam Aethiopiissam se accepisse <ecclesiam> ex gentibus quae dicit: Fusca sum et decora, filiae Hierusalem.

72. Explan. in C.C. 1.4-5 (PG 81, 68):

Οὐ μόνον εἰμι μέλαινα, ἀλλὰ καὶ καλὴ· ἀνέβλεψα γὰρ πάλαι τυφλώτους, καὶ ῥάκια παλαιὰ περικειμένη, νῦν ἐν ἱματισμῷ διαχρῶσθαι περιβεβλημένη, πεποικιλμένη, τὸ βασιλικὸν ἔσχον ἀξίωμα, καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρίσταμαι, ἐξωθησαμένη σε ἐπιμανεῖσαν τῷ βασιλεῖ, καὶ τοῦτον μὲν θανάτῳ παραδεδικυῖαν, τῷ πλήθει δὲ τῶν μοιχῶν τὴν κασάδα μιάνασαν. Μὴ τοίνυν ἀνείδιζέ μοι τὸ μέλαν τῆς χροῆς, μηδὲ τὰ πρότερά μοι ἄγε εἰς μέσον κακά. Μέλαινα γὰρ εἰμι, ὁμολογῶ, ἀλλὰ καλὴ καὶ ἀρέσκουσα τῷ νυμφίῳ. Φοβήθητι τῆς Μαρίας τὸ παράδειγμα· ἀνείδισε γὰρ κακείνη Μωσεί, ὅτι Αἰθιοπίσσαν γυναῖκα ἠγάγετο, καὶ ἐγένετο λεπρῶσα ὡσεὶ χιῶν...Κάγω τοίνυν Αἰθιοπίσσα μὲν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Νομοθέτου νύμφη· καὶ θυγάτηρ μὲν ἱερέως Μαδίαμ ἀνδρὸς εἰδωλολάτρου· ἐπελαθόμεν δὲ τοῦ λαοῦ μου, καὶ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρός μου· διὸ ἐπεθύμησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ κάλλους μου.

73. Ibid., (PG 81, 69):

'Ἐμελανώθην γὰρ λατρεύουσα τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, καὶ τὸν ἥλιον τοῦτον τὸν αἰσθητὸν, ἀντὶ τοῦ ἡλίου τῆς δικαιοσύνης προσκυνήσασα. Ἄλλ'εἶδον τὴν διαφορὰν ἐκείνου καὶ τούτου, καὶ καταλιπούσα τὸ ποῖημα, τὸν Ποιητὴν προσεκύνησα. Μὴ βλέψητέ με τοίνυν, ὅτι ἔγω εἰμι μεμελανωμένη...μέλαινα διὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀσέβειαν, καλὴ διὰ τὴν μετάνοιαν· μέλαινα διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν, καλὴ διὰ τὴν πίστιν.

In his Quaest. in Num. 22 (PG 80, 373-376), Theodoret discusses the origin of Moses' Cushite wife, and reports two theories, that of Josephus, according to whom she was a princess of the Ethiopians conquered when Moses was general in the Egyptian army, and that of Apollinarius, which Theodoret considers far less factual: Moses apparently married the Ethiopian after Sephora, so as to be a type of Christ, who after the Israelites espoused the church of the Gentiles. Theodoret, however, is of the opinion that Sephora was the Ethiopian, as is Augustine, Quaest. Num. 20 (CCL 33, 247). Cyril of Alexandria (De Adoratione in Spiritu et Veritate 2 [PG 68, 257]) sees Sephora as a figure of the church, but makes no mention of her colour: she is, like her father, merely 'ἀλλογενής'.

74. Sermo 95 De Nativitate Moysi et Rubo 2 (CCL 103, 390):

Agnoscite, fratres, hoc non parvum esse mysterium. Aethiopiissa illa ex

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

gentibus erat, quam beatus Moyses duxit uxorem, quia et Christus ex gentibus sibi sociaturus erat ecclesiam. Moyses derelinquit populum suum, et in longinquis regionibus Aethiopiassae coniungitur; et Christus derelicto populo Iudaeorum de extremis regionibus ecclesiae sociatur; illi utique, quae dicit in psalmis: A PINIBUS TERRAE AD TE CLAMAVI. Audi ex persona ecclesiae in Canticis canticorum. Ait ecclesiae: NIGRA SUM ET FORMONSA. Quid est, Nigra sum et formonsa? Nigra per naturam, formonsa per gratiam; nigra originali peccato, formonsa baptismi sacramento.

For the natura/gratia antithesis see below n99.

Gregory of Nazianzus (Orat. 40 In S. Bapt. 26 [PG 36, 396]) carries the argument to its logical conclusion: all men should seize the opportunity to be baptized: even if one is an Ethiopian in one's body, one can be made white in one's spirit.

75. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 118-119), "'Venit" ergo et haec, immo secundum figuram eius ecclesia "venit" "ex gentibus" "audire sapientiam" veri Solomonis et veri pacifici Domini nostri Iesu Christi'.

76. Ibid., (GCS 33, 118).

77. Ibid., (GCS 33, 119):

'Venit' ergo 'in Hierusalem', ad visionem scilicet pacis, cum multitudine et 'virtute multa'; non enim cum una sola gente, ut prius synagoga solos habuit Hebraeos, sed cum totius mundi gentibus venit deferens etiam munera digna Christo...Cum hoc ergo apparatu 'intrat' ad pacificum regem Christum et ipsi aperit cor suum, in confessione scilicet et paenitentiae praecedentium delictorum.

78. Matthaeuserklärung: Katenenfragmente 277 (GCS 41, 124), 'ἀλλὰ τὴν πίστιν τὸ νοητὸν θυμίαμα, καὶ σπένδουσα τὸν ἰδρώτα τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ μαρτυρίου. τοιοῦτοις γὰρ δῶροις ὁ ἀληθὴς ἤδεται Σολομών, ὅς ἐστι Χριστός, "ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν". Σολομῶν γὰρ Εἰρηνικός ἐρμηνεύεται'.

79. See, for example, Jerome, Lib. Interpr. Hebr. Nom. (CCL 72, 138), 'Salomon pacificus sive pacatus erit', and Comm. in Ps. 71 (CCL 72, 216), 'Salomon quippe pacificus, et pacificus est Christus'.

80. Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 7.96 (SC 52, 42):

Itaque sacramentum illud magnum est de Christo et de ecclesia, sed tamen hoc maius est, quia illud in figura ante praecessit, nunc autem plenum in veritate mysterium est; illic enim Salomonis typus, hic autem Christus in suo corpore est. Ex duobus igitur constat ecclesia, ut aut peccare nescias aut peccare desistas; paenitentia enim delictum abolet, sapientia caevet. Hoc in mysterio.

81. Quaest. 33 in Lib. 3 Reg. (PG 80, 700), 'καὶ αὕτη γὰρ ἀλλόφυλος οὔσα, καὶ μήτε νόμον δεξαμένη θεῖον, μήτε προφητικῆς ἀπολαύσασα γεωργίας, ἠρχέσθη τῷ τῆς φύσεως νόμῳ, καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐθαύμασε, καὶ τὴν δικαίαν κρίσιν εὐφήμισε, καὶ διὰ τοῦ δεξαμένου τῆς σοφίας τὸ δῶρον, τὸν μεγαλόδωρον ὑμνησεν'.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

82. Ep. 5 Severo Fratri Paulinus (CSEL 29, 25), 'non habens legem litterae sed habens fidem legis in tabulis cordis carnalibus spiritu consilii et pietatis incisam'.
83. Ibid., 'circumamicta varietate in vestitu deaurato et populi et paternae domus oblita currebat, barbara natione, non animo, et in aperto peregrina, sed in occulto iudaea sanctorum fieri civis optabat'.
84. Ibid., (CSEL 29, 26), 'quia Christum in Solomone mirata verum reginae caelestis affectum in imagine mystica ecclesiae providentis impleverat'. Quodvultdeus too refers to Ps 44, this time to verse 10: 'Sed haec regina nostram sanctam ostendit ecclesiam de qua dicitur ipsi regi nostro: Adstetit regina a dextris tuis', Lib. Promiss. 2.27.58 (CCL 60, 127).
85. Comm. in C.C. Orat. 7 (Greg. Nyss. Op., VI, 205), 'τίς γάρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι μέλαινα ἦν ἐξ εἰδωλολατρίας τὸ κατ'ἀρχὰς ἢ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐκκλησία πρὶν ἐκκλησία γενέσθαι πολλῶ μεταξὺ τῷ τῆς ἀγνοίας διαστήματι τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἀληθινὸν θεὸν γνώσεως ἀπωχισμένη;'.
86. Ibid.:

ἀλλ' ὅτε ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ σοφία διέλαμψε καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν πρὸς τοὺς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένους τὴν ἀκτίνα διέπεμψε, τότε τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἐπιμύσαντος καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀγαθῶν μετουσίας αὐτὸν ἀποστήσαντος ἔρχονται οἱ Αἰθίοπες, οἱ ἐξ ἐθνῶν τῆ πίστει προστρέχοντες καὶ οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγγὺς γίνονται τῷ μυστικῷ ὕδατι τὴν μελανίαν ἀποκλυσάμενοι.

87. Ibid. Orat. 2 (Greg. Nyss. Op., VI, 48-49), 'Χριστὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἦλθε λαμπροὺς ποιῆσαι τοὺς μέλανας, οὐ δικαίους πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καλῶν ἀλλὰ ἀμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν, οὓς τῷ λουτρῷ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λάμπειν ὡς φωστῆρας ἐποίησε τὸ ζοφῶδες αὐτῶν εἶδος ἀποκλύσας τῷ ὕδατι'.
88. Hom. in C.C. 1.6 (SC 37, 71), 'necdum omni peccatorum sorde purgata, necdum lota est in salutem, "nigra" dicitur, sed in atro colore non permanet; fit et candida'.
89. See particularly Tract. de Ps. 86.4 (CCL 78, 114) and Comm. in Soph. 2.12/15 (CCL 76A, 690).
90. In C.C. 1.26 (CCL 69, 177):

Iam enim aequae baptismatis lota est, iam ab omni macula vel ruga purgata, sicut apostolus ait: ut exhibeat sibi ecclesiam non habentem maculam vel rugam, h.e. nullam maculam delicti, nullam rugam perversae doctrinae; iam Christi sanguine rubicunda, iam sancti spiritus inlustratione composita, iam orisatum donis ornata.

91. Expos. Ps. 118.2.9 (CSEL 62, 24):

fusca per culpam, decora per gratiam. dicit et caro: fusca sum et decore, fusca pulvere saeculari quam certando collegi, decore oleo spiritali quo mundi huius pulverem squaloremque detergi, fusca per vitium, sed decore iam per lavacrum quod abluit omne delictum.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

82. Ep. 5 Severo Fratri Paulinus (CSEL 29, 25), 'non habens legem litterae sed habens fidem legis in tabulis cordis carnalibus spiritu consilii et pietatis incisam'.
83. Ibid., 'circumamicta varietate in vestitu deurato et populi et paternae domus oblita currebat, barbara natione, non animo, et in aperto peregrina, sed in occulto iudaea sanctorum fieri civis optabat'.
84. Ibid., (CSEL 29, 26), 'quia Christum in Solomone mirata verum reginae caelestis affectum in imagine mystica ecclesiae providentis impleverat'. Quodvultdeus too refers to Ps 44, this time to verse 10: 'Sed haec regina nostram sanctam ostendit ecclesiam de qua dicitur ipsi regi nostro: Adstetit regina a dextris tuis', Lib. Promiss. 2.27.58 (CCL 60, 127).
85. Comm. in C.C. Orat. 7 (Greg Nyss. Op., VI, 205), 'τίς γάρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι μέλαινα ἦν ἐξ εἰδωλολατρίας τὸ κατ'ἀρχᾶς ἢ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐκκλησία πρὶν ἐκκλησία γενέσθαι πολλῶ μεταξὺ τῶ τῆς ἀγνοίας διαστήματι τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἀληθινὸν θεὸν γνώσεως ἀπωχισμένη;'.
 86. Ibid.:
 ἀλλ'ὅτε ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ σοφία διέλαμψε καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν πρὸς τοὺς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένους τὴν ἀκτίνα διέπεμψε, τότε τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἐπιμύσαντος καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀγαθῶν μετουσίας ἑαυτὸν ἀποστήσαντος ἔρχονται οἱ Αἰθίοπες, οἱ ἐξ ἐθνῶν τῆ πίστει προστρέχοντας καὶ οἷ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἀγγύς γίνονται τῶ μυστικῶ ὕδατι τὴν μελανίαν ἀποκλυσάμενοι.
87. Ibid. Orat. 2 (Greg. Nyss. Op., VI, 48-49), 'Χριστὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἦλθε λαμπροῦς ποιῆσαι τοὺς μέλανας, οὐ δικαίους πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καλῶν ἀλλὰ ἀμαρτωλοῦς εἰς μετάνοιαν, οὓς τῶ λουτρῶ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λάμπειν ὡς φωστήρας ἐποίησε τὸ ζοφῶδες αὐτῶν εἶδος ἀποκλύσας τῶ ὕδατι'.
88. Hom. in C.C. 1.6 (SC 37, 71), 'necdum omni peccatorum sorde purgata, necdum lota est in salutem, "nigra" dicitur, sed in atro colore non permanet; fit et candida'.
89. See particularly Tract. de Ps. 86.4 (CCL 78, 114) and Comm. in Soph. 2.12/15 (CCL 76A, 690).
90. In C.C. 1.26 (CCL 69, 177):
 iam enim aqua baptismatis lota est, iam ab omni macula vel ruga purgata, sicut apostolus ait: ut exhibeat sibi ecclesiam non habentem maculam vel rugam, h.e. nullam maculam delicti, nullam rugam perversae doctrinae; iam Christi sanguine rubicunda, iam sancti spiritus inlustratione composita, iam orisatum donis ornata.
91. Expos. Ps. 118.2.9 (CSEL 62, 24):

fusca per culpam, decora per gratiam. dicit et caro: fusca sum et decora, fusca pulvere saeculari quam certando collegi, decora oleo spiritali quo mundi huius pulverem squaloremque deteresi, fusca per vitium, sed decora iam per lavacrum quod abluit omne delictum.

CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

92. De Mysteriis 7.35 (SC 25, 174), 'Haec vestimenta habens ecclesia per lavacrum regenerationis adsumpta dicit in Canticis: Nigra sum et decora, filiae Hierusalem. Nigra per fragilitatem conditionis humanae, decora per gratiam, nigra quia ex peccatoribus, decora fidei sacramento'.
- See also De Sacramentis 4.2.25 (SC 25, 104).
93. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 123):
- Et puto inconueniens non videri, si dicamus quod eum, quem 'principes Istrahel' condemnauerunt et 'in lacum' mortis tradiderunt, iste alienigena et obscurae gentis homo et degeneris, id est populus gentium, 'educit eum de lacu' mortis, 'resurrectionem' scilicet eius 'a mortuis' credens, et fide sua hunc, quem illi in mortem tradiderant, iste de infernis reuocat ac reducit.
94. Ibid., 'quia "castraverit semet ipsum propter regnum Dei" vel etiam quod semen malitiae in semet ipso non habebat'. R.P.Lawson (Origen: The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies [ACW 26] [London, 1957], 104) takes the alternative exposition as referring to Christ, although he expresses uncertainty in his notes (331). The more obvious reading would seem to be that it refers to the innate goodness and chastity of Abdimelech himself.
95. Comm. in C.C. 2 (GCS 33, 123).
96. Lib. Interpr. Hebr. Nom. (CCL 72, 125).
97. De Spiritu Sancto 2.11 (114) (CSEL 79, 131), 'Eris igitur et tu "Abdemelech", hoc est, "adsumptus a domino", si de profundo gentilis inprudenciae levaveris dei verbum'.
98. De Spiritu Sancto 2.10 (112) (CSEL 79, 130), 'quia sermonem propheticum, quem Iudaei velut in caenum suae mentis carnisque detruserant, nos videlicet ex gentibus peccatores, nigri ante delictis et quondam infructuosi, elevavimus de profundo'.
99. Ibid., (CSEL 79, 130-131), 'Nigra per culpam, decora per gratiam, nigra per condicionem, decora per redemptionem, aut forte nigra exercitii sui pulvere, nigra ergo, dum proeliatur, decora, dum victoriae suae insignibus coronatur'. Compare n91 and 92. For another instance of Ambrose's predilection for the natura (condicio)/gratia antithesis see De Patr. 4.17 (CSEL 32.2, 133): Christ is 'dominus per naturam, frater per gratiam'.
100. See Comm. in Hier. 5.44.7 (CCL 74, 261), 'quod in posterioribus lecturi sumus'.
101. Comm. in Soph. 1.1 (CCL 76A, 657), 'Legimus...Abdimelec eunuchum Aethiopem placuisse Deo'.
102. For the identification of Candace with the Queen of the Sheba, see E.Ullendorff, 'Candace (Acts VIII.27) and the Queen of Sheba', NTS 2 (1956), 53-56; also Ethiopia and the Bible, 9-10; 134-135.

CHAPTER SIX: SAUCIUS INFANS: BAPTISM AND CIRCUMCISION

I: Historia Apostolica 1.754-800

Translation

When Peter, ever watchful on guard over his entrusted flock and seeing all, had illumined all the saints one after another, he advanced through the fields of Lydda, where, standing near the walls, he realized that Aeneas, though his limbs were defunct, was alive and that, though his soul was not dying, he was dying, his weight enfeebled by his slackened joints. 'Get up, paralytic!', he said. 'Make your bed and do not be slow in rendering your duty: you have been carried long enough.' When he had received the gift of these words, with all his strength he drew together into something solid what had previously fallen away. Then, once more made man, he who had been a corpse for such a long time raises his dried up limbs to life, and lifting himself up leaves the tomb of his empty bed, which had been an aspect of death for the wretched man. All the people began to stand along that street and from the weakness of one man there came to many an abundant salvation, which at the touch of the water soon cast out the pollution of their internal sickness and washing their souls in the spring rendered them powerful with another man's strength.

I will here proclaim what is hidden behind this holy figure, if he whose voice gives men back their bodies stirs my heart too: since the duration of his weakness is reported as being eight years, for this period of time he lacked the power of his limbs which had been taken from him, justly, since he lay subject to the ancient law; obviously they always receive cutting wounds whose child is wounded on the eighth successive day; he healed him who was burdened in this respect and made whole in the clear waters him who had long been mutilated by this distinguishing mark of his flesh, so that the eighth year might release the sick man from the affliction of his dried up body on the eighth day when the risen Christ now consecrated his solemn work.

The customary use of this time remains but is restored through a superior prayer; in the one case wounds are spread abroad, in the other they are removed and cast down; there a rule subdues through punishments, here a healing cleanses in the shallows, and limbs which in the former time had long lain loosed unto destruction are drawn together unto salvation.

That paralytic also lay motionless for the years prescribed by that number for whom Siloa, moving close by, alas, afforded no water. The pool, bound round with porticoes, was Judaea; for it contains five halls within its confines, having acquired the quantity through the five volumes of the law of Moses. Surrounded by this ring, weak and sick it [Judaea] sees in its own books the eternal Jesus and yet fails to pay him service. He tears one man away from it, coming to him and taking away his sins.

The cleansed man everywhere fittingly bears out this figure; when, breaking the sabbath, He drove him to the spring, grace overcame the law. Peter reminds the Church of the evidence of the Master, by whose hand one paralytic in the world leapt up, and as its faith progressed the world cast off its bonds.¹

SAUCIUS INFANS

Introduction

This section of the H.A is yet another example of Arator's treatment of the text of Acts. The passage 'paraphrased' here by Arator occupies only four verses (Acts 9:32-5); the account of Peter's healing of Aeneas mentions neither baptism nor circumcision, yet Arator with his usual baptismal amplificatio manages to extend his version over forty-seven hexameters to involve a comparison of the Christian sacrament with the Jewish.² What then inspired the poet almost entirely to ignore the surface meaning of the text?³

Although there is no explicit mention of baptism in the text of Acts at this point, it is perhaps implied at 9:35 that Aeneas' healing resulted in the conversion of those who witnessed it: 'and all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.' Presumably, this turning to the Lord was effected through their being baptised. However, Arator's rendering of the passage makes the baptism explicit:

Plebs cuncta per illam
Coepit stare viam, multisque supervenit ampla
Unius languore salus tactoque liquore
Expulit inclusi sua mox contagia morbi
Fonte lavans animas alieno robore firmas (1.766-70).

The idea of cleansing and purification is introduced by Arator at the outset when he describes Peter's activity in Lydda: lustravit in ordine sanctos (755). Presumably the 'saints' are baptized already and Arator means that Peter enlightened them with his teaching. However, the overtones of the verb prepare us for what is to happen: Aeneas' healing, as interpreted by Arator, is also due in a large

SAUCIUS INFANS

part, if not totally, to baptism:

*lacerumque diu discrimine carnis
In liquidis solidavit aquis (778-9).*

Acts mentions no water; Arator's waters can surely only be those of baptism. Thus far Arator has amplified the text only in as much as he reads into a incident which has, in appearance, nothing to do with baptism instances of baptism which may in fact have happened at that point, taking his lead from Acts 9:35: qui conversi sunt ad Dominum.

We may then have some inkling as to how Arator felt justified in expanding an account of a miraculous healing into a commentary on the healing power of baptism. But what about his references to circumcision? Here Arator takes his lead from the period of Aeneas' illness detailed in Acts 9:34: 'And there he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years.' The number eight allows him to draw the contrast between circumcision and baptism, both rituals which are performed 'on the eighth day'. I do not intend here to examine the ogdoadal connections of baptism and circumcision. Enough has been said elsewhere.⁴

Suffice to say that Arator's commentary is far from being the otiose number-play alluded to by Chatillon: 'Le paralytique souffrir de son mal depuis huit ans (Act., IX, 33), telle est la base solide sur laquelle vont s'appuyer toutes sortes de considérations plus ou moins arbitraires.'⁵ It is astonishing that a writer dedicated to the identification of the slightest feature of antisemitism in the H.A. should fail to notice that underlying these considérations is the

SAUCIUS INFANS

unavoidably antisemitic concept that circumcision is by its very nature wounding and destructive. Chatillon chooses instead to chastise Arator both for the obscurity of his interpretation of the five porticoes of John 5:2 and for its obvious intention de dénigrer la Loi;⁶ the far more serious allegations levelled at circumcision are passed over without comment or even (dare one say it?) recognition. One is forced to conclude yet again that the only sure way of penetrating Arator's alleged obscurity is to examine him in his true patristic and exegetical context.

Hence we shall concentrate first on the way in which Arator uses the healing of Aeneas to emphasise the healing power of baptism which is at such variance with the essentially wounding nature of circumcision.

1. Healing the wounds of circumcision

It is perhaps understandable that Arator should choose to expound the healing nature of baptism in a context which recalls Christ's own healing of the paralytic by the waters of Bethesda (John 5:2-16), for that was exactly how that earlier healing had been interpreted by the Fathers, as we shall see below. In fact, as we inferred above, the language used by Arator in this passage suggests very strongly that Aeneas is not only healed but baptized, or even that his healing takes the form of baptism (see H.A.1,778-9). Whether or not Aeneas was baptized it is clear that Arator saw his illness, or rather the length of it, as a fitting punishment, mirroring the wounds he had received on the eighth day of his infancy.⁷

SAUCIUS INFANS

The view of circumcision as a mutilation was not a Christian invention; secular society had long regarded it as such, as Simon has observed (in this extract with reference to the legislation of the emperor Antoninus in 138, which, modifying Hadrian's total ban on circumcision, allowed circumcision to be practised by Jews alone):

In the first place, it aimed at discouraging a practice that, quite apart from its religious significance, the Romans considered shameful and degrading. This is at least suggested by the assimilation of circumcision to castration. Both, in Roman eyes, consisted in mutilare genitalia.⁸

It may be, as Cullmann suggests, that St Paul himself implies this at Galatians 5:12: 'Paul peut même la comparer aux mutilations que se font les adeptes de certains cultes païens.'⁹

This line of argument certainly found its supporters in the early Church. Here is part of Zeno of Verona's Tract on Circumcision:

Circumcision, brethren, is a scar, made in a circular fashion with a knife so as to produce the injury of a rounded wound. If the Jews think that this is a glorious thing, not to mention anyone else, then how much greater the glory of that man who in honour of his goddess - clearly a repulsive and lecherous old woman - has sacrificed not just a little skin from that same member but the very member itself, torn out by its roots in even more repulsive rituals?¹⁰

He goes on to plead with the practitioners of such perverse rituals to change their ways: 'Recognise therefore, O Jew, even at this late stage the wretched and painful peril of your wrongdoing.'¹¹

Such emphasis on the pain of circumcision was a commonplace of anti-Jewish polemic, as we see in Origen: 'For what is as cruel as a boy receiving the wound of circumcision on his eighth day and enduring the harshness of the knife in his tender infancy?',¹² and Gregory of Elvira:

SAUCIUS INFANS

Anyone can understand that circumcision is a wound drawn around with a knife so that a little might be cut off. Even if the Jew shares this definition, what honour is it to have sustained such damage to the flesh of his perfect body and to have mutilated the unimpaired appearance of his birth with a wounding knife?¹³

The needless pain of circumcision was thus a telling reason against adult conversion to Judaism, as Jerome observes: 'Nor were the Gentiles able to be tortured by the pain of circumcision which was not about to be of any use to them!'¹⁴ This is of course merely a matter of emphasis; Chrysostom, in this passage at least, observes that the pain of infant circumcision is much less than that of the operation when performed on an adult male: if circumcision must be performed, then it should be done at the earliest possible age 'so that at this untimely age he might be able to bear more easily the suffering of the circumcision of the flesh.'¹⁵

One of the most interesting and influential commentaries on the nature of circumcision is found in Ambrose's letter to Constantius (Ep.72). In a rambling, disorganised and frequently unclear letter, Ambrose is surprisingly generous (when compared with other earlier commentators) in his attitude towards circumcision. He finds himself in a difficult position, having both to justify the Jews' original observance of circumcision as a divine institution and at the same time to defend the decision of the Church to abandon it. He does this in three ways: first he poses general theoretical objections to the rite of circumcision (and in the process reveals as much about Christian as secular practices); secondly, he dismisses them by proving circumcision to have been a good thing in its own time (and in doing so anticipates Augustine, who declared that had he been alive in the days before Christ he too would have been

SAUCIUS INFANS

circumcised¹⁶); thirdly, he shows why circumcision is no longer necessary, having been superseded by baptism.

The first theoretical objections will seem familiar:

For what reason are the bodies of mere infants circumcised and exposed to perils at their very birth and so governed by this pronouncement that a danger to their safety arises from a sacrament of their religion?...Or on account of what did the very creator of our body wish his creation at the very beginning of our life to be circumcised and wounded and bloodied and a part severed, which he who arranged everything in order considered ought to be created, as if it were something necessary, along with all the other members...Then, since it was God's design, as he himself frequently bore witness, to summon even more men to the observance of his sacred religion, how much more attracted they would be if some were not discouraged either by the peril or by the disgrace of circumcision itself.¹⁷

Again we see the emphasis laid on the wounding, danger and disgrace of circumcision, as three objections are made: first, that infants should not be subjected to such pain for no reason; secondly, that surely God would not choose so soon to mutilate that which he had so recently created; thirdly, that the suffering involved in the initiation rite was apparently at odds with God's desire for men to become believers. Ambrose is here relying very heavily on another source which we have not yet mentioned, the commentary on Romans by Origen, which survives now only in its translation by Rufinus.¹⁸ In fact, as we shall see, the majority of the points made by Ambrose in this letter are taken directly from Origen's commentary.

Like Ambrose, Origen gives a catalogue of theoretical objections; these in particular are made by 'the Stoics':

Was it so necessary to hide the form of his images, the riddles of his law, by means of the pain and peril of mere children, by the torturing of their tender and as yet innocent infancy?...Is that God of yours then good, who ordained that man as soon as he is born should be wounded at the beginning of his new day? And if, as you think, he himself is the creator of both mind and body, either he is indicating that he has created unnecessarily that part of the body which presently

SAUCIUS INFANS

he commands to be severed, so that he must put right his own mistake through torturing wretched men, or it is not right that he should order that part to be destroyed which he created as something necessary and useful. Then, moreover, if God is concerned that even more men should be attracted to the worship of his religion, a very large obstacle has been created in circumcision.¹⁹

Ambrose's debt is clear. However, his next point would seem to be his own: he defends the imposition of a small amount of pain at the outset of a child's life:

Now, what is ridiculous if, out of a sense of duty, it seemed right for a little pain or distress to be inflicted so that as a result of such trials a greater devotion might be demonstrated? It is also a fine thing that a token of faith should begin to grow from the very cradle of life and that it should be shameful for every one of more advanced age to yield to either distress or pain, both of which he should have overcome in his tender infancy.²⁰

Ambrose does not however minimise the pain or the risk involved in infant circumcision:

And could this pain, which the majority of mere infants used to withstand without peril, frighten an older person? Granted, some Jewish babies did die when they could not withstand the pain of their circumcised body and the seething wound; but this did not deter the others who were strong by reason of their more advanced age, and even made that man more praiseworthy who had obeyed the heavenly commandments.²¹

There is one other theoretical objection posed by Ambrose which requires examination at this point. Ambrose refers to the objections of those who consider that any sacrament which requires the shedding of one's own blood is reprehensible:

It is necessary for him to consider the Lord Jesus reprehensible too, since he poured out not a little but a great deal of blood for the redemption of this world and even today orders us to pour out our own blood for so great a struggle for our faith, saying: Whoever wishes to follow me, let him take up his cross and follow me. Now if the accusation is in no way just, since a man may offer his entire self out of duty and cleanse himself through the pouring forth of much blood, how can we blame the law, which demands a little drop of blood, when we assert that the Lord Jesus demands the pouring forth of much blood and the death of the whole body?²²

SAUCIUS INFANS

There are two points here: the first is that the loss of blood and pain demanded in circumcision are as nothing compared with that demanded in martyrdom:

For if they censure the pain of circumcision, let them censure too the death of the martyrs through whom faith was increased, not lessened. But it is so far from the truth to say that the pain of circumcision harmed the faith that on the contrary pain makes faith more pleasing; for the influence of faith is greater if someone despises pain for his beliefs. And this man has a greater reward than that man who wished to undergo the pain of circumcision so as to pride himself in the law and seek praise from men rather than from God.²³

Pain then is no barrier to belief, far from it. The second point deals with the supersession of circumcision which has been obviated by the crucifixion of Christ:

Therefore until this price was paid by all men, which was to be paid by the pouring forth of the Lord's blood for the absolution of all, there was a need for the blood of every single man so that they might follow the commandments of the holy faith, according to the law and the manner of their custom. But because the price was paid for everyone after the Lord Christ had suffered, there was no longer a need for the blood of every single man to be poured forth, man for man, in circumcision; since the circumcision of everyone was celebrated in the blood of Christ, and since we were all crucified with him on his cross at the same time and buried with him in his tomb and planted together in imitation of his death so that we should serve sin no further: for he who is dead is freed from sin.²⁴

Both these points are elaborated from the account given by Origen:

But the devil held us fast, since we had been distracted by our sins. So he demanded the blood of Christ as our ransom. But until the blood of Jesus could be given, who was so precious that he alone sufficed for the redemption of all, it was necessary for those who were founded upon the law to give up their own blood, each man for himself, as if it were in imitation of the redemption which was to come; and so we, on whose behalf the ransom of Christ's blood was paid, do not need to offer on our own behalf the ransom, that is, the blood of circumcision. But if it seems to you reprehensible that God should order the wounds of the law to be inflicted upon infants and their blood to be shed, you must also censure this when it happened in the case of Christ, who was both circumcised on the eighth day, and received the wounds of his passion, and poured out his blood in the suffering of the cross. Indeed, if because of your horror of circumcision, the approach to this faith seems difficult to you, how much more difficult must seem the way into the Gospel, where a man is ordered to lay down not a small part of his body but his very soul. But the examples of the martyrs, according to you, will prevent men from approaching the faith.²⁵

SAUCIUS INFANS

The link with baptism is clear: circumcision has been rendered unnecessary by Christ's suffering on the cross in which we share through the sacrament of baptism. This argument, first presented by Origen, was to prove very influential, as Ambrose's letter, so closely modelled on Origen's commentary, bears witness.²⁶

Against such a polemic exegetical background it was easy to present baptism as offering a clear contrast. Thus Basil of Caesarea: 'There, on the one hand, is pain and wounding; here, on the other, is the dew of the Spirit and a remedy for the wounds of the heart.'²⁷ Baptism then offers a contrast in its very essence: circumcision wounds, but baptism heals. So Gregory of Elvira stresses the power of baptism

which severs all vices and faults and crimes from the very approaches and sanctuaries, so to speak, of the conscience, from the very fibres and roots, both killing and circumcising not a part but the whole man, not making a wound but searching for the completeness of salvation so that, circumcised in this way, he might rejoice that he has not lost any part of his body but has made ready the completeness of a blessed spirit.²⁸

Baptism, far from wounding, saves and makes whole, conferring integritas salutis. Chrysostom may have been willing, as we saw, to warn against exaggerating the pain caused a child by circumcision, but in the following homily the same pain serves different rhetorical ends:

But consider, I beg you, beloved, the benevolence of God and his ineffable kindness towards us: there there was both pain and distress from what happens and nothing else of benefit from circumcision except this alone, the fact that they were recognisable as a result of this sign and were separated from the remaining races. But our circumcision, I speak of the grace of baptism, possesses the healing which takes away pain and is productive of countless good things for us.²⁹

The sole benefit of circumcision according to Chrysostom - the recognition factor - we shall consider in the second half of this

SAUCIUS INFANS

chapter. Cyril of Alexandria sees a different benefit provided by circumcision, but the outline is the same: both baptism and its type, circumcision, are performed on the eighth day:

and it was already the right time to partake in the Holy Spirit and to receive in it that circumcision which does not cause pain to the flesh but which cleanses the spirit; which does not set free from bodily filth but delivers us from spiritual sicknesses.³⁰

Cyril would appear to be alluding here not only to the tradition that one of the purposes of circumcision was symbolically to cast out lust (a theme we shall consider later) but also to some idea of circumcision for the sake of personal hygiene.

