

Worshiping with Angels – Towards a Deeper Understanding of Daily Prayer in Fourth-Century Cappadocia

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Abstract

Fourth-century Cappadocia was a pivotal time and place for the Christian church. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the development of the daily office of prayer within that context.

The comparative methodology of Anton Baumstark is examined in some detail, as is the proposal by Paul Bradshaw that liturgical scholars should adopt the hermeneutics of suspicion. Based on the latter, a methodology for the analysis of texts is derived from the socio-rhetorical exegesis of Vernon K. Robbins.

The idea, formerly current, that the daily office derived from synagogue worship, is examined in the light of modern scholarship and shown to be fallacious. Other influences from Judaism and paganism are, however, found but these are seen to be at a fundamental level.

A major movement in fourth-century Christianity was the development of monasticism in which the Cappadocian Fathers, particularly Basil of Caesarea, played an important part. The out-dated belief that monasticism originated in the Egyptian desert, from where Basil adopted it, is examined in the light of recent scholarship and rejected. Instead, existing Anatolian monastic practice, and the influence of Basil's sister Macrina must be acknowledged, with the consequence that the daily office of Cappadocian monastics is seen to have developed from domestic prayer.

Two major texts from Basil are examined. His so called 'Longer Rule' provides a scheme of daily prayer times which has had major influence. His letter number 207 has been seen as a description of an all-night vigil for a Cathedral congregation, but in-depth analysis shows that this is a monastic dawn service.

Evening prayer, and in particular the lamp-lighting hymn known as *Phōs Hilaron*, is considered. Two distinct Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies are identified. Various proposed origins are examined with the conclusion that in the case of the *Phōs Hilaron*, a domestic origin is most likely.

Finally, particular aspects of the Cappadocian Fathers' theology of worship are examined, demonstrating a strong eschatological theme.

Contents

Abbreviations	6
1. Introduction	
1.1 General Introduction	7
1.2 Background	9
1.3 Sources	18
1.4 The State of Study.	21
1.5 Outline of dissertation: research aims and their relation to previous scholarship	25
Part I – Methods and Backgrounds for Understanding Daily Prayer	
2. Methodological Considerations in Liturgical Study.	
2.1 Introduction	36
2.2 Anton Baumstark and <i>Comparative Liturgy</i>	36
2.3 The comparative method - a brief history	42
2.4 Can the Organic Model apply to cultural studies?	45
2.5 Paul Bradshaw's Observations on Methodology	50
2.6 The hermeneutics of suspicion and socio-rhetorical exegesis.	55
3. The Question of Jewish Influence on Early Christian Worship	
3.1 Introduction	69
3.2 The Temple.	70
3.3 The Essenes	73
3.4 The Synagogue.	76
3.5 Synagogue origins	77
3.6 The Liturgy of Synagogue / <i>Proseuchē</i>	84
3.7 Synagogue Study of Scripture	85
3.8 Synagogue Prayer before 70 CE	87
3.9 Synagogue Prayer after 70 CE	89
3.10 Liturgical Poetry	93
3.11 Psalmody	93
3.12 Worship in the New Testament.	96
3.13 Conclusions	107
4. Possible Pagan Influence on Early Christian Worship	
4.1 Introduction	110
4.2 Pagan Domestic Prayer	110
4.3 Roman Religion	113
4.4 What is Common to Pagan Practice?	117
4.5 Greco-Roman Prayer	118
4.6 Conclusions	127
5. Monasticism and its Beginnings in Fourth Century Cappadocia	

5.1 Introduction	130
5.2 The Older Understanding of Monastic Development	131
5.3 Urban Asceticism	135
5.4 Idle Beggars	141
5.5 Pontus and Cappadocia	150
5.6 Eustathius of Sebaste and Ascetic Extremism	153
5.7 Macrina	154
5.8 Basil – The Legitimization of the Ascetic Life	157

Part II – Understanding the Cappadocian Office in its Context

6. Monastic Life in Pontus and Cappadocia.

6.1 Introduction	161
6.2 Macrina – The Growth of an Ascetic Life	164
6.3 Basil – The Organisation of Ascetic Life	171
6.4 The Life of Psalmody	177
6.5 A Psalmic Movement	180

7. The Times of Prayer

7.1 Introduction	182
7.2 Origen	182
7.3 Tertullian	186
7.4 Cyprian	189
7.5 Apostolic Constitutions	191
7.6 The Desert Monastic Office of Upper Egypt	195
7.7 The Desert Monastic Office of Lower Egypt – The Evidence of Cassian	203
7.8 Times of Prayer in Basil’s Asceticon, Translation.	207
7.9 Times of Prayer in Basil’s Asceticon, Discussion	212
7.10 Conclusions	221

8. Dawn Prayer

8.1 Introduction	223
8.2 The Antiphon	224
8.3 Scholarly Perceptions of Letter 207	229
8.4 Basil, Letter 207: To the Clergy of Neocaesarea, Translation.	231
8.5 Basil to the Clergy of Neocaesarea, A Socio-rhetorical Reading	235
8.6 The Basis of Conflict	238
8.7 Points of Contention – ‘Citizens of Heaven’	240
8.8 Points of Contention – ‘Psalms’	244
8.9 Points of Contention – ‘A Manner of Singing’	251
8.10 An All-Night Vigil?	255
8.11 Conclusions	264

9. Prayer in the Evening	
9.1 Introduction	266
9.2 The Lighting of Lamps in Pontus and Cappadocia	266
9.3 Phōs Hilaron	268
9.4. Other Christian Lamp-Lighting Ceremonies	274
9.5 The Origin Question - Pagan Light Cult?	281
9.6 The Origin Question - Jewish Lamp-Lighting?	286
9.7 The Origin Question – Conclusions	291
9.8 The Angel of Peace	295
9.9 The Structure of Evening Prayer	299
9.10 Conclusions	300
10. Towards an Understanding of Cappadocian Theology of Prayer and Worship	
10.1 Introduction	302
10.2 Origen – Right Attitudes and Divine Omniscience	303
10.3 Basil – Tradition of Praxis, Tradition of Doctrine	310
10.4 Gregory of Nyssa – the Psalms as a way of life.	319
10.5 Worshipping with Angels	322
11. Overall Conclusions	330
Bibliography	332

Abbreviations

CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum</i>
GNO	<i>Gregorii Nysseni Opera.</i>
Hors. Reg.	<i>Regulations of Horsiesios.</i>
Inst.	Rule of Pachomius: <i>Precepts and Institutes</i>
JPS	The Jewish Publication Society, Hebrew-English <i>Tanakh</i> .
Jud.	Rule of Pachomius: <i>Precepts and Judgements</i>
Leg.	Rule of Pachomius: <i>Precepts and Laws</i>
LXX	<i>The Septuagint.</i>
NIV	The New International Version of the Bible in English.
NRSV	The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible in English.
PG	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca</i> of J-P Migne.
PGM	<i>Papyri Graecae Magicae, or Greek Magical Papyri.</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> of J-P Migne.
Pr	Rule of Pachomius: <i>Precepts.</i>
LR	<i>Longer Rule, or Great Asceticon</i> of Basil of Caesarea.
VSM	<i>Vita Sanctae Macrinae, Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Saint Macrina.</i>

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to achieve a deeper understanding of daily prayer in fourth century Cappadocia. In order to do this, it asks two broad questions: I. What context does one need to grasp in order to understand the Cappodocian evidence about prayer? and II. What can one establish about the practice, nature, origins and significance of daily prayer from our Cappodocian sources? The first question, treated in Part I, relates both to issues of scholarly method and to questions about the ancient context. The chapters in Part II answer the second question. Here, we will first discuss terminology, before sketching out the Cappadocians' background, introducing our main sources, indicating the *status quaestionis* and giving an overview of the structure of the whole thesis.

1.1 General Introduction

The customary understanding of the phrase Divine Office is that it refers to Christian daily prayer conforming to a regular pattern and distinct from what might be called 'sacramental' worship.¹ Since it provides a pattern of prayer at particular times of day, scholars have also called it the Daily Office or the Liturgy of the Hours. An office is usually perceived as essentially communal in nature and this continues to be the case even though a single individual might pray it. As such, it is of a more or less formal character specified by some sort of authority, as its name implies. The term 'office' is also sometimes used for a single component service of the daily scheme but, in order to avoid confusion, it is preferable to use the terms 'service' or 'synaxis'. The latter originally referred to any assembly or gathering but now, more usually, to a single element of the daily office.²

This definition excludes individual prayer of a personal nature and group worship organised on a spontaneous basis. This is why we follow other scholars in preferring the term 'daily office', rather than 'daily prayer'. However, we are concerned here with a period when offices were developing from diverse earlier worship practices and, as we shall see, questions surrounding that development are contentious. It is thus neither possible nor desirable to draw strict boundary lines separating private, family, or communal prayer, nor the earliest versions of

¹ Paul F Bradshaw, 'Daily Prayer' in Paul F Bradshaw (ed), *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, (London: SCM Press, 2002) 140.

² Bradshaw, 'Synaxis', *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 453.

these from later, more precisely specified forms. For example, in what may be the earliest, and is certainly the simplest, description of the office, the *Didache* concludes a text of the Lord's Prayer with the instruction 'Pray this three times a day' (τρίς τῆς ἡμέρας οὕτω προσεύχεσθε).³ This document provides no direction as to whether personal or communal prayer is involved, a common characteristic of all the earliest writers who describe the regular prayer of Christians whether collectively or alone without distinction. So Robert Taft, after a discussion of daily prayer in the pre-Constantinian church, comments 'was this "liturgical prayer" or "private prayer" or something in between? The very question is anachronistic in this early period.'⁴ It is therefore necessary, at least for our purposes, to be prepared to broaden the definition to include the practices of solitary monastics and Christian families, even though there may be inadequate evidence for the precise content of these, and that this may, at least in part, reflect a reality of a certain fluidity of content.

Psalmody, in the sense of the use of portions of the scriptures identified as songs, does not form a requirement of the above definition. Indeed, in the earliest meetings for worship, this may have been completely absent with non-scriptural hymns being used instead. Nevertheless, in our period, the psalter, and possibly other scriptural passages in the form of songs, began to take on a considerable significance as a part of regular daily worship.

It is unfortunate that in the study of Christian worship greater interest has been shown in the sacramental rites of Eucharist and Baptism than in daily prayer. Thus, Bradshaw begins the original (1981) edition of a work on the topic of the Daily Office with the observation, 'in liturgical study and especially in English liturgical study, the subject of the daily office has always been something of the poor relation.'⁵ It is this assessment which provides the basic motivation for the present work.

³ *Didache* 8.3; Bart D. Ehrman (ed & trans.) *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol 1, Loeb Classical Library LCL 24, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2003) 430-1.

⁴ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 29.

⁵ Paul F Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2008) vii.

Further, two important considerations have served to localise the study. Firstly, fourth century Cappadocia was pivotal in the development of monasticism which, necessarily, has a close association with the Divine Office, and, I shall argue, developments in its office have had significant influence on practice elsewhere. Secondly, the textual sources are relatively plentiful and thus provide a case-study for the methodology proposed in chapter two.

1.2 Background.

The fourth century was an era of change in the nature of the Christian religion, initiated by the conversion of the emperor Constantine and the legalisation of Christianity with the proclamation of the Edict of Milan in 313 CE. This legislation did not result in a complete end to persecution, however, for as Christian emperors subsequently interested themselves in church affairs and doctrinal matters, official action might be taken against those who dissented from imperially sponsored beliefs. Thus, Constantine, who convened the Council of Nicaea (325 CE), decreed that the writings of Arius should be destroyed and that anyone preserving them should be executed.⁶ This action was, however, unsuccessful in that Arianism survived as a significant belief and the later succession of the Arian, Valens, as emperor in the east (364 - 378 CE) led to the persecution of Nicene Christians.⁷ This continued until the reign of Theodosius (379 - 395 CE) who re-established the Nicene faith.

In the fourth century, as now, Anatolia was a significant hub between the continents of Europe and Asia.⁸ It provided good land communications: to the west, across the Bosphorus, lay the new city of Constantinople, the imperial capital, to the north-east Armenia, to the south-east Syria, and beyond that Palestine. Further, being a peninsula separating the eastern end of the Mediterranean from the Black sea, it also had good maritime links. In such a position it was inevitably involved in the spread of Christianity from the very first. For it was home to many Jews of the diaspora, some of whom were in Jerusalem at the time of the first

⁶ Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianising the Roman Empire (AD 100-400)*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 1984), 93, and idem 161 note 19 for a list of sources.

⁷ Raymond van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends in Late Antique Cappadocia' in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (April 1986) 53-76, for a fuller description and consequently more nuanced view.

⁸ In the 4th cent. 'Asia' was the name of a province in south-west Anatolia.

Christian Pentecost.⁹ Further, Paul's native city of Tarsus lies on the south-east coast, and, by the time the First Letter of Peter was written in the late first century CE, Jewish Christians were to be found in various parts of Anatolia.¹⁰

At the heart of Anatolia was the province of Cappadocia. Originally a kingdom, it was annexed by Rome in 17 CE and became a province administered by a Roman knight.¹¹ Despite its central position, Raymond Van Dam describes it as 'a borderland', maintaining a certain autonomy because of its distance from administrative centres and its 'rugged terrain'.¹² In 371 CE, Valens, the Arian emperor, divided Cappadocia into two, Cappadocia Prima and Secunda, and, as the church dioceses followed political divisions, this resulted in two separate sees.¹³ Van Dam argues that, for Valens, this was a matter of administrative convenience rather than part of a religious policy, and indeed that 'modern historians ought to hesitate in attributing a coherent "religious policy" to Valens (or to most other emperors, for that matter)'.¹⁴ Nevertheless its consequence was a feud between neighbouring bishops. But before considering this matter, we must turn our attention to the persons who principally contribute to the story and in particular to what Anna Silvas has called, 'the most remarkable family in Christian history'.¹⁵

This description must begin, however, in third century Pontus, for behind the histories of fourth century Anatolian Christians stands the unfortunately somewhat shadowy figure of Gregory Thaumaturgos (Gregory the wonderworker).¹⁶ Some early biographical information may be obtained from the panegyric which he addressed to Origen.¹⁷ Born in Neocaesarea, Pontus, and originally named Theodorus, the date of Gregory's birth is uncertain, though, by

⁹ Acts 2: 9.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. 1: 1-2.

¹¹ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia – Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol 1. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 97.

¹² Raymond Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 9.

¹³ Mitchell, *Anatolia*, vol. 2. 161.

¹⁴ Van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends', 61.

¹⁵ Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 51.

¹⁶ Stephen Mitchell, 'The Life and Lives of Gregory Thaumaturgos', in Jan Willem Drijvers & John W Watt (eds), *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 99-138.

¹⁷ PG 10.1049-1104.

consideration of later events, it must have been between 210 and 220.¹⁸ He was brought up as a pagan but following his father's death, when Gregory was about 14 years old, the youth apparently became interested in Christianity, possibly as the result of a 'conversion experience'.¹⁹ Mitchell stresses, however, that 'Gregory's own account, which we must accept as truthful, describes an organic transition not a sudden change'. This transition continued fortuitously when, as a young man intending to become a lawyer, the study of Roman law led him eventually first to Berytus (modern Beirut), and thence to Caesarea Palestine where he was able to study under Origen.²⁰

After spending several years under Origen's tuition and 'probably before 245', Gregory and his brother, who had joined him in Caesarea, left to return to their native city.²¹ And not long afterwards, according to Eusebius, 'while still young both were appointed bishops of the churches in Pontus'.²² In the case of Thaumaturgos, this was to the new see of Neocaesarea and both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa tell us that at that time the Christians in that city numbered just 17.²³ Mitchell labels this latter claim as an 'obvious fiction', without explanation but possibly on the assumption that a bishop would not be appointed for such a small congregation.²⁴ Other factors may have rendered such an appointment desirable, however. Of greater significance, is that beginning with a small congregation, Gregory increased it considerably, and both the Cappadocians add that at Gregory's death, which may be reliably dated to 270, almost all the inhabitants of the city had been converted.²⁵ Gregory, forced into hiding under the 'Decian' persecution and credited with 'wonder-working', became, following his death, a significant figure in the region, especially and inevitably in his city of Neocaesarea.²⁶ Both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa seek to adopt him as a spiritual ancestor via their own paternal grandmother, Macrina the elder. In the case of

¹⁸ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 104.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 103.

²⁰ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 101. Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 106.

²¹ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives' 104

²² Eusebius *Hist Eccl.* 6.30.

²³ Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 74, Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgos* GNO 49.

²⁴ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 122.

²⁵ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 106.

²⁶ The persecution resulted from the Decree of the Emperor Decius in 250 CE requiring universal sacrifice to Roman pagan gods on his behalf.

Nyssen this adoption is by way of a biography, or rather mythography, of Thaumaturgos.²⁷ This provides information of three kinds. The first of these is biographical detail which, unfortunately fails to be corroborated in the panegyric mention above. 'All of this,' comments Mitchell on the biographical details of *The Life*, 'is fancy and in plain contradiction to Gregory's [Thaumaturgos'] own version of events.'²⁸ Further, Origen, the major influence in Thaumaturgos' Christian development, is 'here mentioned in a single dismissive sentence.'²⁹ The second component of *The Life* is a creedal statement, allegedly revealed to Thaumaturgos in a vision and 'only known to us on the authority of Gregory of Nyssa, the rest of whose *Life of Gregory* is largely fiction.'³⁰ Indeed, in his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil makes no mention of this creed, a piece of evidence he would have been bound to put forward had he known of it, as Michel van Esbroeck points out.³¹ The main component of *The Life*, and the origin of Mitchell's negative remarks, is an account of the miracles performed by Gregory, presumably deriving from oral traditions about the saint. For our purposes, moreover, *The Life*, is unhelpful. Certainly, Thaumaturgos may be assumed to have had a significant influence on the worship of the congregation which he built up in his city, and indeed a century later both Basil and the clergy of Neocasarea credit him with establishing that worship.³² Nevertheless *The Life* makes little or no mention of prayer, liturgical or otherwise.

Basil's claim to inherit the traditions of Thaumaturgos suggests that we should exercise caution in interpretation. His grandmother, he writes, 'taught me the words of the blessed Gregory which, *as far as memory had preserved* down to her day, she cherished herself, while she fashioned and formed me, while yet a child, upon the doctrines of piety.'³³ The date of birth of this grandmother, Macrina the Elder, a native of Pontus, cannot be established with any certainty. However, Basil's claim that she taught him as a child suggests that she died no later than

²⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgos* GNO 49; Basil considered below.

²⁸ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 120.

²⁹ Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London: Viking, 1986), 530.

³⁰ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 108.

³¹ Michel van Esbroeck, 'The Credo of Gregory the Wonderworker and its Influence through Three Centuries', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989) 255-66, see p. 257.

³² Basil, *Letter* 207.

³³ Basil *Letter* 204.6, my emphasis, Roy J Deferrari (trans), *Basil, The Letters*, 4 vols, Loeb Classical Library LCL 190, 215, 243, 270 (London: Heinemann, 1926-39) vol. III, pp. 168-9; see also *Letter*, 223, vol III pp. 298-9.

the early 340s.³⁴ Allowing for low life-expectancy at that period, it seems most unlikely that she was born much before the death of Thaumaturgos in 270. Indeed, Silvas confidently asserts that she 'must have been born after the death of Gregory Thaumaturgos'.³⁵ Even if born during Thaumaturgos' life-time, Macrina the Elder would have been a very young child at his death and thus she would thus have known about him and his teaching only from the oral transmissions of older members of the congregation. So her transmission of the 'words' of the Wonderworker more than fifty years later may be uncertain. Nevertheless, 'these were the palpable if questionable links which joined the pioneering years of Gregory's conversion of Neocaesarea with the dominant Christian culture of Pontus and Cappadocia in the 370s and 380s'.³⁶

Macrina the elder and her husband experienced persecution and loss of property, spending 'seven years hiding in the mountains of Pontus during the reigns of the eastern emperors Diocletian, Galerius and, in particular, Maximinus'.³⁷ Following the edict of Constantine, however, the prosperity of the family seems to have been restored and their son, Basil, now designated 'the elder' became an advocate and *rhetor* in Neocasarea.³⁸

His wife, Emelia, was born in Cappadocia and, according to Gregory Nazianzen, she had a 'propator' who was martyred.³⁹ Silvas suggests that this was most likely a grandfather who died during the Decian persecution of the 250s.⁴⁰ By the time of her marriage she was an orphan and appears to have selected for herself as a husband, a man significantly older, well-established and Christian.⁴¹ Emelia's date of birth is, once again, uncertain but Van Dam suggests that when her husband died, in the early or mid-340s, she was 'most likely only forty years old'.⁴² Silvas suggest that she would have been aged seventeen or eighteen when she

³⁴ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, ix.

³⁵ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 12

³⁶ Mitchell, 'Life and Lives', 122.

³⁷ Van Dam, *Family & Friends* 16; see Gregory Nazianzen *Funeral Oration on St Basil* 43.5, McCauley *Funeral Orations* 30-1.

³⁸ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 62; *Macrina the Younger*, 10; Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 18;

³⁹ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 99; *VSM* 22.3.

⁴⁰ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 1 and 81; Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 16.

⁴¹ Van Dam *Family & Friends*, 100.

⁴² Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 100; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 2.

bore her first child in about 327. She herself died in 370 or 371.⁴³ The couple had nine or ten children; van Dam says 'at least nine', while Sylvas claims 'ten children, nine of whom survived infancy.'⁴⁴ Of these, information survives about five. When Basil the elder died, Emelia moved her household and all but one of her children to live at the family's country estate at Annisa some fifty to sixty kilometres to the west.⁴⁵

The exception was the eldest son and second child (born c 329), Basil, who was sent off to school in the major city of Caesarea in Cappadocia, presumably staying with relatives of his mother.⁴⁶ And, intending to follow the same career as his father, he eventually went on to Athens for advanced study.⁴⁷ When he returned to Annisa, however, he apparently had a change of heart and embarked on a new career.

The second son, Naucratus took up an ascetic lifestyle at the age of 21.⁴⁸ He and his personal servant moved to a secluded spot on the estate, either built, or found, a hut to live in, and undertook to look after a number of aged and sick poor people, providing food by hunting.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, a few years later, Naucratus died in an accident while fishing, and it was possibly this death which brought Basil back from Athens earlier than expected.⁵⁰ Basil subsequently adopted the same ascetic lifestyle, later entering the clergy, becoming a presbyter and, a few years later, bishop of Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia.⁵¹

The next son of whom we know anything, Gregory, born c 335, who became bishop of Nyssa, has been credited with being the founder of mystical theology.⁵²

⁴³ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 107 says 371; Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 124, note 63, claims September 370 – Spring 371.

⁴⁴ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 100; Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 1.

⁴⁵ Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 31

⁴⁶ Sylvas, *Asketikon*, 62-3.

⁴⁷ 349 / 350 CE, Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 33.

⁴⁸ 'Having reached his twenty-second year, *VSM*, GNO 8/1, 378.9-10, this would be c 352.

⁴⁹ Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 34.

⁵⁰ 356 CE, Sylvas, *Asketikon*, 68; Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 35-6; Naucratus lived an ascetic life for five years, before his death *VSM*, GNO 8/1, 379.22, thus c. 357.

⁵¹ Presbyter early to mid 360s, bishop 370, Sylvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 44, 46.

⁵² Jean Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique: doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*, (Paris: Aubier 1944) 6; and see Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 100.

He is also the author of a biography of his eldest sister.⁵³ The youngest child, Peter, born c. 345, who is perhaps deserving of greater recognition than he has received, also ultimately became a bishop.⁵⁴

'The hub of this galaxy of saints', in the words of Silvas, was the eldest child of the family, named Macrina after her paternal grandmother.⁵⁵ Born c 327, she was, as a child, promised in marriage to a youth a few years older than herself, the marriage to take place when she was old enough.⁵⁶ When, a few years later, he became ill and died, Macrina's parents naturally looked for another fiancé for her, but she declared herself to be a widow and that, as such, she would dedicate the rest of her life to God. And 'her decision was more firmly fixed than might have been expected at her age,' Gregory of Nyssa notes.⁵⁷

Like Naucratus, whom she may have influenced, she embraced an ascetic life style, though in her case within the home, looking after the younger children and her mother.⁵⁸ Eventually she persuaded her mother to the same life, which became a life of equality within the community of virgins Macrina was now setting up, the core of this apparently being their former servants with whom they now shared 'all the necessities of life on an equal basis.'⁵⁹ This ultimately developed into a fully-fledged double-community with separate establishments for women and men.⁶⁰ The community was ruled by Macrina, with the assistance of a woman deacon, Lampadion, in charge of the women's section.⁶¹ Peter led the men and, having been ordained a presbyter by Basil, provided overall priestly ministry.⁶²

Two more persons, family friends, must be mentioned. Gregory Nazianzen (Gregory the Theologian), the son of a bishop, met Basil when they were both at

⁵³ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.370.1 - 414.14; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 109-148.

⁵⁴ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 73; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 45.

⁵⁵ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 52; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 12-14.

⁵⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.374.7 – 375.5; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 114-5.

⁵⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.375.6; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 115; see also 28-31.

⁵⁸ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 32-3.

⁵⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.381.15-383.8; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 121.

⁶⁰ Daniel F. Stramara, 'Double Monasticism in the Greek East, Fourth through Eighth Centuries.' *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 269, definition of terminology 271-273.

⁶¹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 39.

⁶² Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 39; for a fuller description see below, chapter 6.

school in Caesarea in the early 340s.⁶³ Having gone on to Athens for further study, he was joined there by Basil.⁶⁴ Though he did not want to become one of the clergy, it seems that his father pressured him into it. He probably introduced the celebration of Christmas into Constantinople and was the author of an informative Funeral Oration on Basil.⁶⁵ Basil and the two Gregoryses are, of course, the Cappadocian Fathers.

Eustathius of Sebaste (Sebasteia), also the son of a bishop, was 'of the same generation as Basil's father, perhaps a few years younger.'⁶⁶ He seems to have been a man of constantly shifting loyalties whose life reads like a catalogue of fourth century heresies.⁶⁷ At different times, it appears, he was homoian (Arian), homoiousian (semi-Arian), and Pneumatomachian, but was also able to present a certificate from Pope Liberius that he had sworn loyalty to the homoousianism of Nicaea, as well as a letter from Basil that he attested belief in the Nicene creed.⁶⁸ Later, however, he seems to have been behind trouble for Basil, who was unjustly (so Basil insists) accused of heresy.⁶⁹ Eustathius is significant for the present study because 'by the mid 350s ... he had a reputation for promoting Christian monasticism.'⁷⁰

The decision of Valens to split the civil administration of Cappadocia, shortly after Basil became Bishop, drew protests from the latter that Caesarea, the provincial capital (and his seat), was totally disrupted.⁷¹ And it seems that he set about attempting to establish his own authority in the region by the creation of three

⁶³ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 34.

⁶⁴ In 348 CE: Brian E Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, (London: Routledge, 2006) 5-6; Basil may have arrived a year later.

⁶⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 43: In Praise of Basil the Great*, PG 36.493-606; for English translation see eg. Leo P McCauley, 'On St. Basil the Great Bishop of Caesarea' in Leo P McCauley, et al., *Funeral Orations by St Gregory Nazianzen & St Ambrose*. The Fathers of the Church series, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 27-99.

⁶⁶ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 25.

⁶⁷ Basil, Letter 244, in *The Letters*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, vol 3, Loeb classical library, (London: Heinemann, 1930) 448-473.

⁶⁸ For Liberius' letter see: Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.12; also Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.11; For Basil's, Letter 125, *The Letters* trans. Roy J. Deferrari, vol 2, Loeb classical library, (London: Heinemann, 1928) 258-271.

⁶⁹ Basil Letters 223, 244; Basil. *Letters*, vol 3, Trans. Roy J. Deferrari. Loeb Classical Library 243, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930) 287-313, 449-473.

⁷⁰ Van Dam, *Family & Friends*, 25.

⁷¹ Van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends', 56.

new subordinate sees to which he appointed bishops. Daley, mentioning only two of these, considers that they lay within Cappadocia Prima, Basil's see, but on the border with Cappadocia Secunda.⁷² Van Dam, however, places all three within Cappadocia Secunda and thus in the diocese of Tyana, the capital of the new province, and under its bishop, Anthimus.⁷³ The identity of one of these new bishops, that of the town of Doara, is unknown. The other two, however, were Basil's younger brother Gregory who became bishop of Nyssa, and Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus whom he made bishop of Sasima. This latter appointment, however, was the cause of an estrangement between the two friends, Gregory considering that Sasima was unworthy of him:

Midway along the high road through Cappadocia, where the road divides into three, there's a stopping place. It's without water or vegetation, not quite civilised, a thoroughly deplorable and cramped little village. There's dust all around the place, the din of wagons, laments, groans, tax-officials, instruments of torture and public stocks. The population consists of casuals and vagrants. Such was my church of Sasima. He who was surrounded by fifty *chorepiscopi* was so magnanimous as to make me incumbent here!⁷⁴

Not surprisingly perhaps, Gregory never visited the place, although van Dam, who places it within Anthimus' diocese, suggests that he was prevented from taking up his duties at Sasima by the latter's opposition.⁷⁵ With episcopal ordination, however, came the opportunity to return to Nazianzus to assist his elderly father who was its bishop.⁷⁶ And, at the accession of Theodosius, he was persuaded to become leader of the Nicene Christians of Constantinople, 'then in a minority', for the bishop, Demophilus, was Homoiousian.⁷⁷ In 380 Theodosius eventually deposed and exiled Demophilus.⁷⁸ But at the Council of

⁷² Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 10-11.

⁷³ Van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends', 66.

⁷⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus, *On His Own Life* 440-50, PG 37:1059-60; translation by Denis Molaise Meehan in *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, ed. Thomas P. Halton et al, vol. 75, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems*. (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987) 89-90.

⁷⁵ Van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends', 66.

⁷⁶ Van Dam, 'Emperor, Bishops, and Friends', 69; Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 12.

⁷⁷ Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 14.

⁷⁸ Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 19.

Constantinople, the following year, opposition from some of the bishops present led Gregory 'fascinated and repelled' by church leadership, to withdraw his candidacy as the successor of Demophilus and he retired to a life of ascetic seclusion.⁷⁹

All three Cappadocian Fathers were ascetics and, in the case of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, ascetics from their youth onwards. For them and their monastic followers the daily cycle of prayer was important. This, however, was in the context of changes in monasticism which, I shall argue, were particularly significant in Cappadocia. And inevitably, the transformation of monasticism in the fourth century brought consequent changes in the daily office. The development of monasticism in general and in Anatolia in particular will be considered more fully below in chapters five and six.

1.3 Sources.

Our principal primary sources are, of course, the works of the three Cappadocian Fathers, including letters, homilies, funeral orations, and the poetry of Gregory Nazianzen. Longer texts of particular significance for us include three works of Gregory of Nyssa, the *Life of Saint Macrina*, *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* and the *Life of Moses*.⁸⁰ Anna Silvas provides an English translation of the first of these, and of Gregory's letters.⁸¹ *Inscriptions of the Psalms* is available in a translation by Ronald Heine and *Life of Moses* by Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson.⁸² Gregory Nazianzen unfortunately provides nothing directly relevant to the daily office; however, we shall consult the funeral orations for his sister

⁷⁹ Sozomen, *Church History*, 7.7, Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 24, quote from p. 59.

⁸⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, 'Vita S. Macrinae', ed. Virginia Woods Callahan, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* vol 8, part 1, (Leiden: Brill, 1952) 370-414; 'In Inscriptiones Psalmorum', ed. Jacobus McDonough, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* vol 5, (Leiden: Brill, 1962) 24-175; *De vita Moysis*, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, ed. Herbert Musurillo, vol 7, part 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1964);

⁸¹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 109 – 148; Anna M Silvas (introduction, translation and commentary), *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

⁸² Ronald E. Heine, (Introduction, Translation and Notes) *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Abraham J Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (trans), *Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of Moses*, (New York: Harper-Collins, 2006).

Gorgonia and Basil, and his poetry, *Carmina moralia* and his autobiographical poem, *On his Own Life*.⁸³

We shall also consult two works by Basil, the first of these being his *On the Holy Spirit*.⁸⁴ Of particular importance is Basil's major ascetical work, previously considered to be quite separate compositions, the *Longer* and *Shorter Rules*, but which, Silvas argues, is best understood as a single work-in-progress, the *Asceticon*.⁸⁵ Unfortunately both of these works have been given a variety of names. In the case of the so-called *Longer Rule*, with which we will principally be concerned, these include: *Regulae fusius tractatae*, *Asceticon magnum sive quaestiones*, the *Great Asceticon*, the *Longer Rule*, and the *Longer Responses*.⁸⁶ To avoid confusion I propose to restrict my terminology to the *Great Asceticon* and *Longer Responses*, the latter providing a convenient abbreviation of *LR*, though maintaining the titles given in other works. Silvas provides translations of both the *Longer* and *Shorter Responses* as well as an analytic survey of the manuscript evidence on which her translations are based, together with helpful introductory matter giving historical, geographical and family backgrounds to Cappadocian monasticism.⁸⁷ Additionally, Basil's letters and sermons are important.⁸⁸

The various *Church Orders* are of significance and in particular we shall consult the Order known as *Apostolic Constitutions*; as this is of particular relevance to the times of prayer the book is given fuller consideration in the chapter below on

⁸³ Or. 8, 'In laudem sororis Gorgoniae', PG 35.789-817; Or. 43, 'In Laudem Basilii Magni', PG 36.493-606; 'Carmina moralia', PG 37.521-968; 'De vita sua', PG 37.1029-1166, and Gregory of Nazianzus, *Autobiographical Poems*, Edited by Caroline White, Cambridge Medieval Classics, Book 6, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005) 11-154.

⁸⁴ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, PG 32.67-218; English translation available from Stephen M Hildebrand (trans and intro), *On the Holy Spirit: St Basil the Great* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011).

⁸⁵ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 1-4; Silvas' spelling, though surely justified, is not customary.

⁸⁶ Basil, *Regulae fusius tractatae*, PG 31.890-1052.

⁸⁷ Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁸⁸ *Epistolae*, PG 32.219-1112, Courtonne, Yves (texte établi et traduit), *Saint Basile, Lettres*, 3 vols, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957-66); With English translation: Deferrari, Roy J (trans), *Basil, The Letters*, 4 vols, Loeb Classical Library LCL 190, (London: Heinemann, 1926-39); *Homiliae et Sermones* PG 31.163-618; English translation: Agnes Clare Way (trans), *Saint Basil, Exegetic Homilies*, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963).

that subject.⁸⁹ Additionally, W. Jardine Grisbrooke provides a useful *enchiridion* which extracts from the church order called *Apostolic Constitutions* those passages judged by the editor to be liturgical in nature, and presents English translations with notes.⁹⁰

Other primary sources will help provide a setting in more general early Christian practices. Those in Greek include Origen, *On Prayer* (c. 236), and various works by John Chrysostom (c. 349 – 407).⁹¹ The *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* also provide a source in the case of two texts consulted.⁹² One of these, provides the single, short record of Christian music which survives from the first five centuries, a mere five lines of Greek text with associated musical notation.⁹³ Thus, historians of music need to sift isolated comments from mostly non-musical literature. Against this background, James McKinnon provides a useful source book of some 400 passages, in English translation, dating from New Testament times to 450 CE.⁹⁴

Amongst Latin authors, various works of Tertullian are consulted, in particular his *On Prayer*.⁹⁵ Of particular interest is *The Travels* of Egeria who visited Jerusalem in the late fourth century.⁹⁶ Egeria, however, though ‘energetic, observant and determined,’ also ‘writes in unusual Latin.’⁹⁷ Jerusalem, moreover, was a special place with its own worship practices and Egeria’s evidence must be approached with some caution. A further author whose works require caution is John Cassian, who provided a guide to monastic practice for monasteries in southern Gaul, in

⁸⁹ Chapter 7.

⁹⁰ W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 13-14, (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1990).

⁹¹ Origen, *De oratione*, PG 11.415-562; Jay dates Origen, *On Prayer* to between 231 and 250 CE possibly around 236, see *Origen’s Treatise on Prayer*, Eric George Jay (trans & notes), (London : S.P.C.K., 1954); Works of John Chrysostom cited when used.

⁹² ‘The Invocation of Isis’, Bernard P Grenfell and Arthur S Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol 11, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1915), 1380.258-9; Untitled, anonymous hymn with musical notation, op. cit., vol. 15 (1922), 1786.21-25.

⁹³ Charles H Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

⁹⁴ James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁹⁵ For *On Prayer* in Latin with English translation see Ernest Evans (trans. and intro.), *Tertullian’s Tract on the Prayer*, (London: SPCK, 1953).

⁹⁶ Latin text available in *The Latin Library*, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/egeria.html> (accessed 05/07/2015). For English translation see eg John Wilkinson (translation and commentary), *Egeria’s Travels*, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Aris and Phillips, 1999).

⁹⁷ Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 2.

The Institutes and *The Conferences*.⁹⁸ Although Cassian had been a monk in Egypt some twenty years before producing these works, it seems that, rather than giving an accurate description of the practices in the monasteries founded by Pachomius in the Egyptian desert, he was seeking to reform Gallic monasticism on the basis of ideas for which he claims Egyptian authority; Taft therefore suggests that he 'cannot be taken as a reliable witness to Pachomian uses.'⁹⁹

1.4 The State of Study.

The scholarly study of the development of Christian worship began in the second half of the nineteenth century, the major figure being Louis Duchesne. Possibly the most read of his works, *Origines du culte chrétien: étude sur la liturgie latine avant Charlemagne* was published in 1889 and translated into English as *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*.¹⁰⁰ Both these versions are available as reproductions today. As indicated by the French title, Duchesne is principally interested in the liturgy of Western Europe. Further, he is largely limited to a later period than concerns us by a lack of adequate data: 'although I have not hesitated when I found it possible to go back earlier than the fourth century, I have, however, for the most part, confined myself to a less remote chronological period.'¹⁰¹

Half a century after the appearance of the English version of Duchesne's work, came *The Shape of the Liturgy* by the Anglican Benedictine, Gregory Dix.¹⁰² Although still stimulating and helpful, this work is now somewhat dated. Brian Spinks, however, suggests that Dix's occasional reliance on inspired guesswork 'must also confirm Dom Gregory as the Charles Darwin of liturgical studies: all his evidence is out of date and much of it is wrong, but the inspired guesses continue to be useful in explaining the newer evidence.'¹⁰³

⁹⁸ John Cassian, *De institutis*, see above; John Cassian, *Collationes patrum in scetica eremo*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vol 13 part 2, ed. Michael Petschenig, (Vienna: Tempsky, 1886).

⁹⁹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 58; and see Chapter 5 below on Monasticism.

¹⁰⁰ Louis Marie Olivier Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 2nd English edition, M.L. McClure (trans), (London: SPCK, 1904); the second English edition seems to be more readily available than the first.

¹⁰¹ Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, v.

¹⁰² Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A & C Black, 1945).

¹⁰³ Bryan D. Spinks, Review of John R. K. Fenwick, *The Anaphoras of St Basil and St James. An Investigation into their Common Origin*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 240, (Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 1992), in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, Vol. 44, No. 2 (October 1993), 715.

Like Dix, Josef Jungmann, called by Taft a 'liturgical giant', has been accused of making 'disastrous assumptions' which, nevertheless, Taft maintains, does not detract from his status as 'one of the great liturgical scholars of all time.'¹⁰⁴ The work for which Jungmann is best known, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, is, for obvious reasons, not relevant to our present study. It and his other writings on the Eucharist in western Christendom did, however, play a significant part in the Liturgical Movement and the Eucharistic revision of the Second Vatican Council. His major work on early church liturgy unfortunately offers a single chapter on early Christian daily prayer which is able to provide only a very general overview.¹⁰⁵ A less well-known book, however, *Christian Prayer through the Centuries* provides a more extensive look at the daily office; it is, nevertheless, still an overview and largely restricted to western practice.¹⁰⁶ Further, the earliest chapters, though relevant to the present study, simply record what the early authors have to say and, Bradshaw comments in his foreword, need revision and extension in the light of later research.¹⁰⁷

The major figure of mid-twentieth century liturgical study was, however, Anton Baumstark, whose first work on the subject was published in 1923.¹⁰⁸ This work is rightly described as 'pathbreaking' in the foreword to the English version.¹⁰⁹ Better known, however, is Baumstark's later, major, work, *Comparative Liturgy*.¹¹⁰ This monumental study displays the author's extensive liturgical knowledge and, together with the previous work mentioned above, sets out his plan for a systematic treatment of liturgical development. Not without criticism in the present day, some of which is to be found in chapter two below on methodology, his influence cannot be denied, as Taft points out: 'the issue, however, is not whether

¹⁰⁴ Robert F. Taft, 'Foreword' in Anton Baumstark, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*, Introduction, translation, and annotation by Fritz West, (Collegeville, Mn: Liturgical Press 2011), xvii – xviii.

¹⁰⁵ Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: to the Time of Gregory the Great*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1959) 97–108.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph Andreas Jungmann, *Christian Prayer through the Centuries*, John Coyne (trans), (London: SPCK, 2007), originally published as *Christliches Beten*, (Munich: Verlag Ars Sacra Joseph Mueller, 1969).

¹⁰⁷ Paul F Bradshaw, 'Foreword' in Jungmann, *Christian Prayer*, vii.

¹⁰⁸ Anton Baumstark, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*, Introduction, translation, and annotation by Fritz West, (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Robert F. Taft, 'Foreword' in Baumstark, *Historical Development*, xv.

¹¹⁰ Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 3rd. edn, edited by Bernard Botte, translated by F L Cross (London: Mowbray, 1958).

Baumstark's methodological principles or every use he made of them was correct. For the heritage he bequeathed to us remains lasting and seminal, and his place in the history of liturgiology assured, regardless of how often he was right or wrong in this or that detail.'¹¹¹ Baumstark's methodological principles are considered in greater detail in chapter two, where they form the starting point for a proposal for the methodology of the present work. One further work by Baumstark is referenced below. *Nocturna Laus*, (in German) provides a study of prayer or, as the title suggests, praise at night.¹¹² Baumstark's German, however, has a tendency to opacity. West comments that Baumstark's intention for his earliest work, that it should be accessible to the general reading public, was not fully realized because of his writing style, 'a mannered, turgid, *akademisches Deutsch*.'¹¹³ It has to be acknowledged, however, that West's translation of *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*, aimed at 'translating solely for clarity and meaning' is remarkably successful; Baumstark's thinking, liberated from its 'infelicitous language', becomes inspirational, at times even poetic.¹¹⁴

Following the school of Baumstark, Robert Taft provides an extensive overview of the history of the Divine Office from New Testament times to the present day and encompassing eastern and western traditions.¹¹⁵ To this he appends chapters on the theology of daily prayer and implications for present day use. This remains the most thorough, and indeed the only so complete, survey of the subject available. In a second work, based on articles which have appeared elsewhere, updated and revised, sometimes substantially so, he provides a sound basis for the justification of the study of liturgical history and includes chapters of relevance to the present work on the theology of vespers, and methodology.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Robert F. Taft, 'Foreword' in Baumstark, *Historical Development*, xvii

¹¹² Anton Baumstark, *Nocturna Laus* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1957) cited above.

¹¹³ Fritz West, 'Introduction' in Baumstark, *Historical Development*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Quoted words from Fritz West, 'Introduction' in Baumstark, *Historical Development*, 35; for poetic language see eg p. 43.

¹¹⁵ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

¹¹⁶ Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1984).

That the origins of the Divine Office should be a worthy, even necessary, subject of study, can be seen from its later history, taken in the light of Taft's argument that the Office has 'a superior value over other forms of prayer,' because it is traditional, biblical and objective.¹¹⁷ The latter characteristic is a consequence of its nature as a *liturgical* action, that is, communal and corporate rather than private and personal.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately however, in the Western 'Catholic' church the Office became the individual prayer of the clergy and 'degenerated into a clerical residue.'¹¹⁹ Churches of the Reformation, on the other hand, have tended to stress individual prayer for all, so that not even a residue remains. True, Taft praises the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*, with its cathedral practices of daily morning and evening prayer, but in lesser churches, even when performed, these attract only the smallest congregations.¹²⁰ Taft comments elsewhere, however, that the purpose of history is to understand the present.¹²¹ Whether the Divine Office truly has 'a superior value' should not be judged from the clerical, private recitation of the Roman Breviary, nor from what some would see as the out-dated Anglican choral evensong, for it can only be truly appreciated by understanding its roots.

Paul Bradshaw presents a study of the Daily Office at its earliest stages, which covers much of the same ground as that of Taft for the first to seventh centuries.¹²² The 2008 version of Bradshaw's book is to be preferred as advances in scholarship since the original publication (1981) have necessitated some modification.¹²³ Two further works by Bradshaw are of significance for any study of early Christian worship, providing important information on sources, including a clear description of the inter-relationships of the various church orders, as well as laying the basis for a systematic methodology for handling relevant texts.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 367 ff.

¹¹⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 347. See Basil LR 37 considered below, particularly p. 29.

¹¹⁹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 362.

¹²⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 323.

¹²¹ Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 153-4.

¹²² Paul Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2008).

¹²³ See 'Preface to the 2008 Reprinted Edition' in Paul Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, i – iii for an outline of the changes made.

¹²⁴ Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2002); Paul Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009).

The above works, providing the broad view of the development of the office, are clearly significant. However, an examination of the fourth century Cappadocian Office, in greater depth, is necessary, and this will have to be set in the context of monastic developments largely ignored by liturgical writers.

1.5 Outline of dissertation: research aims and their relation to previous scholarship.

As stated above, the main aim of this thesis is to achieve a deeper understanding of daily prayer in fourth century Cappadocia. Part I establishes the method and context needed for understanding the Cappadocian evidence about prayer. To this end, this part will pursue the following subsidiary research aims:

- i. To test and refine a methodology for an in-depth study of texts, based on the hermeneutics proposed by Bradshaw, for reading liturgical material (chapter 2).
- ii. To reassess Jewish influence on Christian prayer particularly the daily office. Rejecting earlier claims that it derived from synagogue practice, to consider the influence of early Jewish-Christian practice, scriptural inspiration, and Jewish domestic prayer (chapter 3).
- iii. In the light of recent work directed to the hitherto largely ignored area of 'popular' or domestic pagan religion, to consider how early Christian prayer practices relate to pagan (chapter 4).
- iv. To assess the relationship of Cappadocian to Egyptian desert monasticism (chapter 5).

Part II consists of five chapters examining the practice, nature, origins and significance of daily prayer in fourth century Cappadocia. Specifically, these deal with the particular character of Cappadocian monastic life (chapter 6); the times of prayer (chapter 7); dawn prayer (chapter 8); prayer in the evening (chapter 9), and the theology of prayer (chapter 10). Cumulatively, these chapters will reassess the origin of the Cappadocian daily office: cathedral-monastic hybrid, or domestic prayer? (Chapter 5).

Anton Baumstark's method of comparative liturgy and its underlying 'biological' model, referred to briefly above, deserves to be examined in some detail; which examination forms the first part of an introductory chapter on methodology (chapter 2). However, the prior need is to ensure that texts apparently providing liturgical information are not accepted uncritically. Bradshaw offers a sound basis

for this in proposing that liturgical scholar should adopt the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' which guide students of the New Testament.¹²⁵ His recommendations and my suggestions for additions to them are further discussed in the same chapter. Since this hermeneutic principle has led to the development of a variety of exegetical techniques in the study of scripture, I propose to go beyond Bradshaw's suggestion to the adoption of such a methodology. To put it succinctly, a letter of Basil of Caesarea should be subject to the same scrutiny as a letter of Paul of Tarsus. The beginning of the exegetical process is to examine and compare available translations. I shall, however, provide my own translations for key texts, including particularly two of some length: Basil's description of the times of prayer in his *Great Asceticon*, and his letter to the Clergy of Neocaesarea, number 207. Going beyond this, I suggest that an appropriate technique in our present study will be the Socio-Rhetorical exegesis developed by Vernon K Robbins.¹²⁶ Further, such exegesis must be undertaken before, and as a basis for, any attempt to extract liturgical information. The first aim of the present work is therefore to provide a demonstration of, and a 'test-bed' for, this exegetical method.

In addition to the brief background outlined above, there are three contexts which may have been influential in the development of early Christian worship. Unfortunately, the natures of these are contentious and assumptions have been made about them which have influenced ideas on the development of the daily office and the distinction between cathedral and monastic practices. The examination of these contexts forms the basis for the achievement of aims ii. to iv. above. It is therefore necessary to consider them in some detail.

Two of these are mentioned together by Baumstark: 'wherever liturgical development occurred, it necessarily proceeded from the same set of prior conditions: (1) a specifically Christian content and (2) two vital relationships that stimulated its forms to grow, (a) the worship of the synagogue and (b) the

¹²⁵ Bradshaw, *Search*, 14-20.

¹²⁶ Vernon K Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher, a Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996); *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996).

influence of the Hellenistic milieu.¹²⁷ What is significant here is the equal weight ascribed to both synagogue and Hellenism, other liturgical authors preferring to stress the former and largely ignore the latter. Modern studies of Judaism, however, suggest that synagogue worship, non-existent in the first century CE, developed too late to influence Christianity. Baumstark and others are thus seen to be mistaken; there is Jewish influence but it does not come from the synagogue (see chapter 3). Baumstark, however, is right to introduce the subject of Hellenistic influence, although I shall prefer to use the term 'pagan', as the possibility of specifically Roman practice must also be considered (chapter 4).

The third context, in this case most certainly influential, which must be considered is that of monasticism (examined in detail in chapter 5). This term is used for a wide variety of ascetic practices in the period, not all of which won the approval of church leaders, nor indeed of the general populace. The out-dated idea that monasticism began in the Egyptian desert, spreading from there to the rest of the Christian world, is rejected as simplistic. Instead we find a complex situation in which there was a wide variety of ascetic practices. An aspect of this was that some monks, in many places, presented problems of real or imagined, idleness, violence, sexual laxity, rejection of ecclesiastical authority, or, inevitably, heresy.¹²⁸ Some of these condemnations were applied to the monasticism of mid-fourth century Anatolia in which Eustathius of Sebaste was a major figure. He, however, influenced the monasticism of Basil and, presumably also of Macrina, who in turn influenced her brother. These influences are discussed by Susanna Elm in a useful study of female monasticism.¹²⁹ The particular character of monastic life in Pontus and Cappadocia is discussed in chapter 6.

Inevitably, the ascetic-monastic life includes regular prayer and thus its practitioners had great influence on the development of the divine office. Baumstark distinguishes two coexisting forms of the office, *Cathedral* and *Monastic*, a feature which he describes as 'in Christian antiquity, of general

¹²⁷ Baumstark, *Historical Development*, 89.

¹²⁸ Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Columba Stewart, *'Working the Earth of the Heart': The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

¹²⁹ Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God, The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

occurrence.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, the examples which he provides of this are not entirely helpful in identifying such a division in the fourth century. 'In the west,' he writes, 'the Monastic Rite still lives side by side with the Roman Rite.'¹³¹ Similarly for the Nestorians we find the distinction in 'the great liturgical work attributed to George, Bishop of Arbela.'¹³² For the Byzantine tradition, the 'last witness' to the cathedral office derives from a document dated by Baumstark to the early ninth century, and 'the Coptic Rite has a cast which is so exclusively Monastic that we cannot doubt that there was also in existence ... another usage better suited to the needs of lay communities.'¹³³ The only example offered from earlier than the fifth century is taken from the late fourth century *Pilgrimage of Egeria*, for which Baumstark concentrates his attention on the contrast between the nightly vigils of the ascetics and the Sunday vigils for the whole Christian community.¹³⁴ Jerusalem, as a unique place of pilgrimage, had, however, its own distinctive liturgical culture.

Moreover, Baumstark unfortunately does not provide an adequate definition of the terminology which he adopts. For an explanation of the terms we must therefore turn to Bradshaw who, while rejecting the simple division into two basic offices, as explained below, nevertheless provides us with descriptions of each of them. The cathedral office is performed twice daily, morning and evening.¹³⁵ It is led by the clergy, and psalms and hymns have a central place. These, however, are not freely chosen but fixed and, in the case of psalms, chosen from a small number: psalms 148-50 together with psalm 63, seen as appropriate to the morning and psalm 141 for the evening. Readings from elsewhere in scripture are limited to Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, and some ceremonial appears.

The monastic office is based on a literal interpretation of the instruction to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5: 17), having its origins among desert solitaries who alternated the recitation of psalms with periods of meditation.¹³⁶ Although with the

¹³⁰ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 111.

¹³¹ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 111; "still" refers to the 1950s.

¹³² Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 111-2; Bishop George belongs to the 10th century, see Willem Cornelis Van Unnik, *Nestorian Questions on the Administration of the Eucharist by Isho'yabh IV*, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006) 74-5.

¹³³ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 112.

¹³⁴ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 111.

¹³⁵ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 106-8.

¹³⁶ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 108-12.

establishment of communities, formal rules for praying twice a day were introduced, monastic practice, Bradshaw stresses, remained 'radically different' from that of the cathedral.¹³⁷ Clergy were not required, due to the different leadership structure of such communities, and normally at the twice daily *synaxes* biblical passages were read, alternating with meditation or silent prayer, psalms being used only on Sunday mornings.¹³⁸ Individual recitation of psalms continued, however, using 'the whole psalter and almost nothing but the psalter,' reciting the psalms 'in their biblical order.'¹³⁹ It was, moreover, 'regarded as a great and worthy accomplishment to recite all 150 psalms in the space of twenty-four hours.'¹⁴⁰ While the cathedral office was seen as the worship of the whole church giving praise and thanks to God, the desert monastic office was individualistic rather than ecclesial and its purpose was seen as formation, directed towards the growth of the individual monk into the likeness of Christ.¹⁴¹ Consequently, for the desert monastics, worship also lost its 'cosmic dimensions,' monks did not pray for all God's creation or for general salvation.¹⁴²

However, the bipartite typology requires some modification to account for the office of the fourth century Cappadocian monastics (the so-called 'urban monastics'), with which we will be concerned, and which, as we shall see, was somewhat different from that found in the desert. Juan Mateos, therefore characterises it as a hybrid form.¹⁴³ And Taft writes, 'the first two [Cathedral, and Egyptian-monastic offices] evolved simultaneously from the mid-fourth century. The third [that of "urban monastics"], a synthesis of the first two, is already visible in the last quarter of the same century.'¹⁴⁴ This, moreover, Taft sees as a quite intentional 'synthesis': 'the practices Basil describes are close to the usages of the secular churches – otherwise how could they be an example to the laity? But at the same time to ignore the ascetical heritage of Egypt, *the* cradle of religious life in the popular mind, was unthinkable.'¹⁴⁵ Thus Taft assumes the out-dated

¹³⁷ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 109.

¹³⁸ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 109-10.

¹³⁹ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 111-12, 113.

¹⁴⁰ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 112; see also *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 18.25.

¹⁴¹ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 110.

¹⁴² Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 111.

¹⁴³ Juan Mateos, 'The Origins of the Divine Office', *Worship*, 477-485.

¹⁴⁴ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 32.

¹⁴⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 84, Taft's emphasis.

'out-of-Egypt' model of monasticism as a basis for understanding the Cappadocian practice. Further, the bipartite cathedral-monastic distinction is not accepted by all and, while it does not lie within the scope of the present work to examine the hypothesis in detail, two dissenting but very different voices should be considered.

The first of these is Stig Simeon Frøyshov who perhaps best exemplifies what Taft calls 'a growing tendency to consider the "cathedral" and "monastic" liturgy distinction as no more than a heuristic structure invented by the liturgists.'¹⁴⁶ Accepting the existence of the cathedral office as described above, Frøyshov doubts that of the monastic: 'imagining a pure monastic rite may be useful, but regarding the historicity of such a rite there are, as I see it, two criteria to be fulfilled if one is to acknowledge its historical existence: a) that it was created from scratch as a separate rite or office; and b) that it did not include any cathedral elements.'¹⁴⁷ To which he adds a footnote: 'If it had gone back to a cathedral office it could not have avoided preserving cathedral elements. If it had eradicated all traces of its origin, one ought rather to speak of its creation from scratch.'¹⁴⁸ Apparently Frøyshov considers that there are only two possibilities for the origin of the monastic office: either created from scratch and having no cathedral elements, or deriving from that of the cathedral with surviving traces of that origin. These criteria are, however, rather too stringent as stated. If we consider Eastern and Western Eucharistic rites, for instance, it is right to make a distinction between them, though they have much in common, and it is too simplistic to claim that each was 'created from scratch as a separate rite'; the significant phrase being 'from scratch'. In the main part of the article, however, Frøyshov concentrates much of his argument, on the claimed desert-monastic practice of reciting the whole psalter in biblical order, arguing that this was not the case. Unfortunately, the only evidence for this that he can find derives from much later practice as Bradshaw points out.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Robert Taft, 'Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (d. 1948): A Reply to Recent Critics', *Worship*, 73, no. 6 (November 1999) 532; Stig Simeon R. Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited, Part I: Was Egyptian Desert Liturgy a Pure Monastic Office?' *Studia Liturgica*, 37 (2007): 198-216.

¹⁴⁷ Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited', 201.

¹⁴⁸ Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited', 201, note 10.

¹⁴⁹ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 113.

While apparently not denying that the desert monastics had an office differing from that of the cathedral, Frøyshov suggests that this was not the 'pure' desert-monastic office as defined. The use of the term 'pure', however, implies the existence of a modern concept which a particular historic rite may not fit exactly. As Frøyshov observes, 'the Egyptian desert fathers did not observe or produce any written liturgical rule.'¹⁵⁰ That is, any evidence for their worship practices comes to us indirectly, and thus there is as little evidence for in-course recitation of the whole psalter as there is against it, though of course if an anchorite set out to recite the psalter in the course of a day, it would make sense do so in order. One reason for the difficulty encountered lies in the blurring of meaning of the term 'office' so that, in addition to regular communal and formal worship, it includes the private and informal practice of individuals, some of whom claimed the daily recitation of the whole psalter. Moreover, Frøyshov admits to 'treating Egyptian desert monasticism and its liturgy in a rather grossly unifying way.'¹⁵¹ But in doing so he follows all who choose to discuss *the* desert monastic office. Even from the most simplistic viewpoint, the Pachomian coenobitic office with two daily synaxes interrupting continuous personal psalmody, is very different from that of anchorites who avoided such disruptions; thus there was not one desert office but at least two. But as Frøyshov points out there are also differences of geography and monastic type to consider so that 'the frontiers between various desert liturgies were not necessarily neat.'¹⁵²

A second disagreement with the bipartite typology is found in Bradshaw who, while accepting the existence of separate cathedral and desert-monastic offices from the fourth century onwards, adds two other distinct types of regular worship.¹⁵³ The first of these is daily prayer before the fourth century. 'Such prayer seems generally to have been offered either by individuals on their own or by small groups of family or friends and not in formal liturgical assemblies ... Nevertheless, this does not mean that the daily prayers were thought of as being merely private prayer ... Each person's prayer was seen as being a participation

¹⁵⁰ Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited', 201.

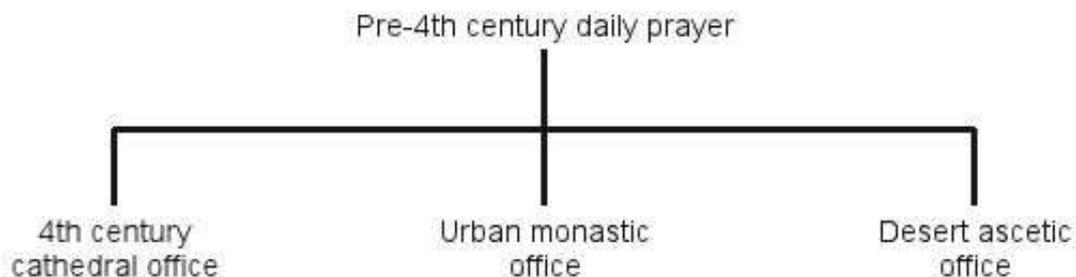
¹⁵¹ Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited', 201, footnote 11.

¹⁵² Frøyshov, 'The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited', 201, footnote 11.

¹⁵³ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 102-6.

in the prayer of the whole Church.¹⁵⁴ Such prayers did not, however, include psalmody, nor the ministry of the word.¹⁵⁵

Additionally, Bradshaw recognises as a quite separate type, 'the prayer of urban ascetics', these were 'ascetic communities [which] began [in the fourth century] to be formed within urban settings in Cappadocia, Syria and elsewhere.'¹⁵⁶ 'Their cycle of prayer,' Bradshaw comments, 'has often been treated as merely as a variant of Egyptian monasticism. This, however, is misleading, for its foundation is quite different.'¹⁵⁷ Rather than being the hybrid form as claimed by Mateos and Taft, the office of these urban ascetic groups developed out of the Christian daily prayer of earlier times, Bradshaw suggests. 'While the cathedral office has moved away from this pattern [that of daily prayer before the fourth century] in one direction and the desert monks in another, these communities had persevered in the old family prayers of former times: they were not innovators, but conservatives in a world which had changed.'¹⁵⁸ What Bradshaw appears to be suggesting here is a 'family tree' of the following form:



Looking again at Bradshaw's descriptions, however, we can see that there is little real similarity between early daily prayer and the practice of the desert ascetics. It might be more correct, therefore, to see the latter as a *de novo* creation deriving from the Pauline example of praying continually. Of greater significance is the fact that Bradshaw thus perceives not two, but '*at least* four different patterns of daily prayer in the early church.'¹⁵⁹ We must ask, therefore, to what extent are

¹⁵⁴ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 105.

¹⁵⁵ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 106.

¹⁵⁶ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 113-6.

¹⁵⁷ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 113.

¹⁵⁸ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 113-4.

¹⁵⁹ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 101, my emphasis.

Bradshaw's contentions supported by the Cappadocian evidence? Is the Cappadocian daily office a hybrid or a distinct entity?

In order to answer these questions, we move to consider two passages from the writings of Basil of Caesarea. The first of these, taken from his *Great Asceticon*, is dealt with in the context of the development of what are now seen as the monastic prayer times, and provides information about how Basil, and his monastic followers, saw the structure of the daily prayer cycle (see chapter 7).¹⁶⁰ My translation of this passage forms a section of that chapter. An examination of how this relates to other schemes will throw further light on aim 4 above. The questions which elicit the response do not relate to prayer times, however, but are concerned with the balance of monastic work and prayer and thus the passage can only be fully understood in the context of the above chapter on monasticism. In later practice, praying the Office involves not only prayers, as usually understood, but also singing psalms and hymns, and reading from scripture. Evidence for the use of all these elements is also to be found in this passage. In the case of psalms, Basil's propensity for scriptural quotations allows us to conjecture which psalms were used at which office. However, although prayers were clearly used no information is available about their content. For readings, moreover, the evidence is even more sketchy.

A document for which the techniques of Socio-Rhetorical exegesis appear particularly appropriate is a letter from Basil to the clergy of Neocaesarea which deals with certain disputes between the two parties, the contentious issues being, monasticism, the use of psalms, and the way in which they are sung by the monastics of Cappadocia (see chapter 8). Again I provide a translation of the full letter as a section within the chapter. The letter provides valuable information about how the psalm singing was organized but no clear statement as to the nature of the criticisms advanced from Neocaesarea. But although no certain solution to this question is possible, hints from Basil allow the formulation of hypotheses. The synaxis described has frequently been interpreted as an all-night vigil of the 'cathedral' type, and the major aim for this chapter is to examine the evidence and arguments for and against this supposition.

¹⁶⁰ LR 37; PG 31: 1009-16.

Having examined the Cappadocian dawn prayer, we then move to the second major synaxis of the daily office, prayer in the evening (chapter 8). Both Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa provide references to a lamp-lighting thanksgiving, considered by most authors to be the hymn called *Phos Hilaron* which still forms part of vespers in the eastern tradition.¹⁶¹ On examination, the text of this hymn displays linguistic subtleties beyond the immediately apparent meaning, features which serve to distinguish it from other evening prayers, and lamp-lighting ceremonies of the early church. Several origins for such ceremonies have been suggested, the pagan light-cult, the Jewish Sabbath evening lighting of lamps or candles, and the pre-Christian custom of hailing lamps when they were first brought in in the evening, and these are examined in the chapter. In addition, the description of evening prayer in *Apostolic Constitutions* introduces what seems to be the first description of what is now known in English as the Angel of Peace Litany. This again forms part of Orthodox vespers to the present day, and is also found in Morning Prayer, and the Eucharist.¹⁶² The suggestion of Taft that this litany was used to conclude Cappadocian evening prayer in the fourth century is critically examined.¹⁶³

Finally, the contribution which ancient authors might make to the theology of prayer and worship, particularly in the case of the divine office, has received insufficient attention from scholars. For this reason, in chapter 10, we shall examine the theology and praxis of prayer and worship according to the Cappadocian fathers. And, in order to ideas assess the question of prior theological influence, we shall examine works of Origen.¹⁶⁴ Origen deals with the

¹⁶¹ Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, 29.73.34-43; Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, 8.1.395.1-6, 398.23-399.9; Antonia Tripolitis, 'Φῶς Ἰλαρόν, Ancient Hymn and Modern Enigma', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 24, no. 3 (Sept. 1970): 189-196; I. F. Hapgood, (ed.), *The Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, (New York: Association Press, 1922), 8; & see R Garland Young, 'The Phos Hilaron' In *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine, A Critical Anthology*, edited by Mark Kiley, (London: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁶² The term 'Orthodox' embraces a wide variety of worship traditions. It is used here to mean those churches which belong to the Byzantine liturgical family: John Klentos, 'Orthodox Worship', in Paul F Bradshaw (ed), *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM Press, 2002) 361-3; terms such as 'vespers' and 'compline' are used here for synaxes occupying similar positions in the daily cycle to those synaxes of the modern office.

¹⁶³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 38-9.

¹⁶⁴ Tertullian, *On Prayer*, Latin text and translation taken from, Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*; Origen, *On Prayer*, PG 11.415-561; English translation from Jay, *Origen's Treatise*.

bodily attitudes adopted for prayer as both indicating and promoting the right attitudes of mind. Origen's work is motivated by answering the question of what need there is for petitionary prayer to an omniscient God. While not entirely successful in this endeavour, the stress he lays on practising consciousness of the presence of God would have been worthy of greater consideration.

In the case of the Cappadocian fathers, we find significant differences from Origen. The psalms, for instance, play a much more significant part. Also, particularly for Basil, there is a close association of the praxis of Christian worship with tradition and doctrine. And, as seen in his description of the times of prayer, the communality of worship is central. Gregory of Nyssa builds on Basil's ideas of the importance of the psalms, offering the whole psalter as a course of instruction in Christian progress towards God. The progress carries the readers, or rather singers, to union with angelic worship in the final psalm. And, in conclusion, we shall examine a poem of Gregory Nazianzen which breaks the boundaries between earth and heaven, between the present and the eschatological future, transforming earthly worshippers into angels.

Part I – Methods and Backgrounds for Understanding Daily Prayer

2. Methodological Considerations in Liturgical Study.

2.1 Introduction.

As stated in the introduction, Anton Baumstark should be considered the most significant figure in liturgical scholarship of the twentieth century, owing, not only to the extent of his knowledge, but principally to the methodology with which his name is closely associated, that of *comparative liturgy*. This chapter critically examines Baumstark's contribution and considers the extent to which the comparative method and its associated tree-model are valid in cultural studies. Accepting and extending the proposal of Paul Bradshaw that the hermeneutics of suspicion, used in the study of scripture, be adopted by liturgical studies, I propose a methodology based on the socio-rhetorical exegesis advocated by Vernon K Robbins.

2.2 Anton Baumstark and *Comparative Liturgy*.

Anton Baumstark (1872 -1948), a scholar who studied the history of liturgy was, unusually for his time, a Roman Catholic layman. Baumstark, while still a student, was already concerned with the proper regard for all cultures, though his interest lay in those of the Mediterranean world. The attitude current at that time was, in his view, at least Euro-centric if not Romo-centric. Eastern Mediterranean culture was understood in terms of that of Europe; and Roman cultural entities were used as a standard by which all others were judged.¹

In 1904 Baumstark reviewed *Orient oder Rom* by the art historian Joseph Strzygowski, who challenged the Romo-centric view of art history arguing that the flow of aesthetic influence in the Mediterranean area had been from east to west rather than west to east.² Baumstark commented: 'We should accustom

¹ Fritz West, *The Comparative Liturgy of Anton Baumstark*, Alcuin Club & Group for Renewal of Worship, Joint Liturgical Studies 31, (Nottingham, Grove Books. 1995) 18.

² Joseph Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst*, (Leipzig, 1901).

ourselves to think of Rome as essentially without influence, the heiress of a purely Hellenistic tradition.³

Strzygowski noted that only monumental artworks survived over time while less substantial structures were usually lost. Wishing, however, to avoid a concentration on imperial art and architecture at the expense of the popular, he made use of comparative methodology to reconstruct architectural forms. Art, like language or life, he thought of as an organism with essential features to be found in a variety of cultures and periods; the characteristics of imperial art as well as those of a few surviving popular fragments could be used to establish the whole picture. Following the influence of Strzygowski, Baumstark began to think of the liturgy as an organic unity though it was not until 1919 that he began to formulate his methodology, and 1923 when his first book on the subject was published followed in 1934 by the first edition of *Liturgie Comparée*.⁴ Baumstark was not the first to apply comparative methodology to liturgical study, that status appearing to belong to John Mason Neal who, in 1863, proposed 'a commencement, however poor and imperfect, of the science of Comparative Liturgiology (if we may borrow a term from anatomy).'⁵ Baumstark, however, went further than any previous scholars in the thoroughness of his use of the method and in his conviction that it could produce results on a par with those of biological science.⁶

Baumstark begins by noting the existence of two antitheses in liturgical development, uniformity versus variety, and austerity versus richness. His assumption is that one of each pair is the older and thus a direction of liturgical evolution can be identified.⁷

In the case of the first antithesis, as we look back in time we find that liturgical variety increases. Initially this was probably due to the improvised nature of the

³ Anton Baumstark, 'Besprechung: Joseph Strzygowski, Kleinasien, ein Neuland der Kunstgeschichte' in *Oriens Christianus*, 4 (1904), 415, quoted in West, *Baumstark*, 14, (West's translation).

⁴ West, *Baumstark*, 26.

⁵ John Mason Neal, *Essays on Liturgiology and Church History*, (London: Saunders Otley & Co, 1863) 124.

⁶ Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, (London. SPCK, 2002) 10.

⁷ Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, revised by Bernard Botte, tr. by F. L. Cross, (London: Mowbray, 1958), 15.

earliest prayers.⁸ But as regional churches sought to regulate the local and as the regions themselves came under the influence of a few more important sees, uniformity increased. This may have been due to the enforcement of doctrinal standards, though in some cases possibly to political necessity. Baumstark thus postulates that ‘the movement of liturgical evolution is in the direction of a more and pronounced uniformity.’ This, however, is consistent with ‘certain local peculiarities which give the impression of a retrograde movement.’⁹

As regards the question of austerity versus richness, Baumstark illustrates with two comparisons, firstly the simple baptism described in Acts 8: 26-39 is compared with the baptismal ritual of Western Christendom in the second half of the first millennium, and secondly Justin’s account of bringing the bread and wine to the Eucharistic president with the Byzantine Great Entrance.¹⁰ These demonstrate a movement from the simple to the elaborate and the same can be seen from the examination of liturgical texts. There are, however, examples where the opposite seems to be the case and this leads to the formulation of a more complex model of development. New material, Baumstark explains, is initially introduced alongside the old but, when the liturgy grows too complex or too long, the more primitive elements tend to be abandoned and ‘disappear completely or leave only a few traces.’ This process, which results in the replacement of the old by the new, Baumstark describes as ‘The Law of Organic Development’, adding in parentheses ““Organic” and therefore “Progressive””¹¹ It is not clear, however, why Baumstark considers that it must be the more primitive elements that are abandoned.

The organic model then implies progressive change by means of a series of changes small enough not to be seen as significant by a contemporary observer. Baumstark thus sees the ultimate effects of such changes as the result of natural law rather than human will. In the protestant reformation and the counter-reformation, however, human will interrupted the natural development of the

⁸ See e.g. Justin Martyr, *Appology* I, 69; online: <https://archive.org/details/apologiesofjusti00just> (accessed 16/07/2015); English translation online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm> (accessed 16/07/2015).

⁹ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 18.

¹⁰ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 20; Justin, Ap. 1, 65.

¹¹ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 23. Here ‘progressive’ means ‘changing gradually’.

liturgy of the West, violating the evolutionary law.¹² Liturgical change as a result of these movements cannot be considered to be organic evolution.

The new does not entirely push out the old, however. Baumstark observes that, at particularly significant times of year, Good Friday for instance, primitive elements are retained which have been eliminated at other times. These observations lead him to formulate his second law of liturgical evolution, 'that primitive conditions are maintained with greater tenacity in the more sacred seasons of the Liturgical Year.'¹³

In seeking the earliest elements Baumstark offers certain criteria. Firstly, as a consequence of his 'Law of Organic Development' the more austere elements must be considered the more primitive. Secondly, he adds 'we shall have to regard as primitive phenomena which are found with the same meaning, the same function, and in the same area in all Christian Rites, or at least in a sufficiently large number of such Rites, and especially so if they have parallels in the liturgy of the synagogue.'¹⁴ Here Baumstark is presumably attempting to construct a criterion which discounts cases in which practises have been imported from a separate strand of development. It is not enough that the same element should appear in a different place or with a different function, for such situations may be accounted for by importation rather than by inheritance from a common ancestor. Apparently, he considers importation from Judaism (presumably after the establishment of Christian rites) to be unlikely as he adds 'we shall pronounce the same verdict where anything has a Jewish parallel, even when it is limited to a few Christian Rites or it may be only to one.' The converse, of course applies, that is elements present in only a few Christian rites and without Jewish parallels are to be dismissed as recent.

Four further laws emerge later in the book. Of these, three refer to prose prayers and are the formulations of two of Baumstark's students. Hamm offers two: 'the older a text is the less it is influenced by the Bible and ... the more recent a text

¹² West, *Baumstark*, 15.

¹³ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 27.

¹⁴ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 31; but see chapter below on possible Jewish Influence for the uncertainty of this.

is the more symmetrical it is.’¹⁵ Of the first of these, Botte, the reviser of the third edition of *Liturgie Comparée*, notes ‘The idea is correct, but it is here expressed in an equivocal manner. The most ancient texts, e.g. the prayers in I Clem. lix - lxi, are full of biblical allusions.’ In the case of Eucharistic institution narratives, considered by Hamm, the later texts employ scriptural quotations literally, Botte points out, while the earlier ones are much freer.¹⁶ Of the second of Hamm’s laws, Baumstark comments that the tendency to symmetry precedes biblical influence, ‘for there are many cases where symmetry which is itself clearly secondary has been destroyed in turn by the ever increasing influence of biblical language.’

The third law of this group Baumstark attributes to Engberding: ‘the later it is, the more liturgical prose becomes charged with doctrinal elements.’¹⁷ A similar comment to that of Botte might be made for this law. For instance, Phil. 2: 6-11 contains several statements of a doctrinal nature, to the extent that it is debateable whether it should be regarded as a doctrinal statement in poetic prose or a liturgical quotation. Prayer, and particularly praise, can hardly avoid implications about belief. Baumstark, however, asserts that, ‘we must descend to the period from the fourth to the seventh century before we find theologians bringing into the Liturgy the theology, and often even the polemical theology, of their sermons.’

One law remains: ‘certain actions which are purely utilitarian by nature may receive a symbolic meaning either from their function in the Liturgy as such or from factors in the liturgical texts which accompany them.’¹⁸ In support, Baumstark offers the Eastern elaboration of the preparation of the Eucharistic bread, and the Great Entrance, which have become imbued with symbolic meaning. Other examples are easy to find; for instance, at the culmination of the Great Entrance, modern Orthodox worshippers are told ‘the priest uncovers the Holy Gifts as a sign of the Lord’s Resurrection.’¹⁹ Here a somewhat tenuous

¹⁵ Fritz Hamm, *Die liturgischen Einsetzungsberichte im Sinne der vergleichender Liturgieforschung untersucht*, (Münster in Westf. : Aschendorff, 1928), cited in Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 59.

¹⁶ Bernard Botte, n. 2, in Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 59.

¹⁷ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 60.

¹⁸ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 130.

¹⁹ Nicholas M. Elias, *The Divine Liturgy Explained*. 4th edition. (Athens: Papadimitriou. 2005), 149.

symbolism gives rise to a liturgical text to make a doctrinal point. It seems that there is a pressure for all actions to have symbolic meaning regardless of their practical purpose.²⁰ We shall encounter an example of this principle in the evening lamp lighting ritual.

Subsequent scholars, while acknowledging a debt to Baumstark's work have not done so without reservations. Thus Botte comments: 'Baumstark's ideas, I believe, were fundamentally right, even if he sometimes gave them too rigid a form and occasionally made unwarranted use of them.'²¹ Although the methodology has been proved largely successful, Botte claims, there are two pitfalls which must be avoided. The first of these is 'being duped by words', it is legitimate, Botte says, to identify and investigate tendencies and even to designate them as 'laws'. This is an analogy with natural science, but only an analogy. The 'laws' are in fact empirical observations of general trends and do not have an absolute character. Indeed, Baumstark points out that there are 'retrograde' forces at work too. Unfortunately, Baumstark is not immune from interpreting the word 'laws' literally. Thus, he says, 'by the law which *requires* that liturgical evolution should proceed from the simpler to the more complex, we shall deem the more austere the more primitive.'²² Botte's second pitfall is not unconnected with the first; it is 'to take a logical construction as though it were a historic reality.' In the absence of exact data, we may formulate provisional hypotheses but, Botte points out, 'we must guard against too absolute conclusions.' And unfortunately, Botte is forced to add 'it is here that we meet with the chief limitation of Baumstark. He did not always see where to draw the line between his hypotheses and historical reality.'

As pointed out above, the followers of Baumstark have avoided any suggestion of appealing to absolutes and adopted more sophisticated methodologies. Thus Taft, noting that the comparative method assumes that it is working with common structures, concentrates his attention on analysis intended to identify underlying

²⁰ See below on ritual, section 2.6.

²¹ Botte, Foreword to the Third Edition of Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, viii – ix.

²² Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 31, my emphasis.

structure. This analysis, he stresses, 'is not carried on in a vacuum. There must be a constant dialectic between structural analysis and historical research.'²³

And, in a passage which, by implication, critiques the absolute nature of Baumstark's 'laws' while validating their use, Taft also provides the philosophical basis of his own work, and justifies liturgical study; he adds:

If there is anything that the philosophers have taught us in recent years, it is that everything, including the 'exact' or natural sciences, has its history and that so-called 'scientific laws' are hypothetical constructs, products of the human mind. They do not leap out of reality before the eyes of every observer. Rather they are perceived structures that change not because reality changes, but because perception does. And so history is a science not of past happenings but of present understanding. ... Liturgical history, therefore, does not deal with the past, but with tradition, which is a genetic vision of the present, a present conditioned by its understanding of its roots. And the purpose of this history is not to recover the past (which is impossible), much less to imitate it (which would be fatuous), but to understand liturgy which, because it has a history, can only be understood in motion, just as the only way to understand a top is to spin it.²⁴

We shall examine the theoretical basis for the use of the comparative method and its associated organic model in cultural studies such as liturgy. But before doing so, it will be useful to consider its development.

2.3 The comparative method - a brief history.

The comparative method has its genesis in the *Naturphilosophen*, German thinkers of the 18th and early 19th centuries who 'understood the whole of nature to be essentially, if not mystically, related through the life-force at work within it', arguing that 'all living forms were but variations on a single plan.'²⁵ This latter idea proved to be extremely productive. Carl Linnaeus (1707 - 1778) and Georges Cuvier (1769 - 1832) developed systems of classification in botany and zoology respectively. In particular, Cuvier, called the father of comparative anatomy,

²³ Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press. 1984) 153.

²⁴ Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 153-4, his emphasis.

²⁵ Fritz West, *The Comparative Liturgy of Anton Baumstark*, Alcuin Club & Group for Renewal of Worship, Joint Liturgical Studies 31, (Nottingham, Grove Books. 1995) 18.

applied his knowledge to palaeontology and impressed with his ability to infer a whole animal from a few fossilised fragments.²⁶

What is of significance is that the structures identified by these scientists can be used to determine descent. This was taken up by Charles Darwin, whose primary achievement was to provide a theoretical basis for established relationships. Darwin also noted a similarity between biological organisms and languages: slow evolution, creation of new forms through geographical isolation, and the difficulty of defining new forms in each case. 'The formation of different languages and of distinct species and the proofs that both have been developed through a gradual process, are curiously parallel.'²⁷

Such thinking led to the use of similar comparative methodology in what is now called *Comparative Linguistics* (originally *comparative grammar* or *comparative philology*), a technique based on a comparison of two or more languages on a feature by feature basis.²⁸ For this the methodology of comparative botany and zoology provided 'both model and metaphor.'²⁹ Thus older languages are described as the 'ancestors' of modern ones, languages form 'families' and are said to be 'related' or even 'genetically related'. Language was seen as a developing organism, whose study, therefore belongs to nature rather than history, being subject to natural law and thus determinate, rather than subject to human will and so indeterminate.³⁰ Thus, August Schleicher proposed a 'family tree' of languages in his *Stammbaumtheorie*, seeing languages as growing from the simple to the complex.³¹

The importance which the organic concept and comparative method had in the study of one aspect of culture, language, led to the adoption of similar concepts and methods in other areas. Yii-Jan Lin describes how 18th century (pre-Darwinian) New Testament textual criticism classified texts into 'families, tribes,

²⁶ See eg. Winfred Philipp Lehmann, *Theoretical Bases of Indo-European Linguistics*, (London: Routledge, 1993) 24.

²⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, (London: J. Murray, 1871), 40.

²⁸ Lehmann, *Theoretical Bases*, 24-31.

²⁹ West, *Baumstark*, 16.

³⁰ West, *Baumstark*, 17.

³¹ August Schleicher, 'Die ersten Spaltungen des indogermanischen Urvolkes', *Allgemeine Zeitung für Wissenschaft und Literatur* (August 1853) 786-7; the *Stammbaumtheorie* is discussed again below.

and nations' often on grounds she rightly categorises as 'racist'.³² Darwin's evolutionary theory, she suggests, laid the basis for a change of attitude: 'The emphasis lay no longer on tracing back to one, singular ancestor but instead on valuing multiple readings as part of a diverse array of stories that are a part of church history.'³³

West notes the same levelling effect; previously there had been a predisposition to make value-judgements about culture and history, with the assumption that one place or period was culturally or morally superior to all others, the attitude criticised by Strzygowski and Baumstark. The comparative method necessarily did away with such pre-judgements; cultures and times were compared as equals with none regarded as superior. Secondly the method discerned cultural units which had not previously been apparent as such: religion, government, education, family, etc. In particular, 'as long as Christianity was regarded as the true faith, all other religions were held to be false, Christianity had no equal, and the cultural category 'religion' did not exist.'³⁴ The comparative method, however, placed Christianity, alongside Judaism, Islam, Hinduism etc. in the category of 'religion'.

However, it has to be remembered that the understanding of the organic model of life began with the observation of common or similar features and proceeded in the direction of the idea of evolution leading to the concept of genes, which remained no more than a theory, though a well substantiated one, until the analysis of DNA revealed the genetic mechanism. Might it be possible to identify small transmissible cultural units which would correspond to genes?

Richard Dawkins maintains that biological evolution depends not on the particular chemical basis of genetics, but only on the existence of a self-replicating unit of transmission, the gene. He further postulates the parallel concept of a similarly self-replicating unit which explains human behaviour and cultural evolution - the *meme*.³⁵ This term he coined to describe a cultural entity which an observer might

³² Yii-Jan Lin, *The Erotic Life of Manuscripts: A History of New Testament Textual Criticism and the Biological Sciences*, Exeter Centre for Biblical Studies, Research seminar, March 6, 2012, pp. 4, 6, on line at https://www.academia.edu/2537883/_The_Erotic_Life_of_Manuscripts_A_History_of_NT_Textual_Criticism_and_the_Biological_Sciences_

³³ Yii-Jan Lin, *Erotic Life*, 18.

³⁴ West, *Baumstark*, 24.

³⁵ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*. 2nd. edn. (Oxford: The University Press, 1989), 186.

consider a *replicator*, that is, an entity which reproduces itself. Cultural entities which may be replicators include melodies, fashions and learned skills. Memes, he suggests, replicate through exposure to humans, who have evolved as efficient copiers of information and behaviour. Because humans do not always copy memes perfectly, and because they may refine, combine or otherwise modify them with other memes to create new memes, they can change over time. Dawkins likens the process by which memes survive and change through the evolution of culture to the natural selection of genes in biological evolution.³⁶ This idea, however, suffers from a fundamental problem in the inability of its supporters to explain whether *mimetics* itself constitutes a meme, or to engage with the implications of either a positive or negative response to that question.

2.4 Can the Organic Model apply to cultural studies?

Though the term 'meme' is a recent one, the idea of a pseudo-genetic transmission of cultural entities has a history almost as long as that of biological evolution upon which it relies. Thus, Edward Tylor asserts that

To the ethnographer the bow and arrow is a species, the habit of flattening children's skulls is a species. The geographical distribution of these things, and their transmission from region to region, have to be studied as the naturalist studies the geography of his botanical and zoological species.³⁷

To this, Claude Levi-Strauss replies, 'nothing is more dangerous than this analogy ... a horse indeed begets a horse ... an ax on the contrary does not generate another ax.'³⁸

Although on the face of it Levi-Strauss' comment about axes appears to be a truism, proponents of memetics might wish to suggest that it misses the point. The material axe, lacking life, cannot have offspring, but it is the physical manifestation of an underlying axe-concept in the mind of an intelligent and living being. This axe-concept (the axe-meme) in one person is transmitted to others, probably by demonstration, and the recipients of the concept produce new axes, possibly with different characteristics, and pass on the idea in their turn. Even Levi-Strauss' further argument, that a subsequent tool will differ from a previous one from which it derives, cannot stand against the organic model, for the theory

³⁶ Dawkins, *Selfish Gene*, 352.

³⁷ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. I, (London: John Murray, 1871), 7.

³⁸ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 4.

of biological evolution is based on exactly that principle, that offspring differ from parents and that some differences survive while others do not. In the same way, a human being makes an axe based on an axe concept deriving from experience of previous axes, introducing design changes consciously or unconsciously. As the axes so produced are used some of these new ideas may survive, others do not.

In fact, the real differences between Tylor and Levi-Strauss are more subtle than may be suggested by the un-critical adoption of the term 'species' by the former and its outright condemnation by the latter. Thus Levi-Strauss observes that 'the European fork and the Polynesian fork (which is used in ritual meals), do not constitute a species, any more than do the straws through which one sips lemonade at a café, the 'bombilla' to drink maté, and the drinking tubes used for ritual purposes by some American Indian tribes.'³⁹ Tylor, on the other hand, finding geographically separated, but similar, cultural entities draws a parallel with biological observations: 'Just as distant regions so often produce vegetables and animals which are analogous, though by no means identical, so it is with the details of the civilization of their inhabitants.'⁴⁰ But, unfortunately he fails to consider the impact which this has on his use of the term 'species'. We should note the significance of 'analogous, though by no means identical' here, for such 'vegetables and animals' are examples of *convergent evolution*, 'the recurring tendency of biological organization to arrive at the same "solution" to a particular "need"' which refers to the independent evolution of similar features in species of different lineages,⁴¹

The significance of convergent evolution should not be underestimated. Presented with a creature which flies, it would be a mistake to assume that it is necessarily related to birds. Insects, bats, and pterosaurs have also, independently, evolved the ability to fly and in quite different ways. Thus, a similar characteristic, even a striking one, shared by two creatures or cultural entities does not provide evidence that they are closely related; additional evidence is

³⁹ Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 4.

⁴⁰ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 8.

⁴¹ John Thomas Osmond Kirk, *Science & Certainty*, (Collingwood, Vic.: CSIRO Publishing, 2007) 79

required. Unfortunately, in the study of liturgical history such further points of comparison may not be available.

West points out that the development of the organic model was highly dependent on structure.⁴² Plants and animals were assigned to families, genera, and species by Linnaeus and Cuvier on the basis of their observed structure. So effective was this process that neither Darwin's theory of evolution nor the later discovery of the mechanism of transmission of genetic information caused any significant changes to the classification. Language, like the biological world, is highly structured.

As in life so in language is perduring structure a positive indicator of descent. In both language and life, the student can delineate fields of comparison on the basis of structural similarities. In life the two kingdoms, plant and animal, constitute structurally analogous fields; within language, linguistic families constitute similar fields. More significantly, the structures in these fields can be used for determining descent.⁴³

And once again, it is this structure, West maintains, which forms the basis of linguistic classification.

Nevertheless, West suggests, there is a hidden trap here. 'Whereas *language families*, are structurally analogous and their structure indicates descent, this is not so for *all of human language*.'⁴⁴ At this point West's argument is not entirely clear, for it is not only analogous structures which form the basis of the organic model of language. The first applications of the comparative method, by Jones and Grimm, made comparisons between languages at the level of individual words.⁴⁵ The former between Sanskrit and Greek and the latter between German and Anglo-Saxon. Two points must be observed, however. Firstly, the deduction of language relationships was made not on isolated examples but on systematic similarities. Secondly, such similarities may not hold in individual cases.

Further, there is, West claims, a mistaken preconception which originated in biology: 'biologists have tended to perceive life on continua, from simplicity to

⁴² West, *Baumstark*, 20.

⁴³ West, *Baumstark*, 20.

⁴⁴ West, *Baumstark*, 21.

⁴⁵ 'Michael J Franklin, *Orientalist Jones, Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer and Linguist, 1746-1794*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 1-42; Lehmann, *Theoretical Bases* 26.

complexity across species, from unity to variety across time.⁴⁶ This idea he terms *linearity*, adding that 'linear regularity is only one aspect (and not the defining one) of the classification of life forms.' This was indeed the case before Darwin, biological classification was by 'group in group', as West points out, that is, a species lay within genus, genus with family and so on. Evolutionary theory, however, posits a *line of descent* from species to species which, in view of the genetic basis now established, should certainly not be seen as mistaken. There is, nevertheless, a pitfall hidden in the too simple adoption of the idea that life proceeds 'from simplicity to complexity ... from unity to variety.' A pitfall which might be better termed the illusion of *evolutionary advancement*. The statement in general is essentially a valid one: life necessarily began as simple forms and has evolved more complex ones, with initially a limited number of simple forms and considerable variety now. Most modern evolutionary biologists, however, would emphasise that this is a general description, increasing complexity *in individual cases* is not inherent in the evolutionary organic model; a parent species might produce a simpler offspring.

There is, however, an important difference between biology and culture. In the former, we find a 'tree of life' in which characteristics are transmitted vertically down through the generations, and horizontal transfer plays a very minor role. In the latter, however, the horizontal transfer of cultural entities has greater significance. To return to the question of axes, for instance, modern materials and ergonomic considerations have led to the redesign of handles not only for axes but also hammers and similar implements. Memes, it appears, easily 'jump species' in violation of the organic model. Languages too adopt vocabulary and even grammar from others; liturgies transfer words, phrases and whole prayers. The organic model as a family-tree is, however, dependent on *separation*. Two groups, belonging initially to a single species, separate, not necessarily geographically but in such a way as to make interbreeding unlikely. Ultimately, they are considered by taxonomists to constitute distinct species probably but not necessarily unable to interbreed so as to produce viable offspring. The tree splits into branches which do not recombine.

⁴⁶ West, *Baumstark*, 21.

Linguistics, faces difficulties with this model, however:

Trees fail to capture the very common situation in which linguistic diversification results from the fragmentation of a language into a network of dialects which remained in contact with each other for an extended period of time.⁴⁷

There is, however an alternative model available for linguistics, which may apply to other cultural studies. In 1872 Johannes Schmidt proposed what he termed a 'wave model'.⁴⁸ On this model each linguistic change is seen as arising in one of a group of languages and diffusing outward to neighbouring languages. Change then spreads like wavelets in a pond, although successive 'waves' may not arise from the same centre nor need they be non-intersecting. We have, hitherto, assumed that the organic model and the comparative method belong together, and, indeed, Schmidt saw his model as a challenge to both, as did Hugo Schuchardt somewhat later.⁴⁹ Alexandre François, however, argues that 'such an extreme stance is however not essential to the Wave Model, and unduly throws the baby (the Comparative Method) out with the bathwater (the Tree Model).'⁵⁰ Indeed, comparative methodology forms the basis for his subsequent example applying the wave model to 110 languages in the Northern Vanuatu archipelago in the Pacific.⁵¹

While the organic tree model is an extremely useful tool in Biology, we must note its limitations in Linguistics, even if we chose to pass over those language changes which can be explained on 'non-organic' grounds (in Baumstark's use of 'organic') or, like François, deal with closely related dialects. Quite possibly a wave model of liturgical change is desirable, but an examination of François' finely detailed comparison of the Vanuatu dialects suggests that we lack sufficient information to create one for liturgical studies – even though the application of some of its broad principles might be useful if they are used tentatively.

⁴⁷ Alexandre François, 'Trees, Waves and Linkages: Models of Language Diversification' in Claire Bower and Bethwyn Evans (ed), *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, (New York: Routledge, 2014) 161-189, 162.

⁴⁸ Johannes Schmidt, *Die Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse der indogermanischen Sprachen*, (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1872).

⁴⁹ Hugo Schuchardt, *Über die Lautgesetze: Gegen die Junggrammatiker*, (Berlin: Oppenheim, 1885).

⁵⁰ François, 'Trees, Waves and Linkages', 169.

⁵¹ François, 'Trees, Waves and Linkages', 174-82.

2.5 Paul Bradshaw's Observations on Methodology.

The fundamental problem of the comparative method in the study of early Christian liturgy is that we have very little direct access to the liturgical entities which are to be compared but rather to documents which describe them. Such descriptions reach us having passed through a series of filters and even additional sources. The author will be writing for a particular purpose the nature of which may not always be clear. Under such circumstances writers will naturally concentrate on those matters which are relevant to their intentions and omit those which are irrelevant or which, from the authors' viewpoint, are obvious. In more extreme cases statements made by the same author on different occasions may even conflict. Thus, in his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil of Caesarea asserts that the clergy of Neocaesarea have made no changes to the liturgy since the time of Gregory Thaumaturgos, the Wonderworker: 'they added not any deed, word, or any mystical rite, besides what he left to the Church.'⁵² In this case he is seeking to reinforce his claim that his position on the Holy Spirit, shared by the Neocaesareans, is not an innovation. However, when facing criticism, by these same clergy, concerning his ways of psalm-singing, which he admits to be new, and to which they object as not in accordance with the practices of Gregory Thaumaturgos, he responds, 'you have preserved for yourselves nothing of his to the present,' mentioning two liturgical innovations they have made since Gregory's time, in a list of other faults in their present behaviour.⁵³ Further, and this particularly applies to the 'church orders', subsequent copyists and editors may have introduced changes or additional material which, as such, may be difficult to date, and which may even change the original intention of the text. Moreover, the comparative method itself may introduce inaccuracies into interpretation unless handled with critical care. In answer to the above difficulties, however, Bradshaw offers useful and important warnings.

⁵² Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 29. 74; Stephen Hildebrand (translation and introduction), *On the Holy Spirit: St Basil the Great*, (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011) 115.

⁵³ Basil, *Letter* 207.4.1-2; my translation; *Saint Basile, Lettres*, vol. II, texte établi et traduit par Yves Courtonne, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961), 183–8; also *Saint Basil, Letters*, vol. 3, Roy J. Deferrari (ed. & trans.), (London: Heinemann 1926), 180-93; see section 8.4.

Bradshaw criticises historians of early liturgy as sometimes being too naïve in interpreting their primary sources when compared with those involved in biblical studies.⁵⁴ Such sources cannot be understood as simply ‘raw data’ but should be subject to the same *hermeneutics of suspicion* as biblical texts. Firstly, the rhetorical nature of texts must be taken into account, non-specific descriptions, for instance, cannot simply be given specific interpretations, as they may actually be attempts to ‘demonize’ certain groups or practices. Thus, when we find that certain ante-Nicene Christians celebrated the Pascha ‘with the Jews’, we should not interpret this as indicating Quartodecimanism.⁵⁵

Also, ancient sources cannot be treated as verbatim records. Writers and preachers will concentrate on those things which are relevant to the points they want to make. Even when prayers are quoted they may be paraphrased. Novel or controversial practices will be mentioned, while the accepted and well known will, largely, be ignored, and even what appear to be lists of precise instructions will assume that certain matters are too well known to need mention. In the case of church orders, we are also faced with the difficulty of deciding the extent to which they are descriptive (providing information about actual practice), or prescriptive (describing what the author thinks should be the practice), and indeed, to what extent did anyone take notice of their prescriptions?⁵⁶

‘All this naturally makes the task more difficult’, Bradshaw comments, before listing three, all too easily made, assumptions to be avoided.⁵⁷ Unlike Baumstark’s laws, however, these are caveats rather than deductive regulations.

The first of these misassumptions is that ‘authoritative sounding statements are always genuinely authoritative.’⁵⁸ There is an undoubted tendency for worshippers to insist that certain things have always or everywhere been done or said. However, Bradshaw points out that we cannot assume that such a statement is true, even if its author is a bishop. The same caution should, of course, apply to the claim that certain things are unheard of.

⁵⁴ Bradshaw, *Search*, 14ff.

⁵⁵ Bradshaw, *Search*, 15.

⁵⁶ Paul F Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, Alcuin Club and Group for the Renewal of Worship, Joint Liturgical Study 80 (Norwich: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 2015) 55-8.

⁵⁷ Bradshaw, *Search*, 17-20.

⁵⁸ Bradshaw, *Search*, 17.

The second mistaken assumption, a close relative of the first, is that 'liturgical legislation is evidence of actual practice.'⁵⁹ That is, the authority of Bishops, Councils and others claiming authority in liturgical matters is not necessarily effective. As Bradshaw points out, the repetition of such rulings shows how little they have been regarded. We can, nevertheless, derive some information from these decrees as the authorities who made them must have identified corresponding defects in at least some of their followers. While accepting that apparently authoritative statements are not always correct, we should note that they are not always completely inaccurate either. Bradshaw's 'rule' is a requirement for thorough investigation rather than simple acceptance or rejection. In order to illustrate this, we will consider three authoritative statements on the same subject.

Origen proclaims: 'who would not at once admit that the East clearly indicates the duty of praying with the face turned towards it with the symbolic suggestion that the soul is looking upon the dawn of the true light?'⁶⁰ Despite the use of a rhetorical question, clearly expecting the answer 'no one', and intended to suggest a near universal acceptance of the practice as an obvious necessity, Origen knows that not everyone adopts the desired direction for prayer. For he admits in the following sentence that it is by no means universal, since some prefer to face the obvious light of a window rather than a blank wall beyond which lies the invisible 'dawn of the true light.' The rhetoric is that of condemnation rather than accurate description.

Perhaps we would be on safer ground if we were to accept the statement of Basil: 'we all look to the East for prayers, but few of us know that our ancient fatherland, the paradise that God planted in Eden, was in the East.'⁶¹ Acceptance of this as an authoritative statement of near universal practice could be advocated based on the fact that Basil's concern here is not to establish a rule for prayer but to illustrate a point in his argument concerning the Holy Spirit. The significance of the sentence lies not in 'we all look to the East for prayers' but in the claim that 'few of us know' why. We may take it that Basil believes that, at least a substantial

⁵⁹ Bradshaw, *Search*, 18-19.

⁶⁰ Origen, *On Prayer*, 32.1, translation from Eric George Jay (trans. & notes), *Origen's Treatise on Prayer* (London: SPCK, 1954) 215-6.

⁶¹ Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27.66.60-3; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106.

majority of Christians face east to pray, though it cannot entirely be ruled out that he is taking the opportunity to urge the practice on many who do not.

Finally, Tertullian writes in very different circumstances: 'Others ... imagine that the sun is the Christian god. They have observed that when we pray, we face to the east.'⁶² Here he is writing to counter the accusation of sun worship made by certain non-Christians. They have observed that Christians (once again, at least a significant proportion) pray facing east. May we take these accusers as reliable witnesses? After all, they might be repeating a popular slur unsupported by any evidence. But surely, if that were the case, Tertullian could dismiss the claim by means of a robust denial of the assertion on which it was based. That he deals with the matter in a work, *To the Nations*, addressed to non-Christians, but does not mention it when writing for Christians in *On Prayer*, suggests further that the practice was sufficiently well established to need no reinforcement among the faithful.

Context, clearly, is important here, the circumstances which prompt the assertion and the nature of the rhetorical techniques employed. And, as suggested in the case of Tertullian, the wider context of other works by the same or other authors.

Thirdly Bradshaw censures the supposition that, 'when a variety of explanations exist for the origin of a practice, one of them must be genuine.'⁶³ Often descriptions of liturgical practices are accompanied by explanations of how they arose. Frequently, several authors will offer different explanations. Even if one of these seems, on balance, to be more likely than the others, that does not guarantee it as correct. It is, as Bradshaw points out, 'tempting in such instances to opt for the explanation that one finds most congenial to one's point of view and to discount the rest.'⁶⁴

As a modification to this last caution, it is necessary to observe that it applies even when the 'variety' extends only to a single explanation. If current thinking leads scholars to consider only one source for a practice, we should not accept that this 'must' therefore be correct. Thus, we shall see that some liturgical

⁶² Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 13, Translation: online, Howe (2007), http://www.tertullian.org/works/ad_nationes.htm (accessed 03/07/2015).

⁶³ Bradshaw, *Search*, 19-20.

⁶⁴ Bradshaw, *Search*, 19.

scholars have, in the past, mistakenly assumed that it is 'obvious' that the divine office originated from Jewish synagogue worship. And, by a process of circular reasoning, that therefore the practice of the first Jewish prayer book 'must' pre-date the Christian office. This is an error encouraged by the biological model which, on the basis that, 'a horse indeed begets a horse', leads us too easily to assume that a formal religious practice must derive from an earlier formal religious practice.

I propose to add two further cautions to those which Bradshaw proposes.⁶⁵ The first of these is that we may not, without evidence, read-back later practices into earlier times even though other factors are similar. Thus, Reif urges: 'It requires constant scholarly caution if one is to avoid the pitfalls of making assumptions about one element in history on the basis of one's knowledge of another ... It is altogether too simple a matter to presuppose that what was standard in one period must have enjoyed the same status in earlier or later generations ... later concepts may turn out to be based on earlier precedents and may have to be redated but, in the absence of proof, no unsupported assumptions may be made of this nature.'⁶⁶ This applies even if, or perhaps especially if, later generations maintain that their customs preserve those of previous generations. Again Reif sounds the appropriate note of caution:

There is, of course, always the danger of reading backwards instead of forwards in the historical analysis of religious trends and are must be taken to avoid the trap of assuming that what a later form of religious practice claims as its earliest precedent is accurately to be identified as such. It is indeed part of the stock-in-trade of the major faiths throughout the centuries that they rarely claim to be innovating but almost always to be returning to their roots and their authentic origins.⁶⁷

Secondly, we should beware of the simplistic assumption that similarities necessarily indicate close relationship (in the sense of a common inheritance). If two prayers, for instance, have similar features we cannot claim that one is a form of the other if those similarities are such as would be arrived at by two authors composing for the same circumstances in ignorance of each other's work. In such

⁶⁵ It seems that Bradshaw would agree with these, however. See rear-cover material, Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*.

⁶⁶ Stefan C. Reif. *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer, New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 14.

⁶⁷ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 22-3; and see comments on legitimation, below.

case, the unusual features take on significance, and the more unusual they are the greater the likelihood of a relationship between the two. As an example, the Lord's Prayer is found in two forms in the New Testament and they are apparently related by the assertion, in each case, that this is how Jesus taught his followers to pray. The hermeneutics of suspicion, however, require more careful comparison, for most of the common features might be ascribable to themes found in a common Jewish background. The shared word ἐπιούσιος, however, by its uniqueness suggests a common Greek source.⁶⁸

Bradshaw's personal methodology may be conveniently summarised. The application of his principles is based on in depth study of texts and contexts, and 'the close comparison of texts'.⁶⁹ Which will also lie at the heart of the methodology adopted here.

2.6 The hermeneutics of suspicion and socio-rhetorical exegesis.

While the above warnings are important, Bradshaw, in his emphasis on the *hermeneutics of suspicion*, is effectively pointing us towards the need to apply thorough exegetical techniques to patristic liturgical texts, the same techniques used in biblical studies. Stenger ascribes the first call for such careful reading to Wettstein, who in 1752 wrote, 'Just as we read the Holy Scriptures and secular laws - and all books old and new - with the same eyes, so also should we employ the same principles for understanding the Scriptures that we use in understanding other books.'⁷⁰

More than a century later, Nietzsche, was making similar comments in rather more trenchant fashion:

Another characteristic of the theologian is his lack of *capacity* for *philology*. What I mean here by the word philology is, in a general sense, to be understood as the art of reading well, of being able to take account of facts *without* falsifying them by interpretation, without losing either caution, patience, or subtlety, owing to one's desire to understand. Philology as *ephexis* in interpretation, whether one be dealing

⁶⁸ Mt 6:9-13; Lk. 11:2-4; and see Origen *On Prayer* 17 for the difficulty of translating ἐπιούσιος.

⁶⁹ Paul Bradshaw, in answer to a question put by the present author, XVII International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 2015.

⁷⁰ Johann Jakob Wettstein 'Über die Auslegung des Neuen Testaments' in *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Amsterdam, 1751/2) II, 875, quoted in Werner Stenger, *Introduction to New Testament Exegesis*, translated by Douglas W Stott (Grand Rapids, Mi: Eerdmans, 1993), 1.

with books, newspaper reports, human destinies or meteorological records – not to speak of the ‘salvation of the soul.’ ... The manner in which a theologian, whether in Berlin or in Rome interprets a verse from the ‘Scriptures’ or an experience, or the triumph of his nation’s army for instance under the superior guiding light of David’s Psalms, is always so exceedingly *daring*, that it is enough to make a philologist’s hair stand on end.⁷¹

While Nietzsche’s ‘Antichrist’ is not in general noteworthy for ‘caution, patience, or subtlety’, it marks a significant contribution to the development of exegesis (the art of reading well, Nietzsche’s ‘philology’). For it places him, along with Marx and Freud, in what Paul Ricoeur termed ‘the school of Suspicion’.⁷² And thus it constitutes a challenge to the understanding of scripture, and a basis for the development of the hermeneutics of suspicion which originated with Ricoeur’s response to that challenge.

Since then the application of exegetical techniques to biblical texts has developed to such an extent that one might be forgiven for assuming that ‘exegesis’ is a specialist term applied exclusively to the interpretation of Christian scriptures. Bradshaw is thus justified in making the contrary plea that other texts, in our case patristic writings on liturgical matters, be read with the same exegetical thoroughness as scripture. The suggestion may, however, be offered that liturgical writings are straightforward descriptions of worship practices, with the implied question: so what need of complex exegesis? In answer to this, I suggest that the following two points should be considered.

Firstly, the fundamental texts of liturgy, prayers, hymns etc. are as much in need of exegetical examination as any other, with the additional question of their *Sitz im Leben*: why *this* text *here*? Or perhaps, how did it get here? Secondly, apparently ‘straight forward’ descriptions of liturgical events occur only in the church orders – of uncertain authorship, place of origin, or date, often bearing a history of much redaction, and a variety of ideologies, all of which call into question the straight-forwardness of the prescriptions.⁷³ Other descriptions,

⁷¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘The Antichrist’ In *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated by Anthony M Ludovici, Vol. 16, 125-231 (Edinburgh: T N Foulis, 1911), § 52, p. 206, his emphasis and ellipsis, with a translator’s footnote that ἔφεξις means reserve, caution; the original was written in 1888.

⁷² Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: an Essay on Interpretation*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 32.

⁷³ Covered very thoroughly in Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, 27-58

though more reliably assigned to place, time and author, are found embedded in works with very different purposes, for instance polemic, inspirational, or didactic. In these cases, strands of liturgical meaning may be interwoven with the author's other concerns, their extraction requiring precise exegetical analysis. In our case, we are concerned primarily with authors who have been educated in the Greek model of rhetoric (perhaps to different levels), who are intending to influence groups, and are motivated by theological, social or political considerations.

For these reasons, I propose to adopt a methodology of thorough exegesis of texts informed by the methods of socio-rhetorical exegesis expounded by Vernon K Robbins.⁷⁴ In the course of this exposition, Robbins identifies several 'textures of texts' which constitute the sub-divisions of his method. The first of these, which he terms *Inner Texture*, is concerned with 'features in the language of the text itself', repetition and patterns, the use of dialogue and narration, the structure of argument.⁷⁵ This Robbins describes as 'a stage of analysis prior to analysis of "meanings", that is, prior to "real interpretation" of the text.'⁷⁶

The second sub-section is *Intertexture*, a factor of importance in dealing with the work of the Cappadocian Fathers with their frequent quotations of and references to scripture.⁷⁷ Robbins relates this to the place of the *chreia* in ancient education.⁷⁸ The use of chreiai, brief quotations, was developed throughout primary, secondary and, for those studying rhetoric, tertiary education.⁷⁹ A chreia might be explicitly attributed, thus Basil writes that 'the Apostle clearly instructs: "The one who does not work is not to eat."⁸⁰ It may be identified as a quotation but without precise attribution as Paul's declaration in *Romans* that 'as it is written,

⁷⁴ Vernon K Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher, a Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996); *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996).

⁷⁵ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 7-39.

⁷⁶ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 7.

⁷⁷ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 40-70.

⁷⁸ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 41.

⁷⁹ Ronald F Hock and Edward N O'Neil, *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Vol. 2 Classroom Exercises* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

⁸⁰ Basil of Caesarea, *Longer Rule*, PG 31.1009-16, quoting 2 Thess 3: 10; translation Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 243-7; see section 6.5 below.

“The one who is righteous will live by faith.”⁸¹ Or, it may simply be introduced without any indication of an external origin as in the case of Paul’s use of the same quotation in Galatians.⁸² Robbins uses the term ‘recontextualization’ for such un-signposted chreiai.⁸³ Some changes may be made in the wording of the chreia so that it fits the new context. Paul’s use of the above quotation from Habakkuk is perhaps an extreme example of this, as the Septuagint version of this text is ‘The one who is righteous will live by *my* faith.’⁸⁴

Paraphrasing the saying was certainly possible, and, indeed, Theon of Alexandria required that students should be able to recite chreiai not only in the original, but in other words too.⁸⁵ Thus an adage from Proverbs: ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότιν εὐλογεῖ ὁ θεὸς (God loves a cheerful and generous man), is quoted by Paul as: ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότιν ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεὸς (God loves a cheerful giver), again without any suggestion that it is a quotation.⁸⁶ There is naturally a problem of recognising such recontextualization of paraphrased chreiai, but as in the above example the verbatim quotation of some key words may help. When this can be recognised, however, it is very useful in appreciating sub-texts. Thus in an extended example, Robbins goes on to show how Mark’s account of the passion recontextualizes much of the first part of Psalm 22, quoting phrases and even isolated words drawn from various points of the psalm, paraphrasing and extending them.⁸⁷

The meaning of a text, however, cannot be correctly understood without knowing its external context, its social setting in both general and specific terms. Texts cannot properly have meaning in isolation, David Bellos maintains.⁸⁸ We may go further, however; even assigning meaning to isolated words and phrases, may not always be a trivial matter. For many such elements carry connotations, additional to their simple meaning, which are naturally, perhaps unconsciously, understood by readers or hearers situated in the relevant cultural setting. Such

⁸¹ Rom. 1: 17; see Hab. 2: 4.

⁸² Gal. 3: 11.

⁸³ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 48.

⁸⁴ LXX Hab. 2: 4, but note the difference from the Hebrew: ‘the righteous will live by *his* faith.’

⁸⁵ Ronald F Hock and Edward N O’Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: Vol. 1 The Progymnasmata* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986) 95.

⁸⁶ Prov. 22: 8 in LXX only; 2 Cor 9:7.

⁸⁷ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 48-50; Mk. 15: 14: 34.

⁸⁸ David Bellos, *Is that a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation* (London: Penguin, 2011) 78.

extended meanings contribute particularly to poetry but also add subtlety to prose. As an example, Bellos discusses the title of the film called, in its American version, 'It's Complicated'.⁸⁹ An elementary translation of this into French would be 'C'est compliqué', but when the French version appeared, it was titled 'Pas si simple!', for to French-speakers, 'compiqué', can have connotations of 'over-sophisticated' or 'perverse' which the English 'complicated' does not.

Considerations like these lead Robbins to introduce the idea of *Social and Cultural Texture*.⁹⁰ Something which underlies all written texts:

Everyone living in an area knows common social and cultural topics either consciously or instinctively. Becoming an adult in that environment means acquiring knowledge, consciously or unconsciously, of these social and cultural values, patterns or codes. ... Knowing the common social and cultural topics in a text can help an interpreter to avoid ethnocentric and anachronistic interpretation.⁹¹

New Testament exegetes who live in a post-industrial, urban-centred society, Robbins emphasises, must be aware that their social and cultural setting is very different from the pre-industrial, agrarian-based system which they are studying.⁹²

While the world of fourth century Anatolia, was fundamentally the same in culture as that of the New Testament era, there were some significant differences consequent on the new status of Christianity. The Cappadocian Fathers, leaders belonging to the educated class of Anatolia, were immersed in Hellenistic culture and the Greek rhetorical tradition. Pagans and Jews were still to be found, together with those of superficial faith accepting the religion of current imperial favour just as their forbears had the cult of Augustus. But the interactions that concern us are almost entirely between Christian groups: Arians opposed adherents of Nicaea, uncontrolled monasticism caused serious problems, and there was local bickering over niceties of belief and matters liturgical. Further, the imperial power, now nominally Christian, presented a threat of a different nature to that of earlier times.

⁸⁹ Bellos, *Is that a Fish in Your Ear?* 78-80.

⁹⁰ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 71-94.

⁹¹ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 75.

⁹² Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 83.

Many social-scientific studies are concerned with the classification of social entities into typologies in imitation of biological classification; thus Robbins, under the heading of *Social and Cultural Texture*, makes use of a typology of sects developed by Wilson which classifies them according to their attitude and response to the world around them, perceived as evil.⁹³ Later (when considering *Ideological Texture*) he offers a taxonomy of groups, based on one by Jeremy Boissevain, which classifies them by internal organisation and interaction.⁹⁴ Such typologies raise the following questions: do we always have sufficient information to classify; how can we handle overlapping classification; and what further information, if any, does such a classification provide? In the absence of answers to these questions, it is difficult to see how such classifications can be helpful, and indeed some social scientists are critical of their usefulness.⁹⁵ Moreover, Robbins misses some key concepts from other scholars, which will be found useful. So, although accepting Robbins' basic principles, we will pass over the typologies to introduce some alternative ideas.

It is not possible to provide here a full description of the development of social scientific exegesis, nor to give proper consideration to criticisms and responses. An overview of these, however, together with a very thorough survey of the literature, are provided by David Horrell.⁹⁶ Moreover, Philip Esler provides a coherent and convincing justification for the use of social-scientific methods in New Testament studies.⁹⁷ As part of this exposition he distinguishes typologies from models: 'a model is a conceptualization of a group of phenomena, a simplified and schematized picture of reality, which is capable of generating a set of hypotheses which, once verified, may either found or substantiate a theory.'⁹⁸

⁹³ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 72-4; Bryan R Wilson, 'Typologie des sectes dans une perspective dynamique et comparative', *Archives de sociologie des religions*, 8e Année, no. 16 (Jul-Dec, 1963): 49-63.

⁹⁴ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 100-1; Jeremy Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974).

⁹⁵ See Philip Esler's discussion of typologies, below.

⁹⁶ David G Horrell, 'Introduction' in David G Horrell (ed), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 3-28.

⁹⁷ Philip F Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', in Horrell, *Social-Scientific Approaches* 123-50, (see note 101), originally published as chapter 1 of Philip F Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), references here are to the reprinted version.

⁹⁸ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 134.

Models, he continues, possess an 'inner dynamic' producing a 'predictable response', 'typologies, on the other hand, lack a "mechanism" they merely classify phenomena into certain accentuated categories and do not specify what may be expected of mixed cases falling in between the types.' Put simply: 'Models are explanatory and predictive, typologies ... are not.' The use of social-scientific exegesis to 'plug-holes' in early textual data should be considered a serious misuse of the method, Esler maintains; typologies and models are not 'something akin to social laws' but 'mental constructs, research tools.'⁹⁹ Although these research tools are not intended to provide information lacking in source texts, 'any particular model *shapes* the way in which evidence is selected and interpreted.' A model may therefore perhaps be best understood as sensitizing the reader to possibilities which *are* present, and providing the vocabulary to express them.¹⁰⁰

Esler proceeds immediately to an example, that of the concept of *legitimation*.¹⁰¹ This refers to the explanation and justification of a social institution, after its establishment, aimed at its rank-and-file membership.¹⁰² Examples provided are: the American *Declaration of Independence*, the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, and Luke-Acts.¹⁰³ The main purpose, Esler declares, is 'integration': 'each individual in the institutional order must feel that his life, in its various stages, is meaningful, that his biography makes sense in this institution.'¹⁰⁴ Although Esler mentions only the legitimation of an institution for the benefit of its own members, we may question whether it may not also apply to an explanation and justification aimed at those outside the institution who are, or may be persuaded to become, sympathetic.

One aspect of legitimation is the formation of a 'symbolic universe', which presents the members of an institution with a world in which everything is in its right place, and also orders history: 'individuals are linked with their predecessors

⁹⁹ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 139-40.

¹⁰⁰ Horrell, 'Introduction', 20, his emphasis in the quotation.

¹⁰¹ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 142; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

¹⁰² Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 142.

¹⁰³ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 143.

¹⁰⁴ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 143.

and successors in a meaningful totality, so they can conceive of themselves as belong to a universe which was there before they were born and will be there after they die.¹⁰⁵ Esler goes on to point out that, 'a common characteristic of the symbolic universe erected to legitimate a new social order [is] the claim that it is not novel, but is actually old and traditional', thus, 'Luke takes great pains to present Christianity as a faith with a past.'¹⁰⁶ Conversely those wishing to undermine the legitimation of an opposing group can be expected to include the accusation of novelty.

Legitimation is one aspect of the inter-relationship of groups, it contrasts with accusations of *deviancy*, a phenomenon described by John Barclay.¹⁰⁷ Barclay applies the term to two simultaneous processes in which, Christianity became separated from its Jewish origins becoming a distinct social and religious entity', while Christian groups also 'defined their own boundaries, a process which involved excluding those they considered to have deviated from the norms of Christian practice or belief.'¹⁰⁸ Deviance, Barclay suggests is a social product, quoting Howard Becker:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label.¹⁰⁹

From an exegetical point of view, moreover, it is necessary to ask the questions: whose definitions of deviance are operating here, and whose interests do those definitions serve?¹¹⁰ Of particular interest and importance is the suggestion, attributed to Kai Theodor Erikson, that 'the labelling of deviants can perform an

¹⁰⁵ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 144.

¹⁰⁶ Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', 145.

¹⁰⁷ John M G Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity.' in Horrell, *Social-Scientific Approaches* 289-308, (see note 101), reprinted from Philip F Esler (ed), *Modelling early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, (London, : Routledge, 1995), references here are to the reprinted version.

¹⁰⁸ Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 291.

¹⁰⁹ Howard S Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, Free Press 1963) 9, quoted in Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 293.

¹¹⁰ Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 294.

important function in the boundary maintenance of an insecure community.¹¹¹ That is, 'the deviant is a person whose activities have moved outside the margins of the group and when the community calls him to account for that vagrancy it is making a statement about the nature and placement of its boundaries.'¹¹²

While Barclay does not expand on his brief mention of deviant 'practice', it is appropriate to do so here, as being particularly relevant to a study of worship. Though not attracting much attention from those involved in New Testament exegesis, *ritual* is of particular significance in the liturgical field. This term 'is usually said to involve a series of actions (a) performed mainly for their symbolic value and (b) that tend to be repeated with some regularity, if not frequently within (c) a particular social group.'¹¹³

While criteria (b) and (c) clearly apply to much of worship in monastery or local church, particularly the regular daily office, we should be careful about the apparent priority of symbolism in the above definition. We have noted above that originally utilitarian actions, such as the eastern Great Entrance, become ritual performances and acquire symbolic significance.¹¹⁴ Utilitarian actions, moreover may persist long after their usefulness has gone. Walter Frere observes that, 'it does not follow, because a practice began on good utilitarian grounds, that it therefore will remain as a useful practice for ever after. Indeed, it is very possible that it may survive as a practice long after its utility is gone; for ecclesiastics are, next to lawyers, the most tenacious class of society.'¹¹⁵ With the possible change of 'ecclesiastics' to 'churchgoers' the words are as relevant now as they were at the beginning of the twentieth century. In some cases, moreover, the behaviour at the heart of ritual may be merely customary rather than utilitarian, possibly because its original purpose, whether utilitarian or symbolic, has been long forgotten. Thus, facing east to pray, a custom apparently originating in pagan practice, was adopted by Christians and urged by teachers and bishops, a variety

¹¹¹ Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 296.

¹¹² Kai Theodor Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: a Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, (London: John Wiley, 1966) 11, quoted in Barclay, 'Deviance and Apostasy', 296, footnote 8.

¹¹³ Paul F Bradshaw and Katharine E Harmon, 'Ritual' In Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor, *The Study of Liturgy and Worship*, 21-32 (London: SPCK, 2013) 21.

¹¹⁴ See section 2.2.

¹¹⁵ Walter Howard Frere, *The Principles of Religious Ceremonial*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1906) 115.

of different symbolic explanations, from Origen and Basil for instance.¹¹⁶ Indeed, such explanations may change over time. Thus, while it is not an invariable law, a useful rule of thumb is that rituals are prior and persistent, their associated symbolisms being secondary and mutable.

Nevertheless, it is characteristic of rituals that they tend to acquire one particular symbolism, perhaps unacknowledged and even unknown by their practitioners; they function as group boundary markers. This becomes apparent in an overview, provided by *New Scientist*, of investigative work performed by anthropologists and social-psychologists.¹¹⁷ Recent experimental work focussing on children leads to the conclusion that rituals, even if meaningless in themselves, are strong components of group identity: 'What's striking about rituals is not just their power to signal group membership but also to create the social glue that binds people into groups.'¹¹⁸ A similar point is made by Mark Searle: 'through such ritual acts, verbal and non-verbal, the collective body acts corporately and affirms its corporate identity.'¹¹⁹ Indeed, Bradshaw and Harmon acknowledge that, amongst other things, 'a liturgical ritual might serve to solidify a community's group identity.'¹²⁰ The most important symbolic value of the actions involved may thus be that of group identity and membership, deriving from their ritual nature. In the terminology of Esler, each performance of the ritual is an act of legitimation re-establishing the corporate identity and reassuring each individual that their lives have meaning within it. Further, deviancy in ritual being easier to spot than theological difference, forms a much more certain boundary marker. We shall see that these observations apply to the ritual which is the Daily Office.

The concepts of legitimation and deviancy are examples of ways in which social-scientific criticism can contribute to Robbins' *Social and Cultural Texture*. A further supplement to Robbins' textures, is a proposal by John Hall Elliott of a scheme for the systematic use of social-scientific methods in the form of a series of nine

¹¹⁶ See above section 2.4, and below, chapter 10.

¹¹⁷ Dan Jones, 'Spooky Actions', *New Scientist*, January 17, 2015, 36-9; the strange title curiously becomes 'Dark Rites' on page 36, the article, however, says nothing to suggest that ritual should be considered either 'spooky' or 'dark'.

¹¹⁸ Jones, 'Spooky Actions', 39.

¹¹⁹ Mark Searle, 'Ritual' In Paul F Bradshaw and John Melloh, *Foundations in Ritual Studies: A Reader for Students of Christian Worship*, 9-16 (London: SPCK, 2007) 13.

¹²⁰ Bradshaw and Harmon, 'Ritual', 25.

questions, or rather groups of questions, 'that might be addressed to any biblical document', and indeed to any patristic document:¹²¹

1. 'Who are the explicitly mentioned (or implied) *readers-hearers* of this document?' This includes questions of the social and cultural relationships with the author(s). Although Elliott does not clearly state this, we should consider the case where the intended audience is different from that mentioned in the text. Thus, for example, an 'open letter' published in a newspaper, often addressed to some powerful or influential person or group, is, by its genre, principally targeted at the newspaper readers.

2. 'Who is the explicitly mentioned or implied *author-sender* of the text?' This includes questions of the relationship of the author(s) to the declared and intended audiences.

3. 'How is the *social situation* described in the text?' This includes not only what is explicitly described but also what can be inferred from the text or can be found from external sources.

4. 'How does the author(s) *diagnose and evaluate* the situation?' This includes aspects which are approved or disapproved as well as ideas and beliefs concerned with this assessment.

5. 'How is the *strategy* of the text evident?' Which includes the genre of the document, argumentation, themes, and ideology.

6. 'What *response* does the author(s) seek from the targeted audience?'

7. 'How does the author(s) attempt to *motivate and persuade* the audience?'

8. 'What is the nature of the situation and strategy of this text as seen from a social-scientific *etic perspective*?'¹²² That is, how do we set this situation and text in a social-scientific model?

¹²¹ John Hall Elliott, 'Social-Scientific Criticism of a Biblical Text: 1 Peter as an Example' in Horrell, *Social-Scientific Approaches* 339-58, reprinted from John Hall Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1995), references here are to the reprinted version, quotations from pp. 342-4, the emphasis is Elliott's in each case; the word 'biblical' may be omitted without detrimental effect on the scheme.

¹²² *Etic*: terminology and concepts external to the culture of the author(s) and readers. In our case, the concepts of social-science: Elliott, 'Social-Scientific Criticism of a Biblical Text', 349, footnote 3.

9. 'What are the *self-interests and/or group interests* that motivated the author(s)?' This includes questions of the *ideology* of the author(s) and any groups involved in the situation.

As implied by his title, Elliott goes on to address these questions in the case of 1 Peter.

In the above, we have already strayed into the area which Robbins terms *Ideological Texture*.¹²³ Indeed, there is close relationship between ideological and social-cultural textures, as seen from Robbins' statement of three ways of analyzing the ideology of a text: 'analyzing the social and cultural location of the implied author of the text; analyzing the ideology of power in the discourse of the text; and analyzing the ideology in the mode of intellectual discourse both in the text and in the interpretation of the text.'¹²⁴

Put simply, ideology refers to the principles or biases which underlie the thinking and writings of authors. However, Robbins account of ideology is rather unhelpful. 'For interpreters of ideology, it is not very satisfactory to talk about 'one person's ideology', he tells us, 'One person's particular way of thinking is the subject of psychology and individual aesthetics rather than ideology.'¹²⁵ Since the texts of the Patristic era, like those of the New Testament with which Robbins is concerned, are almost all the expressions of the ideas of individuals, we must wonder if ideology is at all relevant, at least in this understanding of the word. Robbins, moreover, applies the concept of ideology to present day interpretation:

The beginning place for ideological analysis and interpretation, therefore, is analysis and interpretation of me, the writer of this sentence, and you, the reader of this sentence. The second place for ideological analysis and interpretation, is other people's interpretation of the text in which we are interested. The third and last place for ideological analysis and interpretation is the text that is the guest in our interpretive conversation with each other.¹²⁶

Thus, ideological analysis is apparently concerned with a present-day discussion between individuals who, if we accept the above stricture on personal ideology, cannot properly be ideologically analysed. Nevertheless, Robbins goes on to

¹²³ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 95-119.

¹²⁴ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 111.

¹²⁵ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 95.

¹²⁶ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 95.

describe his own ideological background at some length before encouraging his readers to do the same for themselves.¹²⁷ There is, of course, much value in this. Present readers will, I hope, have noticed the use of the expression ‘principles or biases’ above, and recognised that distinguishing these two categories is a matter of the writer’s *and reader’s* own ideological makeup. But, unfortunately, Robbins’ concentration on the present discussion between exegete and reader makes an ancient text, which may have influenced people to self-sacrifice and martyrdom, appear less of a guest-of-honour and more of an interloper in a present-day academic conversation. Moreover, ideology appears not as a property (texture) of the text itself but of the reception of that text. Robbins’ over-estimate of the importance of present day considerations should not, however, lead us to reject the consideration of ancient ideology in exegesis, nor, indeed, to ignore the ideology of the exegete. We need instead a more relevant and helpful understanding of ideology.

Finding such a definition, however, is by no means simple. Terry Eagleton, begins his book on the subject with the observation that ‘nobody has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology’, adding, ‘and this book will be no exception.’¹²⁸ As Drucker puts it ‘in many works which raise the question about the relationship between what men think and how their societies operate some mention of ideology is made. Since the variety of thinkers who write about this relationship have a variety of views on the subject, it is not at all surprising that they disagree about just what an ideology is,’ to which a little later he adds, ‘for practical purposes the career of ideology begins with Marx.’¹²⁹ That is, the term must be restricted to mean political ideology or the ideology of power. Further, the term is often used pejoratively, as it was by Napoleon Bonaparte, who referred to his political opponents as *ideologues*.

For our purposes, however, it is, I suggest, better to adopt the more general (not restricted to a dominant class), and neutral (without political bias), meaning that an *ideology* is a set of ideas either conscious or unconscious which guide the

¹²⁷ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 96-9.

¹²⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology. An introduction*, (London: Verso, 1991) 1.

¹²⁹ H. M. Drucker, ‘Marx’s Concept of Ideology’, *Philosophy*, Vol. 47, No. 180 (Apr., 1972), 152.

goals expectations, and actions of a group, or indeed of an individual.¹³⁰ And this appears to be the meaning that Robbins adopts. We must, however, be aware that where we perceive ideology in an ancient writing, we do so through the filter of our own ideological stance.

The proposed methodology then will adopt the cautions of Bradshaw with the additions I have advocated, and make an in-depth study of texts and contexts using the techniques of socio-rhetorical exegesis extending this in the social-science area as explained above. With the adoption of this methodology, we may now proceed to the consideration of those factors, largely external to fourth century Cappadocian Christianity, which nevertheless form backgrounds to and may have influenced the development of daily worship there.

¹³⁰ See Eagleton, *Ideology. An introduction*, 1-32, for a thorough analysis of the various meanings, including the neutral and general one suggested here.

3. The Question of Jewish Influence on Early Christian Worship

3.1 Introduction.

On the subject of Jewish influence on Christian worship, Lee I Levine writes:

On the assumption that the early church borrowed heavily from Jewish precedents in the first century CE, Christian scholars have long shown an interest in Jewish Liturgy. Since many of these studies appeared more than a generation ago, in the mid twentieth century, before the explosion of studies relating to Second Temple Literature, and particularly the Qumran scrolls, these scholars drew most of their analogies from rabbinic literature. Sharing the same assumptions as those who specialized in the study of Jewish liturgy, they assumed that the prayers finding expression in rabbinic literature existed well before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 and thus served as the background, and in many cases the source of inspiration, for Christian liturgical initiatives in the first century.¹

Amongst these mid twentieth century scholars, though not mentioned by Levine, is Gregory Dix, who, describing the first section of the eucharistic liturgy (now called the 'Liturgy of the Word'), says that this 'was in its Shape simply a continuation of the Jewish synagogue service of our Lord's time, which was carried straight over into the Christian church by its Jewish nucleus in the decade after the passion.'² Dix's view of a single, first-century, origin for Christian liturgy has become 'all pervasive', Paul Bradshaw writes, adding 'although he applied his argument principally to the Eucharist, others have extended it to cover other early Christian rites. He has thus enabled ... the traditional theory of a single liturgical archetype ... to retain a position of pre-eminence down to the present day.'³

In this chapter I shall argue that more recent scholarship reveals how little certainty there is about the synagogue and its liturgy at that early period, and that what is known at a slightly later stage of its history does not demonstrate a link to the Christian office. Nevertheless, Jewish prayer during the early Christian centuries is worthy of examination. There are, I suggest, Jewish influences on Christian worship but they are subtler and more complex than a straight forward

¹ Lee I Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue, The First Thousand Years*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 558-9.

² Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A & C Black, 1945) 36, Dix's capitalisation.

³ Paul F Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 1992) 7.

importation from the synagogue. For this analysis we must begin with the Jerusalem temple (which not only appears in New Testament accounts but is also important for first and second century developments in the synagogue); we will acknowledge that the practice of many Jews was not temple-based (with a brief examination of the Essenes), and we will examine the evidence for worship in synagogues. In each case our focus will be on aspects which might be claimed to have influenced the practices of Christian daily prayer. Finally, we will ask whether there is Jewish influence on apparently liturgical aspects of the New Testament.

3.2 The Temple.

It may be thought that the temple, being in Jerusalem, concerned with animal sacrifice, and destroyed in 70 CE, could have little direct influence on Christian worship, particularly outside of Palestine. Nevertheless, Levine is able to claim, 'Christian and rabbinic prayer modes ... both ultimately derived – at least in part – from Second Temple worship and ritual configurations.'⁴ Surprisingly, perhaps, the temple, by way of New Testament accounts, has had an influence on the Daily Office. We may not simply assume that the temple's significance ceased post-destruction, even beyond the boundaries of the homeland. Thus, the *Mishnah*, was compiled about 130 years after the second temple had ceased to function, and 'more than half of the Mishnah is devoted to one aspect or another of the temple and its cult.'⁵ Cohen goes on to suggest that this may be either because the compilers looked forward to the re-establishment of temple and cult, or that study of the divine commandments was seen as a way of fulfilling them though they could not be performed.⁶ In view of its dating, the Mishnah should be regarded like early Church orders - do descriptions relate to actual temple practices or what the authors/oral-transmitters thought *ought* to have been done?

While temple worship involved sacrifices and offerings for a variety of reasons, what must concern us is the regular daily and weekly practice and, specifically,

⁴ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 559.

⁵ Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 3rd edn., (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), see pp. 212-3 for general introduction to the Mishnah including dating, quotation from p. 216.

⁶ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 217,

the timing of these.⁷ 'The most important sacrifice was the *Tamid* ("continual offering" or "perpetual offering") that was burned on the altar every morning and afternoon.'⁸ Josephus records, as a Mosaic instruction, that the two sacrifices should be 'at the opening and close of the day.'⁹ This would seem to refer to the two daily sacrifices which are specified in Exodus and Numbers.¹⁰ Assuming that these timings were originally adopted in the temple, at some stage the evening sacrifice seems to have been brought forward to an earlier time. For Josephus describes the two sacrifices, at the time of the destruction of the temple, as taking place 'in the morning and at the ninth hour.'¹¹ He does not, however, make further comment which might explain when and why this change was made.

Rabbinic opinion at a later period than Josephus, however, seems to have been that the required time was during the late afternoon, as seen in the Tractate *Peṣaḥim* of the *Mishnah*, which deals with the rules for Passover. In establishing the relationship between the daily evening sacrifice and that of the Passover, this text comments that 'the continual (daily) offering was slaughtered half an hour after the eighth hour, and sacrificed half an hour after the ninth hour.'¹² It goes on to say that according to R. Rabha this was based on a translation of Num. 28.4 as specifying 'towards evening'.

It might seem that prayer did not form part of these sacrifices. Certainly, there is no suggestion of accompanying prayer of any form to be found in Exodus or Numbers nor indeed in those parts of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, or Ezekiel which deal with the sacrificial cult. Cohen tells us that, in the first temple, 'The act of sacrifice was silent, neither the priest nor the worshipper was required to say

⁷ See full descriptions in e.g. James W. McKinnon, 'The Exclusion of Musical Instruments from the Ancient Synagogue', in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 106 (1979 - 1980), 77-87; James W. McKinnon, 'On the Question of Psalmody in the Ancient Synagogue', *Early Music History*, Vol. 6 (1986), 159-191.

⁸ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 55.

⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3.10.1; Josephus, *The Jewish Antiquities Books IV-VI*, trans. Henry, St. John Thackeray. Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1930).

¹⁰ Ex. 29:38-42; 30:7-8 and Num. 28:1-8.

¹¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14.4.3; *Flavius Josephus, The Jewish Antiquities Books XIV-XVI*, trans. Ralph Marcus, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1957).

¹² *Peṣaḥim* 5.1; see 'Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Pesachim', in *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/pesachimtoc.html> (accessed 05/07/2015).

anything. The cult of the second temple too was silent. A writer of the second century BCE admires the remarkable silence that prevailed in the temple as the priests scurried about, performing their sacred tasks.¹³ The *Letter of Aristeas*, which Cohen cites here is, however, a piece of pseudepigraphia which does not seem to be a reliable source.¹⁴ It is perhaps, however, more convincing that 'according to the Mishnah, prayer was a statutory part of the daily Tamid sacrifice in two ways. First, the priests, immediately after bringing the sacrifice and before offering the incense, would pray on behalf of the nation and then recite the *Shema*' and the priestly benediction.'¹⁵ Nevertheless, the *Mishna*, originating more than a century after the destruction of the temple, might not be entirely reliable on this point, and Cohen goes on to suggest that it is difficult to assess the historicity of the claim.¹⁶

On occasions, however, the men in the court of the Israelites would, it seems, be called upon to join in worship. 'The recitation of certain formulae accompanied a minority of the rituals and on special occasions the milling crowds could declaim a response to a formal recitation.'¹⁷ It seems likely that also singing accompanied the act of sacrifice.¹⁸ Indeed, McKinnon suggests that the final act of the sacrificial liturgy, that of offering the prepared limbs of the slaughtered lamb on the altar fire, was accompanied by the singing of the psalm of the day with instrumental accompaniment. He continues by observing that

This intimate connection between sacrifice and music, particularly instrumental music, comes as no surprise to the observer of other religious rites of the ancient Mediterranean region. Animal sacrifice seems actually to have required musical accompaniment, a circumstance suggesting some deep religious or magical link between the two.¹⁹

¹³ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 58, citing *Letter of Aristeas*, 92-5.

¹⁴ See eg. Bruce M Metzger, *The Bible in Translation* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2001) 15.

¹⁵ *Shema*', possibly just Deut. 6: 4-9 at this time; priestly benediction, Num. 6: 24-26; Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 58.

¹⁶ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 59.

¹⁷ Stefan Reif, 'The Early Liturgy of the Synagogue' in William Horbury et al, (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol 3: The Early Roman Period (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 326-357, 329.

¹⁸ See 1 Chron 25: 1-8.

¹⁹ McKinnon, 'Question', 163.

Cohen, however, stresses that music was merely secondary: 'the song of the Levites always was background music. The central element of the cult was the sacred ballet of the priests not the musical accompaniment of the Levites'.²⁰

But even if the officiating priests offered sacrifice without prayer, it appears from *Luke* and *Acts* that the sanctity of the temple and the daily sacrifices may have attracted Jewish men to pray, presumably in the court of the Israelites. Thus, Jesus introduces his comments on effectiveness of prayer with 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.'²¹ And the description in *Acts* of the healing of a crippled beggar begins, 'Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth' (ἐπὶ τὴν ὥρᾳ τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην).²² This specification of the ninth hour as 'the hour of prayer' suggests that Peter and John went to the temple, presumably as others did, in order to pray while the evening sacrifice was being performed by the priests on duty. These prayers, however, would appear to have been of a personal nature. Christians may have inherited the practice of praying at the ninth hour directly from this Jerusalem practice or, more likely, from the New Testament account. Alternatively, the *Acts* account might have served as a justification for ninth hour prayer.

3.3 The Essenes

The Essenes were a Jewish sect during the Second Temple Period whom both Philo and Josephus describe as being found in large numbers in many towns, living in communal groups and sharing an ascetic lifestyle which included

²⁰ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 58.

²¹ Lk. 18: 10.

²² Acts 3.1, my translation; and see Luke 24: 53, Acts 22: 17.

celibacy.²³ Having stated this last, however, Josephus describes ‘another order’ of the Essenes who marry, solely for the purpose of procreation.²⁴

On an important point, however, Philo and Josephus disagree; Betz summarises:

The attitude of the Essenes towards the Jerusalem Temple, especially the sacrificial cult practised there, is difficult to ascertain. Josephus is of the opinion that although the Essenes sent votive offerings to the Temple, they made their sacrifices according to a different ritual of purification and thus debarred themselves from the common sanctuary. Philo maintains that they did not kill any sacrificial beasts but prepared their own minds as a holy offering.²⁵

Regardless of whether Essenes worshipped at the temple, or not, Betz goes on to comment:

Through their criticism of the Jerusalem priesthood and their own holy service, the Essenes clearly set a distance between themselves and the Temple: prayer, obedience to the Torah and the devotion of one’s whole person to God made for a better atonement than the flesh of beasts.²⁶

On the Sabbath, the Essenes met to listen to Torah reading and exposition, which Betz describes as ‘probably not very different from the usual form of Jewish sabbath worship at that time.’²⁷

²³ Otto Betz, ‘The Essenes’, in W. Horbury, W. Davies, & J. Sturdy (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 444-470; Philo, *Apology for the Jews*, 11.1; see F. H. Colson (trans), *Philo, Every Good Man is Free. On the Contemplative Life. On the Eternity of the World. Against Flaccus. Apology for the Jews. On Providence*, Loeb Classical Library 363, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941) 437-443; Josephus. *The Jewish War*, 2.8 120-153; see H. St. J. Thackeray (trans), *Josephus, The Jewish War, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Loeb Classical Library 203, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927) 369-381.

²⁴ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2.8.13 160-1; Thackeray, *Josephus, The Jewish War*, 385.

²⁵ Betz, ‘The Essenes’, 461; and see Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.19; Louis H Feldman (trans), *Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Volume VIII: Books 18-19*, Loeb Classical Library 433, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965) 14-17; Todd S Beall, *Josephus’ Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 24, 25, Beall notes that 2 manuscripts have apparently inserted negatives into Josephus’ text; Philo *Every Good man is Free*, 75, Colson; *Philo*, 55.

²⁶ Betz, ‘The Essenes’, 461.

²⁷ Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 82-3, Colson, *Philo*, 56-9; Betz, ‘The Essenes’, 459.

The community at Qumran is usually identified as an Essene group.²⁸ Accepting this identity, those of the Dead Sea Scrolls which can be identified as documents of and for the sect itself, throw additional light on Essene prayer practices. Daniel Falk introduces:

A poem in the sectarian Community Rule concerning the role of the *Maskil* – an instructor concerned especially with liturgical matters – clearly states the principle of divinely prescribed times for prayer ...²⁹

This principle is to bless his maker at the prescribed times, and it is followed by a list of such times beginning with the morning and evening of each day. 'The content of these prayers at sunrise and sunset is not provided' comments Falk.³⁰ However, a further document (1RT10), offers:

With the arrival of day and night, I will enter into the covenant of God. And with the departure of evening and morning, I will recite his laws. In their existence I will place my boundary without turning back. I will declare his judgement concerning my sins, and my transgressions are before my eyes as an engraved statute...as soon as I stretch out my hand or my foot, I will bless his name; as soon as (I) go out or come in, to sit down or rise up, and while I recline on my couch, I will cry out to him.³¹

Falk comments that there are allusions to Deut. 6:4–9 here, and that 'saying his laws' indicates a recital of the Shema and the Decalogue; thus, he continues, 'the morning and evening prayer attested in 1RT10 appears to be similar to a wider Jewish practice in the second temple period.'³²

Josephus mentions only one of these two daily prayer times:

Their piety towards the Deity takes a peculiar form. Before the sun is up they utter no word on Their prayers to the sun. mundane matters,

²⁸ Beall, *Josephus' Description*, 3-6 for evidence in favour of this view. To distinguish the two implies the co-existence of two groups with similar views, one of whom was attested by contemporary authors but left no archaeological record, while the other left substantial archaeology but was ignored by contemporary authors, as Cross points out – F M Cross, 'The Early History of the Qumran Community', in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, D. N. Freedman & J C Greenfield (ed) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961) 133-202, 68-9.

²⁹ Daniel Falk, 'Prayer in the Qumran Texts', *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 852-876, 853.

³⁰ Falk, 'Prayer in the Qumran Texts', 854.

³¹ Falk, 'Prayer in the Qumran Texts', 855.

³² Falk, 'Prayer in the Qumran Texts', 855.

but offer to him certain prayers, the which have been handed down from their forefathers, as though entreating him to rise.³³

What then is 'peculiar' about this? It seems that it is the eastward facing stance rather than turning towards Jerusalem. As sun worship cannot be understood here for a Jewish sect which Josephus is praising, we can only conclude that it is a conscious turning away from the temple. Did this then stimulate the use of eastward facing in Christianity? It is unlikely, as we have no other indications of influence from the Essenes, and there is an alternative possibility which is dealt with in the next chapter.

There are other hymns and prayers in the Qumran manuscripts but none are particularly relevant to our inquiry. And although it is tempting to try to see Christian origins in another dissident Jewish sect, particularly one with ascetic ideals, there is no certain evidence of influence. We may, however, see some similarities to synagogue prayer which follows.

3.4 The Synagogue.

We may now turn to the Jewish synagogue which, as noted in the introduction, some scholars in the, not too distant, past have seen as the 'obvious' source of much, possibly all, Christian worship a view which, as Bradshaw points out, survives amongst some today. Writing about the same time as Dix, Clifford Dugmore, begins his survey of the early history of the office with the statement 'the history of worship does not contain any *tabulae rasae*'.³⁴ Concluding from this that, as the roots of Christianity lie in Judaism so the origins of Christian worship must derive from the same source, he attempts to trace their development from the synagogue to the office of the fourth and fifth centuries. The basis of his investigation seems, at first sight, to be reasonable:

Temple worship ... is likely to have left little mark upon Christian worship when the latter began to develop along lines of its own. But if the first Christians attended the Synagogue, as we know they did, and continued to worship according to the liturgy of the Synagogue, the question arises, how much of that liturgy, if any, did they take with them

³³ Josephus. *The Jewish War*, 2.8.5 128; H. St. J. Thackeray *Josephus, The Jewish War*, 370-3.

³⁴ Clifford W Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944) vii.

into the distinctively Christian gatherings which took the place of Synagogue worship for them.³⁵

There are, however, several assumptions here which are open to question. The relationship of the first Christians to synagogues is, for instance, somewhat ambivalent. They were certainly used as bases for teaching and healing by Jesus and subsequently by the Apostles, particularly Paul.³⁶ And yet, in some very early Christian texts, they were also seen as places of hypocritical aggrandisement and possible centres of persecution and flogging.³⁷ More significantly, the assertion that the earliest Christians worshipped 'according to the liturgy of the synagogue' presupposes the existence, in the first century CE., of such liturgical synagogue worship in a form which could be recognised as the origin of the later Christian office. I shall argue that the evidence, such as it is, presents a very different picture. First, I shall analyse scholarly debate about the origins of synagogues, before moving to the question of specific forms of worship. In order to claim a clear line of influence from synagogue to Christian worship, we would need to be sure that forms of synagogue worship were clearly established in the first century CE.

3.5 Synagogue origins

'It is widely recognised that the origins of the synagogue are shrouded in mystery and there is little concrete evidence available to enable scholars to plot its history with any great confidence before the beginning of the Christian era', Reif writes towards the end of the twentieth century.³⁸ In the early years of that century, however, the general belief was that the synagogue had a long, pre-Christian history.

'When the synagogue rises into view during the Second Commonwealth [the era of the second temple] it is already a well-established institution' begins Louis Finkelstein.³⁹ Indeed he ascribes its origins to persecution of the 'Prophetic party' during the reigns of Manasseh and Ammon (mid seventh century BCE), arguing

³⁵ Dugmore, *Influence*, 2.

³⁶ Eg. Mt 4: 23, 9: 35, 12: 9, 13: 54, etc., Acts 9: 20, 13:5, 13:14-15, 14: 1, 17: 1-2, 17: 10, 18: 9.

³⁷ Mt 10:17, 23:3.

³⁸ Stefan C Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer, New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 72.

³⁹ Louis Finkelstein, 'The Origin of the Synagogue' in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol 1 (1928-30) 49.

that these, 'must have had some place of worship', which could be neither the Jerusalem temple, which they would have regarded as profaned, nor minor outlying sacrificial centres which they condemned. He continues, 'We are compelled to assume that their services took the form of prayer, and that secret meetings for the purpose of divine communication grew up among them.'⁴⁰ Thus, he concludes that out of these 'prayer gatherings under prophetic guidance [existing] even before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.' there grew the 'institutionalised synagogues of the Maccabean age.'⁴¹

Solomon Zeitlin agrees with Finkelstein regarding the well-established second commonwealth synagogue: 'from the Tannaitic literature we learn that the synagogue as an institution played a great part in in the life of the Jews in the period of the Second Commonwealth.'⁴² And, he maintains, 'Christianity, with its institutions is directly traceable to the Judaism of that period. The Church, the essential institution of Christianity, is the daughter of the Synagogue.'⁴³ The question of the direct traceability of Christian institutions from the synagogue of the Tannaitic period is debatable, however.

Writing in the early 1930s, Zeitlin summarises the scholarly consensus of his time: 'All scholars are of the opinion that the synagogue as a fixed institution was in existence in Babylonia after the destruction of the first temple', an institution 'necessitated by the need for communal worship and instruction.'⁴⁴ Certainly we must concede the need, at that time, to maintain a distinctly Jewish identity in an alien environment, and perhaps to deliver prophetic encouragement and exhortation (as, for instance, that of the second part of Isaiah), but there is little real evidence for the existence of the synagogue as a place of worship in the Babylonian period.

⁴⁰ Finkelstein, 'Origin', 53.

⁴¹ Finkelstein, 'Origin', 59.

⁴² Solomon Zeitlin, 'The Origin of the Synagogue: A Study in the Development of Jewish Institutions' in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol 2 (1930-31) 73; The Tannaim were teachers of the oral law in the period 10-220 CE, their teaching is recorded in the *Mishnah*, see Wilhelm Bacher, Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, Joseph Jacobs, Louis Ginzberg, 'Tannaim and Amoraim', *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Isidore Singer (managing ed.), 12 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-6) vol 12 p. 49, online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14240-tannaim-and-amoraim>

⁴³ Zeitlin, 'Origin', 69.

⁴⁴ Zeitlin, 'Origin', 73.

Indeed, Zeitlin rejects the above consensus, dismissing ideas that the synagogue existed before or during the exile, and even that it began as a religious establishment. 'Neither of these theories, that the origin of the synagogue was pre-Exilic, and that it was invested with religious character from its very inception, appears to me to be acceptable.'⁴⁵ And he argues instead that after the exile, 'when the Jews returned to Palestine, they did not settle in one place only, as in Jerusalem, but were scattered over all Judea, in various villages and towns. In these smaller settlements, where they had to meet the social and economic problems that confronted them in their practical life, they summoned assemblies of all the inhabitants of the town or village.'⁴⁶ These meetings for the purpose of considering problems of an economic and social character, which, Zeitlin claims, would initially have had no fixed meeting-place, were termed *beth ha-kneset*, 'house of assembly', that is συναγωγή.

Zeitlin then introduces an alternative suggestion. The religious character of the synagogue, he suggests, began much later, 'The synagogue as an institution, a house of reading the Torah and prayers, came into existence when the Pharisees introduced [the concept of] the daily sacrifice as a communal offering, a procedure to which the Sadducees were strongly opposed.'⁴⁷ In order to 'democratize' the sacrifices, the people were divided into 24 divisions, called *ma'amadot*. Each *ma'amad*, in turn, sent priests, Levites and laity to the Jerusalem Temple for a week twice yearly, in order to represent the entire Jewish people by taking part in the daily sacrifices. This priestly service of the *ma'amad* is referred to in Luke's story of Zechariah 'serving as priest before God [because] his section was on duty.'⁴⁸ Those of a *ma'amad* who were unable to go, Zeitlin explains, met together at the times of sacrifice, morning and afternoon, and read the portions of the Torah relating to the daily sacrifice. Although knowledge of the *ma'amad* largely derives from the much later Talmud, Reif argues convincingly that the existence of the custom should be accepted: 'The remnants of information available to us in the Talmudic sources about such an institution are not paralleled in other literature but smack of the authentic, particularly since

⁴⁵ Zeitlin, 'Origin', 74.

⁴⁶ Zeitlin, 'Origin', 75.

⁴⁷ Zeitlin, 'Origin', 76-7.

⁴⁸ Lk. 1: 8.

there was no reason to wish such an arrangement into retrospective existence after the Temple had been destroyed.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Cohen, comment that the historicity of this claim is difficult to assess as ‘no prerabbinic evidence confirms the existence of the lay divisions paralleling those of the priests.’⁵⁰

Levine, while also accepting the existence of the *ma'amad*, nevertheless challenges the implications for the origin for the synagogue and of any Pharisaic influence on it.⁵¹ In particular the synagogue was not, he states, a Pharisaic institution set up in competition with the temple. And indeed, we can see that the nature of the *ma'amad*, as a way of involving distantly located laity in the temple cult, suggests exactly that it was associated with, rather than competing with, the temple. Further, he adds ‘the truth of the matter is, the Pharisees had little or nothing to do with the early synagogue, and there is not one shred of evidence pointing to a connection between the two. No references associate the early Pharisees ... with the synagogue, nor is there anything in early synagogue liturgy that is particularly Pharisaic.’⁵² Indeed, Levine, after a useful survey of proposals by others for synagogue origin,⁵³ criticises the basic assumptions which seem to underlie them:

In addressing this issue in the past, scholars have almost invariably tried to pinpoint a historical context or event that led to the emergence of this institution. Given the state of our sources or, more precisely the lack of any solid evidence, such efforts have clearly become exercises in studied guesswork; as a result, prevailing theories on this subject range over a period of eight hundred years.

With but a few exceptions, these theories share certain assumptions: that the religious component of the ancient synagogue was primary, and that dramatically new religious circumstances gave rise to this institution. Implicit in in most of these theories is the view that some kind of liturgical activity, be it listening to a Divine prophecy, the recital of public prayer, or the introduction of scriptural readings, played a crucial and definitive role in the formation of the early synagogue.⁵⁴

Levine then goes on to make his own proposal for the origin which, he suggests, is to be found in the use of the city gate area for a variety of purposes, including

⁴⁹ Rief, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 58.

⁵⁰ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 59.

⁵¹ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 38-9.

⁵² Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 40-1.

⁵³ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 24-8.

⁵⁴ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 28-9.

markets, public gatherings, law-courts, and 'meals marking the fulfilment of a commandment'.⁵⁵ In addition, city gate areas were frequently used for religious purposes though most of the evidence offered by Levine for this concerns pagan shrines.⁵⁶ One example, though, is significant for the later development of Synagogues. In Nehemiah's description of Ezra's public reading of 'the book of the law of Moses', he does so standing on a wooden platform, 'facing the square before the Water Gate' where all the people had gathered.⁵⁷

Although Levine does not state it, it appears, from the ample evidence he presents, that he is referring to the situation in the Near East and particularly Palestine. This becomes more evident as he describes the transition from city gate to synagogue as occurring in the Hellenistic period when 'architectural traditions that had held sway for centuries were now being revised, in part owing to sustained and intensive contact with the Hellenistic world.'⁵⁸ In essence then Levine's proposal is the same as Zeitlin's: the synagogue began as a place for the conduct of all activities which required people to gather together, though the gatherings very much preceded the buildings, and the *ma'amad*, though shorn of its Pharisaic connection, may have been the genesis of regular liturgical use. Erich S Gruen, however, points out the weakness in this argument, 'the idea that this institution arose to replace functions once performed at the gates of biblical cities in Palestine does not account for the phenomenon of synagogues in the diaspora.'⁵⁹ We may add that the *ma'amad* seems to be a particularly Palestinian institution and this therefore does not account for any use of diaspora synagogues for worship.

At this point we should make a digression to examine the term *proseuchē*, or house of prayer, which most authors assume was simply another term for a synagogue.⁶⁰ However, this assumption is called into question by a somewhat intriguing passage in Acts. Describing Paul's visit to Philippi, Luke writes: 'on the

⁵⁵ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 28-38.

⁵⁶ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 32.

⁵⁷ Neh 8:1-8.

⁵⁸ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 34.

⁵⁹ Erich S Gruen *Diaspora, Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2002) 120.

⁶⁰ John M. D. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora, from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 26; Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 110; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 1.

Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer [προσευχή]; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there.’⁶¹ Hans Conzelmann accepts that *proseuchē* ‘can mean synagogue’ but, if this is indeed the meaning here, then he is right to suggest that the expression ‘we supposed’ is strange, while the fact that they met only women ‘is stranger’.⁶² Frederick Bruce suggests the possibility of corrupt text at this point, proposing that οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι should read οὗ ἐνομιζετο προσευχὴ εἶναι: ‘where a place of prayer was established.’⁶³ However, the alternative reading is not necessary if we accept a further significant proposal from Bruce. The Jewish community of Philippi was very small, he suggests, and there may not have been sufficient men for a synagogue, ten being required, so that an ‘unofficial’ meeting place was established outside the city.⁶⁴ The *minyan* or required congregation of ten for worship is, however, not certain at that time, being first recorded in the Jerusalem Talmud.⁶⁵ Nor is it necessarily the case that the suggested distinction between ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ meeting places is relevant to the Judaism of that time. Nevertheless, the suggestion of a small Jewish community has some value without relying on the *minyan* conjecture, and other commentators have accepted this idea.⁶⁶ In particular, Peter Oakes notes that ‘the almost complete lack of archaeological evidence [suggests] that any Jewish community [in Philippi] was minute’, the earliest evidence for a synagogue being an inscription from the late third or fourth century.⁶⁷ Further weight is given to this suggestion when we note that, whereas Luke normally uses συναγωγή to refer to a synagogue, as in the above examples, only in the case of Philippi does he use προσευχή, to describe a place, using the term for each of the visits which

⁶¹ Acts 16: 13. NRSV.

⁶² Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: a Commentary*, edited by Eldon Jay Epp with Christopher R. Matthews, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 130.

⁶³ Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1954) 329 n. 25.

⁶⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 331.

⁶⁵ Dated to 3rd to 5th century CE: Wilhelm Bacher, ‘Talmud’, in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14213-talmud>.

⁶⁶ See eg James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1996) 219.

⁶⁷ Peter S. Oakes, *Philippians: from People to Letter*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 59 and n. 4.

the disciples make to the place of prayer.⁶⁸ There are two possible ways of accounting for Luke's use of προσευχή here. Firstly, he may be conforming to local usage, though he believes it to be the same as a synagogue. This assumes, however, that his eventual readers / hearers would be fully conversant with the terminology. Secondly, it may be that he sees a difference between the two establishments.

Additionally, it must be noted that Ellis Rivkin, has argued convincingly that, in the case of one particular Egyptian inscription of the third-century BCE, the term προσευχή meant not a synagogue but a dedicatory shrine.⁶⁹ And, while Philo and Josephus do on occasions seem to use the term to refer to a synagogue, in Philo's *Flaccus*, the word appears to have the meaning proposed by Rivkin: 'everywhere in the habitable world the religious veneration of the Jews for the Augustan house has its basis as all may see in the prayer-sites [προσευχαί].'⁷⁰ This seems to imply the existence of many established locations at which Jews prayed for the emperor and family, and 'as all may see' suggests that these were outdoor, public monuments of some sort, rather than buildings which would have hidden whatever veneration occurred inside. It would be quite appropriate to have such a shrine, where Jews might show their loyalty to the emperor, just outside the Roman *Colonia* of Philippi, as a public demonstration of their allegiance. Moreover, Gruen, who identifies *proseuchai* with synagogues, points out that Egyptian Jews dedicated *proseuchai* to Ptolemy, his wife and children. In return, the king granted *proseuchai* the right of asylum commonly accorded to pagan temples.⁷¹ Possibly, the right of asylum implies a building rather than an outdoor monument.

An alternative hypothesis for the growth and development of the synagogue, particularly in the diaspora, is that it served as a substitute for those cut off by distance from the temple in Jerusalem, and for all after 70 CE. Gruen, however,

⁶⁸ Acts 16: 13, 16; Richard I Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009) 401.

⁶⁹ Ellis Rivkin, 'Ben Sira and the Nonexistence of the Synagogue: a Study in Historical Method', In *Time of Harvest: Essays in Honor of Abba Hillel Silver*, ed. D. Silver (New York and London, 1963), 320-54, see discussion in the appendix pp. 350-4.

⁷⁰ Philo, *Flaccus* 49; see *Philo, Works*, trans. F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker and R. Marcus, vol. 9. Loeb classical library, (London: Heinemann, 1929-1954) 328-30, my translation.

⁷¹ Gruen *Diaspora*, 68-9.

rejects this view: 'that approach skews the picture from the outset, presupposing a need to fill a gap.'⁷² After reviewing the various suggests of others, he then asserts: 'synagogues supplied services that were complementary to the Temple rather than serving as a substitute for it.'⁷³ And, as we shall see below, the religious activities of the synagogue were very different from those of the temple.

Due to the paucity of evidence, conclusions at this point must be limited. As far as the origin of the synagogue is concerned there is no consensus, which does not matter to our investigation. However, the debate envisages a wide range of functions, including religious activity, for the institution, and, as the balance between these would naturally differ from place to place according to circumstances, the term synagogue might mean very different things in different situations. A *proseuchē* would thus fit into the pattern though prayer might not be its exclusive or even main activity. Indeed, as we shall see below the term prayer might have a very different meaning from that of the present day

3.6 The Liturgy of Synagogue / *Proseuchē*

Attempts to reconstruct the earliest synagogue liturgy have in the past, Reif claims, too often began from prayer books of a thousand years later and 'sought to extrapolate backwards, making assumptions that defy the vast chasms of history, geography and ideology that separate one millennium from another.'⁷⁴ And, in a passage particularly relevant to our present investigation, he continues,

Recent, more reliable research in the field tends, on the other hand, to stress the lack of concrete evidence, the questionable admissibility of sources even one or two centuries after the destruction of the temple, and the complex nature of Judaism in the time of Jesus and Hillel, thus shying away from a commitment to simple description and taking refuge in a welter of doubt and hesitancy. In consequence, the less specialized scholar is left unenlightened about the general situation that obtained with regard to Jewish liturgy in the first century, and with many unanswered questions about its particular aspects.⁷⁵

Similar concerns are expressed by Levine:

First and foremost, standardized Jewish liturgical texts made their appearance only toward the end of the of the first millennium. Until then, liturgical traditions, particularly those relating to prayer, were in the

⁷² Gruen *Diaspora*, 119.

⁷³ Gruen *Diaspora*, 121.

⁷⁴ Reif, 'Early Liturgy of the Synagogue', 326.

⁷⁵ Reif, 'Early Liturgy of the Synagogue', 326-7.

main transmitted orally. All that is available to us before that time are snippets of information regarding specific prayers and practices. If our task were only to try to fit these pieces together into some sort of coherent picture, matters might be manageable. Unfortunately, the issues are far more complex.⁷⁶

So then, the origins and early functions of the synagogue are a matter of debate, making its liturgical activities equally uncertain. However, we are not concerned with gaining a full and detailed understanding of synagogue liturgy prior to 400 CE, but with deciding what evidence there is of any synagogue influence on Christian daily prayer up to that time. It is therefore worthwhile examining the features of Jewish practice which we might expect and which scholars of Jewish liturgy suggest.

3.7 Synagogue Study of Scripture

Being instructed to 'keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his decrees and his statutes' (Deut 6: 17), it is to be expected that Jews would read and study exactly how to best keep those commandments. And thus, the first and most important religious activity of the synagogue was, in the opinion of most scholars, the reading of the Torah.⁷⁷ Additionally, we may note that Philo, writing in the early first century CE, confirms this picture of the orthodox Jewish synagogue as a place for Torah study and teaching, making no mention of prayer or psalmody.⁷⁸ Elsewhere he repeats similar words about the Essenes.⁷⁹ Luke regards this as an ancient custom: 'for in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.'⁸⁰

As a community believing in the divine management of history for the betterment of God's chosen people, it is inevitable that Judaism should require the regular narration of their history, and with it the message that the continuation of that betterment was dependant on the nations obedience to Torah teaching. And so, in addition to the Pentateuch, other portions of the Hebrew Bible, and particularly

⁷⁶ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 533.

⁷⁷ Cohen, *Maccabees to Mishnah*, 66; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 536-40; Rief, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 61-4;

⁷⁸ Philo, *Hypothetica: Apology for the Jews*, 7.13; Philo, *Works*, trans. F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker and R. Marcus, vol. 9. Loeb classical library, (London: Heinemann, 1929-1954) 433.

⁷⁹ Philo, *Every Good Man is Free*, 12; *Works* vol 9, 57-59.

⁸⁰ *Acts*, 15:21, NRSV.

the prophetic books, also seem to have been read, probably in Aramaic or, in the Diaspora, Greek.⁸¹ This was one of the characteristics which set Judaism apart from surrounding cultures, Levine suggests: 'By the first century [CE], a weekly ceremony featuring the communal reading and study of holy texts had become a universal Jewish practice. It was a unique liturgical feature in the ancient world; no such form of worship was known in paganism.'⁸² Luke provides us with a description of Jesus reading from Isaiah in the synagogue: 'When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.'⁸³ The passage then continues with Jesus apparently selecting his own text before commenting on it. Again according to *Acts*, the practice in synagogues of the diaspora was similar. Thus, when Paul and companions visited the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, 'after the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it."⁸⁴ In response, Paul delivered a sermon, though there is no suggestion in this case that it is based on the scriptural readings.⁸⁵ Numerous other references attest to Jesus and the Apostles speaking in synagogues.⁸⁶ And in addition to the exposition of Torah and prophetic readings there was also discussion.⁸⁷ This was by no means unusual: 'it is eminently clear from all sources that Torah reading in the early synagogue was more than the recitation of a holy text. No matter what the provenance – Judea or the Diaspora – the Torah reading (and the reading from the Prophets) served as a springboard for further instruction and edification.'⁸⁸

While there is no real evidence that first century Christian liturgy included readings from scripture, Justin Martyr reports them in the mid-second century and

⁸¹ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 153-4; Reif, 'Early Liturgy of the Synagogue', 334-5, 344-5.

⁸² Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 151.

⁸³ *Lk* 4:16-17, NRSV.

⁸⁴ *Acts* 13:15, NRSV

⁸⁵ *Acts* 13:16-41, NRSV.

⁸⁶ Eg: *Mt* 4:23, 9:35, 13:54, *Mk* 1:21, 1:39, 6:2, *Lk* 4:15, 4:44, 6:6, 13:10, *Jn* 6:59, 18:20, *Acts* 9:20, 13:5, 14:1, 18:4, 18:26, 19:8.

⁸⁷ *Acts* 6:9; 7:17, 18:4; 18:19.

⁸⁸ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 155.

followed by a sermon.⁸⁹ Did these derive from second century synagogue practice? Again, we lack adequate evidence to decide this point. Intriguingly, as we shall see, scripture readings – as distinct from psalms and similar hymn-like passages - are very little mentioned by the Cappadocians as part of their daily worship, even though the church fathers were themselves well versed in scripture. The readings which we have hints of at that stage need not have been introduced in direct imitation of Judaism, however.

3.8 Synagogue Prayer before 70 CE

If we examine New Testament evidence for prayer in synagogues, we find only one such reference, which occurs in Matthew's gospel: 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.'⁹⁰ Clearly, however, this is not communal prayer. Moreover, it would appear to be a matter of choice whether prayers are made in the synagogue, on a street corner, or according to the dominical instruction which follows, in a private room. Such prayers are clearly of a personal nature. While this passage certainly attests to the use of such private prayers it might suggest that, at least in Palestine, communal prayer in synagogues was, at best, an infrequent practice.

What then of synagogues or *proseuchai* in the diaspora? Gruen, having established that 'there is no reason to question the consistent notices that Jews gathered in Synagogues to study the scriptures' continues:

Did they also come to pray? Some have doubted the proposition. Philo, Acts, and Josephus speak in terms of instruction rather than of prayer. Did diaspora synagogues simply emulate pagan academies, elevating education while subordinating worship? Was the destruction of the Temple a prerequisite for the introduction of liturgical elements into the activities of the synagogue? That is unlikely.⁹¹

At first sight this argument is convincing, a *proseuchē* is, after all 'a house of prayer'. However, three points in the above passage should be considered. Firstly, Gruen moves too easily from 'did they come to pray?' to 'liturgical elements'. The transition ought to be 'did they come to pray?' and if so, was this communal prayer, or personal and private, and if the former was it organised on an *ad hoc* basis or

⁸⁹ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67.

⁹⁰ Mt. 6: 5, NRSV.

⁹¹ Gruen *Diaspora*, 116.

more formally as 'liturgical' prayer? Since no evidence is available, these questions cannot be answered with any certainty. Secondly, there is the allegation of 'elevating education while subordinating worship'. As the discussion immediately below will show, prayer was almost certainly regarded as secondary to Torah study. That does not subordinate worship to education, however, for Levine claims 'that the reading of sacred texts and the accompanying instruction were recognized and valid forms of worship in the Jewish community.'⁹² Torah study then justifies the name 'house of prayer'. Thirdly, it certainly appears that the destruction of the Temple did indeed promote liturgical worship in synagogues though that does not necessarily mean that the destruction of the Temple was a *prerequisite* for prayer being part of synagogue practice.

As regards the impact of the temple's destruction on worship, we must begin with Simeon the Righteous who was high priest in Jerusalem in the late fourth, early third century BCE, although there is some confusion as to his identity.⁹³ Attributed to Simeon is the teaching that the world rests on three pillars: 'Torah observance, temple service, and kindly deeds'.⁹⁴ Regardless of the reliability of the ascription to Simeon, and indeed the uncertainty of his identity, this observation suggests that, although Jews were most certainly expected to pray, prayer was regarded as comparatively unimportant. Thus, it is possible that all prayer was expected to be personal rather than communal. This observation is supported by the few times that prayer is mentioned in the gospels, in the examples given above even prayer by laity at the temple seems to be of a private nature as is apparent in Matthew's passage about hypocrites in synagogues considered above.

It is, of course possible to argue that synagogues, and particularly *proseuchai*, in the diaspora differed in practice to those of Palestine, as Gruen appears to suggest above. The basis of this claim is that the separation of diaspora Jews from Jerusalem, and thus from the temple, forced such a difference upon them.

⁹² Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 146, footnote 59 (continued from previous page).

⁹³ See unattributed article: 'Simeon the Just' in in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13745-simon-the-just>.

⁹⁴ Amram Tropper, *Simeon the Righteous in Rabbinic Literature: A Legend Reinvented*, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 84, (Leiden: Brill 2013) 71; and see Judah Goldin, 'The Three Pillars of Simeon the Righteous', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol. 27 (1958), 43-58, who argues (pp 43-6) that 'kindly deeds' originally meant 'acts of piety'.

However, most Palestinian Jews were separated by such a distance from the temple that regular attendance (to pray privately) at the temple would be difficult and, on the sabbath, impossible. Further what is implied by this claim is not merely a difference in practice but a difference in attitude to prayer, that for Palestinians prayer was a personal matter, for those in the diaspora it was communal. Of course, in the diaspora, some may have found it difficult to find a space to offer their private prayers and the provision of a *proseuchē* would be useful.

Levine sums up:

It would appear unwarranted to deny the existence of prayer as an integral part of Diaspora worship, though admittedly it was not the dominant element. The name *proseuche*, associated with many Diaspora institutions, is simply too telling to be summarily dismissed. Nevertheless, we have no way of determining the nature, composition and extent of communal Jewish prayer in the Diaspora during the Second Temple period.⁹⁵

3.9 Synagogue Prayer after 70 CE

With the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, however, the second of the pillars of Simeon the Righteous, temple service (*'Avodah*), was no more. Certainly, one solution to the question of what to do about this was greater attention to one or both of the other two.⁹⁶ But there was an alternative to such proposals, 'what must surely have seemed a more revolutionary assertion, namely that the distinguished place of *'Avodah* was now to be taken by *Tefillah*, Prayer.'⁹⁷ And the process of this 'revolution' began at Yavneh.

The city of Yavneh (Jabneh, or Jamnia) was a seat of Jewish scholarship even before the destruction of the Temple. After that destruction 'it took the place of Jerusalem; it became the religious and national center of the Jews.'⁹⁸ There, changes in synagogue liturgy consequent upon the temple's destruction were introduced over a period of time, between the destruction and the Bar-Kokba revolt, identified by Levine as 'the Yavnean era'.⁹⁹ Although the details are to

⁹⁵ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 165-6.

⁹⁶ See Rief, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 95-8 for the Rabbinic discussion of this.

⁹⁷ Rief, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 98.

⁹⁸ Richard Gottheil and M. Seligsohn 'Jabneh, or Jamnia' in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8375-jabneh>.

⁹⁹ 70-132 CE, Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, xvi.

some extent uncertain, it seems correct to say that the destruction of the temple did initiate the liturgical prayer of the later synagogue. And this communal prayer consisted of two elements, the *Shema*‘, with associated blessings, and the *Tefill-āh* or *‘Amīdāh*.

The first of these, the *Shema*‘, consisting of Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37–41, is said, in accordance with Dt. 6:7, on rising and before sleep and may originally have been used by individuals or families. While the exact sense of Dt. 6:6, ‘Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart’, is not entirely certain, since it is not clear whether ‘these words’ include Dt 6: 6-9, the most likely meaning would seem to be that they refer to verses 4 and 5. The original *Shema*‘, recited morning and evening may then have consisted of these two verses or even, as Dugmore suggests, v. 4 alone.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, Rabbinic opinion was that the significance of the *Shema*‘ stemmed from its first verse.¹⁰¹ It would seem that an enlarged version of this, followed by the priestly benediction (Num. 6: 24-26), was introduced into temple worship as recorded by the *Mishnah* as mentioned above. If, as Levine suggests, the *Shema*‘ were then adopted from temple worship into the synagogue in the Yavnean era, then ‘the sages [of Yavneh] were not satisfied with mere adoption; they set about to supplement, amplify, and even eliminate some of the paragraphs preceding and following the three core biblical passages that constitute the *Shema*‘ itself.’¹⁰²

The second of the daily elements of prayer, correctly called *Tefillat Ha‘Amīdāh*, ‘The Standing Prayer’, is said after the morning and evening *Shema*‘. The *‘Amīd-āh* is also known as ‘The Eighteen’ since it once consisted of that number of blessings (now nineteen).¹⁰³ The date of origin of the *‘Amīdāh* is uncertain but it is important to note the comment of Reif that ‘there is ... no convincing evidence that even the earliest text of the *‘Amidah* itself predates the destruction of the Temple and only on the basis of intelligent and informed speculation can it be

¹⁰⁰ Dugmore, *Influence*, 18.

¹⁰¹ Dugmore, *Influence*, 19.

¹⁰² Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 550.

¹⁰³ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 540; the blessings of the *‘Amīdāh* bless God, while the priestly blessings bless the congregation; for examples see Dugmore, *Influence*, 114, 120.

argued that some of the introductory and concluding benedictions were in existence at such a time.¹⁰⁴

Though our knowledge of Jewish practice of the first century CE is limited, Josephus provides some information when he describes Moses as instructing, 'twice each day, at the dawn thereof and when the hour comes for turning to repose, let all acknowledge before God the bounties which He has bestowed on them through their deliverance from the land of Egypt.'¹⁰⁵ This seems likely to be a reference to the recitation of the *Shema*'; if so it would presumably be a version including Numbers 15: 41. Josephus, however, makes no mention of the midday/afternoon prayer, nor of the '*Amīdāh*, nor of Jews going to the synagogue for any of these recitations.

Did anything of these elements - the *Shema*', with its blessings, and the '*Amīdāh* - then influence Christian prayer? Certainly, the priestly benedictions have been adopted as a Christian blessing but it is more likely that Christian churches found the passage in scripture than in a Jewish prayer book. The *Shema*', moreover, is not a prayer in the true sense of the word, being addressed by the author(s) of the relevant works to the worshippers, rather than by the worshippers to God, and consisting of a statement of faith followed by a recommendation of following divine commands. There is no reason to believe that its text influenced Christianity.

However, in the case of the '*Amīdāh*, the situation is rather different. D.A. Fiensy and D.R. Darnell identify 16 passages in *Apostolic Constitutions* as 'Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers.'¹⁰⁶ One of these, described as 'Instructions for Catechumens' is, as pointed out in a footnote, 'not a prayer at all', although, as a supposed outline of Christian Instruction it curiously lacks any New Testament references or specifically Christian teaching, suggesting a Jewish origin.¹⁰⁷ W. Jardine Grisbrooke rejects the suggestion of Jewish origin for some of the other passages

¹⁰⁴ Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities* IV.8.13.

¹⁰⁶ D.A. Fiensy (intro.) and D.R. Darnell (trans.), 'Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers' in James H. Charlesworth (ed), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 669-697; and see David A Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to be Jewish*, Brown Judaic Studies 65, (Chico Ca: Scholar Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁷ Fiensy and Darnell, 'Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers', 687 and note 8a; and see Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *By Light, Light: the Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, (Amsterdam: Philo, 1969) 327.

as 'having no more in common with the Jewish prayers on which some have asserted them to be based than any morning and evening prayers are likely to have with any others.'¹⁰⁸ There remain six prayers found in *Apostolic Constitutions* book seven.¹⁰⁹ These Grisbrooke accepts as 'clearly Jewish, at least in remote origin. They follow the classical form of Jewish benedictions; they follow the right order of a series of such benedictions; both in structure and in wording they are similar to known Jewish texts.'¹¹⁰ In fact, the similarities which Grisbrooke observes are to the rabbinic sabbath *'Amīdāh*, though thoroughly Christianised and perhaps rather more prolix.¹¹¹ Grisbrooke comments that 'the compiler [of *Apostolic Constitutions*] is decidedly anti-Jewish and so is unlikely to have borrowed Jewish prayers directly ... The obvious conclusion is that here the compiler probably used already Christianized versions of the Jewish prayers.'¹¹² Further, as the prayers show familiarity with the Aquila Greek OT (c. 135 CE) and must predate the compilation of *Apostolic Constitutions* they must have been composed between the mid second and early fourth centuries.¹¹³ There being no suggestion of liturgical use in the *Apostolic Constitutions* text nor any evidence of these Christian versions elsewhere, we must conclude that they were intended for personal prayer and, as the concluding sentence suggests, meditation.¹¹⁴

It seems then that synagogue prayers had no influence on Christian daily prayer, as Levine comments:

while there can be little question that Jewish liturgical patterns of the first century CE were indeed a powerful influence on the fledgling Christian community, ... we can posit that this did not include the unique rabbinic prayer forms that appear in tannaitic literature ... Thus any reference to early synagogue prayer (in contrast to the temple or Qumran, for example), the Torah reading, or sermons evidenced in

¹⁰⁸ W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students*, (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1990) 82.

¹⁰⁹ *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.33.1 – 38.9, Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 82-90.

¹¹⁰ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 82.

¹¹¹ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 571, citing P W van der Horst, 'The Greek Synagogue Prayers in *Apostolic Constitutions* Book VII' in J Tabory (ed), *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Prayer*, (Jerusalem: Orhot Press, 1999) 19-46.

¹¹² Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 82.

¹¹³ Fiensy and Darnell, 'Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers', 673.

¹¹⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.38.9.

rabbinic literature in order to explain Christian liturgy in the New Testament era is, at the very least problematic and, at most, entirely unjustified.¹¹⁵

He adds 'not only did Christian worship stem from a very different religious, social, and political context than Jewish worship, but it probably began at least a generation earlier.'

3.10 Liturgical Poetry

A final element of synagogue worship need not concern us long. The *piyyut* or liturgical poem 'was introduced into the synagogue service in the fourth or fifth century.'¹¹⁶ Often this replaced the synagogue prayers by incorporating them, and 'some *piyyutim* contained choral elements (refrains, responses)'.¹¹⁷ By the time of this development Christianity had already produced its own liturgical poetry, some of which will be considered in later chapters. It is certainly possible that non-liturgical *piyyutim* existed at a much earlier time and, having influenced Christian worship, was accepted into the synagogue, but in the absence of evidence for this its influence on Christianity is uncertain. Levine, however, suggests an intriguing explanation of the origin of the *piyyut*: 'in the final analysis, the evidence seems to point primarily in one direction, i.e., the influence of contemporary Christian practice.'¹¹⁸

3.11 Psalmody

For those who would wish to trace the practices of daily prayer in Christianity back to the synagogue, the outline of synagogue worship we have considered above, seems to display a surprising omission: the absence of psalmody.

The two articles by James W. McKinnon, cited above, examine the supposed content of synagogue services.¹¹⁹ In the first article his purpose is to examine the question of a ban on the use of musical instruments in the early synagogue. It has been assumed by music historians, he states, that in contrast with the 'elaborate instrumentally-accompanied psalmody' of temple worship described in the Talmud, the absence of any instruments for the synagogue 'was the result of a deliberate legal act', possibly symbolic of mourning over the destruction of the

¹¹⁵ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 559.

¹¹⁶ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 378.

¹¹⁷ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 378.

¹¹⁸ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 628.

¹¹⁹ McKinnon, 'Exclusion', and 'Question', see description of temple sacrifice above.

temple.¹²⁰ Consideration of this question leads him to look at the whole assumed pattern of synagogue worship, allegedly, he says, consisting of four parts: reading scripture, discourse on this, prayer (the *shema*’ and *tefillah*), and psalm singing.¹²¹ There is no doubt about the first two of these, as attested by the New Testament and *Mishnah*, but, as we have seen, there is no certain evidence for communal prayer at the earliest stage or psalm singing. ‘There is no lack of references to prayer in the New Testament, only to prayer in the synagogue’ McKinnon points out.¹²²

The suggestion that the Christian use of psalms derives from the synagogue attracts a particularly trenchant rejection from McKinnon, ‘To state it as clearly as possible, there was no singing of psalms in the ancient Synagogue; the psalmody of the early Synagogue is a myth fostered by a curious coalition of Anglican liturgists and Jewish musicologists.’¹²³ Passages from Anglican liturgists demonstrate that his criticism is justified. Thus, he comments, ‘Oesterly’s [sic] blithe remark is typical: “The liturgical use of psalms in the Jewish Church in pre-Christian times is too well known to need many words. The adoption of the Temple liturgy by the Synagogue took place while the Temple was still standing.”’¹²⁴ Similarly, Gregory Dix asserts ‘The jewish [sic] practice was to read first from the Law of Moses ... and then, after psalmody, one or more lessons from the prophets or other books. ... Between the lessons came the singing of psalms or other canticles from scripture ... a custom which must have been familiar to our Lord and His apostles, since it was universal in the synagogues of their day.’¹²⁵ And Dugmore claims, ‘from what is said on the subject from slightly later sources, it is evident that psalms had always been used in Christian worship and that, therefore, the Jewish liturgical use of them had been continued uninterruptedly by the Christian Church.’¹²⁶

¹²⁰ McKinnon, ‘Exclusion’, 78.

¹²¹ McKinnon, ‘Exclusion’ 84; ‘Question’ 167.

¹²² McKinnon, ‘Question’, 172.

¹²³ McKinnon, ‘Exclusion’ 84.

¹²⁴ McKinnon, ‘Question’ 181, quoting William Oscar Emil Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1925) 75.

¹²⁵ Gregory Dix. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. (London: A and C Black, 1945) 39.

¹²⁶ Dugmore, *Influence*, 80.

McKinnon exonerates 'Jewish liturgical scholars' from involvement in the above 'curious coalition', as they have consulted the primary sources, but continues, 'Anglican liturgical scholars, on the other hand, needed no primary sources; figures like Oesterle [sic], Dix and Dugmore, sympathetic to the idea that the origins of Christian liturgy were to be sought in the Synagogue, simply assumed that Christian psalmody must have stemmed from Jewish psalmody.'¹²⁷ In the later article, however, he recognises that the scholarly sin of assertion without evidence is not only found among Anglicans; thus he draws our attention to Louis Duchesne's statement:

The religious assemblies of the synagogue involved no bloody sacrifice, no oblation of the products of the soil, no first-fruits or incense. The children of Israel assembled together not only for common prayer, but also to read their sacred books – the Law in the first place and then the Prophets; that is to say, the remaining books of the Bible. Besides these readings there were also chants of which the text was furnished by the Psalter. A less essential but widely used exercise was the homily (Midrash) on a theme supplied by the lections. These four elements - lections, chants homilies and prayers – were adopted without hesitation by the Christian Churches.¹²⁸

Certainly, the cantillation (chanting) of psalms was introduced into the synagogue service, but at a later date than imagined by those whom McKinnon criticises. Levine suggests that during the third and fourth centuries, as part of a movement to reinforce links between the synagogue and the memory of the temple, the recitation of a psalm for each day of the week was added to the synagogue liturgy, 'a custom first documented for priests in the temple'.¹²⁹ He adds however, 'In truth this latter practice is first explicitly mentioned as an element of synagogue worship only in a source from the seventh or eighth century, but it almost surely originated before then'.¹³⁰ If his assumption is correct, psalmody would have been introduced into the synagogue during the same period that it became established in the Christian office.

¹²⁷ McKinnon, 'Exclusion' 84.

¹²⁸ Louis Duchesne, *Christian Worship Its Origin and Evolution*, 2nd English Edition, trans. M.L. McClure, (London: SPCK, 1904), 47-8; and see McKinnon 'Question' 181.

¹²⁹ Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 239.

¹³⁰ Citing Tractate Soferim 18, 2, and see Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 591.

So far what has been described has been largely negative as regards Christian daily prayer. As I suggested above, however, there are Jewish influences on Christian worship. These can be seen in New Testament prayers and hymns.

3.12 Worship in the New Testament.

An obvious place to begin with considering New Testament prayer is the Lord's Prayer.¹³¹ The existence of two versions of this has provoked discussion as to which constitutes 'the original text'. Joseph Heinemann, however, points out that the ancient Jewish tradition was to specify prayer contents in general terms, leaving the exact wording to the individual worshipper.¹³² For instance, the Talmud, some two hundred or more years after the NT period, specifies that the main obligatory prayer recited at in each of the daily services should be recited extempore:

the sages of the Talmud insisted that a man should not 'make his recitation of the *Tefillāh* fixed' i.e. he should not repeat the same formulation word for word time and again: 'he should not recite it as one would read a letter'; rather 'he must say something new in his recitation of the *Tefillāh* every day.'¹³³

Thus, Heinemann asserts, 'from the first no single "original text" of any particular prayer was created, but that originally numerous diverse texts and versions existed side by side.'¹³⁴

Indeed, in the case of the Lord's Prayer this has been understood from very early times. Tertullian, says 'Jesus Christ our Lord has marked out for us disciples of the New Covenant a new *outline* of prayer' (Jesus Christus Dominus noster, nobis discipulis novi testamenti novam orationis *formam* determinavit.)¹³⁵ And Origen similarly comments, 'and now we shall come to the next task, the prayer *outlined* by the Lord ... and first of all we must observe that Matthew and Luke are reputed by many to have placed on record this same prayer *sketched out* because it is necessary to pray in this way' (ἡδὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξῆς ἄθλον ἐλευσόμεθα, τὴν ὑπογραφεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου προσευχῆν, ὅσης δυνάμεως πεπλήρωται,

¹³¹ Mt. 6: 9-15; Lk. 11: 2-4; and see Mk: 11:25.

¹³² Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns*, (Berlin: de Guyter, 1977), 37-69.

¹³³ Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 46. *Tefillāh*, lit. 'prayer', means here the '*Amîdāh* or 'standing prayer', the 'eighteen benedictions'.

¹³⁴ Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 43.

¹³⁵ Tertullian, *On Prayer* 1, my translation and emphasis.

θεωρήσαι βουλόμενοι. ... καὶ πρὸ πάντων γε παρατηρητέον ὅτι ὁ Ματθαῖος καὶ ὁ Λουκᾶς δόξαιεν ἂν τοῖς πολλοῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἀναγεγραφέναι ὑποτετυπωμένην πρὸς τὸ δεῖν οὕτως προσεύχεσθαι προσευχήν.)¹³⁶

The Lord's Prayer, moreover, demonstrates, from its very first word, roots deep in the Jewish tradition. God is addressed as 'father' in Isaiah (63: 16 & 64: 8, 'you are our Father' in each case), and in the apocryphal books, Sirach (23: 1, 4; 51: 10) and 3 Maccabees (6: 8).¹³⁷ Additionally James Charlesworth cites the Testaments of Levi and Judah, some texts of the Mishnah, (some of which begin, 'Our Father in heaven') and later Jewish prayers, including the *'Amîdâh*, in which God is called *'abînû* (our Father).¹³⁸ And, indeed, "The Lord's Prayer" can be paralleled almost point for point from the later sayings in the *Berakhoth*, and many miscellaneous sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels have close parallels in rabbinic literature.¹³⁹

We cannot, however, be sure what setting Jesus saw for his prayer. Indeed, information about how that prayer was used in the first two centuries is slight. We cannot then be certain if the prayer was intended for communal use. Nevertheless, the first-person plural implies that, even if recited by individuals, they were each expected to do so as part of a worshipping community. In this respect, Gordon Bahr suggests, it is very similar to the extemporised eighteen benedictions.¹⁴⁰

We should expect to find the earliest evidence about Christian worship in the letters of Paul and, although the references are somewhat scanty and, in some cases, the subject of dispute, some information can be gleaned. Chapter 14 of Paul's first Letter to the Corinthian church is concerned with the regulation of 'speaking in tongues'. While this is not something which he condemns outright, indeed he does it himself (more than anyone else, he says), he wishes to express

¹³⁶ Origen, *On Prayer*, 18.1.5 – 2.3, my translation and emphasis; ὑπογράφω is ambiguous here, it may mean "the prayer to which the Lord has set his name" or "outlined", but ὑποτυπώ certainly states that the prayer is "sketched out".

¹³⁷ See also Wisdom of Solomon 2: 16, 18, and Ex. 4: 22.

¹³⁸ James H Charlesworth, 'A Caveat on Textual transmission and the meaning of Abba: A Study of the Lord's prayer' in James H Charlesworth, Mark Harding and Mark Kiley (eds.), *The Lord's Prayer and Other Payer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*, (Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity Press, 1994) 6-7.

¹³⁹ Morton Smith 'The Jewish Elements in the Gospels', *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Apr., 1956) 94.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon J. Bahr, 'The Use of the Lord's Prayer in the Primitive Church', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (Jun., 1965), 153-159.

concerns about over-use. Thus, he comments, 'Otherwise [i.e. if you are unintelligible] if you bless in the spirit, how will one in the position of the uninstructed say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving? Since he does not understand what you say.'¹⁴¹ Two immediate points should be noted: firstly the association of 'you bless' (εὐλογῆς) with 'thanksgiving' (εὐχαριστία) which suggests a blessing of the Jewish style in which God is blessed for his gifts, and secondly the use of the Aramaic 'Amen' as a congregational response.¹⁴²

That Paul is talking about meetings of the church as a body is seen from subsequent verses: when 'in assembly' (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ), he regards speaking 'with the mind', as preferable to speaking in tongues.¹⁴³ When 'the whole church comes together' (συνέλθη ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη) it wouldn't do for everyone to speak in tongues.¹⁴⁴ And, presenting a window on Corinthian practice, he comments, 'Whenever you come together each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.'¹⁴⁵ The term 'psalm' (ψαλμός), originally referring to plucking a string, and thus playing an instrument with the fingers rather than a plectrum, became used more generally for a song of praise, not necessarily accompanied by a stringed instrument, though perhaps particularly influenced by the Book of Psalms and similar Old Testament passages.¹⁴⁶ In Paul's use in this sentence, the context suggests an original creation.¹⁴⁷ From the rest of the chapter we may understand that 'an interpretation' indicates someone providing a translation for another speaking in tongues. If all this suggests a picture of some confusion we can understand Paul's plea, 'all things must be done decently and in order.'¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, this seems a far cry from the Jewish synagogue with

¹⁴¹ 1 Cor. 14: 16, my translation.

¹⁴² Gordon D Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, revised edn., (Grand Rapids Mi: Eerdmans, 2014) 744-5; in note 540 (p. 744) Fee suggests that εὐλογῆς 'won't work' as a Jewish blessing because this is praising in tongues; but surely that is Paul's point.

¹⁴³ 1 Cor. 14: 19, NRSV; for congregational instruction, see Richard B Hays, *First Corinthians*, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989) 237-8.

¹⁴⁴ 1 Cor. 14: 23, NRSV.

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 14: 26, my trans; and see Fee, *Corinthians*, 743-4 for the presumed charismatic nature of Corinthian hymns.

¹⁴⁶ Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary v. 44, (Nashville, Tn: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 209; 'psalm' is considered further below.

¹⁴⁷ cf. Lk. 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33, NRSV.

¹⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 14: 40, NRSV;

the participants quietly listening to readings and exposition, though the latter was not always accepted peacefully.¹⁴⁹

In the letter to the Ephesians Paul writes of singing: 'be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.'¹⁵⁰ And similar ideas, with the same words about singing, are expressed in Colossians: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God.'¹⁵¹ Once again, we must recall the non-specific use of ψαλμός. Both John Muddiman and O'Brien explain the meanings of the three expressions in the description 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' (ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς).¹⁵² While the former leaves it uncertain as to whether a clear distinction between the three terms can be made, the latter stresses that 'most recent writers' believe that it cannot, and 'firm distinctions cannot be drawn between the terms nor can an exact classification of NT hymns be made on the basis of the different words.'¹⁵³ For Rudolf Schnackenburg this is simply 'an example of the author's stylistic preference for the triplicate.'¹⁵⁴ In other words this is synonymia intended to add emotional force, as indeed is 'singing and making melody' (ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες).¹⁵⁵

A word of particular difficulty for our present purposes is ἑαυτοῖς, 'to yourselves', in the Ephesians version of this passage, and the corresponding ἑαυτούς, 'yourselves' of Colossians. The NRSV renders the first of these as 'among yourselves', and the NIV as 'to one another', both preferring 'one another' for the second. The strict interpretation is, as indicated, '[to] yourselves'.¹⁵⁶ However,

¹⁴⁹ Lk. 4:28; Acts 13: 44-5, NRSV.

¹⁵⁰ Eph. 5: 18-19, NRSV.

¹⁵¹ Col. 3:16; NRSV.

¹⁵² John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, (London: Continuum, 2001), 248-9; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 209.

¹⁵³ See O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 209 for full references.

¹⁵⁴ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 237; Martin Hengel, 'The Song About Christ in Earliest Worship' in *Studies in Early Christology*, (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1995), 373.

¹⁵⁵ Eph. 5: 19, NRSV.

¹⁵⁶ See eg. 2 Cor 7: 1.

‘one another’, represents an occasional use of the pronoun.¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately there is little in the context to indicate whether this denotes communal worship or private since, in each case, the theme of the chapter is Christian life. The expression ‘in your hearts’ (τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν in Ephesians) might suggest private prayer, but it can also be seen as a characteristic of communal singing. And indeed, in the case of Ephesians, the immediate context expresses a preference for intoxication with the Spirit rather than with wine, the latter being usually a communal activity. J. Armitage Robinson however, turns this argument around as, ‘the implied contrast with the revelry of drunkenness makes it clear that in speaking of Christian psalmody, the Apostle is not primarily referring to public worship but to social gatherings in which a common meal was accompanied by sacred song.’¹⁵⁸ It is not certain, however, whether Paul would distinguish between communal worship and communal meal as we do. Further, even if individuals sang spiritual songs to themselves, a practice Paul would surely wish to encourage, they would have to learn words and music which could best be done when gathered together.

As to what these songs may have been like, Hengel suggests that, ‘with relative certainty, one can identify six texts as “psalms about Christ”; in addition to that perhaps several fragments and two or three passages in the letters of Ignatius.’¹⁵⁹ These texts are:- Phil. 2: 6-11, 1 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 1: 3, Col. 1: 15-18, 1 Peter 2: 21-25 (with the possible addition of 1 Pet. 3: 18), and John 1: 1-18. Some of these share an intriguing characteristic, in that they begin with the relative pronoun ὃς which seems to require an introductory call to worship which would not have formed part of the hymn. This suggestion, however, along with any reconstructions of such a call, are, as Stephen Fowl points out, necessarily very speculative.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940) on ἑαυτοῦ: ‘The plural, ἑαυτῶν, ἑαυτοῖς, etc., is sometimes used for ἀλλήλων, ἀλλήλοις, one another.’

¹⁵⁸ J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 2nd edn. (London, Clarke, 1961), 122.

¹⁵⁹ Hengel, ‘The Song About Christ’, 284.

¹⁶⁰ Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: an Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus*, *Journal for the study of the New Testament. Supplement 36*, (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1990), 40-1.

One of the most studied of these, which may indeed be the earliest record of a specifically Christian hymn, is found in Paul's letter to the Philippians.¹⁶¹ This passage is unusual in Paul's writings for, although he frequently writes in what might be termed poetic prose, he does not normally write what appears to be poetry, as this passage does. But, 'if this passage is poetry, it is certainly not Greek poetry.'¹⁶² It does, however, have certain characteristics which are significant. Firstly, it contains a number of undoubted Semitisms indicating either a translation from a Semitic language, presumably Aramaic, to Greek, or else an original composition in Greek by an author whose native language was Semitic. Secondly, the passage displays the parallelism characteristic of the Hebrew Poetry of the Old Testament.¹⁶³ Thus, for instance, although obscured by usual translations into good English, there is parallelism between ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάχων and ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος ('who in the form of God subsisting ... in the likeness of men becoming').¹⁶⁴

Certainly the passage was written by someone familiar with the poetry of Isaiah, as it leads up to a quotation from that book's possibly most strongly monotheistic section which is punctuated by the often repeated 'I am God there is no other', and rises to a universalist eschatological note: 'Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the Earth! For I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear"',¹⁶⁵ modified in Philippians to identify the crucified Christ with the one God.

Thus, although the passage is not Greek poetry, it is Hebrew poetry, in the sense of being of Hebrew style. Was it then an early Christian hymn? Martin says that

¹⁶¹ Phil. 2: 6-11; Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi, Philippians 2: 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of early Christian Worship*, revised edn., (Grand Rapids Mi, Eerdmans, 1983); Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, (revised edn.) Word Biblical Commentary vol. 43, (Nashville, Tn: Thomas Nelson, 2004) lxiv-lxxii, 90-135.

¹⁶² Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ, Essays on Paul*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1990), 94.

¹⁶³ James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

¹⁶⁴ Phil 2: 6, 7, my translation.

¹⁶⁵ Is. 45: 22-3, NRSV.

Hans Lietzmann was the first to call the passage a 'hymn'.¹⁶⁶ This designation was then adopted by Ernst Lohmeyer and by Ernst Käsermann.¹⁶⁷ Many, more recent, authors have accepted this designation, some considering it a matter of 'almost universal agreement.'¹⁶⁸ The agreement, however, is certainly not universal. Markus Bockmuehl, stressing the absence of hard evidences suggests that it is 'unwarranted and potentially misleading to call it a hymn.'¹⁶⁹ Gordon Fee, while agreeing that the passage is poetic, nevertheless warns that 'poetry does not = hymn.'¹⁷⁰ And Fowl rightly draws our attention to the complete lack of evidence that the Philippians passage has a prior existence in a worship situation.¹⁷¹

The passage from Colossians, specified by Hengel as Col. 1: 15-18, should perhaps more correctly be extended to include verses 19 and 20. 'The weight of scholarly opinion today considers that Colossians 1:15-20 is a pre-Pauline 'hymn' inserted into the letter's train of thought by the author' O'Brien summarises, adding that the term 'hymn' has neither the modern English nor Ancient Greek meaning but refers to a quasi-creedal passage with rudimentary metre and utilising the poetic devices found in OT psalms.¹⁷² Much of the debate about authorship, original form, and possible liturgical use described for the Philippians passage applies here also.¹⁷³ O'Brien points out also that the Colossians hymn shows a marked change from the immediately preceding verses, with its first person plurals, 'we' and 'us', instead asserting 'in exalted language the supremacy of Christ in creation and redemption.'¹⁷⁴ If this same insight is applied

¹⁶⁶ Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 25, citing Hans Lietzmann, *Messe Und Herrenmahl: Eine Studie Zur Geschichte Der Liturgie*, (Bonn: De Gruyter, 1926), 178.

¹⁶⁷ Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2,5-11*, (Heidelberg : Carl Winter, 1928); Ernst Käsermann, 'A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2: 5-11' in *God and Christ: Existence and Province*, Robert Walter Funk (ed.), *Journal for Theology and the Church* 5, (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1968), 45-88.

¹⁶⁸ Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 99; see also Martin, *Carmen Christi*; Jean-François Collange, *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians*, trans. A.W. Heathcote, (London : Epworth Press, 1979).

¹⁶⁹ Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, (Peabody, Ma: Hendrickson, 1998), 116-7.

¹⁷⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's letter to the Philippians*, (Grand Rapids, Mi: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 193, n. 4.

¹⁷¹ Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 45.

¹⁷² O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 32-3.

¹⁷³ cf O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 31-42, and Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 90-104.

¹⁷⁴ O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 32.

to the proposed hymn in 1 Peter, then verse 2:21 with the same confessional style as Col. 1:12-14, though using the second person, should be omitted, beginning this particular 'psalm about Christ' with the $\delta\varsigma$ of verse 22. There is, moreover, no certainty that verse 3: 18 should be appended to the hymn as Hengel suggests.

Hebrews 1:3 (or perhaps 3-4) may be dealt with quite quickly. It reads like a summary of the longer Philippians passage, and indeed we may question whether it is long enough to provide the sort of evidence offered for the above hymns. Similar considerations apply to 1 Tim. 3:16, and indeed the close relationship between this and the Philippians hymn is noted by Hengel.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, it shows hymn-like characteristics. The introductory $\delta\varsigma$ 'does not seem to be connected to what precedes it.'¹⁷⁶ It consists of 'six lines, almost identical in form.'¹⁷⁷ And it is 'distinctly different from what precedes and follows', which together with the nature of its content leads to the conclusion that it is a liturgical statement.¹⁷⁸ However, since the Pastoral Epistles are regarded as 'late and secondary', dated to 110 CE or afterwards, this passage properly belongs to later liturgical development than the above.¹⁷⁹ Thus, of Hengel's six hymns, and omitting 1 Peter 2:21 as suggested above, the five already considered are seen to begin with the relative pronoun.

Postponing the consideration of the prologue to the fourth gospel to a chronologically appropriate place, we must note first the curiosity that the hymnic material of the first two chapters of the third gospel is not found in Hengel's list. While these are more generally accepted as hymns, their origins are the subject of debate.

R. A. Aytoun translates the Song of Simeon (the *Nunc Dimittis*, Lk. 2: 29-32) into Hebrew, with a result which, he claims, demonstrates 'Hebrew metre'.¹⁸⁰ Thus, he concludes that this passage was originally composed in that language rather than Greek or even Aramaic, 'For if the poem be translated into Aramaic it shews

¹⁷⁵ Hengel, 'The Song About Christ', 285.

¹⁷⁶ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, (Grand Rapids, Mi, Eerdmans, 1992), 182.

¹⁷⁷ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182.

¹⁷⁸ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 183.

¹⁷⁹ Hengel, 'The Song About Christ', 285.

¹⁸⁰ R. A. Aytoun, 'The Ten Lucan Hymns of the Nativity in their Original Language', *J Theol Studies* (July 1917) os-XVIII (72): 274-288.

no sign of any kind of recognized metre, nor of any poetic form, save a certain balance and parallelism, which is retained in some degree into whatsoever language it is rendered.¹⁸¹ By examining the remainder of the nativity story in the first two chapters of Luke's gospel on the same basis, he claims to have found ten hymns (or perhaps parts of hymns) all of which he declares to be of similar origin. These ten are: the proclamation of the angel to Zachariah (Lk. 1: 14-17); The two addresses by Gabriel to Mary (Lk. 1: 30-33, 35-37); Elizabeth's speech of welcome to Mary (Lk. 1: 42-45); the Song of Mary (the *Magnificat*, Lk. 1: 46-55), the Song of Zachariah (the *Benedictus* Lk. 1: 68-69); the address of the angel to the shepherds (Lk. 2: 10-12); the Song of the Angelic Host (Lk. 2: 14); and, in addition to the *Nunc Dimittis*, 'the prophetic words of Simeon's address to the Virgin (ii 34-36) [which] although they are not exactly lyrical are yet metrical.' That is, he sees virtually all the dialogue of the story as having an origin as Hebrew poetry.

The idea of metre in Hebrew poetry, however, is not now a generally accepted one. Thus David Petersen and Kent Richards summarise their analysis of the state of research by identifying 'an emerging scholarly consensus that denies the existence of meter in classical Hebrew poetry.'¹⁸² Kugel, also dismissing the idea, comments 'Parallelism is now widely taken as a kind of substitute meter, a structure-giving regularity whose role in Biblical Hebrew is comparable to that of meter in ancient Greek.'¹⁸³

However, Douglas Jones, without introducing considerations of metre, concludes that the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc Dimittis* are Christian Psalms originally composed in Hebrew rather than Greek.¹⁸⁴ For even though these psalms demonstrate a familiarity with Old Testament poetry of the Septuagint,

Repeatedly the initial impression that the echoes of the LXX point to a Greek original has been modified by more careful examination. The plausibility of this view has been diminished by the discovery of a wider dependence upon psalms in the tradition of Hebrew psalmography. This wider dependence points to a Hebrew original, while justice is

¹⁸¹ Aytoun, 'The Ten Lucan Hymns', 276.

¹⁸² David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 37-47, quotation from p. 42.

¹⁸³ Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 70-6, quotation from p. 74.

¹⁸⁴ Douglas Jones, 'The Background and Character of the Lukan Psalms', *J Theol Studies* (April 1968) XIX (1): 19-50.

done to the evidence of a relationship to the LXX by supposing that the translation into Greek was made by someone intimately acquainted with the LXX.¹⁸⁵

'All three,' Jones declares, 'so far from being simple and naive, are best understood as the product of a highly developed tradition of psalmody.'¹⁸⁶ Jones thus suggests a pre-Lucan origin in 'the worship of the earliest community of Jewish Christians ... The psalms must then belong to the very earliest period of Jewish Christianity, before a specifically Christian theological language had developed. In these circles the tradition of psalmody was preserved and practised.'¹⁸⁷ Some support for this view is found in the work of Stephen Farris using the methodology of Martin in which relative frequencies of certain syntactical features are counted, scores for these being shown by Martin to differ for original Greek and what he terms 'translation Greek'.¹⁸⁸ On the basis of the results so obtained, Farris concludes that these hymns 'may depend on Semitic, probably Hebrew, originals.'¹⁸⁹

Certainly the *Magnificat* and *Benedictus* sit rather awkwardly in their immediate contexts, though the *Nunc Dimittis* appears to flow naturally out of the story of Simeon. Nevertheless, we must note that these three psalms, or hymns, carry the burden of the theological content of the first two chapters and, moreover, it is most certainly Lucan theology. Thus, the *Magnificat* demonstrates a desire, not for greater social equality, as is sometimes suggested, but the Lucan predilection for socio-economic reversal.¹⁹⁰ The *Benedictus*, presents the Christian movement as a continuation of ancient Jewish tradition, perhaps for the benefit of Roman overlords, customarily suspicious of new religions but respectful of the old. And the *Nunc Dimittis* gives the first hint of the universalism that is one of Luke's primary themes. We must conclude that, whatever the original language and whether composed personally by the author of the rest of the third gospel or not, these hymns are a product of the Lucan community.

¹⁸⁵ Jones, 'Background and Character', 48.

¹⁸⁶ Jones, 'Background and Character', 44.

¹⁸⁷ Jones, 'Background and Character', 47-48.

¹⁸⁸ Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives : their Origin, Meaning and Significance*, JSNT Supplement series: 9, (Sheffield : JSOT Press, 1985) 50-66; Raymond A Martin 'Some Syntactical Criteria of Translation Greek', in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 10, Fasc. 3 (Jul., 1960), 295-310.

¹⁸⁹ Farris, *Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives*, 62.

¹⁹⁰ cf Lk. 1: 53, 6: 24-25; 16: 22-3.

Though it seems that it may be possible to identify certain New Testament passages as hymns, Matthew Gordley begins an article on precisely that task with the pessimistic observation:

The problem of identifying and classifying early Christian hymns within the NT has not gone away, and no identifiable consensus has emerged with regard to the nature, structure, and purpose of any single purported NT hymn. The Johannine prologue is a case in point. Though many scholars recognize the prologue as something of an early Christian hymn, others suggest that the whole enterprise of identifying early Christian hymns is ill-advised.¹⁹¹

Indeed, this dichotomy is something of an oversimplification as many intermediate views are also advocated. Undeterred, however, Gordley goes on to identify the prologue to the fourth gospel as a 'didactic hymn' which, by the omission of verses 6-8 and 15 (as insertions from an original introduction concerning the Baptist) and 16-17 (as an editorial explanation), may be divided into seven strophes. However, the term 'didactic hymn' in Gordley's remarkably broad understanding of the phrase 'includes psalms, hymns, prayers, and religious poetry whose primary purpose is to convey a lesson, idea, or theological truth to a human audience.'¹⁹² It can hardly be denied that the prologue satisfies this prescription, though the poetry is admittedly of a non-metric nature. This is however, no indication that the prologue in any form was used in worship during the earliest period.

Indeed, whether or not any of the passages discussed were ever sung in communal worship cannot be established with any certainty but, as Paul Bradshaw points out, at the very least they suggest the style and content of the earliest Christian worship:

Nevertheless, in spite of all this uncertainty, those passages which have been identified by general consensus as hymns and prayers can legitimately be seen as reflecting the sort of liturgical material which early Christians would have used. Even if these particular examples are not taken directly from common worship but are the product of authors' creativity they would inevitably have been influenced to a considerable extent by the liturgical forms with which they were familiar. This conclusion is confirmed by a comparative analysis of the passages in question, which reveals a large number of common stylistic

¹⁹¹ Matthew Gordley, 'The Johannine Prologue and Jewish Didactic Hymn Traditions: A New Case for Reading the Prologue as a Hymn', in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 128, No. 4 (Winter, 2009) 781.

¹⁹² Gordley, 'The Johannine Prologue', 782.

and linguistic features persisting across differences of author, theology, and background, and so suggests that this commonality derives from the similarities within their various liturgical traditions.¹⁹³

Whatever the status of the various passages above (which must be considered on a case-by-case basis), it is to be noted that they all bear indications of Jewish influence as an aspect of their 'common stylistic and linguistic features.'

3.13 Conclusions

We must therefore conclude that rather than adopt an entire liturgy from the synagogue with a few Christian modifications, early Christians developed their own prayers and hymns, but these were influenced by the concepts and language of Judaism. At a later stage converts and Judaizers may have helped to import Jewish ideas. It certainly seems that until the early fourth century, there were Christians who attended synagogues as well as churches, maintaining contact of a liturgical nature between Jews and Christians.

That they did so until the latter part of that century is, moreover, clear from John Chrysostom's series of eight homilies, *Against the Jews* dated 386-387 CE:

There are many in our ranks who say they think as we do. Yet some of these are going to watch the festivals and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts. I wish to drive this perverse custom from the Church right now.¹⁹⁴

The strength of Chrysostom's opposition to Judaizers suggests that they were not an unimportant group. Indeed, he appears to imply that there were a significant number, as he advises his hearers not to talk about how many Christians observe Jewish fasts lest it become public knowledge, and even suggests that they should deny that any such problem exists.¹⁹⁵ Wolfram Kinzig suggests that, when Christianity became the official religion of the empire in 380 CE, it attracted many who were less committed than formerly and who might have a more eclectic religion.¹⁹⁶ And moreover, 'Jews not only had a rather high

¹⁹³ Bradshaw, *Search*, 59.

¹⁹⁴ John Chrysostom *Against the Jews*, 1.1.5; PG 48. 844.

¹⁹⁵ John Chrysostom *Against the Jews*, 8.4.5; PG 48. 933.

¹⁹⁶ Wolfram Kinzig, 'Non-Separation: Closeness and Co-operation between Jews and Christians in the Fourth Century', *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Mar., 1991) 27-53.

political and economic profile in the city [Antioch], but their rites and customs could also be seen by everybody.¹⁹⁷

As we have seen there is little in the synagogue liturgy which might transfer directly into Christianity. John Arthur Smith, however, offers an alternative suggestion which perhaps better fits the known facts.¹⁹⁸ He, unfortunately, assumes the existence of synagogue prayers, on the basis of Matthew 6: 5 and the use of προσευχή in Acts 16: 13, 16, passages which have been dealt with above. Regarding the question of prayer as settled, Smith then confines his comments to singing, although, in fact, they might also apply to prayer.¹⁹⁹ Singing as a form of worship, he suggests, took place at 'private religious assemblies', specifically gatherings of 'family or household, those of certain sectarian communities and those of associates.'²⁰⁰ In particular, in 4 Maccabees 18: 6-19 the mother of seven sons recalls how her husband taught the children from scripture, including 'the song that Moses taught' (v. 18), and also that 'he sang [ἐμελώδει] to you songs of the psalmist David' (v. 15). Such family worship might, indeed, be the source of early Christian worship practices and, since we can see no such source in the synagogue, this would include both song and prayer. We shall need to return to the question of gentile sympathisers with Judaism and the possible influence of the Jewish domestic sabbath lamp-lighting ceremony on Christian practice in chapter 9.²⁰¹

It was formerly common for scholars to attempt to derive Christian daily prayer from the supposed practice of the Jewish synagogue. And, while this has proved unsuccessful in the light of later analysis, it has been worth re-examining the evidence to show that Jewish influence on the detail of Christian prayers and hymns cannot be denied. In particular, while Christians are unlikely to have inherited the practice of praying at the ninth hour directly from first century temple worship, the description of it in the New Testament was influential. In other words,

¹⁹⁷ Kinzig, 'Non-Separation', 39.

¹⁹⁸ John Arthur Smith, 'The Ancient Synagogue, the Early Church and Singing', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), 1-16.

¹⁹⁹ Smith, 'Ancient Synagogue', 4.

²⁰⁰ Smith, 'Ancient Synagogue', 9.

²⁰¹ Section 9.6.

early Christians either derived their practice from reading about it, or justified their practice by recourse to the New Testament text.

Readings from the Torah were key in the synagogue, but do not seem to have been so in Christian daily prayer. The prayers which were in use in synagogues from the second century on, *Shema* and *Amīdāh*, leave no mark on Christian worship except from prayers in *Apostolic Constitutions* about which we have no further information.

Though not part of synagogue worship, the Lord's prayer, and various hymns in the New Testament (though some scholars do not accept that the latter were ever used in worship) show clear Jewish influence.

It is difficult to find clear evidence either to support or reject Smith's hypothesis of domestic origins. Nevertheless, we may conclude that family worship of early Jewish Christians is likely to have influenced developments in the churches. Thus, while we should not be tempted towards a too facile reading of Jewish influence into the texts of the Cappadocian Fathers, we must note at this point the significance of domestic prayer, a theme which will recur below.

4. Possible Pagan Influence on Early Christian Worship

4.1 Introduction

As noted in the introductory chapter, Anton Baumstark suggests that we must consider 'Hellenistic' influence on early Christian worship in addition to that of Judaism.¹ For him, however, the impact of Hellenism means that baptism and Eucharist were influenced by Hellenist mystery cults, this claim, particularly for the Eucharist, being roundly rejected by Gregory Dix.² When we turn to the daily office, however, Hellenism provides no allegedly obvious connection such as that suggested for synagogue worship. Nevertheless, the increasing proportion of those from a pagan background from the second century on, suggests that possible pagan influences should also be considered.

The last chapter refuted claims that public synagogue worship was the source of the Christian divine office, but suggested some possible influence of domestic prayer. In this chapter we ask: can a similar judgment be made with regard to pagan influence? Further, although Baumstark concentrates on 'Hellenistic' influence, we shall not assume that any such influences must necessarily be Hellenistic (in the restricted sense of purely Greek in culture) and examine Roman private religion as well.

We shall examine pagan prayer both public and private in comparison with Christian prayer and see that, despite obvious differences, some similarities can also be identified.

4.2 Pagan Domestic Prayer

In the pagan world, public or civic cults centred on animal sacrifice, rejected by the early church.³ Thus, while some prayers from the public cult might be relevant, it seems that personal, family, or domestic prayer might provide a more

¹ See above section 1.6; Anton Baumstark, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*, Introduction, translation, and annotation by Fritz West, (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press 2011) 89.

² Baumstark, *Historical Development* 74-88; Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A & C Black, 1945) 61, 65, 72, 153, 398, and particularly 483.

³ For full discussion of this rejection see e.g. George Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice : Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC - AD 200*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Daniel C. Ullucci, *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice*, (Oxford: University Press, 2012).

appropriate focus. The task of examining the beliefs and practices of the household is, however, made difficult by several factors. There is variation to be found not only between identifiably distinct cultures but within each of them; a god or goddess was worshipped according to his or her perceived preferences and the family traditions of the worshipper, rather than in accordance with a cultural norm. Additionally, the information available to us is scanty and little studied: 'Considered globally, domestic religion is the most widespread form of religious activity; perhaps due to its very ubiquity, it is also the least studied. This is especially true of domestic religion of the past.'⁴ Even for the comparatively well documented case of Greece, Jon Mikalson writes, 'The general character of Greek religion and the nature of the ancient sources that happen to survive have made it surprisingly difficult to determine the religious beliefs and attitudes of the "ordinary" ancient Greek.'⁵ We may add that this seems to be equally true of prayer practices. Further, studies of ancient paganism cover a considerable range of time from the second millennium BCE to the eventual banning of pagan practice in the fourth century CE. There is also variation in the terminology used by scholars; the terms 'family', 'household', 'domestic', or 'personal' may be used for those religious practices which lie outside the public cult. Such terminology, however, has its roots in the variation of religious boundaries applicable to different cultures and settings.⁶ Thus Karel van der Toorn considers the term 'family religion' rather than 'domestic' as appropriate for West Asia in the second millennium BCE, since,

the adjective 'domestic' implies that the house is the focus of religious activities; the specification 'family' throws into relief that the beliefs and practices are tied to the social unit of the family and, more specifically, the extended family. Moreover, the expression family religion

⁴ Jonathan Z Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 325.

⁵ Jon D Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion*, (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 2.

⁶ John Bodet and Saul M. Olyan (eds.) *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); in particular, Bodet and Olyan, 'Comparative Perspectives', 276-282.

emphasises that this religion is neither 'personal', at least in our sense of the term, nor 'popular'.⁷

That family religion must be considered distinct from civic cult is shown by the observation that 'urban families did not as a rule venerate the major god of the city as their family god', since major deities 'ranked too high in the hierarchy' to be approached by ordinary people who needed family gods to intercede with those of the first-class.⁸

In the past, moreover, as both Christopher Faraone and Deborah Boedeker point out, historians of religion have tended to ignore or minimise the significance of domestic or personal religious practice; this may be a consequence of reading back into the ancient, pagan world the emphasis which mainstream Christianity, in the medieval period and later, placed on a model of belief and worship which saw the Church as central and mediating all contact with the divine, personal religion being seen as supplementary.⁹ Additionally, scholars may have been influenced by ancient traditionalist criticism, thus Eric Dodds suggests that there was a degeneracy of popular religion by the fourth century BCE due primarily to the proliferation of magical rites for various purposes, as well as the introduction of orgiastic foreign cults.¹⁰

Though civic and family religion are in some respects distinct, it is, however, too simplistic to consider them as isolated from each other. In Boedeker's view, there is a failure to recognise the connections and interchanges between these two which is a consequence of the former marginalization of the domestic cult: 'the tendency in religious history to exclude, or at best to seclude, domestic religion from civic tends to blind us to these dynamic interactions. *Polis* cult and family cult are not two separate systems, but an interlocking set of practices, asymmetrical though often complementary.'¹¹

⁷ Karel van der Toorn, 'Family Religion in Second Millennium West Asia (Mesopotamia, Emar, Nuzi)', in Bodel and Olyan, *Household and Family Religion*, 20.

⁸ Van der Toorn, 'Family Religion', 22.

⁹ Christopher A. Faraone, 'Household Religion in Ancient Greece', in Bodel and Olyan, *Household and Family Religion*, 210; Deborah Boedeker, 'Family Matters: Domestic Religion in Classical Greece', in Bodel and Olyan, *Household and Family Religion*, 229.

¹⁰ Eric Robertson Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, (Berkeley : California University Press, 1951), 192-5.

¹¹ Boedeker, 'Family Matters', 244.

4.3 Roman Religion

In the case of Rome, the situation seems rather worse, for, Roman paganism as a whole has tended to be judged from a Greek perspective as lacking myth and concentrating on ritual practice. It is, claims Robert Phillips, 'a religious system which has, until quite recently, been almost wilfully misunderstood by scholars.'¹² John Bodel agrees, asserting, 'For scholars of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, who regarded the public state cult as moribund and decadent, the Roman popular religion supposedly already institutionalized and buried by it had necessarily also to appear beyond recovery: if the forms even of public religion were hollow shells, how much more empty must have been the historically visible manifestations of a private religiosity that had long ago been suffocated by it?'¹³ While this sentence gives no indication of the period in which Roman paganism was considered to have become 'moribund', Bodel goes on to write of household shrines in the early Empire, that is the earliest Christian period. By the early Christian period 'Rome' must be understood to include Roman *Coloniae* and indeed Roman citizens throughout the empire. Roman religious practice, like that of Greece, was governed by general principles and interpretations of tradition, rather than precise specification; there was no equivalent to the *Roman Missal*, the *Service Book of the Orthodox Church*, the *Book of Common Prayer*, or other service books of the modern, literate world. However, the ritual requirements of the Roman public cult, may be inferred from such information as survives in documents, decrees and inscriptions. Thus the practice at the earliest stage of the Imperial cult, is illustrated by a votive inscription dedicating an altar at Narbo in southern Gaul to the *genius* of the emperor Augustus, which provides a full, if not complete, description of what is required.¹⁴ 'Three Roman knights from the people and three freedmen' are to sacrifice 'one victim each' on three occasions a year, being dates associated with Augustus' rule.¹⁵ Incense and wine are also to be offered on these and two further

¹² C. Robert Phillips, 'Cato the Elder', in in Mark Kiley, et al. (eds.), *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine, a Critical Anthology*, (London: Routledge, 1997) 130.

¹³ John Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva, Penates and the Mother of the Lares: An Outline of Roman Domestic Religion', in Bodel and Olyan, *Household and Family Religion*, 251.

¹⁴ Dan Schowalter, 'Written in Stone: a Prayer to Augustus', in Mark Kiley, et al. *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, 159-164.

¹⁵ 23rd September, 7th January and the 31st May, Schowalter, 'Written in Stone', 163.

days. We do not know how the knights and freedman were selected, but this information may have been given in the end portion of this first part of the inscription, now lost. In addition to the six official sacrificers, others are encouraged to become involved by a second part, which provides for maintenance of and donations to the altar, by permitting them to be made by anyone.

The Roman domestic religious situation appears more complex than either Roman public practice or domestic worship in other cultures.¹⁶ And further, the boundaries between public and private religion are somewhat blurred.¹⁷ In addition to the *Lares* and *Penates*, often grouped together in elementary descriptions as ‘gods of the household’, the *genius* of the paterfamilias was to be honoured, while particular, favourite, well-recognised deities, such as Cicero’s *Minerva*, also found a place in the home.¹⁸

Varro stresses the desirability of religious observance being shared by families: ‘for indeed, as the state is bound to worship the gods communally, so ought we in individual families’ (*etenim ut deos colere debet communitus civitas, sic singulae familiae debemus*).¹⁹ The Roman *familia*, however meant more than ‘kin’, it comprised ‘all those who resided within a single house, the *domus*.’²⁰ That would include not only the nuclear family, but other relatives or dependants living with them, as well as the household slaves and ‘any slaves housed elsewhere’, although the conceptions of the term in Roman sources broaden or narrow this according to personal view or context.²¹ Indeed, Bodet suggests that, ‘by familial worship Varro refers to ... the gentilicial cults conducted publicly (in a spatial sense: they were financed privately) by representatives of the great families of the Republic on behalf of their individual clans (*gentes*).’²² The basis of this assertion is, however, not clear, for Bodet offers no justification for the claim and

¹⁶ John Bodet, ‘Cicero’s *Minerva*’.

¹⁷ See Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in late Antiquity* (Cambridge: The University Press, 2008) 20-48.

¹⁸ See Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.42.

¹⁹ Varro *Rerum Divinarum* (I, 32), quoted in Nonius Marcellus, *De compendiosa doctrina*, 510, see Wallace M. Lindsay (ed.), *Nonii Marcelli De compendiosa doctrina libros xx*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1903), 820.

²⁰ Bodet, ‘Cicero’s *Minerva*’, 248.

²¹ Bodet, ‘Cicero’s *Minerva*’, 248.

²² Bodet, ‘Cicero’s *Minerva*’, 249.

the original context is no longer extant. Further, as Bodel goes on to point out, these gentilicial cults had little real relevance to domestic worship, 'they are mere curiosities – relics at best, during the historical period, more often mere status symbols.'²³ It is quite possible, then, that Varro referred to household worship led by the *paterfamilias* as discussed below.

True 'domestic' religion, moreover, was, in Bodel's view, 'more personal and individual than communal and representative in any real sense'; there were two sets of household gods, the *Lares*, 'shared by all in the household but a particular focus for the slave staff,' and the *Penates*, 'personal, inherited and thus familial.'²⁴ The worship of these gods took place in domestic shrines, conventionally termed *Lararia*, which might be situated at a variety of places throughout the house.²⁵ In these shrines the *Lares* themselves were normally represented by a pair of dancers who flanked a figure of the *Genius* (guardian spirit) of the *paterfamilias* in the act of sacrificing.²⁶ The nature of worship at these shrines is illustrated by the late fourth century imperial ban found in the Codex Theodosianus:

Nullus omnino ex quolibet genere ordine hominum dignitatum vel in potestate positus vel honore perfunctus, sive potens sorte nascendi seu humilis genere condicione ortuna in nullo penitus loco, in nulla urbe sensu carentibus simulacris vel insontem victimam caedat vel secretiore piaculo larem igne, mero genium, penates odore veneratus accendat lumina, imponat tura, sarta suspendat.

No person at all, of any class or order whatsoever of men or of dignitaries, whether he occupies a position of power or has completed such honours, whether he is powerful by lot of birth or is humble in lineage, legal status and fortune, shall sacrifice an innocent victim to senseless images in any place at all or in any city. He shall not, by more secret wickedness, venerate his lar with fire, his genius with wine,

²³ Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva', 250.

²⁴ Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva', 248-9.

²⁵ Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva', 255-6.

²⁶ Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva', 256.

his penates with fragrant odours; he shall not burn lights to them place incense before them or suspend wreaths for them.²⁷

The *Lares*, belonging to the free family but provided for slave worship, existed, Bodel suggests, to control and channel religious expression of slaves towards 'archetypical slave ancestors and the immediate head of the household.'²⁸ Slaves were certainly not to have their own gods, nor even their own worship, it appears from the instructions of Cato the Censor (2nd/3rd cent BCE) for a farm housekeeper:

Rem divinam ni faciat neve mandet, qui pro ea faciat, iniussu domini aut dominae. Scito dominum pro tota familia rem divinam facere ... Kalendis, Idibus, Nonis, festus dies cum erit, coronam in focum indat, per eosdemque dies lari familiari pro copia supplicet.

She must not engage in religious worship herself or get others to engage in it for her without the orders of the master or the mistress; let her remember that the master attends to the devotions for the whole household. ... On the Kalends, Ides, and Nones, and whenever a holy day comes, she must hang a garland over the hearth, and on those days pray to the household gods (*dies lari familiari*) as the opportunity offers.²⁹

'Religious worship' may not, however, be the best rendering of *res divina*, defined as 'a religious rite (usually involving sacrifice)'³⁰ And, as sacrifice formed the basis of prayer (see below), this regulation tied the housekeeper to the same gods as those who were the object of the master's devotions. Further, even her prayers to the *Lares* were controlled. That the regulation of slave religion was not always successful, however, is seen from Paul's greeting to those 'in the Lord' who are

²⁷ Codex Theodosianus 16.10.12 (392 CE, Nov. 8); translation Clyde Pharr et al., *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 473.

²⁸ Bodel, 'Cicero's Minerva', 268.

²⁹ Cato, *De Agri Cultura*, 143.1-2, Latin and translation available at: 'Cato: De Agricultura',

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/cato/de_agricultura/home.htm (accessed 09/07/2015).

³⁰ *The Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), on *divina*.

'of' Aristobulus and Narcissus.³¹ This is usually understood to mean the slaves, freedmen and freedwomen of these households. Aristobulus may have been a member of the Herod family, and Narcissus the freedman of the Emperor Claudius, but as both names were widely used, this is by no means certain. However, as Paul does not greet either of these household heads it may safely be assumed that they were not Christians.³²

4.4 What is Common to Pagan Practice?

Despite the problems outlined above, it may, nevertheless, be possible to identify certain common, or rather related, practices. Thus in a survey making comparison of domestic religious practice throughout the near East and the great range of time designated 'antiquity', Bodel and Olyan note that:

Although the individual components of household and family religion may differ from context to context, some shared elements emerge from comparison. Devotion to family or household gods is common to household and family religion in a number of contexts (e.g. Greece, Rome, Second Millennium Babylon, Israel). These deities may be approached in domestic shrines or local sanctuaries depending on the cultural setting, and they may or may not be the same as the major gods of state or civic cult.³³

Regardless of the deities invoked there may be, in different cultures, continuity or discontinuity between 'public' (i.e. of the civic cult) and 'private' (domestic, household or familial) religion.³⁴ One clear common feature throughout the ancient world is that, as already noted, the public cult centred on animal sacrifice, while domestic practice did not. Indeed, Bodel and Olyan, while noting that 'clearly a range of patterns is possible', identify 'a cross-cultural phenomenon – the avoidance of meat offerings in domestic cult.'³⁵ However, it is clear that

³¹ Rom 16:10,11, translated: 'belong to the family of' (NRSV) or 'belong to the household of' (NIV).

³² James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, The Word Biblical Commentary vol. 38B, (Dallas Tx: Word Books, 1988), 896; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans, a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 740-1.

³³ Bodel and Olyan, 'Comparative Perspectives', 279.

³⁴ Bodel and Olyan, 'Comparative Perspectives', 278.

³⁵ Bodel and Olyan, 'Comparative Perspectives', 279.

'avoidance' must not be understood as indicating that throughout the ancient world meat offerings never formed part of domestic worship. For although, as Bodet and Olyan point out, this public/domestic distinction applies to 'Israel, Ammon, Ugarit and some parts of Greece', nevertheless in Rome, among Roman citizens elsewhere, and in most of Greece, animal sacrifice in the domestic context was common.³⁶ Furthermore this practice would appear to have persisted in fourth century Roman pagan households despite imperial condemnation. The first move in the Roman world against animal sacrifice was taken by Constantine who forbade its use in the imperial cult.³⁷ And in 341 this apparently formed the basis of a decree by Constantian which banned *all* sacrifices:

Cesset superstitio, sacrificiorum aboleatur insania. Nam quicumque contra legem divi principis parentis nostri et hanc nostrae mansuetudinis iussionem ausus fuerit sacrificia celebrare, competens in eum vindicta et praesens sententia exeratur.

Let superstition cease; let the madness of sacrifices be abolished. For whoever, against the law of the divine prince, our parent [Constantine] and this command of our clemency, shall celebrate sacrifices, let a punishment appropriate to him and this present decision be issued.³⁸

This decree was evidently lifted during the short reign of Julian (360-3), as he was nicknamed 'slaughterer'.³⁹ And, fifty years after the original ban, domestic sacrifice still survived as can be seen from the further decree of 392, quoted above.⁴⁰

4.5 Greco-Roman Prayer.

Possibly the best documented prayer practices in the ancient pagan world are those of Greek and Roman religious cultures. Simon Pulleyn provides a comprehensive survey of Greek prayer from the time of Homer to the fourth

³⁶ Faraone, 'Household Religion', 215-7; Boedeker, 'Family Matters', 230, 232, 235.

³⁷ Bernard Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome the First Three Centuries*, (London, T & T Clark, 2010), 227.

³⁸ Codex Theodosianus 16.10.2, translation: Pharr et al., *The Theodosian Code*, 472.

³⁹ *Victimarius*, the sacrificial assistant who slew the victim, see: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22.14.3, English translation available at: 'Ammianus Marcellinus: Roman Antiquities', http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Ammian/22*.html (accessed 05/07/2015).

⁴⁰ Codex Theodosianus 16.10.12, see above.

century (BCE), beginning with a discussion of what was understood about the nature of prayer. Although, 'prayer ... meant asking for something', 'one had to give as well as take', thus 'prayer relied on sacrifice.'⁴¹ The association of prayer with sacrifice, however, depended on χάρις, which 'refers to a whole nexus of related ideas that we would term reciprocity.'⁴² The relevant ideas found in the lexical definition of χάρις include: 'grace, favour, ... by the doer, kindness good will, ... by the receiver, the sense of favour received, thanks, gratitude...', and thus χάριν ὀφείλιν is 'to owe a debt of gratitude, be beholden', while δαιμόνων χάρις means 'homage or worship due to the gods', and διὰ χαρίτων εἶναι means 'to be on terms of friendship or mutual favour.'⁴³ The nature of such reciprocity in the Roman case is illustrated by the Narbo altar inscription mentioned above. The people of Narbo are making a vow (*votum*) to worship Augustus' *genius* in perpetuity in gratitude for the emperor's settlement of a dispute and with a prayer that this divine essence will continue to be 'good, auspicious, and favourable to the emperor Caesar Augustus.'⁴⁴

Prayers performed in private by individuals, and their purposes, were perceived as bordering on magic, particularly when offered by night as was a Christian custom.⁴⁵ And Mikalsen suggests that that 'the lack of mention of such magical rites in the more public sources suggest that while they may have been privately practised they to some extent lacked public acceptability.'⁴⁶ Two distinctions may be made between the petitions of religion and magic. One of these is the private or secret nature of magical practices, but at the heart of the matter is the presupposition by magical practices of a different relationship with the divinity addressed, not χάρις but compulsion.⁴⁷

Both Pulleyn and Mary Depew consider the significance of εὔχεσθαι in Homeric Greek where sometimes it appears to mean 'pray' while, at others, 'boast'.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Simon Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1997), 15.

⁴² Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 4.

⁴³ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940) on χάρις.

⁴⁴ Schowalter, 'Written in Stone', 160-1, 163.

⁴⁵ Larry J. Alderink and Luther H. Martin, 'Prayer in Greco-Roman Religions', in Mark Kiley, et al. *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, 125.

⁴⁶ Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion*, 23.

⁴⁷ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 93.

⁴⁸ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 59-63; Mary Depew, 'Reading Greek Prayers', *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Oct., 1997) 232-6.

Depew relates this back to reciprocity of χάρις: 'This give-and-take between two people is crucial to the usage and meaning of εὔχεσθαι. We might sum it up with the following criterion: *no interpersonal context, no claim*. Both are inextricably tied to the nature and the success of the speech act denoted by εὔχεσθαι.'⁴⁹ For Depew, as this quote reveals, the word means 'to claim'. Pulleyn, however, after a very full discussion of scholarly opinions and examination of linguistic evidence concludes that εὔχεσθαι means 'to say solemnly', which does seem to account for its linguistic range.⁵⁰ However, although useful as a linguistic basis for understanding, the general nature of this interpretation somewhat undermines the concept of εὔχεσθαι as χάρις based petition which Pulleyn clearly accepts.

There is, however, a form of prayer, ἰκετεία (supplication) which is not based on the assertion of right of χάρις reciprocity, but which Pulleyn describes as 'an action whereby one person, who is normally in dire straits, requests the aid and protection of another, thereby putting him under an almost sacral compulsion to comply.'⁵¹ As far as supplication addressed to another human being is concerned, it was, Pulleyn goes on to point out, upheld and enforced by the gods. The gods then could themselves hardly refuse supplications addressed to them.

Prayer not only functioned as petition, but also as thanksgiving, normally accompanied by sacrifice.⁵² Thanksgivings also occur in *ex-voto* inscriptions.⁵³ From which it seems that 'praising the gods ... was an acceptable way of thanking them.'⁵⁴ This brings us to the subject of hymns.

Unfortunately, 'there is, and was in antiquity, some confusion as to what, precisely, a "hymn" (ὕμνος) was.'⁵⁵ Possibly Plato was a major contributor to this confusion for he comments 'there was a species of song consisting in prayers to the gods, and they were known as hymns', he then continues by apparently distinguishing dirges, paeans and dithyrambs from hymns.⁵⁶ Pulleyn, however, notes much

⁴⁹ Depew, 'Reading Greek Prayers', 233, her italics.

⁵⁰ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 63.

⁵¹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 56.

⁵² Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 39-40.

⁵³ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 40-1.

⁵⁴ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 42.

⁵⁵ William D. Furley, 'Praise and Persuasion in Greek Hymns', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 115 (1995) 31.

⁵⁶ Plato, *Laws* 3.700b, translation Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 44., and see Furley, 'Praise and Persuasion', 31.

confusion with other Platonic passages and concludes 'it looks very much as though the evidence of Plato is confused, contentious, and should not be allowed to dominate our interpretation.'⁵⁷ Further, Plato's description of a hymn as a sung prayer is undermined by noting that 'a hymn need not contain any request to the god.'⁵⁸ As an example we might consider the Hymn to Diana by Catullus.⁵⁹ In the translation provided by Frederick Danker, this is a poem of six four-line verses, which reaches a petition, and one of the most general nature, only in the last two lines: 'save, as ever of old, the race of Romulus through your goodly aid.'⁶⁰

Other classifications are clearly possible and Menander Rhetor divides hymns to the gods into *Cletic*, that is invocatory, *Apopemptic*, 'delivered over actual or supposed departures of gods', which he describes as a rare form, *Scientific*, (φυσικοί) describing the nature of gods, *Mythical* or *Genealogical*, describing divine parental relationships, *Fictitious*, relating to new coinage of pseudo-divine personification, *Precatory*, and *Deprecatory*, these latter two being 'bare prayer with none of the other parts we have mentioned', that something good will happen or something bad be averted.⁶¹ As this last definition suggests, a hymn was not necessarily confined to a single type.

For Pulleyn the word 'hymn' has three possible meanings: (1) any hexameter song, (2) any song directed to a god, (3) a particular kind of song distinguished from paeon, dithyramb, proem, or prosodion; he adds, however, that 'it seems to me that the second sense is the commonest in classical Greek.'⁶² And Furley concludes: 'I believe what happened was as follows: hymn was always the generic word, but when the Alexandrians came to classifying religious lyric poetry, they could identify some poems as paeans ... others as dithyrambos ... or nomos ... and any which were clearly addressed to a divinity but did not fit any

⁵⁷ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 46.

⁵⁸ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 44-5.

⁵⁹ Frederick W. Danker, 'Catullus 34: A Prayer to Diana by C. Valerius Catullus', in Mark Kiley, et al. *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, 139-143.

⁶⁰ Danker, 'Catullus 34', 140.

⁶¹ Menander Rhetor, I, 333. 1 – 344.14, translation from: D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson (ed and trans.), *Menander Rhetor*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 6-29, where the Greek text is also available.

⁶² Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 43-4.

sub-category they included under 'hymns'; thus a false distinction emerged between hymns and other religious lyrics.⁶³

If a hymn need not contain a petition, what purpose did it serve? It seems that the gods were expected to be pleased by hymns in their honour. 'The entire strategy behind hymn-composition and performance was to attract the attention of the divinity addressed in a favourable way; ritual and choral worship combined to flatter, woo, charm and persuade a single god or a group of gods that the worshipper(s) was deserving of sympathy and aid', Furley continues.⁶⁴ It was a way of establishing and maintaining the reciprocity of χάρις. A hymn was a gift or offering, ἄγαλμα – 'a pleasing gift especially for the gods.'⁶⁵ 'Hymns had the power to confer τιμή (honour) on the god in a way that a simple prayer seems not to have done', indeed, a hymn may have been referred to as θυσία.⁶⁶ Poets, moreover, often described their writings as being 'smokeless offerings'.⁶⁷ Pulleyn, however, goes on to stress that although hymns may have been seen as offerings in the same sense as animal sacrifice, they should not be thought of as being of equal value. The distinction between hymn and prayer then, in Pulleyn's view is that a hymn 'is a sort of negotiable ἄγαλμα which generates χάρις.'⁶⁸ Prayer, on the other hand, normally depends on χάρις and ξενία (guest-friendship) and 'confidently asserts a right.'⁶⁹

Carl Ausfeld attributes to Greek prayers and hymns a three part structure divided into *invocatio*, *pars epica*, and *precatio*.⁷⁰ The significance of *invocatio* (invocation) and *precatio* (request) are clear. The *pars epica*, illustrating the god's powers by the narration of a myth or list of benefactions, might be regarded as an extension of the *invocatio*. Later authors have preferred alternative terminology, Andrew Miller for instance using *hypomnesis*, or 'reminder' for this second section, its function being '(as the term implies) to present a claim on the god's consideration by recalling a previous occasion (or occasions) on which devotion was displayed

⁶³ Furley, 'Praise and Persuasion', 32.

⁶⁴ Furley, 'Praise and Persuasion', 32

⁶⁵ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 49; Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon* on ἄγαλμα.

⁶⁶ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 49.

⁶⁷ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 50.

⁶⁸ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 55.

⁶⁹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 56.

⁷⁰ Carl Ausfeld, *De Graecorum Precationibus Quaestiones*, *Neue Jahrbucher Suppl.* 28 (1903) 505-36.

by the one party and/or assistance rendered by the other. The “reminder” very often takes the form of a conditional protasis (“if ever in the past”).⁷¹ The *pars epica*, however, does not invariably include such a reminder. Ausfeld’s structure, moreover, should perhaps be regarded as a tool for analysis rather than a rigid template followed by ancient prayer-makers. Depew, for instance, comments that ‘many Greek prayers do not have three distinct parts, while hymns, whose function is to praise, usually do.’⁷² Pulleyn uses the term *argumentum* rather than *pars epica*, but noting that the first and third parts of Ausfeld’s structure, *invocation* and *request*, ‘will suffice to make a prayer’, concentrates his attention on the language of these parts.⁷³

Alderink and Martin point out that the invocation must, of course, take care of ‘a problem characteristic of polytheistic systems that is absent from monotheisms, namely the choice of the deity to be addressed ... asking Mars for health or Isis for victory in war could be disastrous for a well-meaning but misinformed suppliant. Any misdirected request will result in failed communication.’⁷⁴ While the examples given are somewhat spoilt by the fact that the elder Cato does indeed appeal to ‘Father Mars’ for health, though in the agricultural domain, and the ‘Invocation of Isis’ in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* includes such titles as ‘Warlike’, ‘Victorious’, and ‘Dispeller of Attack’, the general comment is a valid one.⁷⁵ It is this requirement, Alderink and Martin go on to suggest, which is responsible for the elaboration of many invocations to include alternative names for the deity, titles, a variety of attributes and in some cases the catch-all, ‘or whatever other name it is lawful to name you.’⁷⁶ The nature of this section may be illustrated by the example prayer to Apollo given by Menander Rhetor:

⁷¹ Andrew M. Miller, *From Delos to Delphi: A Literary Study of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, (Leiden, Brill, 1986), 2.

⁷² Depew, ‘Reading Greek Prayers’, 231.

⁷³ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 132.

⁷⁴ Alderink and Martin, ‘Prayer in Greco-Roman religions’, 124.

⁷⁵ Cato, *De Agri Cultura*, 141, see Phillips, ‘Cato the Elder’, 130, and note 12 p. 132 which explains this usage; ‘The Invocation of Isis’: Bernard P Grenfell and Arthur S Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 11, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1915) no. 1380.

⁷⁶ Alderink and Martin, ‘Prayer in Greco-Roman religions’, 124; for perhaps the most elaborate example see ‘The Invocation of Isis’: Grenfell, & Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 1380.