Whatever beneficial side-effects circumcision might or might not have, the Fathers were fairly united: the pain of circumcision could not be denied and stood in stark contrast to the healing power of baptism. Arator accepts and reflects this tradition with enthusiasm: the healing/baptism of Aeneas is seen as the healing of the wounds of his circumcision. Arator however introduces a further element: Aeneas' healing is described in the terms of a resurrection from the dead. Aeneas is described as cadaver (763); as a result of his healing, extinctos ad vitam surrigit artus (764); his bed is described as monumenta (765).³¹ Aeneas then in his baptism is crucified and raised again with Christ. More interestingly, in the fact that his 'resurrection' inspires the multitude to receive the sacrament of baptism, he becomes an image of Christ himself.

If we are right to read the text in this way, then the phrases unius languore (768) and alieno robore (770) take on new meaning. The

SAUCIUS INFANS

obvious reading of unius languore is of course to interpret it as referring to Aeneas' palsy. It is as a result of the expulsion of this illness that the people of Lydda are inspired to receive baptism. However, if this seems to stretch use of the instrumental ablative beyond classical limits (if not beyond Arator's), or even if it does not, we can also interpret the text on another level. Could not languore allude to Christ's languor on the cross? It was through one man's suffering and sacrifice that salvation came to many. This would accord better with alieno robore; on an obvious level it means that the people of Lydda are strengthened as a result of Aeneas' new-found strength, but it makes just as good if not better sense if taken as referring to Christ: washed in the baptismal spring the people receive the strength of Christ. We remember and reinterpret the argument of Ambrose: Aeneas' suffering, the punishment for his infant circumcision, has been rendered unnecessary by the suffering of Christ on the cross in which the people of Lydda share through the sacrament of baptism.

2. The healing of the paralytic at Bethesda

Arator introduces a new feature into his exposition at line 787 by comparing the healing of Aeneas with the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda recorded at John 5:2-16. This is clear from the reference to his waiting for the waters to move, or rather the fact that the man's infirmity prevented him from reaching the water in time when it did move (proxima mota...nullas praestabat aquas 788-9; see John 5:7); the pool is surrounded by five porticoes (atria quinque...tenet 790-1; see John 5:2); Christ is accused of breaking

SAUCIUS INFANS

the sabbath by performing the healing (sabbata solvens 796; see John 5:16, not verse 10 to which McKinlay refers the reader.³² John 5:10 refers to the paralytic breaking the sabbath by taking up his bed; the nominative solvens clearly refers either to Christ or to his gratia, the subject of impulit ad fontem).

Three reasons are immediately apparent to explain why Arator has drawn this comparison. First, the obvious similarities between the two healings show that Peter was a true practitioner of the healing power bequeathed him by Christ: Petrus ad Ecclesiam revocat documenta Magistri (778). Not all commentators were as convinced of this as Arator; in one of the surviving fragments of his commentary on Acts, Didymus of Alexandria also compared the two miracles: whereas Christ told the paralytic to take up his bed and walk, Aeneas was commanded only to take up his bed. For Didymus this was evidence that Peter's healing power was not so great, since it came only from his faith in Christ, whereas Christ's power was the power of God.³³

Secondly, Arator seizes upon his perceived similarity between the respective lengths of the two men's illnesses:

*Signatis etiam numero paralyticus annis
Ille iacebat iners (787-8).*

Arator is perhaps sufficiently ashamed by the extent to which he has availed himself of poetic licence to avoid giving specific details of the length of the Bethesda paralytic's illness: despite Arator's signatis numero annis, his illness had actually lasted thirty-eight years. Arator of course concentrates on the implication only of the

SAUCIUS INFANS

number eight, since that is the number which suits his purpose.

The third reason is the way in which the healing of the Bethesda paralytic forms an attack on the Jews for failing to recognise Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies:

*Debilis aeternum vidit sine munere Iesum
In libris aegrota suis (793-4).*

As we shall see later in the case of his interpretation of the crossing of the Red Sea,³⁴ Arator, although he shows good knowledge of the details of earlier interpretations, fails to take advantage of the full catechetical tradition. For, from the time of Tertullian, the healing of the paralytic at Bethesda had been interpreted as a baptismal type:

If it seems unprecedented for an angel to come upon the waters, an example of what was to come did occur before: an angel came upon the pool at Bethesda and disturbed it; those who lamented their infirmity watched it happen; for the man who was first to get down to that place ceased to lament after bathing. That image of bodily healing proclaimed a spiritual healing, according to the model through which fleshly matters always occur first as an image of spiritual ones.³⁵

Indeed Daniélou has argued that the baptismal implication is already present in the text of John:

Or la tradition chrétienne est simplement l'expression du Nouveau Testament lui-même. Dans l'Évangile de saint Jean, en effet, l'épisode a un sens baptismal...comme souvent dans l'Évangile de saint Jean, la réalité visible apparaît comme le signe d'une réalité invisible...Or ici de quoi le signe est-il la figure? C'est de la rémission des péchés qui est l'objet même du baptême. Déjà ceci nous oriente vers le sens sacramental. Mais, comme toujours chez saint Jean, les sacrements ne sont pas seulement désignés dans leur contenu, mais dans leur signe... Or ici le miracle a lieu près d'une piscine. Nous nous rappellerons que les baptêmes chrétiens primitifs avaient lieu dans des piscines. Et dans des piscines d'eaux vives, ce que suggère l'agitation de l'eau par l'ange. La scène désigne ainsi la rémission des péchés en relation avec la piscine d'eaux vives. Elle apparaît donc clairement comme une figure du baptême.³⁶

This interpretation was followed both in the West, beginning with

SAUCIUS INFANS

Tertullian, and in the East. Here is an excerpt from Chrysostom's version: 'He intended baptism to be granted, which possesses much power and the greatest gift, baptism which purifies all sins and makes living men from corpses'.³⁷ The reference to baptism raising men from the dead reminds immediately of Arator's reference to Aeneas as a corpse. We see the same detail in the Oratio in Mesopentecosten spuriously attributed to Chrysostom and ascribed by some to Amphilochius of Iconium, but by others to an anonymous writer from the second half of the sixth century, who would thus be a near contemporary of Arator. The author makes the paralytic say:

Do I wish to become a healthy man? I grew old on this bed; I am a prattling tomb; I am dead but live; there is nothing new that I must face after death; everyone swears their oaths on me.³⁸

Here perhaps is a clue to our understanding of what Arator has done. Has he not transferred the traditional exegetical detail of the Bethesda healing to his own account of Aeneas' healing? After all, it is the Acts miracle on which Arator has concentrated, adducing the Johannine healing merely as a support. It would thus be natural for him to transfer the well-known detail of the Bethesda miracle to the less frequently interpreted healing of Aeneas. Here then is an additional, less obvious but no less important explanation of why Arator chose to give this miracle a baptismal interpretation: he has identified it with the Bethesda healing.

No other writer would appear to agree with Arator's numerological explanation of the Bethesda miracle and perhaps we should not expect to find one doing so: as we have seen, Arator had his own peculiar reasons for this particular interpretation. However, the anti-Jewish

SAUCIUS INFANS

polemic we find in Arator is also to be found in varying degrees in commentaries on the healing of the Bethesda paralytic. Chromatius of Aquileia gives us the traditional superiority of baptism over its Jewish models:

And so that pool in all its details showed an image of the baptism which was to come. But there is as much distance between the image and the truth as there is between the grace of that pool and of the baptism which brings salvation. That water was disturbed once a year, this water of the baptism of the church is always ready to be disturbed. That was disturbed in only one place, this is disturbed throughout the whole world. There an angel came down, here the Holy Spirit. There was the grace of an angel, here the mystery of the Trinity. There the water healed only one man a year, this water saves whole nations every day. That water saved men only from ill-health, this saves them even from sin. That freed only their bodies from infirmity, this frees body and soul from sin. By that water lay a crowd of invalids, since it healed only one man a year. By this one lies no one except he who refuses to come and be healed. It is always ready to heal if only men come to be healed. Finally, the gentiles came and were healed. The Jews refused and for this reason remained in perpetual infirmity.³⁹

Ambrose too stresses the superiority of Christian baptism:

But at that time only one man was saved; at that time, I say, as an illustration only he who went down first was cured. How much greater is the grace of the church in which however many go down all are saved!⁴⁰

The Jews are also castigated, as in Arator and Chromatius, for not recognising what was happening and being offered to them before their very eyes:

The water was disturbed on account of their failure to believe. For them it was a miracle, for you faith; for them an angel came down, for you the Holy Spirit; for them a created being moved around, for you works Christ himself, the Lord of creation.⁴¹

We see the same assertion of superiority in Chrysostom,⁴² and with astonishing virulence in Pseudo-Chrysostom, where Christ is given the following words:

Why do you chatter so, paralytic? It is enough that you recognise me as your Lord. Do not imagine all these things, do not watch out for the disturbance of the pool. It is the Jews who are disturbed, avail yourself of the ogdoad of my spring.

SAUCIUS INFANS

Recognise what you are looking for. For even if you do not have a man, yet I am by your side, God made man...Enrage the Jews, astound the evil spirits, smoke out those who speak against you, give the malicious their fill, set free the uselessness of the sabbath and take up your bed against him who spouts legalities.⁴³

Arator's attack on the Jews in this passage centres around his exposition of the five porticoes, so derided by Châtillon:⁴⁴

Piscina ligata

Porticibus iudaea fuit; namque atria quinque
Ad sua claustra tenet per quinque volumina Moysi
Legis adepta modum (789-92).

The five inward-looking porticoes represent the Pentateuch and thus the law. Arator would appear to have taken this image directly from Augustine:

Those five porticoes are the law of the five books of Moses. Moreover the sick (aegroti) were led forth from their homes to lie in the porticoes. Thus the law brought forth the sick but did not heal them; but the water was disturbed by the blessing of God, just as if an angel had come down. When the water seemed disturbed, one man, whoever was able, went down and was healed. That water, bound round with the five porticoes, was the Jewish people, shut in by the law. Now the Lord disturbed them by his presence so that he might be killed. For if the Lord were not to disturb the Jewish people by his descent, would he be crucified? Therefore the disturbed water signifies the passion of our Lord, which occurred because of the disturbance of the Jewish people. The feeble man (languidus) believes in this passion, as if he were going down into the disturbed water, and is healed. He who is not healed by the law (lex), that is the porticoes, is healed through grace (gratia), through his belief in the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

Again we see the link between baptism and the cross: baptism is belief in Christ's passion. We shall return to Augustine shortly. However, other interpretations were also current in the sixth century. Pseudo-Chrysostom saw figured in the five porticoes the five senses:

This is a symbol of the Jewish weakness - the five porticoes which were filled with weak men. For the Jewish people are weak in their five senses, sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch. The children of the Jews are weak in them all. They do not have a clear eye, since they see miracles but look past them. They have no

SAUCIUS INFANS

pleasing sense of taste, since they chew manna and then look for figs. They have no pure sense of smell, since they prefer the stench of the devil to the perfume of the Lord. They have no clear hearing, since they obey the hissings of serpents and not the teachings of the prophets. They have no constructive sense of touch, since they deify idols and despise the living God.⁴⁶

This interpretation maintains the antisemitic virulence noted earlier in a strikingly different illustration of the text. However the fact that Arator is dependent upon Augustine is clear, not only from the interpretation but also from several other verbal parallels. First, Augustine spurns the adjective aegrotus and instead uses the word languidus for the feeble Christian healed by his belief in the cross and baptism, just as Arator uses languore to describe Aeneas' prebaptismal palsy.

Secondly, both Augustine and Arator use the gratia/lex antithesis: for Augustine, where the law failed to heal, grace succeeded (qui non sanabatur lege...sanabatur gratia); similarly Arator stresses the fact that the grace of Christ overruled the law in healing on the sabbath:

quem postquam sabbata solvens
Impulit ad fontem, superavit gratia legem (776-7).

Despite several references to gratia in the excerpts from Chromatius and Ambrose translated above, the gratia/lex antithesis does not seem to be found in any other exegesis of the Bethesda miracle.⁴⁷

Arator then includes the Bethesda miracle because of its obvious similarity to the healing at Lydda but more importantly because of its popular baptismal interpretation.⁴⁸ However he transfers the baptismal exegesis to the healing of Aeneas so as to draw more

SAUCIUS INFANS

tellingly the comparison between baptism and circumcision, for Aeneas could now receive both.

There is however a connection between circumcision and baptism in the case of the Bethesda paralytic which we have thus far ignored. It comes in the text of John itself. When Christ is rebuked by the Jews for failing to observe the sabbath he replies: 'If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well?' (John 7:23). The healing referred to is, of course, that of the paralytic at Bethesda. The link with circumcision is then explicit in John, as Pseudo-Chrysostom realised:

Who is breaking the sabbath? You who circumcise on the sabbath and sharpen your sword and perform the cutting and sever a member and prepare to spatter the place with blood? Or I, who said with a word 'Rise, take up your bed and go away to your own home'?⁴⁹

There remain two aspects of circumcision raised by our discussion of this passage of Arator which require further examination: first, the idea of circumcision as a sign which distinguishes the Jewish people from the Gentiles; secondly, the idea that circumcision symbolised the casting out of lust. Both these ideas occur again in another passage of the Historia Apostolica.

SAUCIUS INFANS

II: Historia Apostolica 2.242-306

Translation

Paul had now overcome men's fierce anger, but, as the faith spread abroad, they [sc. the Jews] spouted forth sudden streams from the Jewish cloud of deceit that baptism could not be given to anyone until circumcision of the flesh had taken place in accordance with the Law of God. Harsh people, why do you still summon men to stones and the sword? This [rite] was a shadow of a figure, not a permanent form; leave behind such pretences for you now see what is true; lasting life has come forth from the mouth of Christ and orders all those who come to him to be reborn in the spring. Why should they cut off limbs and destroy a part of themselves when they can save themselves in their entirety? Do not seek to suppress by an ancient custom this new help and set your eyes gazing backwards, when a straighter way is guiding everyone and, having cut down the briars, is lighting up the world.

During this two-edged dispute, Paul travels to the neighbourhood of the city over which shines the memorial of the cross and visits again the holy leaders of the apostolic law, to whom he tells in person everything which has happened. Peter, who is most concerned to increase his entrusted flocks, calling everyone under his leadership into the happy pastures, unfolded these words with his mouth:

'You see that the Eternal God has fulfilled in us the things recorded in ancient times which the Prophets foretold with instructive speech to their people. For God preferred to be a redeemer for the salvation of us all, and having suffered no one to be set aside in the ransom by which life returns. He has ordered me to show this open road to the Gentiles. Why do you want his wishes to be delayed and held back? Why do you want these hoary riddles to be confused with the new light? Those whom grace cleanses, no law prevents from coming forward. A speedy faith is the stuff of heavenly love; this is what Christ chooses, this is what he makes his own; whoever deserves to practise it is already circumcised and is rightly reborn in the waves.'

They decided to follow their shepherd; and therefore the teachers decided both to go in person and at the same time to absolve the Gentiles in gracious letters: this yoke did not apply to them, yet they must beware that they worship no idols, whose libations are always to be cursed; that they eat nothing strangled, which is defiled with blood; that no unclean lust, stronger than an enemy, oppress those whom the light cleanses with baptism.

So that the proof of this figure may be more clearly evident, why this image, which took place previously, must now be discarded, we must remember its beginning: God said 'Abraham, so that you may now establish in the flesh my everlasting covenant for you and for your offspring, willingly cut off your foreskin with a knife and bind fast our supernal agreement'. Let us examine this secret aid, let us see the settled covenants of God which he in his foreknowledge hid in that wound so as to join to the earth participation in heaven; these covenants the slave learned to swear who first found Rebecca at the water running from the spring of the church.

That part of the body in which Abraham was circumcised is lustful and causes wantonness; it is the servant of vice and lies subject to the law of nature; that

SAUCIUS INFANS

very man, who will be the father of the seed from which the salvation of the world springs to life, casts out that which sin weighs down. The lust which is cut off predicts the virgin work; for his progeny followed a divine course; from this line was holy Mary begotten for a new birth, who without a husband is in herself a mother, and the son of God shines forth from the womb of a virgin and the Mediator perfects man in every way, raising up earthly things from the world and furnishing heavenly things from above. Therefore the old figure becomes obsolete at the birth of Christ; this manifestation renews the old law: the knife is put to flight and the blazing spirit circumcises the heart in the waves so that those who are healed in the waters need not inflict wounds on their bodies.⁵⁰

Introduction

Here we find at last a pericope which is, fundamentally at least, a paraphrase of the text of Acts, in this case Acts 15:1-35 and the discussion of whether or not it was necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised before baptism. However, despite Arator's basic faithfulness to what was said in the course of the Apostolic Council, the progress of the debate differs markedly from the version given in Acts.

In Acts Peter speaks first (7-11), followed by Barnabas and Paul (12), before judgement is given by James (13-21). Arator alters the emphasis entirely; making no reference to Barnabas, he reports Paul as having spoken first (thus altering the order of the speeches in Acts; or is he perhaps referring to the preliminary gatherings described in 15:4?), and then Peter, whose speech in Arator's version is clearly the one which influences the final decision of the council. To this end, the role of James has been axed completely; we neither hear his speech nor are so much as told of his presence. His judgement is transmuted into the decision of the council: Arator clearly did not wish James' obvious presidency of the council to blur his picture of the preeminence of Peter.⁵¹ The passage is not however

SAUCIUS INFANS

devoted entirely to paraphrase; as usual it is followed by a commentary on the significance of the supersession of circumcision, introduced at 281 by the familiar formula

Clarius ut liqueant huius documenta figurae.

Immediately apparent again in this passage is the view of circumcision as an essentially wounding action. We note the way in which Arator is not content to leave the task of denigrating the Jewish rite to Peter and Paul, nor even to wait for the end of the paraphrase to include his own commentary. His opinion is immediately evident when he describes the 'believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees' as deliberate deceivers, motivated by the *Iudaica nube doli* (244),⁵² but he then breaks into the narrative and launches his own attack on the Jews:

*Gens dura, quid ultra
ad lapides ferrumque vocas (246-7)?*

We find the same language used as in 1.754-800:

*Cur membra secent partemque resolvent
cum totum salvare queant (251-2)?*

Why do they insist on destroying a part of themselves when they have the opportunity of being saved in their entirety? The virulence of this attack on circumcision is wholly unsupported by the text of Acts at this point. The nearest Luke comes to attacking it is when he makes Peter refer to the law as 'a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear' (15:10). Yet the importance of this theme to Arator is clear from the way in which he chooses to emphasise the same point in the final

SAUCIUS INFANS

lines of the pericope:

cultroque fugato
Spiritus ardescens cor circumcidit in undis,
Qui sanantur aquis ne figant vulnera membris (304-6).

Thus the passage ends by again drawing the contrast between the wounding nature of circumcision and the healing offered by baptism.

This particular passage however raises several other points which need some explanation and consideration: first, the idea of the exclusiveness of circumcision, the idea that the Jews were being given a mark by which they might be recognised and set apart, for whatever reason, in contrast to the total absence of any distinction made by God amongst those who present themselves for baptism; secondly, the identification of circumcision as symbolic of the old covenant and the relevance of Arator's reference (quae didicit iurare puer [290]) to the servant of Abraham, 'the oldest of his house', mentioned in Gen 24; thirdly, the idea of circumcision and baptism as symbolising the casting out of lustfulness.

1. The exclusiveness of circumcision

Acts itself provides the main argument against maintaining circumcision as a necessary adjunct to conversion to Christianity: 'And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith' (15:8-9). Baptism is by nature universal, welcoming and embracing rather than marking off and setting aside. This is exactly the line which is taken by Arator:

SAUCIUS INFANS

for it is God, says Arator's Peter,

qui maluit emptor
Omnibus esse salus, nullum discernere passus
In pretio quo vita redit; mihi iussit apertam
Gentibus hanc monstrare viam (264-267).

God is the saviour of all and therefore, setting no one aside, shows an 'open road' to the Gentiles: the distinguishing mark of circumcision is no longer needed nor desired.

The early Fathers were fairly certain that one of the main purposes of circumcision was its use as a distinguishing mark, by means of which the Jews might be recognised.⁵³ Thus Eusebius:

And Abraham himself...on behalf of those who were to be born from him, was the first to receive circumcision of the body as a seal and handed down this sign for those who were to be born from him in the flesh to bear, as a mark of their descent from him.⁵⁴

The Jews then were to be marked out as Abraham's children, but for what purpose? The Fathers had various solutions to this problem. For Jerome, it was to prevent the Jews from mixing with Gentiles:

And then for forty years in the desert no one was circumcised, for they lived alone without mingling with any other race; as soon as the people crossed Jordan's bank and the Jewish multitude swarmed into the land of Palestine, circumcision was necessary to provide for any confusion resulting from their mingling with the Gentiles.⁵⁵

Similarly Theodoret of Cyr saw circumcision as a means of ensuring that the Jews 'did not destroy the purity of their breeding'.⁵⁶

There was however another more hostile line of exegesis, such as we find in Justin: 'For, from Abraham, circumcision of the flesh was given as a sign, so that you might both be distinguished from the

SAUCIUS INFANS

other races and from us, and alone might suffer what you now justly suffer.'⁵⁷ Identification of the Jews then has an oppressive purpose: once identified they can be made to suffer what is their due. The same line of antisemitism is evident in Gregory of Elvira:

This then is the third reason for circumcision, which as we said above was given as a sign of their race: since, because it was to happen that the seed of Abraham himself would be the slave of foreign races (and not just once, but often), lest then any confusion over race arise due to the mingling of the prisoners, for this reason a racial mark was given in the place of procreation.⁵⁸

The Jews then needed to be easily distinguishable to fulfil their destiny as the slaves of other races. Gregory goes on to adduce another reason:

For God, knowing both that they would be warmongers and that they would die in battle as a result of their sins, wished them to be recognisable through this mark, so that, recognised in this way, they might be collected for burial.⁵⁹

Whatever the reason for this demarcation, it is understandable that the Christian commentators chose to emphasise that the main or even sole importance of circumcision was its use as a racial sign. Since the old covenant had been superseded, it was obvious that the seal of that covenant had also become a thing of the past, as Cullmann observes:

Il ne serait pas seulement insensé, mais blasphématoire de continuer à pratiquer la circoncision de l'Ancienne Alliance. Ce serait combattre le plan de Dieu, nier le déroulement de l'histoire du salut, oublier que le Christ est mort et ressuscité. La circoncision, alors, cesserait de tendre vers le Christ. Elle se détacherait du plan de salut de Dieu, elle ne scellerait plus la foi d'Abraham en une postérité croyante, mais arrachée de tout ce qui lui donnait son sens, elle serait abaissée au niveau d'un rite extérieur, d'un signe racial.⁶⁰

I do not intend here to examine the general way in which circumcision was made redundant and replaced by the Christian sacrament: this has been amply treated and requires little further comment.⁶¹ However,

SAUCIUS INFANS

Arator's account includes several details which have not been discussed elsewhere.

2. 'Pone manum tuam subter femur meum': Abraham's thigh and the old covenant

As we would expect, Arator begins his commentary by stating his aim of explaining why circumcision is no longer valid as a sign of man's covenant with God:

*Et progressa prius cur iam discedat imago,
Principium meminisse iuvat (282-3).*

To this end he refers to God's instructions to Abraham, paraphrasing the speech contained in Gen 17:9-14. The purpose of circumcision was to enable those on earth to participate in heaven:

ut terris consortia iungat Olympi (289).

It is tempting to think that Arator used the word Olympi with all its pagan and classical connotations advisedly, intending it to sound as outdated and obsolete as the covenant itself.

It is at this point that Arator's narrative requires explanation. The old covenants, says Arator, were those

*Quae didicit iurare puer qui primus ad undam
Repperit ecclesiae currentem fonte Rebeccam (290-1).*

Why does Arator here introduce the servant of Abraham, sent in Gen 24 to find a wife for Isaac?⁶² The incident to which Arator, albeit obliquely, refers occurs right at the beginning of this episode when

SAUCIUS INFANS

the servant is required to place his hand under Abraham's thigh and swear 'by the Lord, the God of heaven and of the earth' (Gen 24:1-9).

To find an answer to this question it is necessary to examine the way in which this passage was interpreted by earlier exegetes. The question which they set themselves was 'Why did Abraham instruct his servant to place his hand on his thigh?'. We find one solution to the problem in Cyril of Alexandria: 'So when Abraham ordered this, the servant took the oath immediately, placing his hand on his master's thigh. Wherefore we can only deduce that the oath was sworn by all the generations which were to come from him.'⁶³ The servant then was being made to swear by all of Abraham's as yet unborn descendants.

Other writers were more specific as to which descendant was being signified here. Thus Ambrose: 'By thigh we understand descendants. For Christ is a descendant of Abraham';⁶⁴ and Augustine: 'What else is meant...but that the Lord God of heaven and the Lord of earth was to come in that flesh which was drawn from that thigh?'⁶⁵

However, there was also current another tradition which sheds rather more light on the passage of Arator. Here is the explanation given by Theodoret of Cyr:

Now, since it was in his seed that he had received both a blessing and the promise of good things, he instructed his servant to place his hand in that place where he had received the sign of his faith. For, trusting in the divine promises, he had accepted the seal of circumcision. He instructed him then to place his hand there so that, mindful both of the divine promise and of his circumcision, he should not corrupt his master's purity of breeding by a foreign marriage.⁶⁶

According to this alternative tradition, the thigh was chosen as

SAUCIUS INFANS

being the place of circumcision, symbol of the covenant made between God and Abraham: this connection explains the appearance of the servant in lines 290-1 and is clearly the tradition to which Arator refers. We find the same tradition in Jerome, who however rejects it in favour of the interpretation found in Ambrose and Augustine:

The Hebrews relate that he swore his oath by that which sanctified it, that is, by his circumcision. We however say that he swore by the seed of Abraham, that is by Christ, who was to be born from him.⁶⁷

The fact that this particular incident is included because of the part of Abraham's body on which the oath was sworn is confirmed by the way in which Arator's line of thought continues:

Corporis ille locus quo circumciditur Abram (292).

Arator's thought at this point is very localised: Abraham's servant is included not because of the oath he swore but because of the way in which he swore it and its implicit connection with circumcision. It is also the region of the body in which circumcision is practised and its natural function which leads Arator into the final part of his commentary.

3. 'Truncata libido': circumcision and lust.

At this point Arator attacks the question, what influenced God's decision to make circumcision in particular the seal of the old covenant? His answer is in accordance with an old and wide-spread tradition:

Corporis ille locus quo circumciditur Abram
Luxuriam lascivus habet vitiique minister
Naturae sub lege iacet; pater ipse....

SAUCIUS INFANS

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SAUCIUS INFANS

Evacuat quod culpa gravat (292-296).

The place of circumcision was chosen because it embodied the lust and sin to which man was by nature prone, the lust and sin whose casting out circumcision was intended if not to effect then at least to symbolise.

Two questions arise here: why does Arator choose to include this traditional material here? He may well have taken his lead from a reference in the text of Acts itself, in particular from the instructions which James declared were to be conveyed to the Gentiles: they did not have to be circumcised, but they were 'to abstain from...unchastity' (15:20). The second problem concerns the connection made by Arator between the circumcision of Abraham and the casting out of lust and the virginity of Abraham's descendant, Mary.

It is not entirely clear whether Arator really thinks that because circumcision affected the sexual organs it automatically brought about freedom from lustful thoughts, even if his language would seem to suggest exactly that. However, there does appear to have been a line of interpretation which explained circumcision in this literal way. Ambrose gives us one example of this kind:

Now, the proposer of the eternal law imposed the seal of fleshly circumcision on men alone because a man is more eager for sexual contact than a woman; therefore he wished to restrain their passion through the seal of circumcision; indeed it was because men believe that they can stray legitimately as long as they abstain from adultery, yet they think that availing themselves of prostitutes is in accordance with the law of nature, although it is permissible for neither a man nor a woman to have intercourse with another outside of wedlock.⁶⁸

However, more frequently the Fathers chose to give circumcision a

SAUCIUS INFANS

more symbolic significance. Ambrose himself continues immediately after the passage translated above:

Now this rite can be explained by a deeper interpretation: for if the mind is cleansed and circumcised, stripped of unnecessary desires and thoughts, it restricts the soul to chastity, and imbued with pure feelings renders it the mother of noble offspring.⁶⁹

And again elsewhere:

Is not circumcision of the flesh clearly an injunction towards chastity, that a man should cut off the lust of the flesh and hold back his irrepressible desires from debauchery and wantonness? For circumcision is given this name so that the stench of all impurity might be banished and the goad of lust removed.⁷⁰

We find the same in Augustine: 'And what is circumcision if not robbing from the flesh? Therefore that circumcision means the robbing of carnal desires from the heart';⁷¹ and in Cyril of Alexandria:

Therefore, God the lawgiver commands that the circumcising blade be applied to that part of the body in particular in which and through which sensual pleasures originate, so that you may learn, as if through a riddle, that it is impossible for us ever to seem pure unless we receive the very sharp force of the divine word in our hearts and take into our minds the knife of the spirit and banish our desire for all things shameful.⁷²

One of the earliest interpretations of this kind is found in Origen's Commentary on Romans. In an intriguing passage, Origen stresses both the suitability of the sexual organs as the location for circumcision and its symbolic significance but also adds the idea that however much the soul might wish to cast off its lustful feelings, it is the flesh that has, as it were, the final word:

To circumcise is to cut off a certain part from the sexual organ, through which is supplied the lineage of the human race and the descent of the flesh. Through this then I think is being symbolically declared that any impurity which has clung to the soul as a result of its participation in the flesh, any feeling of seductive lust which has clouded it, must be cut off from it. For this reason that cutting off was inflicted on the sexual organs and on no others, so that it should be clear that vices of this kind do not arise from the very being of the soul but from an innate impulse and excitement of the flesh.⁷³

SAUCIUS INFANS

Several writers however connected circumcision with the fall from grace, seeing it as Adam's punishment for succumbing to the temptation of the devil. Thus Quodvultdeus:

For, because of his first transgression, man was stricken in that part of his body by the serpent's venom, and, inflamed by the heat of his lust, he was ashamed of those organs which were not created as things of which to be ashamed...Therefore God the creator and judge imposed the sign of circumcision on this part of his body...so that through the benefit of abstinence and the virtue of chastity he might repair that which had been corrupted.⁷⁴

Circumcision then was the price paid by man for his sexual awareness; in itself it did not remove his lustful feelings but it served as a reminder that the only way he could regain his former state and put right his wrong was through observing continentia and integritas.