As you come to complete the subject, you should make use of the invocatory titles of the god. Thus: 'O Sminthian and Pythian, from you my speech began, to you it shall return. By what names shall I address you? Some call you Lycian, some Delian, some Ascrean, some Actian. The Spartans call you Amyclaeon, the Athenians Patroos, the Mileasians Branchiate. You control every city and land and nation. You control the whole inhabited earth, even as you dance on your course through the heaven with the choirs of stars about you. The Persians call you Mithras, the Egyptians Horus – for you bring round the seasons (*hōrai*) – the Thebans Dionysus, the Delphians honour you by the double name of Apollo and Dionysus. Around you dance the muses and the Thyiades. From you the moon acquires her ray. The Chaldeans call you the leader of the stars. Thus, whether these are the titles you take pleasure in or some better than these ...'⁷⁷

It should be noted that the prayer does not follow the three-part structure of Ausfeld, the above passage being preceded by a lengthy introduction, whose several sections are explained by Menander, and which seems to correspond to a *pars epica*.⁷⁸ The precatory section of the prayer, for the flourishing of the city, occupying two short concluding sentences, then follows the above passage. It is perhaps this sort of repetition of titles which is condemned by Matthew 6:7 'When you pray do not babble (μη βατταλογησητε) like the gentiles for they think they will be heard because of their many words.'

In the invocation, an initial vocative may sometimes be repeated, for which Pulleyn provides Greek examples before drawing our attention to Psalm 22 v. 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'⁷⁹ As the double vocative occurs in invocations from Greek, Hebrew and Roman sources, Pulleyn suggests that it may be 'something pretty close to a universal feature of prayer language.'⁸⁰ Additionally the god may be called upon to 'hear' or to 'come', and Pulleyn discusses at some length, and refutes, the claim that the latter has any coercive

⁷⁷ Menander Rhetor, II, 437.5 - 445.24, Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor*, 206-23.

⁷⁸ Menander Rhetor, II, 445.25 – 446.13, translation: Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor*, 222-5.

⁷⁹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 133-4; cf. Mt. 27: 46; Mk 15: 34.

⁸⁰ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 134

nature.⁸¹ It was considered important that gods should act of their own free will, Pulleyn stresses, and goes on to call attention to the words, εὐφρων, πρόφρων, ἴλαος, and εὐμενής, used in very many prayers.⁸²

Also often occurring in the *invocation* of prayers, but not necessarily restricted to that section, is the *tricolon* in which the same phrase, or more often similar phrases, are repeated three times. This form is not peculiarly Greek, however, as it appears in texts ranging from the Vedic hymns of c. 1000 BCE through to modern Christian liturgy.⁸³ Pulleyn speculates that ‘it is therefore likely that we are dealing with something that goes deep into the Indo-European past’, adding that ‘the number three has always been an important number in magic.’⁸⁴ The tricolon may, however, owe its use to the experience that three repetitions build up emphasis while four introduce a hint of tedium.

Pulleyn offers quotations from Hesiod and Plato which describe the practice of regular daily prayer.⁸⁵ ‘At other times too, propitiate the gods with libations and sacrifices, when you go to bed and at the coming of holy day’;⁸⁶ ‘Talking to the gods in prayer and supplication, at the rising and setting of sun and moon, hearing and seeing prostration and abasement.’⁸⁷ Plato adds that such abasement is typical of both Greeks and barbarians. This second quotation is subject to some controversy, however. Is it the sun and moon that are being prayed to? And who is ‘hearing and seeing prostration and abasement’?⁸⁸ It might be better however not to read too much into Plato’s *synonymia*, for the quotation from Hesiod makes it clear that prayer should be offered at sunrise and sunset. However, there is no suggestion that this practice was common, and certainly there is sacrifice involved.

It was possible to pray alone, wherever a person wished and it seems that small groups might pray at home, though in each case presumably without the seclusion that implied magic, although Pulleyn notes that ‘we only hear of those

⁸¹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 136-44.

⁸² Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 144-5, and appendix 217-20.

⁸³ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 145-6.

⁸⁴ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 146.

⁸⁵ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 157.

⁸⁶ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 338-9, quoted in Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 157.

⁸⁷ Plato, *Laws*, 887e.1-4, quoted in Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 157

⁸⁸ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 157.

[prayers] which accompany ritual actions.’⁸⁹ In such family prayers, the prayer was spoken by the *paterfamilias*.⁹⁰ Women, however, did both sacrifice and pray and, moreover, there seems to have been no difference in the nature of the prayers, nor in the divinities addressed.⁹¹ There is little evidence about slaves praying, but Pulleyn comments that if they did so it was without sacrificing.⁹²

As regards bodily attitudes for prayer, Aristotle (according to Pulleyn; pseudo-Aristotle in the view of many) in *The World* writes, ‘all human beings stretch out hands to the sky when praying’⁹³ Pulleyn goes on to describe this gesture as ‘raised above the head, palms upturned towards heaven. The palm of the hand is usually angled outward at about forty-five degrees.’⁹⁴ There were many possible variations, however. The palms faced down when praying to a chthonic deity.

Kneeling to pray was uncommon, the usual attitude of prayer being standing.⁹⁵ Indeed, Alderink and Martin comment that kneeling or prostration was regarded and ‘un-Greek or un-Roman’, though we must note the words of Plato given above.⁹⁶ Kneeling was, however, practised on occasions but when someone knelt it was normally associated with emergencies or the emotional tenor of the scene.⁹⁷ This again seems to mark the significance of supplication, as distinct from prayer based on a right of χάρις. Additionally, different expressions were used to describe the stretching out of the hands in supplication as opposed to petition. It is not entirely clear, however, exactly what the physical difference was.⁹⁸

Although private prayer was normally conducted facing a statue of the relevant god or goddess, on occasions of public sacrifice the officiant who performed it,

⁸⁹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 165.

⁹⁰ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 166.

⁹¹ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 168-70.

⁹² Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 172, and see above on Cato’s instructions for the farm housekeeper.

⁹³ Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Mundo*, 400.16, quoted in Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 189.

⁹⁴ See e.g. the 4th cent. Greek statue, ‘The Praying Boy’, Pergamum Museum, Berlin.

⁹⁵ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 194, gives twelve examples from Homer of standing to pray with upraised hands.

⁹⁶ Alderink and Martin, ‘Prayer in Greco-Roman Religions’, 125.

⁹⁷ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 190.

⁹⁸ Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, 194-5.

having washed and put on clean clothes, would face east, to pray which, in the case of an eastward facing temple, would involve having his back to it and thus also the statue of the divinity, but facing the human audience.⁹⁹

4.6 Conclusions.

At first sight, there seems little similarity of language between pagan and Christian praying. Certainly, the profusion of titles and attributes which characterises the polytheist invocation is rarely to be found in Christian prayers, and never reaches the extremes of their pagan counterparts. However, the overall plan of prayers often tends to be that of Ausfeld.

Not all Christian prayers can be analysed so neatly, however. The Lord's Prayer in the version of Matthew, while it can clearly be divided into three distinct sections with the first and third being *invocation* and *request*, has a middle section: 'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' which presents a problem of allocation.¹⁰⁰ An extension of the invocation? A request, though of different nature to those that follow? Or a generalised *argument* by implication: 'as we await the coming of the kingdom and the establishment of your universal rule, give us ...'?

Certainly, it appears from the above prayers that the concerns which Christians have, or ought to have, are expected to rise above those expressed in many pagan prayers. Considering the final section of Menander's prayer to Sminthian Apollo, Edgar Krentz makes the comment, applicable to most if not all the pagan examples: 'it gives no direct attention to the origins or nature of human kind, has no concept of sin in the Judaeo-Christian sense and exhibits no eschatological hope. Yet it makes clear that human destiny is under the control of Apollo.'¹⁰¹ The lack of consciousness of sin makes this prayer very different from, for instance, Psalm 51 (50), interpreted as a hymn of penitence, and adopted by Basil of Caesarea as an appropriate greeting for the dawn of a new day.¹⁰² This psalm makes a series of petitions, mostly requests for renewal of the sinful individual:

⁹⁹ Ken Dowden, 'Rhetoric and Religion' in Ian Worthington (ed), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 323.

¹⁰⁰ Mt. 6:9-13, NRSV.

¹⁰¹ Edgar Krentz, 'The Prayer in Menander Rhetor 2.445-25 - 446.13', in Mark Kiley, et al. *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, 186.

¹⁰² See below section 7.7.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.' (v. 10), and culminates with a rejection of animal sacrifice (vv 16-17), so much so that the two final verses, expressing the contrary idea, look to be by a very different hand (vv. 18-19). Nevertheless, if we compare the final words of Psalm 50 with those of Menander's prayer we see a similarity of tone. The psalm requests, 'Do good to Zion in your good pleasure ... then you will delight in right sacrifices ...'¹⁰³ And Menander asks, 'Grant that this city may ever flourish in prosperity and that this festival may for ever be organized in your honour ...'¹⁰⁴ Where there are such verbal similarities, however, we should be wary of imputing a direct connection, for, like Ausfeld's prayer structure, they might simply have been generally regarded as natural ways of addressing the divine.

As regards such matters as attitudes for prayer we would seem to be on safer ground, however. The upwardly raised hands described above, known as the 'orans' position, was used among early Christians and was found represented on the wall paintings at the Roman Villa of Lullingstone.¹⁰⁵ It is still in use in Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican traditions normally in a restrained form, and rather more exuberantly among Pentecostal groups.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the eastward facing position for prayer appears to have been adopted by the early church without any thought that it was a continuation of an ancient, pagan, practice. And regular prayer in the morning and evening was likewise accepted.

Further, although there is a little evidence for prayer or worship outside of the sacrificial system, in paganism before the fourth century CE, such evidence is not entirely lacking. And this evidence reveals that many of the details of this worship are also present in Christian practices. This evidence does not, however, suggest transmission at the level usually sought for, in which such and such a pre-Christian rite evolves into a Christian one.

¹⁰³ Ps. 50(51): 18-19, NRSV translation.

¹⁰⁴ Menander II 446.10-11, Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor*, 224-5.

¹⁰⁵ Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values* 132.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Burns, *SCM Studyguide to Liturgy* (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern, 2006) 62; Paul Harvey and Philip Goff, *The Columbia documentary history of religion in America since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) 347; Larry Witham, *Who Shall Lead them?: the Future of Ministry in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 134.

Instead, it transpires that the evidence largely relates to practices of a domestic nature, although the structure and phraseology of prayers and songs were certainly also transmitted. We may conclude that pagan converts to Christianity brought with them basic ideas about the nature and practice of prayer as a subtle influence on the practice their new faith. We shall, nevertheless, as is the case for Judaism, have cause to re-visit alleged pagan influence on the origin of Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ See sections 9.3 – 9.5 below.

5. Monasticism and its Beginnings in Fourth Century Cappadocia

5.1 Introduction

Having considered external factors which may have influenced early Christian worship, concluding that the structure of prayers and hymns, together with the practice of domestic religion are relevant factors, we must now turn our attention to an internal movement which most certainly affected the divine office, that of monasticism. As outlined above in the introductory chapter, Anton Baumstark distinguishes two forms of the divine office, which he terms *cathedral* and *monastic*.¹ The first of these was observed by clergy and laity and consisted of morning and evening prayer with a 'psalmodic element ... of only moderate compass.'² The monastic form, however, comprised a series of synaxes throughout the twenty-four hours of the day and made use of a wide selection of psalmody. This monastic type, it has been claimed, later underwent a further split into *desert* and *urban* sub-types, the latter, originating in Cappadocia and Syria.³ Paul Bradshaw, however, as we have seen, wishes to modify this model.⁴ And, as the nature of the office in 4th Century Cappadocia is affected by the development of 'urban' monasticism there, we can only assess the appropriateness of these views after an examination of the nature and development of monasticism, particularly in Anatolia.

We shall reject the old assumption that monasticism began in Egypt and was imported by Basil into Anatolia, and find that there was much variety in early asceticism. As regards formal monasticism in Anatolia we will examine the claim that it owes much to Eustathius of Sebaste and find that to some extent justified, noting, however, that the condemnation of monastic abuses by the Council of Gangra was also influential in Basil's later monasticism. The important influence of Macrina is also acknowledged and with it the implication that the true origin of

¹ Anton Baumstark *Comparative Liturgy*, ed. Bernard Botte, trans. F.L Cross, (London: Mowbray, 1958) 111; see section 1.6 above.

² Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 112.

³ Juan Mateos, 'The Origins of the Divine Office', *Worship*, 477-485; Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 32; Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, (London: SPCK, 2002) 173.

⁴ See above section 1.6.

Cappadocian monasticism lay in asceticism of a domestic nature. This chapter, therefore, will assess the origins of Cappadocian monasticism as part of the aim of Part II – to establish the *context* necessary for a deeper understanding of the Cappadocian evidence about prayer. The next chapter (chapter 6) will pick up several of the issues discussed here, as part of a more detailed discussion of the structure and character of Macrina's and Basil's communities. In particular, we will examine how these communities structured their day with psalm-singing. Thus, this work in chapter 6 will contribute to the overall aim of Part II – to establish a clearer picture of the practice, nature, origins and significance of daily prayer in Cappadocia.

5.2 The Older Understanding of Monastic Development

It was formerly believed that the development of monastic life followed a simple trajectory, seen as beginning in one place and passed on through a small number of significant and well documented figures. According to this view, monasticism may have begun as a reaction against a perceived general laxity amongst the 'new laity' who became Christians after Constantine's Peace of the Church.⁵ Whether in reaction or not, there were those for whom the avoidance of worldly distractions and the desire for total self-surrender led them to adopt a solitary life in the Egyptian desert.⁶ This was seen as truly beginning with St Antony,⁷ though the movement may have been well established by his time.⁸ Despite originally being solitary, 'it was an easy step' for these hermits to gather together on occasions, perhaps once a week, for the Eucharist and mutual support.⁹ Such monastics were 'eremitic', that is having the life-style of hermits. The step to 'coenobitic' monasticism, the practitioners of which lived in communities, was seen as being taken by Pachomius (286-346 CE) who 'gathered the hermits of the Thebaid into his first monastery' at the deserted village of Tabennesi, from which Pachomian monks were often termed *Tabennesiots*.¹⁰ And subsequent

⁵ David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1969) 12.

⁶ Herbert B. Workman, *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*. 2nd Edn, (London: Epworth Press, 1927) 30.

⁷ Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, 10.

⁸ Ian C. Hannah, *Christian Monasticism: a Great Force in History*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924) 22.

⁹ Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, 13.

¹⁰ Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, 86; see also Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, 15; Hannah, *Christian Monasticism*, 24-26, and Philip Rousseau, *The*

communities elsewhere were considered to be developments of the Pachomian model spreading beyond Egypt.

In Asia Minor, the adoption of this communal monasticism, was perceived as the work of Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea: 'The first Greek to countenance the monastic system seems to have been Eustathius of Sebaste ... but the real founder was the famous St Basil, who in the year 357 set out on his travels with the sole object of studying monasticism.'¹¹ Here the use of the word 'Greek' to describe the Armenian Eustathius, in contrast to the Coptic Pachomius, suggests that Workman is using an outdated narrative which implicitly sees Egyptian monasticism as a 'primitive' form which only became sophisticated and organized when it reached the 'civilization' of Asia Minor. Thus, this view both distances subsequent monasticism from the Copts, who were, later, non-Chalcedonians, and minimizes the influence of the inconsistently heretical, and eventually deposed, Eustathius. And, moreover, it does so by attributing all the initiative in Asia Minor to Basil.

Even the double monastery which, as we shall see, was so characteristic of the Anatolian foundations is, in the older view of monastic development, still seen as derived from Pachomius, whose sister set up a community of nuns on the other side of the Nile opposite her brother's monastery.¹² For Hannah describes Basil, in apparently conscious imitation of Pachomius, as founding a monastery on the banks of the River Iris, 'perhaps as Lowther Clarke suggests, on the ancestral estates', while 'his sister, Macrina, founded a convent for women on the other side of the stream.'¹³ In describing this arrangement, Workman, however, avoids the question of founders, commenting, 'St Basil and his sister, Macrina, presided over settlements of men and women separated only by the river Iris'; nevertheless suggesting that seniority (and possibly foundation) belonged with the Bishop.¹⁴

As monasticism in Anatolia developed, the initiative continued to be seen as Basil developing the Pachomian model. He 'greatly improved upon the monasticism of

Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 57-76.

¹¹ Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, 113; for Basil's subsequent influence see p. 115.

¹² Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, 177.

¹³ Hannah, *Christian Monasticism*, 41.

¹⁴ Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, 177.

Egypt. By placing some of his convents in cities, by establishing schools in connection with them ... by carrying on much charitable work in conjunction, and by bringing the whole system into union with the organization of the church, he may be said, and that for the first time, to have justified the existence of monasticism from the standpoint of the world.¹⁵

It is certainly true that, as bishop, Basil played a key role in the development of monasticism within his diocese, and as part of this role he wrote the works known as the *Short* and *Long Rules* for the members of his communities. And, as we shall see, it may well be correct to say that he 'justified the existence of monasticism' to the world. Unfortunately, as Susanna Elm points out, 'much of the secondary literature still conveys the impression that asceticism in 4th C Asia Minor is essentially synonymous with Basil.'¹⁶ As a result, he is credited with being *the* originator of the form of monasticism which subsequently spread throughout Greek and Russian Orthodoxy. Indeed, he also influenced Western Monasticism through St Benedict, who recommended that his monks study Basil's works. But while Basil's influence on the monastic world is undeniable, the *single origin, linear development* history we have outlined, called by James Goehring the 'big bang' theory, is subject to criticism.¹⁷ Indeed Peter Brown, while still claiming a, possibly unjustified, Egyptian superiority, places the real origins of monasticism elsewhere:

Egypt was the cradle of monasticism. It was in Egypt that that the theory and the practice of the ascetic life reached its highest pitch of articulateness and sophistication. Yet the holy men who minted the ideal of the saint in society came from Syria and, later, from Asia Minor and Palestine – not from Egypt.¹⁸

And, Goehring points out, 'the growth of monasticism in Egypt did not follow a simple linear path from an ill-defined urban ascetic movement in the later third

¹⁵ Hannah, *Christian Monasticism*, 41.

¹⁶ Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God, The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) 81.

¹⁷ James, E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*. (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1999) 13.

¹⁸ Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* (1971) 82.

and early fourth centuries to the withdrawn desert monks of the fourth-century classical period to the large well-defined urban and suburban monasteries of the later Byzantine era.¹⁹

Certainly some of those who practised renunciation were to be found in Egypt but, of necessity, most lived, not in the deep desert, but along its margins. The need for water drew them towards the Nile, though wells fed by seepage from the river meant that they need not settle on its banks. And, though on the edges of the desert, there grew plants which might provide basic subsistence, they needed to maintain some contact with villages and towns both for access to further supplies and as outlets for the products of rope making and basket weaving, activities which provided both spiritual discipline and a way of making a living.²⁰ Unfortunately, aided by Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, Egyptian desert monasticism seems to have become something of an idealised myth. As Caner points out, 'by the fifth century, Egypt had become something of a romantic dreamworld shaped by the ideals of those who described it.'²¹ He adds that, although the *apophthegmata patrum* have long been considered real observations from the desert fathers, the processes of transmission make it likely that 'many of the apophthegmata may have been deliberately altered or placed in this Egyptian tradition to meet the concerns of a later monastic audience.' And, while 'deep desert survival must not be discounted as legendary', 'this stark expanse [of true desert] served more as a back drop than as an actual residence for the monks who produced the desert tradition.'²²

An immediate problem is that the traditional narrative consistently uses the word 'monk' and associated terminology despite significant differences between the groups described, and in doing so it obscures those differences. At the same time it ignores the continuity of the range of ascetic practices which were current in the fourth century and either excludes from consideration many whose lifestyle

¹⁹ James E. Goehring, 'Withdrawing from the Desert: Pachomius and the Development of Village Monasticism in Upper Egypt', *The Harvard Theological Review*, v. 89, no. 3 (Jul., 1996) 268.

²⁰ Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 27, 41ff.

²¹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 20.

²² Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 41 n. 116; 27.

fails to fit the presupposed interpretation of monasticism for their time and place, or else assumes that they may be neatly labelled and categorised. This problem is made worse by the fact that in the English speaking world the term 'monk' is exclusively applied to men and has different meanings for those churches with 'monastic' orders and for the general public. Since the terminology cannot, however, be avoided, it will be necessary to keep these comments in mind in the following survey of 'Urban Monasticism', before a later examination of the origins of the term 'monk'.

5.3 Urban Asceticism

As more recently recognized, belief and practice in the early Church were characterized by much greater diversity than previously supposed. As regards theology, this owes much to the work of Walter Bauer,²³ but other scholars have extended the idea to liturgical practice and local traditions of organization.²⁴ In the same way, the practice of asceticism has been shown to have had great diversity. Even in Egypt, traditionally viewed as the home of desert eremites, there was a longer tradition of individual ascetics living in villages, towns and cities such as Alexandria.²⁵ Athanasius, in his *Life of Antony*, however, marginalizes this older and continuing style of ascetic practice, creating instead an enduring association between monasticism and the desert. In Marilyn Dunn's view this originates from a desire to minimize the influence of ascetics, who might be a source of dangerous ideas, by means of the propaganda message that 'true monks' were isolated from the community.²⁶ The clues to the existence of the older practice remain, however. Thus Antony, at the beginning of his monastic career, is described as entrusting his sister to a group of 'known and trusted virgins', before apprenticing himself to a solitary holy man in a nearby village, an old man who had been a practitioner of this life-style since his youth.²⁷ Pachomius began in a similar way.²⁸ And, Goehring argues that, rather than making a radical

²³ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in earliest Christianity*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1971).

²⁴ See e.g. Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), particularly pp. 18-29.

²⁵ Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: from the Desert Fathers to the early Middle Ages*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 8.

²⁶ Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 10-12.

²⁷ *Life of Antony* 33, PG26.843-846.

²⁸ Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*, 27; Goehring, 'Withdrawing from the Desert', 271-2.

change, Pachomius extended existing practice and that his monastic foundations constitute an 'expansive development of ascetic practice within the towns and villages of Upper Egypt'²⁹ Indeed, the Pachomian monks called themselves *apotaktikoi*, the term used to designate the urban 'renouncers' such as Pachomius' mentor, Palamon; not by accident, Goehring asserts, for this demonstrates 'their legal and social connection with the wider community ... and within Roman Egypt.'³⁰ Certainly Pachomius cannot be identified as the originator of the coenobitic life-style, since there were other, pre-existing, non-Pachomian monasteries; his innovation was rather 'the organization of an affiliate group of monasteries under a common rule.'³¹

As mentioned above, the association of Egypt with the desert eremites has tended to obscure the tradition of ascetics living in towns and cities either as individuals or small groups. Such people, termed *apotactites* or *apotactics*, were, moreover, involved in their local communities rather than cut off from society.³² The existence of these urban ascetics in the fourth century is attested by Basil who records that, when deciding on a life of renunciation, he sought out others who had already done so, 'and I found many in Alexandria, and many in the rest of Egypt.'³³ Egypt, moreover, was not unique, for he adds that others were to be found in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and in his own country. The way this is expressed suggests that possibly Basil's Egyptian contacts were mainly in the capital rather than the desert. Also Goehring's comment that the monastics of the Pachomian tradition were self-designated *apotaktikoi*, seems at odds with Basil's letter *To Amphilocheus, concerning the Canons*, in which he condemns the *Apotactitæ*, along with *Enkratitæ* and *Saccophori*, as heretic offshoots of the Marcionites.³⁴ Basil makes no comment about the similarity of names here which must lead us to wonder if he had anything more than minimal contact with the Pachomians.

²⁹ Goehring, 'Withdrawing from the Desert', 285.

³⁰ Goehring, 'Withdrawing from the Desert', 283.

³¹ Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*, 28-31.

³² Elm, *Virgins of God*, 14.

³³ Basil Letter 223.2; Deferrari, Roy J (trans), *Basil, The Letters*, vol 3, Loeb Classical Library, (London: Heinemann, 1930) 292; my translation.

³⁴ Goehring, 'Withdrawing from the Desert', 283, noted above; Basil, Letter 199.47.

In addition to solitary ascetics living in, or near to towns and villages, Egyptian asceticism thus demonstrated a 'broad spectrum of life-styles.'³⁵ This seems to be repeated elsewhere, 'the complexity of the situation in Egypt is repeated throughout the early Christian world ... the old theory that traced the monastic impulse in all corners of the empire back to an original Egyptian inspiration has proven to be a literary fiction.'³⁶ Thus Dunn maintains that Basil cannot be considered the founder of monastic life in his region since 'fourth century Asia Minor was home to a wide variety of Ascetic movements.'³⁷

Ascetics within towns, for instance, did not have a completely solitary lifestyle and, particularly in the case of women, probably lived with their own families. Indeed, professed virgins remaining at home may have been seen as a source of holiness for the whole family.³⁸ There may have been other motives involved, however, for Elm suggests that, since they were entitled to church support, some families may have regarded a virgin as a means of income.³⁹ From early times virgins were both male and female, as shown in the *Embassy for the Christians* (also called the *Apology*), addressed to Marcus Aurelius & Commodus, by Athenagoras of Athens, in the late second century. He writes, 'You will find many among us both men and women, growing old unmarried, in hope of living in closer communion with God.'⁴⁰

Urban monastics were not always viewed with favour, however, particularly, it seems, when living in groups. Both John Cassian and Jerome identify three kinds of Egyptian monks, these are coenobitic, anchoritic, and a third of which they give similar descriptions, though they differ in the name they attach to this practice. Jerome provides a fuller description of those he terms *remnuoth*. They are, he says,

³⁵ Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 13.

³⁶ Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*, 32.

³⁷ Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 34.

³⁸ Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in late Antiquity* (Cambridge: The University Press, 2008) 204.

³⁹ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 140.

⁴⁰ Athenagoras, *Apology* 33; Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (eds.) *The ante-Nicene Fathers : translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, American reprint of the Edinburgh edition of the series Ante-Nicene Christian library, vol. 2, translation of the *Embassy* by P. Pratten, (Grand Rapids, Mi: Eerdmans, 1976-83), 146.

a very inferior and little regarded type, peculiar to my own province, or, at least, originating there. These live together in twos and threes, but seldom in larger numbers, and are bound by no rule; but do exactly as they choose. A portion of their earnings they contribute to a common fund, out of which food is provided for all. In most cases they reside in cities and strongholds; and, as though it were their workmanship which is holy, and not their life, all that they sell is extremely dear. They often quarrel because they are unwilling, while supplying their own food, to be subordinate to others.⁴¹

Cassian uses *Sarabaites* to describe what we may take to be similar ascetics, since again they are neither coenobites nor anchorites, though his description of their practices is somewhat vaguer, than Jerome's.⁴² The *Sarabaites*, Cassian tells us, are a degenerate form of the original coenobitic and anchoritic.⁴³ They only pretend to be monks, he claims, and like Jerome, he stresses their lack of obedience to superiors. Although accusations of quarrelsomeness, pretended holiness, and selling expensive goods, may have been justified for some of the many small groups concerned, neither of these authors can have had experience of them all, and, noting that the desert anchorites were necessarily independent too, we may suspect that, the principal objection to this style of ascetic life lies in the lack of subjection to authority by those in towns and cities. Dunn may thus be correct in seeing this as propaganda intended to marginalize and ultimately control such groups.⁴⁴

In Syria an ascetic life style seems to have become established which was similar to that of the urban monastics, though, in this case, perhaps better termed 'village monastic'. As this is closely linked to the use of the word μοναχός (monk) it is appropriate to look at the origin of this term first.

⁴¹ Jerome, Epistle 22.34; translation from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> (accessed 06/07/2015).

⁴² John Cassian, *Collationes patrum in scetica eremo*, 18.4; Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vol 13 part 2, ed. Michael Petschenig, (Vienna: Tempusky, 1886); online: <http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/Corpus-Scriptorum-Ecclesiasticorum-Latinorum.html> (accessed 05/07/2015), translation from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/cassian/conferences.toc.html> (accessed 06/07/2015).

⁴³ Cassian, *Collationes*, 18.7.

⁴⁴ Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 10-12, and see above.

The first documented use of the term μοναχός is in an appeal, dated by E. A. Judge to June 6th 324 CE.⁴⁵ In this, one Isidorus, of the agricultural town of Karanis in the Fayum region of Egypt, petitions the region's *praepositus pagi* for redress in respect of an assault. According to his account, he found cattle destroying his crops. When he attempted to remove a cow, however, the owners attacked him with a club and his life was only saved by the intervention of two other men who he wishes to serve as witnesses to the events. These latter persons he describes as 'the deacon Antoninus and the monk Isaac.'⁴⁶ Isidorus evidently expects that the term μοναχός will be understood by the *praepositus*, and further, 'the monk Isaac ... is clearly not a desert ascetic, nor is he a member of a monastic community. Rather, he lives in the village and participates actively in civil and church affairs.'⁴⁷ Whether he was living alone or as one of a small group, and whether in, or close by, the village, are not known.

Judge further identifies the first appearance of μοναχός in an ecclesiastical source as being in the *Commentary on the Psalms* by Eusebius of Caesarea dated 330-40 CE.⁴⁸ In this work, Eusebius attempts to draw teaching points by the comparison of four different versions of Ps. 67(68):6, 'God settles the solitary in a house', 'the solitary' being μονότροποι in the Septuagint.⁴⁹ The other translations that Eusebius uses include that of Aquila, and what Judge describes as the 'Fifth edition', presumably that referred to by Augustine.⁵⁰ The fourth version was that of Symmachus, identified by Eusebius as an Ebionite, though more probably a Samaritan who had converted to Judaism. This latter text uses the word, μοναχοί, which Eusebius understands as 'monks'. Thus, Eusebius says, 'giving the μοναχοί a home was God's first and greatest provision for mankind because they are the front rank of those advancing in Christ (Τὸ γοῦν πρῶτον

⁴⁵ E. A. Judge, 'The Earliest Use of Monachos for "Monk" (P. Col. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism' in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977) 72-89.

⁴⁶ Judge, 'Earliest Use', 73.

⁴⁷ Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 38.

⁴⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Psalms*, PG 23.689.21-2; see Judge, 'Earliest Use', 74.

⁴⁹ Greek text and translation from: Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, (original publication, London: Bagster, 1851, 11th reprinting, Hendrickson, 2005); Judge gives the reference as Ps. 67:7.

⁵⁰ Judge, 'Earliest Use', 75; Augustine *City of God* Book 18 ch. 43. Possibly Eusebius used the *Hexapla* of Origen.

τάγμα τῶν ἐν Χριστῷ προκοπτόντων τὸ τῶν μοναχῶν τυγχάνει.)⁵¹ Eusebius then assumes that the alternatives describe particular monastic characteristics.⁵² Denying that the defining characteristic of μοναχοί was celibacy, Judge considers that, 'In all of this (quite lengthy) flight of exegesis, Eusebius makes no attempt to draw out celibacy as the guiding principle of monasticism. He is concerned to use the various renderings to show that μοναχοί are 'single-minded' in a general, moral sense (which includes chastity), and in particular that they are 'solitary' in their social situation, and thus in need of a home provided by God', this home was the church.⁵³ As regards the origin of this use of μοναχός, Both Françoise Morard and D.F. Bumazhnov propose that it is a rendering into Greek of the Syriac term *ihidaya* (single).⁵⁴

The early Syrian ascetic tradition is considered by Sebastian Brock in his work on the life and writings of Ephrem the Syrian.⁵⁵ As is the case elsewhere, this original native tradition seems to have been marginalized by the claim of Egyptian anchoritic and coenobitic primacy, and 'later Syrian monastic tradition thus sold its own birthright to Egypt.'⁵⁶ Accepting the anchoritic-coenobitic life as a definition of 'monk', Brock is forced to conclude that Ephrem was not a monk 'in the formal sense', although he did belong to the native Syrian tradition of asceticism which Brock terms 'proto-monastic'.⁵⁷ This, again, covers a range of practices similar to those found elsewhere. *Bthulta* and *bthula*, describe virgins, feminine and masculine; *qaddisha* (literally 'holy') means 'a married person who abstains from sexual intercourse'; and *qyama* refers to a group leading a consecrated life having undertaken a vow or vows, presumably including chastity, living together in small groups, and forming 'the core of the local church

⁵¹ Judge, 'Earliest Use', 74.

⁵² Judge, 'Earliest Use', 74-5.

⁵³ Judge, 'Earliest Use', 76.

⁵⁴ Françoise Morard, 'Monachos, moine. Histoire du terme grec jusqu'au 4^e siècle,' *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, vol. 20 (1973) 72-89; Françoise Morard, 'Encore quelques réflexions sur Monachos', *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 34, no. 4 (Dec., 1980), 395-401; D.F. Bumazhnov, 'Some Further Observations Concerning the Early History of the Term ΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ (Monk)', *Studia Patristica*, vol 45 (2010) 21-26.

⁵⁵ Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*. rev. edn. (Kalamazoo, Mi.: Cistercian Publications, 1992).

⁵⁶ Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 131-2.

⁵⁷ Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 132-3.

community.⁵⁸ A fourth designation, described as a 'key-term in the Syrian proto-monastic tradition ... extremely rich in its various connotations', is *iḥidaya*.⁵⁹ There are, Brock explains, 'three basic ideas behind the term *iḥidaya*: singular, individual, unique; single-minded, not divided in heart; and single in the sense of unmarried, celibate.'⁶⁰ These are not entirely unlike the alternative translations of the Hebrew *yaḥid* in Ps. 67(68):6 to which Eusebius refers.⁶¹ The version of Aquila uses μονογενεῖς, possibly adopted from this word's use for the 'only-begotten' Son of God, but presumably in the psalm meaning 'singular' or 'unique'. As noted above, the Septuagint has μονότροποι, translated as 'solitary', but which might reasonably be understood as 'single-minded'.⁶² The Fifth Edition, however, uses μονόζωνοι; 'girded up on their own', Judge suggests, which, Eusebius, however, interprets as indicating that they have embraced a life of poverty.⁶³ Those on the Syriac-Greek cultural border faced with translating, *iḥidaya*, would have found a ready word in Greek, as Bumazhnov suggests, 'the new name μοναχός could be coined in Syria itself and then was adopted outside of this region,' and quickly spread to those groups of unmarried ascetics which existed throughout the Christian world.⁶⁴

5.4 Idle Beggars.

Occupying the cultural space between the solitaries who wandered in the desert and those living in small groups in towns and cities, we find, however, another ascetic category: those whose wanderings, often in groups of significant size, encompassed cities, the countryside and desert fringes.

Christianity owes its early spread to those moving from place to place in small groups, following the examples of Jesus and his disciples, and obeying dominical instructions to give up everything to the poor (Mt. 19: 21) without being anxious about food and clothing (Mt. 6: 25-33; Lk. 12: 22). Such people, lacking fixed abode or regular employment, must necessarily have embraced poverty and practised an ascetic lifestyle, living on the support of those sympathetic to their

⁵⁸ Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 133-6.

⁵⁹ Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 138.

⁶⁰ Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 136-8.

⁶¹ See above and Judge, 'Earliest Use', 74-5.

⁶² Judge, 'Earliest Use', 75.

⁶³ Judge, 'Earliest Use', 75-6.

⁶⁴ Bumazhnov, 'Some Further Observations', 25-26.

message. Indeed, wandering Christian charismatics and teachers received charitable support following the general custom of the ancient near east as Daniel Caner points out: Jews supported teachers of Torah, and pagans assisted Cynic street philosophers, while simple beggars gathered around temples and synagogues, some even attaching themselves as holy men to particular deities, soliciting and receiving food and money in return for ecstatic displays, prophecies and divinations.⁶⁵ Paul legitimises Christian missionaries' reliance on charity: 'the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel' (1 Cor. 9: 14), though he also insists that he does not make use of this right himself (1, Cor 9: 12). Indeed, while again asserting the apostolic right to such support, he condemns those believers who live in idleness (2 Thess 3: 6-12).

An aspect of the practice of renunciation was retreating to the desert. John the Baptist appears to have spent his whole time in the wilderness, living on what few resources it could supply (Mt: 3: 1-4; Mk. 1: 4,6; Lk. 3: 2). Jesus felt impelled to spend time there, according to the gospels, fasting continuously (Mt. 4: 1-2; Mk. 1: 12-13; Lk. 4: 1-2). And Gal. 1: 17, 'I went away at once into Arabia' has been interpreted as Paul also spending time in the desert, though whether this was for three (Gal. 1: 17) or fourteen (Gal. 2: 1) years, or some other period, is uncertain, particularly as Luke makes no reference to such a period of privation on Paul's part.

In the apostolic period, there were itinerant Christian teachers other than Paul. While presumably accepting the teaching of some of these, he also writes scathingly of 'many peddling the word of God' (2 Cor. 2: 17). Here, presumably, he is referring to a group who had apparently come to Corinth with letters of recommendation (2 Cor. 3: 1), claiming to be apostles and ministers of Christ (2 Cor. 11: 22-23).⁶⁶ Dieter Georgi also suggests that Paul's references, to ecstatic visions by himself and others (2 Cor. 12: 1-6), and to 'deceitful workers' (2 Cor. 11: 13), are in response to claims by these people both to have such visions and

⁶⁵ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 70-72.

⁶⁶ Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Eerdmans, 1997) 33, 161; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Eerdmans, 2005) 260.

that this constituted work.⁶⁷ They evidently also wanted financial support from the congregation, apparently criticising Paul's refusal to accept this himself, and provoking from him a sarcastic reply (2 Cor. 12: 13). It must be admitted, however, that such attempts to infer the nature of the opponents' criticism by 'mirror reading' Paul's letter do not always find acceptance by scholars. Richard Hays, for instance, comments that 'Dieter Georgi's ingenious monograph ... presses this sort of analysis to its limits and beyond.'⁶⁸

In the late first or early second century, the Author of the *Didache* again asserts 'every true prophet who wishes to dwell among you is worthy of his food', and so too are true apostles, teachers and workmen.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, caution is urged in dealing with those who claimed this right. Itinerants were entitled to support for two days, after which they were to be sent on their way with a further day's supply of bread. But, if they attempted to stay longer or asked for money, they were to be judged 'false' and 'christmongers'.⁷⁰ Similar temporary hospitality was to be extended to any others in need who came 'in the name of the Lord', but if they wished to stay they were to work. While it seems that the number of such wanderers was great enough to justify the author of the *Didache* including such advice on dealing with them, we cannot be sure how many there were nor what proportion embraced, by choice rather than necessity, the thoroughgoing ascetic regime of those later to be called monks. Nevertheless, such beginnings laid the foundations of a lifestyle which during the next three centuries was to become a problem for the emerging structures of the church.

The power of the Egyptian desert-monastic myth was so well established by the mid fifth century that Sozomen, 'overly influenced, as he was, by Antony's model of desert withdrawal as the touchstone of strict monastic life,' could assert that the first monks of Syria were those who imitated the Egyptian 'practice of philosophy' by living off the land in the mountains above Carrhae near the border

⁶⁷ Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1986) 40.

⁶⁸ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989) 122-153, quotation from p. 126.

⁶⁹ *Didache*, 13: 1-2; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 70 n.105.

⁷⁰ *Didache*, 11.5-6; 12.2, 5.

with Persia.⁷¹ In Syria, however, as in Palestine and Mesopotamia, a greater variety and availability of wild plants together with the opportunity of gleaning the corners of cultivated fields would have meant that food was more readily available than in the Egyptian desert, and possibly provided a healthier diet too.⁷² In claiming that these were the first Syrian monks, however, Sozomen ignored both the settled *iḥidaya*, and an established tradition of wandering ascetics who lived, not in mountains and deserts, but travelling between towns and villages. As a result these latter, whom Caner sees as the true precursors of later Syrian monasticism, have been excluded from most ancient and modern accounts of monastic history.⁷³ Syrian wandering monks, moreover, based their asceticism on the example of Christ and his apostles rather than Antony of Egypt.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, as Caner adds, ‘few scholars have taken their apostolic presumptions seriously, believing that their concerns were directed more toward achieving their own salvation than toward teaching others.’⁷⁵ Whether this criticism is ‘misplaced’ as Caner suggests may be debateable, nevertheless, it is clear that these practitioners, and at least some of the faithful, saw their apostolic, ‘demonstrative asceticism’ as a means of authenticating their claims both to spiritual authority over, and material support from the wider body of Christians.⁷⁶

One particular form of this wandering and begging asceticism became identified as a heresy and thus, ultimately, became a useful label with which to condemn all wanderers. The *Messalians* are first mentioned by Ephrem the Syrian in *Hymns against Heresies* which Columba Stewart dates to before 373 CE, and K. Fitschen to before 363 CE.⁷⁷ This brief reference: ‘and the *mṣallyānē* who are debauched’, this, the only reference to this group in Ephrem’s writings, provides no information except a name and an adjective with a variety of meanings:

⁷¹ Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.33.2; quotation from Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 53; and see Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 20-51.

⁷² Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 52.

⁷³ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 53.

⁷⁴ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 56.

⁷⁵ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 56, attributing this in a footnote (27) to Harnack.

⁷⁶ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 56-7.

⁷⁷ Columba Stewart, *‘Working the Earth of the Heart’: The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 14; K. Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimesalianismus : ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzer Geschichte*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 19.

debauched, unrestrained, stirred up, contemptible.⁷⁸ Epiphanius of Salamis, however, in his *Anchoratus* (374 CE.) and more particularly in *Panarion* (377) provides a profile of Messalian practice which may, as Caner suggests, be based on hearsay.⁷⁹ Messalians, he says, survive by begging and sleeping in the streets, where they do not separate the sexes.⁸⁰ On this latter point, we should note, however, Stewart's comment that Epiphanius 'is desperate to associate the Messalians with sexual impropriety, but everything he reports about them points to their ascetical understanding of relations between the sexes. The accusation of hypocrisy is a hard one to make stick in this case.'⁸¹ Additionally, according to Epiphanius, the Messalians do not fast, and he sees their claim to undertake continuous prayer as a pretence, describing them as 'ceasing their supposed devotion to prayer' whenever they wished for food and drink.⁸² Furthermore, he says, they claim to be prophets, or patriarchs, or angels, or indeed Christ – 'whatever you want.'⁸³

But, Caner points out, 'of all the traits that [Epiphanius] identifies with Messalians, it is their *argia* (idleness) that causes the most dismay.'⁸⁴ They may have acquired this practice from certain otherwise orthodox, but simple, brothers, Epiphanius claims, though he sees the habit as originating with Mani.⁸⁵ 'Thus Epiphanius sought to discredit the Messalian trait he found most reprehensible by linking it with the great Mesopotamian heresiarch.'⁸⁶ The 'simple brothers', Epiphanius explains, lacked moderation in applying the dominical instructions in Matthew to sell all for the support of the poor (Mt. 19: 21), and in John not to 'work for the

⁷⁸ Ephrem, *Hymns Against Heresies*, 22.4; E. Beck, 'Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra haereses', CSCO 169 // SS 76 (Louvain, 1957). As translated by Columba Stewart *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 15, who also discusses the range of meanings. See also the translation of A.C. McCollum, available at http://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ephrem_contra_haer_22.rtf, (accessed 06/07/2015).

⁷⁹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 87.

⁸⁰ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 80.3.4; see Karl Holl, *Epiphanius Panarion* vol. 3, rev. ed. Jürgen Dummer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985); Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 20; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 87.

⁸¹ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 22.

⁸² Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.3.6; Quote from Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 87; and see Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 20.

⁸³ Epiphanius, *Panarion*; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 87; and see Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 20.

⁸⁴ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 88.

⁸⁵ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.4.1; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.4.3.

⁸⁶ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 89.

food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life' (Jn. 6:27). These sayings were not intended to encourage idleness, he asserts, offering, as a counter argument, Paul, described in Acts as working with his own hands to support himself and his companions and teaching that anyone who did not work should not eat (2 Thess. 3: 10), supporting this with Old Testament examples.⁸⁷ Any entitlement to receive ones daily bread from others is thus restricted to bishops and presbyters.⁸⁸ True monks, on the other hand, like those in Egypt, obtain their sustenance by working with their own hands.⁸⁹ Interestingly, Caner points out that Epiphanius makes no connection between the Messalian emphasis on prayer and their refusal to work, presumably because they made no claim that work would interfere with all important prayer and worship.⁹⁰ Although we cannot be sure that Epiphanius gives an accurate picture of those he calls Messalians, he does establish a behavioural profile which served as a basis for later identification and condemnation of similar groups. However, despite Epiphanius' designation of the Messalians as heretics, the characteristics he describes are 'concerned with matters of ascetic practice rather than doctrine.'⁹¹

Doctrinal considerations, however, begin to emerge in the late 4th century. In particular Flavian of Antioch (381 – 404 CE), after examining certain monks identified as Messalians and finding their teachings to be heretical, excommunicated them, expelling them from Syria. The acts of the synod of Side (383 CE) against the Messalians are briefly summarised by Photius, but although there is accusation of 'impious doctrines', no information survives of what those doctrines were thought to be. Of relevance to the present study, however, we are told that Lampetius, a Messalian leader, 'sneered and scoffed at those who chanted the hours as being still under the law.'⁹²

Stewart provides a comparison of lists of Messalian doctrines found in the following works: Theodoret *Historia ecclesiastica* (449-50 CE),⁹³ Theodoret

⁸⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.4.1-4; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.5.1 - 6.3.

⁸⁸ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.5.6; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 88.

⁸⁹ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.4.4-6.

⁹⁰ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 89.

⁹¹ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.7.5; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 89.

⁹² Photius, *Bibliotheka* 52, translated into English by J.H. Freese, available at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/photius_03bibliotheca.htm (accessed 06/07/2015).

⁹³ PG 82, 1141-5; Parmentier, L. (ed.) rev. Scheidweiler, F., *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, Berlin, 1954.

Haeticarum fabularum compendium (453 CE),⁹⁴ Timothy of Constantinople, *De iis ad ecclesiam ab haeticis accedunt* (c 600 CE),⁹⁵ and John of Damascus, *Liber de haeresibus* (before 749 CE),⁹⁶ to which he adds the brief account by Severus of Antioch, in *Contra additiones Juliani* (c 527 CE).⁹⁷ Although these documents have a wide range of dates, Stewart claims that ‘there is no doubt the lists antedate the texts in which they are now found, or that they circulated (in some form) independently of them.’⁹⁸

The central doctrine attributed to Messalianism by these writers, and from which other teachings flow, is that of the ‘indwelling demon’, a belief that the natural state of humanity is one of inhabitation and possession of human minds by demons so that human nature is in communion with evil.⁹⁹ This demon, the ‘root of sin’, can only be expelled or uprooted by continuous, zealous or intense prayer.¹⁰⁰ An immediate consequence of these beliefs is that Baptism is, if not ineffective, of reduced importance, cutting out the growth of sin during a person’s pre-baptismal life but failing to remove sin’s roots (the indwelling demon).¹⁰¹ The demons, having been driven out by such intensive prayer, are replaced by the Holy Spirit of ‘the Heavenly Bridegroom’ which liberates the practitioner from passions, so that he enters a state of ἀπάθεια, the reception of the Spirit being an experience perceptible by the senses.¹⁰² In such a state Messalians reject the authority of the church and regard ecclesiastical communion (κοινωνία) and the Eucharist as irrelevant.¹⁰³ Like other wandering monks, these divinely possessed ones refused to work not, it seems, on the grounds that their time was entire taken up with prayer but because as ‘spiritual ones’ work was beneath them.¹⁰⁴ Nor did they give alms to the needy but rather they kept any such alms for themselves.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁴ PG 83, 336-556.

⁹⁵ PG 86, 12-68.

⁹⁶ B. Kotter, (ed) *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, iv, Patristische Texte und Studien 22, Berlin 1981, 42-6.

⁹⁷ *Sevère d’Antioche: La Polémique antijulianiste*, R. Hespel, (ed.), iia, Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium, 295/Scr. Syri 124; (Louvain, 1968).

⁹⁸ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 53.

⁹⁹ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 59, 246-7.

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 60, 244-5.

¹⁰¹ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 60, 246-9.

¹⁰² Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 60-1, 250-5.

¹⁰³ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 63-4, 268-75.

¹⁰⁴ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 62-3, 262-3.

¹⁰⁵ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 265.

Not unexpectedly for those who renounce the structures of the church, Messalians, we are told, claimed that this state of ἀπάθεια absolved them from any need for fasting or other discipline.¹⁰⁶ Timothy of Constantinople and John of Damascus, however, go further by suggesting that the Messalian belief was that in the post-apatheia state they were free of sin in the sense that they could undertake any indulgence or licentiousness without incurring guilt.¹⁰⁷ And that, in order to protect themselves from prosecution, the Messalians even believed that they were free to deny their own teachings and to anathematize anyone holding their beliefs without the guilt of perjury.¹⁰⁸ Needless to say, these orthodox writers attribute Messalian beliefs and practices to possession by demons rather than the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁹

It was perhaps inevitable that affluent citizens should feel themselves under some pressure when faced with begging monks claiming the moral authority of asceticism. Indeed, some moderate pressure might be considered commendable, as for instance in the case of ‘Alexander the Sleepless’ demonstrating solidarity with, and working on behalf of, the poor.¹¹⁰ Alexander’s enthusiasm was not, however, above criticism. Large throngs of monks in search of food, perhaps encouraged by the violence of some of the psalms they regularly chanted, may easily have been seen as threatening.¹¹¹ Nilus thus addresses ‘the Monk Alexander’ (very possibly the ‘Sleepless’ one) alleging ‘an outlandish practice, using insults and rage to compel people to furnish you with offerings ... This is not what is meant by offerings.’¹¹² Certainly the language of their critics may be exaggerated, thus Zosimus, describing ‘those called monks’ maintains, ‘under the pretext of giving to the poor, they have reduced almost everyone else to beggary.’¹¹³ And Michael Gaddis comments that ‘Greed, banditry and violence came together in the accusation that that the charity solicited by these monks

¹⁰⁶ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 61, 254-5.

¹⁰⁷ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 257.

¹⁰⁸ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 276-7.

¹⁰⁹ Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart*, 262, 267.

¹¹⁰ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 149.

¹¹¹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 142.

¹¹² Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 148.

¹¹³ Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 5.23; Ronald T. Ridley (Translation & Commentary) *Zosimus: New History*, Byzantina Australiensia 2 (Sydney : Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1982) 111.

was actually a form of extortion.¹¹⁴ Though the rhetoric is extreme it reveals that groups of begging monks were often a problem in towns and cities, viewed by the general public with suspicion and as ‘symbols of violence’.¹¹⁵ Little wonder then that the citizens of Palmyra barred their gates against the arrival of Alexander and his ‘multitude of brothers’, protesting, ‘who can feed all these men?’¹¹⁶

With the passage of time, moreover, the aggression of monks was increasingly directed at issues and people beyond their immediate demands for support. Thus the dispute between John Chrysostom and the monk Isaac was marked by outbursts of violence from the latter’s followers.¹¹⁷ Such terrorism was frequently directed against non-Christians and, facing it, the Christian civil authorities were powerless to act. Thus, in 388, following the burning of a synagogue in Callinicum, Mesopotamia, the emperor Theodosius initially supported the decision by the *comes orientis* that the local Bishop should pay for the rebuilding. Ambrose, however, intervened, facing the emperor with a political crisis, and Theodosius backed down, forced to content himself with the feeble protest, ‘monks commit many crimes.’¹¹⁸ In the early fifth century, monks of the Egyptian Abbot Shenoute ransacked the house of an important pagan looking for idols which they wished to destroy. To a charge of banditry (*lesteia*), Shenoute replied in words reminiscent of the claims of the Messalians, ‘There is no crime for those who have Christ.’¹¹⁹ This was no isolated incident; ‘The violences of the monks in Egypt are notorious’ Brown comments.¹²⁰

This has taken us a little beyond our period of interest, but the monastic aggression of the fifth century was a culmination of an earlier trend. ‘The great age of monastic violence was the fifth century, though we find monks already active in the fourth. One band threw stones at Gregory Nazianzen in 379, another at John Chrysostom in 403, their burning of pagan shrines and synagogues was

¹¹⁴ Michael Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) 214.

¹¹⁵ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks* 143 n. 66, 159-60.

¹¹⁶ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 147.

¹¹⁷ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 190-9.

¹¹⁸ Gaddis, *There is no Crime*, 194-6; Ambrose, Ep. 40.

¹¹⁹ Gaddis, *There is no Crime*, 151 n. 1.

¹²⁰ Brown, ‘Rise and Function’, 82.

causing imperial concern well before the turn of the century,' Alan Cameron points out, adding that, unregulated monks 'elevated urban violence into one of the major problems of the late Roman world.'¹²¹

5.5 Pontus and Cappadocia

We should expect then that, by the fourth century, Pontus and Cappadocia experienced the same variety of ascetic life styles: local holy men or women, in some cases living in small groups, 'holy' beggars who wandered from place to place or sometimes settled as shrine guardians, and ascetics, particularly female virgins, living with their families. This latter group may additionally have provided a stimulus for their families to become wholly ascetic. Such a one is described by Gregory Nazianzen in his funeral oration on his sister Gorgonia.¹²² Not only did she adopt an ascetic lifestyle herself, eschewing adornment, hair styling, jewels, costly clothes, and makeup, and 'subjecting her dust by fasting', but she 'won over her husband', and 'dedicated to God ... her whole family and household.' In this way, though a wife, mother and grandmother, she 'united virginity with marriage', devoting her time to works of charity.

Beyond the family were groups with various names.¹²³ In addition to virgins, there were enrolled widows, deaconesses (who had a liturgical role), and *kanonikoi*.¹²⁴ The use of both masculine and feminine nouns for these latter makes it clear that the designation included both men and women. We know a little more of the women, however, since further letters of Basil refer to them. Clearly their influence mattered to Basil since he addresses a group on the question of the Holy Spirit,¹²⁵ and provides rules for one of them, Theodora.¹²⁶ Roy Deferrari describes them as 'women who devoted themselves to works of charity. Although not under vows, they lived apart from men, usually in a coenobium.'¹²⁷ The basis for the claims of

¹²¹ Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 290.

¹²² Or. 8, *In laudem sororis Gorgoniae* PG 35. 789-817; Leo P. McCauley 'On His Sister Gorgonia' in Leo P. McCauley et al., *Funeral Orations by St Gregory Nazianzen & St Ambrose*. The Fathers of the Church series (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1953) 101-118.

¹²³ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 14.

¹²⁴ Basil, Letter 188.6, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 2, 126.

¹²⁵ Basil, Letter 52, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 1, 133-7.

¹²⁶ Basil, Letter 173, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 2, 108-9.

¹²⁷ Roy J Deferrari, (ed. & trans), *Basil: The Letters*, Vols 1-4. Series: Loeb Classical Library, nos 190, 215, 243, 270, (London: Heinemann 1926-1939) v. 1, 52, footnote,

communal living and separation from men is not, however, explained, nor indeed is what Deferrari means by 'not under vows', since their name implies that they must have been subject to a rule, as is made clear by the letter to Theodora.

The problems which groups of ascetics living in towns and cities might pose for authority are seen by an important incident in the life of Basil of Caesarea. In his funeral oration on Basil, Gregory Nazianzen speaks of a group who intervened on the side of Basil, still a presbyter, in a dispute with Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea. These he describes as 'select and wiser members of the Church ... they have separated themselves from the world and consecrated themselves to God. I speak of the Nazarites [*sic*] among us [λέγω δὲ τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ναζιραίους].'¹²⁸ The nazirites 'were indignant that their chief should be ignored, outraged, and set-aside [οἱ δεινὸν ποιησάμενοι τὸ σφῶν κράτος παριδεῖν περιυβρισμένον καὶ ἀπωσμένον]' and 'contemplated defection and revolt.'¹²⁹ Basil not wishing to remain a focus of conflict, preferred to withdraw to Pontus where, 'assuming the direction of the monasteries there [τοῖς ἐκεῖσε φροντιστηρίοις], [he] established some memorable regulations [τι μνήμης ἄξιον].'¹³⁰

Some care is needed as to how we interpret these remarks. The nazirites are clearly ascetics and Leo McCauley, in a footnote, explains that they are 'monks'.¹³¹ But these are urban monastics, possibly living in a community or communities, 'separated from the world' in a spiritual sense. For, despite their 'separation', they clearly had close contacts and considerable influence in the city, including amongst their sympathizers 'some of lowly station and others of high

see also v. 2, p.173, footnote; *coenobium*, a religious community, from κοινόβιον - *The Chambers Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Chambers-Harrap, 1998).

¹²⁸ Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 43 *In Laudem Basilii Magni*, PG 36.493-606; *Funeral Oration on Basil*, 28.3 – 29.2, translation from Leo P McCauley, 'On St. Basil the Great Bishop of Caesarea' in Leo P McCauley, et al., *Funeral Orations by St Gregory Nazianzen & St Ambrose*. The Fathers of the Church series, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953) 27-99, 51-2; 'Nazarite' (Num. 6: 1-21) is an acceptable alternative spelling, see *Chambers Dictionary*, but 'nazirite' is to be preferred as closer to both the Greek and Hebrew. Modern English recommendations on capitalization mean that lower case is also to be preferred (see NRSV and JPS English translations).

¹²⁹ McCauley, 'On St. Basil', 52.

¹³⁰ McCauley, 'On St. Basil', 52.

¹³¹ McCauley, 'On St. Basil', 52, n. 26.

rank',¹³² and it would appear that the problem they presented was violence or the threat of it. Basil's position in relation to them is, moreover, uncertain. If Basil were 'chief' of the nazirites, he was apparently not in a position to command their obedience and thus prevent the dissension which sent him into voluntary exile. Moreover, although τὸ κράτος can refer to a person who is a power or an authority, it is more usually an abstract noun.¹³³ So it is likely that Gregory is saying that the nazirites' anger was because their *authority* was being ignored.

This passage also casts some light on the question of Basil as the founder of monasticism in Asia Minor. For the 'monasteries' in Pontus clearly existed before Basil visited them and, since Gregory was delivering a eulogy, it is most unlikely that he would have omitted a reference to Basil founding them at some earlier period had he done so. It seems probable therefore that Basil withdrew once again to the family estates at Annisa, where Macrina had already begun the establishment of a double monastery.¹³⁴ However, although the translation 'monasteries' must be preferred to the literal 'places for hard thinking' (φροντιστηρία), this would seem to be at an early stage of development when the members are asking questions about the ideal way to proceed with their chosen lifestyle. Further, although Gregory uses the plural here, we shall introduce below the argument of Daniel Stramara, that Annisa must be considered a single establishment.¹³⁵ Similarly, a more accurate translation of τι μνήμης ἄξιον is 'something worthy of remembrance' rather than 'memorable regulations'. We should also be careful of how we understand Gregory's description of Basil as 'assuming direction' at Annisa. That the woman, who as a girl in her early teens, had opposed parental plans for her future with a decision which 'was more firmly fixed than might have been expected at her age' would accept the take-over bid of a sibling two years her junior seems unlikely.¹³⁶ We may, therefore, find here no suggestion that Basil was the instigator of monastic life either in Caesarea or

¹³² McCauley, 'On St. Basil', 52.

¹³³ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940) on κράτος.

¹³⁴ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 63-6. The term 'double monastery' is defined below.

¹³⁵ Section 5.6.

¹³⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.375.9-10, translation from Anna M Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008) 115; and above section 1.2.

Pontus.¹³⁷ We must therefore consider the claim of Workman that Eustathius of Sebaste instigated monasticism in this area.¹³⁸

5.6 Eustathius of Sebaste and Ascetic Extremism

Eustathius was described by Sozomen as the founder of monastic communities in Armenia, Paphlagonia, and Pontus, for whom he provided a rule of life, legislating for food, clothing and customs. And Sozomen adds that 'some assert that he was the author of the ascetic writings commonly attributed to Basil of Cappadocia.'¹³⁹ While this latter comment has no modern support, his importance as a forerunner of Basil is certain. Thus, Elm portrays him as beyond doubt 'the central force, the dynamic figure behind the ascetic development in Asia Minor during the years between *circa* 330 and 360.'¹⁴⁰ And, she claims, he was also a considerable influence on both Basil and his sister Macrina.¹⁴¹ This recent scholarly opinion somewhat reinstates the ascetic significance of Eustathius, which has been marginalized, both because of his heterodoxy and the condemnation of the Council of Gangra.

In 340/1 CE this council, alarmed it seems by ascetics taking a strong doctrinal position opposed to certain normative practices (for instance marriage), and also excesses in asceticism, condemned Eustathius and his followers.¹⁴² After the council, ascetic practices continued, as the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers testify, they themselves combining asceticism with public and administrative duties, but the significance of Eustathius had been minimized.¹⁴³ Eustathius' contribution to this movement may have been seriously underestimated in modern times, but the Council of Gangra meant that the significance of his own ascetic initiatives in Asia Minor was reduced, and his importance lies in his influence on Macrina and Basil. This influence cannot be denied. In an early letter, Basil writes that he returned from Athens on hearing of the ideas of 'Eustathius

¹³⁷ *Contra Deferrari, Basil: The Letters*, vol. 4, 206, footnote.

¹³⁸ Workman, *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, 113, see above section 1.2.

¹³⁹ Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3. 14., In Edward Walford, (trans. & ed.), *The ecclesiastical history of Sozomen : comprising a history of the Church from A.D. 324 to A.D. 440*. (London, Bohn, 1855) 130.

¹⁴⁰ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 124.

¹⁴¹ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 134-5; see also Anna M. Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great* (Oxford: The University Press, 2005) 56-60; Basil, Letters 223, 244.1.7-8, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 8-17, 75.

¹⁴² Silvas, *Asketikon*, date 59, texts 486-494.

¹⁴³ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 55-6.

the Philosopher’; that this is Eustathius of Sabaste is ‘now well accepted.’¹⁴⁴ In the letter which marks his break with Eustathius, however, Basil ascribes his change of direction to his own study of the Gospel, though this was followed by the examples of ascetics elsewhere and finally ‘certain men in my own country’; and here the context makes it clear that the latter were Eustathius and his followers.¹⁴⁵ And, when Basil began his ascetic life at Annisa, he and Gregory Nazianzen were often visited by Eustathius.¹⁴⁶ The influence of Eustathius may date from an earlier time, however, for in a letter to Patrophilus, bishop of Ægæ, Basil writes of supporting someone ever since he was a boy, but whom he now finds attacking him.¹⁴⁷ This may well have been Eustathius. Certainly Basil was acquainted with ascetics in his early years, for he writes to the Chorepiscopus Timothy, as one whom he has known from boyhood as one intent on an upright and ascetic life.¹⁴⁸

5.7 Macrina

Certainly, Eustathius’ work and organizations must have influenced Basil. However, three other members of the latter’s family seem to have been inspired in the same way. The family of Basil and Macrina lives out the true story of monastic development in their own lives.¹⁴⁹ Naucratius, no doubt influenced by the ascetic leanings of his eldest sister and possibly from beyond the family by the positive aspects of Eustathian monasticism, left the comfort of the family home to live an ascetic life in the wild. Not in the desert, but relying on the productive forest and river to enable him to support, not only himself and his companion, but also others unable to provide for themselves. We see, perhaps, where this life might have led him, had he survived, in the career of his youngest brother, Peter.

Macrina, by rejecting marriage, though defining herself as a widow, effectively began as the family virgin.¹⁵⁰ But by demonstrating formidable strength of character she gradually transformed the family and the whole household into a

¹⁴⁴ Basil, Letter, 1.12-13, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 1, 4; Silvas, *Asketikon*, 70.

¹⁴⁵ Basil, Letter 223.2-3, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 10-13

¹⁴⁶ Basil, Letter 223.5.1-4, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 14.

¹⁴⁷ Basil, Letter 244.1.7-14, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 74.

¹⁴⁸ Basil, Letter 291, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 163-4; Silvas, *Asketikon*, 56; 63-4.

¹⁴⁹ See section 1.2 above.

¹⁵⁰ See section 5.2 above.

fully-fledged *double monastery*, that is, 'a single monastic unit of monks and nuns following the same rule, under the same superior, living in the same locality, but in separate quarters.'¹⁵¹ Macrina, with overall authority, was assisted by a woman deacon, Lampadion, presiding over the women's section, and the youngest of her siblings, Peter, ordained presbyter by Basil, who was in charge of the men and ministering the sacraments to the whole community.¹⁵² Silvas provides a six-stage summary of the development process and adds, 'one thing we must be absolutely clear about: Macrina did not acquire her monastic life and doctrine from Basil. No, the lines of influence were much rather the other way round. Macrina's trajectory as a virgin ascetic, a teacher, and a spiritual mother pre-empted, inspired, and illustrated the maturation of Basil's own coenobitic teaching. She was the mother and preceptress of that monasticism that has come down under Basil's name.'¹⁵³

As described by Gregory of Nyssa, Macrina exerted a considerable influence on Basil:

Basil, brother of the one of whom we speak, returned from the schools where he had been undergoing long training in eloquence. He was at that time excessively puffed up with the thought of his own eloquence and was disdainful of local dignitaries, since in his own inflated opinion he surpassed all the leading luminaries. She, however, took him in hand and drew him with such speed towards the goal of philosophy that he withdrew from the worldly show and despised the applause to be gained through eloquence, and went over of his own accord to the life where one toils even with one's own hands, thus providing for himself through perfect renunciation.¹⁵⁴

'Philosophy' here should be understood as 'asceticism'. This account, it must be admitted, differs from those of Basil himself, who credits Eustathius of Sebaste

¹⁵¹ Daniel F. Stramara, 'Double Monasticism in the Greek East, Fourth through Eighth Centuries.' *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 269, with discussion of this definition 271-273.

¹⁵² See below, chapter 6.

¹⁵³ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 47-8.

¹⁵⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.377.7-19, translation Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 117.

with influencing him (see below), and of Gregory Nazianzen who, presumably, drew on his own experience as well as Basil's recollections.¹⁵⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, moreover, may have had personal reasons for crediting Macrina with this influence in place of Eustathius, for in 376 he was deposed from his episcopal see at the behest of the vicar of the Arian emperor Valens, who was influenced by a group associated with Eustathius.¹⁵⁶ Basil, furthermore, may have decided on the ascetic life before his return to Annisa, for Gregory Nazianzen recalls that he had 'engaged even at Athens ... to join [Basil] in a life of philosophy.'¹⁵⁷

Whatever the trigger for his change of direction, Basil began his ascetic life at Annisa in 357/8, possibly joining an already existing group of men, the former companions of his late brother, Naucratus, who were 'following a certain routine and living in accordance with certain specific principles.'¹⁵⁸ We see some evidence of these principles in Basil's letter to Gregory Nazianzen written with the intention of persuading him to share his friend's new lifestyle.¹⁵⁹ When Gregory did join Basil, between 359 and 361, they apparently collaborated on the production of 'written rules and regulations' (ῥοις γραπτοῖς καὶ κανόσιν).¹⁶⁰ These regulations were the beginning of the influential *Small* and *Great Asceticon* of Basil. The *Asceticon's* first public form may have been the *Moralia*, which Elm identifies with the thing 'worthy of remembrance', composed at the time of Basil's second retreat to Annisa during the years 362-5, and which formed the basis for the *Small Asceticon*. In the view of Silvas, the *Small Asceticon* was initially produced in actual question and answer sessions with the communities at Annisa and other local ascetic groups, in which Basil's responses to questions were taken down to be edited and revised later.¹⁶¹ Similar teaching opportunities during the rest of his life would then have provided the basis for the process of continuous revision by which the *Small Asceticon* was transformed into the *Great*.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 43, *In Laudem Basilii Magni*, PG 36.493-606; *Funeral Oration on Basil*, 24; McCauley (trans), 'On St Basil', 49-50.

¹⁵⁶ Basil, Letter 237, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 55-7; Silvas, *Asketikon*, 55-6.

¹⁵⁷ Gregory Nazianzen, Letter 1.1; PG 37.21.

¹⁵⁸ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 63-6.

¹⁵⁹ Basil, Letter 2, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 1, 5-13.

¹⁶⁰ Gregory Nazianzen, Letter 6; PG 37.29-32. Silvas, *Asketikon*, 91.

¹⁶¹ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 143.

¹⁶² Silvas, *Asketikon*, 130-145.

Thus, in directing others, Basil drew on his personal experience of ascetic life which, as far as communal aspects were concerned, he initially spent in close proximity to Macrina and her group. In view of the conflicting evidence, the extent to which her experience influenced him must remain uncertain, but we should be as cautious about accepting at face value Gregory of Nyssa's claim that she was responsible for a dramatic *volte-face* in Basil's life, as we should of Gregory Nazianzen's description of Basil as 'assuming direction' in Annisa.

There are, however, clear similarities between Macrina's model of ascetic life and Basil's, particularly in his establishment of double monasteries for men and women. A further example lies in the importance of charitable work. In the years 368-9 there was a severe famine in which Macrina and Peter at Annisa provided support for a great many people.¹⁶³ Pachomius, on the contrary, though ministering to the destitute and sick, nevertheless saw that as 'no work for a monk', Philip Rousseau records.¹⁶⁴ Rousseau, however, cautions us in a footnote that this statement is 'compromised by the scriptural quotations which follow.' Nevertheless, Pachomius displays an emphasis different from Basil who saw the 'practical life' as an important part of an ascetic life-style.¹⁶⁵ Here, however, both Macrina and Basil seem to be following the example of Eustathius of Sebaste: 'Basil's desire to combine monasticism with charity owes much to Eustathius' radical social teachings and his establishment of a *ptōchotropheion* or centre for poor relief at Sebaste.'¹⁶⁶ If then Basil cannot be credited with the establishment of monasticism in Asia Minor, and drew on Eustathius' example and his sister's experience for the form of communities he set up, what then was his contribution?

5.8 Basil – The Legitimization of the Ascetic Life

The fourth century conflict between wandering, begging monks and church leaders may be seen as a continuation of the clash between divergent leadership

¹⁶³ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.384.14-18; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 123-4; Elm, *Virgins of God*, 92.

¹⁶⁴ Bohairic *Life of Pachomius*, 9; Elm, *Virgins of God*, 285-6; Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius, The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 63 and footnote 33.

¹⁶⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 43, *In Laudem Basilii Magni*, PG 36.493-606; *Funeral Oration on Basil*, 62-3, McCauley (trans), 'On St Basil', 80.

¹⁶⁶ Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 86.

styles originating in the first century, as described by David Horrell.¹⁶⁷ We see in Christian writings of the first century, Horrell suggests, a situation in which authority and power, initially in the hands of itinerant teachers, the prototypes of wandering monks, were transferred to resident leaders.¹⁶⁸ The ideology behind this, he goes on to argue, is found in the 'household codes' which saw the *pater familias* as the authority figure.¹⁶⁹ Such persons naturally provided models of church leadership: 'a bishop ... must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?'¹⁷⁰ Basil, as the eldest son of a land owning family, was in many ways a patriarchal figure. And, although he adopted a lifestyle in which he rejected marriage, children and family affairs, he would, I suggest, have agreed with the author of 1 Timothy that managing the church is the same as managing a household. Thus the appointment of his younger brother and Gregory Nazianzen as subordinate bishops required their acquiescence to his plans in much the same way as a father of his social class arranging marriages for his offspring.

Thirty years after the Council of Gangra, Basil provided firm leadership for the ascetic movement. For the nazirites of Caesarea, who apparently agitated for his episcopacy, he must have had great charisma and authority and, when he became a bishop, the ascetics would no doubt have seen him as one of themselves. He used this influence and authority to bring them under church control. Asceticism he advocates as the ideal Christian life, regulated by authority.¹⁷¹ He legislates against abuses and possible causes of scandal: a presbyter who lives with a woman to whom he is not married,¹⁷² the Glycerius affair,¹⁷³ and alleged fornications of canonical persons.¹⁷⁴ He urges community

¹⁶⁷ David G Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns and the Development of Ideology in Early Christianity' In David G Horrell (intro & ed), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999) 309-338; a revised version of a paper originally published in *Sociology of Religion*, 58.4 (1997) 323-41; references here are to the revised version.

¹⁶⁸ Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns', 309.

¹⁶⁹ Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns', 328-31.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Tim 3:4-5 NRSV, Horrell, 'Leadership Patterns', 323.

¹⁷¹ Basil, Letter 22, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 1, 52-7.

¹⁷² Basil, Letter 55, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 1, 141-2.

¹⁷³ Basil, Letters. 169, 170, 171, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 2, 104-6.

¹⁷⁴ Basil, Letter 188.6, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 2, 126; & see Silvas, *Asketikon*, 31-2.

life for ascetics, 'in imitation of the apostolic manner of living.'¹⁷⁵ And for those who were committed eremites he made special provision, causing 'hermitages and monasteries to be built, not far from his cenobites and his communities of ascetics' (ἀσκητήρια καὶ μοναστήρια δειμάμενος μὲν, οὐ πόρρω δὲ τῶν κοινωνικῶν καὶ μιγάδων), and indeed, not far from, and thus under the eye of, the Bishop.¹⁷⁶ There, they became part of a new synthesis in which 'the life of contemplation might not be divorced from community life, or the active life from contemplation.'¹⁷⁷ As noted above, the 'active life' meant the care and support of the needy.

Possibly Basil's monastic model was part of the 'war on heretics' as Elm suggests, adding that he sought to 'reform and "domesticate"' those who followed the sort of life which he himself had once led.¹⁷⁸ But he may also have been influenced by seeing both the dangers of agitation by ascetics, such as the nazirites of Caesarea, and the suspicion with which the general public viewed the ascetic life.¹⁷⁹ By providing strong leadership and regulating asceticism he legitimized the life-style, drawing it in to become part of the ecclesiastical establishment, making it respectable and therefore acceptable. Again, however, Basil may have been following a lead provided by Eustathius, for Silvas, commenting on the latter that 'if his overall career shows him eminently capable of theological manoeuvring, there is no reason why he could not acquit himself of the same in ascetic practice.'¹⁸⁰ And she goes on to argue that, after the Council of Gangra, Eustathius must have undertaken reforms of this nature in order to conform to the council's decrees and thus continue as a bishop, as a friend to Basil's family, and for many years to Basil himself.

There was still, however, no single ascetic way of life. Elm, for instance, comments on the variety of life styles of female ascetics, 'In practice, there was no fixed manner in which a woman "dedicated her life to God."¹⁸¹ Nevertheless,

¹⁷⁵ Basil, Letter 295, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 3, 169-70.

¹⁷⁶ Or. 43 In Laudem Basilii Magni, PG 36.493-606; Gregory Nazianzen, *Funeral Oration on Basil*, 62.5, trans. McCauley, 'On St Basil', 80.

¹⁷⁷ Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 43, 62.5, McCauley, 'On St Basil', 80.

¹⁷⁸ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 219-20.

¹⁷⁹ Basil, Letter 119, Courtonne, *Lettres*, v. 2, 23-5.

¹⁸⁰ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 83-5.

¹⁸¹ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 151.

she is able to identify 'three major trends of ascetic practice ... the peripatetic life of rigorously ascetic men and women who completely rejected society; men and women who together practiced an ascetic life in the context of their own homes and families; and lastly, settled communities of men and women.'¹⁸² By this last, Elm means, of course, the sort of double monastery which was established at Annisa.

Further, there was no obligation for the majority of ascetics to remain in one chosen mode of life. Indeed, in the case of Macrina, we see the progress of a single individual; in which she becomes first an ascetic living within her family, then the centre of an ascetic family, and ultimately the leader of an ascetic double monastery. A similar pattern occurs, a century later, in the life of Melania the Younger,¹⁸³ and parts of the same pattern are found in the lives of other women of the time, for instance, Gorgonia, sister of Gregory Nazianzen.¹⁸⁴

These women of aristocratic background, however, belong to a single small subgroup of society. We may trace a slightly different pattern in the lives of ascetic male aristocrats who, just as their ancestors had done, entered public life, though in their cases as senior members of the clergy. Basil in particular, together with the other Cappadocian Fathers, provide good examples of this. For people lower down the social scale far less information is available. Some may have been forced to join communities because of famine or other deprivation, or have been freed slaves of ascetic households, examples of both of these being found in Macrina's communities.¹⁸⁵ Others, both male and female, may have been attracted, or driven by poverty, to the ranks of the unregulated wanders. It does not seem likely that these were the only pathways however. There may have been undocumented ascetics living in families, and perhaps groups who met regularly for worship and mutual support. And such ways of life may have provided a basis for a move to the coenobitic.

¹⁸² Elm, *Virgins of God*, 206.

¹⁸³ Patricia Cox Miller (ed.), *Women in early Christianity: translations from Greek texts*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 210ff.

¹⁸⁴ Gregory Nazianzen, Or. 8; McCauley, 'On Gorgonia', 101-118; see above section 5.4.

¹⁸⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.377.24 – 378.5, 401.2-7; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 118, 137; Elm, *Virgins of God*, 84, 92-3.

For the most part ascetic communities in Cappadocia seem to have been established in towns and cities. ‘The majority of ascetics addressed by Basil and Gregory [Nazianzen] lived in urban areas, more precisely in close proximity to the local bishop.’¹⁸⁶ This may have been because they wished to gather around their bishop and ‘play an active and vociferous role in all ecclesiastical decisions’, or because the bishop wanted to ‘regulate their behaviour’ and ‘gain their support.’¹⁸⁷ The town might also have been seen as the most appropriate place for them to engage in practical service. The Annisa communities, however, show that such a life was possible in a rural setting and it may be that the phenomenon has been perceived as urban because larger groups in cities are better documented.¹⁸⁸

This calls into question the meaning of the term ‘urban monastic’. Certainly, those who follow the patterns outlined above were not cut off from the world, but preserved the involvement in their local communities characteristic of the village holy men and women. Nor was a solitary life practised by the majority of ascetics. Indeed Basil asks, ‘Who does not know that man is a domesticated and sociable animal, not a solitary and wild one?’ (ὅτι ἡμερον καὶ κοινωνικὸν ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὐχὶ μοναστικὸν, οὐδὲ ἄγριον).¹⁸⁹ And we have noted how Gregory Nazianzen uses the term *nazirites* rather than *monazontes*.

With the formation of communities, the ascetics come closer to what, in modern western Christendom, is usually, and somewhat loosely, understood as ‘monks’, but even then their lively participation in church affairs and their practical and charitable way of life make them more akin to ‘regulars’. Further, since Annisa must clearly be included, the adjective ‘urban’ also seems inappropriate. Bradshaw points out, however, that this terminology has, unfortunately, become accepted and standard.¹⁹⁰ There is, nevertheless, a clear, and more appropriate, alternative terminology; for Silvas, criticizing Elm’s understanding of how the pattern developed and her corresponding use of the term ‘Homoiousian

¹⁸⁶ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 161.

¹⁸⁷ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 206-7.

¹⁸⁸ Elm, *Virgins of God*, 161.

¹⁸⁹ LR. 3.1, PG 31.917.5-7, trans. Silvas, *Asketikon*, 172.

¹⁹⁰ Bradshaw, *Search*, 173.

Asceticism' to describe it, points out that her own study of the development of the Annisa community

strongly suggests that the antecedents of the classic Basilian community – what was later called the 'double' monastery – are not to be sought so much in a kind of sub-orthodox *modus vivendi* of male and female ascetics indifferently living together, increasingly curbed by an emergent neo-Nicene doctrinal position less favourable to women, but rather on the inherent structure of the Christian family household itself, as it took on an increasingly explicit spiritual orientation. The phenomenon might be called 'family asceticism' or the 'domestic ascetic movement'.¹⁹¹

There is, furthermore, good reason to question Taft's assessment, quoted above, that the urban monastics adopted the cathedral office modifying it to include aspects of desert monasticism.¹⁹² Thus, as Macrina comes to the end of her life, it being evening a light is brought in, 'It was clear that she was eager also to say the lamp-lighting thanksgiving (τὴν ἐπιλύχνιον εὐχαριστίαν); but, her voice failing her, she accomplished her purpose in her heart and in the movement of her hands, her lips moving together with her inward impulse.'¹⁹³ Here we have a domestic, family ritual translated to form part of the prayer of the community; and the domestic origin of such communities suggests that all their daily prayer may have developed from family prayers. Indeed, it may be that what the urban monastic office has in common with that of the cathedral is that both share a common origin in the family, as Bradshaw proposes.¹⁹⁴

We may conclude that Cappadocian monasticism is not a direct derivative of the monasticism of the Egyptian desert. And thus that its office is not directly derived from Egyptian practices, even as a 'hybrid'. In fact Cappadocian monasticism, as the above texts about Gorgonia and Macrina make clear, derives from what ought to be called *domestic asceticism*, a fact which strongly suggests that its office has

¹⁹¹ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 74-5.

¹⁹² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 84; see above section 1.6.

¹⁹³ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.398.23-399.9, my translation; for a fuller discussion see chapter 9.

¹⁹⁴ Paul Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009). 113-6; and section 1.6 above.

its roots in family worship. This will become more apparent as we consider the nature of the form of monasticism adopted by Macrina and Basil which will be considered in the following chapter. Finally, we have examined some distinctive practices from outside Egypt which contrast with those of Macrina's and Basil's communities (and thus help us to contextualise the latter): those movements centred around itinerant ascetics, contrast with Macrina's and Basil's domestic model; furthermore, the Messalians' alleged idleness and practice of continuous prayer contrasts with Macrina's/Basil's model of days ordered around work and a series of synaxes for corporate daily prayer.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ We return to this contrast in section 7.6 below.

Part II – Understanding the Cappadocian Office in its Context

6. Monastic Life in Pontus and Cappadocia.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I expect to show that, whatever other influences lie behind the development of monasticism in Anatolia, the nature of the double-monastery established at Annisa is a consequence of the development of Macrina's life-style. Thus, it is firmly rooted in domestic asceticism. Basil, it appears, provides an organisational structure which balances a unity of male and female sections with the strictures of the Council of Gangra, and a life of worship with the practicalities of serving others. Although the use of psalmody in these monasteries seems to have been part of a more general movement, Macrina's development of monastery from family, means that the immediate source of the major importance of psalms in worship was a consequence of Emmelia's education of her children.

Establishing the nature of monastic life in the communities which concern us requires that two major works be consulted, *The Life of Saint Macrina* written by Gregory of Nyssa and *The Asceticon* of Basil of Caesarea, the latter including both short and long rules. Unfortunately, these two differ in purpose and character so that it is not a matter of simple, direct comparison. Nevertheless, we may assume that Gregory, presenting an idealised account of his eldest sister's life, and Basil offering a goal for his followers to aim for, do give a basic picture of that lifestyle.

6.2 Macrina – The Growth of an Ascetic Life.

A story of the growth of the foundational Cappadocian double monastery is presented by Gregory of Nyssa in his biographical work on his eldest sister. Though written *post factum* and thus describing a progress towards a known goal, this may, with careful reading, provide some information about the development of communal worship.¹

Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Saint Macrina* may be read in conjunction with his *Letter 19*, 'To a Certain John', which gives a brief account of the circumstances surrounding his sister's death, and the dialogue, *On the Soul and Resurrection*,

¹ See Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in late Antiquity* (Cambridge: The University Press, 2008) 208-12.

which apparently provides the details of a 'long conversation', mentioned in *The Life*, which took place the day before her death.² Anna Silvas dates *Letter 19* to mid-380 CE, *The Life* to late 381/382, and *On the Soul* to the mid-380s.³ In reading these, we should bear in mind a caution of which Gregory himself was certainly aware, for in *Letter 19*, a response to one which praised him, written by the 'certain John', he comments 'when anyone bestows flatteries on someone he loves ... he depicts him in words not as he is, but as someone might be like who is in every way perfect.'⁴

In *The Life*, Gregory presents his sister as successor to several admired historical figures and unsurprisingly punctuates the description of her life-style with scriptural quotations, many of them from the psalms. Indeed, he begins by telling us 'Macrina was the virgin's name' (Μακρίνα ἦν ὄνομα τῆ παρθένω), which might be seen as an echo of Luke 1:27, 'the virgin's name was Mary' (τὸ ὄνομα τῆς παρθένου Μαρίας).⁵ However, he goes on to write that she has another, secret name, that of Thekla, the legendary virgin companion of St. Paul, much revered in Anatolia.⁶

As we shall see below, he also wishes to present his sister's life and life-style as a Christian development of philosophy by embedding them in the Greek philosophic tradition. In this he is not alone among Christian authors and it is possible to trace the influence of two Greek Philosophical writers, Plato and Socrates. Thus, Plato's *Symposium*, written as a dinner discussion amongst a group of men, led by Socrates, expounds various theories of the nature of love.⁷ Methodius of Olympus uses the same form for his *Symposium on Virginity*, replacing the men with a group of women under the leadership of Thekla, praising

² *Life of Saint Macrina*: GNO vol 8/1, 370-414; *Letter 19*: GNO 8/2 62-6; *On the Soul and Resurrection*: GNO 3/3 1-123.

³ Silvas, Anna M., *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 154-5.

⁴ Letter 19.2; GNO vol 8/2, 62-3; translation: Silvas, Anna M., *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Vol 83, *Vigiliae Christianae Supplements*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 175.

⁵ GNO 8/1, 371.24

⁶ GNO 8/1, 372.20-23, Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 112; and see Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 17-20 and Jeremy W Barrier, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla: A Critical Introduction and Commentary*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

⁷ William S. Cobb, 'The Symposium' in *The Symposium and the Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues*, State University of New York Press (1993).

Christian virginity rather than Eros.⁸ And it seems clear that Gregory was acquainted with the writings of Methodius.⁹ Further, Plato's *Phaedo* presents Socrates, facing immanent death, discoursing on the immortality of the soul.¹⁰ And Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Soul* is presented in the form of a Socratic dialogue with Gregory asking questions and Macrina, referred to as 'the teacher' (ἡ διδάσκαλος), answering with sound Christian doctrine. Although, like the *Phaedo*, the dialogue with Macrina asserts the immortality of the soul, there is of course an additional stress on bodily resurrection. Ultimately, the *Phaedo* also describes Socrates' calm acceptance of his own death, a demonstration of his genuine belief in immortality, and this is echoed by Macrina's prayerful decease in *The Life*.¹¹ A further association is that both Gregory Nyssen and Gregory Nazianzen, describe the Annisa community as φροντιστήριον, a term originally coined by Aristophanes in *The Clouds* to refer, satirically, to the school of Socrates, but quite seriously used by the two Cappadocians.¹²

The Life begins with a description of Macrina's early education. Gregory, having no first-hand knowledge of this, will have relied on the accounts of his mother and eldest sister. Additionally, it seems reasonable to assume that both Gregory and Basil may have been taught the same way before attending school which would have laid the foundations of their extensive knowledge of psalmody.

The child was reared in this way: Though indeed she had her own nurse, she was mostly nursed in her mother's own arms. Having passed the time of infancy she was ready for the lessons of a child and whatever lesson the decision of her parents directed her to, the character of the girl shone through it. The mother was eager to educate the girl, but not, however, the common secular [lit: from outside] education which instructs the initial stage of study by means of poetry.

⁸ PG 18.27-220.

⁹ Morwenna Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 68.

¹⁰ Sebastian R. P. Gertz, *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism: Studies on the Ancient Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

¹¹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 103-4; Corrigan, Kevin (translation, introduction and notes), *The Life of Saint Macrina, by Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2001) 13-17.

¹² Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8/1, 410.20; Gregory of Nazianzus Oration 43, On St. Basil the Great, 29.2.3, PG 36.536; Aristophanes, *The Clouds* 94; definition and origin from Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* on φροντιστήριον.

For she thought it shameful and entirely unseemly for a tender and mouldable nature to be instructed by either the passions of tragedy, those passions of women which have given poets their origins and subjects [plots and characters?], or the obscenities of the comedies, or the evils which befell Troy, which ignoble stories about women corrupt the character. Instead she resolved on those parts of divinely inspired scripture which were easily learnt at the earliest stage. These were the child's lessons, particularly the Wisdom of Solomon and besides this whatever developed the moral life. Indeed, there was no part whatever of the writings of the psalmodies that she did not know, reciting each portion of the psalmody at its own proper time. When she rose from her bed, engaged in serious matters [her duties?], ceased from them came to eat, left the table, went to bed or left it to pray, she carried the psalmody with her like good company, never leaving her at any time.¹³

Emmelia's opposition to the classical curriculum as unsuitable for the very young is, shared by Plato and similar concerns were expressed by Augustine.¹⁴ These authors, including Gregory, do not always condemn all of traditional classical culture, however, and Corrigan suggests that 'Gregory's attitude here, therefore, is not just a "Christian" view but is symptomatic of a deeper problem, probably felt at all times and place.'¹⁵ With particular relevance to the office of Macrina's later monastic practice is the comment about her 'reciting each portion of the psalmody at its own proper time'. Silvas suggests that here 'Gregory may be anticipating later developments by giving fully fledged monastic character to the young Macrina's regimen'.¹⁶ Indeed he may, however this is by no means certain. Eustathius of Sebaste, for example, and his monastic followers might have established, and made known, a scheme of psalms, alternatively, the young

¹³ GNO 8/1 373.4-374.6, My trans.

¹⁴ Plato, *Republic*, 2-3, 10; *Laws*, 7; Augustine, *The City of God*, 2.8.

¹⁵ Corrigan, *Life of Saint Macrina*, 60, note 16; see also Jean Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse: La Vie de Moïse ou Traité de la perfection en matière de vertu*, 3rd edn. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968) 31-88.

¹⁶ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 113 n. 24.

Macrina might have chosen psalms to sing on the basis of associating their contents with the particular events that Gregory describes.

Gregory's account suggests that Basil the Elder died shortly after the death of the young man intended as Macrina's husband and her resolve on a life of virginity. For he follows his description of that decision with a statement that in order to safeguard her resolution she never left her mother's side for an instant, assisting and supporting Emmelia in her care of nine children and in the business of paying taxes on properties spread over three provinces. The material welfare of Emmelia herself was important too:

The mother looked after the girl's soul, and she her mother's body, fulfilling in all other respects the required service, even to frequently preparing the bread for her mother with her own hands. Not that she made this her primary occupation. But when she had lent her hands to the mystic services [ἐπειδὴ ταῖς μυστικαῖς ὑπηρεσίαις τὰς χεῖρας ἑαυτῆς ἔχρησε] – deeming that the zeal for this matter befitted the purpose of her life – from what was left over she furnished food for her mother by her own labours.¹⁷

A few sources provide the alternative reading that Macrina 'consecrated her hands ...' (ἔχρισε) but 'lent' (ἔχρησε) seems most likely to have been original. The somewhat enigmatic phrase 'mystic services' must presumably refer to tasks associated with worship. Pierre Maraval proposes three possible interpretations:¹⁸

1. Macrina, before beginning her daily tasks, first received Holy Communion.
2. She first baked bread for the Eucharist, then bread for her mother from what ingredients remained.
3. She was a deaconess.

Silvas regards the third possibility as 'doubtful' explaining that 'the office of deaconess only came into prominence somewhat later in the fourth century when it was reserved for older women, from the age of sixty years, in the *Codex*

¹⁷ GNO 8/1, 37.8 – 20; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 116.

¹⁸ Pierre Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse: Vie de Sainte Macrine*, Sources Chrétiennes 178, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971) 158-9, cited in Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 116 n. 34.

Theodosianus XVI, 2, 27. Macrina was certainly not a teenage deaconess, and she never reached sixty years. Her deputy as superior of the women, Lampadion, is however specified as a deaconess.¹⁹ While we may agree with Silvas' conclusion as regards Macrina, her explanation requires a brief excursus to examine the term 'deaconess' and its associated office. Here the work of Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek reveals a complex situation.²⁰ Firstly, there are two similar Greek terms in use for women office holders in the early church, 'deacon' (ἡ διάκονος) and 'deaconess' (ἡ διακόνισσα). After examining the evidence, Madigan and Osiek conclude that these two were 'interchangeable', while criticising a lack of precision in some English translations which have rendered διάκονος with a feminine article as 'deaconess'.²¹ The first use of 'deacon' for a woman, and indeed its first use for a Christian office, is the reference to Phoebe in *Romans*.²² The earliest reliably dateable use of 'deaconess' is found in canon 19 of the Council of Nicaea applied to certain non-ordained women among the Paulianists.²³ However, the earliest reference to orthodox deaconesses, is found in *Apostolic Constitutions* where notably this terminology allows them to be distinguished from (male) deacons.²⁴ Whether deacons or deaconesses, such women fulfilled a wide variety of roles, particularly including assisting in the baptism of women and visiting them in their homes.²⁵ While it is the case that the Theodosian Code, recording a decree of c. 390, provides that no one who has not reached the age of sixty shall be admitted a deaconess, an age limit subsequently lowered to forty by the Council of Chalcedon, younger female deacons were ordained.²⁶

¹⁹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 116 n 35; see below for Lampadion's designation.

²⁰ Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church, a Documentary History*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

²¹ Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 8.

²² *Rom.* 16:1.

²³ 325 CE, Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (1758 - 1798), 2.675-78, Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 117-8.

²⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions* 3.11.3; Franz Xaver von Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones apostolorum*, (Paderbornae, in libraria Ferdinandi Schoeningh, 1905) 1.201; Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 111.

²⁵ Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 6-7; Patricia Cox Miller. *Women in Early Christianity* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 62-3; Paul F Bradshaw, 'Deaconess' in Paul F Bradshaw (ed), *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM Press, 2002) 152.

²⁶ Codex Theodosianus XVI.2.27, 'Imppp. Valentinianus, Theodosius et Arcadius aaa. Tatiano praefecto praetorio ... Nulla nisi emensis sexaginta annis ... ad diaconissarum

Despite interchangeability in the early church it is inadvisable to consider the terms 'deacon' and 'deaconess' interchangeable in modern use, for hand-in-hand with specifically feminine terminology, deaconesses increasingly lose any liturgical function and become non-ordained. Thus, by the fifth and sixth centuries the title 'deaconess' was simply given to many female monastic superiors, though Madigan and Osiek are critical of the facile assumption that the term applied to *all* such.²⁷ Further some modern authors have tended to assume that any woman of significance in the early church was a deaconess despite the lack of any real evidence in many of these cases.²⁸ These considerations explain why the title of 'deaconess' has long been attributed to Macrina, a designation never suggested by Gregory or other contemporary author, but which may underlie Maraval's thinking on this point. Certainly, as Silvas comments, Macrina was not a deaconess or deacon as a teenager nor, it appears, at any other time of her life.²⁹

Returning then to Maraval's first two suggested interpretations of the above passage, it is very likely that Macrina received communion daily. Basil recommends daily communion in his letter to the patrician, Caesaria, while admitting that he receives only four times a week. Further, he comments:

For all who live the monastic life in the solitudes, where there is no priest, keep the communion at home and partake of it from their own hands. At Alexandria also and in Egypt, each person, even those belonging to the laity, as a rule keeps the communion in his own home, and partakes of it with his own hands when he so wishes.³⁰

If we were to read the passage as stating that Macrina '*consecrated* her hands to the mystical services', this would lend support to this particular interpretation.

consortium transferatur'; Council of Chalcedon 451 CE, Canon 15, Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 121-2, for Olympias deacon 'in disregard of the canonical age limit' and Maria of Moab deacon aged 38, see Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 46-7 and 83.

²⁷ Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 3.

²⁸ Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 4.

²⁹ And see further discussion of the deacon, Lampadion, below.

³⁰ Roy J Deferrari (trans), *Basil, The Letters*, vol 2, Loeb Classical Library LCL 215 (London: Heinemann, 1928), 144-147.

The second proposal is also possible. Since she, a pious virgin, regularly baked bread, it would be appropriate for her to provide for the Eucharist and this too might be understood as consecrating her hands. Further, it fits more convincingly with the continuation that she provided for her mother 'from what was left over' (ie. The remaining ingredients and/or prepared dough). Maraval's first two suggestions, however, are not mutually exclusive, and indeed, we may add that Macrina would have said her own prayers, and almost certainly helped in organising and leading family prayers, and all these things might have been seen as 'lending her hands to the mystical services.' Macrina thus entered upon an ascetic lifestyle which incorporated worship into active service which continued to develop.

Eventually the young woman persuaded Emmelia to a full ascetic lifestyle.³¹ And in this, mother and daughter were 'occupied solely with meditation on divine things, unceasing prayer, and uninterrupted hymnody which was extended evenly over the whole time throughout night and day.'³² Gregory's 'solely' (μόνη) should not be taken too literally, however, for as he makes clear in the same passage, they lived a life of real equality with their former servants, Emmelia and Macrina thus doing their share of the housework. Emmelia, accustomed to being served, may or may not have been the mother described by Basil in *Letter 46, To a Fallen Virgin*, which describes that virgin's mother as 'struggling by strange and unwonted toils to break with her accustomed life', but the description must surely reflect the situation which Emmelia now voluntarily accepted.³³

6.3 Basil – The Organisation of Ascetic Life.

The monastic foundations which are often styled 'Basilian' (though 'Macrinan' would be more appropriate) are examples of what later became known as 'double-monasteries'. Daniel F. Stramara defines this as a single community in which men and women lived separately under a common rule and with a single superior, stressing that 'despite its name a double monastery is a *single monastic*

³¹ GNO 8/1, 377.24 – 378.8; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 118.

³² GNO 8/1, 382.13-18; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 121-2.

³³ Roy J. Deferrari (trans. & notes), *Saint Basil, The Letters*, vol 1, Loeb Classical Library LCL 190, (London: Heinemann, 1926) 288-9.

unit of men and women.³⁴ It is important to distinguish this style of monastic life from that of a 'mixed' monastery, in which men and women lived together, and from 'twin' monasteries, a pair of nearby but completely separate establishments.³⁵ While this terminology has been criticised by some scholars as unhelpful and inappropriate, and although I add below two concerns specific to the form of monasticism that we are here concerned with, the terminology provides a useful tool on which to base the discussion which follows.³⁶ Although Basil's rules make provision for double monasteries there is nothing to indicate that this pattern must always be the case, single-sex establishments being possible by omitting those rules which regulate the contact and balance between male and female. Nevertheless, the extent of the concern given to rules for double monasteries suggest that these are likely to have been in the majority.

Two passages in the *Life of Saint Macrina* make it clear that in the final, fully-monastic form of Macrina's institution, the men's and women's living quarters were close (probably closer than was the case for twin monasteries) but quite separate. In the first of these, when Gregory arrives to visit his sister just before her death, 'the whole company of men came pouring out of the men's quarters towards us ... while on the women's side the choir of virgins awaited us modestly at the entrance to the church. When the prayer and the blessing were finished, the women, having received the blessing with a gracious bow of the head, turned back and withdrew to their own quarters.'³⁷ Later, Gregory encounters a soldier who tells of a visit with his wife to the Annisa community: 'When we came within that divine abode, I and my yolk-fellow [his wife] separated according to sex during our visit to the philosophers in that place. I went to the men's quarters, governed by your brother, Peter, while she entered within the virgin's quarters to be with the holy one.'³⁸ The first quotation clearly describes three buildings, accommodations for men and women with a single church. 'The impression is,'

³⁴ Daniel F Stramara, 'Double Monasticism in the Greek East, Fourth through Eighth Centuries', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol 6, no. 2, Summer 1998, 269-312, see pp. 271-3 for a discussion of the definition and p. 269 n. 1 for those authors who have provided it.

³⁵ Stramara, 'Double Monasticism', 272-3.

³⁶ Stramara, 'Double Monasticism', 271 and particularly n. 10 for a list of critical authors.

³⁷ GNO 8/1, 388.9-16, trans. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 127.

³⁸ GNO 8/1, 411.2-7, trans. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 146.

Silvas comments, 'that the men's quarters and the women's quarters were on opposite sides of the church.'³⁹ The second quotation suggests that the quarters lay within a single compound, since man and wife entered and *then* separated.

The accommodation of visitors in the latter case draws our attention to an important aspect of Macrinan-Basilian monasticism, its relationship to the wider community. When, in the *Longer Rule*, Basil is asked to compare eremitic and coenobitic lifestyles for monks, he stresses in his response that the solitary life is limited in its ability to love one's neighbour.⁴⁰ A solitary monk might indeed visit the sick but, so engaged, would be unable to receive strangers; and if he spends time distributing the necessities of life to those in need he cannot work to produce these goods.⁴¹ Only as part of a community, Basil argues, can one truly live a Christian life. Lowther Clarke comments on this passage: 'Coenobitism rests in the last resort on this, and not on economic or even spiritual advantages accruing to the individual from the presence of companions.'⁴²

How this concern for the second dominical commandment worked out in practice in an extreme case is recorded in *The Life*. On the occasion of a severe famine (σιτολείψιας χαλεπῆς, literally a severe wasting away of grain), the Annisa community was able to provide food for many living around them.⁴³ At the same time, children exposed to die by the roadside were taken in and cared for, the survivors of these being amongst the mourners at Macrina's death some ten years later.⁴⁴ During the same period, in Caesarea, Basil was using his influence to persuade those who had hoarded grain or money to donate them for the benefit of the poor.⁴⁵

In less generally calamitous circumstances, Basil makes provision for children to be taken into his monasteries at any age. Orphans are to be accepted

³⁹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 127 n. 81.

⁴⁰ LR 7, PG 31.928.25 – 933.41; Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 180-6.

⁴¹ PG 31.929.24-29.

⁴² William Kemp Lowther Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of St Basil* (London: SPCK, 1925) 164, n. 4.

⁴³ GNO 8/1, 384.14-18; the famine is dated c 369 by Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 123 n. 62.

⁴⁴ GNO 8/1, 401.18-22.

⁴⁵ Funeral Oration on Basil the Great: Or. 43.34, *In Laudem Basilii Magni*, PG 36.493-606.

immediately but other must be brought by their parents and handed over in the presence of witnesses. Only when a child's reason is fully developed may he or she make a profession of virginity.⁴⁶ Before that they are to be considered as 'common children of the brotherhood' (κοινὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφότητος), though their living accommodation and meals are to be separate from the adults.⁴⁷

Although the various groups involved – male and female monastics, boys, girls and guests occupied different quarters and eat separately, they would appear to have worshipped together. For Gregory in the quotation above writes of 'the church' and describes how, on the night preceding Macrina's funeral, 'we held an all-night vigil for her', which apparently involved the whole community, without any suggestion of splitting up into separate groups.⁴⁸ Similarly, as we shall see, Basil uses the singular definite article when writing of 'the people' going to 'the house of prayer.'⁴⁹

Though not included by Stramara as part of his definition of double monasteries, it is this sharing of worship which most clearly defines Macrinan-Basilian monasticism as a unity in a single *adelphotēs* (the Greek term having a more clearly inclusive meaning than the English 'brotherhood'), and which distinguishes it from twin monasteries such as those of Pachomius and his sister on opposite banks of the Nile. Margaret Gertrude Murphy interprets Basil's rules, at least those parts referring to both male and female ascetics, as merely regulating the contacts between what were, using Stramara's terminology, twin monasteries.⁵⁰ However, this certainly does not apply to Macrina's establishment at Annisa, and Basil's use of the singular for the *adelphotēs* and 'the house of prayer' clearly envisages the unity of the double monastery.

While Stramara's definition specifies 'a single superior', it is inevitable that the leadership of two groups, in many ways quite separate while in others unified, cannot be so simply defined. And unfortunately, in the case of Basil's foundations, our understanding is somewhat limited by his terminology which is not entirely

⁴⁶ LR Question 15, PG 31.956.16-18, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 199-8.

⁴⁷ PG 31.952.3-33, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 201.

⁴⁸ GNO 406.28-407.2, translation Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 142.

⁴⁹ See below, section 8.4.

⁵⁰ Margaret Gertrude Murphy, *St. Basil and Monasticism* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 2011) 33, 95.

clear. Basil makes use of several terms for monastic leaders, the principal ones being προεστώς (leader, superior) and πρεσβύτερος (elder, senior). Either of these may mean the single superior (at least of the men's section) but they are also used in the plural to denote a group of senior members of the same monastery. Thus, the superiors (προεστῶτες) are warned to give strict attention to anyone working with pride or murmuring and ensure that *the* superior (προεστώς) should deal correctly with the matter.⁵¹ These superiors are presumably the same as the 'pre-eminent ones' (προεχόντες) who are to advise and, if necessary, correct the superior (προεστώς).⁵² Additionally, the plurals may refer to a meeting of heads of monasteries, as in the case of a vacancy in the office of superior of a monastery being chosen by the 'leaders of other brotherhoods' (ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀδελφότησι προεχόντων).⁵³ As they are used in the rules, these masculine words should be taken to include their feminine counterparts. That such positions existed is seen by Basil's use of the corresponding προεστῶσα and πρεσβυτέρα when he feels that the distinction is needed. Thus, LR 33 which regulates contact between men and women advises, when such communication is necessary, 'let selected male elders (πρεσβύτεροι) deliver the message to selected female elders (πρεσβυτέραις).'⁵⁴

Allowing for the flexibility of Basil's terminology, and for the existence of groups of male and female elders whose influence is important, two points clearly emerge. Firstly, each of the two sections of the double monastery is governed by a superior. Secondly, Basil's thinking does not, however, extend to perfect equality between them. Two extracts from the *Shorter Rules* illustrate both of these points.

In the first case, Basil is asked: 'May the male superior speak to a sister of that which builds up the faith, in the absence of the female superior?' (Εἰ χρὴ τὸν προεστῶτα ἐκτὸς τῆς προεστῶσης λαλεῖν ἀδελφῇ τινι τὰ πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς

⁵¹ LR 29, PG 31.992.21-34, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 231.

⁵² LR 27, PG 31.988, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 228.

⁵³ LR 43, PG 31.1029.10-12, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 256.

⁵⁴ LR 33.2, PG 31.997.41-6, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 235.

πίστεως;)⁵⁵ To which he replies that this does not do things in ‘decency and good order’.⁵⁶

In the second example the question is: ‘If the male senior has ordered something to be done among the sisters without the knowledge of the female senior, is the female senior justified in being annoyed?’ (εἰ, τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου γενέσθαι τι προστάξαντος ἐν ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς παρὰ γνώσιν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας, εὐλόγως ἀγανακτεῖ ἡ πρεσβυτέρα;) To this the response is ‘Very much so!’⁵⁷

In both of these cases Basil is concerned to ensure that the status and authority of the female superior needs to be protected against the possibility of being ignored by her male counterpart. There are, however, no corresponding rules forbidding her to interfere in his area. This lack of reciprocity seems to imply that Basil assumes that the overall superior will be the man. It is clear, however, that the eventual organisation at Annisa differed from that envisaged by Basil, in respect of the status of Macrina. Priestly ministry was presumably provided by Peter who was ordained presbyter by Basil, presumably for this purpose and, as Gregory describes it, apparently at the beginning of Basil’s episcopacy.⁵⁸ Additionally, Peter was in charge of the men’s section as is seen in the account of the soldier considered above.⁵⁹

In the case of the women’s section, Gregory tells us: ‘And there was one appointed over the choir (or troop) of virgins, of the rank of the diaconate, whose name was Lampadion.’ (Καὶ ἦν τις προτεταγμένη τοῦ χοροῦ τῆς παρθενίας ἐν τῷ τῆς διακονίας βαθμῷ, Λαμπάδιον ὄνομα αὐτῆς·).⁶⁰ Silvas notes that ‘the term προτεταγμένη is used in the *Asketikon* [of Basil] for an official subordinate to “the one who presides.” It seems therefore that Macrina fulfilled the function of *proestosa* of the combined establishment with Lampadion as her deputy in charge of the women.’⁶¹ Although Silvas, in her translation of *The Life of Saint*

⁵⁵ SR 108, PG 31.1156.32-35, my translation, attempting to preserve the different terminology in both this and the quotation immediately below, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 332-3.

⁵⁶ 1 Cor. 14:40.

⁵⁷ SR 111, PG 31.1157.10-14, my translation, Silvas, *Asketikon*, 334.

⁵⁸ GNO 8/1, 385.16; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 125; this would be c 371 CE, see Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 39.

⁵⁹ GNO 8/1, 410.20 - 411.26; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 146.

⁶⁰ GNO 8/1 402.14-15, my translation.

⁶¹ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 138 and footnote 109.

Macrina, in common with others, applies the title 'deaconess' to Lampadion, Gregory, does not use 'deaconess' in the above quotation. Later, however, he describes her as 'the deacon' (ἡ διάκονος).⁶² Basil uses the same terminology for his letter to 'The Deacons (Διακόνους), Daughters of Count Terentius', and for a female deacon whose case is dealt with in his letter 'To Amphilocius on the Canons'.⁶³ While it is hardly surprising that Gregory and Basil would prefer the term established with scriptural authority, we should note that the inclusive nature of 'deacon' fits well with the generally balanced approach of the *Rules*.

6.4 The Life of Psalmody

Some guide to the later activities of the Annisa community is found in Gregory's *Letter 19*:

She [*Macrina*] dwelt in a remote part of Pontus, having exiled herself from the life of human beings. Gathered around her was a great choir of virgins whom she had brought forth by her spiritual labour-pains⁶⁴ and guided towards perfection through her consummate care, while she herself imitated the life of angels in a human body. With her there was no distinction between night and day. Rather the night showed itself active with the deeds of light⁶⁵ and day imitated the tranquillity of night through serenity of life. The psalmody resounded in her house at all times night and day.⁶⁶

Although Emmelia considered the classical curriculum as particularly unsuitable for girls, she can hardly have thought it appropriate for young boys, so Basil would presumably have experienced the same initial education as his sister, before starting school. It is unsurprising then, that in *Letter 2*, written to Gregory Nazianzen on the subject of the ascetic life, he allocates a central function to psalmody:

The discipline of piety nourishes the soul with divine thoughts. What then is more blessed than to imitate on earth the anthems of angels'

⁶² *GNO* 8/1, 406.10.

⁶³ Basil *Letter* 105, Deferrari (trans), *Basil, The Letters*, vol 2, 198, my translation; *Letter* 199.44, Deferrari, *The Letters* vol 3, 130.

⁶⁴ 1 Cor 4:15, Gal 4:19.

⁶⁵ Rom. 12:12-13, Eph. 5:8.

⁶⁶ *Letter* 19.7-8, *GNO* vol 8/2 62-8; Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, 177.

choirs; to hasten to prayer at the very break of day, and to worship our Creator with hymns and songs; then, when the sun shines brightly and we turn to our tasks, prayer attending us wherever we go, to season our labours with sacred song as food with salt? For that state of the soul in which there is joy and no sorrow is a boon bestowed by the consolation of hymns.⁶⁷

Psalms and singing, it seems were to play an important part in Macrina's funeral. On that occasion, after the all-night vigil, a large number of people from the surrounding areas attended and Gregory describes how he separated the crowd according to sex, putting the women with 'the choir of virgins' (τῷ τῶν παρθένων συγκαταμίξας χορῶ) and the men with 'the order of the monks' (τῷ τῶν μοναζόντων τάγματι).⁶⁸ He then apparently had them practise the singing, for he continues: 'I contrived to produce a single psalmody from each which was both rhythmical and harmonious exactly as from a choir, through the common accordance of all blending in orderly fashion' (μίαν ἐξ ἐκατέρων εὐρυθμόν τε καὶ ἔναρμόνιον καθάπερ ἐν χοροστασίᾳ τὴν ψαλμωδίαν γίνεσθαι παρεσκεύασα διὰ τῆς κοινῆς πάντων συνωδίας εὐκόσμως συγκεκραμένην.)⁶⁹ Silvas translates this as 'I then elicited a single psalmody, rhythmical and harmonious, coming alternatively from either side as in choral singing, and blending beautifully in the common responses.'⁷⁰ Here Silvas over-interprets ἐξ ἐκατέρων as 'coming alternatively from either side', even though alternating verses might indeed be the best way to organise singing by two separated groups in a procession, assuming that all know the words. Further, although Kevin Corrigan agrees with Silvas in translating the last phrase as 'because of the shared responses of all', διὰ τῆς κοινῆς ... συνωδίας can surely only be singular, particularly in a sentence in which Gregory stresses the single nature of the psalmody.⁷¹ Including the laity, presumably less familiar with the psalms, among the monastics would make

⁶⁷ Deferrari, *Letters*, vol 1, 12-13.

⁶⁸ *GNO* 8/1, 407.8-10.

⁶⁹ *GNO* 8/1 407.10-13; my translation

⁷⁰ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 143.

⁷¹ Kevin Corrigan, (trans. with introduction and notes), *The Life of Saint Macrina by Gregory Bishop of Nyssa*, (*Eugene Or: Wipf and Stock*, 2001) 49; The only textual variation noted here in *GNO* is συνοδίας (a journey in company) in three manuscripts.

responsorial singing much the most practicable method but this belongs amongst commentary rather than in translation.

The singing procession then made its way slowly through the press of people to the Church of the Holy Martyrs, which was also the family mausoleum, a distance of about a mile.⁷² Gregory describes how ‘a kind of mystic procession was set in train, the psalmody resounding harmoniously from beginning to end, sung as in the hymnody of the three children.’⁷³

It appears, however, that not all the singing at Annisa was of scriptural passages. Gregory, having decided to visit his sister and finding her bedridden, spent some time with her in the late afternoon of the day before her death, listening as she spoke of religious matters:

As she recounted these things I was yearning for the day to be lengthened so that she might not cease to delight [lit. sweeten] our hearing; but the sound of the singing was calling us to the lamp-lighting thanksgivings (πρὸς τὰς ἐπιλυχνίους εὐχαριστίας), and the great one [Macrina] sent me also to the church, and she withdrew to God with prayer.⁷⁴

The following evening, Gregory was once more with his sister, and he describes how she recited a long prayer, gradually becoming weaker as she did so. He continues:

Meanwhile, evening having overtaken [us] and a light brought in, at once her eyes opened wide, and she looked towards the gleam. It was clear that she was eager also to say the lamp-lighting thanksgiving (τὴν ἐπιλύχνιον εὐχαριστίαν); but, her voice failing her, she accomplished her purpose in her heart and in the movement of her hands, her lips moving together with her inward impulse. And thus, she fulfilled the thanksgiving and, by bringing her hand to her face for the

⁷² GNO 8/1, 407.14 – 408.17. The distance given, of seven or eight *stadia*, being approximately one mile.

⁷³ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 143-4.

⁷⁴ GNO 8,1, 395.1-6, my translation; for full discussion of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving see below chapter 9.

sign [of the cross], she marked the end of her prayer, and, taking a strong, deep breath, ended her life with prayer.⁷⁵

This same thanksgiving is attested by Basil in his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*:

I will add what otherwise would perhaps be [too] trivial to bring up, but because of its antiquity is necessary as testimony against anyone who accuses us of innovation. It seemed good to our fathers not to receive the gift of the evening light in silence, but as soon as it appeared to give thanks. And who the author was of those words of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving (τῆς ἐπιλυχνίου εὐχαριστίας) we are unable to say. The people, however, are accustomed to use the ancient phrase, and no one has ever yet thought them impious who say 'We praise Father, Son and the Holy Spirit of God.'⁷⁶

The expression which Basil and Gregory use is ἡ ἐπιλυχνίος εὐχαριστία, is usually translated as 'the lamp-lighting thanksgiving', although as the first and third of the above examples show, the occasion is the bringing in of already lighted lamps.⁷⁷ This song was not, it seems, a psalm or other scriptural passage since it includes a Trinitarian doxology which Basil suggests is part of the original composition. The possible origins of the ceremony and the nature of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving will be considered in chapter nine..

6.5 A Psalmic Movement

The psalms played an important part in the lives and thoughts of Macrina, Gregory and Basil. At the very end of Macrina's life, Gregory places a prayer which Silvas describes as 'eucharistic' a term relating to its style and structure rather than its content.⁷⁸ One way in which it differs from usual eucharistic prayers is in the extensive use of scriptural quotations, fifteen from the New Testament and fifteen from the Old. Of the latter there are ten quotations from the Book of Psalms including the final prayer that her soul would be received 'as an incense

⁷⁵ GNO 8,1, 398.21-399.9, my translation.

⁷⁶ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 29.73.34-43, PG 32.204-5, my translation.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon press 1961) on ἐπιλυχνίος.

⁷⁸ GNO 8/1, 397.3 – 398.17; English translation: Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 133-5; for the 'eucharistic' nature see Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 133 n. 98.

offering in your sight' from Psalm 140, which Silvas describes as 'the psalm par excellence of evening prayer.'⁷⁹ In the case of Basil, psalm references are numerous throughout his writings including those of an ascetic nature.⁸⁰ It appears that the monastics of Pontus and Cappadocia were part of what James W McKinnon calls the later fourth century 'psalmodic movement', describing that as 'an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for the singing of psalms that swept from east to west through the Christian population in the closing decades of the fourth century.'⁸¹ As the singing of psalms seems to have become a contentious issue, it will be necessary to consider the question of how and where the practice originated. This, however, must be left to a later chapter when the objection to psalms arises.⁸²

In Annisa and Cappadocian then, the double monastery cannot be considered an off-shoot of Egyptian coenobitic monasticism, nor is there any reason to believe that the office of the former should be considered a hybrid of Egyptian with cathedral practices. Instead, domestic asceticism grows into double-monasticism, Macrina's early life of service for the family grows into monastic lives of service for all those in need, and her teen-age psalm singing becomes the psalmody of the Cappadocian daily office.

⁷⁹ Ps 140 (141): 2; *GNO* 8/1, 398.7; Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 135, and see note 103.

⁸⁰ See Clarke, *Ascetic Works of St Basil*, 20 for an analysis of 'formal' quotations in the ascetic works.

⁸¹ James W McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth-Century Psalmodic Movement', *Music and Letters* 75, no. 4 (Nov. 1994) 506.

⁸² Chapter 8.

7. The Times of Prayer

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the regular prayer times which Basil recommends for his ascetics. In the *Longer Rule* he describes a schedule of daily prayer which later became the monastic office in both east and west. This schema, however did not appear *ex-nihilo* in the Basilian monasteries but developed from earlier and simpler ones, which, I shall argue, were initially of a domestic nature. As part of a move to more institutionalised prayer, prayer times increased in number and, despite the sparse nature of the available data, we can see a trend of a general nature emerging in the works of those earlier authors who wrote about prayer times, beginning with Origen. Paul Bradshaw offers a hypothesis as to how Christian daily prayer moved from a three times daily scheme to a five-fold one (with additional prayer at night). Tertullian and Cyprian show this move emerging in the patterns which they promote. The point of origin and paths of transmission cannot be established but the ‘wave’ of this change had probably arrived in Anatolia before the time of Basil, and, as we shall see, influenced other monastics there. Basil and his followers nevertheless add a feature not found elsewhere at an earlier time, prayer ‘as night begins’.

It is, moreover, possible to see that Egyptian desert monasticism is most unlikely to have had real influence on practice in Cappadocia. As we shall see, the development of the daily prayer cycle is driven by a constant desire to balance Paul’s requirement ‘pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5. 17) against a perceived need to establish specific times. With an eye to the goal of establishing the distinctive features of the schedule of daily prayer in Basil’s *Asceticon*, we now turn our attention to those earlier writers.

7.2 Origen

Origen’s *Treatise on Prayer* is addressed to Ambrosius and Tatiana, presumably man and wife, to deal with questions raised by others.¹ It is thus aimed at a lay audience and, as parts of the document are directed to matters at the discretion of the readers, we may assume that it relates to personal or family prayer. On the

¹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 2.1, see Eric George Jay (trans. & commentary), *Origen’s Treatise on Prayer*, (London: SPCK, 1954) 81, notes 1 & 2, for Ambrosius and Tatiana, and see below section 10.2.

subject of prayer times, Origen begins from the Pauline injunction but interprets this as implying prayerful deeds rather than solely words or thoughts: 'the man who links together his prayer with deeds of duty and fits seemly actions with his prayer is the man who prays without ceasing.'² Within this continuous prayerful activity, however, Origen distinguishes 'the part usually called "prayer"' which is 'bound to be performed no less than three times a day', quoting as justification Dan. 6:10: 'Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously.'³ One of these three times, Origen writes, is seen in the story of Peter going up to the rooftop to pray at about the sixth hour. Unfortunately, Origen's continuation then becomes somewhat ambiguous:

[The Sixth Hour] stands in the middle of the three prayers, of which David said before him [Peter]: 'In the morning you will hear my voice, in the morning I will stand before you and look up.' [Ps. 5:3.] And the last [of the three] is shown by 'the lifting of my hands as an evening sacrifice' [Ps. 140:2]. But not even the season of the night shall we properly bring to a conclusion without such prayer, for David says, 'at midnight I rose to give thanks to you because of your righteous judgments.' [Ps. 118: 62.]

It is possible to understand the three psalm quotations above to indicate the three times of prayer as morning, evening and midnight. Alternatively, we might, either consider that Origen, having explained midday prayer on the basis of the story of Peter, uses the psalm quotations to justify *further* times, or else interprets the repeated 'in the morning' of Psalm 5 as two different times, the second being the sixth hour, thus giving three times during the day (in the sense of daylight hours), together with a fourth prayer at night.

This latter interpretation forms the basis of Clifford Dugmore's claim that the above passage requires prayer at the third, sixth and ninth hours (*terce*, *sext* and *none*, collectively 'the little hours' or 'the day hours'), with an additional prayer during the night.⁴ Joan Walker, advocating the same interpretation, comments

² Origen, *De Oratione*, 12.2; PG 11.452; Jay, *Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, 114-5.

³ Origen, *De Oratione*, 12.2; PG 11.452-3; Translation: Jay, *Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, 115.

⁴ Clifford W Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944) 68.

that, although Origen 'does not tie this up with terce, sext and none, there is little doubt from the rest of the context that he had them in mind.'⁵ Jay, however, objects that 'this is to make [Origen] in this section to counsel prayer *four* times a day', and suggests that the three times of prayer are night, noon and in the evening.⁶

Jay it seems, though quoting Origen's instruction as 'not less than three times' (οὐκ ἔλαττον τρίς), nevertheless understands this to mean 'exactly three times'. Moreover, were Origen intending to prescribe the daily scheme which Jay attributes to him, and mentioning the first of these after the other two, having stated that evening prayer was the last, he would surely continue 'and the first ...' Instead, the adversative 'but not even the season of the night' (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὸν τῆς νυκτὸς καιρὸν) suggests that the list of three has been completed and prayer at night is additional.

The passage, however does not completely support the interpretation of Dugmore and Walker either. For despite Walker's claim, there is nothing in the context of either Daniel or Origen to indicate specific times, and the use of Psalm 140:2 suggests an evening rather than mid-afternoon prayer. And, if this is the case, an early morning rather than mid-morning prayer would also seem likely. We must therefore conclude that Origen, though not legislating fixed times, seems to be thinking in terms of noon, evening and probably early morning with additional prayer during the night. Support for this is found in Bradshaw's observation that prayer, morning, noon, evening, and night, would have been the first pattern of daily prayer going back to the early church and 'may have had its roots in an ancient Jewish tradition of praying at the cardinal points of the day which was especially preserved among the Essenes.'⁷ There is, however, no need to posit a connection between the Essenes and the early church. At a time when time telling was necessarily imprecise, the 'cardinal points' of dawn and dusk together with noon would have seemed natural times for prayer as a matter of course, as Tertullian notes (see below), and as also seen in the pagan tradition.⁸

⁵ Joan Hazelden Walker, 'Terce, Sext & None. An Apostolic Custom?' *Studia Patristica*, 5 (1962): 205-21, 209.

⁶ Jay, *Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, 115-6, n. 3. (Jay's italics).

⁷ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 57.

⁸ See above section 4.4.

Where they are used by ancient authors, the terms ‘third’, ‘sixth’ and ‘ninth’ hours should perhaps be better understood as ‘mid-morning’, ‘mid-day’, and ‘mid-afternoon’, these latter being, as Taft points out, the ‘normal points of reference in the ancient world.’ As regards these, ‘little hours’, Walker wishes to claim a ‘truly apostolic origin’ for them, as being introduced into Rome by Peter and Paul. The reasons given for this suggestion are a claim that only in Rome were these hours signalled, and the passion account of Mark’s gospel (Mk. 15: 25,33, 34), also associated with that city. Taft, however, dismisses this hypothesis as ‘unlikely at such an early date.’ Furthermore, as we shall see below, these hours appear to have also been publicly signalled in Carthage and, we may presume, in all major cities at least.

As regards prayer during the night, we should note that, although to the modern reader it may appear that this would be an arduous and particularly ascetic practice added on to the ‘natural’ daylight prayer times for the especially devout, this view does not fit with the world before artificial light. Roger Ekirch, for instance, reviewing ancient, medieval, and modern evidence, argues that prior to the development of artificial light, sleep was divided into two distinct phases by a period of wakefulness lasting approximately one hour, and that this is mankind’s natural pattern of slumber.⁹ While writers such as Ekirch and Craig Koslofsky describe this phenomenon for Western Europe from historical evidence, the experimental studies of Thomas Wehr demonstrate that it is indeed the natural sleep-pattern of humanity.¹⁰ Such a wakeful interlude may well have seemed a natural opportunity for further prayer.

In summary, Origen, writing exhortation for a lay audience rather than legislating church or monastic schedules appears to make no distinction between the dawn-midday-sunset pattern and that of third-sixth-ninth hours. Here he probably reflects general practice, lay Christians possibly interpreting the ‘three times a day’ according to their own convenience. Indeed, Edward Phillips argues that the

⁹ A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night In Times Past*, (New York: Norton, 2006) 308–310; and ‘Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles’, *American Historical Review* 106, 2 (April 2001), 343–86.

¹⁰ Craig Koslofsky, *Evenings' empire: A history of the night in early modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 6; Thomas A Wehr, ‘In Short Photoperiods, Human Sleep is Biphasic’, *Journal of Sleep Research*, Volume 1, Issue 2, (June 1992) 103–107.

tradition of threefold prayer during the day was interpreted in some places as the 'little hours' with the addition of prayer during the night.¹¹ Bradshaw develops this by suggesting that two traditions of prayer: morning, noon, evening, and third, sixth and night hours, existed and were 'later conflated into the fivefold pattern that we first encounter in North Africa.'¹² Two Carthaginian authors seem to show this 'conflation' in action.

7.3 Tertullian

Roughly contemporary with Origen, Tertullian (Carthage, early third century) provides a written account of prayer times which Taft calls 'the first description of what was to become by the end of the fourth century the classic system of Christian daily prayer.'¹³ Like Origen, Tertullian in his tract, *On Prayer*, and the letters *To His Wife*, appears to be writing for a general, primarily lay, audience. In the first of these documents, after a section pointing out that prayer should occur at every time and place, he continues:

Concerning the time [of prayer], the external observance of certain hours will still not be unprofitable. I speak of those common [times] which mark the intervals of the day, the third, sixth and ninth, which are found in scripture to be of greater religious significance. At the third hour the first [gift of] the Holy Spirit was poured out on the assembled disciples.¹⁴ Peter, who experienced the vision of everything common in that small vessel, had gone up to the housetop to pray at the sixth hour.¹⁵ He also, with John, at the ninth hour went to the temple where he restored the health of the paralytic.¹⁶ And although these are simple [statements] without any rule for observance, yet let it be good [enough] to establish some presumption that might enforce the admonition to pray and, as if by law, drag us away from business for a while to such a duty. So that, as we read, Daniel also observed, evidently from the teaching of Israel, we may worship no less than at least three times a day, being the debtors of three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In addition, of course, to the appropriate prayers which, without

¹¹ L. Edward Phillips, 'Daily Prayer in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus', *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol 40 no 2, (Oct, 1989) 389-400.

¹² Paul F Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2002) 176.

¹³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 17-18; Tertullian, *De Oratione*: 25, http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_orat/evans_orat_03latin.htm (accessed 07/07/2015).

¹⁴ Acts 2:15

¹⁵ Acts 10: 9.

¹⁶ Acts 3: 1.

any command for their observation, are due at the coming in of daylight and night.¹⁷

Certain observations on this translation are appropriate:

'External observance' (extrinsecus observatio): Evans notes that 'verbal nouns are to Tertullian quite as much verbs as substantives and naturally enough take a qualifying adverb.'¹⁸ Unfortunately this still leaves a question about the intended meaning of *extrinsecus*. Evans and Bradshaw translate this as 'from extraneous sources', which is unhelpful.¹⁹ Taft, however, while rendering it as 'external', deals with the uncertainty by drawing our attention to a very similar statement in Tertullian's *On Fasting*: 'these three hours, as more marked in human matters, which divide the day, which distinguish business affairs, which *resound publicly*, so also have been more solemn in divine prayers.' (... *tres istas horas ut insigniores in rebus humanis, quam diem distribuunt, quae negotia distinguunt, quae publice resonant, ita et sollemniores fuisse in orationibus diuinis.*)²⁰ Taft is surely correct in suggesting that 'resound publicly' (*publice resonant*) refers to the audible, public signalling of these times, at least in major cities.²¹ Thus *extrinsecus observatio* should perhaps be best understood as 'publically signalled observance' and Tertullian is suggesting that this can be put to good, that is prayerful, use by Christians.

'Found in scripture to be of greater religious significance' (sollemniores): both Evans and Bradshaw translate this as 'found in the scriptures to be in established use.'²² There is, however, nothing in the passages from Acts to indicate that these were recognised and established Jewish prayer times. Taft offers the alternative translation of 'more solemn', which Evans admits as a possibility, and which signifies 'of greater religious significance.'²³

¹⁷ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, 25; my translation. Compare: Ernest Evans (ed. and trans.), *Tertullian's Tract, On the Prayer*, (London: SPCK 1953) 34; Paul F Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 50; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 18-19.

¹⁸ Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*, 60.

¹⁹ Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*, 35; Paul F Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 50.

²⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 18-19; Tertullian *On Fasting* 10.3; 'De ieiunio adversus psychicos', http://www.tertullian.org/latin/de_ieiunio.htm (accessed 07/07/2015), my translation and emphasis.

²¹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 19; Walker, 'Terce, Sext & None', 209.

²² Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*, 35, 60; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 50.

²³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 17; Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*, 60.

'*Appropriate prayers*' (*legitimis orationibus*): this phrase cannot mean 'statutory prayers' as both Evans and Taft have it, since not only is it followed immediately by 'without any command for their observation' (*sine ullius observationis praecepto*), but the previous section begins with the words: 'concerning the times of prayer no rules at all have been laid down, except to pray at every time and place' (*de temporibus orationis nihil omnino praescriptum est, nisi plane omni in tempore et loco orare*).²⁴ Taft adds the suggestion that we should 'accept without hesitation the customary interpretation' that the reference is to Exodus (29: 38-41; 30: 7-8) and Numbers (28: 3-8) which specify temple sacrifices at these times.²⁵ If Tertullian intends this, however, it is curious, that he first tells us that there are 'no rules at all laid down', and, though he quotes the story of Daniel to justify prayer at the third, sixth and ninth hours, omits any reference to the passages of Exodus or Numbers, either here or elsewhere in *On Prayer*. Bradshaw's translation, 'obligatory prayers', is perhaps slightly better, but it nevertheless suggests that Tertullian is contradicting himself.²⁶ However, *legitimus* might be understood as 'right, fit, proper, or appropriate', so the best understanding may be that Tertullian simply regards these two as appropriate times for prayer.²⁷ The greater emphasis in the above passage falls on prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, but we should not let this blind us to the possibility that Tertullian, perceiving no need to argue for worship at dawn and dusk, which he sees as well-established, is promoting the 'little hours' as additional times. Not all regular prayer is included here, furthermore, for in the second letter *To His Wife*, writing of the difficulties faced by a Christian woman with an unbelieving husband, he points out that she will not be unnoticed when she rises to pray during the night.²⁸ Again, Tertullian appears to regard such night prayers as so well established as to need no further justification.

²⁴ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, 2; Evans, *Tertullian's Tract*, 34-5; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 18.

²⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 18.

²⁶ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 50.

²⁷ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, 5th edn, (London: Cassell, 1987) on *legitimus*.

²⁸ Tertullian, *To his Wife II*, 5:3.

7.4 Cyprian

If Tertullian were writing to commend a recent introduction of the 'little hours' as additional prayer-times he would seem to have succeeded, as by the middle of the century, Cyprian writing *On the Lord's Prayer* (Carthage, c. 250 CE) describes a scheme of daily prayer which he appears to give priority to the prayer at the third, sixth and ninth hours, though recommending prayer at dawn and dusk also.²⁹ Cyprian, citing the stories of Daniel and the three young men praying three times a day, claims that this indicates the third, sixth and ninth hours as 'established and proper' (*statutis et legitimis*) times for prayer, and that they were long recognised and observed in Judaism.³⁰ There is, however, nothing in the book of Daniel to identify at which three times he prayed, and as we have seen above, Origen seems to have interpreted this passage differently.

To the Daniel story, however, Cyprian adds the passages from Acts referring to the third and sixth hours (though not the ninth) and introduces the Markan passion account to endorse the sixth and ninth hours (Mk. 15:33-4), curiously omitting the reference to the crucifixion beginning at the third hour (Mk. 15: 25). He also sees these three hours as prefiguring the Trinity (*sacramento scilicet Trinitas*).³¹ And, with the three hour gaps between them, these become a trinity of trinities (ignoring the last three hours of a twelve hour day).

If Cyprian indeed saw the third, sixth and ninth hours as the primary ones established by scripture, then his subsequent observations would seem to suggest that he considers prayer at sunrise and dusk to be more recent and additional. 'For us,' he says 'both the times and the obligations for prayers have increased' (*Sed nobis ... orandi nunc et spatia et sacramenta creverunt*).³² Sunrise symbolizes the resurrection, and he further justifies prayer at sunrise and sunset by the use of light imagery for Christ, adding that, as Christ is true sun and true day (*in Scripturis sanctis sol verus et dies verus est Christus*), Christians

²⁹ Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 34-35; PL 4.541-544; and see: Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 19-21; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 52; Alexander Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen On the Lord's Prayer*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004) 90-93.

³⁰ Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 34; see Dan 6: 10, 13.

³¹ Sacramentum: 'a figure', Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen*, 90; 'a symbol', Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 52.

³² Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 35; my translation, and see the translations In Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen*, 91; and Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 52.

must pray at all times. He then extends this argument to commend prayer during the night: 'Having in the Kingdom, day alone, without interruption of night, so let us keep vigil at night, as though in the light' (*Habituri in regno sine interventu noctis solum diem, sic nocte quasi in lumine vigilemus*).³³

We see here examples which support Bradshaw's suggestion of the conflation of two earlier schemes. But, while Tertullian appears to be writing of the prayer of an individual or family, it may be that Cyprian, as bishop, was concerned with a cathedral office. For even if his exhortations were directed at laity, he would surely expect clergy, including himself, to lead by example. Further his view of particular prayer times as obligations suggests a formalisation of lay prayer even though he might recognise that laity might not be able to attend all five of the synaxes he is promoting. One thing, however, is clear: neither of the Carthaginian authors writes of a monastic office. And despite the somewhat prescriptive nature of the texts cited, we should not assume that they refer only to prayer in common, with private prayer being a distinct, individual concern. Indeed, such a distinction is inappropriate in the first three Christian centuries. 'Christians prayed. Whether they did it alone or in company depended not on the nature of the prayer, but on who happened to be around when the hour for prayer arrived.'³⁴ Indeed, we shall see that Basil's view was that prayer at specified times was always communal even when performed by individuals separated from the main body.³⁵

Although very similar schemes of daily prayer were recommended by these writers, Taft notes that the evidence 'though not disparate, is diverse enough to exclude any facile attempt to harmonize it into one system or horarium without doing violence to the facts.'³⁶ It is also sufficiently diverse for us to conclude that no single tradition underlies it except the general desire to commemorate the common scriptural quotations.

Of course, Carthage is a long way from Cappadocia and even from Alexandria, the furthest west that Basil seems to have reached in his travels in search of Eustathius of Sebaste. Not only can there be no suggestion that Tertullian, or anyone else in Carthage, was responsible for the conflation, but there is no

³³ Cyprian, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 35, my translation.

³⁴ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 29.

³⁵ See sections 6.5,6 below.

³⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 27; *horarium*, the daily schedule of prayer.

question of either of these two North African writers being a direct influence on Basil. While the data is too sparse for a formal application of the wave model, the facts are, nevertheless that the infrastructure of empire meant that people travelled, particularly senior churchmen and those of the laity that were affluent, educated, and thus influential. Documents, and indeed ideas, travelled, from hand-to-hand and from mouth-to-mouth, further than people. Within this setting, Origen, Tertullian and Cyprian provide evidence for variety in daily prayer in the early church, variety which is further attested by the church order known as *Apostolic Constitutions*.

7.5 Apostolic Constitutions

This church order derives from *The Didache*, *The Didascalia*, and *The Apostolic Tradition*, 'collected re-worked and expanded along with other material'.³⁷ As regards dating, 'it is generally accepted that it originated in Syria, and most probably in Antioch, between 375 and 380. It is unlikely to be much earlier than that, because it includes a reference to the feast of Christmas, which was only just beginning to make an appearance in eastern churches, and it is unlikely to be later, because its doctrine of the Holy Spirit is incompatible with the definition agreed at the Council of Constantinople in 381.'³⁸ It is the earlier of these datings which is important for us, for Anna Silvas dates 'the first edition of an expanded *Asketikon*', that is the first version of the *Longer Rule*, to the early 370s, with a further revision in 375.³⁹ She goes on to suggest that additional changes were then made in 376 to counter the Pneumatomachians, and one of these which has particular relevance to the passage to be considered below.⁴⁰ In *LR* 37 we find a reference to 'the glory of God and of his Christ', a phrase which occurs in the prologue to *LR*, with the addition of 'and of the worshipful and Holy Spirit'.⁴¹ Since

³⁷ Paul F Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, Alcuin Club and Group for the Renewal of Worship, Joint Liturgical Study 80 (Norwich: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 2015) 20.

³⁸ Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, 21; Marcel Metzger (traduction et notes), *Les constitutions apostoliques: introduction, texte critique*, v. 1, Sources chrétiennes 320, 329, 336 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985-87) 58-60; W Jardine Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students*, Alcuin Club and Group for Renewal of Worship, Joint Liturgical Studies 13-14 (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1990) 6-7.

³⁹ Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 2-3.

⁴⁰ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 3.

⁴¹ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 153-4, 247; and see final paragraph of the translation below.

LR 37 lacks the anti-pneumatomachian phrase, it appears that, at the very latest, it was composed as part of the 375 revision. Thus, *Apostolic Constitutions* is clearly too late to have had any direct influence on the prayer schedule of Basil or his monastics. The value of this document lies in its derivation from earlier church orders which may have influenced Cappadocian practices.

The composite nature of *Apostolic Constitutions* is quite clearly seen in those sections which specify times for daily prayer:

Firstly, in a passage deriving from the *Didache*, the Lord's Prayer is quoted, with the addition of a concluding doxology, together with the instruction: 'pray in this manner three times a day.'⁴²

Another, quite separate, section, however, urges the bishop to require his people, both clergy and laity, to attend church for prayer, morning and evening every day.⁴³ This seen as of particular importance on Saturday and Sunday: 'Above all on the Sabbath day and on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of the Lord, be even more diligent to assemble together.'⁴⁴ Although book eight of *Apostolic Constitutions* requires prayer six times a day (described immediately below), it also specifies the structure and texts of morning and evening prayer, while book seven gives morning and evening hymns.⁴⁵ These passages will be examined in greater detail below and in the chapters on morning and evening prayer.

Yet another specification of prayer times occurs in book eight, where six occasions for daily prayer are prescribed, the passage concentrating on the justification for them without describing their content:

Offer your prayers in the morning, at the third hour, at the sixth, at the ninth, in the evening. and at cockcrow. In the morning give thanks that the Lord has sent you light, chasing away, the night, and bringing on the day. At the third hour because at that [hour] the Lord received the sentence [of condemnation] from Pontius Pilate. At the sixth, because at that hour he was crucified. At the ninth because all the things were shaken at the crucifixion of the Lord, horrified at the temerity of the impious Jews, unable to bear the injury offered to the Lord. In the even-

⁴² *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.24.1-2, books, chapters and verses here and below are references to Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques*; Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions* 52-3, from whom translations are taken; and see *Didache* 8.33.

⁴³ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 2.59.1-4, Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions* 53-4.

⁴⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.59.1-4, Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions* 54.

⁴⁵ *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.35-39, 7.47-48.

ing, giving thanks that he has given you the night to rest from the labours of the day. At cockcrow, because that hour brings the good news of the coming of the day, for the performance of the works of light.⁴⁶

Grisbrooke sees this as an adaption of a corresponding passage in *The Apostolic Tradition*, though the symbolism attached to the times differ between these two documents.⁴⁷ However, it has to be acknowledged that *The Apostolic Tradition* is itself a composite work, available now only in translations but with a presumed 'original' Greek text which survives only in fragments.⁴⁸ Thus we cannot be certain that some earlier version did not attach to the various hours symbolisms similar to those in *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Metzger uses the above three passages as part of the evidence demonstrating the composite nature of the document, noting that the compiler has made no attempt to harmonize the various sources.⁴⁹ Grisbrooke, however, comments that such harmonization is unnecessary as 'taken together, they harmonize with one another well enough of their own accord.'⁵⁰ He would seem to be suggesting that it is possible to read these passages as indicating relative importance within an overall scheme: anyone wishing to use the order as a guide to daily prayer would see that six times are expected, on three of these occasions (at least) the Lord's Prayer is to be said, while two occasions, morning and evening are particularly important, requiring church attendance. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the compiler makes no attempt to indicate this, nor even to link the three passages. This inevitably raises the question as to whether this (and other church orders) should be regarded as 'descriptive or prescriptive', either of these choices raising further questions.⁵¹ In particular we may ask, was it ever expected that anyone would use the order as a guide to daily prayer? Indeed, Metzger stresses the importance to the work of preserving received tradition rather than either of the above aims.⁵² As Grisbrooke puts it, 'the primary purpose of AC is the preservation of existing traditions concerning various ecclesiastical institutions', adding, 'he was concerned not to reconcile divergent passages, nor to eliminate

⁴⁶ *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.34.1-7; Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 53.

⁴⁷ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 53.

⁴⁸ Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, 16-17, 35-40.

⁴⁹ Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques*, vol 1, 33.

⁵⁰ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 52.

⁵¹ See Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, 55-8 for a full discussion.

⁵² Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques*, vol 1, 49.

repetitions but to retain them if they were part of the traditional material he had inherited.⁵³ Bradshaw concludes that ‘it seems impossible to imagine that this church order was ever intended to serve practical ends.’⁵⁴

However, the answers to these questions need not concern us for, as we shall see, Basil produces a scheme of daily prayer similar, but not identical, to that of *Apostolic Constitutions* book 8. And this scheme is quite clearly intended to be prescriptive and, almost certainly, as Basil suggests in his explanation, also descriptive. However, the accepted dating of *Apostolic Constitutions* makes it most unlikely that Basil consulted it when he, in collaboration with his monastic followers, arranged their own daily prayer times. Further, although the putative Greek original of *The Apostolic Tradition*, predating the *Constitutions*, would have been early enough, there is no need to assume its *direct* influence on Basil’s thinking.

Additionally, as mentioned above, *Apostolic Constitutions* offers three sections giving information on the liturgical content of the office when people assemble, and which provide an understanding of the type of worship involved in the morning and evening cathedral office, although we do not know where and when, or indeed if, they were used. We consider these passages here in order to situate them in their separate and disconnected contexts.

Firstly, book two, in specifying morning and evening prayer (above) instructs: ‘assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing and praying in the house of the Lord, saying in the morning the sixty-second psalm, and in the evening the one hundred and fortieth.’⁵⁵ Secondly, book seven, chapters 47-9 provide hymns of praise for use in morning and evening worship. These chapters, however, are found in only six manuscripts belonging to three manuscript families.⁵⁶ The morning hymn is close to the ‘Great Doxology’ (*Gloria in excelsis Deo*), and in the case of one of these manuscript families, very close indeed.⁵⁷ The evening hymn is a short passage along similar lines, to which is

⁵³ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 6.

⁵⁴ Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, 54.

⁵⁵ *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.59.2, trans. Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 54.

⁵⁶ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 57 n. 2.

⁵⁷ *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.47.1-3, trans. Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 56-7.

appended the *Nunc dimittis*.⁵⁸ Grisbrooke notes that 'The text of this hymn is quoted by St. John Chrysostom, and has remained in use.'⁵⁹ Thirdly, book eight gives fuller descriptions of morning and evening prayer.⁶⁰ These specify, in each case, an introductory psalm, prayers over various groups (such as catechumens) before they are dismissed, a litany (in the modern sense) and prayers of blessing by the bishop over the people.

Thus, *Apostolic Constitutions*, once again, displays internal inconsistencies which the compiler makes no attempt to reconcile. This calls into question, therefore, deductions based on later attempts at reconciliation. Thus, we may say no more than that the source for the morning and evening hymns of praise quoted in book seven would seem to have been influential, since both hymns appear in later use. In book eight, however, there is no mention of, or place for, them. Also, Taft and Grisbrooke assume that the 'lamp-lighting psalm' and 'morning psalm' mentioned in book eight are psalms 140 (141) and 62 (63) as specified in book two.⁶¹ This may be judged to be likely on the grounds that these two later became, in Grisbrooke's words, 'the classic morning and evening psalms'.⁶² There is no certainty, however, that either the original author (or editor) of what became book eight, or the compiler of *Apostolic Constitutions* intended this. Further, since *Apostolic Constitutions* is clearly *not* a record of what was done in any particular church, there is no justification for Grisbrooke's additional remark that these two psalms 'would appear to be at this time the only psalms in the morning and evening offices at Antioch'. Consequently, although this document adds to our understanding of the variety of practices around daily prayer, and although it points to earlier sources which might have influenced the Cappadocians, evidence for actual influence is far too insubstantial.

7.6 The Desert Monastic Office of Upper Egypt

At this point we must take into account the influence which has been attributed to desert monasticism. I have argued above that the monasticism of the Egyptian

⁵⁸ *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.48.1-4, Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 57, Lk. 29-32.

⁵⁹ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 57 n. 1.

⁶⁰ *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.35.1 - 37.7, 8.38.1 - 39.5, Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 58-61.

⁶¹ Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 58, 60; Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition, (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 42-3, 50-1.

⁶² Grisbrooke, *Liturgical Portions*, 54 n. 2.

desert had little or no influence on the ideals or organisation of the monastic projects of Macrina and Basil.⁶³ In this section, we shall see, by the examination of the prayer practices of desert monasticism, that their influence on the daily office of these Anatolians has also been seriously overestimated by modern writers.⁶⁴

Little, if anything, is known of the prayer of the desert solitaries. McKinnon, however, summarises what is claimed:

the desert monks embraced it [the Pauline command of *Thessalonians* 5:17] with simple literateness. They sought to maintain a constant sense of the divine presence, a meditative state nourished by prayer, manual labour, fasting and, not least psalmody. The type of psalmody they employed was a particularly effective device for such a purpose: it was psalmody 'in course', or 'continuous' psalmody, that is, the recitation at one sitting of large proportions of the Psalter in order, and occasionally the entire psalter from beginning to end.⁶⁵

It is not clear how McKinnon intends us to understand his use of 'sitting' here. There is furthermore, no clear evidence that these monks recited psalmody in course, or used the entire Psalter, even 'occasionally'. Nevertheless, the very general nature of this description may be accepted as, at least, likely. In the early fourth-century some desert monks began to follow what can truly be called an 'office', as part of the coenobitic monasticism of Pachomius.⁶⁶

We might expect Cyprian's increase in 'times and obligations' to be most marked amongst monks. An examination of the rules of Pachomius, however, shows that his followers maintained a much simpler system of formal, communal prayer until the early fifth century, presumably because they regarded continuous personal prayer as the mainstay of monastic life. Some of this communal worship appears to have taken place in the 'houses' into which the monastery was divided. According to Jerome in the preface to his translation, a Pachomian monastery consisted of thirty to forty houses, each house, of about forty brothers, being presided over by a master, and small groups of three or four houses being

⁶³ Chapter 5.

⁶⁴ James W McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth-Century Psalmody Movement', *Music and Letters*, vol 75 no. 4 (Nov. 1994) 505-521; Juan Mateos, 'The Origins of the Divine Office', *Worship*, 41 (October 1967) 477-85; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 66-72.

⁶⁵ McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism', 506.

⁶⁶ c. 320 CE, Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 57-73; McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism', 507.

associated as a 'tribe'.⁶⁷ These numbers may, however, be a little exaggerated with, for instance, perhaps twenty or more monks in a house.⁶⁸ The house-masters rendered a weekly account of activities to 'the father of the monastery', and an overall superior resided at the monastery of Phbow.⁶⁹

The rules of Pachomius are divided into four parts: *Precepts* (by far the largest), *Precepts and Institutes*, *Precepts and Judgements*, and *Precepts and Laws*, primarily available in a Latin translation by Jerome.⁷⁰ Vielleux is unfortunately somewhat inconsistent about Jerome's source, offering alternative explanations that, 'Jerome translated [the rules] from a Greek translation made for him', and 'A Greek translation probably existed at a very early period for the use of Greek speaking monks ... St Jerome had a copy in his hands in 404, when he made the Latin version.'⁷¹ The original Coptic version is no longer extant but some Coptic fragments exist along with Greek *Excerpta*, and these are useful in assessing the accuracy of Jerome's work. There are also Ethiopian versions, but Vielleux dismisses these as translations of a different work (Palladius' *Rule of the Angel*), or a 'not always faithful' translation of the Greek *Excerpta*, or a late compilation, 'devoid of real value.'⁷² As regards authenticity, Vielleux notes that there can be no certainty about how much of the documents originated with Pachomius himself, as opposed to being later developments.⁷³ The four series of rules were intended for different purposes, he argues, and were 'parallel texts which evolved at the same time in different contexts.'⁷⁴ Rousseau, concerned with practice in the time of Pachomius himself, also stresses the misleading effects of later elements found in the *Rules*, but nevertheless maintains that it is possible to extract 'the essentials ... as Pachomius first defined them.'⁷⁵ To these four Pachomian texts may be added the *Regulations of Horsiesios*, a successor of Pachomius who

⁶⁷ Jerome, *Preface*, 2; Armand Vielleux (trans.), *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2: *Pachomian Chronicles and Rules*. (Kalamazoo, Mi: Cistercian Publications, 1981) 142.

⁶⁸ Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius, The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 79.

⁶⁹ Jerome, 'Preface', 6-7 in Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 143.

⁷⁰ Armand Vielleux (trans.), *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 7-13. Together with the *Regulations of Horsiesios* (see below), these are referenced, following the abbreviations of Vielleux, as *Pr.*, *Inst.*, *Jud.*, *Leg.* and *Hors. Reg.*

⁷¹ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 8 & 9.

⁷² Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 9.

⁷³ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 10-11.

⁷⁴ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 10.

⁷⁵ Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 77-86, quotation from p. 78.

became overall superior in 346 CE.⁷⁶ The attribution of these rules to Horsiesios is, however uncertain.⁷⁷ Despite these difficulties in establishing texts and authorship, it may, for our purposes, however, be sufficient to note that Vielleux concludes that the available texts of the above documents 'are witnesses to the state of [Pachomian] regulation at the end of the fourth century.'⁷⁸ Curiously, for documents which legislate for many things in a level of detail which may sometimes seem over-precise to a modern reader, the times and content of communal prayer are not the subject of systematic regulation. Rather they seem to be assumed to be known, and must thus be inferred from those regulations which describe associated matters.

The prayer meeting (*synaxis*) most often mentioned in the rules is that of 'The Six Prayers' in the evening. The literal translation from the Coptic is 'the Six Times of Prayer', but Vielleux argues that a more accurate rendition should be 'the Six Sections of Prayer', formed around the reading or recitation of six scriptural passages.⁷⁹ Certainly the way the expression is used does appear to refer to a single prayer meeting divided into sections, as for instance, 'The one who arrives late for one of the Six Prayers at evening, or does not recite, or laughs or talks, shall do penance in his house during the Six Prayers.'⁸⁰ This rule and those immediately following it seem to refer to meetings for the Six Prayers taking place in separate houses.⁸¹ This is not completely certain, however. Thus, although Pr. 122 instructs: 'Sitting in their houses, they shall not speak ... but they shall reflect on the words spoken by the housemaster', it might be taken to indicate that there is a general *synaxis*, followed by a dispersal to houses where housemasters comment on the scripture reading previously heard. Wherever held, this *synaxis*, of 'The Six Prayers', with associated homilies from housemasters is to be the last action of the day, followed by sleep.⁸² Certainly, the Six Prayers are not only said in houses, for other rules show that evening prayer in the houses is expected to follow a model established for a meeting of the entire monastery: 'Assembled in

⁷⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 63.

⁷⁷ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 11-12.

⁷⁸ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 13.

⁷⁹ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 191, note on Pr. 121.

⁸⁰ Pr. 121; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 164.

⁸¹ Pr. 121-6. Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 164.

⁸² Pr. 126.

their houses they shall do the Six Prayers in the evening, according to the rule of the assembly', and, 'to make the Six Evening Prayers after the pattern of the major *synaxis* in which all the brothers are assembled together, is a great delight.'⁸³

There was also to be prayer in the morning.⁸⁴ This took place, not at cockcrow 'but at the normal hour of the morning service in the cathedral usage', that is, at dawn.⁸⁵ Again this appears to be 'in individual houses', although Vielleux points out that it is not entirely certain whether this expression refers to the corporate prayers or the discussion on the housemasters' instruction which follows.⁸⁶ That such instruction is done by housemasters, however, once more suggests that the former should be understood. Additionally, there is a single reference which seems to move morning prayer to midday: 'Without the order of the superior of the monastery the weekly server ... shall not be able to give the signal for [the brothers] to gather whether for the midday *synaxis* or for the evening *synaxis* of the Six Prayers. Since the concluding phrase, beginning 'whether', is not found in the Greek *Excerpta*, Vielleux concludes that it is 'probably a gloss of Jerome.'⁸⁷

Vielleux continues the above note by observing that 'There was a *synaxis* of all the brothers of the monastery in the morning and a celebration called the 'Six Prayers' in the individual houses in the evening. Whether there was another assembly of all the brothers of the monastery in the evening, possibly after the ninth hour, is doubtful. If there was one it was perhaps the celebration that Jerome calls *collecta meridiana*.' It seems, however, much more likely that there was a major *synaxis* of all the brothers for the Six Prayers in the late evening, presumably on Sunday and possibly also Saturday which was replaced by a similar gathering in individual houses on weekdays. There was also a gathering in houses for daily morning prayer which may have been replaced by a major *synaxis* on Sundays. As to the content of these prayer gatherings, the only mention of singing psalms is with reference to the major Sunday *synaxes*. Both Rousseau and Taft interpret this as indicating that psalm singing, the essence of

⁸³ Inst. 14, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 171 and Leg. 10, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 182.

⁸⁴ Pr. 19, 24, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 148, 149.

⁸⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 63; Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 80.

⁸⁶ Pr. 19, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 148 and associated note p. 186.

⁸⁷ Pr. 23, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 149 and note 186.

continuous individual praise, occurred communally only on Sundays, but note the comments immediately below.⁸⁸ Thus, the rules for the major *synaxis* require that: without the order of the house-master in charge of the weekly service, ‘no one shall come from another house of the same tribe to sing psalms;⁸⁹ only the housemaster and ‘elders of some reputation’ are permitted to sing psalms on Sunday;⁹⁰ anyone ‘missing when one of the elders is chanting, that is, reading the psalter’ is to undergo penance;⁹¹ and, also apparently intended for the major *synaxis*, ‘If it happens that, during the psalmody or the prayer or in the midst of a reading, anyone speaks or laughs, he shall unfasten his belt immediately and with neck bowed down and hands hanging down he stand before the altar and be rebuked by the superior of the monastery.’⁹² However, while these rules certainly provide the *regulation* of psalm singing required for a *synaxis*, of six-hundred or more monks, the absence of such regulation for a house of twenty or so does not mean that psalms were not used. Further, the two rules cited above, suggesting that the weekday observance of the Six Prayers in individual houses should be according to the ‘rule’ or ‘pattern’ of the major *synaxis*, question the certainty of such an assertion. The possibilities that psalms, though used on Sunday, might not be thought of as part of the pattern, or that the above rules were an attempt to encourage the use of psalms on weekdays, mean that a firm conclusion on this point cannot be reached. Clearly, however, the Sunday *synaxis* involved psalmody, prayers, and readings, and the evening ‘Six Sections of Prayer’ may each have been a psalm, a reading and a prayer. Additionally, ‘instructions’ were given, two or three times a week by the father of the monastery or housemasters.⁹³

The *Regulations of Horsiesios*, while not contributing to the matter of prayer times, nevertheless establish some details of worship practices. The author, who may

⁸⁸ Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 80; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 65; Paul F Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009) 110.

⁸⁹ Pr. 15, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 147.

⁹⁰ Pr. 16, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 148.

⁹¹ Pr. 17, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 148. Vielleux adds in a note (p. 186 on Pr. 17) that the explanation, ‘that is, reading the psalter’, missing from the Greek texts, is probably added by Jerome; pointing out further that it is not clear if ‘chanting’ (ψάλλειν, *psallere*) means chanting, singing generally, or singing psalms.

⁹² Pr. 8, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 146.

⁹³ Pr. 20. Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 148 & note p. 186; *Inst.* 15, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 171 & note 193.

for convenience be referred to as Horsiesios, begins this part of the regulations by exhorting, 'Let us give heed with exactness to the canons of prayer.'⁹⁴ Vielleux comments that 'Horsiesios is referring to some well-known canons concerning the times of prayer', presumably now unknown.⁹⁵ However, it is not clear that these canons were about *times* of prayer, either exclusively or indeed at all. Indeed, the expression may refer to the regulations which Horsiesios is about to state. He goes on to write, 'whether at the *synaxis* or at the Six Sections, or in our houses, or anywhere, whether in the fields or in the community. Wherever we are, even while walking along the road, we must pray to God ... our hands outstretched in the form of the cross, uttering the prayer written in the Gospel.'⁹⁶ If indeed the canons are concerned with times of prayer, this would seem to instruct that those away from the community at the established times should join in, even though restricting their participation to the Lord's Prayer.⁹⁷ However, as we have seen, the Pachomian regulations are for two communal prayer times at dawn and dusk, and the only times monks are away from the monastery, and possibly 'walking along the road', being between these two, so this conjecture should be dismissed.

The practice of prayer at a *synaxis* is described in the following regulations, and may be summarised as follows (with inferred details in parentheses):

All make the sign of the cross on their foreheads.⁹⁸

At a given signal all rise for prayer. No details are given so it is not clear if this is communal and said by a leader, or private.⁹⁹

At a signal to kneel, all prostrate themselves for adoration and penitential prayer. (Horsiesios quotes Psalm 95 (94): 6 at this point so the brothers may have been expected to pray this silently).

They rise, make the sign of the cross (on the forehead) and say the Lord's Prayer (with arms outstretched), and the penitential theme continues with a single-sentence prayer and two psalm quotations.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Hors. Reg. 6, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 198.

⁹⁵ Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 220, note on Hors. Reg. 6.

⁹⁶ Hors. Reg. 6, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 199.

⁹⁷ See Basil's similar instruction below sections 6.5-6.

⁹⁸ Hors. Reg. 7, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 199.

⁹⁹ Hors. Reg. 8, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 199.

¹⁰⁰ Hors. Reg. 9, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 199. Pss 19(18): 13-14 and 51(50): 10.

At a further signal they sit, signing themselves on the forehead again, for a scripture reading.¹⁰¹

Taft suggests that this constitutes 'a liturgical unit', repeated a number of times (presumably six in the evening).¹⁰² He, therefore, begins the sequence with a scriptural reading. However, Horsiesios says, 'At the beginning of our prayers let us sign ourselves with the seal of baptism. Let us make the sign of the Cross on our foreheads,' expanding on the nature of the sign before continuing, 'When the signal is given for prayer, let us rise promptly...'¹⁰³ That is, the sequence begins with the sign of the Cross and prayers. It is entirely possible, nevertheless, that after the final reading the *synaxis* concluded with prayers in the above form. As we shall see, similar practices seem to have extended beyond these Tabennesiot communities.¹⁰⁴

As discussed above, there was generally much concern about monks who did not work.¹⁰⁵ And, since Basil's description of the prayer schedule for his monastics, considered below, emerges from a need to answer questions about the balance of prayer and work, it will be appropriate to note the policy of the Pachomian monasteries in this respect. Firstly there are various rules which make it clear that the monks are expected to work as a matter of course. Thus 'after morning prayer, the weekly server on whom this work is enjoined shall ask the superior of the monastery about the various things he believes necessary and about when they ought to go out to work in the fields.'¹⁰⁶ However, we find that they are also expected to work during communal worship. A new entrant to the monastery is warned that, on entering the *synaxis* room, 'he should not tread on the rushes which have been dipped in water in preparation for the platting of ropes.'¹⁰⁷ During the readings and prayers, '[you shall not] sit idle in the *synaxis*, but with a quick hand you shall prepare ropes for the warps of mats, although exception is made for the infirmity of the body to which leave may be given for rest. ... Let no one look at another twisting ropes or praying: let him rather be

¹⁰¹ Hors. Reg. 10, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 200

¹⁰² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 64-5.

¹⁰³ Hors. Reg. 7-8, Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 199.

¹⁰⁴ Tabennesiot: a Pachomian monk from Tabennesi, the first Pachomian foundation.

¹⁰⁵ Section 5.3.

¹⁰⁶ *Pr.* 24; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 149.

¹⁰⁷ *Pr.* 4; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 145.

intent on his own work with eyes cast down.’¹⁰⁸ Thus there was certainly no question of idleness in the Pachomian foundations.

We shall see that there is little similarity between the office of these establishments and there is no evidence that Basil had any contact with them. In addition to the Pachomian monasteries of the Thebaid, however, there were monastic centres further north in Lower Egypt, and it is claimed that it was these that Basil visited.¹⁰⁹

7.7 The Desert Monastic Office of Lower Egypt – The Evidence of Cassian

Some knowledge of the practices of these northern monasteries is provided by John Cassian who, after some early experience in Palestine, spent some time at the monasteries of Lower Egypt from the early 380’s to c. 400 before writing his *Institutes* and *Conferences* for monasteries founded in Marseilles.¹¹⁰ In addition to his personal experience, Cassian knew of Basil’s *Asceticon* and Jerome’s Latin translations, presumably of the rule of Pachomius though the latter he does not mention by name.¹¹¹ It is not clear, however, how much of these works he had read and absorbed. Moreover, some care must be taken in interpreting Cassian’s writings, and it is worth repeating here Taft’s warning, ‘Cassian is attempting not a history of Egyptian monasticism but a reform of Gallic monasticism along Egyptian lines ... he presents a somewhat idealized Egyptian office that is apparently a synthesis of various elements, then claims universal authority for it as *the* tradition of “the whole of Egypt and the Thebaid.”’¹¹²

In his *Institutes* Cassian begins with a description of night-time services though it is not certain at what times these were observed, since one section refers to ‘evening and night-time services’ while a little later this has become ‘evening and

¹⁰⁸ *Pr.* 5, 7; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 146.

¹⁰⁹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 76; McKinnon, ‘Desert Monasticism’, 506, 508.

¹¹⁰ Born c. 360, died early 430’s; Boniface Ramsey (trans. and notes), *John Cassian: The Institutes*, (New York, NY: The Newman Press, 2000) 3.