Zeno of Verona too blames Adam for the introduction of circumcision:

Add the fact that circumcision does not so much promise salvation as point out the location and principal site of his wrongdoing. For Adam, when he plucked the forbidden apple because of this organ, in this way introduced the power of death to the human race.⁷⁵

Adam is not the only one to receive Zeno's censure: he later blames Eve as well and her introduction enables him to draw the traditional parallel with the Virgin Mary:

Then the pain of circumcision begins with that woman who was the first to sin, and because it was through Eve's ear that the devil, creeping in with his advice, wounded and destroyed her, it is through the ear that Christ enters Mary and cutting away all the sins of her heart heals the wound caused by the woman, as he is born from a virgin.⁷⁶

We can begin to place Arator in his context: clearly there was a tradition which presented Mary in her virginity as representative of the new covenant which had replaced the old one symbolised by circumcision. It is time to return to the Historia Apostolica:

SAUCIUS INFANS

truncata libido

Virgineum promittit opus; haec namque propago
Divinum concepit iter; hinc sacra Maria est
Ad partum generata novum, quae coniugis expers
Mater inest, natusque Dei de virginis alvo
Emicet (296-301).

The casting off of lust symbolised by circumcision prophesied the virgin birth which was to come: the old covenant established by Abraham was to be replaced by one of his own descendants.⁷⁷

We can trace back to the earliest exegetes the view that the chaste behaviour encouraged by circumcision had been surpassed by the abstinence practised by the virgins in whom the Church abounded.

Origen gives the argument in full:

No one doubts that this organ, on which the foreskin seems to be found, is subject to its natural functions, those of intercourse and procreation. If therefore a man, who does not act in an unfitting manner in respect of impulses of this kind, neither exceeds the limits set by the laws nor has known any woman other than his legitimate wife, and conducts himself in the case of this woman too only for the purpose of procreation and at the fixed and legitimate times, that man is called circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh. But the man who rushes headlong into all wantonness and tarries everywhere in various illicit embraces and charges unbridled into every whirlpool of lust, he is uncircumcised in the foreskin of his flesh. But the church of Christ, being strengthened by the grace of him who was crucified for her, abstains not only from illicit and unspeakable couplings but also from those which are allowed and permissible; and like the virgin bride of Christ, it abounds in chaste and modest virgins in whom the true circumcision of the foreskin of the flesh has occurred; and indeed the covenant of God, the eternal covenant is preserved in their flesh.⁷⁸

But it is Gregory of Elvira who provides the closest link with the interpretation expounded by Arator. He summarises the argument presented by Origen but takes it one step further:

At that time therefore that circumcision of the flesh had to be applied, since it was necessary for their intemperance, which could not be curbed by faith, to be restrained by the sword. Then, I say, when virginity was assailed by marriage, that circumcision was valid, but not in the Church, where virginity dispenses with marriage; then, I say, when one man availed himself of many wives and concubines, that circumcision was valid, but not in the Church, where it is said Let those who have wives live as though they had none. But in our case, where both she who bears

SAUCIUS INFANS

Christ is a virgin and the Holy Spirit from which he is conceived is even more a virgin...79

The links are clear: the significance of circumcision as the casting out of lust is no longer needed, for the virgin birth of Christ, which obviated lust completely, has rendered it obsolete. In the same way, the old covenant established by Abraham has been replaced by the new covenant which is embodied in Christ:

natusque Dei de virginis alvo
Emicat atque hominem Mediator in omnia complet
Hinc terrena levans, illinc caelestia praestans (300-302).

We cannot help but notice the detailed description this new covenant is given in comparison with that given of the old:

ut terris consortia iungat Olympi (289).

The text of Acts is concerned to show that the burden of circumcision is not one which has any relevance for Gentile converts to Christianity. Arator sets himself the task of proving its total obsolescence. We are consequently left in no doubt as to the superiority of the new dispensation: the old covenant has been replaced by the new, mere continence by virginity, circumcision by baptism.

NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 57-60. The translation differs from Schrader's in several places:

- a) inclusi (1.769) is rendered as 'particular' (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 47); this surely misses the point that the men who are healed by baptism are not suffering from any

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

physical illness;

b) discrimine (1.778) is rendered as 'peril' (48). While this meaning is undoubtedly implied on a secondary level, the circumcisional context would seem to demand the more obvious reading of 'distinguishing mark'.

c) *Debilis aeternum vidit sine munere Iesum
In libris aegrotis suis (1.793-794)*

is rendered as 'she, being weak, sees the everlasting Jesus, without His gift [faith], suffering in her books' (48). This misses the point entirely; the Jews see Christ in the Old Testament but fail to recognise him and pay him service (sine munere).

d) Schrader (48) follows McKinlay (CSEL 72, 310) in reading mundus (1.796) as 'world'. But the following sentence, referring to Christ's healing on the sabbath, makes the sense of 'cleansed man' just as plausible: every time a man is baptized, grace overcomes the law.

2. For a general introduction to the biblical and patristic foundations of the drawing of typological parallels between circumcision and baptism see J.Daniélou, 'Circoncision et baptême', Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Michael Schmaus zum sechzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht von seinem Freunden und Schülern edited by J.Auer and H.Volk (Munich, 1957), 755-776. See also Daniélou, Bible et Liturgie: La théologie biblique des Sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Église (Paris, 1951), 89-95.
3. F.Chatillon ('Arator Déclamateur Antijuif II: Les traits empoisonnés du De Actibus (suite)', RMAL 25-34 (1969-78), 16) also comments on the amount of space given this passage by Arator and concludes 'Il faut comprendre qu'Arator, en la circonstance, se trouve devant un fait éminemment propre à inspirer sa verve. On n'est pas poète pour rien. Raconter ne suffit pas, il faut développer tant qu'on peut'. The final sentence does indeed epitomise Arator's aim, not just to tell the story but to explain it; Chatillon does not need to make it sound like an insult.
4. Notably, H.Rahner, Greek Myths and Christian Mystery translated by B.Battershaw (London, 1963 from Zurich, 1957), 69-88. See also Daniélou, Bible et Liturgie, 355-387.

On this section of Acts in particular M.D.Goulder (Type and History in Acts [London, 1964], 96) sees in the use of the word 'Arise' an allusion to the Resurrection, since it recalls the 'resurrection' healings performed by Christ, as at Mark 2. This is highlighted by the significance of 'the resurrection number. As Jesus had been raised on the eighth day of the week, so Aeneas is raised in the eighth year of his paralysis'. However, not surprisingly, it is left to Arator to pursue the connection to its baptismal conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

5. 'Arator Déclamateur Antijuif II', 16.
6. Ibid., 17.
7. There is disagreement among modern scholars over Aeneas' religion, prior to his healing at least. Haenchen (338n) assumes that he was already a Christian, whereas O. Bauernfeind (Kommentar und Studien zur Apostelgeschichte [Tübingen, 1980], 138) thinks not: 'Aeneas scheint noch nicht Christ zu sein.' Amongst earlier commentators R. B. Rackham (The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition (Westminster Commentaries), 2nd edition [London, 1904], 144) saw symbolised in the healing of Aeneas 'the healing of those Gentiles who are sick with sin, or repentance'. Suffice it to say that Arator must have believed Aeneas to be a Jew.
8. M. Simon, Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425) translated by H. McKeating (Oxford, 1986 from Paris, 1964), 104.

Rutilius Namatianus (De reditu suo 1.387-388, [LCL, Minor Latin Poets, 798]) details the sense of uncomprehending disgust which was the standard Roman attitude towards circumcision. For the concern of the Roman man with the physical appearance of his penis see Aline Rousselle, Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity, trans. Felicia Pheasant (Family, Sexuality and Social Relations in the Past Times) (Oxford, 1988), 54.
9. O. Cullmann, Le Baptême des enfants et la doctrine biblique du baptême (Cahiers théologiques de l'actualité protestante 19/20) (Neuchâtel/Paris, 1948), 60. See also TDNT 6, 78-9.
10. Tract. 1.3 (1.13) De Circumcisione 2 (CCL 22, 24):

Circumcisio est, fratres, in damnum rotundi vulneris ferro circulate cicatrix. Quam si Iudaeus aestimat gloriam, ut de ceteris taceam, maior est eius, qui in honorem deae suae - sane anus turpis atque ametricis - non parvam cutem eiusdem membri, sed ipsum membrum radicatus abscisum mysteriis turpioribus immolavit.

Lactantius refers to the rite of self-castration practised by the Galli, the priests of Cybele, at Div. Iust. 1.17.7 (CSEL 19, 65): 'Deum Mater et amavit formosum adolescentem et eundem cum paelice deprehensum exsectis virilibus semivirum reddidit et ideo nunc sacra eius a Gallis sacerdotibus celebrantur.' See also Ovid, Fasti 4.359-364.
11. Tract. 1.3 (1.13) 12 (CCL 22, 26), 'Agnosce igitur, Iudaeae, vel sero erroris tui miserum dolendumque discrimen'.
12. In Ex. Hom. 7: De amaritudine aquae Merreae 1 (GCS Orig 6, 205), 'Quid enim tam amarum quam ut puer octava die circumcisionis vulnus accipiat et rigorem ferri tenera patiat infantia?'.
13. Tract Orig. 4.2 (CCL 69, 27):

quisvis intellegere potest circumcisionem esse circumductum ferro vulnus quo

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

aliquid amputatur. Quam definitionem etsi Iudaeus tenet, quae gloria est (illi) iacturam carnis in perfecto corpore suscepisse et integram nativitatis figuram ferro vulnerante mutilasse?

Gregory goes on to 'prove' circumcision to be unnatural by comparing the whole, uncircumcised baby with its wounded, circumcised father. Nature and religion are at odds (Tract. Orig. 4.3 [CCL 69, 28]): 'Ita in Iudaeo natura et religio reluctantur, integritate naturali institutione praestante et institutionis perfectionem introducta religione tollente.' Compare n19 below where the same point is made by Origen, who however chooses to emphasise the contradiction of God's creation rather than nature.

14. Comm. in Ep. ad Galatas 1.2 (PL 26, 336), 'Nec gentes poterant adulta iam aetate non profuturo circumcisionis dolore cruciari'.
15. In Gen. Hom. 39.5 (PG 53, 367), 'ἵνα ἐν τῇ ἁώρῳ ἡλικίᾳ κουφότερον ἐνεγκεῖν τὸν πόνον δυνηθῆι τῆς περιτομῆς τῆς σαρκός'. But at In Gen. Hom. 40.4 (PG 53, 373) he emphasises the pain caused Abraham by circumcision which nonetheless he and his whole household took lightly. Gregory of Elvira too emphasises Abraham's pain and shame at Tract. Orig. 4.24 (CCL 69, 32): 'Et ideo circumcisionis vulnus inprimitur et dolor inrogatur et debilitas infertur et sanguis effunditur et pudor movetur.'
16. Ep. 23 (Domino...Maximino).4 (CSEL 34.1, 67-8), 'si veteris populi temporibus Iudaeus essem, quando aliud esse melius non possem, accepissem utique circumcisionem. quod signaculum iustitiae fidei tantum illo tempore valuit, antequam domini evacuaretur adventu'. Augustine had other reasons for this generous attitude: the parallel of infant circumcision supported his theory of original sin and his view of the necessity of infant baptism: just as a child is born uncircumcised, even though his father has been circumcised, so the child of baptised parents is yet born unbaptised: just as circumcision was necessary to remove the child's inborn sin, so is the sacrament of baptism. See especially Contra Iulianum Pelagianum 6.18-20 (PL 44, 833-4). For a brief survey of Augustine's attitude to circumcision, see B.Blumenkranz, Die Judenpredigt Augustins: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen in den ersten Jahrhunderten (Reimp. of 1st ed. Bâle 1946, Paris 1973), 145-148.
17. Ep. 72 (Ambrosius Constantio).2-3 (PL 16, 1244):

qua ratione circumciduntur infantulorum corpore, et in ipso ortu subiciuntur periculis, et hoc imperari oraculo; ut discrimen salutis fiat de mysterio religionis...aut qua gratis ipse operator corporis nostri in ipso nostrae generationis exordio circumcidi voluit opus suum, et vulnerari, et cruentari, et abscondi partem, quam velut necessariam, qui omnia disposuit ordinate, cum caeteris membris faciendam putavit?...Deinde cum propositum sit Deo, ut frequenter ipse testificatus est, plures ad sacrae observantiam provocare religionis, quanto magis invitarentur, si non aliqui circumcisionis ipsius aut periculo, aut opprobrio revocarentur.
18. Ambrose must have read Origen's Commentary on Romans in the

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

original Greek since Rufinus' 'translation' was not made until after his death. See H.Chadwick, 'Rufinus and the Tura Papyrus of Origen's Commentary on Romans', *JTS NS* 10 (1959), 10: 'The original commentary of Origen was a large undertaking, extending to fifteen tomes according to Jerome (*Ep.* xxxiii.4), and now survives in the Latin abridgement of Rufinus of Aquileia, made for his friend Heraclius about 405, in which its dimensions are reduced to ten books.'

19. *Comm. in Ep. ad Rom.* 2.13 (PG 14, 910):

Itane oportuit ut cum poena et periculo parvulorum, cum cruciatibus tenerae et adhuc innocentis infantiae, figurarum species, et legis aenigmata conderentur?...Itane bonus est Deus iste qui natum hominem statim in primis novae lucis suspiciis praeceperit vulnerari? Et si, ut vobis videtur, ipse est et animae creator et corporis, aut superfluo se plasmasse partem illum corporis notat quam postmodum mandat abscindi, ut per miserorum supplicia proprium emendet errorem; aut quod necessario et utiliter fecit, non recte mandat auferri. Tum praeterea si curae est Deo plurimos ad cultum suae religionis adduci, maximum ex circumcissione obstaculum nascitur.

20. *Ep.* 72. 11 (PL 16, 1246):

Quid autem absurdum si propter pietatem aliquid doloris vel laboris inferri videbatur, quo plus devotio per haec certamina probaretur? Pulchrum etiam ut ab ipsis vitae incunabulis insigne religionis adolesceret, et puderet unumquemque aetatis provectoris vel labori, vel dolori cedere, quorum utrumque tenera infantia vicisset.

21. *Ep.* 72. 13 (PL 16, 1247):

Et potuit hoc terrere maiorem, quod infantuli plerique sustinebant sine periculo? Esto tamen aliquos infantulos Iudaeorum, cum dolorem circumcisi corporis plagaeque ferventis sustinere non potuerint, defunctos fuisse: sed hoc nec caeteros deterrebat provectori aetate robustos, et laudabiliorem faciebat eum, qui praecipis obedisset coelestibus.

22. *Ep.* 72. 10 (PL 16, 1246):

necesse est ut is etiam Dominum Iesum reprehendendum arbitretur, qui non exiguum, sed multum sanguinem pro huius mundi effudit redemptione, et hodieque nos fundere iubet sanguinem nostrum pro tanto religionis certamine, dicens: Qui vult me sequi, tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. Si autem nequaquam iusta est accusatio, cum aliquis totum se pro pietate offerat, et multi sanguinis se mundet effusione; quomodo legem possumus reprehendere, exigui stillam exigentem sanguinis, cum praedicemus Dominum Iesum multi effusionem sanguinis, et totius corporis mortem imperantem?

23. *Ep.* 72. 14 (PL 16, 1247):

Nam si reprehendunt circumcissionis dolorem, reprehendant et martyrum mortem, per quos cumulata, non minuta religio est. In tantum autem abest nocuisse fidei circumcissionis dolorem, ut probabiliorem fidem faciat dolor; maior enim fidei gratia, si quis pro religione contemnat dolorem; et hic magis habet praemium quam ille, qui ideo dolorem voluit circumcissionis subire, ut gloriaretur in Lege et laudem ex hominibus magis quam ex Deo quaereret.

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

24. Ep. 72. 9 (PL 16, 1246):

Donec igitur hoc pretium pro omnibus solveretur hominibus, quod Dominici sanguinis effusione pro omnium fuit solvendum absolute, opus fuit singulorum sanguine, qui Lege et consuetudinis ritu, sacrae praecepta sequerentur religionis. Sed quia pretium pro omnibus solutum est, posteaquam passus est Christus Dominus, iam non opus est, ut viritum sanguis singulorum circumcissione fundatur; cum in sanguine Christi circumcisio universorum celebrata sit, et in illius cruce omnes simul crucifixi simus cum eo, et consepulti in eius sepulcro, complantati similitudini mortis eius, ut ultra non serviamus peccato: Qui enim mortuus est, iustificatus est a peccato.

25. Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 2.13 (PG 14, 911-12):

Tenebat autem nos diabolus, cui distracti fuimus peccatis nostris. Poposcit ergo pretium nostrum sanguinem Christi. Verum donec Iesu sanguis daretur, qui tam pretiosus fuit, ut solus pro omnium redemptione sufficeret, necessarium fuit eos qui instituebantur in lege, unumquemque pro se, velut ad imitationem quandam futurae redemptionis, sanguinem suum dare; et propterea nos, pro quibus completum est pretium sanguinis Christi, non necesse habemus pro nobis ipsis pretium, id est, sanguinem circumcisionis offerre. Si vero culpabile vobis videtur quod Deus legis inferri iubet infantibus vulnera, et sanguinem fundi: hoc etiam in Christo factum culpatis, qui et octava die circumcisus est, et vulnera passionis excepit, et cum crucis poena sanguinem suum fudit. Quod vero circumcisionis horrore difficilis vobis ad religionem videtur accessus, difficilior multo videtur ingressus ad Evangelium, ubi non partem exiguum corporis, sed ipsam quis animam ponere iubetur. Sed exempla martyrum, secundum vos, prohibebunt homines accedere ad fidem.

26. Although the similarity was first noticed by W. Willbrand ("Ambrosius und der Kommentar des Origenes zum Römerbriefe", BiblZeitschr 8 [1910], 26-32), the reliance of Ep. 72 on Origen's commentary has not always been noticed. F. Homes Dudden (The Life and Times of St Ambrose, 2 vols [Oxford, 1935], I 113 n3), though acknowledging Origen as one of Ambrose's favourite authors and admitting that Ambrose had no scruples when it came to borrowing (II, 459), does not include the Commentary on Romans as a work with which he was familiar.

Pierre Courcelle, however, (Recherches sur Saint Ambroise: 'vies' anciennes, culture, iconographie [Paris, 1973], 19) did see proof in Ep. 72 that Ambrose was acquainted with Origen's commentary: 'car Origène lui a enseigné que les anciens Égyptiens étaient adonnés à la géométrie et à l'astronomie et avaient des prêtres circoncis.' He then places side by side a passage from each work which show quite clearly Ambrose's debt to Origen. However, even Courcelle does not realise the extent to which Ambrose is indebted: the extract which he quotes is only the beginning of a section in which both Origen and Ambrose counter gentile objections to circumcision by indicating gentile races which were considered as eruditissimi and who still practised circumcision. As Courcelle observes, both devote their first paragraph to the Aegyptii, who were skilled in geometria and astronomia and whose priests were always circumcised. But they then introduce an identical list of further races in an extremely similar way, something not detailed by Courcelle. Thus Ambrose: 'Reperimus

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

autem in historia veterum non solum Aegyptios, sed etiam Aethiopum, et Arabum, et Phoenicum aliquos circumcissione erga suos usos' (Ep. 72.6, PL 16, 1245), and Origen: 'Verum si replicetis historias vestras, inuenietis non solum Aegyptiorum sacerdotes et hierophantes usos esse circumcissione, sed et Arabas et Aethiopes, et Phoenices, aliosque quorum studia erga huiuscemodi superstitiones nobilius viguere' (Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 2.13, PG 14, 911). Nor does Courcelle refer to any of the arguments to which Ambrose so obviously helped himself.

Daniélou ('Circoncision et baptême', 775) also draws the link, but fails to explain it in any detail.

27. Hom. in s. baptisma 2 (PG 31, 428), 'Κάκει μὲν ὀδύνη καὶ ἔλκος ἐνταῦθα δὲ δρόσος ψυχῆς, καὶ ἔλκους καρδίας ἴαμα'. See also column 429, where the newly-baptized is described as 'θεραπεύη, μὴ ὀδυνώμενος'.

28. Tract. Orig. 4.19 (CCL 69, 31):

vitis cuncta et errores et crimina hab ipsis conscientiae, ut ita dixerim, aditis adque penetralibus, ab ipsis fibris adque radicibus execans et hoccidens et circumcidens non partem, sed totum hominem, non vulnus faciens, sed integritatem salutis inquirens, ut ita circumcisis gaudeat se non solum nec quicquam corporis perdidisse, sed integritatem beatae animae praeparasse.

29. In Gen. Hom. 40.4 (PG 53, 373):

'Ἀλλὰ σκόπει μοι, ἀγαπητὲ, τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν, καὶ τὴν ἀφάτον περὶ ἡμᾶς εὐεργεσίαν. Ἐκεῖ καὶ ὀδύνη καὶ πόνος ἐκ τοῦ γινομένου, καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς ἄφελος ἦν, ἢ τοῦτο μόνον, τὸ διὰ τοῦ σημείου τούτου γνωρίμους αὐτοὺς εἶναι, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἔθνῶν κεχωρίσθαι. Ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα περιτομή, ἢ τοῦ βαπτίσματος λέγω χάρις, ἀνώδυνον ἔχει τὴν ἰατρείαν καὶ μυρίων ἀγαθῶν πρόξενος γίνεται ἡμῖν.

30. Glaphyra in Gen. 3: De Abraham et de promissione per Isaac 9 (PG 69, 133), 'Καὶ καιρὸς ἦν ἤδη τοῦ μεταλαχεῖν ἀγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ δέχεσθαι περιτομὴν, οὐ σάρκα λυποῦντος, ἀλλὰ πνεῦμα καθαίροντος· οὐ σωματικῶν ἀπαλλάττοντος ῥύπων, ἀλλὰ ψυχικῶν ἡμᾶς νοσημάτων ἀπολύοντος'.

31. See Goulder, n4 above.

32. CSEL 72, 60.

33. Fragmenta in A.A. (PG 39, 1673).

34. See chapter 7: 'Iustis Via, Sontibus Unda: The Crossing of the Red Sea.'

35. De Baptismo 5.5 (CCL 1, 281):

Angelum aquis intervenire si novum videtur, exemplum futuri praecurrit: piscinam Bethsaidam angelus interveniens commovebat; observabant qui invaliditudinem querebantur: nam si quis praevenerat descendere illuc queri post lavacrum desinebat. Figura ista medicinae corporalis spiritalem

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

medicinam praedicebat, ex forme qua semper carnalia in figura(m) spiritalium antecedunt.

36. Bible et Liturgie, 282-4, in a section where Daniélou discusses this passage in detail (282-291).
37. Hom. 36 in Ioann. 1 (PG 59, 203), 'Ἐμελλε βάπτισμα δίδοσθαι, πολλήν δύναμιν ἔχον καὶ δωρεάν μεγίστην, βάπτισμα πάσας ἀμαρτίας καθάρων, καὶ ἀντὶ νεκρῶν ζῶντας ποιοῦν'. For an earlier baptismal interpretation of this healing see Amphilochius of Iconium, Oratio 9 In illud: Non potest filius a se facere 2 (CCG 3, 176).
38. It is ascribed to Amphilochius at CPG 3236, but, as Datema observes (CCG 3, xxi), it bears little resemblance to the undisputed homily of Amphilochius referred to above (n37). 7 (CCG 3, 260): 'Θέλω ὑγιῆς γενέσθαι; Κατεγήρασα τῇ κλίνῃ, τάφος εἰμι πολύλαλος, τέθνηκα ζῶν, οὐδὲν καινότερον μετὰ θάνατον ὑπομένειν μέλλω, ὄρχον με πάντες λαμβάνουσι.'
39. Sermo 14.1 De Paralytico sanatione et de baptismo (CCL 9A, 62):
- Piscina itaque illa per omnia futuri baptismi imaginem demonstravit. Sed quantum distat inter imaginem et veritatem, tantum inter gratiam piscinae illius et gratiam distat baptismatis salutaris. Illa aqua semel in anno movebatur, haec aqua baptismi ecclesiae semper parata est ut moveatur. Illa uno tantum loco movebatur, haec per totum mundum movetur. Illic angelus descendebat, hic Spiritus sanctus. Illic gratia angeli, hic mysterium Trinitatis. Illic aqua unum tantum in anno curabat, haec cotidie populos salvat. Illa corpus tantum sanabat, haec et animam et corpus salvat. Illa a validudine solummodo, haec etiam a peccato. Illa corpus solummodo ab invalidudine liberabat, haec corpus et animam liberat a peccato. Ad illam aquam multitudo languentium iacebat, quia unum tantum in anno curabat; ad istam nemo iacet, nisi qui venire noluerit ut sanetur. Semper praeparata est ad sanandum, si modo veniant qui sanentur. Venerunt denique gentes et sanatae sunt. Iudaei venire noluerunt et idcirco in infirmitate perpetua remanserunt.
40. De Sacr. 2.2.5 (SC 25, 76), 'Tamen tunc temporis unus salvabatur, tunc, inquam, temporis in figura qui prior descendisset solus curabatur. Quanto maior est gratia ecclesiae in qua omnes salvantur quicumque descendunt'. See also De Myst. 4.23 (SC 25, 166-8), 'Tunc curabatur unus, nunc omnes sanantur, aut certe unus solus populus Christianus'.
41. De Myst. 4.22 (SC 25, 168), 'Movebatur aqua propter incredulos. Illis signum, tibi fides: illis angelus descendebat, tibi spiritus sanctus: illis creatura movebatur, tibi Christus operatur ipse dominus creaturae'. See also Cyril of Jerusalem, Hom. in paralyticum 13 (PG 33, 1148), where the Jews continue to disbelieve and to suffer and refuse to be healed.
42. Hom. 36 in Ioann. 1 (PG 59, 204).
43. Oratio in Mesopentecosten 7 (CCG 3, 261):

Τί βαμβαίνεις, παράλυτε; Ἀρχεῖ σοι τὸ γνωρίσαι με κύριον· μὴ φαντάζου περὶ

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

πολλά, μὴ εἰς τὴν ταραχὴν τῆς κολυμβήθρας ἀφόρα· τετάρταται τὰ Ἰουδαϊκά, τῆς ἐμῆς πηγῆς τὴν ὀγδοάδα ἔχε. "Α ἐπιζητεῖς οἶδα· εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχεις, ἀλλὰ παρέστηκά σοι ὁ ἄνανθρωπήσας θεός... Δρίμυξον Ἰουδαίους, θάμβησον δαίμονας, κάπνισον τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας, πληροφόρησον τοὺς κακόφρονας, λύσον τὴν τοῦ σαββάτου ἀργίαν, ἀντὶ δικολόγου τὴν κλίνην φέρε.

44. See n6 above.

45. Enarr. in Ps. 83. 6-7 (CCL 39, 1157):

Quinque illae porticus, lex est in quinque libris Moysi. Ad hoc producebantur aegroti de domibus suis, ut iacerent in porticibus. Ergo lex prodebat aegrotos, non sanabat; sed benedictione Dei turbabatur aqua, tamquam angelo descendente; visa aqua turbata, qui poterat unus descendebat et sanabatur. Aqua illa cincta quinque porticibus, populus Iudaeorum erat lege conclusus; hunc perturbavit Dominus praesentia sua, ut occideretur. Nisi enim descensu suo Dominus perturbaret populum Iudaeorum, numquid crucifigeretur? Itaque turbata aqua passionem Domini significabat, quae facta est perturbata gente Iudaeorum. In hanc passionem credit languidus, tamquam in aquam turbatam descendens, et sanatur. Qui non sanabatur lege, id est porticibus, sanatur gratia, per passionis fidem nostri Iesu Christi.

See also Tract. in Iohann. 24.6 (CCL 36, 246-247) and Enarr. in Ps. 102.15 (CCL 40, 1465).

46. Oratio in Mesopentecosten 4 (CCG 3, 255-6):

Σύμβολον τοῦτο τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρρωστίας, αἱ πάντε στοαὶ αἴτινες ἐπεπληρῶντο τῶν ἀρρώστων. Καὶ γὰρ ἀρρωστεῖ ὁ Ἰουδαϊκὸς λαὸς διὰ τῶν πάντε αἰσθήσεων, ὀράσεως, ὀσφρήσεως, γεύσεως, ἀκοῆς, ἀφῆς· διὰ πάντων ἠρρώστουν οἱ Ἰουδαίων παῖδες. Οὐκ εἶχον καθαρὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ὀρῶντες τὰ θαύματα καὶ παρορῶντες· οὐκ εἶχον γεῦσιν εὐχάριστον μάννα τρώγοντες καὶ συκέας ἐπιζητούντες· οὐκ εἶχον ὀσφρησιν εἰλικρινῆ τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ μύρου τὴν διαβολικὴν δυσωδίαν προκρίναντες· οὐκ εἶχον ἀκοὴν καθαρὰν τῶν δρακοντιαίων συρισμάτων καὶ οὐ προφητικῶν κατηχημάτων πειθόμενοι· οὐκ εἶχον τὴν ἀφῆν συναργετικὴν εἶδωλα θεολογούντες καὶ τοῦ ζῶντος θεοῦ καταφρονούντες.

47. See however Ps-Chrysostom, In S. Theophania (PG 50, 807), where Christ says to John the Baptist at his baptism "Ὡσπερ περιετμήθην, ἵνα τὸν νόμον πληρώσω, βαπτίζομαι ἵνα τὴν χάριν κυρώσω": circumcision was for the fulfilment of the law, baptism for the confirmation of grace.

48. We should note at this point the slip made by Arator at H.A. 1. 788, where he appears to confuse the pool of Bethesda, the true setting of John 5, with the water of Siloa, the setting of John 9 and the restoration of sight to the blind man. His slip misleads McKinlay sufficiently to prompt him to give a reference of John 9:1-11 for the whole section (796-789), which apart from the use of Siloa contains detail which is relevant only to the healing of the Bethesda paralytic (CSEL 72, 59). Arntzen however seems to believe that Bethesda and Siloa are one and the same (PL 68, 159). Perhaps a word is possible in Arator's defence: the healing of the blind man was also a well-known baptismal type (see Ambrose, De Sacr. 3.2.11-15, SC 25, 98-100).

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

49. Oratio in Mesopentecosten 2 (CCG 3, 253):

Τίς λύει τὸ σάββατον; Ὑμεῖς οἱ ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ περιτέμνοντες καὶ ξίφος
ὀξύνοντες καὶ τομὴν ἐπάγοντες καὶ μέλος χαρίζοντες καὶ τὸν τόπον αἱμάτων
παρασκευάζοντες, ἢ ἐγὼ ὁ εἰρηκῶς λόγῳ, Ἐγερθεὶς ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ
ἕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου;.

50. CSEL 72, 91-94.

51. See the discussions of this passage by Leimbach ('Über den Dichter Arator', 251-253) and Roberts (Biblical Epic, 113).

52. McKinlay (CSEL 72, 279) and Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 66) read doli as nominative plural, thus presenting the Pharisees as 'deceit' personified; I find it more natural to construe it as a genitive singular, dependent on nube, with Iudaei implied as the subject of vomuerē.