¹¹¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, Preface, 5; Latin text: John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 17, ed. Michael Petschenig, (Vienna: Tempsky, 1888); online: <http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/Corpus-Scriptorum-Ecclesiasticorum-Latinorum.html> (accessed 05/07/2015). English translations from Ramsey unless otherwise noted; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 12-13.

¹¹² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 58, Taft’s emphasis, quotation from Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.4; and see section 1.4.

morning'.¹¹³ Nevertheless the times of these observances seem to have been precisely regulated, for Cassian declares, 'he who is entrusted with rousing the religious community ... does not presume to awaken the brothers whenever he pleases ... [but] from the position of the stars he carefully and frequently watches for the time appointed by the community and calls them to their service of prayer.'¹¹⁴ Accepting that one of these two occasions was evening, we must conclude, with Taft, that the night-time/morning service began 'at cockcrow' (though clearly not decided by the whim of the cock) and was, perhaps, intended to conclude at dawn.¹¹⁵

The content of these two services, apparently the same, is fairly clear, each consists of twelve psalms and these are followed by two readings, one Old and one New Testament, except on Sundays and during the Pentecost season when one is from the Gospels and the other elsewhere in the New Testament.¹¹⁶ Each psalm is sung by a soloist and when it concludes all stand praying silently with arms outstretched then briefly prostrate themselves before again standing to pray in the same fashion; finally a leader 'collects' the prayer, aloud.¹¹⁷ From the context, it is clear, as Taft points out, that this 'collect' prayer concludes each psalm-prayers unit rather than being a single prayer at the end of the service.¹¹⁸ This sequence closely follows that described in the *Regulations of Horsiesios* (above). Clearly, there is some inter-monastic influence here but it is by no means certain how that occurred. Monks may have changed allegiance from time to time so that one group may have influenced the other; alternatively, Cassian 'may have had contact with the Pachomians of the monastery of Metanoia at Canopus on the coast in the Delta', as Taft suggests.¹¹⁹ Indeed, although Cassian gives no indication of knowing the *Regulations of Horsiesios*, he may have had access to a translation and incorporated this description into the *Institutes*. Certainly we

¹¹³ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.4, 6; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 39, 41.

¹¹⁴ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.17; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 48.

¹¹⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 60, 65; and see a brief discussion of 'cockcrow', below section 7.5

¹¹⁶ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.4, 6; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 39, 41.

¹¹⁷ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.6, 2.10.1; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 41, 43.

¹¹⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 60, footnote 3.

¹¹⁹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 62.

should understand 'with arms outstretched' in the above to mean 'in the form of the cross' as in *Horsiesios'* description.

The number of twelve psalms Cassian justifies by the story of an angelic visitor to an Egyptian monastery who sang this number and immediately 'withdrew from the eyes of all.'¹²⁰ That the last of the angel's psalms was one with Alleluia as a response, indicates that Cassian commends this practice. However, this should, he says, only be a psalm 'introduced by an Alleluia in its title.'¹²¹ Long psalms are not sung as a whole but split up into two or three sections, each section apparently constituting one of the twelve psalms, 'for it is not a multitude of verses but rather the understanding of the mind that pleases them.'¹²² Further, four soloists each sing three of the twelve psalms unless there are too few brothers gathered for this to be possible.¹²³

In the following chapter Cassian discusses the 'daytime hours' of terce, sext and none, ascribing these observations to the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia. Since he was in a monastery in Bethlehem for 'a few years' from 380 CE, he is presumably writing from personal experience of practices a little later than Basil of Caesarea, nevertheless, the comparison he makes with those of the Egyptians may throw some further light on the latter.¹²⁴ In the case of Egypt, Cassian says, 'the offices that we are obliged to render to the Lord at different hours and at intervals of time, at the call of the summoner, are celebrated continuously and spontaneously throughout the course of the whole day, in tandem with their work.'¹²⁵ Thus only the evening and night-time (morning) offices are celebrated communally. Although this may seem to imply that the specific daytime offices are known but are performed by individuals whenever they wish, the use of 'continuously' suggests that Cassian means that ceaseless personal prayer *replaces* the formal offices. The third, sixth and ninth hours are, however, observed 'in the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia and the entire

¹²⁰ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.5.5; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 40-1; see below section 7.1.

¹²¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.11.3; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 44.

¹²² Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.11.1, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 44.

¹²³ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.11.3, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 44.

¹²⁴ Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 6-7; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 76.

¹²⁵ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.2, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 59.

Orient ... every day with three psalms [each].¹²⁶ Here 'the Orient' is, Ramsey says, 'the civil diocese of Oriens, which included Palestine and Mesopotamia and which had Antioch as its metropolis', not, either the prefecture of the Orient or the whole of the East.¹²⁷ These hours Cassian justifies with the full range of scriptural quotations treated above.¹²⁸

In addition to these three, Cassian also knows of a 'morning service' at dawn. Like terce and sext, it is to be observed with the saying of three psalms and prayers.¹²⁹ This service, 'observed now in western lands', was, he writes, 'originally instituted as a canonical function in our own time and our own monastery, where our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin', that is at Bethlehem, during Cassian's time there. It was, he claims, introduced because, after the conclusion of the 'morning service ... along with the daily vigils', when the monks were allowed to return to bed, some remained there until the third hour. Here Cassian becomes rather difficult to understand, as he apparently uses the term 'morning service' to mean both the original cockcrow service and the new one after dawn. That he cannot simply mean that the morning service has been moved, is shown by his claim of seven spiritual gatherings (considered below). In view of Basil's description of a post-dawn service, we may, moreover, doubt Cassian's claim of a Bethlehem origin, though his justification for its introduction there may be genuine.¹³⁰

In support of this service, Cassian quotes psalm 62 (63), 'God, my God, I look to you from the dawn', and 'in the morning I shall meditate upon you', words which 'we are accustomed to sing every day', adding to these, two quotations from psalm 118 (119), 'I anticipated the dawn and cried out ... My eyes have anticipated the break of day in order that I might meditate on your words.'¹³¹ Despite the appropriateness of these words, psalm 118 seems not have been

¹²⁶ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.3.1, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 59.

¹²⁷ Ramsey, *Institutes*, 70, note on 3.3.1; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 80.

¹²⁸ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3 - 8, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 59-62.

¹²⁹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.3.10 - 3.4.1, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 62-3.

¹³⁰ For Basil's Times of Prayer see sections 6.5,6.

¹³¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.3.10, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 62; Pss, 62 (63) 1, 6, 118 (119) 147-8, Ramsey's translation from Cassian.

used first thing in the morning as later he adds that, 'psalms 50, 62, and 89 have been assigned to this new service.'¹³²

Cassian sees an additional benefit in this innovation, 'for with the addition of this service we come together for these spiritual gathering seven times a day', in accordance with the sentence, again from psalm 118: 'seven times a day I have praised you.'¹³³ This total can only be understood by looking forward to *Institutes*, 3.6 which appears to say that the elders of the Bethlehem monastery appended to the night-time morning service 'Psalm 148 and the others that follow', and regarding this as an extra service, called by Cassian 'the night-time vigils', but later *Lauds*, though following directly on its predecessor.¹³⁴ The seven are then, at night: evening prayer, night-time morning service, and the daily vigils; to which are added the three traditional daytime services and the new post-dawn morning service.¹³⁵

The Egyptian desert monastics, then, celebrated two daily synaxes, at sunset and dawn. The latter began at dawn in the Pachominan monasteries but, according to Cassian's testimony, ended at dawn in the non-Pachomian establishments of lower Egypt. Although the daily singing of psalms at these services is uncertain for the Pachomians, they seem to have been in use elsewhere. We also appear to be observing a similar development to that which occurred in the cathedral office or was encouraged for private prayers, in that Cassian also promotes the observation of the 'little hours', which he knows from Palestine. Together with the daily vigils and post-dawn synaxis these constitute a schedule of daily prayer which is similar, but not identical, to the description of a scheme of prayer given by Basil of Caesarea in his *Great Asceticon*, and to which we may now turn our attention.

7.8 Times of Prayer in Basil's Asceticon, Translation.

Question 37.¹³⁶

¹³² Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.6, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 64.

¹³³ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.4.3, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 63; Ps 118 (119): 164, Ramsey's translation from Cassian.

¹³⁴ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.6, Ramsey, *Institutes*, 64.

¹³⁵ See Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 79.

¹³⁶ Basil, *LR*, Question 37; PG 31.1009-1016, my translation. Additional paragraphs are introduced below to separate the various hours of prayer.

Ought one to neglect work on the excuse of prayers and psalmody? And what times are appropriate for prayer? But first, is there a need to work?

Answer.

The saying of our Lord Jesus Christ is that not simply everyone, nor anyone at random, but the labourer is worthy of his food.¹³⁷ And the Apostle enjoins us to labour and with our own hands produce what is beneficial, so that we may have something to share with the one who is in need. From which it is clear that it is necessary to work in earnest. For we must not suppose the object of piety to be an excuse for idleness nor a refuge from labour, but a foundation of a struggle, of even greater labours, and of patience in afflictions, so that it may be possible for us too to say, 'In labour and hardship, in very many watchings, in hunger and thirst.'¹³⁸ For such a guide is fitting for us, not only because of the subjugation of the body, but also because of the love of our neighbour, so that, through us, God may also supply a sufficiency for the weak among the brothers, after the example given in Acts by the Apostle, saying 'In all things I show you by example that labouring in this way we must support the weak.'¹³⁹ And again, 'That you may have something to share with the one who is in need.'¹⁴⁰ That we may be deemed worthy to hear: 'Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.'¹⁴¹

And what need is there to say how great the evil of idleness is, since the Apostle clearly instructs: 'The one who does not work is not to eat.'¹⁴² Since daily food is necessary for each, so work is also necessary, according to one's ability. For it was not without reason that Solomon wrote in praise, 'She did not eat the bread of idleness.'¹⁴³ And again the Apostle wrote about himself: 'We did not eat bread as a gift from someone, but by labour and hardship working by night and day',¹⁴⁴ although, being one who proclaimed the gospel, he had the right to get his living

¹³⁷ Mt. 10: 10.

¹³⁸ 2 Cor 11: 27. 'very many', περισσοτέρως here, is πολλάκις in 2 Cor.

¹³⁹ Acts 20: 35.

¹⁴⁰ Eph. 4: 28.

¹⁴¹ Mt. 25:34-5.

¹⁴² 2 Thess 3: 10.

¹⁴³ Prov. 31: 27.

¹⁴⁴ 2 Thess 3: 8.

from the gospel.¹⁴⁵ And the Lord, himself, associated idleness with wickedness, saying, 'Wicked and lazy slave.'¹⁴⁶ But also the wise Solomon not only praises the labourer with the words recalled, but also shames the idler by comparison with the smallest creature saying: 'Go to the ant, you idler.'¹⁴⁷ Therefore we should be afraid that on no account should this be alleged against us on the day of judgement, when the one who gave us the ability to work requires the work corresponding to that ability, since, 'To whom much was entrusted,' he says, 'much more will be asked of him in return.'¹⁴⁸ And when some beg off work on the pretext of the prayers and psalmody, you should know that, for all other things, each has its own appropriate time, as Ecclesiastes said: 'A right time for all undertakings.'¹⁴⁹ But for prayer and psalmody as for many other things also, every time is appropriate. Therefore, while directing our hands to work, we praise God in song, with the tongue, whenever this is possible, or rather, useful for building up the faith, but if not possible, in the heart, 'with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' as it is written.¹⁵⁰ And we fulfil prayer while working, giving thanks to the one who has given both ability of the hands for work, and wisdom of mind for the acquisition of skill, and has freely given the raw material both for tools and what is requisite for crafts, whichever we happen to practice. And we pray that the works of our hands are directed towards the goal of being well pleasing to God.

Thus we also keep our souls undistracted whenever, in each activity, we ask God for success in our work, and we give¹⁵¹ thanks to the one who gave the work, and we keep the goal of being well pleasing to him, as said previously. For unless one has these things as direction, how can the sayings of the Apostle agree with one another, both this: 'offer prayers continuously,'¹⁵² and this: 'working night and day'?¹⁵³ Indeed, when thanksgiving at all times both is prescribed in the law and has been shown to be necessary for us in life, according to both nature and

¹⁴⁵ 1 Cor 9: 14.

¹⁴⁶ Mt. 25: 26.

¹⁴⁷ Prov. 6: 6.

¹⁴⁸ Lk. 12: 48.

¹⁴⁹ Eccl. 3: 1.

¹⁵⁰ Col. 3: 16.

¹⁵¹ Literally 'fulfil'.

¹⁵² 1 Thess. 5: 17.

¹⁵³ 2 Thess.3: 8.

reason, we must note¹⁵⁴ the established times of prayer in the communities, which we have necessarily chosen because each one has its own something as a reminder of the good things from God.

Firstly dawn, so that the first movements of the soul and mind are votive offerings to God, and nothing else is undertaken in mind before being gladdened by the thought of God. As it is written, 'I remembered my God and rejoiced.'¹⁵⁵ And we do not rouse the body to work before doing as it is said: 'To you, O Lord, I will pray, and in the morning you will hear my voice. In the morning I shall stand before you and watch.'¹⁵⁶

And again at the third hour we stand up for prayer and gather the community together again, even if they happen to be split up, each to their different jobs. And calling to mind the gift of the Spirit given to the apostles at the third hour, 'all with one accord'¹⁵⁷ make obeisance, asking for guidance and teaching from him for what is profitable towards becoming, with them, worthy of receiving sanctification, according to the saying: 'A clean heart create in me, O God, and renew an honest spirit in my bowels. May you not cast me off from your presence, nor deprive me of your Holy Spirit. Restore to me the great joy of your salvation, and with a guiding spirit support me.'¹⁵⁸ And elsewhere, 'Your good Spirit will guide me on level ground.'¹⁵⁹ And so we have our labours again.

Even if some may be absent far away, being separated because of the nature of their tasks or locations, they ought, of necessity, to fulfil, in that place, each of the things decreed in common, no one being left out. For, 'Whenever there are two or three gathered in my name,' says the Lord, 'there I am in the midst of them.'¹⁶⁰

In the case of the sixth hour, we chose it as being necessary for prayer in [according to] the imitation of the holy ones who said, 'At evening, dawn and at noon, I shall describe and proclaim, and he will listen to my voice.'¹⁶¹ And at that

¹⁵⁴ παροράω, 'notice', also 'overlook' both with implications of the casual, but not here.

¹⁵⁵ Ps 76 (77): 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ps. 5: 2b-3.

¹⁵⁷ Acts 2:1; πάντας ὁμοθυμαδὸν, a variant reading, see Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, editors Aland, Aland et al, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001)

¹⁵⁸ Ps. 50: 10-12.

¹⁵⁹ Ps. 142 (143): 10.

¹⁶⁰ Mt. 18: 20.

¹⁶¹ Ps. 54: 18 (55:17).

time,¹⁶² the 90th psalm is sung¹⁶³ so as to deliver us from ‘calamity and the noontide demon.’¹⁶⁴

And the ninth hour has been handed down to us as necessary for prayer from the apostles themselves in Acts which recounts that Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour of prayer.¹⁶⁵

As the day is completed there is thanksgiving for what has been given us during it, or what has been accomplished by us. And there is confession¹⁶⁶ of what was done amiss whether intentionally or unintentionally or where a fault has escaped our notice, in word or deed, or in the heart itself, we make atonement for all things through prayer to God. For reflection on what is past is a great benefit towards not falling in with the same again. That is why it says, ‘For what you say in your hearts, be pricked in the heart upon your beds.’¹⁶⁷

And again, as night begins, the request is that our rest may be without offence and free from fantasies, and of necessity we say again at this hour, the 90th psalm.

As regards midnight, Paul and Silas have handed on to us the need for prayer, as the story in Acts describes, saying, ‘About midnight Paul and Silas were singing praise to God.’¹⁶⁸ And the psalmist says, ‘At midnight I arise to give you thanks for the judgements of your justice.’¹⁶⁹

And again we must anticipate the dawn and arise for prayer so that we are not caught by the day asleep in bed, according to the one who said, ‘My eyes anticipated the dawn that I might ponder your sayings.’¹⁷⁰

Nothing of these things must be overlooked at the proper time by those who have deliberately chosen to live in watchfulness for the glory of God and of his Christ. But I reckon it to be useful for there to be difference and variety in the prayers and psalmody at the hours decided on, and concerning this, that with monotony

¹⁶² ἄμα, lit. ‘at the same time’.

¹⁶³ Λέγω.

¹⁶⁴ Ps. 90 (91): 6.

¹⁶⁵ Acts 3: 1.

¹⁶⁶ ἐξαγόρευσις, ‘speaking out’.

¹⁶⁷ Ps. 4: 4;

¹⁶⁸ Acts 16: 25.

¹⁶⁹ Ps. 118 (119): 62.

¹⁷⁰ Ps. 118 (119): 148.

often somehow the soul both grows weary and is distracted from rising to the heights, but when there is change and variety in the psalmody and reading¹⁷¹ for each hour its¹⁷² longing is refreshed and its alertness¹⁷³ renewed.

7.9 Times of Prayer in Basil's *Asceticon*, Discussion

The daily scheme of worship is part of Basil's response to a group of questions concerned with the balance between work and prayer. The final question of the group is the crucial one, 'is there a need to work?' As we have seen, by the late fourth century, largely unregulated groups of wandering, self-professed monks constituted a problem for bishops, imperial officials, and ordinary people alike.¹⁷⁴ And the main cause of offence was their refusal to work, often, but not always, on the grounds, or as some contemporary writers see it, pretence, of being called to a life of full-time prayer. Interestingly, Basil makes no reference in his reply to these problems nor to any allegations of heresy which were applied to the Messalians and, by association, any other non-working monks. Thus, this section of the *Asceticon* should be regarded as a piece of *legitimation* in the sense used by Esler.¹⁷⁵ Basil needs to ensure that his monastic followers feel that their lives are meaningful as part of a greater whole, and give them confidence when faced either with monks who refuse to work or with those who accuse all monks of idleness.

Basil, like Pachomius, starts from the need to balance full-time work with continuous prayer. His solution is, however, quite different. For, while expecting psalm-singing to go on during work, there is, no suggestion that work should continue during communal prayers. Work, Basil says, is necessary, not only so that the ascetics may provide for themselves but also for others in need. He supports this with a battery of biblical quotations principally from the New Testament though, inevitably, he adds appropriate passages from Proverbs. Prayer, he declares is not an opportunity to shirk their labours but a spiritual foundation for even greater labour and hardship. As regards prayer, he begins by

¹⁷¹ Λόγος – 'reading': Silvas, *Asketikon* p. 247; 'readings': Clarke, *Ascetic Works*, p. 209; 'scripture', Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p.86; 'words': Bradshaw, P., *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf & Stock, 2008, p. 100.

¹⁷² i.e. the soul's.

¹⁷³ τὸ νηφάλιον from νηφάλιος 'sober' but also 'self-controlled.

¹⁷⁴ Chapter 5

¹⁷⁵ See section 2.5 above.

quoting Ecclesiastes, an unusual choice, perhaps, in view of that book's lament of the workaholic in chapter 2. Basil's purpose, however, is to engage critically with 'for everything there is a season'¹⁷⁶ and declare that, for prayer, not only are all times appropriate, but indeed that prayer at all times is necessary. This brings him to the core of his argument, that continuous prayer and continuous work are not alternatives, both are essential. Lest this seem paradoxical, Basil is prepared with a convincing argument. For, just as quotations from Proverbs in support of work are unsurprising, so is the use of 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 (vv 6-13), in which Paul condemns idleness and offers himself as an example of working for his daily food. But, says Basil, the same apostle, writing to the same group, also urges them to 'pray without ceasing.'¹⁷⁷ So, for Basil's ascetics, prayer must accompany work at all times, 'Therefore, while directing our hands to work, we praise God in song' (ὥστε μεταξύ τὰς χεῖρας κινουῦντα πρὸς τὰ ἔργα ... τὸν Θεὸν ἀνυμνεῖν.) Indeed, Basil expects his followers to sing aloud ('with the tongue', ποτὲ μὲν καὶ τῇ γλώσσῃ) whenever this is possible, otherwise silently ('in the heart', εἰ δὲ μή γε, τῇ καρδίᾳ).¹⁷⁸ In this Basil seems not to have changed from his first ascetic practice, for in an early letter to Gregory Nazianzen, describing his retreat in Annisa and urging his friend to join him, he writes:

Τί οὖν μακαριώτερον τοῦ τὴν ἀγγέλων χορείαν ἐν γῆ μιμεῖσθαι· εὐθύς μὲν ἀρχομένης ἡμέρας εἰς εὐχὰς ὀρμώντα ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς γεραίρειν τὸν κτίσαντα, εἶτα ἡλίου καθαρώς λάμπαντος ἐπ' ἔργα τρεπόμενον, πανταχοῦ αὐτῷ τῆς εὐχῆς συμπαρούσης, καὶ τῶν ὕμνων ὥσπερ ἄλατι παραρτύειν τὰς ἐργασίας;¹⁷⁹

What then is more blessed than to imitate on earth the chorus of angels, beginning the day at once, being eager for prayers to honour the Creator with hymns and songs, then as the sun shines clearly, turning to work, prayer being everywhere present with it, and hymns, like salt, seasoning the tasks?¹⁸⁰

Clearly, continuous prayer, possibly silent, 'while directing our hands to work' may be regarded as of a personal nature, though several working together and singing aloud would no doubt do so in unison, but for the developed Basilian communities there is also to be prayer in common, and Basil directs that, when individuals or

¹⁷⁶ Eccl. 3: 1.

¹⁷⁷ 1 Thess. 5: 17.

¹⁷⁸ PG 31.1012.32-36.

¹⁷⁹ Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile. Lettres*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957; v. 1, Letter 2: 2.44-50.

¹⁸⁰ My translation.

small groups, are separated from the community and unable to return for formal prayers, they should, nevertheless ‘fulfil, in that place, each of the things decreed in common, no one being left out’ (πληροῦν ἀναγκαίως ὀφείλουσιν ἐκεῖ ἕκαστα τὰ κοινῇ δόξαντα, μηδὲν διακρινόμενοι).¹⁸¹ This underlines the legitimation aspect of the passage, Basil sees common prayer as shared and united prayer, with which even those who must be absent from the community can still feel joined.

This common prayer must necessarily take place at fixed times which Basil proceeds to list, beginning at dawn. These are ‘the established times of prayer in the brotherhoods, which we have necessarily chosen’ (τοὺς διατετυπωμένους καιροὺς τῶν προσευχῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀδελφότησιν, οὓς ἀναγκαίως ἐξελεξάμεθα).¹⁸² It seems that more than one community is involved, and, in view of the general nature of the *Longer Responses*, we must assume that this means all the Basilian foundations, and that the hours of prayer were decided at a council of community superiors as described in *Longer Responses 54*. As the times listed correspond closely to the monastic hours found in the later use of both eastern and western churches, Silvas comments that ‘times of prayer ... which we have necessarily chosen’ implies that, ‘thus Basil himself had a major role in organising the classic sequence of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Church both east and west.’¹⁸³ We shall return to this question later.

The list begins with prayer at dawn and ends with rising for prayer at the conclusion of the night, with the injunction that the ascetics must be awake and praying before dawn, ‘so that we are not caught by the day asleep in bed’ (ὡς μὴ ἐν ὕπνῳ καὶ κοίτῃ ὑπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας καταληφθῆναι).¹⁸⁴ On this, Silvas comments that ‘It is unlikely that we have another pre-dawn prayer before the dawn prayer.’¹⁸⁵ Taft observes that in both cases Basil refers to the office of dawn, ‘and is obviously speaking of one, not two, morning services.’¹⁸⁶ This, I shall argue, is consistent with letter 207 which depicts a service beginning before dawn and ending after it.¹⁸⁷ By beginning and ending at the same place, Basil stresses that

¹⁸¹ PG 31.1015.41-3.

¹⁸² PG 31.1013.12-13.

¹⁸³ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 245, footnote 406, but see below.

¹⁸⁴ PG 31.1016.29-30.

¹⁸⁵ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 247, footnote 414.

¹⁸⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 86.

¹⁸⁷ See below section 7.5.

here is a ceaseless round of prayer. The other hours are given as the third, sixth (noon) and ninth hours, the close of day, beginning of night, and midnight.

The only fixed psalm of which we can be certain is 90 (91), which Basil prescribes twice, at noon, and 'as night begins', because of its assurance of night and day protection: 'Thou shalt not be afraid of terror by night; nor of the arrow flying by day; nor of the evil thing that walks in darkness; nor of calamity, and the evil spirit at noonday.'¹⁸⁸ Its use at night has certainly continued, being found in the Office of Compline according to the Rule of St Benedict,¹⁸⁹ and, from this source, finding its way into modern western offices intended for non-monastic use.¹⁹⁰ Some other psalms may also have been fixed. It is, however, unlikely that there were many, for Basil expresses his concern for there to be 'difference and variety in the prayers and psalmody at the hours decided on' (τὴν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς καὶ ψαλμωδίαις κατὰ τὰς ἐπιτεκρινόμενας ὥρας διαφορὰν τε καὶ ποικιλίαν).¹⁹¹

This requirement of variety suggests that more than a few psalms would be in regular use and thus raises the question of what access community members had to the texts. Harry Gamble estimates that level of literacy at the time was low, about 10% of the population as a whole, and if Basil's ascetics were no more literate than the general population, we must assume that only a small proportion of them could read.¹⁹² However, once more we have to take note of Pachomian policy in this regard. One wishing to enter the monastery must first be taught the Lord's Prayer, we are told and 'as many psalms as he can learn.'¹⁹³ A later regulation modifies this to 'they shall give him twenty psalms or two of the

¹⁸⁸ Ps. 90(91):5-6; Translation from Lancelot C. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, (original publication, London: Bagster, 1851, 11th reprinting, Hendrickson, 2005.) Ps 90:5-6.

¹⁸⁹ *Regula Benedicti*, 18:19, see eg. Timothy Fry, *The Rule of St Benedict in English*, (Collegeville, Mn: Liturgical Press 1982) 46.

¹⁹⁰ Eg 'Night Prayer' in *Morning and Evening Prayer with Night Prayer*, The Episcopal Conferences of Australia, England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland, (Glasgow: Collins, 1976) 692-3; 'Night Prayer' in *Common Worship Daily Prayer*, The Archbishops' Council, (London: Church House Publishing, 2005) 339-40.

¹⁹¹ PG 31.1016.36-7.

¹⁹² Harry Y Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: a History of Early Christian Texts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

¹⁹³ *Pr. 49*; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 153.

Apostle's epistles, or some other part of the Scripture.'¹⁹⁴ How this is to be achieved moreover is significant:

And if he is illiterate, he shall go at the first, third, and sixth hours to someone who can teach and has been appointed for him. He shall stand before him and learn very studiously with all gratitude. Then the fundamentals of a syllable, the verbs, and nouns shall be written for him, and even if he does not want to, he shall be compelled to read. There shall be no one whatever in the monastery who does not learn to read and does not memorise something of the scriptures [One should learn by heart] at least the New Testament and the Psalter.¹⁹⁵

The monastery, it seems, also had its own library: 'if they seek a book to read, let them have it; and at the end of the week they shall put it back in its place.'

Even general literacy, however, does not provide a complete solution to the question raised above. In an age when texts had to be copied into hand-made codices by those who could not only read but write clearly, the availability of books would also present a problem. Indeed, in the Pachomian texts quoted above, it is clear that literacy is seen as a pathway to memorisation. For Basil, moreover, it seems that reading was something restricted to a selected few. For when asked 'may we allow anyone who wishes to learn his letters or have time for reading?' he replies that a man must do as his superiors tell him, regardless of his own wishes.¹⁹⁶ Thus, his expectation that psalmody would be used for private worship as well as a variety of psalms for regular common prayer requires that his monks would have, as a matter of course, learnt many psalms by heart, and, in addition, known which were to be used at which times.

It is not clear exactly what Basil means by 'difference and variety in the prayers and psalmody', it might mean variety over the course of a day, or a longer period. It would be feasible to have a selection of psalms, spread over a period of perhaps a week, with some repetition such as the use of psalm 90 twice per day. We may, moreover, be able to surmise what some of these were. For, those psalms quoted to justify particular prayer times are clearly, in Basil's view, appropriate to those hours and therefore were probably, as Taft suggests, chosen from the ones used

¹⁹⁴ *Pr.* 139; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 166.

¹⁹⁵ *Pr.* 139-40; Vielleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, 2, 166; the additional text: '[One should learn by heart]' is provided by Vielleux.

¹⁹⁶ Basil, *Shorter Rules* 96, PG 31.1149-50.

then.¹⁹⁷ Support for this proposal comes from a comparison of Basil's scheme with the present '*Byzantine Sabaitic Horologion*'.¹⁹⁸ A Horologion, or Book of Hours, provides fixed portions of the daily cycle of the Orthodox Office, and this Horologion originates with the monasteries of Sabas, a leader of Palestinian Monasticism. Sabas was born in the small village of Moutalaska in the district of Caesarea, Cappadocia, in 439 CE and at the age of 8 was placed in the nearby Flavian monastery, where he soon learned the entire psalter and the regulations of communal life and became a reader in the church.¹⁹⁹ At the age of 18 he left to follow the monastic life in the desert near Jerusalem, arriving there during the winter of 456. Eventually he founded his own monastery, the *Great Laura* (483) and subsequently several others. With a background in a Cappadocian monastery in the mid fifth century, and his extensive knowledge of its worship, we may assume that the daily office of monasteries which he founded will have been substantially influenced by Basil.

Both Silvas and Taft direct our attention to *Ascetical Discourse I*, formerly included amongst Basil's ascetic works but probably not to be ascribed to Basil.²⁰⁰ The table below provides a comparison of the schemes found in *Longer Responses 37*, *Ascetical Discourse I*, and the *Sabaitic Horologion* together with scriptural quotations in the first two cases and psalms used in the third. Lowther Clarke deals with the authenticity of the two '*Sermones Ascetici*' together, commenting, on the suggestion that they originate with Basil himself, 'the voice of criticism is uniformly unfavourable.'²⁰¹ The principal reasons are vocabulary and style, but Clarke also adds that the arrangement of the hours in *Ascetical Discourse I* is 'irreconcilable with the eight-fold system of F.37.'²⁰² This is hardly the case since

¹⁹⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 87.

¹⁹⁸ Taft's terminology: *Liturgy of the Hours*, 87 (horologion = horarium); for comparison see table below.

¹⁹⁹ Alexander P. Kazhdan (editor in chief), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) on Sabas; Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library & Collection, 1995) 37-50.

²⁰⁰ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 246, footnote 410; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 86; PG 31.877C; William Kemp Lowther Clarke, *The Ascetic Works of St Basil*, (London: SPCK, 1925) 137.

²⁰¹ Clarke, *Ascetic Works*, 11.

²⁰² Clarke, *Ascetic Works*, 11, 137, footnote 7; F37 is Basil, *Regulae fusius tractatae*, Question 37.

the differences are few. Firstly, as noted above, the final observance of *Longer Responses 37*, which ‘anticipates the dawn’, continues into the dawn service. The extent to which Basil and his followers understood these two to form a unity is uncertain, though some light may be cast on this when Basil’s letter to the clergy of Neocaesarea is considered.

Nevertheless, the scheme of *Longer Responses 37* might be said to match that of the *Ascetical Discourse* at this point. The major differences, however, are that the *Ascetical Discourse* omits the service ‘as night begins’ and, in order to get seven services, in accordance with, ‘Seven times in a day have I praised thee because of the judgements of thy righteousness’,²⁰³ splits the noon day observance into two parts, before and after taking food. Interestingly, at the ninth hour, the *Discourse*, ‘commemorates the Lord’s passion’, more usually associated with noon.²⁰⁴

	Longer Responses 37		Ascetical Discourse I		Horologion
Time	Psalms (* known to be used)	Other	Psalms	Other	Fixed psalms used († compare LR 37)
Dawn	76:3 5:4-5		54: 17		
3 rd Hour	50:12-14 142: 10	Acts 2:1 Acts 2:15		Acts 2:15	16, 24, 50†
Noon	90* 54:18		54: 17 Split		53, 54†, 90†
9 th Hour		Acts 3:1		The Pas-sion	83, 84, 85
Close of day	4: 4		54: 17		

203 Ps 118 (119): 164, translation Brenton, Septuagint.

204 Clarke, *Ascetic Works*, 137; compare Cassian, *De institutis* 3.3; see Silvas, *Asketikon*, 246, footnote 410.

As night begins	90*		No synaxis.		90†
Midnight	118:62	Acts 16:25	118:62	Acts 16:25	
Pre-dawn	118:148				

To a limited extent, this table illustrates both stylistic differences and similarities between *Ascetical Discourse I* and *Longer Responses 37*. The *Discourse* has fewer scriptural quotations, though admittedly the passage which concerns us is shorter than the corresponding section of *Longer Responses 37*. Indeed, the three references to Ps. 54 (55): 17 are a single quote in the *Discourse*, justifying three observances at once with ‘Evening, and morning, and at noon I will declare and make known [my wants], and he shall listen to my voice.’²⁰⁵ Further, an imprecise reference to ‘the Lord’s passion’ in the *Discourse* seems uncharacteristic of Basil who would perhaps have preferred an appropriate gospel quotation. On the other hand, the references other than this are all used by Basil, and all but one of the hours correspond; can the *Discourse*’s scheme have been derived from Basil’s?

We must be cautious, however, about imputing common, or even associated, origins to daily prayer times simply because they follow a similar structure. It is not unlikely that such arrangements may have arisen independently. Communities and groups of ascetics existing before Basil would probably have had set times for group common prayer. Almost inevitably, it seems, they would have chosen similar schemes based on both the ‘normal points of reference’ and references in scripture. The adoption of these times, then, by both Basil and the author of the *Discourse* can hardly be surprising.

Against this background the single real difference between the schemes of *Ascetical Discourse I* and *Longer Responses 37* becomes significant. In the prayer cycle of *Longer Responses 37*, prayer ‘as night begins’ appears a little anomalous coming after prayer ‘as the day is completed’. Indeed we might believe that these refer to the same service, as has been argued for dawn prayer, were it not for Basil’s introduction: ‘and again...’ (καὶ πάλιν) which he uses

²⁰⁵ Ps. 54: 17, translation Brenton, *Septuagint* who inserts ‘my wants’.

elsewhere in this passage to introduce a new synaxis. This makes it clear that he is about to describe a separate occasion. Nevertheless, there may have been only a short time between the two. Also, the earlier of the two sessions, 'as the day is completed', bears signs of being a final prayer for the day, involving confession of faults and, if Taft is correct in suggesting that Basil quoted psalms actually sung, the use of psalm 4 which ends: 'I will both lie down and sleep, for thou Lord, only hast caused me to dwell securely.'²⁰⁶ Indeed, psalm 4 is used in the Office of Compline in the Rule of St Benedict and subsequent western offices.²⁰⁷ This suggests that prayer 'as night begins' might be a recent introduction for the Basilian communities. Indeed, it may be the case that these two offices represent parts of what was originally a single evening service which became split, possibly across an evening meal time in the same way as the noon office of the *Discourse*. It is unlikely, however, that the community of the *Discourse* would have adopted a sevenfold prayer cycle from the Basilian communities, recombined the evening offices and then split up the noon office in order to satisfy a 'seven times a day' requirement from Psalm 118.

The scheme of the *Discourse*, then, appears to derive from the general trends of the cathedral office in the preceding centuries, with the implication that so does that of Basil, weakening Silvas' suggestion that Basil played an important part in establishing the 'the classic sequence' of the daily cycle.²⁰⁸ He and his communities, however, may have invented the service subsequently called, in the west, *Compline*, and more latterly, *Night Prayer*. And its presence, together with its use of Psalm 90, may constitute a marker of transmission through Basil. It may indeed have been introduced it into the west by St Benedict following Basilian practice, for on compline, Louis Duchesne comments, presumably of purely western practice, 'this office has not any earlier attestation than the rule of St Benedict.'²⁰⁹

Unfortunately, Basil introduces an enigma as he appeals for variety 'in the psalmody and word for each hour', τῆς ψαλμωδίας καὶ τοῦ περὶ ἐκάστης ὥρας

²⁰⁶ Ps 4: 8, translation Brenton, *Septuagint*.

²⁰⁷ *Regula Benedicti*, 18:19; Fry, *Rule of St Benedict*, 46, also above note on Psalm 90.

²⁰⁸ Silvas *Asketikon*, 245, footnote 406, quoted above.

²⁰⁹ Louis Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, (London: SPCK, 1904) 449, footnote 1.

λόγου.²¹⁰ What ‘word’ is he speaking of? It is unlikely that this is a reference to the words of the psalms since, throughout this response, ‘psalmody’ defines which psalms are being used. Nor is it likely that the words of prayers are meant, for again ‘prayers’ have been referred to throughout, in association with psalmody and presumably interposed between the psalms²¹¹. It thus seems best to understand λόγος here in the sense of ‘story’ or ‘prose writing’ and to agree with other translations consulted, that the reference is to a scripture reading.²¹²

Taft, who sees readings as an addition to a basic skeleton office established by the end of the fourth century, comments that they, along with other elements, were added ‘in a later period or maybe already at this time.’²¹³ And as we accept Taft’s translation of λόγος in the above phrase as ‘scripture’, we must conclude that readings were established by the mid to late fourth century, certainly in the Basilian communities. No doubt Basil would have expected his ascetics to read scripture or, rather, to have it read to them, and their regular prayer times would have provided very suitable opportunities for this. It is strange, however, that only here does he mention readings in connection with the prayers and psalmody, and unfortunate that he gives no further clues as to which hours were provided with readings, how long they were, or how they were to be selected.

7.10 Conclusions.

We have already seen that the Cappadocian daily office derived from domestic prayer.²¹⁴ Although Gregory of Nyssa’s description of Macrina singing psalms associates them with particular activities rather than specific times, the shared worship of full monasticism necessitates that such times be established. At some point, therefore, the Macrinan-Basilian Monasteries developed a prayer schedule based on the pattern elsewhere. But to this they seem to have added the synaxis now known as compline. A thorough examination of the evidence regarding the times of daily prayer has enabled us to establish this as a distinctive contribution of Macrinan-Basilian Monasticism.

²¹⁰ PG 31.1016.38-9.

²¹¹ As described in letter 207.

²¹² Eg. Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 86.

²¹³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 90.

²¹⁴ Chapter 6.

What then are we to conclude about the nature of the Cappadocian urban monastic office as a hybrid of Cathedral and Monastic practices? It was undoubtedly a monastic practice to begin the daily round of prayer before dawn.²¹⁵ Additionally, communal prayer immediately before sleep ('as night begins') was possibly more suited to the monastic environment though this seems to be a development of the Basilian communities rather than adopted from an external source. However, the general pattern of worship in Basilian monasteries is that of the home and cathedral, as comparison with Tertullian and Cyprian shows. The indication, then is that this is not a hybrid, though it might be considered an office of cathedral-domestic origin with some added monastic features.

Finally, this chapter has shown the worth of the method suggested in chapter 2: by paying attention to the audience of Origen and Tertullian (lay persons) and of Cyprian (probably a cathedral community) we have been able to interpret their evidence on times of prayer without falling into false assumptions about connections with monastic offices. Furthermore, reading the relevant section of Basil's *Asceticon* as a piece of legitimation in the sense used by Esler, has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of its significance: as noted above, it may have been prompted by a desire to give monks confidence in their particular rhythms of prayer in the face of alternative patterns.

²¹⁵ Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1984) 202, and see section 7.6 below.

8. Dawn Prayer

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we established that the general pattern of worship in Basilian monasteries is that of the home and cathedral, but that it was monastic practice to pray before dawn and Basil's communities added a night service. The next two chapters will examine dawn and evening prayer in turn. The purpose of this chapter will be to challenge scholarly understandings of a particular synaxis which has been interpreted as a monastic night vigil or an occasional, all-night cathedral vigil.

As we have seen, Christians used naturally occurring wakeful periods during the night for prayer.¹ Such night prayer would necessarily have been personal prayer, quite distinct from occasional all-night vigils which were held in churches. Only in monastic communities would it have been easy to organise regular and frequent communal night prayer; Basil, we recall, specified three times for prayer during the hours of darkness: 'as night begins', 'midnight' and 'anticipating the dawn'.²

Further information about prayer at night occurs in Basil's letter 207, *To the Clergy of Neocaesarea*, This is dated to the late Summer of 375 CE by Roy Deferrari.³ Anna Silvas, however, sees letters 207, 210, and 211 as written from Annisa, the site of Macrina's double monastery, on 'very likely his [Basil's] last visit up north to Pontus in 376'.⁴ In the letter, Basil undertakes to defend himself and his monastic associates against charges levelled against them by certain persons in Neocaesarea, and in course of it, he describes a night office at which psalms are sung.

While Baumstark believed that the synaxis described a prolonged monastic vigil, more recent scholars, however, understand it to be an occasional, all-night, cathedral (that is non-monastic) vigil.⁵ I shall dispute both of these claims. This letter provides a good example of the need for socio-rhetorical exegesis, as extended in the social-scientific field, for it offers an example of a well-trained

¹ See *Times of Prayer*, section 7.1 above.

² See *Times of Prayer* above, sections 7.5,6.

³ Saint Basil, *Letters*, vol. 3, Roy J. Deferrari (ed. & trans.), (London: Heinemann 1926), 180-93, dating from p.181, note 1

⁴ Anna M Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008) 73-4.

⁵ See below, section 8.3.

rhetor using his skills in a conflict between two groups.⁶ Further, the use of this analysis sheds a new light on certain aspects of the letter, aspects which lie at the heart of the argument about the nature of the synaxis. This new interpretation of the evidence, I shall argue, strongly suggests that what is described is the regular monastic pre-dawn synaxis found in Basil's times of prayer.⁷

We will examine the letter below, but before doing so it is necessary to examine the meaning of the terms *antiphon* and *antiphonal* which are relevant to that discussion and will re-occur throughout this chapter.

8.2 The Antiphon

In the first three centuries, when there was communal singing, it might be performed in three ways.⁸ Firstly, a hymn or psalm might be sung *directly*, that is in unison. Because of low levels of literacy this would be appropriate for short hymns which were in frequent use so that everyone would be familiar with both words and music. Secondly, verses might be sung alternately by two groups, again requiring familiarity from the congregation. The use of this method is attested by Pliny who recounts a brief description of Christian worship in Bythnia-Pontus in the early second century. The local Christians, he writes to Trajan, had the custom of 'gathering together before dawn on a fixed day, and of singing alternately a hymn 'to Christ as to a God' (*quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem conuenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum inuicem*).⁹ While the meaning of *secum inuicem* ('in alternation with each other') may lack the precision we might wish, it clearly relates to some alternating form. Basil, as we shall see, describes one of his people's psalms as sung in this fashion. Taft, moreover, says, unfortunately without a clear date, 'in early monastic usage, psalms were executed either directly, that is, in their entirety, by a soloist or by the whole community together; or alternately, with the congregation divided into two choirs alternating the verses.'¹⁰ Thirdly, a psalm or hymn with a response in its text, often 'alleluia' in the case of psalms, might be sung by a soloist, the congregation

⁶ See section 2.6 above.

⁷ 'Anticipating the dawn', chapter 7 above.

⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139; Joseph Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, (London: Burns & Oats, 1964) 90-111.

⁹ Pliny the Younger, *Letters* Book 10, 96, in *Pliny, Letters and Panegyricus II*, Betty Radice (ed. & trans.), Loeb Classical Library LCL59, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press) 288.

¹⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139.

singing the response after each verse. And Taft claims, 'Later monastic usage followed the cathedral churches in extending the responsorial method beyond the repertoire of the biblical alleluia psalms to the entire psalter by simply selecting a verse of any psalm to serve as its response.'¹¹

In the fourth-century a further method, particular to psalms and to all-night cathedral vigils, emerged. *Antiphonal* psalmody is a more sophisticated development of the responsorial form, though perhaps influenced by the alternate.¹² This was intended both to add variety and to draw out the singing of psalms during those all-night vigils. Although there were variations, the typical form required two choirs, each with its own soloist. The psalm verses were sung alternately by the soloists, the choirs alternating the singing of a response which was normally longer than the refrains of responsorial psalmody, often not taken from the same psalm, and might be non-scriptural.¹³ Additionally, the *Gloria Patri* was introduced at the end. This entire structure was then termed an *antiphon*. Gelineau, commenting that 'the true nature of antiphony as practised in ancient days has escaped most of the authors who have written about it and who, in consequence, are much at variance in their opinions,' insists that *antiphony* must mean what is described here and never alternate psalmody. This, he declares, 'is the only view which accords with historical documents.'¹⁴ Bradshaw tells us that, according to ancient ecclesiastical historians, the antiphonal form of psalmody began at all-night vigils in Antioch. Though accounts differ as to when this happened, they seem agreed that it was in opposition to similar Arian practices.¹⁵

Taft, who provides a clear explanation of the structure of an Antiphon, like Gelineau, stresses the confusion caused by misunderstanding the term:

Note the popular nature of this [antiphonal] psalmody. The People respond with a fixed refrain, easily manageable. And the scriptural element, sung clearly and intelligibly by one soloist, does not succumb to choral muffling. Failure to understand these original forms has resulted

¹¹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139.

¹² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139; *Antiphōnein*: 'voice against voice', Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 101.

¹³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139; Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 101-5; and see Anton Baumstark, *Nocturna Laus* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1957) 124-5.

¹⁴ Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 102, footnote 197.

¹⁵ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 90.

in confusion between alternate psalmody, which is monastic, and antiphonal, which is popular; in the execution – often unintelligibly – of the psalm verses by choir instead of soloist, and so forth. It also results frequently in a misreading of the historical sources, especially for the liturgy of hours.¹⁶

We might add that a generally low level of literacy means that psalms would need to be learnt by heart for alternate psalmody, easily achievable by the constant practice of monastics, less so for the general populace. Antiphons, on the other hand, would need only that the people should recall music and words of a refrain sung first by the soloist.

Although beginning as a device to extend psalms during cathedral vigils, John Cassian appears to suggest that antiphons were adopted by monks for the same purpose: *Quidam enim uicenos seu tricenos psalmos et hos ipsos antiphonarum protelatos melodiis et adjunctione quarundam modulationum debere dici singulis noctibus censuerunt.*¹⁷ This Ramsey translates as ‘some, for example, have thought that each night they should say twenty or thirty psalms and that these should be drawn out with the singing of antiphons and the addition of certain melodies.’¹⁸ He adds, in a note, however, “Antiphons” here seems to refer to psalms sung in antiphonal fashion – i.e. divided between two groups or between two individuals. Hence this could be translated as “with the antiphonal singing of psalms”.¹⁹ Merely alternating singing does not draw out a psalm, however, so it seems more likely that Cassian is using *antiphon* in the meaning of Baumstark, Taft, and Gelineau, described above, and possibly that the ‘certain melodies’ are the substantial choir responses which that form appends to each psalm-verse.

The alternating form of psalmody which emerged much later in the west, and which survives today (often called *antiphonal*), may not have derived directly from primitive alternate singing. Taft argues that, ‘although the evidence is not always clear’ the later western practice is a degenerate form of antiphony.²⁰ Evidence for

¹⁶ Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1984) 159.

¹⁷ John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, vol. 17, ed. Michael Petschenig, (Vienna: Tempsky, 1888); online: <http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/Corpus-Scriptorum-Ecclesiasticorum-Latinorum.html> (accessed 05/07/2015), 2.2.1, CSEL 17: 18.

¹⁸ Boniface Ramsey (trans. and notes), *John Cassian: The Institutes*, (New York, NY: The Newman Press, 2000) 37.

¹⁹ Ramsey, *Institutes*, 50, note on 2.2.1.

²⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 139.

this can be seen in the use of the *Gloria Patri* to conclude a psalm, and the retention of the refrain, to which the name *antiphon* has been transferred, no longer as a response to each verse, but sung before, and repeated after, the whole psalm. The doubling of roles characteristic of antiphony is lost, however, and the alternation of verses is between two choirs, or between cantor and choir.

It might not be so straight forward, however, for as regards the *Gloria Patri*, we should note the evidence of Cassian that, at the beginning of the fifth century, this doxology was being used in the west to conclude psalms sung by a soloist. Cassian concludes his description of monastic night-time services, at which twelve psalms were sung, with mention of what he sees as an unusual practice in Gaul:

Illud etiam quod in hac provincia vidimus, ut uno cantante in clausula psalmi omnes adstantes concinant cum clamore, gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto, nusquam per omnem Orientem audivimus, sed cum omnium silentio ab eo, qui cantat, finito psalmo orationem succedere, hac vero glorificatione trinitatis tantummodo solere antiphona terminari.²¹

That [practice] which we have observed in this province [Gaul] - that one [person] sings, [and] at the conclusion of the psalm all rise and sing with a loud voice: *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto* - we have heard nowhere throughout the East, but [there], while all keep silence, at the end of the psalm the singer offers the following prayer; usually only an antiphon ends with this glorification of the Trinity.²²

Ramsey translates the final clause as 'although the antiphon only ends as a rule, with this glorification of the Trinity', adding in a note, 'here, unlike 2.2.1 the term "antiphon" clearly refers to the whole of the psalmody rather than to the manner in which it is sung.'²³ Taft, following the translation of Gibson, renders this similarly: 'but with this hymn in honour of the Trinity only the whole of the Psalmody is usually ended', and concludes that the twelfth psalm is followed by *Gloria Patri*.²⁴

Cassian's meaning, however, is not as clear as Ramsey suggests, the clause having three possible interpretations:

²¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.8, Latin text from CSEL 17: 24.

²² My translation

²³ Ramsey, *Institutes*, 42.

²⁴ Edgar C.S. Gibson (trans. and Notes), *The Works of John Cassian*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1964), quoted in Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 59; Taft's conclusion pp. 60-1.

If we accept with Ramsey that in 2.2.1, 'antiphons' means psalms 'divided between two groups or between two individuals', then this may be an injunction to add the *Gloria Patri* to *any* such psalms, whenever they occur.²⁵ Cassian, however makes no mention of such alternating psalms in the Egyptian monastic office, referring only to those sung by a soloist, possibly with a response as in the case of the final Alleluia psalm.

Secondly, if it is indeed the case that Cassian uses the somewhat inappropriate term 'antiphon' to mean a whole group of twelve psalms each followed by prayers, a further difficulty is introduced. Is the final psalm followed by *Gloria Patri*, and then prayers, or do the prayers precede *Gloria Patri*, or does *Gloria Patri* replace the prayers? Had any of these been what Cassian intends why did he not make his meaning clearer?

Thirdly, however, Cassian's use of 'antiphons' in the earlier passage, 2.2.1, shows that he knows very well the implications of the word. They are to be used at extended vigils at night in order to 'draw out' the singing of psalms, a practice of which he seems to disapprove.²⁶ The only satisfactory conclusion then is that Cassian understands *antiphon* to mean a psalm with verses divided between two soloists while a response, or responses, of similar length to a psalm verse is sung by alternating choirs, as Gelineau insists. It appears then that here Cassian is not saying that Eastern desert monasticism made use of a final *Gloria Patri* at evening or dawn prayer, but is criticising what he sees as an unusual innovation in Gaul: using this doxology instead of prayers to complete psalms other than antiphons. This clause should thus be rendered as 'only an antiphon usually ends with this glorification of the Trinity.' Ramsey's interpretation, somewhat curiously followed by Taft, is thus an example of the very confusion and 'misreading of the historical sources' caused by misunderstanding the term 'antiphon' as emphasised by Gelineau, and indeed Taft himself.²⁷

²⁵ Ramsey, *Institutes*, 50, note on 2.2.1.

²⁶ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.2.1; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 37.

²⁷ Joseph Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* (London: Burns and Oats, 1964) 102; Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1984) 159.

8.3 Scholarly Perceptions of Letter 207

Anton Baumstark consider this letter only briefly. Accepting an account by Cassian of eastern monastic vigils, and picking out a single phrase of ‘twenty or thirty psalms’, he suggests that this is ‘most closely related’ (*nächstverwandt*) to that described in letter 207: ‘Basil in his letter to the clergy of Neocaesarea, outlines the nightly (*allnächtlichen*) communal celebration at Caesarea.’²⁸ Cassian, however, writing in the early fifth century, paints a picture of eastern monastic practice which much more confused, and at times confusing, than appears from Baumstark’s short description and in which twenty or thirty psalms are just one of several possibilities. Monasteries, he claims, had a variety of different models and rules for prayers and psalms at night:²⁹

Some, for example, have thought that each night they should say twenty or thirty psalms and that these should be drawn out with the singing of antiphons and the addition of certain melodies, while others have tried to exceed that number and a few have opted for eighteen. We know that in this way different canons have been established in different places, and we have seen nearly as many models and rules being used as we have seen monasteries and cells.³⁰

Later he suggests that as many as fifty or sixty psalms or even more might be used.³¹ It is apparent from the way that Cassian describes this extended psalm singing that he regards the striving for more and more night-time psalms as excessive, and the consequent plurality of practices as chaotic. No doubt seeking to ensure that no such situation will occur among those following his instructions, he appeals to the *dignitas* of Egypt to establish a more reasonable rule: ‘the number of twelve psalms is maintained throughout all of Egypt and the Thebaid in both the evening and the night-time services in such a way that, when they are finished, two readings follow, one from the Old and one from the New

²⁸ ‘Basileios in seinem Briefe an den Klerus von Neokaisareia von der allnächtlichen Gemeindefeier zu Kaisareia entwirft’, Anton Baumstark, *Nocturna Laus*, (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1957) 128.

²⁹ John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*; Latin text: Michael Petschenig (ed), *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 17, (Vienna: Tempsky, 1888); online: <http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/Corpus-Scriptorum-Ecclesiasticorum-Latinorum.html> (accessed 05/07/2015), 2; Boniface Ramsey (translation and notes), *John Cassian: The Institutes*, (New York, NY: The Newman Press, 2000) 35-55, see p. 3 for dating, Ramsey’s translations used below.

³⁰ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.2.1; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 37.

³¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.5.4; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 40.

Testament.³² He goes further, moreover, in suggesting, divine authority behind this number, a claim which he bases on a story of an event at a conference which was held to settle the question of how many psalms should be used. At its shared evening prayer, one apparent participant, a particularly able singer, stood up, sang exactly twelve psalms, and finally revealed his angelic identity by vanishing, and, in Cassian's words, 'thus concluding both the discussion and the ceremony.'³³ We should not rely too strongly on Cassian's account as evidence for monastic practice, however, for there is room for much confusion in it. Having written of 'the evening and the night-time services' in the passage quoted above, a little later he refers to 'the evening and the morning assemblies.'³⁴ At the same time, he is comparing these services with ones which included 'the singing of antiphons' a feature of *Cathedral* vigils³⁵ Had the monks borrowed the use of antiphons, from cathedral vigils in order to 'draw out' what otherwise might be much shorter services? Or is he, in fact, writing about all-night vigils on the cathedral model? It is difficult, then, to say how accurate a picture of monastic practices is provided by Cassian's description of many psalms being sung nightly; the monasteries in which this occurred may have been few.

Baumstark's assessment of this description was followed by later scholars such as Juan Mateos who originally saw it as a nightly monastic vigil extended from midnight to dawn.³⁶ Bradshaw, however, disagrees, commenting that 'this may not be the case', and suggesting instead that it is 'an occasional vigil of longer duration', at which 'the ordinary laity are involved.'³⁷ Further, Taft comments that he has discussed this matter with Mateos and now 'we agree with Bradshaw.'³⁸ That is, the letter is held to describe an occasional, all-night, cathedral (that is non-monastic), vigil. However, I shall argue that there are good reasons to reject both this hypothesis and the earlier one of a regular all-night monastic vigil.

³² Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.4; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 39.

³³ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.5.5; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 40-1.

³⁴ Cassian, *De institutis*, 2.6; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 41

³⁵ See above.

³⁶ Juan Mateos 'L'office monastique à la fin du IV^e siècle: Antioche, Palestine, Cappadoce', *Oriens Christianus* 47 (1963) 53-88, 85-6.

³⁷ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

³⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40.

8.4 Basil, Letter 207: To the Clergy of Neocaesarea, Translation.³⁹

1. Both the agreement of hatred against us⁴⁰ and also the way you have all, as one, followed the leader of the war against us,⁴¹ alike persuaded me to be silent with regard to everyone and not to begin a friendly letter nor any communication, but to brood in silence over my own distress. But, since it is necessary not to keep silent against slanders – not that we might avenge⁴² ourselves against them by opposition, but that we might not acquiesce⁴³ in the success of a falsehood nor let those who have been deceived by it fall into harm - it seemed necessary to me to put this matter to you all and write a letter for your judgement,⁴⁴ although we wrote not long ago to all the presbyterate in common and have not been thought worthy of a single reply.

Brothers, do not flatter those bringing worthless opinions to your minds,⁴⁵ and do not consent⁴⁶ to disregard it when, to your knowledge, the people of God are being subverted⁴⁷ by ungodly teaching. Sabellius the Libyan and Marcellus the Galatian, alone of everyone, dared to teach and write these very things which, now among you, the leaders of the people are endeavouring to bring before you as their own personal discoveries, babbling in speech and certainly not able to bring these quibbles⁴⁸ and fallacies into a plausible formulation.⁴⁹

These men publicly declare specified and unspecified things against us and in every way avoid meeting us. Why? Is it not because they would be viewed with suspicion if there were an examination into their own teachings? Indeed they have been so completely shameless as even to fabricate dreams about us, slandering our teachings as harmful. But even if they receive in their own heads

³⁹ Basil, *Letter 207*, PG 32, 760-765; Greek text from: Saint Basile, *Lettres*, vol. II, texte établi et traduit par Yves Courtonne, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961), 183–8; my translation.

⁴⁰ See discussion in section 7.3 on the use of the first person plural.

⁴¹ Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, identifies this person as Artarbius Bishop of Neocaesarea, see below section 7.3.

⁴² Ἐκδικέω - punish, avenge, vindicate, Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940).

⁴³ Συγχωρέω – compromise, acquiesce.

⁴⁴ Σύνεσις – judgement but also ‘meeting together’.

⁴⁵ Ψυχή – mind or soul.

⁴⁶ Δέχομαι – accept, approve.

⁴⁷ Καταστρέφω - turn aside.

⁴⁸ Σόφισμα – quibble, cunning contrivance, sophism.

⁴⁹ Κατασκευή – construction, state, here a properly formulated construction of argument.

all the visions of the autumn months,⁵⁰ they will be able to fix no blasphemy on us, for in every Church there are many who witness to the truth.

2. And if they are asked the cause of this unproclaimed and truceless war, they say, psalms, and a manner of singing which has been changed from the custom which has become current with you,⁵¹ and such kind of things of which they ought to be ashamed. And we are also accused because we have people, practitioners of piety, who have set themselves apart from the world and all the cares of life which the Lord likens to thorns since they do not allow the word to come to fruition. Such people as these carry in their bodies the mortification of Jesus and have lifted up their own cross and are followers of God. But for myself, I would value my life if these were my wrong doings and I had men about me, under me as teacher, who have chosen this practice. But I hear that in Egypt now, there is such virtue among men, and perhaps some also in Palestine who direct their lives as citizens according to the Gospel.⁵² And I hear that there are some perfect and blessed men also in Mesopotamia. Well, we are children in comparison with the perfect. And if women also choose a Gospel life, honouring virginity above marriage, bringing under subjection the will of the flesh and living in mourning which is esteemed as blessed, they are blessed by their deliberate choice wherever in the world they may be. But these are minor achievements⁵³ from us who are making a rudimentary start and as yet being introduced to piety.

And if they impute some offence against the life of the women, I do not undertake to speak in defence of them. But this I protest solemnly to you that, those things which until now Satan the father of lies has not undertaken to say, these audacious hearts and unbridled mouths articulate shamelessly. And I want you to know that we pray to have corps⁵⁴ of both men and women, whose citizenship is in heaven,⁵⁵ who have crucified the flesh together with passions and desires, who

⁵⁰ Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, dates this letter to the late Summer of 375 CE.

⁵¹ Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3: 'which differs from the custom in use among you', suggests that Basil and his community have diverged from the Neocaesareans, but the second use of a perfect participle hints that the contrary may be the case.

⁵² Πολιτεία – the life of a citizen. Κατὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον might also mean directed towards the goal of the Gospel.

⁵³ Μικρὰ ταῦτα - lit. 'small things'.

⁵⁴ Σύνταγμα - 'that which is put together in order; a body of troops drawn up in order,' also 'the constitution of a state', see discussion below, section 7.4.

⁵⁵ Τὸ πολίτευμά ἐν οὐρανοῖς: Phil. 3: 20.

are not anxious about food and clothing,⁵⁶ but remain undistracted, constantly attending on the Lord, continuing day and night in prayer. Whose mouths do not chatter about the works of men, but continuously sing hymns⁵⁷ to our God, working with their own hands that they may have something to share with those in need.

3. Now in regard to the charge about the singing of psalms, with which those who are slandering us frighten the simple, I have this to say: our currently prevailing customs are in unison and harmony with all the churches of God. Among us the people⁵⁸ rise early from the night⁵⁹ to go to the house of prayer, and weeping in grief, affliction, and anguish, make a full confession to God. Finally rising from their prayers, they come to the psalmody.⁶⁰ And now, having been divided into two, they sing alternately with each other,⁶¹ thus strengthening their practice of the oracles,⁶² and at the same time producing for themselves attention and freedom of the heart from anxiety. After that, once again, having entrusted one to lead⁶³ the song, the rest respond. And in this way, having brought the night to perfection⁶⁴ with variety of psalmody,⁶⁵ praying in between times, presently, as day dawns, all by common consent as with one voice and heart raise the psalm of confession to the Lord,⁶⁶ each one making his own expressions of repentance. If you shun us because of this, you will shun the Egyptians, people of both Libyas,⁶⁷ the Thebans, Palestinians, Arabians, Phoenicians, Syrians, those

⁵⁶ Mt. 6: 25; Lk 12: 22.

⁵⁷ Ὕμνος – a song in honour of a God.

⁵⁸ Ὁ λαός – see discussion section 7.4.

⁵⁹ Ἐκ νυκτὸς γὰρ ὀρθρίζει, Is. 26:9, see discussion section 7.4.

⁶⁰ Or 'singing'.

⁶¹ Ἀντιψάλλουσιν ἀλλήλοις is somewhat uncertain, ἀντιψάλλω means 'to play a stringed instrument in accompaniment', while the related adjective, ἀντίψαλμος, means 'responsive, harmonious'. Since there are two choirs, it seems most likely that this refers to responsive or alternate singing.

⁶² Λόγιον - See 'oracles of the Spirit' in section 4 of the letter.

⁶³ Κατάρχω - 'make a beginning', 'lead the way'.

⁶⁴ Διαφέρω - lit. 'carry over' or 'across', can mean 'carry through' but also 'bring to perfection'. Here the emphasis is on the use of psalmody to complete the night and, particularly in view of the use of ὀρθρίζει (above, note 21), it need carry no suggestion that the whole night has been spent in singing.

⁶⁵ Ἐν τῇ ποικιλίᾳ τῆς ψαλμωδίας - lit. 'in the embroidery of psalmody.'

⁶⁶ Psalm 50 (51), see comments below, section 7.7.

⁶⁷ Upper and lower Libya. (Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, p. 188, n. 1).

settled by the Euphrates, and all in general among whom watching,⁶⁸ prayers and shared psalmody have been honoured.

4. 'But,' they say, 'these things were not done in the time of the great Gregory.'⁶⁹ But neither were the supplications⁷⁰ which you now practice. And I am not criticising you when I say that, for I have been praying for you all to live in tears and continuous repentance, for we too do nothing else but supplicate over our sins. Except that we appease our God, not just with human expressions as you do, but with the oracles of the Spirit.⁷¹ And what witness do you have that these things were not done in the time of the admirable Gregory, since you have preserved for yourselves nothing of his to the present? Gregory did not cover his head while praying. How could he? He was a true disciple of the apostle who said 'Every man praying or prophesying with something over his head shames his head'⁷² and 'For a man indeed ought not to cover his head as he is the image and glory of God.'⁷³ That pure soul, who was worthy of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, shunned oaths, being contented with 'yes' and 'no', according to the command of the Lord who said, 'But I tell you not to swear at all.'⁷⁴ That man could not bear to call his brother stupid, for he feared the Lord's threat. Passion, anger and bitterness never came out of his mouth. He hated abuse which does not lead to the kingdom of heaven. Jealousy and arrogance had been banished from that guiltless soul. He did not stand at the altar before having been reconciled to his brother. A lie or an artifice contrived to slander anyone he so detested as knowing that a lie is born of the devil and that the Lord will destroy all who speak a lie.⁷⁵ If none of these things at all is in you, but you are clean of all, you are disciples of the disciple of the commandments of the Lord. If not,

⁶⁸ Ἀγρυπνία - 'sleeplessness, waking, watching'. 'Watching' in this case is clearly during the night. 'Vigil' might be appropriate if that is not taken to indicate a specific period of time.

⁶⁹ Gregory Thaumaturgus (Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, p. 189, n. 2).

⁷⁰ Λιτανεΐαι - not 'litanies' but 'supplications', particularly in view of what follows, as Deferrari points out (*Letters* vol 3, p. 189, n. 2). It is clearly already becoming a technical term, however, and Bradshaw says that it is often used to mean 'vigils' (*Daily Prayer*, p. 102).

⁷¹ The Psalms, as scripture, seen as divinely inspired (see above 'oracles'); the form of 'supplications' used by the Neocaesareans is not known, but the words were presumably of their own composition.

⁷² 1 Cor. 11:4.

⁷³ 1 Cor. 11:7.

⁷⁴ Mt. 5:34.

⁷⁵ Ps. 5:6.

watch out that you do not strain a gnat⁷⁶ by being precise in language about the sound of the voice for the psalmody while parting from the greatest of the commandments.⁷⁷

The necessity of speaking in my defence leads me to use these words that you might be taught to cast out the beam from your eyes and then to take out the splinter of another. Nevertheless, we agree to accept everything, if it is also accepted that nothing is unscrutinised before God. Only let those things of first importance prevail, and remain silent with regard to innovations concerning the faith.⁷⁸ Do not set aside the hypostases. Do not deny the name of Christ. Do not misinterpret the words of Gregory. Otherwise, as long as we breathe and are able to utter a sound it will be impossible for us to keep silent about so great a destruction of souls.

8.5 Basil to the Clergy of Neocaesarea, A Socio-rhetorical reading

As proposed in chapter 2, one of the first questions to be considered is: for whom was this letter intended? Although it is addressed to the clergy of Neocaesarea, Basil, particularly in view of the history of relations with them, as outlined within it, can hardly have expected a significant change of heart on their part. We have, on the other hand, once again encountered an essay in legitimation, with Basil aiming his text at, and presumably circulating copies to, perhaps two other groups. Firstly, there are his own people within Anatolia, particularly the monastics themselves. They need to feel that their bishop is defending their life-style and practices against slurs from neighbours, and to be given confidence and encouragement to continue on the course that they have accepted. Secondly, there are those beyond the boundaries of the squabble, bishops and influential persons in other areas, for whom the letter may be intended to combat any misrepresentations coming from Neocaesarea, to demonstrate that Basil and his followers in Cappadocia were innocent of offence, and to acquire the support of those he describes as 'all the churches of God'. We also have here an example of a social group (the clergy of Neocaesarea) creating deviance by assuming their

⁷⁶ Mt. 23:24.

⁷⁷ 'Precise in language' is clearly a negative comment, Deferrari translates this phrase as 'finical', *Letters*, vol 3, 191

⁷⁸ Here, presumably, Basil does not mean that the Neocaesareans should fail to condemn others' innovations but that they should not formulate their own.

own beliefs and practices as a norm, and labelling Basil and his monastics as outsiders. Basil does the same in return but, perhaps more confident of his own position, does so in a more subtle manner.

Basil uses a mixture of singular and plural for his first-person expressions. It is possible to construe this to be a plural of authority (the apostolic 'we'), and thus render it as singular throughout. This however implies a certain inconsistency in Basil's writing. For a line such as: 'in regard to the charge about the singing of psalms, with which those who are slandering us frighten the simple, I have this to say,' mixes singular and plural in close proximity, but puts a particularly authoritative statement in the singular. This use of both singular and plural makes much more sense if we understand that he is distinguishing himself as an individual (the author of the letter), from his status as a member and leader of a group (the ascetics of Cappadocia and Annisa, or the whole Christian community), all of whom are being attacked. Indeed, this is seen from the very first sentence of the letter: 'Both the agreement of hatred against us and also the way you have all, as one, followed the leader of the war against us, alike persuaded me to be silent ...' This usage enables Basil to demonstrate to his followers not only that he is defending them but also that he is one of them. For this reason, it seems appropriate to follow the examples of Courtonne and Deferrari and preserve Basil's usage as far as possible.

At first sight it also appears that Basil wishes to distinguish the Cappadocian monastics from himself, the writer, and indeed the Christians of Cappadocia generally: 'we are also accused because we have people, practitioners of piety ...' However, this may be to avoid the odium of self-praise, even though this is a situation for which Plutarch proposes that 'a statesman' might make use of self-praise, not for personal glory, but 'when the occasion and the matter in hand demand that the truth be told.'⁷⁹ Where self-praise is to be avoided, an alternative method is to transfer the praise to others:

Towards one who praises himself the generality of men feel a great hostility and resentment, but do not feel so strongly against one who praises another, but often even listen with pleasure and voice their

⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol VII, 2.19, 539E in Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol VII, Loeb Classical Library 405, trans. Phillip H. de Lacy and Benedict Einarson, (Cambridge Ma: Harvard University Press 1959) 119, Greek on facing page. De Lacy and Einarson's translation here and following.

agreement, some, when the occasion allows, are in the habit of praising others whose aims and acts are the same as their own and whose general character is similar.⁸⁰

That this is the case is seen from the more modest statement later in which Basil does include himself among the practitioners of piety: 'we are children in comparison with the perfect.' Once more this follows the best rhetorical practice: 'some do not present their own praise in all its brilliance and undimmed, but throw in certain minor shortcomings, failures, or faults, thus obviating any effect of displeasure or disapproval.'⁸¹

Basil's description of the synaxis begins with a general confession though its precise form is not described, and it may indeed have consisted of many simultaneous individual confessions. This is followed by the singing of the psalms, with interposed prayers. Two methods of singing are described. Firstly, two choirs 'sing alternately with each other', then a soloist leads and everyone else responds. We should not assume, however, that this means that only two psalms were sung, the description being intended to indicate the different styles of singing. Between the psalms, are prayers, which if uttered aloud may have had some relationship to the words of the preceding psalm. However, we are not told the content of these and they may have been individual and silent.⁸²

Similarly, the psalms used are not specified. This is possibly because, following Basil's requirement for variation in psalmody, they would have changed from day to day.⁸³ At dawn, however, another, specific, psalm is sung: 'as day dawns, all by common consent as with one voice and heart raise the psalm of confession to the Lord, each one making his own expressions of repentance.' The words 'with one voice and heart' (ὡς ἓξ ἐνὸς στόματος καὶ μιᾶς καρδίας) suggest that this is sung in unison; what then are we to make of 'each one making his own expressions of repentance'? Clearly the clause cannot mean that they each used different words, indeed, the requirement of singing in unison implies that the rhythm and stress cannot have varied much. Presumably, therefore, 'expressions of repentance' must have been demonstrated by bodily attitude. Additionally, it is,

⁸⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 10.1; 542C; de Lacy and Einarson, *Plutarch: Moralia*, 405, 135.

⁸¹ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 13.1; 543F; De Lacy and Einarson, *Plutarch: Moralia* 405, 143.

⁸² Paul F Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 2009) 120.

⁸³ See *Times of Prayer*, above section 6.6.

perhaps, a little strange that a service which began as all participants, 'weeping in grief, affliction, and anguish, make a full confession to God' should terminate with yet another confession. The strangeness is, however, somewhat mitigated when we recall that Basil begins the monastic day at dawn with a synaxis which he describes as the first act of the day: 'Firstly dawn, so that the first movements of the soul and mind are votive offerings to God, and nothing else is undertaken in mind before being gladdened by the thought of God.'⁸⁴ Possibly, then, Basil did see two synaxes here, separated by dawn as implied in the times of prayer set out in the *Asceticon*, each of these services beginning with an act of confession.

As regards the 'psalm of confession' both Taft and Bradshaw identify this as psalm 50 (51).⁸⁵ It seems to have been a common psalm for use in the morning. 'A universal feature of later [cathedral] rites', Bradshaw claims which 'may well have formed a part of the early cathedral office.'⁸⁶ Cassian says that, along with psalms 62 and 89 it was used at the monastic morning office immediately upon rising, a synaxis which he claims originated at his Bethlehem monastery.⁸⁷ However in the *Longer Responses* Basil quotes psalm 50 with regard to the synaxis at the third hour.⁸⁸ While it is not absolutely certain that such a quotation indicates that the psalm was used at that time, nevertheless the psalm appears in the *Sabbatic Horologion* at that point in the day.⁸⁹ The exact position of this psalm in the Basilian office cannot therefore be certain, although it may have changed over time.

Our principal concerns with this letter, however, are the points of conflict between Caesarea and Neocaesarea, and the nature of the synaxis which Basil describes here, and these questions are examined in detail below.

8.6 The Basis of Conflict

Even allowing for a certain rhetorical exaggeration it would appear that relations between Caesarea and Neocaesarea were acrimonious. This is perhaps surprising as the latter was Basil's home town and he might be expected to have

⁸⁴ Basil, *LR*: 37, PG 1013.15-7.

⁸⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40-1; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

⁸⁶ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 82.

⁸⁷ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.6; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 64; Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.4.1; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 62-3.

⁸⁸ See section 6.4 above.

⁸⁹ See section 6.4 above.

friends and relatives there. The relationship seems, however, to have degenerated over the years as illustrated by Basil's attitude to three of the Neocaesarean bishops, one of historical importance and two who held office during Basil's own episcopacy. The first Bishop of Neocaesarea was Gregory Thaumaturgos, regarded by all as a major figure in Anatolian Christianity. With some fifty years separating the birth of Basil from the death of Gregory (and thus about a century between the episcopate of the latter and the date of this letter), Basil can have known Gregory only by reputation, derived principally, he claims, from his maternal grandmother, Macrina the Elder.⁹⁰ As noted in Chapter 1, however, any knowledge she may have had of Gregory would have dated from her childhood relying on what she gathered from older people in the Neocaesarean church.⁹¹ Gregory's reputation was such, however, that Basil clearly had great respect for his memory as an orthodox teacher, as, indeed, did the Neocaesarean clergy.⁹² In the case of Musonius, however, who was bishop of Neocaesarea during the initial years of Basil's episcopacy, the relationship was somewhat cool and, despite having a common Nicene faith, they were, Basil admits, unable to work together for peace among the churches.⁹³ Nevertheless, on the death of Musonius, Basil wrote a long consolatory letter to Neocaesarea lauding him as 'a man ... who surpassed all his contemporaries in all the human virtues', and a worthy successor to Gregory Thaumaturgos.⁹⁴ Musonius was succeeded by Atarbius, a cousin of Basil, and it was then that an even more serious rift occurred. At its heart lay disagreements, or possibly misunderstandings, about the Trinity. In this letter Basil accuses the Neocaesareans of Sabellianism (modalism), while they possibly saw Basil as a semi-Arian (homoiousian).⁹⁵ Also Basil had previously been a friend and supporter of Eustathius of Sebaste although by the time of this letter, their

⁹⁰ Basil Letter 204.6.

⁹¹ See above, section 1.2, for comparative dating.

⁹² See the present letter, no. 207, and Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 29, 74; Stephen M Hildebrand (trans. and intro.), *On the Holy Spirit: St Basil the Great*, (Yonkers, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press), 114-5.

⁹³ Basil, letter 28.3.18-26, Courtonne, *Lettres I*, 70.

⁹⁴ Basil, letter 28.1.16-17, Courtonne, *Lettres I*, 70, my translation.

⁹⁵ See the present letter, and for Basil's use and eventual rejection of homoious language see: Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth*, (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press 2007) 214-222.

friendship was probably over. These differences were stronger, it seems, than blood ties and Atarbius, appears in this letter as 'the leader of the war against us.'⁹⁶

Doctrinal differences inevitably, it seems, cause deep and bitter criticism of all disparities found in an opposing faction. And thus, the immediate focus of discord is a very different matter, for Basil comments: 'And if they are asked the cause of this unproclaimed and truceless war, they say, psalms, and a manner of singing which has been changed from the custom which has become current with you,⁹⁷ and such kind of things of which they ought to be ashamed.' This will lead us to the liturgical heart of the interpretation of the letter but, for the moment, consideration of it must be suspended as Basil proceeds immediately to describe another point of dispute, one which nevertheless is, I shall argue, closely associated with questions of psalm singing. He continues, 'we are also accused because we have people, practitioners of piety, who have set themselves apart from the world and all the cares of life', in other words, Basilian monasticism is also criticised by his opponents. There are thus three points of contention to be dealt with below: monasticism, the use of psalms in worship, and the way in which they are sung.

8.7 Points of Contention – 'Citizens of Heaven'

Why should the presence of 'practitioners of piety' be a source of criticism? Here we should recall that the Council of Gangra had condemned many things associated with the monastic followers of Eustathius of Sebaste including the practice of men and women living together as 'brothers and sisters'. While other abuses of asceticism, also condemned by Gangra, might have additionally been attributed to Basil's monastics, the double monastery, perhaps originating with Eustathius, certainly developed by Macrina the younger, and adopted by Basil as the basis of his own foundations, would appear to be the most probable cause of outrage amongst those perhaps not fully appreciating the extent to which the two sections were separated. Additionally, we should recall that Susanna Elm

⁹⁶ So identified in Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, 181 note 2. For an overview of the squabble with Atarbius see: Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 274-278.

⁹⁷ Deferrari, *Letters* vol 3, 183: 'which differs from the custom in use among you', suggests that Basil and his community have diverged from the Neocaesareans, but the second use of a perfect participle hints that the contrary may be the case.

designates the Eustathian practice as ‘homoiousian’ monasticism, an inappropriate label perhaps, but one based on a situation in which a particular monastic structure might be seen as associated with unacceptable theology.⁹⁸ And, to make matters worse, it appears, that the synaxis described by Basil later in this letter, shared by men and women, would have taken place in semi-darkness. Certainly, it seems that impropriety in the double monastery was hinted at by the Neocaesarian critics. This is suggested by both Basil’s comment, ‘if they impute some offence against the life of the women’, and his strong condemnation of such allegations as ‘lies’ in the following sentence.

In describing his groups of male and female ascetics, Basil introduces a significant theme, that of citizenship. Thus, the ideal for the ascetics, following the example of others in Egypt and Palestine, is to ‘direct their lives as citizens according to the Gospel’ (κατὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον πολιτείαν κατορθοῦσιν), and the nature of their citizenship is shown by Basil’s recontextualisation of a quotation from Philippians, ‘our citizenship is in heaven’ (τὸ πολίτευμά [ἐστίν] ἐν οὐρανοῖς).⁹⁹ This quotation is a response by Paul to a situation in which the Christians of Philippi are facing local persecution by those proud of their Roman citizenship, but Basil cannot have been unaware that there was also a squabble within the Philippian church.¹⁰⁰ Possibly he saw a parallel with his own situation, facing persecution from the emperor Valens and yet attacked by the ‘quibbles’ of those who ought to have been friends.¹⁰¹

The two ascetic groups of men and women which Basil describes, he terms συντάγματα. While τάγμα means a body of troops, σύνταγμα implies that they are drawn up in a well-ordered fashion. But the use of the latter term here is a little unusual in Basil who customarily refers to his communities as ἀδελφότης, ‘brotherhood’, using the singular term to describe the double-community. Thus, he instructs that any children taken in should be brought up ‘as the common

⁹⁸ Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God, The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) 106-136, describing the unacceptable practices of this monasticism.

⁹⁹ Basil, Letter 207.2.31, Phil. 3: 20; ἐστίν is inserted by Basil.

¹⁰⁰ cf. Acts 16: 20-21, Phil. 4:2-3, and see e.g. Peter Oakes, *Philippians, from People to Letter*, (Cambridge: The University Press, 2001) 1-54.

¹⁰¹ Valens died 378.

children of the community' (ὡς κοινὰ τέκνα τῆς ἀδελφότητος),¹⁰² and that family concerns must not distract those who have been received 'into the community' (ἐν τῇ ἀδελφότητι).¹⁰³ He also occasionally uses τάγμα in the sense of an 'order' of monks or virgins, thus the distribution of necessities requires responsible persons 'in each order' (ἐν ἐκάστῳ τάγματι).¹⁰⁴ And, in his second letter 'To Amphilochius, Concerning the Canons', he describes these as 'the order of virgins' (τὸ τάγμα τῶν παρθένων), and 'the order of male celibates' (τῷ τάγματι τῶν μοναζόντων)¹⁰⁵

Anna Silvas wishes to argue for a literal reading of the composite, σύν-ταγμα, that is both orders united into a single community: 'in letter 207 the distinct *tagmas* are brought into alignment in one *syntagma*, or ordered arrangement.'¹⁰⁶ And, in support of this, she quotes 'we have a body of both men and women (καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν συντάγμα) whose citizenship is in heaven', stressing that συντάγμα is singular.¹⁰⁷ As the above examples show, it is certainly the case that Basil regards the union of men's and women's orders, together with separate sections for children of each sex and possibly guests, as a single community.¹⁰⁸ It must, nevertheless, be noted that all the sources consulted use the plural, συντάγματα, at this point, the only variant acknowledged being συστήματα (σύστημα, a composite whole, a college or assembly), which is nevertheless plural.¹⁰⁹ Alternatively, following a further suggestion of Silvas we might look on σύνταγμα, troops drawn up in battle array, as a metaphor for the ascetics drawn up, under a leader, in a well-ordered 'prayer array'.¹¹⁰ There may, however, be greater significance in the use of this word.