53. See Simon, Verus Israel, 164-5: 'They [sc. Christians] do not dispute the fact that circumcision was a sign given to the Jews, and that it was intended to distinguish them from other peoples.' See also Daniélou, 'Circumcision et baptême', 774 and, for the parallel between the mark of circumcision and the signing of the cross in baptism, 774-776.

54. Dem. Evang. 1.6 (GCS 23, 23-24), 'καὶ αὐτὸς δ'ὁ Ἀβραάμ...διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας ἐξ αὐτοῦ φθῆναι ὡσπερ τινὰ σφραγίδα τὴν περιτομὴν πρῶτος ὑπέμεινε τοῦ σώματος, γνῶρισμα τῆς αὐτοῦ διαδοχῆς τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ σάρκα γενησομένοις τουτὶ τὸ σημεῖον παραδιδοῦς φέρειν'. See also Origen, Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 2.13 (PG 14, 901): 'Erant enim nonnulli in initiis, qui circumcisionem veluti insigne vernaculum gentis suae nimio amore servarent.'

55. Comm. in Ep. ad Gal. 1.3 (PL 26, 352-3), 'Denique per quadraginta annos in eremo nullus est circumcisis: soli quippe sine Gentis alterius admixtione vivebant: statim ut Iordanis ripam transgressus est populus, et in Palaestinae terram Iudaeum se examen infudit, circumcisio necessaria futuro ex commixtione Gentium providit errori'.

56. Quaest. in Gen. 68 (PG 80, 177), 'μὴ διαφθεῖρωσι τὴν εὐγένειαν'.

57. Dialogus 16 (CAC 1.2, 58), 'Ἡ γὰρ ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ κατὰ σάρκα περιτομὴ εἰς σημεῖον ἐδόθη, ἵνα ᾗτε ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν καὶ ἡμῶν ἀφωρισμένοι, καὶ ἵνα μόνοι πάθητε ἃ νῦν ἐν δίχῃ πάσχετε'.

58. Tract. Orig. 4.25 (CCL 69, 32-3):

Haec est ergo tertia circumcisionis ratio, quam in signo generis datam esse supra diximus, ut, quia futurum erat ut semen ipsius Abrahae serviret gentibus alienis et hoc non semel, sed frequenter, ne quis ergo error in genere de captivitatis permixtione oriretur, ideo signum generis in loco generationis est datum.

59. Ibid., 'Nam et sciens deus bellatores eos futuros <et> pro peccatis suis in pugna morituros, nota hac eos voluit esse

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

insignes, ut exinde agniti colligerentur ad sepulturam'.

60. Le Baptême des enfants, 59.
61. See n2 above for references.
62. Rebecca herself was of course a type of the church, a tradition reflected by Arator. See, for example, Augustine, Sermo 4: De Iacob et Esau 11 (CCL 41, 28), 'Haec ecclesia significatur in Rebecca uxore Isaac', and Enarr. in Ps. 126.8 (CCL 40, 1863). Her meeting with the servant at the well was also interpreted traditionally as being of baptismal significance, as Arator realised, describing her as

ecclesiae currentem fonte Rebeccam (291).

See, for an early example, Origen, In Gen. Hom. 10.5 (GCS Orig. 6, 100): 'Ibi ad puteos et ad aquas venit, ut inveniantur sponsae; et ecclesia Christo in lavacro aquae coniungitur.' Compare Ambrose, De Abraham 1.9.87-8 (CSEL 32.1, 558-9): where else should Rebecca, that is the church, be found but in Mesopotamia 'ubi duobus stipatur fluminibus, lavacro gratiae et fletu paenitentiae'? Accordingly she 'sola descendit, sola cognovit fontem verum, hoc est non aquae fontem, sed vitae aeternae'. The episode is given a more explicitly baptismal interpretation by Caesarius of Arles, Sermo 85: De puero Abraham qui missus est ad Rebeccam 3 (CCL 103, 350): Rebecca, the church, is to be the bride of Isaac, a figure of Christ:

Ubi tamen invenitur sponse illa, quae Christo socianda erat? ubi, nisi ad aquam? Verum est, carissimi: nisi ecclesia ad aquam baptismi venisset, Christo sociata non esset. Rebecca ergo Abrahae puerum invenit ad puteum; et ecclesia invenit Christum ad baptismi sacramentum.

63. Glaphyra in Genesim 3: De Isaac et Rebecca (PG 69, 148), 'Τὰ ὑποταγὰ τοῦ πατρὸς προστεταχότος τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, διώμνυτο μὲν ὁ οἰκέτης παραχρήμα, τῷ μηρῷ δεσπότου τὴν χεῖρα ἐπιτιθείς. Δι' οὗ παρέσται νοεῖν τὸ μονονουχὶ κατὰ πάσης τῆς ἐσομένης ἐξ αὐτοῦ γονῆς πεποιῆσθαι τὴν ὀρχωμοσίαν'.
64. De Abraham 1.9.83 (CSEL 32.1, 555), 'per femur generationem intellegimus. generatio autem Abrahae Christus est'.
65. De civitate dei 16.33 (CSEL 40.2, 185), 'quid aliud demonstratum est... nisi Dominum Deum caeli et Dominum terrae in carne, quae ex illo femore trahebatur, fuisse venturum?'. See also Quaest. Gen 62 (CCL 33, 24), De pecc. orig. 27.32 (CSEL 42, 191-192), Quodvultdeus, Lib. Prom. 1.19.26 (CCL 60, 35) and Caesarius of Arles, Sermo 85.1 (CCL 103, 349): 'quando servus suus femur illius continebat, non per carnale membrum sed per deum vivum et verum iuramenta praestabat: quia ABRAHAM GENUIT ISAAC, ISAAC GENUIT IACOB, IACOB GENUIT IUDAM, de cuius semine Christus dominus natus est.'
66. Quaest. in Gen. 74 (PG 80, 184):

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἐν τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν, καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπαγγελίαν ἐδέξατο, ἐκεῖ θεῖναι τὸν παῖδα τὴν χεῖρα προσέταξεν, ἔνθα καὶ τῆς πίστεως τὸ σημεῖον ἐδέξατο. Πιστεύσας γὰρ ταῖς θεαῖς ἐπαγγελίαις ἔλαβε τῆς περιτομῆς τὴν σφραγίδα. Ἐκεῖ δὲ θεῖναι τὴν χεῖρα προσέταξεν, ἵνα καὶ τῆς θείας ἐπαγγελίας καὶ τῆς περιτομῆς μεμνημένος, ἀλλοφύλῳ γάμῳ τὴν δεσποτικὴν εὐγένειαν μὴ λωβῆσθαι.

67. Lib. Hebr. Quaest. in Gen. 24.9 (CCL 72, 28), 'Tradunt Hebraei quod in sanctificatione eius, hoc est in circumcissione iuraverit, nos autem dicimus, iurasse eum in semine Abrahae, hoc est in Christo, qui ex illo nasciturus erat'.

68. De Abraham 2.11.78 (CSEL 32.1, 630-1):

legis autem lator aeternae signaculum circumcisionis carnalis in solis meribus exigit, eo quod ad admixtionis usum vir muliere vehementior sit, et ideo ipsius impetum infringere voluit circumcisionis signaculo, vel quia viri licito se errare credunt, si solo se abstineant adulterio, meretricios autem usus tamquam naturae legi suppetere putant, cum praeter coniugium nec viro liceat nec feminae misceri alteri.

Chrysostom too saw the Jews as a lustful race: circumcision was carried out to remind them not to mix with the Gentiles whilst surrendering to their desires (In Gen. Hom. 39.4, PG 53, 366); however no reference is made to circumcision as symbolising the casting off of lust.

69. De Abraham 2.11.78 (CSEL 32.1, 631), 'altiore autem interpretatione illud panditur, quod si mens purgata et circumcisa sit, exsuta superfluis voluptatibus et cogitationibus restringit animam ad sui castimoniam purisque sensibus infusam bonorum facit partuum generatricem'.

70. Ibid. 1.4.27 (CSEL 32.1, 522), 'nonne evidenter circumcisio carnis praeceptum est castimoniae, ut aliquis resecat libidinem carnis et indomitas luxu ac lascivia refrenet cupiditates? etenim circumcisionis vocabulo id praescribitur, ut omnis inpuritatis fetor abstergeatur et auferatur incentivum libidinis'.

71. Tract. in Ioh. 30.5 (CCL 36, 291), 'et quid est circumcisio, nisi carnis exspoliatio? Significat ergo ista circumcisio exspoliationem a corde cupiditatum carnalium'.

72. In Ioann. Ev. 4.7 (PG 73, 689):

Προσάττει τοιγαρὸν ὁ νομοθέτης καὶ θεός, ἐκεῖνῳ δὴ μάλιστα τῷ μορίῳ τοῦ σώματος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ δι' οὗ τῶν ἡδονῶν ἡ γένεσις, τὸν περιτέμνοντα σίδηρον ἐπιφέρεσθαι, ἵνα δὴ μάθῃς, ὡς δι' αἰνίγματος, ὡς ἀμήχανον ἡμᾶς ἀφθῆσεσθαι ποτε καθαρούς, εἰ μὴ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου τὴν τομωτάτην ἐνέργειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ δεξάμενοι, καὶ εἰς νοῦν λαβόντες τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος μάχαιραν, τὰς ἐφ' ἅπασιν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς ἐπιθυμίας ἀποπεμψόμεθα.

73. Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 2.13 (PG 14, 907):

Circumcidere, est ex genituali membro, per quod successio humani generis et carnalis propago ministratur, amputare aliquam partem. Per hoc ergo indicari

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

figuraliter reor, amputandam esse ab anima, si qua illi ex consortio carnis adhaesit impuritas, si quis eam libidinis maleuadæ sensus obtexit. Idcirco igitur non aliis ista desectio, sed genitalibus membris infigitur, ut clareat quod huiusmodi vitia animæ non ex propria substantia, sed ex genuino motu et incentivo carnis adveniunt.

See also Ambrose, Ep. 72.15 (PL 16, 1247).

74. Lib. Prom. 1.14.21 (CCL 60, 29):

Nam primæ præuersionis cause ea parte corporis serpentis veneno homo percussus, ardore libidinis aestuans puduit ex his quæ pudenda creata non erant...Idcirco creator et iudex Deus in ea parte corporis signum circumcisionis indixit...ut per continentiae bonum atque integritatis decus id repararet quod vitiatum fuerat.

75. Tract. 1.3 (1.13): De Circumcisione 8 (CCL 22, 25), 'Adde quod circumcisio ista non tam salutem pollicetur quam locum caputque criminis monstrat. Adam etenim, cum illicitum pomum hoc membro decerpit, sic in genus humanum ius mortis induxit'.

76. Ibid. 19 (CCL 22, 28), 'Denique a muliere, quæ prior peccaverat, circumcisionis incipit cura, et quia suasionem per aurem inrepens diabolus Evam vulnerans interemerat, per aurem intrat Christus in Mariam, universa cordis desecat vitia vulnusque mulieris, dum de virgine nascitur, curat'.

77. When Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 68) translates 1.296-297 'his lust's having been cut out guaranteed virginal conduct', he shows himself to be unaware of the exegetical background against which Arator's account is set: circumcision is but a forerunner of the virginity which is to come.

78. In Gen. Hom. 3.6 (GCS Orig. 6, 46-7):

Membrum hoc, in quo præputium videtur esse, officiis naturalibus coitus et generationis deservire, nemo qui dubitet. Si qui igitur erga huiusmodi motus non importunus existat, nec statutos legibus terminos superet nec aliam feminam quam coniugem legitimam noverit et in ea quoque ipse posteritatis tantummodo causa certis et legitimis temporibus agat, iste circumcisus præputio carnis suæ dicendus est. Qui vero in omnem lasciviam proruit et per diversos et illicitos passim pendet amplexus atque in omnem libidinis gurgitem fertur infrenis, iste incircumcisus est præputio carnis suæ. Verum ecclesia Christi gratia eius, qui pro se crucifixus est, roborata non solum ab illicitis nefandisque cubilibus, verum etiam a concessis et licitis temperat et tamquam virgo sponsa Christi castis et pudicis virginibus floret, in quibus vera circumcisio carnis præputii facta est et vere testamentum Dei et testamentum æternum in eorum carne servatur.

79. Tract. Orig. 4.29 (CCL 69, 34):

Tunc ergo debuit circumcisio ista carnalis adhiberi, quando necesse erat intemperantia ferro compesci, quæ fide quohiberi non poterat; ibi, inquam, valuit circumcisio ista, ubi virginitas impugnabatur a nuptiis, non in ecclesia, ubi virginitas nuptias excusat; ibi, inquam, valuit circumcisio

CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

ista, ubi vir unus multas uxores et pelices utebatur, non in ecclesia, ubi dicitur: Habentes uxores tamquam non habentes sint. Ceterum apud nos, ubi et quae Xpistum parit virgo est, ipse et spiritus sanctus ex quo concipitur magis virgo est [at which point the text becomes too corrupt to provide any sense].

CHAPTER SEVEN: IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA:

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

(Historia Apostolica 2.40-95)

Translation

Paul visits the city called by the name of Antioch, and straightway hastens to preach to the hordes which the synagogue contains; and demanding silence with his hand he says: 'You know with what harshness the Egyptian land placed a yoke upon our fathers, whom God through his miracles snatched away from the cruel fields, yielding everything to whom, nature changed its course when the rod put to flight the ridge of the sea and the flood stood still, banished from its banks, now proving favourable by reason of its dusty path; and the power of the ocean was made subordinate in obedience to feet, and, as the deep returned, it prepared to raise a shipwreck for the guilty; for, commanded in various ways to deflect its own statutes, it spread out the sands for these men, and heaped up the waters for those: a road for the righteous, a wave for the guilty.

When the stricken flint foamed with its opened veins, bringing forth watery pools from its dry crown and bestowing a streaming brook, it was no ancient source following its accustomed course nor did it display a former habit in bringing forth new gifts; but the eternal law compelled it to follow a course which was not inborn, and showed that matter could be brought forth which was unconnected with its origin: a feast from the dew, liquid from the rock. For, lest but a few miracles should flow forth for good reasons, the rocks gush forth springs and the clouds abound with bread and the liquid from the air hardened into solid food and the crowds which had long had empty throats were filled with fruitful waters and the husbanding clouds gave feasts and they devoured rain and the showers were eaten.

Thus the invincible hand, thus the full grace of the Creator knew how to nurture his complaining flocks and place the sacred bands in a better homeland, so that the fruit of a pleasant womb might flower into the seeds of eternal life. For it is sown of Davidic stock, with Mary as his mother, that Christ is with us; whom all the oracles of the seers sang would come, God in the flesh, and creating himself would enter a virgin's womb.

Unfold whatever your Sabbaths conceal: you can see the proofs of this typic figure shining in the folds of the sacred Lamb, from whose fire your ancient prophets drew their sayings, and which allowed them to speak beforehand of what was to occur later. John the Baptist, strong in virtue, cried: "I am not he; after me will come one the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to touch, nor undo the top of the humble fastening which binds up his exalted feet".'

How well the voice of Paul sang the teachings of baptism, mingling old with new! Nor does the Epistle cease to repeat this when it teaches: 'Our fathers shone in the Red Sea in the baptism according to the law in the name of Moses, when at the same time the rock followed them as they went; for the rock was Christ.'

What more, harsh people, do you want? Look, it says in your books: 'Do not be late in believing!' Look at the signs of the sea, which whisper the mystical gifts to

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

come in the time of the cross, when Jesus tinged the waters with blood and from the one wound of his side flowed that which gave the three gifts of life. That redness of the water was an occasion which was to come: thus the Creator washes all men, thus he redeems them. The colour of the ransom is here in the whirlpool of the ocean, and there appear in the deep miracles which belong to the tree.¹

Introduction

This passage, perhaps more than any other, reveals the exact nature of Arator's attitude to the text of Acts, namely that it is not so much one of paraphrase as one of commentary. Compare for instance the dimensions of the biblical original and Arator's version: fourteen verses of text (Acts 13:14-28) are transformed into fifty-six hexameters. Lest this were due merely to the rhetorical technique of amplificatio (for admittedly verbosity comes easily to Arator), let us examine the content of Arator's versification and compare it with the Acts text, for convenience and clarity in tabular form:

Acts 13

H.A. 2

Introduction

14	Paul arrives in Antioch and on Sabbath enters synagogue.	40	Paul arrives in Antioch and immediately enters synagogue
15-16	Paul is invited by leaders of synagogue to speak and, demanding silence, begins to preach.	41-42	and, demanding silence, preaches.

Speech

17	God chose Israel, led them out of Egypt	43-52	God rescued Israel from Egypt, turning back the Red Sea: shipwrecking the guilty, saving the righteous.
18	and supported them for forty years in the wilderness;	53-69	Miracles in the desert: water from rock, manna from heaven.
19-22	destroyed Canaan, first gave judges, then Samuel the prophet, Saul the king, replacing him with David.		
23	Christ came from house of David	70-73	Christ came from Davidic stock, born of the Virgin Mary.
24-25	John the Baptist prophesied Christ.	73-77	Recognise what your Sabbaths hide: the prophets announced the coming of Christ.

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

26-28 Jews fulfilled prophecies by ignoring Sabbath readings.

78-80 for example, John the Baptist.

Commentary

82-95 Paul is preaching the praecepta lavacri; compare 1 Cor 10:2-4. Jews fail to see that the Red Sea prefigures the water and blood flowing from the crucified Christ and their significance.

This summary requires little comment: after a shortened introduction Arator concentrates on three episodes of traditional sacramental importance: the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracle of Horeb and the raining down of manna, none of which is explicitly mentioned in Acts. He completely ignores the summary of Jewish history contained in vv19-22, concentrating in the rest of the speech on the failure of the Jews to interpret correctly the prophecy and typology contained in the Scriptures. Finally he comments on the speech as a whole: for Arator it is a piece of baptismal teaching comparable with 1 Cor 10:2-4:

Quam bene vox Pauli cecinit praecepta lavacri
Permiscens antiqua novis!

But the speech in Acts does not refer even obliquely to baptism. The baptismal connection is inserted entirely by Arator, not in paraphrase but in comment. To say merely that the speech is 'rhetorically elaborated'² is to underestimate and even mistake Arator's intention. After all, in Acts this is only the introduction to Paul's speech: 'the history of salvation from the time of the fathers...a favourite method with such sermons in Luke's time.'³ Arator leaves the meat of the speech for the next section (H.A. 2. 96-155), choosing instead to set aside the traditional preamble for

its own interpretation. Once more the title 'verse commentary' would appear to be nearer the mark than 'biblical paraphrase': just as the Jews failed to recognise Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, so they fail to understand the typological significance of Old Testament events.

The typological interpretation of the crossing of the Red Sea, stemming from 1 Cor 10:2, and its treatment by the Fathers has been well examined, not least by Jean Daniélou;⁴ so well examined that one might think there was little left to say. However, let us take one remark of Daniélou as our starting point:

On voit bien ici comment, à partir du donné catéchétique primitif, prédicateurs et écrivains pourraient développer de façon personnelle les types scripturaires en utilisant les procédés de la rhétorique, en renforçant le caractère dramatique, en donnant des interprétations psychologiques. Mais l'essentiel est que ce sont là développements secondaires à partir d'un noyau qui, lui, appartient à la tradition commune de l'Église.⁵

This chapter will take for granted the 'noyau' and examine some of the individual interpretations which were developed to flesh out the basic outline, interpretations which despite their common origin were often radically different. There are three features of Arator's account which in particular show the influence of such personal developments within the 'tradition commune'. The first is the equivocal nature of the metaphoric interpretation of the waters of the Red Sea; the second is the idea of the superiority of the Christian veritas over the Jewish figura, and the inability of the Jews to recognise it; the third is the interpretation of the waters of the Red Sea as prefiguring the mingled blood and water which flowed from the side of the crucified Christ.

1. Whose shipwreck is it anyway?

We must begin this section by asking ourselves whether we can really consider the crossing of the Red Sea per se as a baptismal type, for its importance and relevance to baptism would appear to lie not in the close correlation of detail but in the general parallels drawn between the salvation brought by Christ and bestowed in baptism and the saving events of the Old Testament of which this particular episode was the chief. As Daniélou says: 'Now the crossing of the Red Sea was for the Jews the most significant memory in their history, the supreme work performed by God on their behalf.'⁶

The analogy of the crossing of the Red Sea with baptism was founded primarily then on the common element of salvation and only secondarily on the respective parts played by water, although as G.W.H.Lampe points out:

the theme of death and resurrection, annihilation (or at least peril and disaster) followed by restoration, is recurrent in the Old Testament narratives from Noah through the Egyptian bondage, the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings and the entry into the Promised Land. In all these cases water, the 'deep' which signifies so frequently in Hebrew thought the abyss of Sheol, is central in the story.⁷

Can we then consider the crossing of the Red Sea as an accurate baptismal type or is it just helpful and illustrative allegory? To answer this question we must of course distinguish between the two. Thus Kenneth Woollcombe: 'Typological exegesis is the search for linkages between events, persons or things within the historical framework of revelation, whereas allegorism is the search for a secondary and hidden meaning underlying the primary and obvious meaning of a narrative.'⁸ Following this analysis, we may fairly

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

interpret the saving event of the Exodus in general as a type of the salvation wrought by Christ in baptism. But the aquatic details of the crossing of the Red Sea and the miracles in the wilderness and their relation to baptism as set out by St Paul we must define as allegory. Note however that no inferiority is implied as regards the technique of allegorical interpretation. As Woolfcombe continues:

St Paul's allegorism, however, was not an end in itself...he proceeded to show that the events which the 'fathers' experienced in the Exodus, directly corresponded to the events which he and his contemporaries were experiencing, because Christ was the prime mover in both.⁹

The technique of allegorical interpretation is used as it were within a more general typological comparison.

The fact that individual details in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea cannot be compared exactly with the enactment of baptismal ritual does not then invalidate its use as a baptismal metaphor. Daniélou describes the general parallels which secured the position of the crossing of the Red Sea as one of the foremost baptismal images, branching outwards from Tertullian, De Baptismo 9:

Here too it is important not to stop at symbols, but to look for the theological analogy. Tertullian shows this. In what does the great work of God, accomplished at the time of the passage through the Sea, consist? The people are in a desperate position, destined to extermination. By the power of God alone, the Sea divides, the people pass through and reach the other side. They sing the song of deliverance. There is no question there of a work of creation, nor of a work of judgement, nor of a work of sanctification, but of a work of redemption, in the etymological sense of that word. God sets free - and only He can set free.

The situation of the catechumen is the same. He is at the edge of the baptismal font. His position is desperate. He is under the domination of the Prince of this world, and he is destined to death. It is then that by an act of the power of God alone the waters open, the catechumen crosses over them, and passing to the other side, having escaped the domination of the forces of evil, he too sings the canticle of the saved. Thus in both cases we are in the presence of a divine act of salvation, and here also, between the one and the other, intervenes the liberating power of Christ, the prisoner of death, who by the divine power had forced in that same Paschal night the iron bolts and the brazen locks to open, so

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

that He might be the First-born of the Resurrected.¹⁰

It is then the overall pattern and 'theological analogy' rather than the strict analogy of detail which are important.

But although it is the Exodus in general which is important, the part played by water in the scheme of both allegory and reality was of paramount importance for the Fathers. Modern theologians¹¹ may try to separate water from baptism of the Spirit, but their approach would have been scarcely understandable to the Fathers, least of all to Tertullian who, after all, had felt the need to defend himself against the charge of writing a panegyric on water!¹² Therefore the role played by the water in the crossing of the Red Sea had to be made to approximate to that played by water in baptism if the crossing of the Red Sea were to serve as workable baptismal imagery.

As in the story of the Flood a little licence must be granted the Fathers in their efforts to make such an approximation, for on a purely historical level the Israelites (as Noah and his family before them) are saved precisely because they managed with divine assistance to avoid the engulfing water. Therefore some accommodation of the biblical narrative is necessary, for the mystery of baptism must of necessity involve enduring the water which is both destructive and saving. Thus Tertullian, with the earliest evidence of the basic catechetical material:

First of all, when the people who were freed from Egypt escaped the violence of the king of Egypt by crossing through the water, then the water blotted out the king himself with all his troops. What clearer image is there of the sacrament of baptism? The nations are freed from the world, that is through the water, and leave the devil, their ancient ruler, overwhelmed in the water.¹³

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

Tertullian remains deliberately hazy over the actual detail. If we allow him the half-truth of per aquam, then his strategy is clear. The emphasis is placed squarely on the destruction of the Egyptians which corresponds quite fairly with the destruction of the devil accomplished by the water of baptism. The Israelites are freed not so much by the water as by the destruction of the Egyptians effected by the water. All other detail is conveniently submerged. However, we must not let Tertullian's per aquam pass by completely. It is a clue to a basic characteristic of nearly all the patristic expositions of this episode: the emphasis is laid, not so much on the fact that the waters parted for the Israelites but that the Israelites passed through them. The fact that the way remained dry - the miraculous characteristic of the phenomenon - is conveniently forgotten (compare the account at Ex 14:16).

However, such accommodation of the biblical narrative is evident already at 1 Cor 10:2: 'and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.' (Similarly one feels that Daniélou might have overly accommodated baptismal ritual to the biblical narrative when he says: 'the waters open and the catechumen crosses over them' in the passage quoted above.) Following St Paul, the Fathers were quite clear that for the crossing of the Red Sea to have any validity as a baptismal image the Israelites had to be seen to have endured the danger of the sea and to have emerged safely on the other side. Therefore the historical fact that the Israelites avoided the waters altogether would have to be accommodated.

There were three main ways in which the Fathers managed to achieve

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

this analogy. The first was the method we have already seen used by Tertullian. In this method - which we might call selective accommodation - the saving aspect is largely or sometimes completely ignored, as we see in the following extract from Chrysostom. The problem of the saving water is entirely avoided by concentrating on the Israelites' escape from the Egyptians and from the slavery of sin.

You did not see Pharaoh with his army being drowned, but you saw the devil with his army being plunged into the sea. They crossed the sea, but you crossed death; they were released from the Egyptians, you were freed from devils. The Jews cast off the slavery of barbarians, but you cast off the far more dangerous slavery of sin.¹⁴

However the most usual method of accommodation was what we shall call implicit accommodation. Here writers drew implicit parallels with the explicit details of the baptismal fulfilment. Thus we find that Cyril of Jerusalem maintains a discreet silence as regards the parting of the waters:

That tyrant pursued that ancient people as far as the sea, while this reckless, shameless begetter of evil, the devil, follows you as far as the saving springs themselves. The former was sent to the deep in the sea, and the latter is destroyed in the saving water.¹⁵

By implicit parallels between 'the saving springs' or 'water' and the sea, Cyril successfully accommodates the text without rewriting Scripture: the waters of the Red Sea are clearly identified with the waters of baptism. However, as in Tertullian and Chrysostom, the emphasis is again placed on the destruction of the Egyptians rather than the successful crossing of the sea by the Israelites.

Basil of Caesarea also cleverly avoids the necessity of rewriting

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

Scripture by making the waters of the Red Sea an exact parallel to the waters of baptism. As did other writers, he draws the analogy in other respects, leaving the difficulty unstated but the parallel implicit:

Just as the sea was figuratively baptism, setting them aside from the Pharaoh, even so does this bath set us aside from the tyranny of the devil. It killed the enemy in itself; and here dies our hatred towards God. The people passed out from it unharmed, and we too climb up out of the water living, as if from the dead, saved by the grace of him who calls us.¹⁶

Just as Pharaoh is separated from the Israelites and killed, so we cast off our hostility towards God. The place of water in this half of the analogy is clear. Notice in the second half however how Basil avoids mentioning water in direct application to the fate of the Israelites: 'the people came out of it [sc. the sea] unharmed' - the saving water is mentioned only in relation to our baptism and thus is also implicitly to be understood in the context of the Red Sea. The analogy is clear, but by skilful omission and implication Basil avoids accommodating history.

Implicit accommodation is also to be found in Gregory of Nyssa's In Baptismum Christi. General analogies are drawn between type and fulfilment but full baptismal detail is confined to the fulfilment alone:

Just as it seems to the divine-sounding Paul, the very people who crossed over the Red Sea proclaimed the salvation which comes from the water. The people passed through and the Egyptian king was overwhelmed with his army and this sacrament was prophesied through these results. For now too, whenever the people are born in the water of rebirth, fleeing from Egypt, the hardness of sin, they on the one hand are themselves freed and saved, but the devil with his personal attendants (I speak indeed of the spirits of wickedness) is choked with pain and destroyed, regarding the salvation of mankind as a personal disaster.¹⁷

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

The Israelites ingeniously 'crossed over' and 'passed through'; it is the catechumen who takes his place in the water.

Many writers however adopted the method of full accommodation to gain maximum symbolic effect from the passage. In this method history is rewritten to accommodate baptismal ritual. Here is Didymus of Alexandria:

But the Red Sea too, which received into it the Israelites who neither hesitated nor trusted in uncertainty, and which released them from the evils hanging over them in Egypt, from Pharoah and from his army, and the whole theory of their journey from Egypt, this was a type of the salvation effected in baptism...The people indicated those who are now enlightened, the waters which mediated for the safety of the people indicated baptism.¹⁸

Didymus gives us our most unequivocal accommodation of history thus far. It is not just the crossing of the Red Sea which is a type of the passage involved in baptism, but the waters themselves which received the faithful Israelites into their midst. Even though Didymus stresses that it is the whole saving event of the Exodus which forms the foreshadowing of the sacrament, great emphasis is also laid on the waters which symbolise baptism through their mediation. Water is here an essential and explicit element, both in image and in fulfilment.

A second example shows again that Christian exegetes were prone not just to give more than one exposition of passage, but also to use more than one method of exegesis. Gregory of Nyssa, whom we saw above availing himself of implicit accommodation, in the Vita Moysis has no qualms about adopting it in full when attempting to illustrate the essentially ambiguous nature of baptismal water: 'The nature of

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

water, when faith guided through the staff and the cloud gave light, was on the one hand lifegiving for those taking refuge in it, and on the other destructive for the pursuers.¹⁹ It is the fact that the Israelites take refuge in the water, that they recognise its lifegiving properties, not that they pass through it with dry feet, which is the object of comparison with the destruction of the Egyptians.

The same water brings both life and death; as Augustine said when commenting on Psalm 135:13, 'who divided the Red Sea in two parts': 'He also divided it so that one and the same baptism might be life to some, to others death.'²⁰ Here we see Augustine quite clearly adapting history to fit his own theory of baptism. He ignores the fact that the dividing of the Red Sea left a dry passage for the Israelites in the middle!

Where is the place of Arator in such an analysis of Red Sea exegesis? As we have seen, for the crossing of the Red Sea to have any validity as a baptismal symbol, the Israelites must be seen to have endured the danger of the sea and to have emerged safely on the other side. It must be said immediately that Arator does not entirely succeed in this respect, although he does seem to make an attempt at accommodation:

pontique facultas
Obsequio est subiecta pedum (2.48-49)

the power of the sea is firmly trodden under foot. But for Arator it is the Egyptians who take on the head-on conflict with the sea, and

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

they alone who suffer shipwreck:

[sc. ponti facultas] redeunte profundo
Naufragium factura reis, quae vertere iussa
Per varios sua iura modos his stravit arenas,
His cumulavit aquas; iustis via, sontibus unda (2.49-52).²¹

In Arator's account the Israelites do not seem to have suffered much threat from the water at any time. He is more successful when dealing with the Flood: the dove, when it fails to find dry land, is considered naufraga but is saved because it does not succumb to the lure of the waters.²²

Arator has absorbed the traditional idea of the waters destroying man's sin, but fails to convince us at this stage that these same waters are the saving springs of baptism. This is mainly because of his desire to present a clear-cut distinction between the fate of the Egyptians, engulfed in the waves, and that of the Israelites who continue on dry land, culminating in his neat antithesis:

iustis via, sontibus unda (2.52).