Basil uses σύνταγμα often, usually with the meaning of a written composition.¹¹¹ As a reference to a group of people it occurs much less frequently, and in this

¹⁰² Basil, *LR* 15.1, PG 31.952.31.

¹⁰³ Basil, *LR* 15.1, PG 31.993.22.

¹⁰⁴ Basil, *LR* 34.1, PG 31.1000.23, see also ἐκάστου τάγματος, *LR* 35.3, PG 31.1008.7.

¹⁰⁵ Basil, Letter 199.18.9, 19.2, Courtonne, *Lettres* I, 155. See also τὸ κοινὸν τάγμα τῶν μοναστῶν, letter 170.1.2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Anna M Silvas, *The Asketikon of St. Basil the Great*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 73.

¹⁰⁷ Silvas, *Macrina the Younger*, 45-6.

¹⁰⁸ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 201, n. 246.

¹⁰⁹ Courtonne, *Lettres*, II, 185; Deferrari, *Letters*, vol 3, 186; PG 31.761.

¹¹⁰ Silvas, *Asketikon*, 73.

¹¹¹ E.g. Letters 20.1.30, 76.1.15, 129.1.6, 131.1.5, 131.2.9, etc.

sense may have a negative meaning. Thus in letter 237 to Eusebius of Samosata he writes of those doing the will of the imperial vicar, ‘this same group (τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο σύνταγμα) has set out for Sebaste to join with Eustathius and with him to overturn the affairs of the Nicopolitans.’¹¹² And in Letter 169 to Gregory Nazianzen, outlining the history and crimes of the deacon Glycerius, he describes how when parents have tried to make personal appeals to daughters to leave the group, ‘this admirable young fellow [Glycerius] and his predatory band (μετὰ τοῦ ληστρικοῦ συντάγματος) even insult and flout them.’¹¹³ We may infer that Basil wishes us to understand that these groups are well organised. However, in letter 207 the close association of the word with ‘whose citizenship is in heaven’ suggests that Basil is using σύνταγμα in the sense of the constitution of a state, as he does in his *Homily given in Time of famine and Drought*, exhorting, ‘Let us emulate the first constitution of Christians’ (τὸ πρῶτον τῶν Χριστιανῶν ζηλώσωμεν σύνταγμα).¹¹⁴ The modern sense of a constitution as a legal document (or collection of such) is not relevant here, however, rather the word describes the organised body of citizenry. This usage by Basil is seen in Letter 76 to Sophronius, complaining of the new administration of Caesarean affairs, he writes ‘gone is our government; and the whole body politic (τὸ πολιτικὸν σύνταγμα), having abandoned its domicile in the city through despondency over the fate of its magistrates, is wandering aimlessly through the countryside.’¹¹⁵ His use of συντάγματα in letter 207, instead of τάγματα is, however, unusual and we may infer that he wishes to continue to stress his theme of citizenship. It is, nevertheless, unlikely that Basil would see this as incompatible with Silvas’ understanding of a well-ordered ‘prayer array’, on the contrary, prayer is an important part of the groups’ constitution.

Thus Basil stresses that his ascetics live an orderly and social life in accordance with his theology of monastic life as communal living: ‘Who does not know that man is a domesticated and sociable animal, not a solitary and wild one?’ (ὅτι ἡμερον καὶ κοινωνικὸν ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὐχὶ μοναστικὸν, οὐδὲ ἄγριον).¹¹⁶ This contrasts with the picture he paints of his opponents, accusing them of being

¹¹² Basil, *The Letters*, vol 3, 410-411, Deferrari’s translation.

¹¹³ Basil, *The Letters*, vol 2, 440-441, Deferrari’s translation.

¹¹⁴ PG 31.325.15-16.

¹¹⁵ Basil, *The Letters*, vol 2, 82-3, Deferrari’s translation.

¹¹⁶ Basil, *LR* 3.1, PG 31.917.5-7, translation from Silvas, *Asketikon*, 172.

incoherent in speech (βαμβαινόντες τῇ γλώσσῃ) and unable to formulate their quibbles into an intelligible argument (καὶ οὐδὲ εἰς πιθανὴν κατασκευὴν ἀγαγεῖν τὰ σοφίσματα).¹¹⁷ Basil thus wishes to emphasise the well-ordered nature of the life of his followers, as contrasted with the anarchic behaviour of those monastics condemned by the Council of Gangra, as well as the unstructured polemics of his Neocaesarean opponents.

8.8 Points of Contention – ‘Psalms’

Our second point of contention appears in Basil’s account as the single word, ‘psalms’. Since there is no suggestion that his Neocaesarean opponents had a doctrinal objection to the Old Testament, it seems that their hostility, specifically to psalms, must relate to their use as songs in worship. This is borne out by a comment from Basil later in this letter. In comparing the ‘supplications’ (λιτανεῖαι) of the Neocaesareans with his groups’ own worship, Basil comments ‘we appease our God not just with human expressions as you do, but with the oracles of the Spirit,’ (τοῖς λογίοις τοῦ Πνεύματος τὸν Θεὸν ἡμῶν ἐξιλεούμεθα) that is, the psalms, and, I shall argue below, other scriptural passages identified as songs. Further, although the term ‘psalm’ was used rather loosely by early church writers, possibly referring to any sung text, the same comment makes it clear that for Basil, and presumably his opponents, it here signifies scriptural songs. The objection to psalms in worship is, Basil writes, ‘these things were not done in the time of the great Gregory’, in other words, psalm singing is condemned as a practice contrary to custom. In answer, Basil, perhaps unsurprisingly, makes use of musical metaphor: ‘our currently prevailing customs are in unison and harmony (συνῳδὰ ἐστὶ καὶ σύμφωνα) with all the churches of God.’ Once again this suggests peace and order, stressing the above contrast. But, additionally, it associates him and his followers with his true target audience beyond the local dispute. That he does so, demonstrates that he recognises a movement which goes beyond his local squabble. About this movement four questions may be asked: 1) was there a doctrinal basis for the use of psalms in worship? 2) Did it originate from Egyptian monastic practice? 3) Was it in opposition to hymns used by heretical groups? 3) Was it in opposition to the habit of singing of ‘pagan’ songs which survived from pre-Christian times? These questions, however, cannot be

¹¹⁷ Letter 207.1.19-20, Courtonne, *Lettres*, II, 183.

dealt with singly, being to some extent interconnected, and the examination of them necessarily interwoven.

The use of psalmody in Macrina's double monastery in Pontus, and by Basil in Caesarea is part of a general movement which introduced psalm singing into worship. In the view of James McKinnon this originated within Egyptian desert monasticism, and he repeats Taft's claim that Basil (along with almost every other influential figure in fourth-century Christianity) visited these desert monks.¹¹⁸ While we know from Basil's later account that he went to Alexandria in the course of his search for Eustathius of Sebaste, deciding to stay there for a while on learning that Eustathius had left for unknown places in the East, and that he found that there were monastic establishments 'in Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt', he nowhere mentions the desert.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the appended 'elsewhere in Egypt' suggests strongly that the Alexandrian urban monastics told him of these other places which he did not visit, and certainly that he regarded the latter as no more significant than their Alexandrian counterparts. Further, and more significantly for McKinnon's argument, while Basil was in Alexandria, his sister Macrina was already singing psalms in Pontus in a monastic setting, though perhaps it was not yet the fully developed office of later times.

A further criticism of McKinnon's claim is that it offers no explanation of an outstanding and important question: 'why those who took to the desert should have shown such an overwhelming preference for psalms above all other Scripture for this purpose has been a source of puzzlement for scholars.'¹²⁰ For the desert fathers did not use the psalter for worship or prayer but 'as a reading, as the source of inspiration for the meditative prayer which was to follow it.'¹²¹

Bradshaw points out that the original status of psalms in the early church was as Christological prophecy, along with the Pentateuch and the prophets, as Luke claims: "everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the

¹¹⁸ James W McKinnon, 'Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth-Century Psalmic Movement', *Music and Letters*, vol 75 no. 4 (Nov, 1994) 505-21; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 76.

¹¹⁹ Basil, *Letter 1*, Deferrari, *Letters vol 1*, 4; Basil, *Letter 223.2*, Deferrari, *Letters vol 3*, 292, my translation.

¹²⁰ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 120.

¹²¹ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 120; Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Psalmody n'est pas prier', *Ecclesia Orans* 6 (1989) 7-32.

psalms must be fulfilled.¹²² Initially this Christological interpretation would have applied only to a small number of psalms but as time went on this was extended: 'from the third century onwards, apparently under the influence of the exegetical method adopted by Origen from classical literature, that Christological interpretation was gradually extended from certain selected psalms to encompass virtually all the psalms.'¹²³ And furthermore, 'as is well known, Origen's ideas exercised a strong influence over the spirituality of the desert fathers and hence it is likely that his Christological exegesis of the psalm would have commended itself to the early ascetics, whose fundamental aim was to conform their lives to the pattern of Christ.'¹²⁴

Origen's interpretation was, however, not exclusively Christological; in Homily 1 on Psalm 36, for instance, he writes: 'we discover that this whole psalm is moral, and given to the human soul as a care and remedy, declaring our sins and teaching us to live in accordance with the law.' (invenimus quod totus psalmus iste moralis est, et velut cura quaedam ac medicina humanae animae datus, cum peccata nostra arguit, et edocet nos secundum legem vivere).¹²⁵ The teaching of Origen cannot, however, be advanced as a major influence for the use of psalms in worship. Had Origen advocated this, surely his pupil, Gregory Thaumaturgos, would have introduced it into Neocaesarea, whose leaders a century later insisted that 'these things were not done in the time of the great Gregory.' Nevertheless, by the later fourth-century several authors including Ambrose, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa were extolling the psalms not only as teaching about Christ but as encompassing all Christian doctrine.¹²⁶ For Basil, the psalms are both compendium of faith and panacea for spiritual ills:

Now, the prophets teach one thing, historians another, the law something else, and the form of advice found in the proverbs something different still. But the Book of Psalms has taken over what is profitable from all. It foretells coming events; it recalls history; it frames laws for life; it suggests what must be done; and, in general it is the common

¹²² Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 117-9; Lk 24: 44, NRSV.

¹²³ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 118.

¹²⁴ Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 120.

¹²⁵ PG 12:1319, my translation. from the Latin of Rufinus, the Greek original having been lost and rediscovered in 2012.

¹²⁶ e.g. Ambrose, (340 – 397 CE), *Explanatio psalmi* 1.7,9; Athanasius, (c 298 – 373 CE), *Epistula ad Marcellinum*; John Chrysostom, (349 – 407 CE), *Expositio in psalmum*, 41.1.

treasury of good doctrine, carefully finding what is suitable for each one. The old wounds of souls it cures completely, and to the recently wounded it brings speedy improvement; the diseased it treats, and the unharmed it preserves. On the whole it effaces, as far as is possible, the passions, which subtly exercise dominion over souls during the lifetime of man, and it does this with a certainly orderly persuasion and sweetness which produces sound thoughts.¹²⁷

And Gregory of Nyssa extends this view seeing the psalter, in course, as a stage-by-stage manual of the development of the Christian life in the pursuit of blessedness.¹²⁸

At this time also, the nature of psalms as hymns began to be stressed. Basil continues the above passage:

When indeed the Holy Spirit saw that the human race was guided only with difficulty toward virtue, and that, because of our inclination toward pleasure, we were neglectful of an upright life, what did he do? The delight of melody He mingled with the doctrines so that by the pleasantness and softness of the sound heard we might receive without perceiving it the benefit of the words, just as wise physicians who, when giving the fastidious rather bitter drugs to drink, frequently smear the cup with honey. Therefore, he devised for us these harmonious melodies of the psalms, that they who are children in age or, even those who are youthful in disposition might to all appearances chant but, in reality, become trained in soul. For, never has any one of the many indifferent persons gone away easily holding in mind either an apostolic or prophetic message, but they do chant the words of the psalms even in the home, and they spread them around in the market place.¹²⁹

The practice of smearing a cup with honey as a simile for making difficult ideas easy to assimilate goes back at least, to Lucretius:

Doctors who give children foul-tasting wormwood first coat the rim of the cup with the sweet juice of honey; their intention is that the children, unwary at their tender age, will be tricked into applying their lips to the cup and at the same time drain the bitter draught of wormwood ... I have a similar intention now, since this philosophy of ours often appears somewhat off-putting to those who have not experienced it, and most people recoil back from it, I have preferred to expound it to you

¹²⁷ Basil, *Homily on Psalm 1*, PG 29.212.4 – 16, Roy Joseph Deferrari (trans), *Saint Basil Exegetic Homilies*, The Fathers Of The Church, A New Translation Volume 46 (Washington DC: The Catholic University Of America Press, 1963) 151-2

¹²⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, particularly I.3 (17); Ronald E Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptiones of the Psalms* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1995) 87-8.

¹²⁹ Basil, *Homily on Psalm 1*, PG 29.212.16-34; Deferrari, *Exegetic Homilies*, 152.

in harmonious Pierian poetry and, so to speak, coat it with the sweet honey of the Muses.¹³⁰

And this idea is taken up by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*: 'for those who have not yet tasted the pleasure which is pure and divine, one must contrive something like that which physicians are accustomed to do when they make their bitter and hard-to-swallow medicine easy for the sick to take by sweetening it with honey.'¹³¹ However, it seems likely that the arguments, that the psalms encompass all doctrine, and that melody makes that doctrine easier to assimilate, are not reasons for the adoption of psalms in worship but justifications, after the fact.

An alternative, but not unconnected, hypothesis for the introduction of psalms into worship is proposed by Martin Hengel.¹³² The second and third centuries saw a rise of heretical groups which were particularly productive of new songs and spontaneous singing. Since many of these groups rejected the Old Testament and thus the psalter, they were largely reliant on self-composed material which inevitably reflected their own teachings. As heresies and the groups promoting them were excluded from communion with the more orthodox, their hymns went with them. Any new creation of hymnic material, Hengel proposes, thus became suspect and the reaction of orthodox churches was gradually to restrict singing to the biblical psalms or canticles, regarded as divinely inspired and re-interpreted as Christian prophecies. While Hengel writes of the events of an earlier period, heresies were still to be found in the fourth century, and certainly a hint of Hengel's view can be found in Basil's contrast of expressions of merely human composition which were therefore inadequate if not suspect, against 'the oracles of the Spirit', the scriptural psalms and other songs seen as divinely inspired statements of Christian doctrine. However, the suggestion that new hymns were automatically suspect is by no means certain, and church leaders in Neocaesarea, clinging to their use of 'mere human expressions' which they saw as the practices

¹³⁰ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.933 ff, trans. Martin Ferguson Smith, *Lucretius On The Nature of Things*, revised edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2001) 28-8.

¹³¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.2 (15), GNO 5.28.27 – 29.2, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 86-7.

¹³² Martin Hengel, 'The Song About Christ in Earliest Worship' in *Studies in Early Christology*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995) 240-6.

of the 'Great Gregory' a century or more earlier, seem to have had the opposite opinion, that the psalms were a suspect novelty.

It was, however, possible to write hymns which might express the orthodox view as is seen in the writings of Ephrem the Syrian, a late fourth-century orthodox theologian and hymnologist. 'Many of his *Hymns against Heresies*, composed in Nisibis, were refutations of the doctrines of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan; and in his new home [Edessa] he supplemented these polemics with more hymns as well as prose refutations.'¹³³ The heresies of the first three Christian centuries were, it seems still to be found in the late fourth.¹³⁴ Of these heresiarchs, the most interesting is perhaps Bardaisan, who provided, not only a target for Ephrem's poetry, but also the poetic form for it. 'The first Syriac author whose name has been preserved, Bardaisan composed his one hundred fifty hymns [in Edessa] in the second century.'¹³⁵ He was responsible for the origination of the form of hymn called *madrāšâ* and 'composing hymns in the same form to combat the heretic's views, Ephrem became the unquestioned master of the genre.'¹³⁶ Although he did not turn to the psalms as vehicles of doctrine, trusting instead in his own ability to express what he saw as the faith, not every Christian teacher was an Ephrem. Thus, his apparent need for orthodox songs as a counter to heresies also provides some support for the general tenor of Hengel's argument

An alternative explanation for the psalmodic movement may, however, be found in the works of Gregory of Nyssa as he continues his introduction to the psalter:

In short, all people in all pursuits, both men and women, healthy and ill, consider it a loss not to proclaim this sublime teaching. For instance, both banquets and wedding festivities include this philosophy as a part of the rejoicing in their celebrations, so that, in these night festivals, by means of these psalms, we are in the presence of enthusiastic hymn singing and the philosophy of the Churches which is enthusiastically pursued in them.¹³⁷

Heine notes that singing was seen as an essential component of banquets, including those at weddings, but the traditional pagan nature of the songs made

¹³³ Kathleen E McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 27.

¹³⁴ Marcion 85 – 160 CE, Bardaisan 154 – 222 CE, Mani 216-274 CE; Ephrem 306 – 373 CE, a native of Nisibis, moved to Edessa in 363.

¹³⁵ McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns*, 26.

¹³⁶ McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns*, 26.

¹³⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (17), GNO 5.29.18 – 30.14, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptiones*, 87-8.

them unsuitable for Christians.¹³⁸ While Christians could hardly be forbidden the celebration of weddings and other events, they could be encouraged to make use of more suitable songs. While it is possible that psalms were used by many Christians on such occasions, it seems likely that Gregory's claims are part of a continued episcopal campaign to produce this effect. Indeed, we may suspect that Gregory is generally looking at psalm singing outside the church through slightly rose-tinted spectacles. Nevertheless, psalms were used on a personal basis by the devout. Thus, Gregory Nazianzen, describing the death of his sister Gorgonia records, 'her pastor ... perceived that her lips were moving slightly ... She was faintly murmuring a psalm, the closing words of a psalm, and truly they are a testimony of her confidence in her parting. Blessed indeed is he who can close his life with the words: "In peace in the selfsame I will sleep and I will rest."' ¹³⁹ And, as we have seen, Gregory of Nyssa on the childhood education of his sister Macrina, writes that she knew the whole psalter making regular use of psalmody at appropriate times. ¹⁴⁰ And, like Gorgonia, she is described as approaching death with words of psalms on her lips. ¹⁴¹ Thus, for Gregory, the use of psalms in church worship might be seen as a basis for countering unsuitable, possibly pagan, singing beyond the church doors.

It is neither possible, nor indeed necessary, to adopt only one of the above explanations for the origin and growth of the fourth century psalmodic movement. While I reject the suggestion of Cappadocian practice being directly derived from Egyptian desert monasticism, a variety of needs and stimuli from different directions may have inspired it. Certainly, Christian interpretation of psalms, their impeccable status as scripture, together with their poetic nature, made them attractive as worship songs, while the existence of heretical hymns and pagan songs shows a felt need for singing amongst congregations. While Basil's claim to be 'in unison and harmony with all the churches of God' cannot be

¹³⁸ Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 88, n. 10; see also Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 37-42.

¹³⁹ Or. 8, *In laudem sororis Gorgoniae*, PG 35. 789-817; Gregory Nazianzen, Funeral Oration on His Sister, Gorgonia, 22, translation from Leo P. McCauley et al. (trans.), *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 116-7; quoting Ps 4:8.

¹⁴⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.373.4-374.6, translation from Anna M Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008) 113-4.

¹⁴¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.397-8.

substantiated (it certainly did not include the Neocaesarean churches), the movement was, it seems, well established generally by the time he wrote. Thus, we cannot expect to get from his writings any certainty about its origins and development. However, while Emelia cannot have influenced leaders such as Ambrose, Athanasius, and Chrysostom, her influence on Macrina, Basil and Gregory should not be forgotten.

8.9 Points of Contention – ‘A Manner of Singing’

We come now to the third issue between the two parties; it is not only psalms which are objected to, but also the way in which they are sung. In the absence of precise information from the Neocaesarean side of the argument, explanations must be speculative. We will therefore consider several possible interpretations of this complaint.

Firstly, it might be thought that the way of singing with which the Neocaesareans were familiar might be metrical hymns, psalms, being non-metrical, being chanted without fixed rhythm. However, Charles Cosgrove points out that ancient Greek music in general was very different from modern repetitive song melodies, being, in many ways, similar to the later Gregorian chant, used for psalmody.¹⁴² It is unlikely then that the melody of Basilian psalm singing was very different from hymns or ‘supplications’ sung in the churches of Neocaesarea.

A second possibility is that the alternate singing described by Basil might be unfamiliar in Neocaesarea. However, Pliny recounts a brief description of Christian worship in Bythynia-Pontus in the early second century, writing to Trajan that the local Christians had the custom of ‘gathering together before dawn on a fixed day, and of singing alternately a hymn to Christ as to a God’ (*quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum inuicem*).¹⁴³ While the meaning of *secum inuicem* (‘in alternation with each other’) may lack the precision we might wish, it clearly relates to some alternating form. Although it is not impossible that such a way of singing may have died out in

¹⁴² Charles H Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 104-108.

¹⁴³ Pliny the Younger, *Letters* Book 10, 96, in *Pliny, Letters and Panegyricus II*, Betty Radice (ed. & trans.), Loeb Classical Library LCL59, (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press) 288.

fourth-century Neocaesarea, it seems unlikely that Neocaesareans would be unfamiliar with it.

A third possibility derives from the structure of the Basilian monastery with separate quarters for men and women and shared worship. It seems most likely that the description of two choirs who sing alternately means that there was one choir of men and another of women who took it in turn to sing verses of the psalm. That separate choirs sharing the singing was the norm for a double monastery is supported by a passage in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Saint Macrina*. At his sister's funeral, a large number of people from the surrounding district attended, so he allocated them to join the appropriate choirs: 'I separated the tide of people according to sex, and put the crowd of women with the choir of virgins, while the menfolk I put in the order of the monks. Then I elicited a single psalmody, rhythmical and harmonious, coming alternatively from either side as in choral singing, and blending beautifully in the common responses.'¹⁴⁴ Low levels of literacy would require the learning of a number of psalms by heart for this way of singing. In the other case, however, where singing was responsorial, only the soloist would need to know (or be able to read) more psalms while the assembly would simply be called upon to recall a fixed chorus.

Further, Basil warns the Neocaesareans not to be 'precise in language about the sound of the voice for the psalmody' (περὶ μὲν ἤχου φωνῆς τοῦ κατὰ τὰς ψαλμωδίας ἀκριβολογούμενοι). As Basil describes two groups split into two choirs, can it have been women's voices that were objected to? If so, this letter may point to the emergence, in fourth century Asia Minor, of a change in Church attitudes to the singing of women, which is described by Johannes Quasten.¹⁴⁵ Women, he claims, naturally joined in communal singing in Church in the first two Christian centuries. Although he can offer no specific reference to women singing at this time, this, nevertheless, seems a reasonable implication from statements that singing was for all, and a lack of criticism or prohibition, as there was later. However, at the time of Letter 207 women sang in church and were encouraged to do so, at least in some places. Thus, Quasten offers us the evidence of Maruta

¹⁴⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.407.4-13, translation from Anna M Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008) 142-3.

¹⁴⁵ Johannes Quasten, 'The Liturgical Singing of Women in Christian Antiquity', *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Jul., 1941), 149-165.

(or Maruthas) of Maipherkat, reporting on the Council of Nicaea, that churches should have groups of sisters to take part in psalmody: 'It is the will of the general synod that municipal churches should not be without this class of sisters. They shall have a diligent teacher to instruct them in reading and especially in psalmody. This is decreed by the synod without anathema.'¹⁴⁶ The Mesopotamian bishop, Maruta, writing in the first quarter of the fifth century did not, presumably, have first-hand knowledge of the council, however. And moreover, this requirement does not appear amongst the Nicene Canons.¹⁴⁷ But, whatever the accuracy of his account, it seems that he accepted, and was, indeed, promoting, the singing of women in Mesopotamia. Even closer to the date of Basil's letter, Egeria, in the late fourth century, describes '*monozantes* and *parthenas*', together with lay men and women meeting before the break of day to chant hymns and psalms '[joining] in singing the refrains' ('ymni et psalmi responduntur').¹⁴⁸ And, Ephrem the Syrian, when at Nisibis, 'is said to have founded a choir of women whom he personally instructed in the singing of his hymns.'¹⁴⁹

But already by that time, an alternative view was begging to creep in. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem (died 386) and Isidore of Pelusium (died c. 448) condemn the liturgical singing of women, even merely joining in congregational song.¹⁵⁰ One reason for this prohibition may have been that, in the world outside that of Christian worship, music and singing by women were associated with courtesans and harlots.¹⁵¹ But a more cogent reason, Quasten suggests, may have been that, in many heretical groups, women seem to have held prominent positions including those of singers.¹⁵² Thus Jerome, writing in criticism of Pelagius in the

¹⁴⁶ Braun, *Marutha von Maipherhat, De sancta Nicaena synodo*, can. 41 (Kirchengeschichtliche Studien, IV, 3, Münster, 1898), 87, quoted in Quasten 'Liturgical Singing of Women', 154.

¹⁴⁷ Henry R Percival (ed. and trans.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd. Series, vol. 14, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, (New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1900) 8-42.

¹⁴⁸ *Egeria's Travels* 24, 1, cited in Quasten 'Liturgical Singing of Women', 155, quotation from Wilkinson, *J. Egeria's Travels*, (London: SPCK, 1971), Latin text from *Egeria and The Fourth Century Liturgy of Jerusalem*, (hypertext), Michael Fraser, 1994, on-line at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mikef/durham/egelat.html> (accessed 08/07/2015).

¹⁴⁹ McVey, Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns, 28

¹⁵⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatech.* 14, PG 33, 356; Isidore of Pelusium, *Epistula* 1, 90, PG 78, 244; quoted in Quasten 'Liturgical Singing of Women', 157.

¹⁵¹ Quasten 'Liturgical Singing of Women', 159ff.

¹⁵² Quasten 'Liturgical Singing of Women', 157-8.

early 5th century, condemns him for permitting women to sing ‘as though they were lawfully constituted teachers.’¹⁵³ However, we must note that this presupposes an established rejection of women as ‘lawfully constituted teachers’, and further that the tendency was to a two-way association of heresy with unconventional practice (as is implied by the Neocaesarean criticism of Basilian monasticism and Basil’s defence). The public singing of women was thus to be condemned because of its association with heresies, while unorthodox groups were denounced for allowing women to sing. Thus the monarchianist, Paul of Samosata, (Bishop of Antioch, 260-268) was attacked for substituting his own compositions for the usual Easter hymns and, in the words of Eusebius, for having ‘women sing hymns in the middle of the assembly on the first Easter Day.’¹⁵⁴ And in a comment redolent of the Neocaesarean concerns ‘about the sound of the voice for the psalmody’, Eusebius adds ‘the very sound of it must have provoked a shudder.’ The establishment of a women’s choir may well have been seen as associated with Paul’s heretical views and allegedly corrupt lifestyle.¹⁵⁵ Ephrem the Syrian, an orthodox teacher of semi-monastic lifestyle, does not seem to have met with similar criticism for his women’s choir.

Clearly, Eusebius did not have personal experience of hearing the singing of Paul of Samosata’s female choir any more than the church-leaders of Neocaesarea had heard Basil’s monastics. Possibly in the latter case the objection might stem, not from the inclusion of women in the singing, but from the alternation of male and female voices suggested above. Certainly, as Basil makes clear, the problem was ‘the sound of the voice for the psalmody’ and this is relevant to a fourth possible explanation of the ‘manner of singing’, which impacts on modern discussion about the nature of the synaxis itself.

Bearing the nature of antiphons in mind, we may now proceed to deal with the possibility that the ‘manner of singing’ to which the Neocaesareans objected was the singing of antiphons. And thus, since antiphons were used at all-night vigils and formed part of cathedral worship rather than that of a monastery, this question

¹⁵³ Jerome, *Contra Pelagianos* 1, 25, PL 23, 519, quoted in Quasten ‘Liturgical Singing of Women’, 159.

¹⁵⁴ Bishop of Antioch 260-8 CE, Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7, 30, 10, quoted in Quasten ‘Liturgical Singing of Women’, 153.

¹⁵⁵ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abridged by D M Low, (London: Book Club Associates, 1974) 221-3.

is closely bound up with two others. Was this synaxis an all-night vigil? And was it a 'cathedral' office or a monastic one?

8.10 An All-Night Vigil?

As the 'manner of singing' of Basil's group is different from that of the Neocaesareans, Bradshaw suggests that a problem may be 'the inclusion of antiphonal psalmody as well as the more traditional responsorial method', drawing a parallel between the Neocaesarean criticism of Basil and the weekly vigils as a focus of conflict between Arians and Orthodox in Antioch.¹⁵⁶ I shall argue below that what we have here is more correctly described as 'alternate' singing, which did not have Arian origins, nevertheless it is possible that the Sabellian Neocaesareans might have identified it with Arian practices and their antipathy might thus have had a doctrinal basis.

In the above discussion, we have tended to assume that the Neocaesarean criticism of Basil's monasticism was closely associated with their additional objection to psalms and the manner of singing them. That is, that the service depicted in the letter was a monastic practice. This assumption, however, is not universally accepted; nevertheless, we shall see that on close examination of what Basil has to say, some justification for it emerges. 'Recent scholars have tended to assume that Basil is here describing the regular midnight [monastic] office which had been extended into a vigil, following the Egyptian model, and lasting until morning, the 'psalm of confession' (Ps. 51) forming the beginning of the morning office, as in other rites', Bradshaw tells us, before adding, as noted above, 'however, this may not be the case.'¹⁵⁷ The alternative proposed by Bradshaw and Robert Taft, is that the service described here, while not a *regular monastic* vigil, nevertheless lasts from midnight to and beyond dawn being, as Taft explains, 'an *occasional Cathedral* vigil such as we see in Alexandria and Constantinople at this time.'¹⁵⁸ I shall argue that this may not be the case either.

¹⁵⁶ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*, (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 1981) 101-2. The precise date of origin of antiphonal psalmody in Antioch is uncertain, however, see Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 90.

¹⁵⁷ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in east and West*, 2nd edn. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993) 40, my emphasis.

Basil begins his description with the words: ‘Among us the people rise early from the night to go to the house of prayer’ (Ἐκ νυκτὸς γὰρ ὀρθρίζει παρ’ ἡμῖν ὁ λαὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τῆς προσευχῆς).¹⁵⁹ Although ἐκ νυκτὸς means ‘from night’ and can even signify ‘from nightfall’, the use of ὀρθρίζω, ‘I rise or wake early’ (ὄρθρος, dawn), indicates that such a translation is inappropriate here. Moreover, the sentence begins with a phrase from Isaiah 26:9, which reads in full: ‘My spirit rises early from the night to you, O God, because of the light of your ordinances upon the earth’ (Ἐκ νυκτὸς ὀρθρίζει τὸ πνεῦμά μου πρὸς σὲ ὁ Θεὸς, διότι φῶς τὰ προστάγματά σου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).¹⁶⁰ And we should note that there is a clear association with light and dawn. Other translations support this understanding. Thus Brenton translates the occurrence in Isaiah as, ‘My spirit seeks thee early in the morning, O God.’¹⁶¹ Similarly, Deferrari translates the phrase in letter 207 as, ‘the people rise early at night.’¹⁶² Some translators are rather more vague as regards time, Courtonne renders it as, ‘Pendant la nuit chez nous le peuple se lève’,¹⁶³ and Bradshaw as ‘the people go at night to the house of prayer.’¹⁶⁴ Taft, however, offers the somewhat too free translation, ‘Among us the people “keep watch after nightfall” in the house of prayer.’¹⁶⁵ Taft comments that the phrase is one that ‘we shall also find in Chrysostom’s Antiochene vigil, and which is still today the Lenten invitatory to nocturns in the Byzantine Sabaitic [ie. Orthodox monastic] office.’¹⁶⁶

The passage to which Taft refers, in John Chrysostom’s *Homily 14 on 1 Timothy*, does not, however, describe a vigil kept from midnight but one beginning at cockcrow (ἀλεκτρυῶν ἐφώνησε), as Taft himself points out elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ The term ‘cockcrow’ should not be understood as a precise time but the *period* of one

¹⁵⁹ Basil, *Letter 207.3.4-6*, Courtonne, *Lettres*, II, 186.

¹⁶⁰ Is 26:9; Greek from Lancelot C. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, (original publication, London: Bagster, 1851, 11th reprinting, Hendrickson, 2005.) my translation.

¹⁶¹ Is. 26: 9, Brenton, *Septuagint*, his translation.

¹⁶² Deferrari, *Letters*, vol 3, 187.

¹⁶³ Courtonne, *Lettres*, vol 2, 186.

¹⁶⁴ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 100.

¹⁶⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 39, Taft’s quotation marks indicate the quotation from Is. 26:9.

¹⁶⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40, see above chapter: *Times of Prayer*, section 6.6 for Taft’s use of ‘Byzantine Sabaitic’, ‘nocturns’, a term not used in the Orthodox churches, refers to the midnight office.

¹⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, *Homily on 1 Timothy 14.4*, PG 62.576.8-22; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 80-1.

to two hours immediately preceding the dawn, when cocks, driven by their circadian cycles, predict the coming of light.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, this is borne out by the statement a little earlier in the *Homily on 1 Timothy*. In a monastic community, Chrysostom says, worship begins ‘as soon as it is day, or rather before day, when the cock crows’ (Ἡμέρα γίνεται, μάλλον δὲ πρὸ ἡμέρας ἀλεκτροῦν ἐφώνησε).¹⁶⁹ The close association of cockcrow with the beginning of day in Chrysostom’s mind suggests that he regards these two as being separated by only a short period of time.

We may ask, if Basil wanted scriptural justification for a vigil beginning at midnight, why did he not quote ‘At midnight I arose to give you thanks for the judgements of your justice,’ as he does in his discussion of the times of prayer?¹⁷⁰ Indeed, this quotation is used by the author of *On Virginity*, attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, precisely to introduce just such a vigil.¹⁷¹ If on the other hand, the reference is to a beginning shortly before dawn, might we not expect him to quote, ‘My eyes anticipated the dawn that I might ponder your sayings,’ as in the same discussion.¹⁷² Certainly there is a similarity of meaning between ‘my eyes anticipated the dawn’ and ‘they rise early from the night.’ That Basil chooses the latter, suggests that there may be a stronger reason for its use.

The first argument advanced by Taft and Bradshaw, for identifying this as a Cathedral all-night vigil is based on the next part of Basil’s initial sentence. The description of the participants here as ‘the people’ (ὁ λαὸς), is understood by these authors to refer to the ordinary (non-monastic) laity.¹⁷³ This argument is, however, somewhat weakened by Taft’s admission that ‘Basil does not call his ascetics “monks”.’¹⁷⁴ More precisely, Basil does not normally use *any* special term for his ascetics, avoiding the use of μοναζόντες or ναζιραίοι found in Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa, and preferring ‘brothers’ or ‘Christians’.¹⁷⁵ He

¹⁶⁸ Kevin K. Birth, ‘The Regular Sound of the Cock: Context-Dependent Time Reckoning in the Middle Ages’, *KronoScope* 11:1-2 (2011) 125-144.

¹⁶⁹ Chrysostom, *Homily on 1 Timothy* 14.3, PG 62.575.36-7.

¹⁷⁰ Ps. 118 (119): 62; Basil, *LR*, 37.5, see above chapter on Times of Prayer.

¹⁷¹ Pseudo Athanasius, *On Virginity* 20.1-18, quoted in Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 88; see Taft for the proposal that the authorship is Cappadocian around 370 CE.

¹⁷² Ps. 118 (119): 148, Basil, *LR*, 37.5.

¹⁷³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

¹⁷⁴ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40.

¹⁷⁵ See e.g. Basil, *Letter 22*, Courtonne, *Lettres*, I, 52-7; Deferrari, *Letters* vol 1, 128-141.

was, however, not unaware of such terminology, for as noted above, he uses μοναζόντες in his second letter 'To Amphilochius, Concerning the Canons', and in letter 170 to Glycerius, he refers to the alternative, τάγμα τῶν μοναστῶν.¹⁷⁶ It is rather the case that he wished to play down boundaries between ascetics and the ordinary laity. There is, moreover, good reason for a different understanding of ὁ λαὸς here.

Modern scholarship suggests that Isaiah chapter 26 may be part of a prophecy of salvation belonging to the exilic period, or an eschatological prophecy as late as the second century BCE.¹⁷⁷ Although Basil may have read it in the context of the foreign oracles section of the book, in which Judah is portrayed as surrounded by enemies (Isaiah chapters 13-23), it is perhaps more likely that he understood it as having a Christian eschatological interpretation, and would have expected the Neocaesareans to take it the same way. Once again, then, he would have found something rhetorically appropriate to his situation.

The words quoted are, in Vernon Robbins' terminology, a *Recontextualization* of the passage from Isaiah; that is, the source is not mentioned and indeed there is no suggestion that it is a quotation.¹⁷⁸ As Robbins demonstrates in his example of the use of Psalm 22 in Mark's passion account, recontextualization may pull together phrases and even individual words from various parts of the source.¹⁷⁹ That is also the case here. Examining the Isaiah chapter, we find that, following a brief introduction, it consists of a song, beginning: 'Behold a strong city and he shall make salvation its wall and fortification. Open the gates, let a people [λαὸς] enter that preserves righteousness and truth,' (ἰδοὺ πόλις ἰσχυρὰ, καὶ σωτήριον θήσει τεῖχος καὶ περίτειχος. ἀνοίξατε πύλας, εἰσελθέτω λαὸς φυλάσσω δικαιοσύνην καὶ φυλάσσω ἀλήθειαν.)¹⁸⁰ As an aside, we may note that the translation of φυλάσσω as 'preserve' is clearly required in this context although its basic meaning, 'to keep watch', 'be sleepless' is, perhaps, also relevant and is

¹⁷⁶ Basil *Letter 199*.19.2; *Letter 170*.1.2-3.

¹⁷⁷ See eg. Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13 – 39, A Commentary*, (London: SCM Press, 1974) 173 -9; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 171-4.

¹⁷⁸ Vernon K Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996) 48.

¹⁷⁹ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 438-50; Mk. 15:24-34.

¹⁸⁰ Is. 26:1-2, Brenton, *Septuagint*, my translation.

similar in sense to ἀγρυπνία - 'sleeplessness, waking, watching' used later in the letter. This initial verse of the Isaiah song makes it clear that Basil has chosen the particular quotation from later in the chapter, together with ὁ λαὸς, as a continuation of his theme of a properly ordered heavenly citizenship. Other aspects of the song may well have been in his mind too. In contrast to the Neocaesareans 'warfare', the people who are to enter the heavenly city are described as 'receiving truth and keeping peace' (ἀντιλαμβανόμενος ἀληθείας καὶ φυλάσσων εἰρήνην).¹⁸¹ And, in an implied threat to the city of Neocaesarea, the song continues: 'you [O Lord] will overthrow strong cities and shatter them to the ground, and the feet of the meek and lowly shall trample them.' (πόλεις ὄχυράς καταβαλεῖς καὶ κατάξεις ἕως ἐδάφους. Καὶ πόδες πραέων καὶ ταπεινῶν).¹⁸² And the psalm goes on to assure the people that, despite affliction, they will ultimately be justified.¹⁸³ While many of the Christian laity of Cappadocia will have been lowly and some, possibly, meek, and Basil, no doubt, urged the importance of these characteristics upon them all, it was his monastic associates who most closely fitted the description of 'the meek and lowly.'

The association of ἐκ νυκτὸς ὀρθρίζει with λαὸς thus strongly suggests that monasticism in Cappadocia and the singing of psalms cannot be considered as two separate issues. The people who rise and go to the house of prayer are the 'people that preserves righteousness and truth', the people who 'who direct their lives as citizens according to the Gospel', those 'whose citizenship is in heaven', the 'meek and lowly.' The 'we' of this letter are the people whose faith and practices will be vindicated by God, and who will, as citizens, enter the 'strong city' of heaven.

One further hypothesis concerning this quotation should be added. In this letter Basil uses the term 'with the oracles of the Spirit' (τοῖς λογίοις τοῦ Πνεύματος) for what is sung, an expression which we have assumed to mean 'psalms'. While it is clear that psalms are included in this designation, he would, presumably, also consider the song of Isaiah 26 to be such an oracle. And, as Taft suggests that the psalms Basil quotes when he describes prayer-times in the Asceticon might be psalms actually used during the corresponding synaxes, might this song not

¹⁸¹ Is. 26:3, Brenton, *Septuagint*, my translation.

¹⁸² Is. 26:5-6, Brenton, *Septuagint*, my translation.

¹⁸³ Is. 26:16-18.

be used in its entirety in the synaxis described here?¹⁸⁴ Such a use would certainly bring the passage to Basil's mind when describing the service, and suggest the theme of heavenly citizenship to him.

Taft further comments that 'this vigil does not accord with the uses of the ascetics in *Longer Rules* 37:5, which provides a period of rest between the nightly *mesonyktikon* or midnight office and the morning prayer of the ascetics.'¹⁸⁵ Taft is, of course, assuming that this is an all-night vigil and arguing that it is not a monastic one, apparently failing to consider the possibility that what is described is actually 'the morning prayer of the ascetics.'

A second phrase, τὴν νύκτα διενεγκόντες, might perhaps be taken to indicate an all-night vigil. This could be translated 'having passed the night', with διαφέρω carrying a suggestion of 'enduring'. An alternative translation of the verb, however, is 'bring to perfection' which better fits Basil's concept of worship and the current context, particularly in view of our translation of ὀρθρίζω.

Taft goes on to argue that, 'the whole context of the passage of *Letter 207* on psalmody would lead us to think of Cathedral practice. For instance, Basil justifies his liturgical usage by appealing to that of "all the Churches of God" and numerous countries, whereas earlier in the same letter, when speaking of the ascetics, he appeals only to the three traditional cradles of monasticism, Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.'¹⁸⁶ Thus Taft sees the two areas of conflict in the letter, monasticism and psalm singing, as distinct and separate.

This argument is, however, not as compelling as it might appear at first sight. Following the Council of Gangra, Basil is unlikely to defend his monasticism by appealing to the example of others in Anatolia, or that of the irregular and denounced idle wanderers found throughout the Christian world. And, of course, boasting of being a new and improved version of these could be seen as unacceptable self-praise. There were, however, three centres seen as beyond reproach, accepted by an intended audience beyond Cappadocia, perhaps, even by the Neocaesareans. Nevertheless, he puts his appeal to them in somewhat guarded terms: 'I hear that ... perhaps some ...' and, as we have seen, cites them

¹⁸⁴ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 87.

¹⁸⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40.

¹⁸⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40.

as a target to be aimed for rather than a perfection achieved. In the same way, if monasticism is not fully trusted, he can hardly justify his liturgical practice by citing monastic precedents. However, the practices criticised are part of the fourth-century psalmodic movement, spread through the churches rather than deriving from the practice of desert monks. Further, the office of the *urban* monastics of Cappadocia was, it is clear, closer to that of the cathedral than that found among the monks of Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. He therefore offers the examples of other churches, however, again formulated, in the most general and uncontroversial terms. Who can object to ‘watching (ἀγρυπνία), prayers, and shared psalmody’? Moreover, by aligning himself with those beyond the current conflict, Basil might be able to count on their support in return.

In addition, Bradshaw argues that Basil’s description of psalm singing provides additional evidence for considering the synaxis described as an all-night cathedral vigil:

The inclusion of antiphonal psalmody as well as the more traditional responsorial method suggests that it is an occasional vigil of longer duration rather than a regular night office, since all our early references to this new way of rendering the psalms refer to such occasions, where it seems to have been adopted in order to introduce some variety and thus reduce tiredness and distraction in such extended observances.¹⁸⁷

We must recall that Basil does not refer to *antiphons* or *antiphonal psalmody*. Nor does he describe antiphonal psalmody. If he were writing of a recently introduced practice of antiphony, but wished for any reason, to avoid the use of the new terminology, he would surely describe it more precisely, mentioning the two soloists in a similar manner to his description of the responsorial form: ‘having entrusted one to lead the song, the rest respond’ Moreover, if we accept the evidence of Pliny as indicating early alternate singing, together with Taft’s claim that one early form of psalmody had two alternating choirs, we may conclude that Basil writes ἀντιψάλλουσιν ἀλλήλοις to mean the same practice. Indeed, Taft is quite clear that what Basil describes is alternate psalmody and not an antiphon:

It is generally believed that ‘antiphonal psalmody’ means the alternation of psalm verses by the congregation or community divided into two choirs. Such alternative [sic] monastic psalmody is as a matter of

¹⁸⁷ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

fact described by some early writers such as Basil the Great. But that is not antiphonal psalmody.¹⁸⁸

To assume that such alternate singing implies antiphony seems to be an example of the very confusion which Joseph Gelineau and Taft criticise.¹⁸⁹ It seems then that the best translation of Basil's καὶ νῦν μὲν διχῆ διανεμηθέντες ἀντιψάλλουσιν ἀλλήλοις must be 'and now, having been divided into two, they sing alternately with each other.'

Taft, however, makes a similar mistake in his argument, commenting that 'the description of the psalmody, first antiphonal then responsorial and interrupted by prayers is remarkably like the Friday night vigil of the Bethlehem monks'¹⁹⁰ The basic structure of the latter, as described by Cassian was, Taft continues, 'a liturgical unit of three antiphons, three responsorial psalms and three lessons, repeated throughout the night.' The relevant passage from Cassian is:

A vigil will certainly demand a higher toll if it is with heedless and unreasonable excess drawn out until dawn. Therefore they [Bethlehem monks] divide it into three sections, so that the toil that is diversified in this way may cater to the body's frailty with a certain pleasurable-ness. For when they have sung three antiphons while standing, they then sit on the ground or on very low seats and respond to one man chanting three psalms, which is done individually by individual brothers who take each other's place in turn, and as they are sitting in quiet three readings are added on to these.¹⁹¹

It may be the case that when Cassian writes that the vigil is divided into three sections he means that, as Taft puts it, the three sections constitute a 'liturgical unit' which is repeated until the vigil is completed. However, it is clear that Cassian regards dragging the service out until dawn as a 'heedless and unreasonable excess', so that it is by no means certain that this unit was repeated 'throughout the night.'¹⁹²

There are certain similarities between this vigil and the synaxis which Basil describes; both take place at night, and involve the singing of psalms in two

¹⁸⁸ Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, (Washington DC, The Pastoral Press, 1984), 157, citing Letter 207 for Basil's description of alternate psalmody.

¹⁸⁹ Joseph Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, (London: Burns & Oats, 1964) 102, footnote 197; Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 159; see Introduction section 1.5.

¹⁹⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 40.

¹⁹¹ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.8.4; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 66.

¹⁹² See below for further discussion of this point.

different ways, one of which is responsorial. However, Cassian clearly writes of the use of 'antiphons', characteristic of vigils, while Basil, as we have seen, describes the other manner of singing as 'alternate' which 'is not antiphonal psalmody.' Further, Basil makes no mention of any readings. While this does not entirely rule out the reading of some scripture other than psalms it seems most unlikely that readings can have constituted a significant part of the Basilian synaxis as they apparently do for that which Cassian describes. Additionally, the Bethlehem monastic vigil of Friday night and Saturday morning did not always go on until daybreak, for Cassian writes that the monks 'are accustomed to concluding [it] after cockcrow and before dawn.'¹⁹³ Unfortunately, Cassian's information is once more a little confusing, for as he expands this later it becomes a practice observed during the long nights of winter when the vigil ends at 'the fourth cockcrow' providing the monks with a rest of 'nearly two hours' or 'at least an hour.'¹⁹⁴ Basil, nevertheless, makes no mention of such a gap; his followers continue up to and beyond the dawn.

Certainly, there were all-night cathedral vigils in Cappadocia; Basil preaches at them or about them. Thus his *Homily on Psalm 144, 1* was delivered at a vigil in honour of the forty martyrs.¹⁹⁵ In *Homily 14 on Drunkards 1*, however, he complains about behaviour on such occasions.¹⁹⁶ These vigils lasted from midnight to midday.¹⁹⁷ As Taft observes, 'it is obvious that the laity did not spend all night, every night in prayer', thus such vigils were occasional affairs.¹⁹⁸ Basil, however, makes no suggestion that *Letter 207* describes anything infrequent, and his plain, unqualified statement of what is done ('our currently prevailing customs are ... Among us the people rise early from the night to go to the house of prayer'), implies that he is describing a norm rather than an exception. Nor indeed is there any indication that this service goes on until midday.

There is then little justification for the claim that what Basil is describing is an all-night vigil, either monastic or cathedral, it being in fact a regular morning office. Is it then the cathedral morning office? The late fourth century cathedral usage,

¹⁹³ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.6; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 64.

¹⁹⁴ Cassian, *De institutis*, 3.8.1; Ramsey, *Institutes*, 65.

¹⁹⁵ Basil, *Homily on Psalm 144, 1*, PG 29.484.

¹⁹⁶ Basil, *Homily 14 on Drunkards 1*, PG 31.444-445.

¹⁹⁷ Basil, *Homily on Psalm 144, 1*, PG 29.484; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 168.

¹⁹⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 168; Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 101.

however, normally began at daybreak; ‘the monks rose earlier and prayed longer,’ Taft explains, ‘so what was *matins* and vespers in the cathedral usage was *vigils* and vespers for the monks.’¹⁹⁹ We must therefore conclude that Basil is describing a daily, pre-dawn, monastic office. That this is the norm for Basil’s ascetics is, moreover, born out by Basil’s reference to the pre-dawn office in the *Longer Responses*. After prescribing prayer at midnight in imitation of Paul and Silas (Acts 16: 25, in Philippi), he adds, ‘And once more we must rise for prayer, anticipating the dawn’ (Καὶ πάλιν χρῆ προφθάσαντας τὸν ὄρθρον εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν διανίστασθαι).²⁰⁰

8.11 Conclusions

The socio-rhetorical methodology adopted has been especially effective in understanding Basil’s letter. In particular, the concept of extended recontextualization has enabled us to recognise the phrase ‘the people rise early from the night’ not simply as a statement of time but as a continuation of the theme of heavenly citizenship already introduced. Further we have seen that this leads to a stress on the orderliness of monastic life as a major point of the letter.

It seems likely that the most significant of the Neocaesarian criticisms, targeted the double monastery, perhaps associating it with Eustathius of Sebaste, with associated imputations of misconduct. The theme of heavenly citizenship and orderly conduct is used to counter this.

As regards the introduction of psalmody into worship, Basil claims, justifiably, that he and his followers are part of a general movement, hence his appeal to ‘all the churches of God’. We must therefore conclude that the Neocaesarian church was somewhat old-fashioned.

There is no evidence in the letter to support the hypothesis that the objection to an unfamiliar ‘manner of singing’ refers to the use of antiphons (in the sense used by Baumstark, Taft and Gelineau). And indeed, Basil’s suggestion that his opponents are being over particular ‘about the sound of the voice for psalmody’ certainly suggests otherwise. Thus, although no certainty can be established from

¹⁹⁹ Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 202.

²⁰⁰ Basil, *LR*: 37, PG 1016.28-9, my translation.

the text of this letter, it seems probably that the objection refers to alternating singing by choirs of men and women respectively.

Collectively the above points render the suggestion that the service described is an all-night cathedral vigil very uncertain, and I have suggested above that the most likely interpretation is that this letter describes the regular pre-dawn synaxis of the Basilian monasteries. Further, it seems likely that this provides a pattern for all the regular synaxes of the day. There are psalms, normally sung either responsorially or alternately, with the occasional unison singing of particular psalms in frequent use, of which we know psalms 90 and 50. And it seems that the term 'psalm' here may also apply to other Old-Testament passages identified as songs, such as that of Isaiah 26, included in the dawn synaxis, I suggest. There are also prayers, recited after psalms, and readings about which Basil provides no further information.

This suggestion of a regular pattern necessarily raises the question: why is this particular synaxis chosen as an example in this letter? It may be that Basil chooses it because he wishes to tackle allegations of impropriety in his monasteries when men and women meet for services in semi-darkness. Additionally, however, he plans to counter such criticism by stressing the well-ordered life of heavenly citizenship, and therefore the song of Isaiah 26 figures strongly in his thinking, and thus so does the dawn synaxis.

While asserting that this is a description of monastic practice, however, we must acknowledge that Basil does not make great distinction between laity and monks, that his monasteries were in or near cities, and in contact with lay people, and that he provides us with no evidence of a separate cathedral daily office. Additionally, it would appear that the Neocaesarean opponents are comparing a monastic office with their cathedral one. It seems likely, therefore, that no distinction was made between cathedral and monastic offices in Basil's diocese and the city laity attended the office celebrated by the monastics.

9. Prayer in the Evening

9.1 Introduction

Although the structure of worship outlined in Basil's Letter 207 may be taken as indicative for the other daily synaxes, we find that the evening synaxis has a unique feature. For, despite his claim to use scriptural 'oracles' rather than 'merely human words', the celebration of vespers contains a non-scriptural lamp-lighting hymn with, apparently, associated ceremony.¹

This chapter, therefore (1) examines what we know of the Cappadocian practice, (2) considers the likelihood that the hymn, *Phōs Hilaron*, the only known contender, is indeed the Cappadocian hymn, (3) considers the possibility of relationships with other Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies, and (4) examines proposals for the origins of these ceremonies with particular reference to the *Phōs Hilaron* and the Cappadocian practice.

9.2 The Lighting of Lamps in Pontus and Cappadocia

In his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil writes:

I will add what otherwise would perhaps be [too] trivial to bring up, but because of its antiquity is necessary as testimony against anyone who accuses us of innovation. It seemed good to our fathers (τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν) not to receive the gift of the evening light in silence, but as soon as it appeared to give thanks. And who the author was of those words of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving (τῆς ἐπιλυχνίου εὐχαριστίας) we are unable to say. The people (ὁ λαός), however, are accustomed to use the ancient phrase, and no one has ever yet thought them impious who say 'We praise Father, Son and the Holy Spirit of God.'²

This same thanksgiving is attested by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Life of Saint Macrina*. Visiting his, by then, bedridden sister, he listened for some time as she spoke of religious matters:

As she recounted these things I was yearning for the day to be lengthened so that she might not cease to delight [lit. sweeten] our hearing; but the sound of the singing was calling us to the lamp-lighting thanksgivings (πρὸς τὰς ἐπιλυχνίους εὐχαριστίας), and the great one [Macrina] sent me also to the church, and she withdrew to God with prayer.³

¹ 'Vespers' and 'compline' are not terms used by Basil, or others at that time, but are used here for synaxes occupying positions in Basil's daily cycle corresponding to vespers and compline in the modern office, see section 1.6.

² Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 29.73.34-43, PG 32.204-5, my translation.

³ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.395.1-6, my translation.

The following evening, Gregory was once more with his sister, and he describes how she recited a long prayer, gradually becoming weaker as she did so. He continues:

Meanwhile, evening having overtaken [us] and a light brought in, at once her eyes opened wide, and she looked towards the gleam. It was clear that she was eager also to say the lamp-lighting thanksgiving (τὴν ἐπιλύχνιον εὐχαριστίαν); but, her voice failing her, she accomplished her purpose in her heart and in the movement of her hands, her lips moving together with her inward impulse. And thus, she fulfilled the thanksgiving and, by bringing her hand to her face for the sign [of the cross], she marked the end of her prayer, and, taking a strong, deep breath, ended her life with prayer.⁴

The expression which Basil and Gregory use is ἡ ἐπιλυχνίος εὐχαριστία, usually translated as ‘the lamp-lighting thanksgiving’, although in the case of the first and third of the above examples, the occasion is the bringing in of already lighted lamps.⁵ What we know for certain about this thanksgiving is that it was a hymn expressing trinitarian praise which, together with Basil’s reference to an, albeit unknown, author, indicates that it was not of scriptural origin. Further it is specifically attached to the lighting of, or bringing in of already lit, lamps and it appears that there are associated hand movements.

There is general agreement that this thanksgiving refers to the ancient hymn, *Phōs Hilaron*, which forms part of Orthodox vespers to the present day.⁶ However, that is by no means certain, and in the following discussion we shall therefore maintain a distinction by using the terminology: *Phōs Hilaron*, for the hymn of present day vespers, and ‘Cappadocian lamp-lighting thanksgiving’ or ‘hymn’.

⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *VSM*, GNO 8.1.398.21-399.9, my translation.

⁵ Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon press 1961) on ἐπιλυχνίος.

⁶ E.g. Paul F Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2008) 76; Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 2nd rev. edn., (Collegeville, Mn., The Liturgical Press, 1993) 38; Antonia Tripolitis, ‘Φῶς Ἰλαρόν, Ancient Hymn and Modern Enigma’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Sept. 1970), 189-196, 192-3, etc.; for the hymn’s place in vespers see: I. F. Hapgood (ed.), *The Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, (New York: Association Press, 1922) 8; Alexander Nadson (ed.) *The Office of Vespers in the Byzantine Rite*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965) 21.

9.3 Phōs Hilaron

The earliest extant version of the *Phōs Hilaron*, seems to be a papyrus fragment in the British Museum which Antonia Tripolitis dates to the sixth or seventh centuries, reconstructing the text:⁷

Φῶς ἰλαρὸν ἁγίας δόξης
ἀθανάτου Πατρὸς οὐρανίου
ἁγίου μάκαρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ·

Ἐλθόντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλίου δύσιν,
ἰδόντες φῶς ἑσπερινόν,
ὑμνοῦμεν Πατέρα, Υἱὸν καὶ
ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, Θεόν.

Ἄξιόν σε ἐν πᾶσι καιροῖς
ὑμνεῖσθαι φωναῖς αἰσίαις,
Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ζωὴν ὁ διδούς·
διὸ ὁ κόσμος σὲ δοξάζει.

For this, Tripolitis provides the translation:

Joyous light of the holy glory
of the immortal Father, heavenly
holy, blessed⁸ Jesus Christ;

Having come to the sun's setting
(and) beholding the evening light,
we praise God, Father, Son
and Holy Spirit.

It is fitting that you should be
praised⁹ with auspicious voices,
Son of God, giver of life:
wherefore the world glorifies you.

As some modern writers have seen references to, or claimed paraphrases of, the *Phōs Hilaron* in various documents, it is worth looking at the hymn in some detail, before examining such claims as well as the assumption that it is the Cappadocian lamp-lighting thanksgiving which Macrina, Basil and Gregory knew.

The three adjectives, 'heavenly, holy, blessed', cause a minor, but apparently general, translation problem. Some translators, notably Antonia Tripolitis and Robert Taft, list the three after 'Father', omitting a final comma: 'of the immortal

⁷ Papyrus fragment 244 (p. Lond. Inv. 2037B); Antonia Tripolitis, 'Φῶς ἰλαρόν', 189.

⁸ Μάκαρος, blessed, happy, properly of the gods as opposed to mortal men.

⁹ ὑμνοῦμεν (ὑμνέω), praise in song.

Father, heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ', implying that they refer to Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Garland Young opts for an equal apportionment of adjectives between Father and Son: 'of the immortal heavenly Father, holy blessed Jesus Christ.'¹¹ And *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, the office book of the Church of England, prefers 'of the immortal Father heavenly, holy, blessed, O Jesus Christ' which, while no doubt technically correct, means that the referent of the adjectives is by no means obvious.¹² However, accepting Tripolitis' Greek text, we find that these adjectives agree with Πατρός (genitive) and not Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ (vocative) and are in the predicative position, following the noun. The grammatical sense of the phrase is thus '... of the immortal Father, who is heavenly, holy, and blessed, O Jesus Christ ...' Possibly, however, in view of Basil's appraisal of the hymn as having impeccable Trinitarian credentials, this is a matter of small moment.

With most translators, we may assume that φῶς ἱλαρόν is vocative, but, although the hymn may have originated with a greeting of the evening lamplight (see below), it is not the feeble, artificial light of the lamp which is truly being hailed here but the 'light of the holy glory of the immortal Father', identified with the clearly vocative Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ. Sunset and the bringing-in of lights are simply reminders that the evening's worship should begin, as the second verse makes clear: 'Having come to the setting of the sun and having seen the evening light, we sing praise.'

The identification of Christ with the glory of God, often expressed in light imagery, particularly when contrasted with darkness, is an early and enduring Christian concept. Thus one of the most powerful pieces of early Christian poetry, the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, proclaims: 'We have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.'¹³ To this the first Letter to Timothy adds the imagery of light: 'our Lord Jesus Christ ... he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light.'¹⁴ But the language of the *Phōs Hilaron* is perhaps closest to that of Paul in the second Letter to the Corinthians:

¹⁰ Tripolitis, 'Φῶς ἱλαρόν', 189; Robert Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 38.

¹¹ R Garland Young, 'The Phos Hilaron' in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine, A Critical Anthology*, edited by Mark Kiley, 315-8 (London: Routledge, 1997) 317.

¹² *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, (London: Church House Publishing, 2005) 635.

¹³ Jn. 1: 14.

¹⁴ 1 Tim. 6: 14-16.

'It is the God who said 'let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'¹⁵ Like, Paul and John, Justin Martyr extends this light to the experience of Christian converts, describing baptism in terms of light: 'and this washing is called illumination.'¹⁶

Young comments that ἡλαρός is an unusual word to use of Christ or God, occurring in the New Testament only in 2 Cor. 9: 7, 'God loves a cheerful giver.' He adds, however, that 'the term was widely employed in the Greek mystery cults of Isis and Cybele in the celebration of the *Hilaria*, the Day of Cheerfulness. The author of the hymn apparently wants to challenge pagan assertions about the source of spiritual enlightenment by co-opting the term *hilaron* and applying it to Jesus Christ.'¹⁷ Now certainly both joyfulness and light imagery were associated with Isis. Thus the *Invocation of Isis* in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* hails her as σὺ κ[α]ὶ φωτὸς κα[ὶ] φλεγμάτων κυρία, 'you [are] the lady of light and flames', and ἥλιον ἀνατολῆς μέχρι δύσεως σὺ ἐπιφέρεις κ[αὶ] ὅλοι εὐφραίνονται οἱ θεοί, 'you bring the sun from rising to setting, and all the gods are glad.'¹⁸ And there was, as Young says, an annual *hilaria* or 'Day of Cheerfulness', a Roman festival of Cybele, who may have been generally identified with Isis, and certainly is in the long list of such identifications in the *Invocation of Isis*. This festival was apparently held on the 25th of March, also associated with the Pascha, and indeed with the birth of Christ, by *De Pascha Computus*, dated 243 CE.¹⁹ Young goes on to suggest that 'the author of the hymn apparently wants to challenge pagan assertions about the source of spiritual enlightenment by co-opting the term *hilaron* and applying it to Jesus Christ.' However, while this is not impossible, the association seems, nevertheless, to be somewhat tenuous.

Although, as Young suggests, ἡλαρός, 'cheerful, merry', is not much used of Christ, it is perhaps not as inappropriate as he appears to suggest, for it derives from

¹⁵ 2 Cor 4: 6.

¹⁶ Justin, *Apology*. 1: 6.12.

¹⁷ Young, 'Phos Hilaron', 316.

¹⁸ Bernard P Grenfell and Arthur S Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, v. XI, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1915) 1380.258-9, translation p. 202; 1380.157-9, translation p. 202.

¹⁹ Thomas J Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 2nd edn., (Collegeville Mn: Liturgical Press, 1986) 90-1.

ἴλαος which, particularly when referring to divine beings, means ‘propitious, gracious.’²⁰ Indeed, Simon Pulleyn, finds resonances with a distant past: ‘We also find that ἴληθι (‘be propitious’) is only used when speaking to gods. This must partly be due to its lexical meaning. To be ἴλαος is the preserve of divinity. None the less, the archaic imperative adds to the solemnity of the words.’²¹ And ἰλαρός itself can carry the associated idea of generous and gracious giving, as it does in 2 Cor. 9: 7, itself a reference to a verse from Proverbs found only in the Septuagint as an addition to Proverbs 22: 8: ἄνδρα ἰλαρὸν καὶ δότιν εὐλογεῖ ὁ Θεός: ‘God blesses a cheerful and generous man.’²² Cheerfulness alone is not what occasions blessing, however, but rather graciousness in giving, as Paul stresses: ‘each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’²³ Addressing Christ as the *gracious* light is certainly appropriate.

Tripolitis, and others, translate αἴσιος, in line 3, as ‘auspicious’, as above, although, strictly speaking, that term refers to the receipt of favourable omens rather than the response of worshippers to the divine. Although αἴσιος can carry the meaning ‘happy’, the translation used in the American Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* of 1979, this is with the connotation of ‘fortunate’, that is being in receipt of divine generosity.²⁴ Here then, the word seems to mean ‘appropriate to worship’, not in fear but gratitude, and must be seen as complementary to ἰλαρός; Christ, the graciously given, and graciously giving, light, invokes the response of fortunate, appropriately grateful, and thus joyful, voices.

As noted above, some see references to, or paraphrases of, the *Phōs Hilaron* in other ancient texts. It will therefore be useful to identify those themes which might be expected in any hymn or prayer at eventide, and those which seem to be unique to this hymn.²⁵ Those ideas which should be expected are: coming to the

²⁰ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940) on ἴλαος.

²¹ Simon Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 147.

²² Greek from Lancelot C. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha*, (original publication, London: Bagster, 1851, 11th reprinting, Hendrickson, 2005.), my translation.

²³ 2 Cor. 9.7, NRSV.

²⁴ Episcopal Church of the USA, *The Book of Common Prayer*, (Seabury Press, 1979) 112; Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, on αἴσιος.

²⁵ Tripolitis sees a version of the hymn in a lamp-lighting ceremony found in the Ethiopic version of the Apostolic Tradition, and suggest that Cyprian ‘alludes to the

end of the day, light associated with God and/or Christ and evening light as a reminder of this, the worshippers' response in praise, and, as Basil stresses, the Trinity. Those themes which are apparently specific to the *Phōs Hilaron* are: Firstly, the theme of Christ the light as gracious/joyous (ἱλαρός), paired with the worshippers' response of appropriate gratitude/fortune (αἴσιος), this pairing being suggestive of the pre-Christian reciprocity of χάρις. Secondly, the *Phōs Hilaron* identifies the second person of the Trinity not only with light, but also with the glory of the Father. And finally, the address of the whole *Phōs Hilaron* hymn is to the Son, rather than to the Father *through* the Son, as is often the case with other prayers or hymns.

This exegesis presents the opportunity to give an alternative translation, following what I consider to be the meaning of the Greek text more closely:

1. O gracious light of the holy glory of the immortal Father, who is heavenly, holy and blessed, O Jesus Christ.
2. Having come to the setting of the Sun and having seen the evening light, we sing praise of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. It is right that at all times that you should be praised with fortunate voices, O Son of God, the giver of life, wherefore the world glorifies you.²⁶

John Hale, commenting that the hymn has no discernible meter or division into stanzas, adds that this is 'most likely because it was sung by a solo voice.'²⁷ The same features also apply to the psalms, however, and, as we have seen, these may be sung in various ways including direct unison. Further, in the first of the two passages from *The Life of Saint Macrina*, Gregory uses the plural: τὰς ἐπιλυχνίους εὐχαριστίας, 'the lamp-lighting thanksgivings', and it is not clear whether he means that there were multiple lamps or multiple singers. Although it seems probable that more than one lamp would be needed for the combined groups, Gregory does hear the singing from Macrina's room so it is also likely that many people were singing.

hymn in his *De Oratione Dominica*, 'Φῶς ἱλαρόν', 193-4, 196; Vassiliadis finds a reference to it *Apostolic Constitutions* Book 8 which is considered below.

²⁶ My translation

²⁷ John K Hale, 'Hail Gladdening Light: A note on John Keble's Verse Translations', *Victorian Poetry*, v. 24, no.1 (Spring 1986): 92-95.

Hale's observation, however, may help us account for one apparent discrepancy in the passage from Basil. The Trinitarian formula which he quotes, Αἰνοῦμεν Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ, 'We praise Father, Son and the Holy Spirit of God', is not quite the same as that of the text given by Tripolitis, ὑμνοῦμεν Πατέρα, Υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, Θεόν, 'we sing praise of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' But the lack of meter certainly makes it possible for alternative wordings to exist and Basil's wording is to be found in a version of the *Phōs Hilaron* in a ninth century Sinai *Horologion*, the oldest known text of a *Horologion*.²⁸ Assuming that Basil is indeed referring to the *Phōs Hilaron* then it does appear that his text records an early version.²⁹ However, in the absence of supporting evidence, Taft's claim that it gives the *original* wording for the *Phōs Hilaron* cannot be certainly established.³⁰

As to authorship of the hymn, two names have been suggested, bishops Athenogenes and Sophronios.³¹ Little is known of Athenogenes who may have been martyred at Sebaste, Armenia, ca. 305 CE., or 290 CE., or 196 CE.³² The suggestion that he was the author of this hymn seems to derive from Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*, where, in the lines following the quotation given above, he writes of Athenogenes composing a hymn just before his martyrdom. It is clear, however, that Basil is referring to a different hymn, particularly in view of his statement that he does not know the author of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving. The other attribution, to Sophronios, Bishop of Jerusalem during the years 634-638, is made in older Orthodox service books and repeated in some more recent ones: 'Then shall be sung the Hymn (Tropár) composed by Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.'³³ In the nineteenth century, service books attributed the hymn to both of these authors; according to Tripolitis: 'most of the Horologia of the 19th

²⁸ Juan Mateos, 'Un horologion inédit de Saint-Sabas. Le Codex sinaïtique grec 863 (LX^e siècle)', *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant* III.1, (ST 233, Vatican: Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1964) 47-76; and see Alexander Rentel, 'Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy' in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, 255-306, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 302, n. 47.

²⁹ Rentel, 'Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy', 302, n. 47.

³⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 38.

³¹ Tripolitis, 'Φῶς Ἰλαρόν', 191-2.

³² Tripolitis, 'Φῶς Ἰλαρόν', 191, n. 9.

³³ Hapgood, *Service Book*, 8; John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*, vol. 1 (London: Joseph Masters 1847) 899; James Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church, Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914) 16.

century ... claim that the hymn was composed by the martyr Athenogenes, but is attributed to St. Sophronios because it is believed that he had added to it.' Tripolitis adds, however, 'What part St. Sophronios is supposed to have added is not described.'³⁴

The little we know about the Cappadocian lamp-lighting thanksgiving and the absence of information about the origins of *Phōs Hilaron* make it impossible to assert with any certainty that they are the same hymn. Indeed, if the latter were composed by Sophronius (about which there is also no certainty), it cannot have been the hymn known to Basil more than 250 years earlier. Nevertheless, we know there was a lamp-lighting hymn sung at vespers in Macrina's monastery, and which Gregory of Nyssa and Basil assume to be familiar to all those reading their works. If this was not the *Phōs Hilaron* it must surely have been something similar in nature and with the trinitarian invocation which Basil quotes. And moreover, as an alternative there are no known contenders. We may therefore proceed with a cautious and provisional acceptance of the consensus view on the condition that no firm conclusions should be made solely on the basis of that identity.

9.4. Other Christian Lamp-Lighting Ceremonies

In attempting to establish the origin of the Cappadocian lamp-lighting ceremony, we encounter, amongst various scholars, assumptions adopted without justification, which are for that reason unhelpful. In addition to the tendency, already mentioned, to see an allusion to the *Phōs Hilaron* in any mention of lamp-lighting, these assumptions are: firstly, that any mention of lights in an ancient text implies an associated ritual; secondly that there is a single origin for all Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies, and further that origin must be found in a pre-existing religious ritual. Of course, it must be admitted that, at a time when light held great significance and the lighting of lamps was a more complex a matter than at the present, some degree of ceremony might naturally attach to the lighting or bringing-in of lamps; also, that there is a common origin of such ceremonies to be found in the need for light at dusk. However, the prevalence of the above assumptions means that the origin of Cappadocian practice necessitates that it be compared with other ceremonies elsewhere. These, like

³⁴ Tripolitis, 'Φῶς Ἰλαρόν', 191-2.

other liturgical matters, are picked out in a series of passages, sometimes only brief comments, which assume that the readers/hearers are acquainted with, and do not need to be reminded of, the very information that we seek, just as both Basil and Gregory of Nyssa assume that their 'lamp-lighting thanksgiving' is known to all, even beyond the Cappadocian borders.

Taft provides us with an example of the first of those two assumptions when commenting on what is possibly the earliest reference to the use of lights in Christian worship: 'The agape also mentioned by Tertullian in his *Apology* 39, did include a blessing of the evening lamp that is without doubt the ancestor of the lucernarium of cathedral evensong.'³⁵ The passage referred to reads: 'After water for the hands come the lights; and then each, from what he knows of the Holy Scriptures, or from his own heart, is called before the rest to sing to God' (Post aquam manulem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium deo canere.)³⁶ There is, we observe, no mention of a lamp-blessing and the evidence for a Christian lamp-lighting ritual consists of the single word *lumina*. Of course, Tertullian, in writing an apology, was trying to show how a Christian agape followed a similar pattern to the well-known symposium, rather than giving liturgical directives for others to follow. Thus, although he does not mention any ceremony or prayers in connection with the lamps, it cannot be certain that these things did not happen. However, on the evidence which he provides, we cannot claim the contrary that there *were* prayers or ceremonies, such as blessing the lamps, as Taft suggests. Taking this evidence at face value, it seems no more than that, as a natural introduction to the coming supper, there is hand-washing, and lights are brought in, or lit, before the meal commences. The use of lights in the evening was, of course, to be expected, and indeed it would probably have been done with some degree of ceremony, even outside the Christian setting. And I shall, for this reason, suggest below that Taft, though over-interpreting in respect of a lamp blessing, is nevertheless correct, in an earlier comment on the same passage, that Tertullian 'provides our earliest

³⁵ Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition edn (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993.) 26.

³⁶ Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 39.18; text with translation by T R Glover, from *Tertullian, Apology & De Spectaculis; & Minucius Felix*, Loeb Classical Library, (London: Heinemann, 1931) 180-1.

evidence for the agape supper with its evening lamp ritual, remote ancestor of the lucernarium of cathedral vespers.³⁷

A description of cathedral evening worship which provides a brief reference to what may or may not be a lamp-lighting ceremony, can be found in Book 8 of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Because other aspects of the service will be discussed later, the passage is quoted in full.³⁸

Ἐσπέρας γενομένης συναθροίσεις τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ὧ ἐπίσκοπε· καὶ μετὰ τὸ ῥηθῆναι τὸν ἐπιλύχνιον ψαλμὸν προσφωνήσῃ ὁ διάκονος ὑπὲρ τῶν κατηγουμένων καὶ χειμαζομένων καὶ τῶν φωτιζομένων καὶ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ, ὡς προείπομεν.

Μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἀπολυθῆναι αὐτοὺς ὁ διάκονος ἔρεϊ· Ὅσοι πιστοί, δεηθῶμεν τοῦ Κυρίου. Καὶ μετὰ τὸ προσφωνῆσαι αὐτὸν τὰ τῆς πρώτης εὐχῆς ἔρεϊ·

Σῶσον καὶ ἀνάστησον ἡμᾶς, ὁ Θεός, διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου.
Ἀναστάντες αἰτησώμεθα
τὰ ἐλέη τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τοὺς οἰκτιρμούς αὐτοῦ,
τὸν ἄγγελον τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς εἰρήνης,
τὰ καλὰ καὶ συμφέροντα,
χριστιανὰ τὰ τέλη,
τὴν ἐσπέραν καὶ τὴν νύκτα εἰρηνικὴν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον,
καὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν ἀκατάγνωστον
αἰτησώμεθα·
ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀλλήλους τῷ ζῶντι Θεῷ διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ
παραθώμεθα.
Καὶ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἐπευχόμενος λεγέτω·

Ὁ ἄναρχος Θεὸς καὶ ἀτελεύτητος, ὁ τῶν ὅλων ποιητὴς διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ κηδεμών, πρὸ δὲ πάντων αὐτοῦ Θεὸς καὶ Πατήρ, ὁ τοῦ Πνεύματος Κύριος καὶ τῶν νοητῶν καὶ αἰσθητῶν βασιλεύς, ὁ ποιήσας ἡμέραν πρὸς ἔργα φωτὸς καὶ νύκτα εἰς ἀνάπαυσιν τῆς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν· «Σὴ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἡμέρα καὶ σὴ ἐστιν ἡ νύξ, σὺ κατηρτίσω φαῦσιν καὶ ἥλιον». Αὐτὸς καὶ νῦν, δέσποτα φιλόανθρωπε καὶ πανάγαθε, εὐμενῶς πρόσδεξαι τὴν ἐσπερινὴν εὐχαριστίαν ἡμῶν ταύτην. Ὁ διαγαγὼν ἡμᾶς τὸ μῆκος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἀγαγὼν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῆς νυκτός, φύλαξον ἡμᾶς διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου· εἰρηνικὴν παράσχου τὴν ἐσπέραν καὶ τὴν νύκτα ἀναμάρτητον καὶ ἀφαντασιάστον καὶ καταξίωσον ἡμᾶς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου, δι' οὗ σοι δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ κράτος ἐν ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.³⁹

³⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 18.

³⁸ See section 7.5 above for brief description and dating of *Apostolic Constitutions*.

³⁹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8.35.2-37.6; text from Marcel Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, 3 vols. Sources Chrétiennes 320, 329, 336, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985-1987); for the significance of the indented section see below section 8.6.

When evening has come, you will gather together the church, Bishop, and after the lamp-lighting psalm has been said, the deacon shall proclaim over the catechumens, the distressed (lit. 'storm-tossed'), those being enlightened (or instructed), and the penitents, as previously said.

After they have been dismissed the deacon shall say, 'All (lit. how many so-ever) that are faithful let us ask of the Lord,' and after he proclaims the first prayer he shall say:

'Save us and raise us up, O God, by your Christ.

Arising let us ask:

For the mercies of the Lord and his compassions.

For the angel of peace.

For those things good and profitable (or beneficial).

For a Christian end.

For a peaceful and sinless evening and night.

And let us ask in the whole time of our life we may not be condemned.

Let us place ourselves and one another before the living God, through his Christ.'

And praying, the bishop is to say:

'O God without beginning or end, maker and protector of all things through Christ, before all his God and father, the Lord of the Spirit, and king of all things perceptible to the mind or senses, who made the day for works of light and night for the refreshment of our weakness: "For the day is yours and the night is yours, you set in order the light and the sun." Now, master, lover of mankind and absolutely good, graciously accept this, our evening thanksgiving. You who have led us through the length of the day and brought us to the beginning of night, guard us through your Christ. Give us a peaceful evening and a night free from sin and fantasies, and consider us worthy of everlasting life, through your Christ, through whom glory honour and power be to you in the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen'⁴⁰

The bishop then blesses the people, and the deacon dismisses them. Here, the prayers 'previously said' are the prayers of dismissal of Book 8, chapters 6-10 which follow the Liturgy of the Word in the Eucharist.⁴¹ This passage has been quoted rather fully because the diaconal litany and the episcopal prayer following will both be considered again below. Despite the repetitive prayers over various groups, this is a very straight-forward example of the cathedral office.

Petros Vassiliadis, however, sees the use of the term ἐπιλύχνιος on the second line of the above passage as a specific reference to the *Phōs Hilaron*, which he writes, 'is first mentioned as ἐπιλύχνιος (candle lighting) or ἐπιλύχνιος εὐχαριστία

⁴⁰ My translation.

⁴¹ Apostolic Constitutions, 8.6-10; see Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 46.

by an unknown author in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book 8, 34ff), most probably of Antiochene origin, written in the late 3rd or early 4th century AD.⁴² That is he assumes ἐπιλύχνιος indicates the hymn referred to by Basil and Gregory and that this is the *Phōs Hilaron*. Two observations are appropriate, however. Firstly, this comment gives a dating for *Apostolic Constitutions* much earlier than that of Metzger.⁴³ Secondly, there is no mention of the lamps being lit, possibly because that could be taken for granted at that time of day. Indeed, the term ἐπιλύχνιος, applied to the psalm or hymn sung at the start of worship, would appear to indicate the time of day rather than an association with the actual lighting of lamps. Thus, there is no evidence that the *Phōs Hilaron* is meant here. On the other hand, although, as we can see from its use in Basil's letter to the clergy of Neocasarea, the word 'psalm' was coming to mean a scriptural song, particularly one taken from the Book of Psalms, we cannot assume that this is the case here in a work deriving from much earlier sources.⁴⁴ The ἐπιλύχνιος ψαλμὸς then might refer to the *Phōs Hilaron* or the Cappadocian Lamp-Lighting Thanksgiving, and, if this were the case, the service would lack any scriptural psalmody, much as it lacks any scriptural readings, a situation perhaps not impossible in an early cathedral office. Alternatively, the ἐπιλύχνιος ψαλμὸς might indeed have been an appropriate scriptural psalm. Further, since Book 2 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* specifies the use of psalm 140 (141) in the evening, Taft assumes without further comment that psalm 140 must be the ἐπιλύχνιος ψαλμὸς.⁴⁵ But, as noted above, books 2 and 8 originate from different sources, so although this is a feasible hypothesis, it cannot be regarded as certain. Psalm 140, lacking references to light or lamps, hardly seems appropriate as a lamp-lighting hymn. Indeed, it qualifies as an evening psalm only by virtue of the second verse: 'Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.' Nevertheless, on balance and in view of the evidence from other sources, it seems most likely that Taft is correct in his assumption. That is, the above passage thus describes vespers in which psalm 140 was used as the

⁴² Petros Vassiliadis 'From the Pauline Collection to Phos Hilaron of Cappadocia', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* vol 56, issue 1, (2012) 5-16, 9.