In his attempt at a catechetical interpretation Arator fails to affirm the necessary ambiguity: the wave is one and the same for righteous and guilty, it saves one and destroys the other. As Gregory of Nyssa wrote: 'For this is what we hear concerning the narrative, which says that in the same water both enemy and friend are set apart for death and life: the enemy is destroyed, the friend is endued with life.'²³

Arator fails as a direct result of remaining over-faithful to the

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

biblical account at the expense of the catechetical tradition. If the waters of the Red Sea are to be made to represent those of baptism, then all men must be shipwrecked, a shipwreck which is salutary for some and damning for others.

Of all the early Fathers perhaps Zeno of Verona comes closest to solving this inherent problem. For him the Red Sea narrative is but a figura, which the truth must of necessity surpass:

If the Jews can boast in remembrance of vain allegory, how much more so the Christians to whom belongs no figure but the truth! Which truth, from these very occurrences, both recognise and affirm. The Jews preach that their ancestors, who had been weighed down by the heavy yoke of slavery to Pharaoh and his army, were freed from Egypt. From the madness of the devil and from the harsh crowd of idols not only our ancestors but every Christian offspring is freed, from the true Egypt, that is from this wretched world, always and at every moment. To them Moses offered leadership, our leader is Christ the Lord; to them the column of cloud and fire showed the way, to us the most shining oracles of the Old and New Testaments have revealed the way, Christ the true Lord who said: I am the way and the truth.²⁴

Thus far Zeno has given us nothing new; the saving event of the Jewish people left far behind in history is as nothing compared with Christ's redemption of men, which is actually happening now. We will return to this typological superiority shortly. The 'tradition commune' however is little changed; Zeno observes and preserves the usual parallels. The next section however is startling in its originality:

Their fugitive people crossed through the Red Sea of waves on right and left on dry foot while the rocks stood stunned; but this sea of ours receives men of their own accord. it makes them happily shipwrecked and, destroying all sins, submerges them in the generative wave, so that, having become heavenly, they do not know how to desire the land. Finally after the sea they reach the desert, we after baptism reach paradise.²⁵

This detail then is one in which truth really does surpass allegory.

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

The Red Sea was no real baptism at all, for the Israelites did not pass through the water. Christians who approach baptism endure shipwreck willingly, even happily. The participation in Christ which baptism affords robs them of any desire to return to dry land. The only life after baptism is paradise.

Zeno then is willing to confront head-on the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the use of the crossing of the Red Sea as a baptismal metaphor. The saving event by which baptism is prefigured is not so much the crossing itself as the Exodus. The act of deliverance is figured in the escape rather than in the crossing of the waters. In this way Zeno avoids any accommodation of the biblical text: he does not make other characters the object of comparison leaving a convenient omission as regards the water, and categorically refuses to draw parallels implicit or explicit between the waters of the Red Sea and the waters of baptism. Instead the contrast is drawn between the dry feet of the Israelites and the water-loving Christians.

Arator has assimilated several of these traditional characteristics but overall has failed to mould them into a convincing whole. His intent is presumably to tell the story of the Red Sea in baptismal terms. But in choosing to do so without providing the aid of a key (for Israelites, read Christians; for Egyptians, sinners), Arator fails sufficiently to accommodate the narrative to give any successful baptismal perspective.

2. 'Umbra futuri': the superiority of 'veritas' over 'figure'

This section will take as its starting point four lines of the passage translated at the beginning of this chapter:

Sic invicta manus, sic gratia plena Creantis
Scit querulos nutrire greges et ponere sacros
In patria meliore choros, ut ventris amoeni
Fructus ad aeternae florescat semina vitae (2.66-69).

The implication is that the fruition of the Old Covenant is to be found in the New: the trials in the wilderness are not just preparation for the better promised land but also for the advent of the New Covenant. Indeed the idea that the Old Covenant can be understood only as a preparation for the New is summed up by the final sentence: Christ is the fruit of the Old Covenant, born of Mary through the line of David, but also the seeds of eternal life. In Christ is found the consummation of the Old and the beginning of the New:

The saving work of Christ, inaugurating the New Covenant between God and man, was thus seen as the moment which gave significance to the whole course of covenant-history that had preceded it. In the light of this decisive event, the pattern of God's dealings with his people could for the first time be clearly discerned. Only now could the full meaning of the history of Israel be properly understood.²⁶

Thus G.W.H.Lampe lays out one of the basic principles underlying the practice of typological exegesis, a principle which is further supported by Heb 10:1, 'the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities', as R.M.Grant points out:

The epistle to the Hebrews played an important role in the history of exegesis. It encouraged the fancifulness of allegorists and others who sought for hidden meanings in the Old Testament. At the same time it achieved more positive results. Without the typological method it would have been almost impossible for the early

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

Church to retain its grasp on the Old Testament.²⁷

However an aspect of the typological or allegorical method not discussed either by Lampe or by Grant is a characteristic inherent in the very language of the Hebrews text, the notion of superiority. The Old Covenant dealt only with shadows, the New deals with reality. The law is not only a shadow, a reflection of the truth, but a shadow in comparison with truth. This idea of the superiority of veritas over figura would seem to be inherent in this passage of Arator and was very dear to the hearts of the Fathers, in particular when commenting on the crossing of the Red Sea.

We may note the ease with which simple parallelism can be transformed into an expression of superiority. Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, is concerned only to draw the allegorical parallel with the aid of such opposites as ἐξελ and ἐνταῦθα, ἐξαίτιος and οὐτος: 'There Moses is sent from God to Egypt, here Christ is despatched from the Father to the world'²⁸ the parallels begin; this incident happened there, its counterpart happens here.

How small a change is needed to establish a clear sense of superiority in the fulfilment of the type! As John Chrysostom shows, all that is required is the insertion of one small word:

You did not see Pharaoh with his army being drowned but you saw the devil with his army being plunged into the sea. They crossed the sea, but you crossed death...the Jews cast off the slavery of the barbarians, but you cast off the far more dangerous slavery of sin.²⁹

Thus is the contrast drawn. Christian baptism is of far greater significance than the temporal and temporary salvation of the Jews.

It is in relation to the crossing of the Red Sea that Chrysostom sets forth his opinion that the antitype, or rather the truth, must of necessity be superior to the type, for it is that upon which the relationship between the two is founded:

Those people were restored to freedom as we also are; but not to the same freedom but in our case to a far more shining one. If our circumstances seem to be greater and to surpass theirs, do not be alarmed. For this is the most important characteristic of truth, to have a great superiority over the type...For I said that it is necessary for the truth to have some great and ineffable superiority.³⁰

Of what then did this superiority consist? It may have been rhetorically ineffable for Chrysostom but other writers had no such difficulty explaining the grounds on which such superiority rested.

Of course it was possible to be indifferent, as was Origen, to the historicity of the Exodus narrative, condemning it to the realm of myth,³¹ but on the whole it was the very historical setting, limited in time and scope, of the Exodus which was to seem inferior to the salvation granted by Christian baptism. Thus in the passage translated above,³² Zeno of Verona stresses that the Exodus was an event set in the past. The Jews boast of it as being something which happened to their ancestors, but baptism is something which both happened to our ancestors and continues to happen to us momentis omnibus. Zeno takes up this theme again in another tract. The Jews' glory at the Red Sea was but a praeterita umbra; they may have escaped from their bonds then, but now they are bound again.³³ The crossing of the Red Sea was an event, albeit of great importance, set within a limited historical context; baptism however suffers no such limitations of time and place.

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

This then is the first element of which the superiority of the antitype consists: its scope is not bound by any historical framework. It is the refusal of the Jews to recognise that the story of the Exodus has anything but a purely historical significance that Ambrose attacks. Moses achieved nothing on his own:

But you marvel at Moses because he led your fathers through the sea with dry feet. Moses did not order, but put into effect; he did not command the sea, but obeyed him who commands the floods. You praise Moses because he sank Pharaoh the king with his army. Moses prayed and someone else ordered; Moses besought, Christ had effect; Moses fled, Christ pursued. Moses followed the column to turn away the darkness of night; Christ gave the light. You recognise Moses, who tempered the bitterness of the water, you recognise Moses who brought forth water from the rock; you do not recognise Christ who laid low the army of that true Egyptian king and sank it in the deep of the abyss, who frees us every day from the floods of this world lest the storm of this age overwhelm us.³⁴

Moses' achievement was indeed great, but it was a moment in the past and achieved only through the power of Christ who continues to act every day through the sacrament of baptism.

The second element of superiority is found in the reward or result consequent on the antitype as opposed to the type. Let us return to Zeno; remember that for Zeno Christians have already been rewarded by the act of baptism itself, withheld, as he saw it, from the Jews as the waters stood back: 'Finally after the sea they reached the wilderness; we after baptism reach paradise.'³⁵ We find the same desert/heaven antithesis in Chrysostom: 'For them after Egypt there was the wilderness, for you after your exodus, heaven.'³⁶ Ambrose does not make the antithesis explicit, but is clearly thinking along the same lines: 'What benefit was it for your fathers to cross over the Red Sea if they were not allowed to reach the land of resurrection? For everyone who left Egypt died in the desert.'³⁷

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

Through baptism the Christian participates in the death and resurrection of Christ and consequently reaches 'heaven'. Although Ambrose was wary of expressing this explicitly,³⁸ Zeno and Chrysostom felt no such qualms: paradise after baptism was a certainty.

However, not all writers saw the future of the Christian after baptism as being so different from that of the Israelites in the desert. Tertullian saw the conduct of Christ after his baptism, as compared with that of the Israelites after the Exodus, as urging upon us a kind of moral superiority:

After his baptism temptations immediately surrounded our Lord himself, engaged in fasting as he was for forty days. Someone will say: 'Should we too therefore fast after baptism instead?' And who will say no, unless it is the need for joy and thanksgiving for one's salvation? But the Lord, in my humble opinion, was using Israel as a type to turn a reproach back upon them: for that people, having crossed the sea and being carried into the wilderness, for forty years there, although they were fed through divine provision, remembered their stomach and gullet no less than God. Then the Lord, having isolated himself after the water in the desert and having survived forty days of fasting, showed that the man of God does not live by bread but by the word of God, and that the temptations imposed upon the fullness and unrestraint of the stomach can be crushed by abstinence.³⁹

So for Tertullian Christ is concerned not only to correct the example of the Israelites but also to recommend such superiority to us.

Similarly Jerome implies that baptism will naturally be superior in this respect to the type represented by the crossing of the Red Sea:

Let us now pray to the Lord that the sea will also break asunder for us, that the rock might also pour forth waters for us, lest our corpses also perish and lie with the people in the desert. For you know that the corpses of our fathers still lie in the desert to this day...For they have not the spirit of God, wherefore they died and their bodies lie in the desert.⁴⁰

The crossing of the Red Sea then was no true baptism because it did not confer the spiritus dei. The superiority of baptism, coupled with

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

continual prayer, promises avoidance of the desert.

Characteristically the exegesis of Augustine marked a departure from the confidence displayed with regard to baptism by such as Chrysostom and Zeno, for whom superiority was unquestionably manifest in the certainty of a post-baptismal paradise as opposed to the wilderness endured by the Jews. Augustine on the contrary saw the experience of the Israelites as mirroring exactly the trials besetting the Christian after baptism. Not for him any immediate entry into paradise:

The people are led through the desert: all those who are baptized do not yet enjoy the promised homeland, but, by hoping for what they cannot see and by waiting patiently, it is as if they are in the desert. And there are found troublesome and dangerous trials, lest they return in their heart to Egypt.⁴¹

And elsewhere even more clearly:

After that Red Sea the homeland is not given immediately, nor, as if the enemy is no longer present, can there be carefree celebration; on the contrary there remains the isolation of the wilderness, there remain the enemy lying in ambush along the way; thus even after baptism the Christian life remains in the midst of trials.⁴²

For Augustine, baptism is the beginning of the Christian life, not the achievement of its goal.⁴³ He saw no superiority in the antitype: the figura of the crossing of the Red Sea and its consequent trials and tribulations were for Augustine the exact prefiguration of the Christian veritas.

Thus we should not expect to find in Augustine the confidence of earlier exegetes in the superiority of the Christian sacraments over their typological counterparts which are to be found in the

wilderness narratives, the raining-down of manna and the miracle of Horeb, that is the miraculous flowing of water from the rock. Again we must turn to Zeno, Chrysostom and Ambrose.

In Zeno we find the same theory of sacramental superiority which we recorded earlier: a single historical act cannot bear comparison with events of eternal significance and implication:

When they were hungry manna was rained down upon them; we however cannot hunger, we who carry with us the everlasting supply of heavenly bread. When they were thirsty the rock flowed into a cup, but he who drinks the spring of Christ will never know how to thirst. To them in the desert was shown the sweetness of milk and honey, but to us something which is worth much more, sweeter than honey and whiter than milk, will be bestowed, the blessing of eternal life in the kingdom of God.⁴⁴

The body of Christ is an unending supply of food, and the water of his baptism quenches all thirst once and for all.⁴⁵ Chrysostom similarly stresses the eternal value of the sacraments:

Moses then held up his hands to heaven and brought down manna, the bread of angels. This Moses of ours, holding up his hands to heaven, brings eternal food. That man struck the rock and brought forth streams of water. This one grasps the table, he strikes the perceptible table and makes the springs of the Spirit to flood forth.⁴⁶

Chrysostom clearly refers to the eucharistic sacraments, as the reference to the νοητὴ τροφὴ reveals. Christ pours forth his blood at every eucharist.

It is however in the writings of Ambrose that we find the most detailed and extended analysis of the comparative value of miracle and sacrament. Early on in the De Sacramentis Ambrose sets out the two basic grounds on which the superiority of the Christian sacraments rests:

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

We marvel at the mysteries of the Jews which were given to our fathers, as being superior first in the antiquity of their sacraments and secondly in their sacredness. This thing I promise, that the sacraments of the Christians are more divine and of earlier origin than those of the Jews.⁴⁷

As we shall see, Ambrose goes on to present a case both for the antiquity and superior godliness of the eucharistic bread, but attempts to prove only the latter in the case of baptism. He tells us that baptism is older but offers no evidence to support his case. Instead he concentrates on its superior effectiveness:

As we are presently talking of baptism, what is more peculiar than that the people of the Jews should have passed through the sea? And yet those Jews who passed over all died in the desert. But he who passes through this spring, that is from earthly things to heavenly (for this is what this passage, this pasch is; that is the passage of a man, the passage from sin to life, from wrong to grace, from defilement to holiness); he who passes through this spring does not die but rises up.⁴⁸

Crossing over the Red Sea might have saved the Israelites from the Egyptians, but it could not save them from death in the desert; baptism ensures not death but resurrection. Ambrose has not proved that baptism is older than this Jewish 'mystery', but he has shown its effective superiority.

Ambrose attempts to satisfy on both counts when he comes to deal with the eucharistic bread and its type, the manna from heaven. As far as antiquity is concerned, Ambrose needs to find a type of the eucharistic sacraments which predates the miraculous raining down of manna. He does so by referring to the figure of Melchizedek, validated as a type of Christ by Heb 7. Just as Melchizedek prefigures Christ, so his bread and wine prefigure the sacraments and predate the manna.⁴⁹ Having thus 'proved' superiority on the first

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

count, that of pre-existence, Ambrose moves on to its effective superiority. For this, the fullest analysis, based on Jn 6:48-51, is found in De Mysteriis:

It is indeed wonderful that God should have rained manna upon our fathers and fed them with daily nourishment from heaven...But yet all those who ate that bread died in the desert; but that food which you receive, that living bread which came down from heaven, supplies the substance of eternal life, and whoever eats this will never die, for it is the body of Christ.⁵⁰

This then is the scriptural-based exegesis of this sacramental superiority. Ambrose however has more to support his case:

Consider now whether the bread of angels or the flesh of Christ, which is indeed the body of life, is superior. That manna came from heaven, this is beyond heaven; that was of heaven, this is of the Lord of heaven; that is liable to corruption if it is kept until the following day, this is free from any corruption: whoever tastes it devoutly cannot experience corruption.⁵¹

Ambrose fleshes out this exposition in his commentary on Ps 118: the bread from heaven is not the true bread but merely an umbra futuri, for the real bread has been reserved for the church. He repeats the superiority-basis founded on Jn 6 and continues:

For if they had received the true bread they would not have said, Lord, give us this bread always. Why, Jew, do you ask him to give you bread which he gives to everyone freely, gives every day, gives for ever? It is within you yourself to receive this bread; draw near to this bread and you will receive it.⁵²

The sacramental bread of the eucharist is no miracle to be prayed for, but is offered to all by God of his own free will, but the ability to receive it lies in the heart of the would-be recipient. Ambrose turns the superiority motif upside-down: the superior bread needs less outward petition than the inferior.

Let us now return to the passage from De Mysteriis and the

significance of the water from the rock:

For them the water flowed from the rock, for you blood from Christ; water satisfied them temporarily, his blood washes you for ever. The Jew drinks and is still thirsty, when you drink you cannot thirst; that also was done in shadow, this in truth.⁵³

Does then Ambrose intend the water of Horeb to be representative of baptism or of eucharist? On the one hand the use of the verb diluit suggests baptism; on the other, as we shall see later, Ambrose usually interprets the blood from Christ's side as the eucharistic wine, in contrast to the water of baptism which simultaneously flowed out.⁵⁴ Coupled with this difficulty is the fact that in De Sacramentis the water of Horeb appears to be interpreted as the water to be mixed with the eucharistic wine.⁵⁵

We can shed light on this difficulty by referring to another passage of Ambrose, again from his exposition of Ps 118:

Thus they also ate manna, so that, however many times they had been washed, they still ate the food of angels, as it is written. Now also recognise in the mysteries of the gospel that although you have been baptized in your whole body, yet you are still later cleansed by the spiritual food and drink.⁵⁶

This unusual reference to the cleansing power of the eucharistic sacraments, necessary even after the cleansing of baptism, solves the problem in the passage of De Mysteriis: the raining down of manna and the miracle of Horeb are to be interpreted as the eucharistic bread and wine, symbols of the cleansing, sanctifying body and blood of Christ.

In Ambrose then we find an elaboration of the exegesis we first encountered in Zeno: effective superiority lies in the fact that the

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

Christian sacraments are not subject to temporal limitations, either in their administration or in their effect. Ambrose's final comment on this passage also returns us to the remarks made at the beginning of this section on the importance of the linguistic detail of Heb 10:1 in the establishing of the superiority of the antitype: 'You have now realised that they are superior: for light is stronger than shadow, truth than figure, the body of the Author than manna from heaven.'⁵⁷ The metaphorical umbra of Hebrews is just as inferior to the truth as real shadow is to light, and therefore as the Jewish mysterium is to the Christian sacramentum.

3. Flumina de ventre Christi

Consule signa maris, quae mystica dona susurrant
Temporibus ventura crucis, cum sanguine Iesus
Tinxit aquas laterisque uno de vulnere fluxit
Quod vitae tria dona daret. Rubor aequoris ille
Causa futura fuit: Sic Conditor abluit omnes.
Sic emit; hic pretii color est in gurgite ponti.
Apparentque vado miracula debita ligno (89-95).

Thus Arator ends his exposition of the crossing of the Red Sea. The red 'colour' of the sea prefigures the water mingled with blood which flowed from Christ's side as he hung dying on the cross; the water mingled with blood which washes and redeems.

The significance of the flumina de ventre Christi has been studied in a famous article by Hugo Rahner,⁵⁸ but nevertheless there remain many intriguing subtleties and differing nuances of interpretation in the writings of the Fathers on this subject which reward more detailed investigation. In the instance quoted above Arator follows one particular line of interpretation, but it would be fruitless to

examine this one tradition in isolation and without considering the exegetical background within which it is set.

Cyril of Jerusalem recognised the possibility of a need for flexible interpretation of Jn 19:34, 'and at once there came out blood and water', in Catechesis 13: De Christo Crucifixo et Sepulto. Here Cyril gives a list of the possible interpretations, which are both complementary and interchangeable, commenting 'Nothing is done without a reason'. In order to keep Cyril's distinctions as clear as possible, I shall summarise:

1. It reinforces the image of Christ as prefigured by the Old Testament: the first sign at the time of Moses was the turning of the river into blood. Christ's final sign was the outflowing of blood and water.
2. The water and blood signify Christ's judge and accusers respectively: Pilate, who washed his hands of any guilt, and the Jews who cried out 'His blood be upon us'.
3. The blood and water are reserved for unbelievers and believers respectively: the conspiring Jews receive the condemnation of blood and Christians the salvation which comes from water.
4. Earlier commentators, he says, saw another possible interpretation: the blood and water signify the two-fold power of baptism which is granted to the illuminated through water and to the holy martyrs through the shedding of their own blood.
5. Christ was smitten in the side to undo the sin of women. For Eve, the first sinner, was formed from Adam's side. Since Christ came to save both men and women, his wounding thus signifies in particular the pardoning of women.⁵⁹

This passage displays Cyril's characteristic ingenuity and eclectic method of commentary. The sections which most demand our attention are the fourth and fifth, where the blood and water are seen by earlier commentators to represent baptism and martyrdom and where the parallel is drawn between Christ's side and Adam's. To this second feature we shall return shortly, but for the moment we shall consider

the earlier tradition to which Cyril refers. The first question we must ask, of course, is to whom he is referring.

In the earliest patristic commentators there seems little agreement on a single and specific interpretation of the blood and water - even in the work of the same writer. Origen, for example, gives several interpretations. On one occasion, when comparing Christ with the rock which poured out water for the Israelites, he says:

For when Christ was smitten and nailed to the cross he brought forth the springs of the New Testament... Thus it was necessary for him to be smitten; for had he not been smitten and had not there flowed out from his side water and blood, we all would be suffering thirst for the word of God.⁶⁰

Elsewhere Origen compares the cure for leprosy prescribed in Lev 14:6 - a ritual involving the blood of a chicken and running water - to the water and blood from Christ's side which purified the world,⁶¹ a purification Origen does not relate specifically to baptism.

When commenting directly on the passage in John, Origen refers only to the blood which reminds us that the Word was indeed made Flesh.⁶² And again elsewhere, Origen sees in the blood and water signs that even in death Christ was not like the other dead, for he still gave forth the signs of life.⁶³ A similar interpretation is offered by Hippolytus in his homily on the two robbers who were crucified with Jesus: the fact that even when dead Christ's body gave forth water and blood, 'contrary to mortal practice', shows that he retained 'the mighty power of life'.⁶⁴ But again, like Origen, Hippolytus does not restrict himself merely to one line of interpretation, and in De Antichristo we receive the first hints of the common tradition to

which Cyril of Jerusalem referred. Commenting on Gen 49:11, 'he washes his garment in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes', Hippolytus draws attention to the cleansing qualities of the flumina:

And so, in the blood of what sort of grape but his holy flesh, pressed like a grape on the tree? From his side there flooded two streams, of blood and of water, through which the nations, doomed to destruction, are cleansed, which are referred to as the vesture of Christ.⁶⁵

The reference is quite clearly to the cleansing powers of baptism, but the flumina are not distinguished in their functions: it is a baptism of both blood and water. Exactly what is meant by a baptism of blood, if indeed that is what is meant here, is not specified. However, that the flumina were interpreted as a double baptism is clear from the writings of other commentators, in whose writings such a joint interpretation persisted even when it had become a more usual or even standard practice to interpret the flumina separately. Pseudo-Cyprian specifically says that although the flumina differed in themselves, their significance did not:

These streams first appeared in the passion of the Lord, from whose side, pierced with a soldier's spear, flowed blood and water, so that it might send forth two streams of different appearance (yet it was still the single side of the same man) in such a way that whoever might drink in faith from either stream might be filled with the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶

The first signs of the accepted tradition of the dual interpretation to which Cyril of Jerusalem refers, however, are to be found as early as the time of Tertullian. In De Pudicitia he discusses the possibility that a man's sins might be cleansed by his own martyrdom: 'If this is so, then martyrdom will be another baptism. For I have withal, he says, another baptism. Whence too there flowed out of the wound in the Lord's side water and blood, the materials of both

baptisms.'⁶⁷

The dual interpretation of the water as baptism and of the blood as martyrdom seems then to be the earliest common tradition of Jn 19:34. Accordingly, we meet it again in Zeno⁶⁸ and Gregory of Elvira.⁶⁹ The same is found in Rufinus: 'Yet this can also be interpreted as prefiguring the twofold grace of baptism: one which is given through the baptism of water, another which is sought through martyrdom in the pouring forth of blood, for both are called baptism.'⁷⁰ and in Jerome: the church has its sins 'washed away through the baptism of water and is crowned in the blood of martyrdom'.⁷¹

However, the emphasis is still on baptism; writers are at pains to show that martyrdom is only another form of baptism. The flumina were to receive a more fully sacramental interpretation in a tradition which was to become one of the most influential in the history of baptismal symbolism: 'Then one of the soldiers struck his side with a spear and from his side there flowed water and blood. Why water? Why blood? Water to cleanse, blood to redeem.'⁷² So writes Ambrose in the characteristic rhetorical questions of De Sacramentis. And again in De Patriarchis as Ambrose explains Gen 49:11, 'and his vesture in the blood of grapes':

He himself is the vine, he himself the grape: the vine, because he clung to the tree; the grape, because when pierced by the soldier's spear his side sent forth water and blood. For thus did John say that there came out from him water and blood, water for baptism, blood for a ransom. The water washed us, the blood redeemed us.⁷³

In both these passages we find the standard Ambrosian formula for the exegesis of Jn 19:34, which is so clearly evident in our passage of

Arator with its similar use of the words abluit, emit and pretium (2.93-94). It is however in his commentary on Luke that we find Ambrose's most detailed exegesis:

I also ask why we do not find that he was struck before his death, why we find that it was after his death, unless perhaps it is to show that his departure was of his own free-will rather than of necessity; and so that we might learn the mystic order, that the sacraments of the altar do not come before baptism, but that baptism comes first and then the cup. Next, so that we might notice that although the nature of his body was mortal, although its condition was similar, yet it was dissimilar in grace. For, to be sure, the blood in our bodies congeals after death, but from that incorrupt body even in death the life of all flowed out; for water and blood came forth, the former to wash, the latter to redeem. Let us therefore drink our ransom, so that by drinking we might be redeemed.⁷⁴

The redeeming blood is thus quite clearly the blood of Christ dispensed at the eucharist which we may receive only after dying with Christ in baptism, Ambrose here taking advantage of the word-order of the related text at 1 Jn 5:6: Hic est, qui venit per aquam et sanguinem, Iesus Christus. This then is the fully sacramental interpretation of the flumina: the water and the blood represent baptism and the eucharist.⁷⁵ However, this sacramental interpretation was more frequently taken a step further and developed into an ecclesiological interpretation. Thus Chrysostom:

By means of this was an ineffable mystery performed, for there came forth water and blood. These springs did not come forth for no reason or by chance. But at that moment from both these springs the Church came into being. And initiates know that they are reborn through water and are fed with blood and flesh. It is from this source that the sacraments take their origin, so that whenever you approach the awful cup you approach it in this way, as if drinking from his very side.⁷⁶

In other words, if we see the Church as being founded principally upon the sacraments, then it was the Church itself which was born from Christ's side. This is also the viewpoint from which Hilary interprets the passage:

For since the Word was made flesh and the Church is a part of Christ (since it was

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

both born through the water and brought to life through the blood from his side), and again the flesh, in which the Word (which was before all ages, that is the Son of God) was born, remains in us through the sacrament...⁷⁷

Hilary then goes on to provide the other obvious typological parallel for this line of argument, the one listed as the fifth given by Cyril of Jerusalem at the beginning of this section: 'he distinctly taught that in Adam and Eve was contained both his own image and that of the Church, which he shows after the sleep of his death was made holy through the participation in his flesh.'⁷⁸ There are several parallels here: first, that between Christ's death and Adam's sleep; secondly, that between Christ's side and Adam's; and thirdly, that between the Church and Eve. This line of typological exegesis has very early origins indeed and is intimately linked with the interpretation of the flumina.

Of course, not all commentators chose to use all three parallels when making their comparison of the two passages. Many ignored these three basic elements and instead chose to place the emphasis elsewhere. As we saw earlier, Cyril of Jerusalem makes explicit mention only of the fact that the wounding of Christ's side made amends for the sins committed by Eve who was created from Adam's side and does not attempt to explain the role played in this pardoning by the flumina.⁷⁹ Pseudo-Chrysostom follows the same sort of line, whilst giving more detailed interpretation of the flumina:

For wishing to destroy the deed of the female and check her who earlier flowed from his [Adam's] side, bringing death, he opened within himself his holy side, from which flowed the holy blood and water, the final signs of spiritual marriage and mystic adoption and regeneration.⁸⁰

Some chose to draw the parallel between the flumina and the

appearance of Eve from Adam's side without drawing any analogy between Eve and the Church. Thus Rufinus, having interpreted the flumina as the double baptism of baptism and martyrdom, continues:

But if you ask this too, why he is said to have brought forth water and blood from no other limb but from his side, it seems to me that through the rib in his side a woman is indicated. For in this way the source of sin and death came forth from the first woman, who was the rib of the first Adam, and in the same way the source of redemption and life was brought forth from the rib of the second Adam.⁸¹

Others, such as Tertullian, chose to draw an implicit parallel between Eve and the Church without explicitly mentioning the flumina. Thus in De Anima:

For if Adam gave a prefiguring of Christ, the sleep of Adam was the death of Christ, about to fall asleep in death, so that from a similar wound in his side there might be fashioned the true mother of living things, the Church.⁸²

Many Fathers, however, completed the equation, identifying the flumina with the Church and seeing its prefigurement in Eve. So Zeno of Verona:

Because both sexes had met destruction through the woman, who alone had touched the fatal tree, the whole human race was brought to life through a man hung from a different tree. And lest the beginning should not seem to have been returned afresh to its own condition, the former man is perfected on the cross and, when he has been put blissfully to sleep, in the same way from his side (through the blow of the spear) is torn not a rib, but, through water and blood (which is baptism and martyrdom), the spiritual body of a spiritual woman is poured forth, so that Adam might justly be renewed through Christ and Eve through the Church.⁸³

We find the same in Gregory of Elvira, who adds the further typological parallel of the miracle of Horeb,⁸⁴ and in Ambrose,⁸⁵ Jerome⁸⁶ and with admirable clarity in Chrysostom:

I said that that blood and water are a sign of baptism and the sacraments. From both of these was the Church born...The signs of baptism and the sacraments came from his side. From his side then Christ created the Church, just as from the side of Adam he created Eve.⁸⁷

However, the fullest treatment of this kind of exegesis and the one which would seem to have had the most influence on the writings of Arator, comes in the writings of Augustine. Let us first glance briefly at a passage from his commentary on Ps 138, which is of the same type as the passages examined immediately above:

If then the way in which Eve was created from the side of her sleeping husband was a prefiguring of the future Adam, then from the side of the sleeping Lord (that is, dying in his passion and smitten on the cross with the spear) there flowed out the sacraments from which might be formed the Church.⁸⁸

But it is in his commentary on Jn 19:34 itself that Augustine gives his most extended interpretation:

The evangelist used his words carefully, so that he did not say, 'he struck his side', or 'he wounded it', or anything else. But 'he opened it', so that from this moment in a certain way the door of life was opened, whence the sacraments of the Church flowed, without which one may not enter the life which is the true life. That blood was poured out for the remission of sins; that water tempers the cup of salvation; this also supplies baptism as well as drink. This was foretold by the fact that Noah was ordered to make a door in the side of the ark, by which the animals which were not destined to perish in the flood were to enter, in which the Church was prefigured. On account of this the first woman was created from the side of her sleeping husband, and she was called the life and mother of living things. What was beforehand a great sin of transgression did indeed prefigure a great good. This second Adam bowed his head and slept on the cross so that his spouse could be formed from him, which flowed forth from his side as he slept.⁸⁹

Besides being of general interest and importance for the study of the patristic interpretation of the flumina which underlies Arator's account of the crossing of the Red Sea, this passage of Augustine also sheds light on another episode of the Historia Apostolica: the account of Peter's being freed from jail by the angel (H.A. 1.1007-1046, retelling Acts 12:1-9). The bulk of Arator's commentary is directed at verse 7, 'and he [the angel] struck Peter on the side':

Be happy to learn the proof of this type, you who have deserved to be reborn in the clear spring, and discern with pious heart the image which rests in the holy body of Peter: the angel himself reveals this road to sure goodness; by touching Peter's side he struck that part in which the Church has its head; since the

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

messenger knew that this was where the Church had taken its origin, this was where he lifted him up. Noah fashioned holy doors in the side of his ark when shutting in the animals; this was their salvation as the flood laid everything waste. Eve was brought forth from her husband as he slept, an offspring born from his side, bearing the name of life and to remain thus even longer had she not committed her crime. After Christ, the mystic Adam, deigned to give up his limbs to the cross and in the destruction of the flesh to be oppressed in death so that life could return, he sanctified the new gifts of liquid through their passage from his side. Now the angel summons Peter through that part of his body, so that every mind might believe that the glory of the Church exists within him and hold fast to his faith with his heavenly champion; on the angel's instructions these feet once more deserved their sandals, feet which the right hand of the Master touched, which washed him in his entirety in the waters.⁹⁰

The creation of Eve, the doors in the Ark, the flumina from Christ's side, familiar from Augustine's commentary on John, are put to new and unexpected use by Arator to stress the special authority invested in Peter as the head of the Church on earth.

We have seen then that there was a long and fruitful tradition of sacramental interpretation of the flumina of Jn 19:34, that Arator's account reflects this tradition in its allusions to baptism and the eucharist and in particular in his Ambrosian choice of vocabulary, and that Arator was well aware of the full range of typological parallels, as seen for example in the work of Augustine, available to any commentator on such a theme. However, we have still not solved the main problem of this section of Arator's text: the identification of the waters of the Red Sea with the flumina de ventre Christi. Arator's identification rests upon the 'colour' of the water: the 'Red' Sea is the same 'colour' as the blood-tinged water flowing from Christ's side.

Jerome sets us off on the right track, but is far from providing us with an answer: 'Now it [the Red Sea] is called red because of the

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

blood.⁹¹ Whose blood? The Egyptians'? The solution lies yet again in the writings of Augustine. Here is an extract from one of his sermons:

Your sins were like the Egyptians following, pursuing the Israelites, but only as far as the Red Sea. What is this 'as far as the Red Sea'? As far as the spring consecrated with the cross and blood of Christ. For that which is red is red. Do you not see how part of Christ is red? Ask the eyes of faith. If you see the cross, pay attention also to the blood. If you see what is hanging, pay attention also to what is pouring forth. The side of Christ was pierced with a spear and our ransom flowed out. Thus baptism is sealed with the seal of Christ, that is, when you are touched with the water it is also as if you are crossing over in the Red Sea.⁹²

The naming and colouring of the Red Sea are explained by its prefiguring of the waters of baptism, which are in turn prefigured by the mingled blood and water of Christ on the cross. He expresses the same more succinctly in Contra Faustum, 'The Red Sea is also red: baptism is indeed consecrated with the blood of Christ', and elsewhere.⁹³ We see this tradition reflected not only in Arator but also in Quodvultdeus⁹⁴ and more memorably in Cassiodorus:

Nor is the very name of the Red Sea of no meaning: for just as it is agreed that that sea is named red, so this water too can be called red, which came out of the Lord our Saviour together with his blood.⁹⁵

One final problem remains: what are the vitae tria dona which pour from Christ's side at H.A. 2.92? McKinlay quotes a medieval gloss on the text, 'remissionem peccatorum, immaculatam conversationem et post haec vitam aeternam' but has nothing else to offer.⁹⁶ For once the answer lies not in any tradition handed down by learned commentators but instead in one of Arator's so-called 'predecessors', Sedulius. Here is part of the crucifixion narrative from his Paschale Carmen:

And from the gaping wound ran down the purple blood and with it water. These things indeed represent the glory of our holy religion: the body, the blood and the water are the three gifts of our life (tria vitae munera nostrae). Reborn in

IUSTIS VIA, SONTIBUS UNDA

the font, we are fed with the body and blood of Christ and thus become the temple of his divinity; may God grant that we keep it immaculate and make us in our slighthness fit for so great a guest.⁹⁷

Though unnoticed either by McKinlay or Huemer, Sedulius' editor, this is clearly Arator's source.

Arator's purpose then is quite clear: to disregard entirely the summary of Jewish history given by Paul in Acts and instead to seize upon a reference to the Exodus and thus give an interpretation of the crossing of the Red Sea as a baptismal narrative. The previous sections of this chapter have shown the limited extent to which Arator succeeded in his aim in the opening sections of the passage. However, in the closing stages he finally achieves what he so dismally failed to achieve in the opening lines. The interpretation of the flumina de ventre Christi as being prefigured in the waters of the Red Sea was by no means a mainstream interpretation, but it does give Arator the opportunity to show that he really does know what baptism is about. Now at last he emphasises the insoluble bond between baptism and the cross, that the sacraments foreshadowed by the events in the Red Sea were displayed in their perfect form upon the cross, and that it was the participation of the divine in the mortal which enabled man to achieve participation in the divine.

NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 79-82. In line 64, Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 62) translates nimbi coloni as 'the inhabitants of the cloud'; I have preferred to follow McKinlay (CSEL 72, 312) in reading nimbi as nominative and coloni as an adjective.
2. Roberts, Biblical Epic, 147n.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

3. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 408.
4. See principally 'Traversée de la mer Rouge et Baptême aux premiers siècles', RSR 33 (1946), 402-430; also Sacramentum Futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique (Paris, 1950), 131-200 and Bible et Liturgie, 119-135. See also the earlier studies of F.J.Dölger, 'Der Durchzug durch das Rote Meer als Sinnbild der christlichen Taufe', AC 2 (1930, repr. 1974), 63-69, and P.Lundberg, La Typologie baptismale, 116-145.
5. 'Traversée', 415.
6. Christ and Us (Approches du Christ, trans. W.Roberts) (London, 1961), 72.
7. 'The Reasonableness of Typology', in G.W.H.Lampe and K.J.Woolcombe, Essays on Typology (Studies in Biblical Theology) (London, 1957), 27-28.
8. Ibid., 40.
9. Ibid., 66.
10. Christ and Us, 194-195.
11. See for example J.D.G.Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London, 1970), 101-102:

To sum up, if we are to understand the Lukan teaching, while recognizing that water-baptism has an essential role within conversion-initiation, and that it is (usually closely) related to Spirit-baptism through the faith which it expresses, we must nevertheless acknowledge both that Spirit-baptism and water-baptism are distinct entities and that the focus and nerve-centre of Christian conversion-initiation is the gift of the Spirit.

12. De Bapt. 3.6 (CCL 1, 279), 'vereor ne laudes aquae potius quam baptismo rationes videar congregasse'.
13. Ibid., 9.1 (CCL 1, 283-284):

Primum quidem, cum populus de Aegypto [libere] expeditus vim regis Aegypti per aquam transgressus evadit, ipsum regem cum totis copiis aqua extinguit. Quae figura manifestior in baptismi sacramento? Liberantur de saeculo nationes, per aquam scilicet, et diabolum dominatorem pristinum in aqua obpressum derelinquant.

14. Aux Néophytes: Catéchèse 3.24 (SC 50, 165):

Ὁὐκ εἶδες τὸν Φαραὼ μετὰ τῶν ὄπλων ἀποπνιγόμενον, ἀλλ'εἶδες τὸν διάβολον μετὰ τῶν ὄπλων καταποντιζόμενον. Διέβησαν ἐκεῖνοι πέρατος, διέβης οὐ θάνατον· ἀπηλλάγησαν Αἴγυπτίων ἐκεῖνοι, ἠλευθερώθης δαιμόνων οὐ δουλείαν ἀπέθεντο βαρβαρικὴν Ἰουδαῖοι, οὐ δὲ τὴν πολλὰ καλεπατέραν τὴν τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

15. Mystag. 1.3 (SC 126, 86):

Ἐκεῖνος ὁ τύραννος καταδύωκεν ἕως θαλάσσης τὸν παλαιὸν ἐκεῖνον λαόν, καὶ σοὶ

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

ὁ ἰταμός, ὁ ἀναίσχυντος καὶ ἀρχέκακος οὗτος δαίμων ἕως αὐτῶν ἠκολούθει τῶν σωτηρίων ναμάτων. Ἐκεῖνος ὑποβρύχιος ἐν θαλάσῃ γίνεται, καὶ οὗτος ἐν τῷ σωτηρίῳ ὕδατι ἀφανίζεται.

16. De S.S. 14.31 (SC 17, 164):

πῶς ἡ θάλασσα βάπτισμα τυπικῶς, χωρισμὸν ποιούσα τοῦ Φαραῶ, ὡς καὶ τὸ λουτρὸν τοῦτο τῆς τυραννίδος τοῦ διαβόλου; Ἀπέκτεινε ἐκεῖνη ἐν ἑαυτῇ τὸν ἐχθρόν· ἀποθνήσκει καὶ ὁδε ἡ ἔχθρα ἡμῶν ἢ εἰς Θεόν. Ἐξῆλθεν ἀπ'ἐκείνης ἀπαθῆς ὁ λαός· ἀναβαίνομεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ὡς ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, χάριτι σωθέντες τῇ τοῦ καλέσαντος ἡμᾶς.

17. In Bapt. Christi (PG 46, 589-592):

Ὡς δὲ Παῦλῳ τῷ θεοπεσίῳ δοκεῖ, καὶ ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν περαιωθεὶς θάλασσαν, τὴν ἐξ ὕδατος σωτηρίαν εὐηγγελίσατο. Παρῆλθεν ὁ λαός, καὶ βασιλεὺς ὁ Αἰγύπτιος μετὰ τῆς στρατιᾶς ἐβυθίσθη, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μυστήριον διὰ τῶν ἔργων προσφητεύετο. Καὶ νῦν γάρ, ἡνίκα ἂν ὁ λαός ἐν τῷ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ὕδατι γένηται, φεύγων τὴν Αἴγυπτον, τὴν μοχθηρὰν ἀμαρτίαν, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐλευθεροῦται καὶ σώζεται, ὁ δὲ διάβολος μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων ὑπηρετῶν (λέγω δὴ τῶν πνευμάτων τῆς πονηρίας) ἀποπνίγεται τῇ λύπῃ καὶ φθείρεται, συμφορὰν ἰδίαν τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν ἠγούμενος.

18. De Trinitate 2.14 (PG 39, 696-697):

Ἄλλὰ καὶ ἡ ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα εἰσοδεξαμένη Ἰσραηλίτας, οὔτ'ἐνδύσαντας, οὔτ'ἐπ'ἀδήλῳ πιστεύσαντας, καὶ τῶν ἐπηρετημένων αὐτοῖς κακῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἀπὸ Φαραῶ καὶ τοῦ στρατεύματος αὐτοῦ ἀπαλλάξασα, καὶ πᾶσα δὲ ἡ ὑπόθεσις τῆς ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου αὐτῶν ὁδοῦ, τύπος ἦν τῆς ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι σωτηρίας...ὁ δὲ λαός, τοὺς νῦν φωτιζομένους, τὰ δὲ ὕδατα, μεσιτεύσαντα τῷ λαῷ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, ἔδηλου τὸ βάπτισμα.

19. Theoria 2.124 (SC 1, 67), 'ἡ τοῦ ὕδατος φύσις, ἠγουμένης τῆς κατὰ τὴν βακτηρίαν πίστεως καὶ τῆς φωτιζούσης νεφέλης, ζωποιοῦς μὲν γίνεται τῶν εἰς αὐτὴν καταφευγόντων, ἀναιρετικὴ δὲ τῶν διωκόντων". Daniélou comments: 'Définition très complète du baptême, dont les principes sont l'eau, le bois (la foi) et la nuée (l'Esprit) et qui est à la fois mort et résurrection.'

20. Enarr. in Ps. 135.9 (CCL 40, 1963), 'Dividit etiam, ut unus atque idem baptismus aliis sit in vitam, aliis sit in mortem', a clear influence on Prosper of Aquitaine, Expos. Ps. 135.13 (CCL 68A, 160): 'Rubri maris divisione significatur baptismus Christi, in quo fiunt divisiones, ut una res aliis sit in vitam, aliis in mortem, in vitam fidelibus, in mortem persecutoribus.' See also Enarr. in Ps. 123.7 (CCL 40, 1830), where Augustine again speaks of the Red Sea:

Sed qualis est ista aqua? Torrens est, fluit cum impetu, sed transitura est. Torrentes enim dicuntur fluvii qui repentinis imbribus crescunt; magnum habent impetum: quisquis incurrerit trahitur, sed in quo Dominus non est: in quo autem Dominus est, transit torrentem anime ipsius. Adhuc fluit torrens, sed iam transiit anima martyrum.

The torrent still flows but for the righteous the water is traversable.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

21. Perhaps Arator was influenced in his description of the Egyptians as shipwrecked by Prudentius, Lib. Cath. 5.77 (LCL, Prudentius 1, 42), where, in a non-baptismal context, the waters stand back explicitly for the Israelites only to engulf the Egyptians.
22. H.A. 1.653 (CSEL 72, 51). For discussion of this episode see Chapter 4: Lotus sed non Mundus. Compare Chrysostom, De providentia Dei 13.9 (SC 79, 192-194):

ὅτε μόνος, τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης διαφθορείσης ἐν πονηρίᾳ, τὴν ὀρθὴν ᾤδευσεν ὁδὸν καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν διετήρησε καὶ οὕτω διέλαμψεν, ὡς ἐν τῷ ναυαγίῳ τῆς οἰκουμένης αὐτόν τε διασωθῆναι καὶ ἑτέρους διὰ τὴν περιουσίαν τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς τῶν ἐπερτημένων ἐξαρκάσαι κινδύνων;

Noah steers his own path and is preserved from the shipwreck of the world. For an early example of the use of the shipwreck as a baptismal metaphor, see Optatus 5.1 (CSEL 26, 121): 'baptisma... esse... peccatorum... naufragium.'

23. Vita Moysis: Theoria 2.126 (SC 1, 68), 'τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν ὃ διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ἀκούομεν, ἣ φησὶν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ὕδατι θανάτῳ καὶ ζωῇ διακρίνεσθαι τὸ ἐχθρὸν καὶ τὸ φίλον, τοῦ μὲν ἐχθροῦ φθειρομένου, τοῦ δὲ φίλου ζωογονουμένου'.

For Arator's fondness for aphorisms, see Thraede, 'Arator', 191.

24. Tract. 1.46B (2.63) Sequentia Exodi 1-2 (CCL 22, 120):

Si Iudei vacuatae imaginis recordatione gloriantur, quanto magis Christianus, in quo non est figura sed veritas! Quam ex rebus ipsis agnoscite pariter et probate. Iudei maiores suos Pharaonis exercitusque eius gravi servitutis iugo depressos de Aegypto praedicant liberatos. A diaboli rabie idolorumque turba violenta non tantum nostri maiores, sed omnis Christiana progenies de vera Aegypto, id est isto de mundo, semper momentis omnibus liberatur. Illis ducatum Moyses praebuit, dux noster Christus est dominus; illis columna nubis atque ignis viam demonstravit, nobis testamenti veteris ac novi clarissima oracula viam, verum Christum dominum, prodiderunt, qui ait: Ego sum via et veritas.

25. Ibid., 2-3:

Illorum profugus populus per mare rubrum dextra laevaue undarum stupentibus rupibus pede sicco transivit; et nostrum mare voluntarios suscipit, feliciter naufragos facit interimensque universa peccata genitali unda submergit, ut caelestes effecti terram desiderare non norint. Denique illi post mare ad eremum pervenerunt, nos post baptismum ad paradysum pervenimus.

26. G.W.H.Lampe, 'The Reasonableness of Typology', 25-26.
27. R.M.Grant, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, second ed. (London, 1965), 35-36.
28. Mystag. 1.3 (SC 126, 86), 'Ἐκεῖ Μωϋσῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς Αἴγυπτον πεμπόμενος, ἐνταῦθα Χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἀποστελλόμενος'.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

29. Aux Néophytes: Catéchèse 3.24 (SC 50, 165). For text see n14 above.

30. In Apostolicum Dictum: Nolo vos ignorare 4 (PG 51, 248):

πρὸς ἐλευθερίαν ἀνήχθησαν ἐκείνοι, καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ'οὐ πρὸς τὴν αὐτήν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς πολλῷ λαμπροτέραν ἡμεῖς. Εἰ δὲ μείζω τὰ ἡμέτερα καὶ ὑπερέχοντα ἐκείνων, μὴ θορυβοῦ. Τοῦτο γὰρ μάλιστα ἐστὶν ἀληθείας, τὸ πολλὴν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν τύπον τὴν ὑπεροχὴν... εἶπον γὰρ ὅτι δεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔχειν τινὰ ὑπεροχὴν πολλὴν καὶ ἔφατον.

Note the use of comparative with πολλῷ used by Chrysostom to express the superiority: our freedom is πολλῷ λαμπροτέρα just as the slavery of sin which we have escaped is πολλῷ καλεπωτέρα (see n14 above).

31. Origen (In Ex. Hom. 5.1 [GCS Orig 6, 184]) comments on Paul's typological interpretation of 1 Cor 10: 'Nonne iustum videtur, ut traditam nobis huiusmodi regulam simili in ceteris servemus exemplo? An, ut quidam volunt, haec, quae tantus ac talis Apostolus tradidit, relinquentes rursus ad "Iudaicas fabulas" convertamur?'

32. See n24 above.

33. Tract. 1.52 (2.64) Sequentia Exodi (CCL 22, 126).

34. Expos. Ps. 118.18.29 (CSEL 62, 412):

Sed miramini Moysen, quia patres vestros per mare siccis duxit vestigiis. Moyses non imperavit, sed impetravit, non iussit mari, sed servivit iubenti fluctibus. Moysen laudatis, quia regem Pharaon cum exercitu suo mersit. Moyses orabat et alius imperabat, Moyses precabatur, Christus operabatur, Moyses fugiebat, Christus insequabatur, Moyses columnam sequebatur, ut nocturnas tenebras declinaret, Christus inluminabat. Moysen agnoscitis, qui aquae amaritudinem temperavit, Moysen agnoscitis, qui aquam produxit de petra: Christum non agnoscitis, qui veri illius Aegyptii regis stravit exercitum et abyssi mersit profundo, qui nos liberat cotidie de mundi huius fluctibus, ne nos saeculi procella demergat.

35. Tract. 1.46B (2.63).3 (CCL 22, 120), 'Denique illi post mare ad eremum pervenerunt, nos post baptismum ad paradysum pervenimus'. See also Tract. 2.26 (2.54) Tractatus Diei Paschae 3 (CCL 22, 200); Miriam is a type of the Church which 'populum Christianum ducit, non in eremum, sed ad caelum'.

36. Aux Néophytes: Catéchèse 3.25 (SC 50, 166), 'Ἐκείνοις μετὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἔρημος, σοὶ δὲ μετὰ τὴν ἔξοδον οὐρανός'.

37. Expos. Ps. 118.18.29 (CSEL 62, 412), 'quid profuit patribus transire per Mare Rubrum, quibus ad terram resurrectionis non licuit pervenire? quicumque enim exierunt de Aegypto, perierunt in deserto'.

38. See Chapter Three: Divinus Odor passim.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

39. De Bapt. 20.3-4 (CCL 1, 294-295):

Ipsum dominum post lavacrum statim temptationes circumsteterunt quadraginta diebus ieiuniis functum. 'Ergo et nos' dicet aliquis 'a lavacro potius ieiunare oportet?'. Et quis enim prohibet nisi necessitas gaudii et gratulatio salutis? Sed dominus quantum aestimo de figura Israelis exprobrationem in ipsum retorsit: namque populus mare transgressus et in solitudine translatum per quadraginta annos illic cum divinis copiis aleretur nihilominus ventris et gulæ meminerat quam dei. Deinde dominus post aquam segregatus in deserta quadraginta dierum ieiunia emensus ostendit non pane vivere hominem dei sed dei verbo temptationesque plenitudini et immoderantiae ventris adpositas abstinencia elidi.

40. Tract. de Ps. 77.15 (CCL 78, 73):

Oremus autem Dominum, ut et nobis interrumpat mare, ut et nobis petra fluat aquas, ne et nostra cadavera pereant, et iaceant cum populo in deserto. Scitis enim quoniam cadavera patrum nostrorum usque hodie iacent in deserto...Quoniam non habent spiritum Dei, propterea mortui sunt, et iacent cadavera eorum in deserto.

41. Contra Faustum 12.30 (CSEL 25.1, 358), 'Ducitur populus per desertum: baptizati omnes nondum perfruentes promissa patria, sed quod non vident sperando et per patientiam expectando tamquam in deserto sunt; et illic laboriosae et periculosae temptationes, ne revertantur corde in Aegyptum'.

42. Enarr. in Ps. 72.5 (CCL 39, 989), 'Post mare illud Rubrum non continuo patria datur, nec tamquam iam hostes desint, secure triumphatur; sed restat eremi solitudo, restant hostes insidiantes in via; sic et post baptismum restat vita christiana in tentationibus'. See also Sermo 4: De Iacob et Esau 9 (CCL 41, 26-27).

43. See De Trinitate 14.17.23 (CCL 50A, 454) and P. Brown, Augustine of Hippo: A Biography (London, 1967), 368-369.

44. Tract. 1.46B (2.63).3 (CCL 22, 120):

Illis inrorata est esurientibus manna, nos autem esurire non possumus, sempiternam qui caelestis panis nobiscum portamus annonam. Illis sitientibus petra fluxit in poculum, et Christi fontem qui biberit, in aeternum sitire non novit. Illis in deserto suavitas lactis et mellis exhibita est, nobis vero, quod plus est, melle dulcior ac lacte candidior aeternae vitae beatitudo dei tribuetur in regno.

45. This would seem to be the earliest interpretation of the water of Horeb, that it prefigured the water of baptism. See Tertullian, De Bapt. 9.3 (CCL 1, 284). For the eucharistic interpretation read on.

46. Catéchèse 3.26 (SC 50, 166-167):

Μωϋσῆς τότε ἀνάτεινε τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ κατήνεγκεν ἄρτον ἀγγέλων τὸ μάννα. Οὗτος ὁ Μωϋσῆς ἀνατείνων τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν φέρει τὴν αἰώνιον τροφήν. Ἐκεῖνος ἔπληξε τὴν πέτραν καὶ ἐξέβαλε ποταμοὺς ὑδάτων· οὗτος

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

ἀπισται τῆς τραπέζης. πλήττει τὴν νοσητὴν τράπεζαν καὶ πηγὰς πνεύματος ἀναβλύζειν ποιεῖ.

47. De Sacr. 1.4.11 (SC 25, 66), 'Miramur mysteria Iudaeorum quae patribus nostris data sunt, primum vetustate sacramentorum, deinde sanctitate praestantia. Illud promitto quod diviniora et priora sacramenta sunt Christianorum quam Iudaeorum'.
48. Ibid., 1.4.12 (SC 25, 66):
- Quid praecipuum quam quod per mare transivit Iudaeorum populus, ut de baptismo interim loquamur. Attamen qui transierunt Iudaei mortui sunt omnes in deserto. Caeterum qui per hunc fontem transit, hoc est, a terrenis ad caelestia - hic est enim transitus, ideo pascha, hoc est, transitus eius, transitus a peccato ad vitam, a culpa ad gratiam, ab inquinamenta ad sanctificationem - qui per hunc fontem transit, non moritur sed resurgit.
49. See De Sacr. 4.3.9-12 (SC 25, 106-108) where this passage is taken as proof not only of the earlier origin of the sacraments but also of the Christian race as compared with the Jewish, whose origin is traced back only as far as Judah; see also De Myst. 8.44-46 (SC 25, 180-182).
50. De Myst. 8.47 (SC 25, 182):
- Revera mirabile est quod manna deus pluerit patribus et quotidiano caeli pascebantur alimento...Sed tamen panem illum qui manducaverunt omnes in deserto mortui sunt; ista autem esca quam accipis, iste panis vivus qui descendit de caelo, vitae aeternae substantiam subministrat et quicumque hunc manducaverit non morietur in aeternum, est enim corpus Christi.
51. Ibid., 8.48:
- Considera nunc utrum praestantior sit panis angelorum an caro Christi, quae utique corpus est vitae. Manna illud de caelo, hoc supra caelum; illud caeli, hoc domini caelorum; illud corruptioni obnoxium si in diem alterum servaretur, hoc ab omni alienum corruptione, quod quicumque religiose gustaverit corruptionem sentire non poterit.
52. Expos. Ps. 118.18.27-28 (CSEL 62, 411):
- denique si accepissent panem verum, non dixissent: domine, semper da nobis panem hunc. Quid petis, Iudaeo, ut tribuat tibi panem quem dat omnibus, dat cotidie, dat semper? in te ipso est ut accipias hunc panem; accede ad hunc panem et accipies eum.
53. De Myst. 8.48 (SC 25, 182), 'Illis aqua de petra fluxit, tibi sanguis e Christo; illos ad horam satiavit aqua, te sanguis diluit in aeternum. Iudaeus bibit et sitit, tu cum biberis sitire non poteris, et illud in umbra, hoc in veritate'.
54. See for example Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 10.48 (SC 52, 172) where the water from the rock is interpreted as the water from Christ's side.
55. De Sacr. 5.1.3 (SC 25, 120-122), 'Tetigit petram et petra undam

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

maximam fudit...Tangit ergo sacerdos calicem, redundat aqua in calice'.

56. Expos. Ps. 118.16.29 (CSEL 62, 367), 'ideo et manna manducaverunt, ut totiens abluti manducarent panem, ut scriptum est, angelorum. nunc quoque in evangelii mysteriis recognoscis, quia baptizatus licet toto corpore postea tamen esca spiritali potuque mundaris'. Ambrose is subscribing to the traditional interpretation which sees in the events at the Red Sea and at Horeb a sacramental sequence: baptism followed by eucharist. Thus Basil of Caesarea, Hom. 13 In S.Bapt. 2, (PG 31, 428), Chrysostom, In Apostolicum Dictum: Nolo vos ignorare 4, (PG 51, 248), and Theodoret of Cyr, Quaest. in Ex. 27, (PG 80, 257).
57. De Myst. 8.49 (SC 25, 184), 'Cognovisti praestantiora: potior est enim lux quam umbra, veritas quam figura, corpus auctoris quam manna de caelo'.
58. H.Rahner, 'Flumina de ventre Christi: Die patristische Auslegung von Joh 7, 37.38', Biblica 22 (1941), 269-302; 367-403. His general conclusion (401) is as follows: 'Die "flumina de ventre Christi" sind "Geist", und dieser wird gegeben im Augenblick der vollzogenen Verherrlichung des Leibes Jesu - als aus seiner Seite das Wasser quoll, das im Blut heiligend wurde.' See also Daniélou, Bible et Liturgie, 201-208.
59. 21 (PG 33, 797-800):

'Αρχὴ σημεῖων ἐπὶ Μωσῆος αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ. καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον πάντων τῶν σημεῖων Ἰησοῦ τὸ αὐτό. Πρῶτον Μωσῆς τὸν ποταμὸν μετέβαλεν εἰς αἷμα· καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ τέλος, ὕδωρ ἐξήνεγκεν ἐκ πλευρᾶς μετὰ αἵματος. Διὰ τὰς δύο φωνὰς Ἰωῶς, τοῦ τε κρίνοντος, καὶ τῶν ἐπιβοῶντων· ἢ διὰ τοὺς πιστεύοντας, καὶ τοὺς ἀπιστοῦντας. Ὁ μὲν Πιλάτος ἔλεγεν· Ἄθῶός εἰμι, καὶ ὕδατι ἀπενίπτειτο τὰς χεῖρας· οἱ δὲ ἐπιβοῶντες ἔλεγον· Τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. Ἦν οὖν τὰ δύο ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς· τὸ ὕδωρ Ἰωῶς τῷ κρίνοντι, τοῖς δὲ ἐπιβοῶσι τὸ αἷμα. Καὶ πάλιν ἄλλως νοητέον· Ἰουδαίοις μὲν τὸ αἷμα, Χριστιανοῖς δὲ τὸ ὕδωρ· ἐκείνοις μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἐπιβούλοις, ἢ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος καταδίκη· σοὶ δὲ τῷ πιστεύοντι νῦν, ἢ διὰ ὕδατος σωτηρία· οὐδὲν γὰρ εἰκὴ γέγονεν. Ἀπέδωκαν οἱ ἐξηγηταὶ Πατέρες ἡμῶν καὶ ἄλλην τοῦ πράγματος αἰτίαν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ διπλὴ τίς ἐστὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου βαπτίσματος ἐν Εὐαγγελίοις ἡ δύναμις, μία μὲν ἡ τοῖς φωτιζομένοις δωρουμένη δι' ὕδατος, δευτέρα δὲ ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων μαρτύρων ἐν διωγμοῖς δι' οἰκείου αἵματος· ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς σωτηρίου πλευρᾶς αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ, τῆς ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ γινομένης ὁμολογίας, ἐν τε φωτίσματι καὶ μαρτυρίου καιροῖς βεβαιούσα τὴν χάριν. Ἔστι καὶ ἄλλη τῆς πλευρᾶς αἰτία. Γυνὴ γέγονεν ἀρχηγὸς ἁμαρτίας, ἢ πλασθεῖσα ἐκ πλευρᾶς· ἀλλ' ὁ ἐλθὼν Ἰησοῦς ἀνδράσιν ὁμοῦ καὶ γυναῖκι χαρίσασθαι τὴν ἀμνηστίαν, ἐνύγη τὴν πλευρὰν ὑπὲρ γυναικῶν, ἵνα λύσῃ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

Cyril's list does not of course attempt in any way to be prescriptive or comprehensive. There were other interpretations; Gennadius, for example, in his Liber sive Definitio Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum 41 (ed. C.H.Turner, JTS 7 [1906], 97), saw the mingled flumina as referring to the mixing of wine with water in the eucharist.

60. In Ex. Hom. 11.2 (GCS Orig. 6, 254), 'Percussus enim Christus et in crucem actus novi testamenti fontes produxit...Necesse ergo

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

erat illum percuti; nisi enim ille fuisset percussus et "exisset de latere eius aqua et sanguis", omnes nos "sitim verbi Dei" pateremur'.

61. In Levit. Hom. 8.10 (GCS Orig. 6, 411).
62. In Ioh. 2.8 (GCS Orig. 4, 62).
63. Contra Celsum 2.69 (GCS Orig 1, 904), 'ἀλλὰ ζωτικὰ σημεῖα καὶ ἐν τῇ νεκρότητι δείξαντα τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα'.
64. Εἰς τοὺς δύο ληστὰς 2 (GCS Hipp. 1.2, 211), 'Καὶ νεκρόν τε ὄν τὸ σῶμα κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον τρόπον, μεγάλην ἔχει ζωῆς ἐν αὐτῷ δύναμιν'.
65. 11 (GCS Hipp. 1.2, 10), 'αἷματι οὖν σταφυλῆς ποίας, ἀλλ' ἢ τῆς ἀγίας σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ ὡς βότρυος ἐπὶ ξύλου θλιβείσης; ἐξ ἧς πλευρᾶς ἔβλυσαν δύο πηγαί, αἵματος καὶ ὕδατος, δι' ὧν τὰ ἔθνη ἀπολούμενα καθαίρονται, ἅτινα ὡς περιβόλαιον λελόγισται Χριστῷ'. The identification of Christ as the grape is found later in Ambrose (see below n73).
66. De rebaptismate 14 (CSEL 3.3, 87):
- quae flumina primum apparuerunt in Domini passione, cuius de latere perforato lancea militari sanguis et aqua manavit, ut emitteret duo flumina diversae speciei, sed tamen eiusdem ac singulare latus, ita ut impleatur spiritu sancto quicumque credens biberit ex utroque flumine.*
- See also Gregory of Elvira, Tract. Orig. 15.10 (CCL 69, 114) and Ps-Chrysostom, Sur la Sainte Paque 53.4 (SC 27, 181) where the flumina are interpreted as a baptism of fire and spirit.
67. 22.9-10 (CCL 2, 1329), 'Quod sciam, et martyrimum aliud erit baptisma. Habeo enim inquit et aliud baptisma. Unde et ex vulnere lateris dominici aqua et sanguis, utriusque lavacri paratura manavit'.
68. Tract. 1.3 (1.13) De Circumcisione 20 (CCL 22, 28-29), 'per aquam et sanguinem, quod est baptismum atque martyrimum'.
69. Tract. Orig. 15.13 (CCL 69, 115), 'ecclesiam...habentem scilicet duo baptismata, aquae et sanguinis, unde fideles in ecclesia et martires fiunt'.
70. Expos. Symb. 21 (CCL 20, 158), 'Potest tamen etiam illud intellegi, quod duplicem gratiam baptismi figuraverit: unam quae datur per aquae baptismum, aliam quae per martyrimum profusione sanguinis quaeritur: utrumque enim baptismum nominatur'.
71. Tract. de Ps. 88.3 (CCL 78, 407), 'per baptismum per aquam dimittuntur peccata, deinde in sanguine martyrimum coronatur'. See also In Esaiam 13.48.20/22 (CCL 73A, 533) where the rock of Horeb is implicitly equated with Christ's side, 'baptismum nobis et martyrimum dedicans'.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

Perhaps this is the tradition to which Arator alludes at H.A. 1.741-745. As Saul escapes from Damascus in a basket, Arator comments: 'the basket which afforded Saul a hiding-place is usually woven from alternate rushes and palms and gloriously contains a figure of the Church; for the rush and palm are always present, through the waters and the crowns: the wave of baptism and the blood of martyrdom are pleasing to the Church.' Arator does not mention the flumina but there does seem to be some hint here of the exegetical tradition examined below which sees the flumina as representing the Church, through their foreshadowing of the sacraments. Elsewhere Arator refers only to their cleansing power: 'You make everything clean, O Christ, through your blood which flowed from the wound of your side, mingled with dissimilar water' (H.A. 1.927-929).

72. De Sacr. 5.1.4 (SC 25, 122), 'Tunc unus de militibus lancea tetigit latus eius et de latere eius aqua fluxit et sanguis. Quare aqua? Quare sanguis? Aqua ut mundaret, sanguis ut redimeret'.

73. De Patr. 4.24 (CSEL 32.2, 138):

ipse est vitis, ipse uva: vitis ligno adhaerens, uva, quia lancea militis apertum latus emisit aquam et sanguinem. sic enim dixit Iohannes quia exiit de eo aqua et sanguis, aqua ad lavacrum, sanguis ad pretium. aqua nos abluit, sanguis nos redemit.

74. Expos. ev. sec. Luc 10.135 (SC 52, 201-202):

Quaero etiam cur ante mortem non inveniamus esse percussum, post mortem inveniamus, nisi forte ut voluntarius magis quam necessarius exitus eius fuisse doceatur et ordinem mysticum noverimus, quia non ante altaris sacramenta quam baptismum, sed baptismum ante, sic poculum. Deinde ut advertamus quia licet corporis eius fuerit natum mortalis, licet qualitas similis, dissimilis tamen gratis. Nam utique post mortem sanguis in nostris corporibus congelascit, ex illo autem incorrupto licet corpore, sed defuncto omnium vita manebat; aqua enim et sanguis exiit, illa quae diluat, iste qui redimat. Bibamus ergo pretium nostrum, ut bibendo redimamur.

See also 10.48 (SC 52, 172): 'tres enim testes sunt, aqua, sanguis, et spiritus, aqua ad lavacrum, sanguis ad pretium, spiritus ad resurrectionem'.

75. See also Cyril of Alexandria, In Ioann. ev. 12 (19:34) (PG 74, 677), where the blood and water are not only seen as a type (εἰκών) of baptism and eucharist but also as their firstfruits (ἀπαρχή).

76. In Ioann. Hom. 85.3 (PG 59, 463):

Μετὰ δὲ τούτου καὶ μυστήριον ἀπόρρητον ἐτελείτο. Ἐξήλθε γὰρ ὕδωρ καὶ αἷμα. Οὐχ ἀπλῶς δὲ οὐδὲ ὡς ἔτυχεν αὐταὶ ἐξήλθον αἱ πηγαί· ἀλλ' ἄπειθ' ἕξ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων ἡ Ἐκκλησία συνέστηκε. Καὶ ἴσασιν οἱ μυσταγωγούμενοι, δι' ὕδατος μὲν ἀναγεννόμενοι, δι' αἵματος δὲ καὶ σαρκὸς τρεφόμενοι. Ἐντεῦθεν ἀρχὴν λαμβάνει τὰ μυστήρια. Ἰν' ἔταν προσίης τῷ φρικτῷ ποτηρίῳ, ὡς ἀπ' αὐτῆς πίναν τῆς πλευρᾶς, οὕτω προσίης.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

77. Tract. Myst. 1.3 (SC 19, 78-80):

Cum enim verbum factum sit caro et ecclesie membrum sit Christi, quae ex latere eius et per aquam nata et vivificata per sanguinem sit, rursus caro, in qua verbum ante saecula manens, quod est Filius Dei, natum sit, per sacramentum maneat in nobis...

78. Ibid., 'absolute docuit in Adam atque Eva suam et ecclesiae speciem contineri, quam post mortis suae somnum sanctificatam esse carnis suae communione significet'.

79. See n59 above.

80. Sur la Sainte Paque 53.3 (SC 27, 181):

Τὸ γὰρ ἔργον τῆς θηλείας λύσαι θελήσας καὶ τὴν ἐκ πλευρᾶς πρότερον βούσασαν ἐπισχεῖν θανατηφόρον, ἤδη τὴν ἱερὰν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἐστόμωσε πλευράν, ἐξ ἧς τὸ ἱερὸν ἔρρευσεν αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ, τὰ τέλεια τῶν πνευματικῶν γάμων τῶν μυστικῶν καὶ υἰοθεσίας καὶ παλιγγενεσίας τὰ σημεῖα.

81. Expos. Symb. 21 (CCL 20, 158):

Quod si et hoc quaeris, cur non ex alio membro, sed ex latere produxisse dicatur aquam et sanguinem, videtur mihi in latere per costam mulier indicari. Quia ergo fons peccati et mortis de muliere prima, quae fuit primi Adam costa, processit, idcirco et fons redemptionis ac vitae de secundi Adam costa producitur.

82. 43.10 (CCL 2, 847), 'Si enim Adam de Christo figuram dabat, somnus Aadae mors erat Christi dormituri in mortem, ut de iniuria perinde lateris eius vera mater viventium figuraretur ecclesia'.

83. Tract. 1.3 (1.13) De Circumcisione 20 (CCL 22, 28-29):

quia per mulierem, quae sola lignum letale contigerat, exceperat uterque sexus interitum, e diverso per virum ligno suspensum vivificatum est omne genus humanum. Ac ne non ex integro principium suo statui redditum videretur, prior vir consummat in cruce atque eo feliciter soporato similiter de eius latere ictu lanceae non costa divellitur, sed per aquam et sanguinem, quod est baptismum et martyrium, spiritale corpus spiritualis feminae effunditur, ut legitime Adam per Christum, Eva per ecclesiam renovaretur.

84. Tract. Orig. 15.12 (CCL 69, 115).

85. Expos. ev. sec. Luc. 2.86-87 (SC 45, 112-113).

86. See especially Tract. de Ps. 88.3 (CCL 78, 407), 'Audivimus de primo Adam, veniamus ad secundum, et videamus quomodo de latere eius aedificetur ecclesia'. See also Ep. 123.11 Ad Geruchiam: De monogamia (Budé, Jérôme 7, 85) and In Ep. ad Eph. 3 (5:31-32) (PL 26, 535), neither of which however mentions the flumina.

87. Catéchèse 3: Aux Néophytes 17 (SC 50, 161):

εἶπον ὅτι τοῦ βαπτίσματος σύμβολον καὶ τῶν μυστηρίων ἔστι τὸ αἷμα ἐκεῖνο καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ. Ἐξ ἐκατέρων τούτων ἡ ἐκκλησία γεγένηται...Τὰ δὲ σύμβολα τοῦ

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

βαπτίσματος καὶ τῶν μυστηρίων ἀπὸ τῆς πλευράς. 'Ἀπὸ τῆς πλευράς ἄρα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐδημιούργησεν ὁ Χριστός, καθάπερ ἀπὸ τῆς πλευράς τοῦ Ἀδάμ τὴν Εὐαν ἐδημιούργησε.

88. Enarr. in Ps. 138.2 (CCL 40, 1991), 'Si ergo Adam forma futuri, quomodo de latere dormientis Eva facta est, sic ex latere Domini dormientis, id est, in passione morientis, et in cruce percusso de lancea, manaverunt sacramenta, quibus formaretur ecclesia'. See also De Genesi contra Manich. 2.24.37 (PL 34, 216), Contra Faustum 12.8 (CSEL 25.1, 336) and Enarr. in Ps. 40.10 (CCL 38, 456), this last cited by Ferrari ('Le Allegorie', 424).

See also the Augustinian tradition reflected in Prosper of Aquitaine, Liber Sententiarum 331 (CCL 68A, 341) and Quodvultdeus, De Cataclysmo 4.10 (CCL 60, 413).

89. Tract. in Ioh. 120.2 (CCL 36, 661):

Vigilanti verbo evangelista usus est, ut non diceret: Latus eius percussit, aut vulneravit, aut quid aliud: sed: aperuit: ut illic quodammodo vitae ostium panderetur, unde sacramenta ecclesiae manaverunt, sine quibus ad vitam quae vera vita est, non intratur. Ille sanguis in remissionem fusus est peccatorum; aqua illa salutare temperat poculum; haec et lavacrum praestat, et potum. Hoc praenuntiabat quod Noe in latere arcae ostium facere iussus est, quae intrarent animalia quae non erant diluvio peritura, quibus praefigurabatur ecclesia. Propter hoc prima mulier facta est de latere viri dormientis, et appellata est vita materque vivorum. Magnum quippe significavit bonum, ante magnum praevaricationis malum. Hic secundus Adam inclinato capite in cruce dormivit, ut inde formaretur ei coniunx, quod de latere dormientis effluxit.

Similar reference to the entrance to the ark is found at Contra Faustum 12.16 (CSEL 25.1, 345-346): 'quod aditus ei fit a latere: nemo quippe intrat in ecclesiam nisi per sacramentum remissionis peccatorum; hoc autem de Christi latere aperto manavit.' See also Augustine's interpretation of the miracle of Horeb (Ibid., 16.17 [CSEL 25.1, 458]): 'sed sicut percussa petra manavit aquam sitientibus, sic plaga dominicae passionis effecta est vita credentibus.'

90. H.A. 1.1027-1046 (CSEL 72, 73-74).

91. Tract. de Ps. 135.13 (CCL 78, 294), 'Rubrum autem dicitur de sanguine'.

92. Sermo 213: In trad. symb. 2.8 (PL 38, 1064):

Aegyptiis insequentibus Israelitas similia erant vestra peccata, persequentibus, sed usque ad mare Rubrum. Quid est, usque ad mare Rubrum? Usque ad fontem Christi cruce et sanguine consecratum. Quod enim rubrum est, rubet. Non vides quomodo rubeat pars Christi? Interroga oculos fidei. Si crucem vides, attende et cruorem. Si vides quod pendet, attende quod fudit. Lancea perforatum est latus Christi, et manavit pretium nostrum. Ideo signo Christi signatur Baptismus, id est, aqua ubi tingimini, et quasi in mari Rubro transitis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

93. 12.29 (CSEL 25.1, 357), 'rubes et mare rubrum: baptismus utique Christi sanguine consecratus'. See also Enarr. in Ps. 80.8 (CCL 39, 1124); Enarr. in Ps. 105.10 (CCL 40, 1559-1560), copied by Prosper of Aquitaine (CCL 68A, 38). See also, less explicitly, Sermo 352: De utilitate agendae paenitentiae 2.3 (PL 39, 1551).
94. De Cataclysmo 3.22 (CCL 60, 412).
95. Expos. in Ps. 80.6 (CCL 98, 751), 'Nec nomen ipsum maris Rubri vacat: quia sicut illud Rubrum constat dici, ita et haec aqua rubra potest nuncupari, quae una cum sanguine de latere Domini Salvatoris exivit'.
96. McKinlay (CSEL 72, 82) is followed by Schrader (Arator's on the Acts of the Apostles, 94).
97. 5.287-294 (CSEL 10, 135-136):

equae patenti
Vulnere purpureus cruor et simul unda cucurrit.
Haec sunt quippe sacrae pro religionis honore:
Corpus sanguis aqua tris vitae munere nostrae.
Fonte renascentes, membris et sanguine Christi
Vescimur atque ideo templum deitatis habemur,
Quod servare Deus nos annuat immaculatum,
Et faciat tenues tanto mensore capaces.

The prose version at Pasch. Op. 5.24 (CSEL 10, 293) contains nothing which is not found in the verses above.

CHAPTER EIGHT: AQUILA: THE REJUVENATION OF THE EAGLE

(Historia Apostolica 2.506-511, 521-550)

Translation

As he went on his way, Paul had already left behind the Attic hordes overcome with his reverent eloquence, and, making for the adjoining ramparts of Corinth between the two seas, found a city abounding in people, which, though it touched the waves of alternate oceans, thirsted for the everlasting waters. A teacher there at that time was that Aquila from Pontus...

So that meaning might not perchance lie hidden in uncertainty, I will declare the explanation by which it will be given: the holy scriptures have often declared that it is from names that proofs are to be deduced and in which the greatest arguments have their origin. It is right therefore to inquire more deeply for what figurative reason he is called thus who, being a comrade in his craft, is joined as dear host to Paul, or on account of what kind of merit he is deemed worthy of approval and is pleasing in this particular.

The faithful nature of Aquila automatically bears out what its model maintains: for the bird, when it is weak from age and, being elderly, already of failing sight, lies beneath the flame-shooting sun and warms its heavy feathers in the fire, and opens its darkened eyes and presses its feeble gaze upon the blazing rays so that it might return to its former day; thus the languishing bird absorbs the gifts of the heat, from whose kindling it receives strength and restores the losses of its former lifetime. So that it might gain not only what the glowing heat inspires, it is immersed three times in the waves to cleanse itself in the shallow of the pool, and casts off its old age in the waters, and lifts a young image of beauty from the spring. What more obvious enactment of religion could there be? When we are touched by the light of the true Sun, faith draws near and we let go the stains of our old life; being soon reborn of the mothering water we are conspicuously undeveloped in our newness; infancy is restored again to the old man, and this better birth lies at hand for those wet from their second rising. Being well aware of the example of this bird, he, whom the Spirit drove to turn his fecund hand on the lyre, said: 'Thou shalt be renewed like the eagle': for this reason the elect may feel that what the songs of a righteous man affirm in the recommendation of a type is itself pleasing.¹

Introduction

In this passage Arator again demonstrates the great extent to which his particular brand of etymological explanation is pursued, not at the expense of, but rather in accordance with his general exegesis of the text. The first few lines reveal quite clearly that Paul arrives

AQUILA

in Corinth on a mission of baptism and conversion. Arator highlights this by his ironic word-play on bimaris, the epithet classically applied to Corinth.² This town, through its two ports, Lechaëum on the Gulf of Corinth and Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf, may be continually washed by two of the earth's seas, but it still thirsts for the real waters of baptism.

Arator now takes up the character of Aquila, who with his wife Priscilla had welcomed Paul into his house (Acts 18:3). Luke does not tell us exactly when Aquila was baptized, but since he has come from Rome, presumably he did not receive the baptism of John.³ Possibly he is one of those who are baptized at 18:8: 'and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.' But, wherever he was baptized, Arator, by his exposition of the figura underlying Aquila's name, makes him symbolic of all those baptized by Paul at Corinth. His authority for such a mode of exegesis is none other than the holy scriptures themselves (H.A. 2.522-4). McKinlay, in his running index locorum, makes rather gratuitous reference to Gen 29:34 and the naming of Levi, signifying the union of Leah and Jacob. Why he should point to this particular example of biblical etymology before any other is not entirely clear, but, since he does, why does he not refer to the whole account of the sons born to Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, all of whom bear names pertinent to the situation of their birth (Gen 29:29-30:24)?

In the case of Aquila, the basic meaning of the Latin word - eagle - provides Arator with a subject which can be moulded perfectly to suit the needs of the passage. He recounts the story that the eagle, when

AQUILA

old, restores itself to youth by basking in the sun and then bathing three times in a stream, a legend familiar to modern readers from its appearance in Spenser's The Faerie Queen:

As Eagle fresh out of the Ocean wave,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoery gray,
And deckt himselfe with feathers youthly gay,
Like Eyes hauke up mounts unto the skies,
His newly budded pineons to assay,
And marveiles at himselfe, still as he flies:
So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise (1.11.34).

Where does this fable, so aptly shaped as a baptismal parallel, originate?

McKinlay supplies a reference to Jerome's Liber Interpretationum Hebraicorum Nominum, 'aquila dolens vel parturiens',⁴ which he unsuccessfully attempts to make relevant by reference to key words in the passage such as debilis and languida. Arntzen informs us of his intentions thus: 'notabo veteres Christianos poetas de aquila, ut mystica et divina ave, mira scribere';⁵ however, of the three passages he provides only one is immediately relevant to the lines of Arator under consideration.

Quoting a passage which is in substance very close indeed to the account given by Arator, he refers, without expressing the slightest doubt as to its authenticity, to Jerome's Epistula ad Praesidium, a letter which has been 'rejected as apocryphal from the sixteenth to the present century, but which, freed from alien matter which had got attached to it, has impressed a growing number of modern scholars as authentic'.⁶ Unfortunately for Arntzen, this alien matter includes that passage which concerns the rejuvenation of the eagle.

AQUILA

However, whereas interpolation in most cases involves the incorporation of later material, the paragraph here spuriously attributed to Jerome is actually of much earlier origin, in its substance if not in its exact verbal detail.

1. Arator's Source: The Physiologus

The account is to be found in the Physiologus, 'an immensely popular collection of edifying fabulous anecdotes from natural history',⁷ the earliest version of which was written, probably in Egypt, in the second century AD. It contains, in its original form, forty-nine chapters, in each of which the mythical detail or mystic property of some animal, plant or mineral is related and then given an exposition in the form of a Christian moralization.

We cannot know for certain whether Arator knew the Greek or the later Latin Physiologus,⁹ or indeed whether he knew either in its entirety or had merely come across an excerpt from one of them. However, the Latin adaptation was certainly in circulation at the time Arator was writing, since the Decretum Gelasianum, written at the beginning of the sixth century, though ascribing it erroneously to Ambrose, lists the Physiologus as suitable apocryphal reading.¹⁰ What is clear is that it is the Physiologus, whether Greek or Latin, which undoubtedly provides the source for Arator's tale of the eagle's rejuvenation. Though the two versions differ slightly in their moralizations, Arator's account could equally well have been drawn from either. However, since we may very well have reason to doubt the extent of Arator's knowledge of Greek,¹¹ and since the Latin adaptation would

AQUILA

appear to have been current, this is the version it would seem most worthwhile to consult:

Of the eagle David says in the one hundred and second psalm: Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's. The Physiologus says that the eagle has the following nature: when it grows old, its wings become heavy and its eyes are enveloped in darkness; then it seeks a spring of water, and over that spring flies up into the height as far as the atmosphere of the sun, and there sets fire to its wings and burns up the darkness of its eyes with the ray of the sun; then indeed, coming down to the spring, it immerses itself three times and at once is completely renewed in such a way that in the vigour of its wings and in the brightness of its eyes it is renewed much better [than before].

You too then, O man, whether Jew or Gentile, you who wear your old apparel and the eyes of whose heart are darkened, seek the spiritual spring of the Lord, who said: Unless one is reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of the God of heaven. Unless then you are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and unless you lift up the eyes of your heart to the Lord who is the Sun of Righteousness, your youth shall not be renewed like the eagle's.¹²

Although Arator shows no slavish devotion to the Physiologus, the similarities are obvious, the symptoms of the eagle's old age, for example. Despite the fact that Arator implies that the bird absorbs the sun's heat from the ground, whereas the Physiologus lays more emphasis on its burning away its old age at rather closer quarters, the pattern is the same: the eagle subjects itself to the heat of the sun and the cleansing of the water. Arator is also aware of the moralization: rebirth comes from the light and warmth of the true sun, the Sun of Righteousness, although again he is more interested in the regenerative power of the consecrated but real water used in baptism than in the metaphorical spring which is the word of God.

It is impossible to say whether Arator knew the Physiologus at first hand (indeed his divergence from its account, however slight, might suggest that he did not); but the paucity of writers who seem to have followed this particular interpretation of Ps 102:5, 'So that your

AQUILA

youth is renewed like the eagle's', attractive as it is, would seem to indicate that it was not a tradition in popular circulation.¹³ Other interpretations, as we shall see, did not even always see the verse as referring to the rejuvenation or rebirth involved in baptism. This, of course, is not to suggest that any legend of the eagle's literal renewal existed at all before the composition of the psalm.¹⁴ There is no evidence whatsoever that any tradition of the eagle's rejuvenation existed before the composition of the Physiologus. Such an interpretation results from a specifically Christian reading of the psalm; certainly it had no basis in the exegesis of the rabbis who predictably had little concern for rebirth.¹⁵

Sbordone, the editor of the Greek Physiologus, equally sees no link with the classical tradition: 'aquilae senectutem...in iuvenilem vero speciem reddi nullus graecus latinusve scriptor testatus est.'¹⁶ However, there did seem to be a tradition, at least in Roman times, which saw the eagle, even in old age, as being 'young and lusty'. See Terence, Heautontimorumenos 520-521, where Syrus the slave describes the activity of his elderly master Chremes at a drunken supper the previous evening:

Vise verost, quod dici solet,
Aquilae senectus

which Betty Radice appositely translates: 'Well, it looked to me like what they call life in the old dog yet.'¹⁷ Terence, however, would not appear to know any legend such as that contained in the Physiologus; the eagle might remain youthful in old age, but it does

not experience any rejuvenation

2. Alternative non-baptismal theories

Was the Physiologus account, then, which would seem so little known, the only version of the eagle's rejuvenation with which Arator was acquainted? Or did Arator choose this baptismal reading deliberately because it suited his exposition of the biblical passage? To answer these questions we must examine the other theories in popular currency at the time, and thus conceivably available to him.

A more widely known version of the eagle's renewal, containing no baptismal association, would appear to have its first occurrence in Augustine's Enarrationes in Psalmos,¹⁸ upon which Cassiodorus based his account in the Expositio Psalmorum, which version will be given here, being substantially the same but rather more concise:

But we must examine why the example of the eagle is introduced. Now, when this bird is advanced in age, its upper beak, nose-like in its horny curving, is said to grow out so much that it is not free to gather food with its usual freedom; realising whence a risk to its life might occur, it is said to smooth off its beak on a rock until it removes from itself all obstructions. Having done this, it is recalled to the former strength of its body by its usual collection of food. Thus the soul is restored to its original health, if it does not cease to smooth away its sins on the rock wherein is Christ the Lord. For it is restored to the food of salvation when it casts off its sins, which are obstructions to the eternal life which the Lord affords.¹⁹

The abnormal growth of the upper beak and its removal are also found in Dracontius' De laudibus Dei, where God has the power 'to restore youth to the old age of the swift eagle, which endured hunger when its beak grew hooked',²⁰ and in Prosper of Aquitaine's Expositio Psalmorum: 'like an eagle, which by casting off its wings and

AQUILA

changing its beak grows young unto new strength with renewed vigour.'²¹ Prosper combines the beak theory with the idea of a restorative moulting of feathers, as found also in Jerome's comment on Is 40:31: 'We have frequently said that the old age of eagles is revived by the changing of their feathers.'²²

The notion that eagles lose their feathers in old age recurs in Jerome's interpretation of Mic 1:16, where the bald eagles are the Jews:

And just as the eagle, which is the queen of birds, loses its down at a specified time and stays featherless, thus also does Israel cast off all her former glory, with which she was once surrounded, and mourn her sons now subject to the power of the enemy.²³

He goes on to quote Ps 102:5 and the passage from Terence (which he thus presumably interpreted as referring to continued activity in old age): the unrepentant Jews, unlike eagles, do not assume new feathers. For the saints however it is a different matter: 'Now, also called eagles are the saints whose youth is renewed like the eagle's, and who, according to Isaiah, grow feathers and assume wings in order to arrive at Christ's passion.'²⁴ In these examples we see Jerome variously twisting his theme, allowing the text to stimulate the symbolism which in turn inspires the exegesis.

While Jerome seems to have developed his theory of the eagle's rejuvenation from a natural observation (that birds from time to time do replace their feathers) which, in the case of the eagle, is not attested by the ancient naturalists, the detail of the eagle's protruding upper beak stems in its origin from Aristotle.²⁵

AQUILA

Augustine, however, most probably knew the version in Pliny: 'they meet their end not through old age nor through sickness, but through hunger; for their upper beak grows to such an extent that its hooked shape cannot be opened.'²⁶ However the rejuvenating remedy and subsequent moralization, in the absence of any earlier source, may well belong to Augustine himself.

The influence of Aristotle and Pliny concerning the habits of the eagle demonstrates quite clearly the difficulty faced by the early Christian writers in their attempts to invent and establish new mythical traditions. The fabulous stories which were rooted in classical learning were much more likely than their newly contrived and specifically Christian equivalents to receive popular acceptance and dissemination, even when their morality could scarcely be considered compatible with Christian beliefs.

Trace, for example, the history of the popular notion that eagles expose their newborn chicks to the sun. Pliny, following Aristotle, tells the story of the sea-eagle, but it was taken by later writers to refer to the eagle itself:

The sea-eagle, striking its chicks while still unfledged, promptly compels them to gaze upon the direct rays of the sun, and if it notices one blinking or watering at the eye, it hurls it headlong from the nest as a bastard and of inferior stock. That one whose gaze remains straight against it, it brings up.²⁷

There follows a continuous line of writers, Christian and pagan, who show detailed acquaintance with the tradition;²⁸ indeed, in the case of many writers the acquaintance is such that we are forced to conclude that either they knew Pliny's account at first hand, or his

AQUILA

influence was so strong that it was able to dictate the tradition even to its last detail.

Many, for instance, use vocabulary to describe the defective chicks which clearly derives from Pliny's 'velut adulterinum atque degenerem'. Thus Tertullian: 'alioquin non educabunt, ut degenerem';²⁹ Ambrose: 'quasi degener et tanta indignus parente reicitur';³⁰ Claudian:

degenerem refugo torsit qui lumine visum,
unguibus hunc saevis ira paterna ferit;³¹

Jerome: 'pullosque suos an generosi sint, hoc experimento probent';³² and Augustine: 'si acie palpitaverit, tamquam adulterinus ab ungue dimittitur'.³³ Gregory of Nazianzus and Pseudo-Eustathius also refer to the rejected chick as 'ὑβθος'.³⁴

3. How influential was the Physiologus?

Such then is the weighty influence of the classical tradition; but when we return to the eagle's rejuvenation, is it likely that, had Augustine, Prosper, and Cassiodorus known the Physiologus at first hand, they would have ignored completely its baptismal interpretation, far more satisfactory in its symbolism, and preferred something based loosely on Pliny but in its imagery frankly absurd?

We may then have reason to doubt exactly how widely the Physiologus was known in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries; that is not to question the popularity of some of the fables it contains, but rather

AQUILA

to examine what evidence there is that writers at this time actually had access to a full text. Sbordone gives copious cross-references to other authors, but, to judge from his edition, the popularity of individual episodes would appear to vary enormously, with few, and in the case of the eagle none, involving any direct quotation from the Physiologus during this period.³⁵

Is the scarceness of quotation in the West perhaps an indication that the Latin Physiologus is later in origin than certain critics may have believed? Its editor, F.J.Carmody, believed in 1938 that it 'was prepared some time before the eighth century', an indisputable terminus ante quem, being the date of the earliest manuscript.³⁶ Carmody would appear not to know the Decretum Gelasianum, which, as we have seen, recommended the Physiologus, presumably a Latin version since it is attributed to Ambrose; this would set its latest date at some point before the sixth century.³⁷ However, in a footnote to his judgement in the main text, Carmody adds: 'The presence in the authentic chapter on the PERDIX of a long word for word correspondence with St. Ambrose...may indicate that the Latin Physiologus goes back at least to the fourth century.'³⁸

Later in the same article he adduces in his support the fact that the Physiologus is not known to have quoted anything but the Bible: therefore Ambrose must be quoting the Physiologus and not vice versa. However, he himself nullifies this 'proof' by admitting that nowhere else does Ambrose use, or even appear to know, the Latin Physiologus; he thus concludes: 'The theory is not proven.' Nonetheless he still maintains that 'it seems likely that the Lat. Phys. is at least as

AQUILA

old as the 4th cent.'.39 Furthermore, in his edition the following year he states categorically that 'il doit se placer avant l'an 386',40 and by the time he comes to write the article for the New Catholic Encyclopedia his conviction is such that we learn, on the basis of no further evidence, that the Latin Physiologus 'was in circulation by 386'.41

The episode in question is that concerning the partridge, an exposition of Jer 17:11: 'Like the partridge that gathers a brood which she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by right; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool.' Ambrose's account of the partridge fable and its subsequent moralization (Exameron 6.3.13) undoubtedly include a substantial section of the Latin Physiologus,42 but is it necessary to assume that it is Ambrose who does the borrowing? Carmody tells us that the Latin Physiologus contains 'not only the bulk of the moralizations of the Greek version, but also many additions';43 it would thus seem impossible to ascribe a definite borrowing to one at the expense of the other.

However, unlike the anecdote concerning the eagle, the partridge fable would appear to have been comparatively popular with early Christian writers, and was widely known by the time Ambrose wrote the Exameron, as Augustine tells us: 'That partridge indeed was understood by certain ancestors and commentators on the scriptures before us to be the devil, gathering what he did not beget.'44 Since these commentators included Origen, Hippolytus, Filaster, and Jerome,45 it is quite possible that Ambrose did not know any version

of the Physiologus at all, but had encountered the tradition elsewhere and that it was his account which the author of the Latin Physiologus had followed.

Alternatively, we can accept Carmody's theory in part and admit that Ambrose may have known this particular episode from the Latin Physiologus but not necessarily any others. This would accord with the idea that some episodes proved more popular than others and were thus circulated separately from the text as a whole. However, both hypotheses are forced to remain conjectural; to use Carmody's words, but rejecting his inference: 'The theory is not proven.'

4. Ambrose and the Eagle

Whether or not Ambrose quoted the partridge fable from the Physiologus, there is certainly no evidence that he knew the episode which concerns the eagle. It is scarcely conceivable that he, of all people, would have ignored the baptismal account of the eagle's rejuvenation had he known of it, for his writings, most notably De Sacramentis and De Mysteriis, contain numerous references to the eagle as a bird of baptismal significance. Thus De Sacramentis, as Ambrose addresses the newly baptized:

Finally, hear again David when he says Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's. You have begun to be a good eagle, in that you seek heaven and disdain earthly things. Good eagles are around the altar: for where the body is, there also will the eagles gather. The meaning of the body is the altar, and the body of Christ is on the altar. You are the eagles, renewed by the ablution of your sin.⁴⁶

And again in De Mysteriis: 'the people, having cast off the remnants of their old sin, are restored unto the youth of an eagle, and hasten

AQUILA

to draw nigh to that celestial banquet.'⁴⁷

There is one other reference which would appear to indicate quite clearly that Ambrose was unaware of the Physiologus account, or that, if he was familiar with it, he chose to ignore it: 'For the eagle too, when it has died, is reborn from its own remains, just as through the sacrament of baptism, when we are dead unto sin, we are reborn and reshaped in God.'⁴⁸ Here the eagle is not rejuvenated but completely reborn; like the phoenix, it actually dies before being restored to new life.

Another writer who stresses the baptismal significance of the eagle, yet who shows no acquaintance with the Physiologus, is Maximus of Turin. His sermon for Easter Day, from which a few details must suffice, deals extensively with the symbol of the rejuvenated eagle, which for Maximus had a double application, signifying both the risen Christ⁴⁹ and the neophyte renewed in baptism:

Whence holy David also said Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's, understanding that through the grace of baptism the perishable substance of our life can be revived and that that which has collapsed in us through the long standing of our offences can be renewed in some kind of youth.⁵⁰

However, Maximus refers to the rejuvenation theory we first saw in Jerome: just as the eagle revives its weary wings with new feathers and becomes a chick again, so do the newly baptized cast off their sins and return to the innocence of infancy.⁵¹

Both Ambrose and Maximus interpret Ps 102:5 as being of baptismal significance, a significance each explains with his own theory of

AQUILA

rejuvenation, neither of which bears much resemblance to the account contained in the Physiologus. Whether or not they knew this account we cannot tell for certain, but the implication must be that they did not.

Arator would seem to be the first writer in the West to refer to the Physiologus version of the eagle's renewal. Whether he was aware of any other version it is impossible to say; the most we can venture is that other versions would appear to have been current, and indeed more popular, at the time he was writing. Either Arator consciously chose the Physiologus account as being most pertinent to his exposition of Acts as a whole, with its emphasis on baptism and renewal, or he was exceedingly fortunate in knowing only the one which suited his purpose so well. What might have been a fruitless and incongruous etymological digression instead becomes an integral part of his narrative.

NOTES

1. CSEL 72, 105-108. Punctuation in lines 537-538 follows Hudson-Williams, 'Notes', 95:

cui ne sola forent quae fervidus incutit aestus,
per laticum purganda vadum ter mergitur undis...

In line 545 I read manantibus with Waszink ('Notes', 90-91). McKinlay's adherence to manentibus produces no sense at all. I disagree with Schrader in two places: first, in line 522, which he renders (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 74) 'I shall sing in what manner is granted [to me]'. The ratio however is surely the 'reasoning' behind the allegory; secondly, in lines 549-550, which he translates (75) 'by this precept those proven good are allowed to feel that they are pleasing [to God] from the praise of [this] symbol, which the songs of the righteous affirm'. This is not only difficult to construe from the Latin, but seems to miss the point, for presumably Arator means to justify the use of such allegory through reference to the psalm quotation: the allegory is pleasing because of its biblical

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

support.

See the discussion of this passage by Leimbach ('Über den Dichter', 256-7), who however sees the fable of the eagle's rejuvenation as somehow connected with that of the phoenix: 'Die ganze Sage...berührt sich in der Hauptsache mit der viel häufiger vorkommenden, von vielen Kirchenvätern für unzweifelhaftes Factum gehaltenen Phönixsage (257).' The same mistake is made by Ferrari ('Le Allegorie', 431), who however is full of admiration for the episode, describing it as 'una bella allegoria'.

2. See Horace, Carm. 1.7.2-3: 'bimarisve Corinthi/moenia', which Arator may well be consciously echoing. Here as elsewhere the epithet is employed in a passage where Corinth is one in a geographical catalogue of place-names, compiled for rhetorical effect (see also Ovid, Met 6.419-420; Seneca, Oedipus 282, and Statius, Achill. 1.407). The word-play in which Arator indulges, meaningless in a pagan writer, is of course a specifically Christian departure.
3. For discussion of the roles of Aquila and Priscilla, see Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 538-539.
4. CCL 72, 143.
5. PL 68, 204.
6. J.N.D.Kelly, Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies (London, 1975), 111.
7. Ibid., 111n. Arator's reliance on the Physiologus is recognised by Schrader (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 95), but he perpetuates the confusion by also referring to the Epistula ad Praesidium.
8. Physiologus Graecus, ed. F.Sbordone (Milan, 1936; reimpr. Hildesheim/New York, 1976).
9. F.J.Carmody, Physiologus Latinus. Éditions préliminaires: Versio B (Paris, 1939).
10. Decretum Gelasianum, ed. E.von Dobschütz, TU 38.4 (1912), 12; see also 309-310. Carmody's attempt to place the Physiologus Latinus before 400 will be discussed later.
11. On the decline of Greek in the West see H-I.Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. George Lamb, (New York, 1956), 350-354.
12. Phys. Lat., 8.19:

De aquila David in psalmo centesimo secundo: Renovabitur ut aquilae iuventus tua. Physiologus dicit aquilam talem habere naturam: cum senuerit, gravantur alas eius, et obducuntur oculi eius caligine; tunc quaerit fontem aquae, et contra eum fontem evolat in altum usque ad serem solis, et ibi incendit alas suas, et caliginem oculorum comburit de radio solis; tunc demum descendens ad

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

fontem trina vice se mergit, et statim renovatur tota, ita ut alarum vigore et oculorum splendore multum melius renovetur.

Ergo et tu, homo, sive Iudaeus sive gentilis, qui vestimentum habes vetus, et caligentur oculi cordis tui, quaere spiritalem fontem domini, qui dixit: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et spiritu sancto, non potest intrare in regnum dei caelorum. Nisi ergo: Baptizatus fueris in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, et sustuleris oculos cordis tui ad dominum, qui est sol iustitiae, non renovabitur ut aquilae iuventus tua.

13. There is one instance of the Physiologus fable which may well predate Arator. The Comm. in Hexaemeron of Pseudo-Eustathius of Antioch (PG 18, 732) has been given a date between the fourth and fifth centuries (see CPG 3393). It is, however, a much shortened version with no moralization. (The verb βαπτίζω is used of the eagle, as in the Physiologus Graecus, but could imply simply "is immersed" and need not refer to baptism itself.) An abridged version is also found in the anonymous De Trinitate seu Tract. in Symb. Apostolorum 34 (falsely attributed to Ambrose at PL 17, 545), which is dated by M.C. Diaz y Diaz as being possibly later than the sixth century (Index scriptorum latinorum medii aevi hispanorum 19). It is, however, offered in proof of resurrection, with no mention of baptism.
14. Modern commentators offer little help on the verse. For example, J.W. Rogerson and J.W. McKay (Psalms 101-150, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, 1977), 25) refer us to Is 40:29-31, saying 'The eagle was a symbol for rejuvenation.' C.H. Spurgeon, however (The Treasury of David, 7 vols [London, 1883-1885], IV, 464), directs us (without reference) to the Dutch theologian Hermann Venema (1697-1787), who commented on the verse: 'Comparatio cum aquila non est in renovatione, sed in vigore et alacritate, se continuo renovante, constituenda (Comm. ad Psalmos, 6 vols [Franeker and Leuwarden, 1762-7], V, 421).' This interpretation, although it stems from Venema's establishing the text as 'renovat sese instar aquilae alacritas tua', would seem closest to the basic meaning of the verse.
15. See the fourth-century rabbinic comment in The Midrash on Psalms, trans. W.G. Braude, 2 vols (New Haven, 1959), II, 160: 'R. Yudan held that the latter part of this verse referred to Job to whom it was said Gird up now thy loins like a cock-eagle (Job 38:3) - that is, like an eagle who has lighted upon a dung-heap and shakes itself clean, so Job shook himself free of suffering and was renewed.'
16. Phys. Graec., 22.
17. Terence: The Comedies (Harmondsworth, 1976), 124. Ausonius also knows the tradition (Prof. 5, 21-22 [MGH.AA 5.2, 581]), though he may not be untouched by Christian influences:

laetus, pudicus, pulcher in senio quoque, ut
aquilae senectus aut equi.

Eugraphius, at the beginning of the sixth century, explains the

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

passage in Terence by reference to Pliny's theory concerning the elderly eagle's curved beak (see below); however, he adds the grisly information that it was thus able only to suck the blood from corpses to prolong its life: 'hoc igitur ait servus domino, quasi bibendo totum tempus hesternae cena egerit (Teubner, 183).' J.Marouzeau's reference (Budé, Terence 2, 51) to 'un proverbe grec', namely 'aquilae senecta, corydoni iuventa', is inconsequential; this proverb has no authority earlier than Erasmus' Adages 1.9.57 (Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia, ed. J.Leclerc, 10 vols (Leiden, 1703-1706), II, 355e). Of more worth is the preceding adage (1.9.56, 355d), 'aquilae senecta', in which Erasmus refers specifically to this passage in Terence, claiming, like Eugraphius, that in old age eagles drink rather than eat. Thus Chremes imitates an eagle in his bibacity for one of two reasons: 'sive quod natura frigus aetatis, vini calore pensare desiderat: sive quod vini hilaritas minuit senectutis molestiam.'

18. Enarr. in Ps. 102.5 (CCL 40, 1459-1460).

19. Expos. Ps. 102.5 (CCL 98, 915):

Sed perscrutandum est cur aquilae introducatur exemplum. Huic avi iam aetate provectae, supernum labium cornea inflexione nasutum, tantum fertur excrescere, ut ei non sit liberum escas solita libertate decerpere, quae intellegens unde ei periculum vitae possit accidere, os suum in saxo dicitur expolire, usquequo omnia sibi eius impedimenta submoveat. Quo facto in antiquam valetudinem corporis sui, escarum solita perceptione revocatur. Sic anima in pristinam sanitatem revertitur, si peccata sua in petra qua est Christus Dominus expolire non desinat. Revertitur enim ad cibos salutaris, quando delicta, quae sunt impedimenta aeternae vitae, Domino praestante, respuerit.

20. De laudibus Dei 1.724-725 (MGH.AA 14, 64):

praepetis aut aquilae senio renovare iuventam,
quae rostro crescente famem tolerabat adunco.

Sbordone's Secunda Redactio (Phys. Graec., 191-195), which he dates as being somewhere between the fifth and sixth centuries, combines both the baptismal and the beak theories. However, see B.E.Perry's review in AJPh 58 (1937), 494, which considers it 'hardly older than the eleventh'.

21. Expos. Ps. 102.5 (CCL 68A, 13), 'ad similitudinem aquilae, quae depositis alis rostroque mutato in novas vires redivivo vigore iuvenescit'.

22. In Esaiam 12.40.27/31 (CCL 73A, 467), 'Crebro diximus, aquilarum senectutem revirescere mutatione pennarum'.

23. Comm. in Mic. 1.1:16 (CCL 76, 437), 'Et quomodo aquila quae regina est avium certo tempore amittit pilos, et remanet implumis, sic etiam Israel deponat omnem gloriam suam, qua ante fuerat circumdatus, et plangat filios, hostium subditos

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

potestati'.

24. Comm. in Math. 4.24:28 (CCL 77, 229), 'Aquilae autem appellantur sancti quibus innovata est iuventus ut aquilae et qui iuxta Esaiam plumescunt et adsumunt alas ut ad Christi veniant passionem'.
25. De animal. hist. 9.32 (619a).
26. Nat. Hist. 10.3.15, 'oppetunt non senio nec aegritudine, sed fame, in tantum superiore ad crescente rostro, ut ad uncitas aperiri non queat'.
27. Ibid., 10.3.10, 'haliaetus tantum implumes etiamnum pullos suos percutiens subinde cogit adversos intueri solis radios et, si coniventem umectantemque animadvertit, praecipitat e nido velut adulterinum atque degenerem. illum, cuius acies firma contra stetit, educat'. See also Aristotle, De animal. hist. 9.34 (620a).
28. For more references see D'A.W.Thompson, A Glossary of Greek Birds, second ed. (London, 1936), 8-9, to which add Basil of Caesarea's translator Eustathius, In Hexaemeron Basilii Caesareae Cappadociae Episcopi Latina Translatio: Hom. 8.6.2 (TU 66 [1958], 108), and Gregory of Elvira (?), Sermo de Salomone 6.13 (CCL 69, 255).
29. De anima 8.4 (CCL 2, 791).
30. Exameron 5.18.60 (CSEL 32.1, 186); see also Expos. Ps. 118.19.13 (CSEL 62, 428).
31. Panegyricus de tert. cons. Hon. Aug.: Praef., 9-10.
32. In Esaiam 12.40.27/31 (CCL 73A, 467).
33. In Ioann. ev. Tract. 36.5 (CCL 36, 327).
34. Gregory of Nazianzus, Carm. 2.1.12.371-374 (PG 37, 1193); Ps-Eustathius, Comm. in Hex. (PG 18, 732).
35. Compare for instance the number of references for the legend of the phoenix (Phys. Graec., 25-28) with that for the lesser known tale of the pelican (ibid., 16-19).
36. F.J.Carmody, 'De Bestiis et Aliis Rebus and the Latin Physiologus', Speculum 13 (1938), 153. The earliest manuscript, from the eighth century, is in Berne (Bibliothèque publique, MS 233).
37. See n10 above.
38. 'De Bestiis', 153n.
39. Ibid., 156.

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

40. Phys. Lat., 7.
41. 'Physiologus', NCE 11 (1967), 343.
42. Compare CSEL 32.1, 211-212 with Phys. Lat. 25.45. Ambrose however felt no compulsion to "copy" the Phys. Lat. when giving a different version of the same fable at Ep. 32 (PL 16, 1069-1071).
43. 'De Bestiis', 153.
44. Sermo 46 De Pastoribus 28 (CCL 41, 553), 'Perdix quidem ille a quibusdam maioribus et ante nos scripturarum tractatoribus diabolus intellectus est, congregans quae non peperit'.
45. Origen, Hom. in Hier. 17 (SC 238, 162); Hippolytus, De Christo et Antichristo 55 (GCS Hipp. 1.2, 36-37); Filaster, Div. Her. Lib.: Praef. (CCL 9, 217); Jerome, In Hier. 3.75.4-5 (CCL 74, 167-168).
46. De Sacr. 4.2.7 (SC 25, 104):
- Denique iterum audi dicentem David: Renovabitur sicut aquilae iuventus tua. Bona aquila esse coepisti quae caelum petis. terrena fastidis. Bonae aquilae circa altare: Ubi enim corpus ibi et aquilae. Forma corporis altare est, et corpus Christi est in altari. Aquilae vos estis renovatae ablutione delicti.
- See also Expos. ev.sec. Luc. 8.56 (SC 52, 123), where Lk 17:37 receives a double exposition: a) the eagles are Mary, the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary at the tomb, flying upon spiritual wings around the body of Christ; b) the body is the Church, in which we are reborn, like eagles, through baptism.
47. De Myst. 8.43 (SC 25, 180), 'Depositis enim inveterati erroris exuviis, renovata in aquilae iuventutem, caeleste illud festinat adire convivium'. See also Expos. Ps. 118.18.26 (CSEL 62, 410), 'renovatus aquilae iuventute per baptismatis sacramenta', and ibid., 14.39 (CSEL 62, 324-325).
48. De Paenitentia 2.2.8 (CSEL 73, 166-167), 'quod etiam aquila, cum fuerit mortua, ex suis reliquiis renascitur, sicut per baptismatis sacramentum, cum fuerimus peccato mortui, renascimur deo ac reformamur'. At Expos. ev.sec. Luc. 3.50 (SC 45, 149) Ambrose does not refer to any kind of rejuvenation, choosing to stress only the eagle's old age, although, as we saw in n46, he does include it later in the same work: an example of the flexibility and licence with which such symbols were treated.
49. Sermo 55 De sancta Pascha 2 (CCL 23, 222).
50. De sancta Pascha 1 (CCL 23, 221), 'Unde et David sanctus ait: Renovabitur sicut aquilae iuventus tua; intellegens per gratiam baptismi occidua vitae nostrae posse revivescere, et iuventute quadam renovari posse id quod in nobis fuerat delictorum vetustate conlapsum'. Basil of Caesarea (De S.S. 14.33 [SC 17, 166]) also makes a baptismal connection but gives no explanation.
51. Ibid. (221-222).

CHAPTER NINE: POSTSCRIPT

Is it then possible, as a result of our investigations, to say with any certainty that there were specific works of which Arator had first-hand knowledge and upon whose contents he drew during the writing of the Historia Apostolica? Certainly, there can be no doubt that ancient writers felt no embarrassment at borrowing ideas, or even whole sentences, from earlier commentators;¹ but, before we attempt to frame a response, however vague and imprecise, to that question, we must remind ourselves that Arator was not open to influence solely, or even predominantly, from literary sources. As Eduard Fraenkel observed in the case of Catullus, coincidence of thought between two authors is no proof of their awareness of each other's writings; referring to Catullus' attack on otium in Poem 51, Fraenkel observes:

The topic itself had been formulated so often that we may safely assume that by then it had come to form part of the conglomerate of ideas which, with frequent changes of its elements, keeps floating in the intellectual atmosphere of any educated society. So Catullus could become acquainted with it without having to consult any book of a philosopher or historian.²

Intellectual activity may have been about to enter its 'dark' age, but we have no reason to think that the dissemination of ideas in the sixth century was brought about by means substantially different from those of the 'golden' age of Latin letters, as surmised by Fraenkel.³ But in a Christian context we can amplify this further: exegetical and doctrinal ideas were just as likely to be transmitted in a liturgical and, more importantly, a predominantly oral form, as Bernard Botte observes in the case of Ambrose:

¹ Il dépend, en fait, d'une tradition orale dont nous trouvons les vestiges dans les

POSTSCRIPT

formules liturgiques et dans le choix des lectures destinées à la liturgie du carême et de Pâques...C'est, avant tout, un témoignage de la grande tradition chrétienne qui, partie du Christ et des Apôtres, se continue dans l'Église.⁴

We need not then feel obliged in every case to attribute Arator's exegetical ideas to a particular written source. It is quite clear that certain symbols and images were part of the exegetical, liturgical and intellectual atmosphere of the time; it would be impossible and perhaps futile to attempt to tie each of Arator's images to a specific appearance of the same image in the writings of some earlier exegete.

However, despite the validity of this point, there are undoubtedly works which were well-known at the time Arator was writing, and it comes as no surprise that these are the works with which, as we have attempted to indicate, Arator would seem to have been most familiar. The list of such works is headed by certain works of Augustine, the Enarrationes in Psalmos and Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium to name the most popular,⁵ and more particularly the De Sacramentis, De Mysteriis and Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam of Ambrose.⁶ The coincidence of language as well of thought in the case of these works would seem to argue more than merely casual acquaintance.

The one work which poses a problem in this respect is the Physiologus. The fable of the eagle's rebirth, with its folkloric quality, is exactly the type of material which one might have expected Arator to have encountered through some kind of oral transmission. But, as we saw in the preceding chapter, the Physiologus, or at least the information it contains concerning the

POSTSCRIPT

eagle, for all its later popularity, does not appear to have been well-known in the Latin West in the years leading up to the composition of Arator's work. If this was indeed the case, then it is unlikely that Arator would have come across this particular fable at second hand. Was perhaps a copy of the Physiologus contained in the papal libraries to which Arator as subdeacon had access? It is, unfortunately, impossible to draw a firm conclusion.

It may well be that this study has failed to uncover the true 'source' of any of these images; I cannot claim to have read more than a judicious selection of all the works which might possibly have influenced Arator. However, if this is indeed the case, I would refer the reader to the first chapter of this study in which the quest of Quellenforschung per se was disowned. The point of the central chapters has not been to identify the one 'original' source, but to attempt to trace the various ways and lines along which traditional allegorical explanations developed in the two centuries or so preceding the writing of the Historia Apostolica, and thus to shed some light on the reasoning which lay behind Arator's particular choice of mystical interpretations.

We have yet to speculate as to Arator's motivation for including so much baptismal, indeed one may say catechetical, material in his exegesis. Part of the answer undoubtedly lies in the fact that, as we observed in the second chapter, The Acts of the Apostles is the supreme witness of baptism and conversion in the earliest days of the Church. However, it was equally shown, both there and in subsequent chapters, that the amount of baptismal material in the H.A. far

POSTSCRIPT

exceeds the amount contained in the text it purports to explain.

With the acceptance of infant baptism as the norm, incidents of adult baptism became something of a rarity and the attendant catechetical instruction was to some degree superseded as a regular feature of the life of the Church. Clearly, baptismal doctrine did not maintain the position of supreme importance it had held in the century ending around 450. Consequently, the importance of the traditio symboli, the explanation to the newly-baptized of the baptismal creed, was to some extent undermined.⁷

However, it is also clear that baptism, though no longer a burning issue, continued to occupy the mind of the Church in the middle of the sixth century. Certainly, several of the extant writings of Pope Vigilius, to whom Arator dedicated his work, would seem to indicate that constant vigilance was needed to ensure that orthodox rites were being observed. His letter to Eutherius deals almost exclusively with the problem of heretical baptism;⁸ elsewhere we find him asserting the necessity for terna mersio in the administration of the sacrament.⁹ This continuing climate of attempts to eliminate unorthodox practices perhaps helps explain the attention given by Arator to the problem of heretical baptism in his exegesis of the baptism of John's disciples at Ephesus (H.A.2, 569-622).

But perhaps it was the very fact that the heyday of the baptismal catechesis had passed that encouraged Arator to fill the gap by incorporating the potent and memorable symbolism of initiation into writing of another genre, that of scriptural exegesis. As Botte

POSTSCRIPT

observes, catechetical instruction had always been founded on two bases, 'le symbolisme des rites et celui des Écritures'.¹⁰ What Arator does is to reverse the process; rather than substantiating his explanation of the sacraments through allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, he justifies his mystical exegesis of the text of Acts by revealing its hidden sacramental perspective, the 'shadowings-forth of baptism'.¹¹

Such sacramental justification however is not the only way in which Ambrose absorbs baptism into his mode of exegesis. In several places in the H.A. there are indications that it is only the baptized who are able, or perhaps permitted, to receive the true meaning of the Scriptures, revealed through mystical interpretation (the very skill which the Jewish people, as represented in the H.A., were, in their refusal to accept baptism, prevented from acquiring).

Thus, as Arator prepares to reveal the significance of Peter's side, the place where he was touched by the angel, he instructs his audience:

*Laeti documenta figurae
Discite, qui liquido meruistis fonte renasci.*

Be happy to learn the proof of this type, you who have deserved to be reborn in the clear spring (1.1027-1028).

The baptized may no longer be in a position to receive immediate post-baptismal instruction, but Arator makes it clear that baptism has given them the ability and privilege of divining the hidden truths of the Scriptures through the method of mystical exegesis.¹²

POSTSCRIPT

To present catechetical instruction in the guise of a biblical commentary was to follow the basic principles of the example afforded Arator by such as Ambrose. Baptismal catecheses had never been closely-argued systematic treatises, as Botte observes:

Ce n'est pas une synthèse harmonieuse, mais une série de tableaux, qui doivent se graver dans la mémoire des néophytes et, en se complétant mutuellement, leur donner du baptême une idée riche et vivante. L'ordre importe peu, pourvu que l'image reste. On pourra réduire cela plus tard en formules abstraites, qui auront l'avantage de la brièveté et de la clarté logique. Mais la doctrine ne sera pas plus riche, et elle sera moins vivante.¹³

What is true of Ambrose's baptismal teaching is equally true of Arator's presentation of baptismal exegesis in the Historia Apostolica. Arator may have the virtue neither of brevity nor of clarity of argument, but the richness of his use of symbolism is undeniable.

And so, just as Arator began his commentary by departing from the text of Acts and including an account of the saving events which alone made the subsequent acts of baptism and conversion possible, namely the descensus and resurrection of Christ,¹⁴ so in the closing lines of the work he looks beyond the final words of Acts to the ministry and imminent martyrdom of Peter and Paul. It comes as no surprise that the final typological parallel of the H.A. again reveals a sacramental perspective:

Aegyptus mundi formam gerit: inde vocari
Quae meruit ducibus plebs est commissa duobus
In quibus officium fraternus nexuit ortus.
Idola tot Romae, mundo collecta subacto
Quae fuerant, tenebris obnoxia corda premebant;
Liber et hic populus, quem vinxerant ante Pharaon.
Exiit Aegypti totidem ductoribus umbras
Perque lavacra Dei, quae tunc maris egit imago,
Vitae nactus iter caelestem repperit escam (2.1237-1245).

POSTSCRIPT

Egypt is a metaphor for the world: the people who deserved to be called out of that place were entrusted to two leaders, bound together in their duty by the fact that they were born brothers. The countless idols of Rome, which she had gathered together as she conquered the world, weighed down hearts which had become slaves to the darkness. These people too, whom Pharaoh had once bound, were made free, and, with as many leaders, cast off the shadows of Egypt through the baptism of God (which in that former time the sea performed symbolically): having obtained the road to life, they found the food of heaven.

Fittingly is sacramental typology mingled with the imagery of light and darkness. The train of thought is not always immediately obvious but the symbolism nonetheless has its effect. Without giving details, Arator reminds us of the fact that it was two brothers, Moses and Aaron, who led the Israelites out of Egypt. We know that this information is to be interpreted allegorically because of the key provided at the opening of the section: Egypt is a metaphor for the world (1237). Without making an explicit connection, Arator then turns to Rome: the city into which the apostles arrived was enveloped in the debilitating darkness of idol-worship. It is only at this point that Arator begins to explain the link: the Romans too were freed, just as the Israelites had been - et hic (1242) is enough to make the parallel clear. From this point on the detail of type and antitype is amalgamated: the Romans were as firmly bound by Pharaoh as the Israelites had been; the Romans too were led out of the darkness of Egypt. Only when Arator arrives at the means of this salvation is the full explanation provided: the Romans were enlightened through the true sacrament of baptism; the crossing of the Red Sea which saved the Israelites was no more than an imago. Now the sacramental sequence can be concluded: just as the Israelites received manna in the wilderness, so the Romans, having received the vitae iter through the sacrament of baptism, their passage from darkness to light complete, may proceed to the caelestis esca of the

POSTSCRIPT

eucharist.¹⁵ We may find fault with the construction, but we cannot fail to appreciate the imagery:

Il n'a rien d'abstrait, ni de systématique...Mais quelle richesse d'images! Et on peut ajouter: quelle richesse de doctrine!¹⁶

NOTES

1. See, for example, Bernard Botte, in his introduction to Ambrose's sacramental treatises (SC 25, 19): 'Les anciens n'avaient pas grand scrupule en matière de propriété littéraire. Ils ne gênaient pas pour transcrire de larges extraits. D'autres se contentaient de reprendre les idées et de les démarquer, en les transposant dans leur propre langage.'
2. Horace (Oxford, 1957), 212-213.
3. See, for example, Witke's judgement (Numen Litterarum, 219) on this period:

Arator shows us that the climate for literature in Italy was not bad in the '40's of the sixth century...The more one reads these poets of a so-called Dark Age, the more one understands how unjust that denomination is in many departments of literature. Just because these poets have not been studied, it is assumed they merit obscurity; yet far inferior musicians are resurrected annually by societies bent on rehabilitating the abundant second, third and fourth raters of the baroque age and onwards.

4. SC 25, 40.
5. See Gerald Bonner, St Augustine of Hippo, 145. The influence of the psalm-commentaries on the later commentaries of such as Prosper of Aquitaine, Quodvultdeus and Cassiodorus is well-known. See for example Chapter 7, n88 and n93.
6. See J.H.Srawley's introduction to St Ambrose: On the Sacraments and On the Mysteries, trans. T.Thompson, (London, 1950), 1, and Gabriel Tissot's introduction to the Expos. ev. sec. Luc. (SC 45, 33-36).
7. See Botte, SC 25, 12;22; also J.A.Jungmann, 'Catechumenate', NCE 3, 240 and especially J.D.C.Fisher, Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation. (Alcuin Club Collections 47.) (London, 1965), 3-11, for the changes in baptismal liturgy effected by the increase in infant candidates.
8. Ep. ad Eutherium, PL 69, 15-19.
9. See the fragment of Ad Profuturum Bracaransum (PL 69, 19) and Ex Conc. Apost. Tit. 49-50 (PL 69, 20-21).
10. SC 25, 33.

CHAPTER NINE: NOTES

11. In Schrader's words (Arator's On the Acts of the Apostles, 8).
12. The point is also made by Frances Young (From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background [London, 1983], 133) in an attempt to reconcile the mystical exegesis of Cyril of Jerusalem's Homilia in paralyticum (PG 33, 1131-1154) with the more dogmatic content of the Catecheses: 'The secrecy surrounding the imparting of enlightenment to those seeking baptism is itself consonant with the esoteric leanings of the Alexandrian tradition.'

See also H.A.2, 549-550 (CSEL 72, 107-108). At the end of his exposition of the name Aquila, Arator urges the probati to approve the use of such allegorical exegesis, which after all has its basis in scripture (in this case Ps 102:5).

13. SC 25, 36. He goes on (38) to argue that the supersession of adult baptism as the norm ensured that baptismal catecheses never reached a regular form: 'La catéchèse baptismale est morte trop tôt: elle n'a pas eu le temps de prendre des formes fixes.'
14. See the discussion in Chapter 2, n40.
15. Arator expands the theme of the superiority of the antitype in the lines which follow:

His etiam germanus amor, quibus amplius actus
Quam natura dedit... (2.1246-1247).

Moses and Aaron may have been brothers, but their Christian counterparts are bound by a fraternal love, greater than that which is conferred by kinship alone.
16. Botte, again on Ambrose, SC 25, 33.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AC</u>	<u>Antike und Christentum.</u>
<u>ACW</u>	<u>Ancient Christian Writers.</u> Westminster, Maryland and London: Longmans
<u>AJPh</u>	<u>American Journal of Philology</u>
<u>ANRW</u>	<u>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.</u> Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter
<u>BiblZeitschr</u>	<u>Biblische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>BStudLat</u>	<u>Bollettino di Studi Latini</u>
<u>BLE</u>	<u>Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique</u>
<u>ByzZeitschr</u>	<u>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>CCG</u>	<u>Corpus Christianorum: Series Graeca.</u> Turnhout: Brepols
<u>CCL</u>	<u>Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina.</u> Turnhout: Brepols
<u>CPG</u>	<u>Clavis Patrum Graecorum.</u> ed. M.Geerard and F.Glorie. 5 vols. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974-1987.
<u>CR</u>	<u>Classical Review</u>
<u>CSEL</u>	<u>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.</u> Vienna: Tempsky
<u>DAC</u>	<u>Dictionary of the Apostolic Church.</u> ed. James Hastings. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T.Clark, 1915-1918
<u>DACL</u>	<u>Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie.</u> ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq et al. 15 vols. Paris: LeTouzey et Ané, 1924-1953
<u>DTC</u>	<u>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.</u> ed. A.Vacant, E. Mangenot et al. 15 vols. Paris: LeTouzey et Ané, 1923-1946
<u>ERE</u>	<u>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.</u> ed. James Hastings. 13 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T.Clark, 1908-1926
<u>GCS</u>	<u>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller.</u> Leipzig: Hinrichs
<u>HJb</u>	<u>Historisches Jahrbuch</u>
<u>IrThQ</u>	<u>Irish Theological Quarterly</u>
<u>JbAC</u>	<u>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</u>
<u>JTS</u>	<u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>
<u>LCL</u>	<u>Loeb Classical Library.</u> London and New York: Heinemann
<u>MGH.AA</u>	<u>Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi.</u> Berlin: Weidmann
<u>NCE</u>	<u>The New Catholic Encyclopedia.</u> New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967
<u>NTS</u>	<u>New Testament Studies</u>
<u>OrChr</u>	<u>Oriens Christianus</u>
<u>PG</u>	<u>J.-P.Migne, ed. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca.</u> Paris
<u>PL</u>	<u>J.-P.Migne, ed. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina.</u> Paris
<u>REL</u>	<u>Revue des études latines</u>
<u>RMAL</u>	<u>Revue du moyen âge latin</u>
<u>RSR</u>	<u>Recherches de science religieuse</u>
<u>SC</u>	<u>Sources Chrétiennes.</u> Paris: Éditions Du Cerf
<u>TheolStudKrit</u>	<u>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</u>
<u>TDNT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.</u> ed.

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<u>TU</u>	<u>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</u> . Berlin: Akademie
<u>VigChr</u>	<u>Vigiliae Christianae</u>
<u>VirgSocProc</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Virgil Society</u>

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