⁴³ Late 4th c. for which see section 7.5 above.

⁴⁴ Letter 207, above chapter 8.

⁴⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 45, 47.

regular evening psalm, which was without a lamp-lighting ceremony, and for which description the term ἐπιλυχνίος is used simply to indicate the time of day.

Further references to lamp-lighting are to be found in two church orders which appear to be derivatives of *The Apostolic Tradition*, these are, the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Testamentum Domini*. *The Canons of Hippolytus* is extant only in Arabic, although it is believed to derive from a Coptic translation of an early fourth-century Greek original, and in its present form it has been held to date from the late fourth or early fifth century.⁴⁶ Describing an agape, it instructs 'If there is a meal or supper made by someone for the poor – it is [a supper] of the Lord – the bishop is to be present at the time when one lights the lamp. The deacon is to light it, and the bishop is to pray over them and over him who has invited them.'⁴⁷ It is interesting that this is the one of a few descriptions of the lamp being lit rather than being brought in alight. Possibly this is to give the lighting, done in everyone's presence by the deacon, a greater ceremonial significance. Nevertheless, there is no mention of hymns, prayers or other ceremonial associated with the lamp or light.

The Testamentum Domini is a church order, with manuscripts in Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, which incorporates *The Apostolic Tradition* into a much more extensive document. The presumed Greek original has, however, been lost, though it has been suggested to date from the second half of the fourth century, possibly originating in Anatolia.⁴⁸ There are, however, significant differences between the versions, and we are warned that 'the author displays a somewhat perverse fidelity to his source,' preserving the wording, but inserting phrases of his own which destroy the meaning.⁴⁹ The lamp-lighting here also involves the deacon, though perhaps not in lighting the lamp: 'let the lamp be offered in the temple by the deacon saying: "The grace of our Lord [be] with you all." And let all the people say: "And with your spirit."⁵⁰ The text provided by Bradshaw, Johnson

⁴⁶ Paul F Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson and Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition, A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002) 10-11.

⁴⁷ Bradshaw, Johnson & Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 11.

⁴⁸ Grant Sperry-White (Intro Trans & Notes), *The Testamentum Domini, A Text for Students*, (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1991), 5-7; Paul F Bradshaw, *Ancient Church Orders*, (Norwich: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 2016) 19-20.

⁴⁹ Bradshaw, Johnson & Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 11.

⁵⁰ Bradshaw, Johnson & Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 157.

& Phillips continues ‘and let the little boys say spiritual psalms and hymns of praise by the light of the lamp.’ Here, they are following the translation of James Cooper and Arthur John Maclean who append a footnote that the literal translation of the Syriac is ‘by (or close to) the burning of the lamp.’⁵¹ Tripolitis, however, renders this as ‘at the lighting of the lamp’, which would appear to be her understanding of the Latin translation provided by Ignatius Rahmani, ‘ad accensionem lucernae’.⁵² This translation suggests, however, that multiple psalms and hymns were required to accompany the lighting of a single lamp, which is unlikely. The direct translation of Cooper and Maclean (with its footnote justification) is thus to be preferred.

These three above examples show that no single lamp-lighting ceremony existed during the periods when they were written, or edited. Further, they do not describe anything more than the simplest practice, and, despite clerical involvement, it is clear that the lighting/bringing in of the lamp serves more as a marker to indicate the beginning of the service. Moreover, there is no certain reference to associated hymns, psalms or prayers.

An exception to the above generalisation is found in the description provided by Egeria of an extended rite of lamp-lighting which occurred daily at Jerusalem in the late fourth century:

At four o'clock [lit. ‘the tenth hour’] they have the *Lychnicon*, as they call it, or in our language, *Lucernare*. All the people congregate once more in the *Anastasis*, and the lamps and candles are all lit, which makes it very bright. The fire is brought not from outside, but from the cave – that is from inside the railing – where a lamp is always burning night and day. For some time they have the *Lucernare* psalms and antiphons [*Dicuntur etiam psalmi lucernares, sed et antiphonae diutius*]; then they send for the bishop, who enters and sits in the chief seat.⁵³

Lest it be thought that Egeria is describing some special occasion or perhaps a Sunday service, it should be noted, that this passage forms part of a section

⁵¹ James Cooper & Arthur John Maclean (trans., into. & notes), *The Testament of our Lord, Translated into English from the Syriac*, (Edinburgh, T&T Clark 1902) 129.

⁵² Tripolitis, ‘Φῶς ἱλαρόν’, 194; Ignatius Ephraem Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1899) 133-135.

⁵³ John Wilkinson, (translation & commentary), *Egeria’s Travels*, 3rd edn., (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 1999) 143-4; see also Paul F Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock, 2008) 78-9. Latin from Louis Duschesne, *Christian Worship*, trans. M L McClure, (London: SPCK, 1904) 493-4.

describing regular worship on weekdays, as Egeria makes clear at its conclusion, 'these are the services held every weekday at the Cross and at the Anastasis', (*haec operatio cotidie per dies sex ita habetur ad Crucam et ad Anastasim*), adding later that the same happens on Sunday. Here the lamp-lighting, as a result of its unique setting, has become a distinct, named, section of the worship, of which psalm singing forms a part, and there are apparently several psalms and antiphons sung at that time, possibly because there were a great many lamps and candles to be lit. Once more, we cannot be sure of the terminology. We do not know for certain how Egeria would have intended the words 'psalm' or 'antiphon' nor, indeed, if her Greek were good enough to follow the exact nature of everything sung. Thus, one of these items might have been the *Phōs Hilaron* or other hymn. Nevertheless, the best conjecture is that Egeria was informed about what was being sung, that these were scriptural psalms, and therefore not referring directly to the lighting of lamps but seen as having some connection to evening worship. The lamps are, however, not brought in alight, but lit *in situ*, both because of the availability of an already burning lamp, and, almost certainly, the symbolism of spreading the light out from the lamp of the cave, the site of the resurrection.

Interesting as this ceremony is, its special site and nature make it unique. It is unlikely, therefore, that it could have had any influence elsewhere, except possibly that visitors to Jerusalem may have been encouraged in the use of some, almost certainly simpler, lamp ceremony in their native situation. Modern writers, however, largely ignore the fact that Egeria knows of a lamp-lighting ceremony in Spain, the *Lucernare*. Although nothing further is known about the content of this practice in late fourth-century Spain, its existence indicates that such ceremonies were a general phenomenon, not confined to the eastern Mediterranean area.

We continue now with an examination of the possible origin of Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies and in particular that of the Cappadocian monastics.

9.5 The Origin Question - Pagan Light Cult?

Bradshaw, after quoting the passages from Gregory of Nyssa and Basil, given above, goes on to comment:

Both F. J. Dölger and J. Mateos believe that this Christian practice arose out of the pagan light-cult which was widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean area, but Gregory Dix and Gabrielle Winkler seem to

be more correct in seeing it as deriving ultimately from the lighting of the lamp in Judaism, which was preserved in Christianity first of all in connection with the community meals ... and would then have become attached to the evening office as a daily feature when those meals began to decline.⁵⁴

With regard to the first of these hypotheses, it is difficult to identify 'the pagan light-cult which was widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean area', unless that is to be understood as an underlying tendency to see light as a sacred adjunct in a variety of rites, for instance in the cult of Dionysus, or the Eleusinian mysteries.

In the former case, the god is born by Zeus' lightning striking his mother, Semele, and the link to fire and flame continues so that 'the association of Dionysus with nocturnal dances and blazing torches is a persistent motif of Athenian drama.'⁵⁵ The earliest examples of Attic iconography in which light is connected with Dionysiac ritual and myth show the god himself holding torches.⁵⁶ By the late 5th to 6th century BCE, however, his devotees are also depicted with torches, particularly when taking part in processions.⁵⁷ The range of cultic activities associated with Dionysus was considerable and many of them took place at night.⁵⁸

Torches were also used in the Eleusinian mysteries. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* the goddess is described as holding torches as, for nine days, she searches for her daughter, Kore (Persephone), and, presumably in imitation of this, initiates also bore torches when participating in the mysteries.⁵⁹ Apart from the mysteries, the most important festival of Demeter was the *Thesmophoria*. Matthew Dillon, describing statuettes of women carrying piglets for sacrifice at

⁵⁴ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 76; see F. J. Dölger, 'Lumen Christi', *Antike und Christentum* 5, Münster 1936, pp 1-43; Juan Mateos, 'Quelques anciens documents sur l'office du soir', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35, 1969, 350; Dix, *Shape*, 87; Gabriele Winkler, 'Über die Kathedralvesper in den verschiedenen Riten des Ostens und Westens', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 16, 1974, pp. 60-1.

⁵⁵ Dimitris Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness in Dionysiac Rituals as illustrated on Attic Vase Paintings of the 5th century BCE', in Menelaos Christopolous, Efimia D Karakantza & Olga Levaniouk, (eds.), *Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion*, (Plymouth, UK: Lexington, 2010) 237.

⁵⁶ Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness', 238.

⁵⁷ Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness', 241ff, particularly p. 246.

⁵⁸ Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness', 251.

⁵⁹ Nicholas James Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1974); Ioanna Patera, 'Light and Lighting Equipment in the Eleusinian Mysteries', in Christopolous, Karakantza & Levaniouk *Light and Darkness* (see note 55) 263ff.

'*Thesmophoria* sites throughout the Greek world, especially Syracuse', adds 'often the woman has a torch in one hand and a piglet in the other, and in most cases a goddess, presumably Demeter, is intended; she is synonymous with the women worshippers.'⁶⁰ And on the second day of the three-day *Thesmophoria*, women attend before dawn with lighted torches.⁶¹

Although Dionysus and Demeter are the principal divinities whose cults make much use of torches, they also appear elsewhere. Thus a torch is a common attribute of Artemis Lochia; characteristic is a relief showing a woman presenting a baby, presumably shortly after birth, to the goddess who holds a long torch.⁶² Torches were also used in the nocturnal *Arrephoria* festival of Athena Polias at the Parthenon, as depicted on the Parthenon frieze.⁶³ And, when the Pallas statue of Athena was transported to Phaleron and later returned, it was escorted by 150 ephebes with lighted torches.⁶⁴ Further, an Athenian vase shows Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, escorting a married couple to their home holding a lighted torch in each hand.⁶⁵

Clearly, many of these activities took place at night and would thus require torchlight for their execution. Nevertheless, torches cannot be seen just as necessary, practical accessories, for Paleothodoros points out that in some cases torches appear in depictions of the Dionysiac cult 'without necessarily denoting specific nocturnal rites.'⁶⁶ And he concludes that 'torches appear because they are part of the Dionysiac imagery and not because the scenery is to be located at night.'⁶⁷

There is a near universal association of light with the gods and particularly divine epiphanies.⁶⁸ But beyond this, these descriptions seem very far from any of the Christian ceremonies. It may be possible, however, to find a point of similarity in

⁶⁰ Matthew Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, (London: Routledge, 2002) 114.

⁶¹ Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 118.

⁶² Relief from Echinus, Greece, 4th cent BCE, Archeological Museum of Lamia, inv. AE 1041; Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 25, 232.

⁶³ British Museum, inv. BM 115.161; Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 46.

⁶⁴ Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 134.

⁶⁵ Dillon, *Girls and Women*, 134.

⁶⁶ Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness', 248.

⁶⁷ Paleothodoros, 'Light and Darkness', 251.

⁶⁸ Patera, 'Light and Lighting Equipment', 262.

the domestic use of lamps. These, a more recent invention than torches, are little mentioned or depicted in connection with Greek cults, nevertheless archaeological evidence reveals many in use in the temples of Demeter, and, while some show traces of having been lit, no such signs appear on many others.⁶⁹

According to Clement of Alexandria, lamps were invented by the Egyptians.⁷⁰ And Athanasia Zografou records that their use became widespread in Egyptian religious practice, the first act of the ceremonial day being the lighting of lamps for priests to enter the sanctuaries at dawn.⁷¹ As noted above, in the Greco-Roman world, torches were originally, almost exclusively, depicted in archaic and classical literature and iconography in the hands of deities and their priests. Lamps, however, were carried by worshippers in procession, and dedicated to sanctuaries, practices which, under Egyptian and other eastern influences, started gathering momentum towards the end of the Hellenistic period.⁷²

Thus, nocturnal festivals, usually associated with, or under the influence of, Isis cults, involved the burning of lamps, and temples of Isis and Sarapis required a special staff of lamp-lighters (λυχνάπται).⁷³ The association of lights with Isis, 'the lady of light and flames', and her identification with Cybele and hence possible association with the Roman *hilaria*, has been discussed above but, although, as we might expect, the use of lamps was associated with Isis in Egypt, there seems to be no such association with Cybele in Rome, though it would hardly be surprising if the 'Day of cheerfulness' extended into an evening of merriment, with attendant use of torches. Hieroglyphic texts from the temple of Esna in Upper Egypt apparently refer to a lamp-burning festival (Λυχνοκαίη) in honour of Neith, identified with Isis and Athena. Additionally, the everlasting golden lamp of Athena Polias on the Acropolis shows an early syncretism, while the illumination of the temple (λυχναψία) of Jupiter at Arsinoe in commemoration of the emperor's

⁶⁹ Patera, 'Light and Lighting Equipment', 266.

⁷⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk I, ch. 16.

⁷¹ Athanasia Zografou, 'Magical Lamps, Luminous Dreams, Lamps in PGM Recipes', in Christopolous, Karakantza & Levaniouk *Light and Darkness* (see note 55) 277.

⁷² Martin P Nilson, 'Lampen und Kerzen im Kult der Antiker' in Martin P Nilson, *Opuscula Selecta*, vol III, (Lund: Gleerup, 1960) 189-214; Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 276.

⁷³ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 278.

victories, or in honour of senior imperial officials, 'provides evidence of interrelation between Egyptian and emperor-worshipping rites.'⁷⁴ Lamps were included in lists of sacrificial supplies, with the lamp 'closely linked' to altar and offerings in Greece.⁷⁵

Lamps, moreover, were more convenient than torches, particularly in the domestic setting:

Cheaper and handier than the torch for interior lighting, the lamp (λύχνος) was destined to play a major role in Roman domestic cults. Along with the portable altar and censer, the lamp will become part of a religious setting, a readily available private sacred space comparable to Christian iconostases with everlasting oil lamps. In fact, impressive deposits of lamps were discovered in the domestic sanctuaries of *Lares* at Pompei. Be it niches, *aediculae* or suitably arranged house-rooms, the *Lararia* constitute model miniature temples with *arulae*, figurines and, obviously, lamps.⁷⁶

A quieter, more domestic, form of popular participation in festivals involved the lighting of lamps. Herodotus mentions a 'festival of lights' based in Sais but celebrated throughout Egypt (2.62), and the numerous terra-cotta lamps produced in Egypt throughout the Greco-Roman period and often stamped with mythic imagery attest to such observances.⁷⁷

In these circumstances lamps frequently became part of private activities which might be termed 'magical' rather than 'religious', though the distinction is not a clear one. Evidence of this use appears in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (PGM), a collection of recipes which are syncretic, deriving largely from Egyptian beliefs and practices and reflecting the 'widespread usage of lamps in Egyptian religious contexts of all times.'⁷⁸ That these practices continued well into the Christian era is seen from a sermon by Abbot Shenoute of Atripe who criticises those who 'burn lamps about empty things while offering incense in the name of ghosts.'⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 278.

⁷⁵ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 280.

⁷⁶ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 276.

⁷⁷ Sarah Iles Johnston (ed), *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, (Harvard: The University Press, 2004) 249.

⁷⁸ Karl L Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, vols I & II, (München: Saur, 2001); Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 277.

⁷⁹ Shenoute, *Discours 4*, 'The Lord Thundered' codex DU, p. 45 (Amélineau 1909: 379); Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 286; Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World*, 249.

The Greek Magical Papyri provide us with important information concerning the symbolism of the lamp-light. Their original religious function of lighting cult statues suggests a connection between lamps and divine epiphanies.⁸⁰ In lamp magic, the divinity's own light is invited to merge with that of the lamp.⁸¹ Thus, the flame of the lamp is seen as 'consubstantial' with the divine, an understanding affirmed by the practitioner of lamp magic standing facing the lamp and addressing the magic formulae to it.⁸² We shall need to return to this point after considering the Jewish lamp-lighting before the Sabbath meal.

In summary, it is not possible to identify *the* pagan light cult. There were a variety of cultic activities involving lights, but although essential to those activities, the action of lamp-lighting does not seem to form part of the religious ritual. Of course, we might expect the necessary lighting of lamps before an evening meal to attract some ceremony, but there is nothing to associate this with a cult.

9.6 The Origin Question - Jewish Lamp-Lighting?

The 'lighting of the lamp in Judaism' to which Bradshaw refers is part of the preparation for the Sabbath. In its present day form it consists of lighting at least two candles in commemoration of the dual command to *remember* and *keep* the Sabbath.⁸³ The lighting is followed by a short prayer:

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us with his commandments, and commands us to light the candles of Shabbat (Amen).⁸⁴

This duty is performed, if possible, by the senior woman of the household, though another woman or even a man might do so if necessary, and the lighting should be completed at least 18 minutes before sundown to conform to the proscription of making fire on the Sabbath day.⁸⁵ The *Mishnah* does not mention this candle lighting as an obligation but it does assume that candles will be lit before the

⁸⁰ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 283.

⁸¹ Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 282.

⁸² Zografou, 'Magical Lamps', 283.

⁸³ Ex. 20.8; and see B.M. Lewin, 'The History of the Sabbath Candles', in *Essays and Studies in Memory of Linda A. Miller*, Israel Davidson (ed), (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America 1938) 55-68.

⁸⁴ See eg <http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer/shabbat.htm>. The first record of the complete text of this blessing is from the Siddur of Rav Amram, written by Amram Gaon in the 9th century; Stefan C Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer, New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 139.

⁸⁵ Ex. 35.3.

beginning of the Sabbath not as a religious ritual but simply to avoid eating in darkness.⁸⁶

The questions to be answered, then, concern how a particular Jewish ritual, relating to a meal on the Sabbath day, and apparently originating in the third century, might have found its way into Christian practice as a daily introduction to evening prayer. And the first such question is how much contact was there between Jews and Christians in the first three or four Christian centuries?

As we saw in chapter 3, there was prolonged contact between Jews and gentile sympathisers some of the latter being or later becoming Christians.⁸⁷ And Louis Feldman argues that during the Hellenistic and Roman periods there were many 'God-fearers' or sympathisers with Judaism, that is non-Jews who were not proselytes but who adopted certain Jewish practices.⁸⁸ Feldman accepts that the references in *Acts* to 'God-fearing' (φοβούμενοι τὸν θεῶν) and 'worshipping' (σεβόμενοι) might mean any pious people, applying particularly, perhaps, to proselytes.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, 'God-fearer', he claims, later became a catchphrase used for the 'semi-proselytes' who adopted certain customs without undertaking full-conversion. While such people were, at least nominally, pagans, some may have found their way into Christianity, Lydia, mentioned in *Acts* 16, perhaps being one such.⁹⁰ Preserving some of their former practices, these converts may have influenced other Christians. Indeed, Justin Martyr (ca. 160) puts into the mouth of the Jew Trypho the assertion that all Christians should keep the Sabbath and feasts, and be circumcised 'like all god-fearing persons.'⁹¹ Some Christians apparently did exactly this, and Commodianus, a third century poet, alludes to such Judaizers as 'half-Jews'.⁹²

⁸⁶ Joseph Tabory, 'Jewish festivals in late Antiquity', in Steven T. Katz (ed), *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 556-572, 562.

⁸⁷ Section 3.6.

⁸⁸ Louis H Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*. (Princeton: The University Press, 1993), particularly chap. 10, 'The Success of Jews in Winning 'Sympathisers'', pp. 342-382; φοβούμενοι τὸν θεῶν: *Acts* 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, σεβόμενοι: *Acts* 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4; 18:7.

⁸⁹ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 342-3.

⁹⁰ *Acts* 16:14-15.

⁹¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 10.2.

⁹² Commodianus, *Instructiones*, 1.24.11 ff, cited in Feldman *Jew and Gentile*, 357.

Feldman goes on to describe synagogue inscriptions and documentary evidence which establish the existence of sympathisers with Judaism. This group, he claims, was at its height in the third century CE and certainly still in existence in the fifth.⁹³ In particular, he considers inscriptions from Aphrodisias in south-western Turkey which date from the third and fourth centuries. There was, Feldman suggests, a sizeable community of Jews in Asia Minor at that time, more than a million according to one estimate, and it is wrong to assume, as some historians have done, that 'Judaism [was] declining as Christianity rose.'⁹⁴ Two inscriptions at Aphrodisias list synagogue donors. Some have clearly Jewish names, while others, persons with Greco-Roman names, are listed separately, a small number described as proselytes, and many more as God-fearers.⁹⁵ These inscriptions would appear to be the same as those described by Stephen Mitchell who understands the cause to be a 'soup-kitchen, for the poor of the city.'⁹⁶ Although the numbers given by Feldman and Mitchell differ significantly, the proportions are very similar, just over 40% are 'God fearers'.⁹⁷

Of course, it would be unwise to read too much into such figures. Those who contributed to the establishment or maintenance of a synagogue might simply have been recognizing Judaism as a social asset contributing to the general good, and indeed Feldman gives, among some thirty factors attracting gentiles to Judaism, many which fall into that category, including the law-abiding nature of Jews, their loyalty to the state, and commercial matters.⁹⁸ Not all such sympathizers would necessarily attend the synagogue they supported, nor adopt Jewish beliefs or customs. Nevertheless, the practice of Jewish customs may have been widespread. That is was indeed the case is supported by a passage from Tertullian's *To the Nations*, an early apologetic work, which seems to have been replaced later by *The Apology*:

AII plane humanius solem Christianum deum aestimant, quod inno-
tuerit ad orientis partem facere nos precationem, uel die solis laetitiam

⁹³ Feldman *Jew and Gentile*, 358.

⁹⁴ Feldman *Jew and Gentile*, 362ff.

⁹⁵ Feldman *Jew and Gentile*, 367-8.

⁹⁶ Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia – Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol 2. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 32.

⁹⁷ Feldman 54 out of 130 names, Mitchell 65 out of 155 names.

⁹⁸ Feldman *Jew and Gentile*, 369-382.

curare. Quid uos minus facitis? Non plerique affectatione adorandi aliquando etiam caelestia ad solis initium labra uibratis? Vos certe estis, qui etiam in laterculum septem dierum solem recepistis, et ex diebus ipsorum praelegistis, quo die lauacrum subtrahatis aut in uesperam differatis, aut otium et prandium curetis. Quod quidem facitis exorbitantes et ipsi a uestris ad alienas religiones: Iudaei enim festi sabbata et cena pura et Iudaici ritus lucernarum et ieiunia cum azymis et orationes litorales, quae utique aliena sunt a diis uestris. Quare, ut ab excessu reuertar, qui solem et diem eius nobis exprobratis, agnoscite uicinitatem: non longe a Saturno et sabbatis uestris sumus!⁹⁹

Others of kinder disposition imagine that the sun is the Christian god. They have observed that when we pray, we face to the east and we rejoice on the day of the sun. Do you do anything less than this? Do you not sometimes cause your lips to quiver toward the rising sun as an act of adoration? It is most definitely your preference to single out Sunday, the seventh day from the sequence, to refrain from bathing, at least until evening? This is also your designated day for leisure and festivity. By doing this you depart from your traditional practices in favour of alien religions. The Jewish festivals are the Sabbath and the feast of purification. And the Jews also have the rite of the lamps (*ritus lucernarum*) and of fasting, with unleavened bread, and prayers at the seashore - all of which are alien to your gods. Now to return to our subject, you who deride us for sun worship and Sunday worship, see how close you are to us. We are not far removed from your Saturn and your Sabbath!¹⁰⁰

Bradshaw, in the context of considering Tertullian's description of an agape, seems to take this passage from *To the Nations* as indicating that there was a Christian lamp-lighting ceremony deriving from that of the Jewish Sabbath: 'The ablutions and bringing in of the lamps resemble Jewish customs (and indeed Tertullian himself says that the lamp ceremony is derived from Judaism).'¹⁰¹ Taft, however, after describing the general custom of greeting the evening lamp (discussed below), interprets the above passage from *To the Nations* as indicating that Tertullian 'accuses the pagans of having borrowed "the Jewish lucernarium rite"', adding 'But I am sceptical that this general pagan usage would have been borrowed from a despised minority such as the Jews.'¹⁰² Examination of the context, however, shows that neither of these interpretations of Tertullian's words is correct.

⁹⁹ Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 13.

¹⁰⁰ Translation, Howe (2007): http://www.tertullian.org/works/ad_nationes.htm.

¹⁰¹ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, 51.

¹⁰² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 37.

The passage is a somewhat curious one. The tract as a whole is aimed at pagan attacks on Christianity, yet here we have claims that certain Jewish customs (or what seem to be Jewish customs) are current among the attackers. Those who observe these customs are not Jews, since, as the above passage makes clear, they are polytheists and Tertullian accuses them of adopting 'alien' practices. Nor can they belong to the general pagan majority, ignorant of, or at least ignoring, Jewish practices. They can only be God-fearers, or sympathisers with Judaism, but not converts, and it seems that it is such people who criticise Christians for facing east to pray. The 'you' of the passage then must be understood as indicating 'you who make the particular sun-worshipping allegation.'

We may add that the tone of the passage does not support the idea that Tertullian would have approved a Christian adoption of a lamp-lighting ceremony which might be seen as of Jewish origin, nor indeed does he say anything which suggests that there was a Christian *ritus lucernarum*. And indeed, from the wording, 'and the Jews also have ...', it is not at all certain whether he is suggesting that the God-fearers have adopted all the customs that he lists or merely commenting that these are Jewish practices. This strengthens the conclusion above that the bringing-in of lamps at his agape was no more than a practical response to the need for light. Indeed, Dix, who sees the agape and ultimately the Eucharist as deriving from a Jewish *chabûrah*, or association, supper, comments: 'the bringing in of the bason [sic] and lamps were a *chabûrah* custom, but they were also common customs at the evening meal all round the Mediterranean.'¹⁰³

The group of pagans sympathizing with Judaism appear, moreover, to be matched by a corresponding movement within Christianity, as demonstrated by the polemics of church leaders against 'Judaizing'. Thus, John Chrysostom, as a presbyter in Antioch (386-387), denounces those Christians who follow Jewish customs, warning of danger to the church in these practices. If Jewish ceremonies are holy, the implication, he asserts, is that Christianity must be false.¹⁰⁴ Further, in a comment which suggests that the size of the movement was significant, he advises that the number of Christians involved in such practices

¹⁰³ Dix, *Shape*, 85.

¹⁰⁴ John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos*: 1.6.852.

should not be mentioned: 'Do not say there were many who observed the fast with the Jews. Such a rumour spreads disgrace on the Church.'¹⁰⁵ And Jerome, in a letter to Augustine written about 404 CE, refers to the *Minei* also called *Nazarenes*, apparently a group of Jewish Christians, writing: 'While they desire to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither one nor the other.'¹⁰⁶ And he goes on to warn that if Jews are allowed to introduce their practices into the Church, 'they will not become Christians, but they will make us Jews.' Similarly, Basil, in two letters, denounces Apollinarus, bishop of Laodicea for urging the observance of worship 'according to the law'.¹⁰⁷

9.7 The Origin Question - Conclusions

In conclusion, we must first observe that there was no single Christian lamp-lighting ceremony. Indeed, in some cases there appears to be no ceremony at all, light is needed, lamps are lit. Thus, Tertullian's only hint of a lamp lighting ceremony at his agape is contained in one word: *lumina*, 'lights'.

Nor indeed is it possible to identify a single pagan light cult, though here we can discern widespread associations of ideas which might underlie Christian practice. Firstly, light is widely, and very naturally, regarded in a mystical way and particularly associated with divine epiphanies, an idea prevalent also in both Judaism and Christianity. Secondly, domestic, 'magical' uses of lamps go further by identifying the lamp-light with the 'light' of a god. But although it is tempting to see a point of contact with the *Phōs Hilaron* here, we should note that the sort of revulsion expressed by Abbot Shenoute against divination or incantation using lamps is likely to have been felt by other Christian leaders if they encountered practices which showed any similarity. Thus 'the point of contact', if indeed it exists, must be buried very deeply in the unconscious cultural memory.

On the other hand, it is certainly possible that lighting lamps before the Jewish Sabbath meal became part of a Christian agape, lost its association with the Sabbath and eventually became attached to daily evening prayer.

Clearly, this would require a great change in the significance attached to the act. The Jewish practice delimits the Sabbath – all is prepared, and, as the sun sets

¹⁰⁵ John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos*: 8.4.933.

¹⁰⁶ Jerome, *Letter* 112.13.

¹⁰⁷ Basil, *Letters* 265.2, 263.4.

one enters a holy time with its own special nature and its own rules for the order of human lives. The Christian ceremonies, however, while marking the coming of evening, make no such division, being part of a ceaseless round of prayer.

This is shown by the observation that the Jewish prayer has no resemblance to the *Phōs Hilaron* or any Christian lamp-lighting prayer. It is nevertheless the case that rituals persist while their significance changes to suit new situations.

On balance, therefore, we must agree with Bradshaw, Johnson and Phillips that there is no certain evidence for or against a derivation of the ritual from Judaism.¹⁰⁸ However, there are two further points which should be considered. Firstly, the variety of Christian practice strongly suggests that there was no early adoption of Jewish lamp-lighting customs. This is supported by the *Mishnah's* apparent ignorance of any Jewish lamp-lighting ceremony which suggests that there was no early adoption in Judaism either. Secondly, the rejection of Jewish practices by later Christian leaders show that they did not consider their lamp-lighting to have been adopted from Judaism. Thus, we must reject the theory of a Jewish origin as well as that of an origin in Paganism, recalling Bradshaw's principal that 'when a variety of explanations exist for the origin of a practice, it does not follow that one of them must be genuine.'¹⁰⁹ Further, in view of the variety of Christian ceremonies, any account of origins must deal with more than one strand of development.

I therefore propose a single, simple, and obvious point of origin, in the domestic environment with the simple practical requirement of light as evening draws on. The bringing in of lamps would naturally be done with some small ceremony which would, as Bradshaw suggests naturally transfer to the beginning of an agape, though equally naturally to the necessary provision of light for vespers in a church environment. It is then possible to distinguish two separate main strands of development.

On the one hand, in the Cathedral Office, the *Lychnikon* no doubt soon became recognised as the beginning of worship, and in becoming so, was linked to other initial elements, which led to various ways of involving the deacon. Similarly, the

¹⁰⁸ Bradshaw, Johnson & Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 159.

¹⁰⁹ Bradshaw, *Search*, 17; see above section 2.4.

use of ἐπιλύχνιος to indicate a time of day leads to the evening psalm, 140, becoming the ἐπιλύχνιος ψαλμὸς despite lacking lamp or light symbolism.¹¹⁰ Ultimately this may have led to the introduction of a formal lamp-blessing.

On the other hand, the *Phōs Hilaron* almost certainly originated as part of domestic worship. For, rejecting suggestions that Christian lamp-lighting was borrowed from Judaism or a specific pagan religious rite, for the reasons given above, it is possible to see the origins of this hymn in a simpler, more domestic custom and outline an admittedly hypothetical derivation. In an age before electric lamps, when light itself was a mysterious, divine gift, light and lamps naturally had a deeper significance than they do in modern times, and as suggested above the cultural unconsciousness of all peoples associated light with divinity. The ancient practice, then, was to greet lamps brought in at eventide with ‘Hail good (or friendly) light!’ or similar words.¹¹¹ And, since there is nothing particularly pagan about such phrases, it is likely that they would continue to be used by Christians. But if family evening prayers immediately followed, then the lamp-lighting and any associated exclamation could come to be accepted as part of that worship and, as Basil comments, ‘it seemed good to our fathers not to receive the gift of the evening light in silence, but as soon as it appeared to give thanks.’¹¹² For this acceptance to be complete, however, it would be necessary for the address to be transferred from the lamp-light to a member of the Trinity. Although Clement of Alexandria may not have had direct influence on the composition of the *Phōs Hilaron* he illustrates Christian thinking in his *Protrepticus*, or *Exhortation to the Heathen*, dated to the end of the second century,¹¹³ in which he urges: τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεὸν ἐποπτεύσωμεν, ταύτην αὐτῷ πρῶτον ἀνυμνήσαντες τὴν φωνήν «χαῖρε φῶς», ‘let us contemplate the truly real God, first proclaiming to him this saying, “Hail, O light!”’¹¹⁴ At some stage, it seems, some unknown person made the greeting of the light more specifically Christian by extending the exclamation to the *Phōs Hilaron*, identifying the light specifically

¹¹⁰ See above discussion.

¹¹¹ Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 6, 4; see Roland G. Kent, *Varro, De Lingua Latina*, vol. 1, (London: Heinemann, 1938) 176; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 37.

¹¹² Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 29.73.34-43, PG 32.204-5, my translation, see above.

¹¹³ Ca. 195 CE, see John Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria*. (New York: Ardent Media, 1974) 17.

¹¹⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 11.114.1.

with Christ, and perhaps using ἱλαρός because of its association with graciousness and its pairing with αἴσιος.

Both F. J. Dölger, and E. R. Smothers have dismissed a connection between the domestic hailing of the evening lamp and the *Phōs Hilaron* as somewhat tenuous, and indeed the above derivation should certainly be regarded as a speculative sketch.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, four salient points in it are indisputable:

1. The practice of hailing the light in the domestic setting underlines the significance of light throughout ancient culture and indicates that ceremony of a simple nature was attached to the normal provision of light at eventide.
2. Basil identifies that ancient custom as the origin of the lamp-lighting thanksgiving that he knew.
3. In early Christianity, light was a major image of God and Christ, perhaps even more so than it is today.
4. That imagery is taken up by the *Phōs Hilaron* and associated with the evening lamp.

The domestic nature of the hymn's original use is underlined by Basil's comment that 'the people ... are accustomed to use the ancient phrase,' implying, perhaps, not formal church worship but the people in their own homes.¹¹⁶ This original domestic setting may be the reason that the name of the author is forgotten.

Christian lamp-lighting then seems to have begun with the simple ceremony of bringing in the lamps as illustrated by Tertullian's account above. The use of a short hymn during this process may have added particularly Christian significance. And it appears from Gregory of Nyssa's reference to hand movements that the lamps may have been lit after being brought in. And indeed, Macrina's use of those motions suggests that she was accustomed to doing it. Gregory does not mention lamp-lighting at any earlier period though it would necessarily have happened, and, just as Macrina undertook the servants' work of baking bread, it might have been natural for her to light lamps at the beginning of family evening worship. Gregory thus describes his sister, in her dying moments,

¹¹⁵ F. J. Dölger, 'Der christliche Abendhymnus Φῶς ἱλαρόν', *Antike und Christentum*, 5 (1936); E. R. Smothers, ΦΩΣ ΙΛΑΡΟΝ, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 19 (1929) 272.

¹¹⁶ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 29.73.34-43, PG 32.204-5, my translation; see above section 1.1.

doing something she has done since she was a teenager, as a completion of her life of service.

In view of the limited evidence for the early use of the *Phōs Hilaron* hymn we might be tempted to believe that, in the fourth century, it was private to the family of Macrina and Basil. Moreover, Basil and Gregory appear to be the only writers at that time who use the expression ἐπιλυχνίος εὐχαριστία. Nevertheless, in writing of the 'lamp-lighting thanksgiving', they clearly do so in the expectation that others will recognise this designation, and, in Basil's case, he very certainly describes a specific thanksgiving. Additionally, that he knows neither the author nor when it was composed, suggests that its origin does not form part of his family history.

If then this hymn began and was principally used in a domestic setting, how did it become part of the formal office? Here we are in the area of speculation. There are, however, certain known facts on which to base that speculation. Firstly, Macrina converted her family home into a double community and almost certainly converted family prayers into the Daily Office of these so-called 'urban monastics'. Basil, developed matters further by spreading this form of monasticism and the influence of its office. In doing so they may well have laid the foundation for the wider adoption of this hymn. As regards the connection with Sophronios, bishop of Jerusalem from 634 CE to 638/9, we have seen that Egeria does not record the use of *Phōs Hilaron* in late fourth century Jerusalem. Might Sophronios, who had been a monk in a monastery near Bethlehem, have encountered the hymn in his monastic life and been responsible for its introduction in to his cathedral city?¹¹⁷

9.8 The Angel of Peace

The final part of the description of vespers from *Apostolic Constitutions* given above, introduces a further element.¹¹⁸ The indented section in the passage quoted appears to be an early version of what is known as the *Angel of Peace*

¹¹⁷ Pauline Allen (Intro., Text, Trans. & Commentary), *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh Century Heresy, The Synodical Letter and other Documents*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 15-23.

¹¹⁸ Section 8.2.

Litany. And, as Taft proposes that this formed part of the Cappadocian vespers, we must examine it further before discussing Taft's claim.

This, in its present-day form, is a *litany* in the modern English sense of the word, that is, a series of petitions said or sung by a leader, in the East traditionally a deacon, to each of which the congregation make a response.¹¹⁹ 'The *synapte meta ton aiteseon*, called in English the "Angel of peace litany", is a litany that traditionally precedes the final blessing or inclination prayer in the Byzantine and other Eastern daily offices.'¹²⁰

In its more recent form this litany appears in the Orthodox celebration of both vespers and matins as well as twice in the Eucharistic Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, these latter being at the completion of the offertory procession, or Great Entrance, and in the preparation for communion as an introduction to the Lord's Prayer.¹²¹ The evening prayer form of this, in the translation of the 1922 *Service Book* is:¹²²

Deacon: Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

Succour us, save us, be merciful unto us, and keep us O God, by thy grace;

An evening all-perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us beseech of the Lord;

An Angel of Peace, the faithful guide and guardian both of our souls and bodies, let us beseech of the Lord;

The pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us beseech of the Lord;

All things which are good and profitable to our souls, and peace to the world, let us beseech of the Lord;

That we may pass the residue of our life in peace and penitence, let us beseech of the Lord;

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful; and a good defence against the dread Judgement Seat of Christ, let us beseech of the Lord;

¹¹⁹ Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, 3rd. edn, edited by Bernard Botte, translated by F L Cross (London: Mowbray, 1958) 74-80.

¹²⁰ Alexopoulos, S. 'Litany' in Bradshaw, P. (ed.) *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, London, SCM Press, 2002., 282.

¹²¹ Hapgood, *Service Book*, 10, 36, 98-9, 111-2; Elias, *The Divine Liturgy Explained*, 143-145, 179-181.

¹²² Hapgood, *Service Book*, 10; Nadson, *Office of Vespers*, 27.

Calling to remembrance our most holy, all-undefiled, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Birth-giver of God and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

In modern Eastern rite vespers, the people respond to the first two of these phrases, 'Lord, have mercy', and to the final, mutual commendation, 'To thee, O Lord', the other petitions, which end 'let us beseech of the Lord', being concluded with the people's response, 'Grant this, O Lord.'¹²³ The 'inclination' prayer which follows in the daily offices is so-called because of its diaconal introduction 'Let us bow [incline] our heads unto the Lord.'

Certainly, this modern litany seems to be an elaboration of the passage from the Apostolic Constitutions, and surely must be a development of it. The earlier description, however, has no indication that the people are expected to reply, except, perhaps, the twice occurring 'let us ask.' We cannot be certain, therefore, if there was an expected, fixed response to the petitions, omitted because it was considered 'obvious' by the author, and/or because this document was originally intended for the instruction and use of clergy. It may alternatively be the case that either, the petitions were intended to inspire personal, and unspoken, prayer in the people, or that the congregation did indeed respond but in spontaneous and unspecified ways. Taft, however, tells us, without offering justification, that 'to each petition the faithful responded "Kyrie eleison"'. The modern response, 'Grant this, O Lord' (Παράσχου Κύπριε), which also occurs throughout the litany in the two eucharistic versions, seems more likely, however.¹²⁴

With regard to this litany, Taft draws our attention to two quotations from Basil of Caesarea.¹²⁵ The first of these occurs in letter 11, written to an unknown correspondent:

Τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι τὴν ἁγίαν ἡμέραν συνδιαγαγόντες τοῖς τέκνοις ἡμῶν, καὶ ὄντως τελείαν ἑορτὴν ἑορτάσαντες τῷ Κυρίῳ ..., προεπέμψαμεν μεθ' ὑγείας πρὸς τὴν σὴν εὐγένειαν, εὐχόμενοι τῷ φιλανθρώπῳ Θεῷ καὶ αὐτοῖς δοθῆναι εἰρηνικὸν ἄγγελον βοηθὸν καὶ σύμπορον.¹²⁶

¹²³ Nadson (ed.) *The Office of Vespers*, 27-8.

¹²⁴ Elias, *The Divine Liturgy Explained*, 143-145, 179-181.

¹²⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 38-9.

¹²⁶ Basil, *Letter* 11.1-6. Greek text from Deferrari, *Letters* vol 1, 102.

Having by God's grace, spent the holy day with our children and having truly celebrated a perfect festival for the Lord ... we sent them on in good health to your nobility, praying God, the lover of humankind, that an angel of peace be given to them as an aid and companion.¹²⁷

The second occurs in LR 37.3: αἰτοῦντας τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ ὁδηγίαν καὶ διδασκαλίαν πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον: 'asking of him guidance and instruction in what is profitable.'¹²⁸ Taft considers this latter to be a 'paraphrase' of the fifth petition of the litany, for 'things which are good and profitable for our souls' (Τὰ καλὰ καὶ συμφέροντα ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἡμῶν).¹²⁹ And from these two passages, Taft concludes that Basil knew the *Angel of Peace* litany and, therefore, that 'Cappadocian cathedral vespers in the second half of the fourth century' ended with these intercessions.¹³⁰

However, we must note that 'Angel of Peace' is the modern English name given to what is correctly called the *synapte meta ton aiteseon*, in which it is one of the petitions, and thus Basil would almost certainly not have used this expression to refer to the whole litany, if it then existed and he knew it. So although, 'having ... spent the holy day' suggests that evening is coming on and the vespers service is in Basil's mind, it very much looks as if Basil simply speeded his guests on their way with the prayer for angelic guidance which he outlines in his letter. Nor is it clear why a teacher like Basil, himself allegedly using the litany on a daily basis, and writing for the benefit who also would know it well, would paraphrase rather than quote verbatim. Further, the prayer of LR 37 occurs in the context of the Third Hour, associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and thus of his 'guidance and instruction', rather than where the litany is found in the evening prayer of *Apostolic Constitutions*, or the modern offices of vespers or matins which now also incorporate the *Angel of Peace* litany.

On this evidence then we cannot say that the late fourth century Cappadocian vespers concluded with the *Angel of Peace* litany. Basil may certainly be recording the very earliest stage of that litany in that he used ideas and terminology no doubt current at the time, but possibly before they were strung

¹²⁷ My translation.

¹²⁸ Basil, LR 37.3; PG 31.1013.30-32; my translation.

¹²⁹ Elias, *The Divine Liturgy Explained*, 144, translation 145.

¹³⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 39.

together into the early form of the *synapte meta ton aiteseon* as it appears in the *Apostolic Constitutions* vespers.

9.9 The Structure of Evening Prayer

We are now in a position to summarize the evening prayer of Basil's communities. As we have seen, this was split into two parts, prayer 'as the day is completed' and 'as night begins.'

Prayer at the completion of the day, which we are for convenience terming 'vespers', would be as follows:

The lighting or bringing in of lamps, accompanied by the singing of the Lamp-lighting Thanksgiving.

Confession, 'of what was done amiss whether intentionally or unintentionally or where a fault has escaped our notice, in word or deed, or in the heart itself.'¹³¹

A psalm or psalms. These would be variable in response to Basil's requirement for 'change and variety in the psalmody,'¹³² although Ps. 4, quoted by Basil for this time, or Ps. 140 (141) seem likely to have been among those used.¹³³

Prayer of thanksgiving 'for what has been given us during it, or what has been accomplished by us.'¹³⁴

With regard to the prayer, we should note that the episcopal prayer of *Apostolic Constitutions*, discussed above, also describes vespers as an 'evening thanksgiving' but without specifying detail.

In addition, we have already noted that some time during the day must have been provided for the reading and exposition of scripture.¹³⁵ Vespers would have been a suitable occasion for this and by the mid-5th century this seems to have been the case, at least on Saturday and Sunday, for Socrates of Constantinople writes 'Similarly, both in Caesarea in Cappadocia and in Cyprus, on the Sabbath and

¹³¹ Basil, *LR* 37; PG 31.1016.9-13.

¹³² Basil, *LR* 37; PG 31.1016.34-41.

¹³³ See above on 'Times of Prayer' (Ps. 4) and this chapter (Ps. 140.)

¹³⁴ Basil, *LR* 37; PG 31.1016.7-9.

¹³⁵ Basil, *LR* 37; PG 31.1016.39-41.

the Lord's day, in the evening at lamp-lighting, the presbyters and bishops always interpret the scriptures.' (Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐν Καισαρεία τῆς Καππαδοκίας καὶ ἐν Κύπρῳ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σαββάτου καὶ κυριακῆς ἀεὶ περὶ ἑσπέραν μετὰ τὴν λυχναψίαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ ἐπίσκοποι τὰς γραφὰς ἐρμηνεύουσιν.)¹³⁶

Prayer 'as night begins' (Compline) must have been much simpler, perhaps solely consisting of:

Ps. 90 (91). The only known fixed psalm in Basil's scheme.

Prayer 'that our rest may be without offence and free from fantasies.'¹³⁷

Again, similar sentiments are expressed in the episcopal prayer at vespers in *Apostolic Constitutions* which asks for 'a peaceful evening and a night free from sin and fantasies', (εἰρηνικὴν παράσχου τὴν ἑσπέραν καὶ τὴν νύκτα ἀναμάρτητον καὶ ἀφαντασιάστον).¹³⁸

9.10 Conclusions.

To return to the chapter aims outlined in section 9.1.

We have been able to provide an outline of the Cappadocian evening synaxes, vespers and compline, and, although we cannot be sure of all the psalms used, possibilities have been suggested.

While it is not possible to assert or deny that the Cappadocian Lamp-lighting Thanksgiving is the *Phōs Hilaron*. This, however, remains the sole known possibility for the hymn which Macrina, Basil and Gregory knew.

In view of claimed references to the *Phōs Hilaron*, in a variety of other documents, criteria based on the unique characteristics of the hymn have been developed, and some of these claims have been shown to lack credibility.

There is neither evidence nor reason to see Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies as developments from either pagan or Jewish practices. Instead a domestic origin is proposed with two strands of development into Cathedral and Urban-Monastic practice.

¹³⁶ Socrates of Constantinople, called *Scholasticus*, 439-450 CE, *Church History* 5.22.55.188-91.

¹³⁷ Basil, *LR* 37; *PG* 31.1016.18-21.

¹³⁸ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8.37.12-13, text from Metzger, *Les constitutions apostoliques*.

There is good reason to believe that the Cappadocian Lamp-lighting ceremony, and indeed vespers as a whole, developed directly from family evening prayers, rather than from any pagan or Jewish religious ceremony.

10. Towards an Understanding of Cappadocian Theology of Prayer and Worship

10.1 Introduction

It is all too easy to read liturgical texts focussing on what was or was not done, said or sung and miss the theological considerations of the time. Robert Taft, however, offers three chapters giving a theological viewpoint on the daily office.¹ The principal one of these uses his historical understanding to critique the traditional Catholic theology of this liturgy and some modern views, as well as developing an understanding of the office based on earlier and, he suggests, more appropriate interpretations. The purpose of the chapter below is not to present a rival theology to Taft but, noting the word 'toward' in two of his chapter titles, to supplement his ideas with specifically Cappadocian concepts with a view to aiding further forward movement.² We shall, nevertheless find ourselves finally converging towards Taft's conclusion that the Daily Office, like all Christian worship, is an eschatological proclamation.

In order to provide a background to the Cappadocian Fathers' understanding of prayer and worship, we shall begin by considering the ideas of Origen in his discourse *On Prayer*. We have seen that a direct transmission of Origen's teaching via Gregory Thaumaturgos and Macrina the Elder to the Cappadocians must be rejected.³ However, they would have known of the connection and this would have encouraged the reading of Origen's works. Certainly, there are indications that Origen, particularly in such works as *Commentary on The Song of Songs* and *Homily on Genesis* influenced the spirituality of Basil and Gregory

¹ Principally, 'Toward a theology of the Liturgy of the Hours' in *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition (Collegeville, Mn: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 331-365; the other 2 are: 'The Liturgy of the Hours as the Church's School of Prayer', in *The Liturgy of the Hours*, 367-373; "Thanksgiving for the Light" 'Toward a Theology of Vespers' in *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1984) 127-149.

² As the Cappadocians, when speaking of prayer in general, do not distinguish its context (eucharist or office) we shall accept that such a distinction cannot alter what they have to say.

³ See chapter 1.

of Nyssa.⁴ And clearly, Origen's method of scriptural exegesis influenced them, although they may have had their own ways of applying it.⁵

As we shall see, however, as regards the practice and purpose of prayer (as opposed to 'spirituality' understood more generally as the soul's relationship to the divine) the perspectives of Origen and the Cappadocians are distinct. Origen focuses on personal and petitionary prayer and The Cappadocians on corporate worship. Much of *On Prayer* is taken up with a commentary on the Lord's Prayer, but important as that is, it need not concern us here, belonging as it does to a study of the reception of that prayer. Instead we shall examine this author's concepts and practices of prayer in general.

10.2 Origen – Right Attitudes and Divine Omniscience

Origen writes his *Treatise on Prayer* from the perspective of Alexandria and Caesarea Palestina between 231 and 250 CE, possibly around 236.⁶ Considering the attitude adopted for prayer as important, Origen distinguishes 'disposition' and 'posture' (τῆς καταστάσεως καὶ τοῦ σχήματος), the former, he writes, referring to the soul and the latter to the body.⁷ The required spiritual disposition is that of 'throwing off' temptation, mental unrest, and intruding thoughts, as well as forgetting any injuries received from others.⁸

As regards posture Origen accepts that there are 'innumerable dispositions of the body', but the attitude 'to be preferred before all' involves 'stretching out the hands and lifting up the eyes.'⁹ Although Origen does not specify the disposition of the whole body, he clearly assumes standing in the majority of cases, since he goes

⁴ See Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St. John of the Cross*, 2nd rev edn (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1990); Andrew Louth, *Origins of The Christian Mystical Tradition, From Plato to Denys* 2nd edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Origen, *The Song of Songs: commentary and Homilies*, R. P Lawson (trans and notes), Ancient Christian Writers 26 (London: Longmans, Green, 1957); Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, R E Heine (trans), (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982).

⁵ Origen, *On first principles*, G.W.Butterworth (trans) New York : Harper Torchbooks, 1966; Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, (London: Routledge, 1999) 136-8; and see below.

⁶ Origen, *De Oratione*, PG 11.415-561, English translation from Eric George Jay (trans. & notes), *Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, (London: SPCK, 1954); dating from Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 72.

⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, 31.1, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 209.

⁸ Origen, *De Oratione*, 31.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 210.

⁹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 31.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 210.

on to suggest that sitting or lying is permissible in case of infirmity (and also that raising the hands and eyes may be dispensed with in difficult circumstances). In the use of uplifted hands, he is accepting the apparently universal, Jewish and pagan, 'orans' position.¹⁰ It is also clear that standing was the normal posture of prayer for both pagans and Jews, as Jesus assumes, in an instruction to begin prayer with the forgiveness of others, 'whenever you stand praying ...'¹¹ Luke, however, has several references to kneeling for prayer, using the expression 'placing the knees' (θεῖς τὰ γόνατα). So Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives, Steven at his martyrdom, and Paul, kneeling, shares prayer with others on two occasions when parting from them.¹² Paul himself uses different terminology when he writes, 'For this reason I bend my knees [κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου] to the Father ... that, according to the riches of his glory, he may give you power to become mighty in your inner being, through his Spirit.'¹³ These examples conform to the usual pagan pattern of kneeling in order to add significance to the petition.¹⁴ An alternative understanding is kneeling in order to acknowledge God's supremacy as Paul writes to the Romans, quoting Isaiah, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.' (ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ).¹⁵

It is clear that Origen perceives repentance as important and distinct from other prayers, for he urges the necessity of kneeling for it, declaring, in Eric Jay's translation: 'and we must know that genuflection is necessary [καὶ ἡ γονυκλισία δὲ ὅτι ἀναγκαία ἐστίν] when a man is going to accuse himself of his sins before God.'¹⁶ In view of the very specific definition of 'genuflection' in Western Christianity, however, it is perhaps better to render γονυκλισία as 'kneeling'. Origen justifies this requirement with a reference to the quotation from *Ephesians* mentioned above, although there Paul is talking of petitionary prayer rather than confession. That Origen commends kneeling for confession, moreover, makes it clear that another posture, presumably standing, was the norm. Indeed, that he

¹⁰ See above section 4.4.

¹¹ Mk. 11:25, translation NRSV.

¹² Lk. 22:41, Acts 7:10, 20:36, 21:5;

¹³ Eph 3: 14, 16, my translation; Schnackenburg questions the authenticity of this letter: Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 24-9.

¹⁴ See above section 4.4.

¹⁵ Rom 14:11 quoting Is 45: 24 (LXX); see also Phil 2: 10 discussed below.

¹⁶ Origen, *De Oratone*, 31.3, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 210.

emphasises kneeling as part of the act of repentance, suggests that it may well be the case that this was not a general custom at the time. However, if his intention was really to promote this particular practice, he somewhat spoils his advocacy by going on to consider Phil. 2: 10, 'in the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of heavenly and earthly being and those under the earth', and observing that, since heavenly beings do not have knees, this must refer to a spiritual kneeling.¹⁷ This would seem to imply that the physical act of kneeling is not required for confession; in addition, the heavenly beings kneel not to confess offences but to acknowledge supremacy. However, practices, both actual and proposed, differed from place to place; Tertullian, who advocates standing on Sundays and during Pentecost, and by implication kneeling at other times, may have represented what came to be the majority view among church authorities, and certainly the ultimately accepted one, since Canon 20 of the Council of Nicaea requires precisely that.¹⁸

Further, Origen stresses that when praying one should face east, the direction of sunrise.¹⁹ He sees this as symbolic, it is to be 'as though the soul beheld the rising of the true light,' though this symbolism is, apparently in his view, quite independent of the time of day. Both the orientation and the symbolism are obvious to all, he claims: 'who would not at once agree that the region towards the sunrising clearly indicates that we ought to make our prayers facing in that direction?' So obvious is all this, it seems, that he is not prepared to be as permissive in this case as he is for bodily posture, rejecting the suggestion that a person might find it appropriate to face a westerly window rather than an easterly blank wall. Nevertheless, his very insistence makes it clear that there were those who did not accept the idea.

While pagan prayer had an arguably rational basis, that gods, though magical and immortal, were otherwise like human beings, who must be implored by name and acquainted with the desires of the petitioner, those who believe in an

¹⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, 31.3, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 211-2.

¹⁸ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, 23.5; Ernest Evans (trans. and intro.), *De Oratione Liber: Tertullian's Tract on the Prayer*, (London: SPCK, 1953), 32, 33; Henry R Percival (ed. And trans.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers*, 2nd. Series, vol. 14, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, (New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1900), 42.

¹⁹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 32.1, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 215-6, and see above, section 2.4.

omnipotent and omniscient God have a deity who knows their needs, their wishes, and even their desire to worship. This raises the question: in the face of such infinite power and foreknowledge, how can the prayers of mere humans be significant or meaningful? Thus Paul, while accepting the necessity of human prayer, nevertheless sees it as inevitably needing to be hugely supplemented by divine power: 'The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought ... but the one who searches the heart knows the mind of the Spirit, because, according to the will of God, he supplicates on behalf of the holy ones.'²⁰

The questions of divine foreknowledge and human inadequacy, are tackled by Origen in his *Treatise on Prayer*. This was written as a response to problems posed by Ambrosius and Tatiana, who had encountered persons who put forward two arguments which questioned the necessity and effectiveness of prayer.²¹ Firstly there is the question of divine foreknowledge: 'God knows all things before they come into being ... what need is there to send up prayer to him who knows what things we need even before we pray?'²² Little children, the opponents of prayer go on to suggest, may not know what is good for them nor indeed be able to ask for it, nevertheless, their fathers provide for the children's needs without waiting for them to ask. Human beings 'fall short' of God, 'the father and maker of all' by a greater degree than small children do from their parents, so that our prayers are to a correspondingly greater degree unnecessary.²³ Secondly it is argued that divine predestination means that prayer is without effect since we pray either for the predestined good which, like the rising of the Sun, comes about irrespective of prayer, or else for those things which, not being in our best interests, are predestined not to happen.²⁴

Origen deals firstly with the second of these objections by means of arguments against the idea of predestination. Animals, he says, and particularly human beings, being rational, act of their own accord, their movement 'is movement "through themselves"'; an animal unable to move of its own accord 'cannot be

²⁰ Rom. 8:26-7; my translation.

²¹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 2.1, see Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 81, notes 1 & 2, for Ambrosius and Tatiana.

²² Origen, *De Oratione*, 5.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 94, quoting Mt. 6: 8.

²³ Origen, *De Oratione*, 5.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 94.

²⁴ Origen, *De Oratione*, 5.3-5, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 95-7.

considered any longer to be an animal, but it will be like a plant which is moved by nature only, or a stone which is carried by some outside agency.²⁵ Further, the matter of human free will is decided by our common experience, that we decide for ourselves to eat, walk, and assent or dissent from particular opinions, and, as we censure all sorts of wrong doers, so we inevitably impute free will to them.²⁶

While human will is free, however, divine omniscience must mean that God has foreknowledge of how it is exercised. Nevertheless, it is important to appreciate, as Origen makes clear, that divine foreknowledge is not 'the cause of ... all that is to be done of our free will.'²⁷ God thus foresees prayers as he foresees needs, and the outcomes of those prayers are, in Origen's opinion, in accordance with his perception of the needs and the overall worthiness, or otherwise, of the petitioner.²⁸ Jay explains this in a footnote as 'since God has created man with free will and capable of spiritual communion with himself, it is reasonable to suppose that these spiritual movements have a part in the determining of events. Man's prayers (or his failure to pray) are among the factors that God takes into account from eternity.'²⁹

While the argument against predestination is largely convincing, the same cannot be said of Origen's handling of the suggestion that prayer is rendered unnecessary by divine foreknowledge. Here he concentrates on the worthiness of the individual praying, even though this worthiness might be in the future with respect to the act of prayer. Unfortunately, this leads him to slip into a somewhat questionable idea of God's response to prayer. For, writing of a man whose prayer is blameless, he imagines God as saying: 'I will ... supply more than he could ask ... I will send this ministering angel to begin to work with him for his salvation ... an angel more honourable than the other [unworthy man], because that man is going to be better than the other, but from such and such a man who ... will fail and slip backwards to more material things, I will remove this good helper.'³⁰ That human worth is judged on future performance is illustrated by the next section of Origen's treatise, which considers the biblical histories of Josiah,

²⁵ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.1, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 98.

²⁶ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 99.

²⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.3, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 100.

²⁸ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.4, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 100-2.

²⁹ Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 101, n. 1.

³⁰ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.4, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 101-2.

Judas, and Paul. Thus God, Origen suggests, gives better spiritual assistance to those he knows will become worthy, while reduced support, which may even be withdrawn, is given to those most in need of such help. This view is, irreconcilable with the concept of a just and benevolent God and indeed has the appearance of 'back-door' predestination, an idea which occurs to Origen and which he attempts, unconvincingly, to reject: 'If anybody is disturbed on the grounds that compulsion is thus brought upon events because God, who foreknows the future, cannot lie, we must say to him that God inevitably knows that a particular man does not inevitably and unswervingly will the better, or will so desire the worse that he becomes incapable of change towards improvement.'³¹ In Jay's view, 'Origen is evidently not quite sure that his argument has completely resolved the contradiction between God's foreknowledge and man's free will', adding, 'It is the fact that his argument is confined within the category of time which introduces this weakness.'³² It is not clear, however, how placing God beyond the confines of the human concept of time clarifies the argument. In a subsequent note, Jay adds that 'God's certain knowledge includes knowledge of the fact that man is not determined.'³³ Here, perhaps, Jay is reaching towards a solution, but without fully appreciating what is involved.

In fact, the reconciliation of the divine characteristics of foreknowledge, benevolence and justice requires, either that God treats everyone equally regardless of their worth, or that the creator surveys, not merely a simple future, but all possible outcomes, and may thus observe that in some cases, *any* aid is pointless. While Origen may not have been aware of it, something similar to this latter concept is implicit in Aristotelian metaphysics, and this certainly seems to have been considered by Gregory of Nyssa: 'the capability of contemplating both the potentiality and the actuality [δύναμις τε καὶ ἐνέργεια] of things which exist is the unique property of deity.'³⁴ Origen, however, fails to consider this aspect and thus unfortunately fails to maintain the important distinction between

³¹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 6.4, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 101.

³² Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 101, n. 4.

³³ Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 101, n. 5.

³⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, 1.6 (42), GNO 5.40.20-21, translation from Ronald E. Heine, (Introduction, Translation and Notes) *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 98; see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048a 26ff.

predestination and foreknowledge which he himself points out, that the former is causative, while the latter is not.

Origen then goes on to discuss the requirements for effective prayer. The first and most important of these is consciousness of the presence of God: 'he is greatly helped who is intent in his mind on his prayer, through his very intentness in prayer adapting himself to the presence of God, and to speech with him who is present as with one who looks on him and is present.'³⁵ Although the text is somewhat repetitive, Jay is perhaps right not to accept proposed modifications to it but to provide a similarly repetitive and thus emphatic translation.³⁶ The benefits of what Origen terms 'recollection' of the divine presence, are exceptional, 'for although we were to suppose that no further help apart from this could come to the man who settles his thoughts upon prayer, we must realise that that he who composes himself thus with devotion in his time of prayer obtains no ordinary result.'³⁷ Jay comments that, 'the intensity of Origen's thought in the foregoing section is noteworthy. Notice especially that although he believes in the objective efficacy of prayer he is here arguing that, even if prayer could accomplish nothing objectively, its value would still be great for what it achieves in a man's soul.'³⁸ Other requirements are the forgiveness of others and the avoidance of anger.³⁹ And, as regards the object of prayer, Origen apparently offers two quotations: 'the following passages ... "Ask for the great things and the small things will be added to you." And "Ask for heavenly things and earthly things will be added to you."⁴⁰ While these seem to be based on Mt. 6: 33 the wording is not the same in any extant text nor is there a parallel pair of sentences in Matthew's text, as there is here. This wording may be from the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, or an interpolation into the Matthew text, Jay suggests.⁴¹ When the same quotation occurs for the third time in the *Treatise on Prayer*, Jay comments that this 'might well be said to be the main theme of the whole treatise.'⁴² However, the claim that seeking after

³⁵ Origen, *De Oratione*, 8.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 105.

³⁶ Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 105, nn. 1, 2, 3.

³⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, 8.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 105-6.

³⁸ Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 106, n. 1.

³⁹ Origen, *De Oratione*, 9.1, 9.3, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 106-7, 108, see Mt. 6: 14-15, 1 Tim 2: 8.

⁴⁰ Origen, *De Oratione*, 2.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 82; 14.1; 121-2; 16.2; 131-2.

⁴¹ Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 82 n. 4.

⁴² Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 131 n. 2.

heavenly things will result in gaining earthly ones too is not, in common experience, justified, as Gregory of Nyssa points out: 'good fortune in this life, so far as many things are concerned, does not occur to people in relation to the worth of their choices.'⁴³

Thus, we must practice consciousness of the presence of God, repentance, avoidance of anger and forgiveness of others, in order to pray for heavenly things, which include principally the consciousness of the presence of God, together with support for the practice of the other requirements. If this is seen, not as a circular argument, but as a developmental exercise, it provides the very real reason for prayer for which Ambrosius and Tatiana were searching, and it is, furthermore, prayer which 'obtains no ordinary result.' For this argument no longer depends on divine foreknowledge, but upon human free-will. At the same time, it is not a 'justification by works' view of prayer, for although personal concentration ('intentness') on prayer and on the presence of God is required, Origen sees God as 'taking the initiative in coming into every man's mind.'⁴⁴ Unfortunately, however, Origen does not develop the argument this far.

10.3 Basil – Tradition of Praxis, Tradition of Doctrine

Writing some one and a half centuries later, Basil of Caesarea provides his own understanding of these matters.⁴⁵ But, while Origen appears to concentrate on personal and petitionary prayer, Basil deals with the topic of prayer and worship within the church. In his defence of the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit, he appeals to non-scriptural traditions of the church in addition to the teachings of scripture; 'Both hold the same power with respect to true religion', he claims.⁴⁶ Indeed, Philip Rousseau comments that 'παράδοσις was one of his most commonly expressed ideals.'⁴⁷ Further, for Basil the traditionally transmitted dogma and liturgical praxis are two sides of the same coin. Thus, he asserts,

⁴³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 1.6 (43), GNO 5.40.26-28, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 98; Gregory here comments on Psalm 72 (73) which deals with exactly this point.

⁴⁴ Origen, *De Oratione*, 8.2, Jay, *Origen's Treatise*, 105.

⁴⁵ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66, PG 32.188; this (and subsequent translations) from Stephen M Hildebrand (trans. and intro.), *On the Holy Spirit: St Basil the Great*, (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 104-6.

⁴⁶ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.1-5, PG 32.188; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 104.

⁴⁷ Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xiv.

'This is the reason for non-scriptural traditions, that knowledge of dogmas not be neglected or despised by the many because of familiarity,' and leads immediately into a discussion of liturgical observations which he sees as symbolic of deeper meanings.⁴⁸ We should not, of course, assume that Basil's interpretation of practices are, as he apparently believes, the reasons for their original adoption, nor indeed, as he claims, that the practices are apostolic in origin.

As we have seen, Basil, like Tertullian and Origen, expects Christians to face east for prayer.⁴⁹ His reason, however, is very different: 'we all look to the East for prayers, but few of us know that our ancient fatherland, the paradise that God planted in Eden, was in the East.'⁵⁰ For both Tertullian and Origen the eastward position celebrates the resurrection, 'the rising of the true light' as the latter puts it. Although it is not clear from the immediate context, we shall see from Basil's general understanding of worship that he looks, not backwards to a long gone earthly paradise, but forward to a heavenly future. This is seen in his explanation of standing for prayer, in which he develops the underlying teaching beyond the idea of simply celebrating Christ's resurrection: 'We say our prayers standing on the first day of the week, but not all know the reason why. By standing for prayer we remind ourselves of the grace given to us on the day of resurrection, as if we are rising to stand with Christ and being bound to seek what is above.'⁵¹ The same practice is to be followed during the fifty days of the Pentecost period as a reminder of the eschatological future: 'the whole of Pentecost is a reminder of the resurrection to come in eternity.'⁵² To this he adds, 'the ordinances of the Church well taught us to prefer to stand at prayer on this day, as if we were leading our minds from the present to the future.'⁵³ This is followed by a rather unusual statement, at least as far as the liturgical practice is concerned, 'With each going down on the knee and rising up we indicate in deed that we have fallen through sin to the earth and are called up to heaven by the love of our creator.'⁵⁴ It would

⁴⁸ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.53-5, PG 32.189, Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 105.

⁴⁹ Considered above, section 2.5.

⁵⁰ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.60-3, PG 32.192; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106; and see above section 2.4.

⁵¹ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.64-7, PG 32.192; quoting Col. 3:1, Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106.

⁵² Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.81-2, PG 32.192; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106.

⁵³ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.89-92, PG 32.192; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106.

⁵⁴ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66.92-5, PG 32.192; Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 106.

seem that, on Sundays and during the Pentecost period, worshippers repeatedly knelt and then stood to pray. This may have been an early form of petitionary prayer. For, although he makes no mention of this passage from Basil, Hugh Wybrew describes ‘an older way of making corporate intercession ... the people were bidden to pray for a particular category of persons. The deacon instructed them to kneel and silent prayer was made. He then gave the commend to arise, and the priest recited a short collect, in which the silent prayers of the faithful were gathered together.’ Petitions of this kind, Wybrew claims, were replaced in the fourth century by litanies such as that found in the eighth book of *Apostolic Constitutions*.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Wybrew’s suggestion is by no means certain. What Basil describes applies to Sundays and the Pentecost season, and the standing position required by Origen and Basil would seem to apply to prayers in general, the private prayers of the congregation included. Certainly, Basil gives no indication that he expects the congregation to kneel for private prayers on Sunday, and indeed we do not know that ‘private prayer’ had at that time any place in the liturgical worship of the community. We must ask, might it not be that all knelt for a moment, not in order to pray, but as a mark of humble supplication before the actual prayer was said standing?

Unlike Origen, Basil’s reflections on prayer reveal a distinct concern for developing a theology of corporate prayer – even when the community is dispersed. He encouraged all his ascetic followers to join in the communal prayer even though separated from the group.⁵⁶ And, in a letter to the Senate of Tyana appealing for unity in the face of plans by the emperor Valens to split up Cappadocia, Basil stresses the value of shared prayer for all:

Indeed from the very constitution of our bodies the Lord has taught us the necessity of the community. For whenever I look upon these very limbs of ours, and see that no one of them is sufficient in itself to produce action, how can I reason that I myself suffice to cope with the difficulties of life? For one foot could not make a stride safely unless the other supported it, nor could the eye see accurately, unless it had

⁵⁵ Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1989), 39.

⁵⁶ See above section 7.6.

the other as its partner and, working in harmony with it, cast its glance upon the objects of sight. The hearing is more exact when it receives sound through both its channels; and the grasp of the hand is stronger through the combined efforts of the fingers. And to sum up, I see that none of these things which are accomplished either by nature or by deliberate choice is completed without the union of the related forces; since, in truth, even prayer itself, if it be not voiced by many together, is much less efficacious than it might be, and the Lord has promised that He would be in the midst of two or three who should invoke Him together.⁵⁷

Thus, although Basil did not believe that prayer and worship were restricted to the context of the church assembly, he clearly saw the prayer and worship of individuals as being most appropriately carried out within the community of the faithful.

The fact that Basil believes worship in a liturgical context is of great importance is illustrated by his homily on Psalm 28(29), which is entitled 'A psalm of David at the finishing of the tabernacle' (Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυΐδ· ἐξοδίου σκηνῆς.)⁵⁸ The term 'tabernacle', he says, is not to be taken as meaning 'the building constructed from this inanimate material', but rather 'the tabernacle for us is this body ... and the finishing of the tabernacle is the departure from this life, for which the scripture bids us to be prepared.'⁵⁹ It is noticeable that, although Basil must acknowledge that the tabernacle of the title is a building and that there are courts associated with it, the temple, as such, is not mentioned at this point. Basil is concerned to present a Christian interpretation of the psalm here.

The psalm begins:

Ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ, υἱοὶ θεοῦ,
ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ υἱοὺς κριῶν,

⁵⁷ *Basil, The letters*, vol 2, Roy Joseph Deferrari (trans), (London : Heinemann 1928), 162-3, Deferrari's translation; quoting Mt 18: 20.

⁵⁸ Basil, *Homily on Psalm 28*; see Agnes Clare Way, *Saint Basil, Exegetic Homilies*, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 193-211, translations of Homilies on Psalms from Way unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁹ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 1*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 193-4.

ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν,
ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ δόξαν ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ,
προσκυνήσατε τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν αὐλῇ ἁγία αὐτοῦ.

Bring to the Lord, O sons of God,
Bring to the Lord sons of rams,
Bring to the Lord glory and honour,
Bring to the Lord glory for his name
Worship the Lord in his holy court.⁶⁰

The first clause, Basil sees as referring to the members of the congregation, called upon to be holy: ‘Therefore “bring to the Lord,” not you who are just any persons nor who are sons of just any persons, but you who are children of God.’⁶¹ Rams were perceived as leading flocks of sheep to sources of water and food, and thus interpreted here by Basil as church leaders; and so ‘sons of rams’, were their spiritual children, ‘those formed to a life of virtue through zeal for good works by the teaching of the leaders.’⁶² As the grammatical cases make clear, these are both the ‘sons of God’ making the offering, and the offering itself.

The third and fourth lines, however, present the challenge of human inadequacy before an omnipotent God, ‘how do we, dust and ashes,’ Basil asks, ‘offer glory to the great Lord?’⁶³ It is done, he explains by the perfection of the Christian life: ‘Glory though our good works, when our works shine before men, so that men, seeing our works give glory to our Father in heaven.’⁶⁴ This, Basil says, requires a basis of sound doctrine, in particular as regards the Trinity.⁶⁵

The fifth line above clearly refers to the Jerusalem Temple with its reference to ‘his holy court [αὐλή]’ and Basil notes the nature of this court as a unique place of worship before quoting John 10: 16, ‘Other sheep I have that are not of this fold [αὐλή].’⁶⁶ ‘It is not proper’, Basil continues, ‘to adore God outside of this holy

⁶⁰ My translation.

⁶¹ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 1*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 194.

⁶² Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 2*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 195.

⁶³ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 2*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 195.

⁶⁴ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 2*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 195, quoting Mt. 5:16.

⁶⁵ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 2*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 196.

⁶⁶ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 3*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 198.

court but only within it.⁶⁷ What then is this 'holy court'? Firstly, it consists of a right attitude to prayer, thus Basil presents a 'notion of the human heart as the place par excellence where worship of God, of that God who is truly present, might most properly be conducted,' a comment which might perhaps be considered to be in line with some of Origen's reflections.⁶⁸ But Basil adds, 'it is possible to consider the court in a still loftier sense as the heavenly way of life. Therefore, "they that are planted" here "in the house of the Lord," which is the Church of the living God, "they shall flourish in the courts of our God."⁶⁹ We may have expected him, and many preachers might be tempted, to interpret the holy court, the only proper place for worship, as the church. Basil, however, stresses here that it is the pure heart of the individual practising a heavenly way of life on earth. He is then able to move to the concept of the church as a pathway to a life in heaven, as Rousseau comments,

The holy place, the place of cult in the fullest sense, was to be found at both levels: in the tent [tabernacle], and in the aula. It was not a matter of contrasting the individual and the corporate: it was a matter of recognizing the difference between 'Church now' and 'Church to come'. Because of an interplay of language, neither appeared stable in the eye of a human observer. The 'Church' at any one time was the place through which individuals passed on their way to God. Their very passing carried the Church forward also. Each contributed to the progress of the other.⁷⁰

A further understanding of Basil's view of the relationship between church and worshipper may be gained from his mixture of some intriguing metaphors in his commentary on psalm 44 (45), which may be described as a royal wedding

⁶⁷ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 3*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 198.

⁶⁸ Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 226.

⁶⁹ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 28, 3*; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 198. Quoting Ps 91(92):14.

⁷⁰ Rousseau, *Basil*, 181.

song.⁷¹ The verse under consideration being: 'The queen stood on thy right hand, arrayed in gilded clothing, embroidered in varied colours.'⁷² Basil comments:

Now he [the psalmist] is speaking about the Church about which we have learnt in the Canticle that it is the perfect dove of Christ, which admits those known for their good works to the right side of Christ separating them from the bad, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.⁷³ Therefore the queen, that is the soul which is joined with the Word, its bridegroom, not subjected by sin but sharing the kingdom of Christ, stands on the right hand of the Saviour in gilded clothing, that is to say, adorning herself charmingly and religiously with spiritual doctrines, interwoven and varied.⁷⁴

The expression 'Now he is speaking about the Church' initially suggests that Basil means that the Church is the bride, an association which would fit with the later remark, 'adorning herself charmingly and religiously with spiritual doctrines.' But, in fact, it is the Christian soul 'known for good works' who stands on the right side of the Lord. Unhelpfully perhaps, the Church is curiously introduced as a dove, not found in the psalm but in a different bridal song, where it is unconnected with the separation of sheep from goats.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the Christian soul as the bride of Christ, is a significant image, and once more, with an 'interplay of language' between 'dove' and 'bride' as in the case of 'Church now' and 'Church to come', Basil blurs the distinction between the individual Christian and the Church as a whole.

The final verse of this psalm draws from Basil an important idea upon which he, unfortunately, does not expand. The verse is 'they shall remember your name in every generation and generation; therefore, the peoples will acknowledge you forever, even forever and ever.'⁷⁶ Basil comments: 'After all things else the Scripture, as if in the person of the Church says "I shall remember thy name

⁷¹ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 19, (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1983), 335-341.

⁷² Ps. 44: 9, Way's translation from Basil, *Hom. on Psalm, 44, 1, Way, Exegetic Homilies*, 291.

⁷³ Mt. 25:52.

⁷⁴ Basil, *Hom. on Psalm, 44, 1, Way, Exegetic Homilies*, 291.

⁷⁵ Song of Solomon: 6:8.

⁷⁶ Ps. 44(45): 17(18), my translation.

throughout all generations.” And what is the remembrance of the Church? The praise of the people.’⁷⁷ The people’s praise then is what maintains the relationship between the church, humanity as a whole, and God.

For Basil, however, the place of worship is not to be identified solely with the Church, nor even, in the ‘loftier’ sense, with ‘the heavenly way of life’, for he also applies a much more ‘lofty’ interpretation: ‘the Spirit is often called the place of those being holy’ he says.⁷⁸ And in an interpretation which perhaps shows the influence of Origen, he continues:

We have observed the psalmist saying even about God: ‘be my protector God, and the secure place of my Salvation.’⁷⁹ And about the Holy Spirit, Scripture says: ‘behold the place near me, and stand upon the rock.’⁸⁰ What else does it mean by ‘place’ but contemplation in the Spirit, in which Moses was able to see spiritually God made manifest to him?⁸¹ This is the proper place for true worship. ‘Take care,’ Scripture says, ‘that you do not bring your burnt-offerings in every place but in the place which the Lord your God chooses.’⁸² What sort of things is a spiritual burnt offering? It is a sacrifice of praise. In what sort of place do we offer this? In the Holy Spirit. Where have we learnt this? From the Lord, when he said, ‘true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth.’⁸³

The expression ἰδεῖν γνωστῶς, rendered in Hildebrand’s translation, above, as ‘to see spiritually’, is a recontextualisation of a phrase from earlier in the Exodus passage where Moses asks of God, ‘reveal yourself to me, that I may know you’ or possibly ‘see you in such a way as to know you,’ (ἐμφάνισόν μοι σεαυτὸν γνωστῶς ἵνα ἴδω σε).⁸⁴ Two other words from the Exodus story are also recontextualised: ‘place’ and ‘worship’, relating each to a sequence of other

⁷⁷ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 44*, 12; translation from Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 295.

⁷⁸ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 26.62, Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 101.

⁷⁹ Ps. 30:2.

⁸⁰ Ex 33: 21.

⁸¹ Ex 33: 13, see discussion below.

⁸² Dt. 12: 13-14.

⁸³ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 26.62.6-20, translation from Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 101; final quotation Jn 4: 23.

⁸⁴ Ex 33: 13, my translation of the LXX, see NRSV translation of the Hebrew: ‘show me your ways so that I may know you’, and similarly in the JPS.

scriptural quotations. In the case of the quote from psalm 32, Basil either had a different text to that used by Brenton or changed the wording to suit his purpose so that 'a house of refuge' (LXX: οἶκον καταφυγῆς) became 'a secure place' (Basil: τόπον ὄχυρόν).⁸⁵ The effect of these associations is to bring out his interpretation of the Exodus story in which Moses' direct experience of God invoked the response of worship, strengthening Basil's assertion of the Holy Spirit as the 'place' of worship.⁸⁶

In Basil's thinking then, worship was bound together with the true faith, in some sense knowing God. And the context of worship, it seems, preserved and transmitted traditional aspects of belief not easily found in scripture: 'Of the dogmas and proclamations [δογμαμάτων καὶ κηρυγμάτων] that are guarded in the Church, we hold some from the teaching of the Scriptures and others we have received in mystery [ἐν μυστηρίῳ] as the teachings of the tradition of the apostles.'⁸⁷ Rousseau points out that 'in mystery' here 'does not mean in a 'hidden' or 'secret' way, but in the cultic practice of the Church.'⁸⁸ Indeed, the term can refer to a 'symbolic' event or to 'a sacrament as a revelation of divine operation.'⁸⁹ We may thus take Rousseau's assessment as accurate since the rest of this section is devoted to cultic matters handed down as tradition rather than being scriptural. Nevertheless, we should note that a certain degree of hiddenness is implicit in that transmission, for Basil says, later in this section, 'The apostles and fathers ordained from the first the matters of the Church and guarded the solemnity of the mysteries in secrecy and silence (ἐν τῷ κεκρυμμένῳ καὶ ἀφθέγκτῳ τὸ σεμνὸν τοῖς μυστηρίοις ἐφύλασσον).'⁹⁰ Rousseau's point here, as elsewhere, is that Basil did not separate doctrine and faith from worship and praxis, and almost certainly would not have considered it possible to do so. That is, 'Basil regarded worship as the link between text and audience, between

⁸⁵ Comparing Brenton, *Septuagint Ps 30:2* (text and translation), with Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 26.62, (translation) Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 101.

⁸⁶ Ex. 34: 6-8.

⁸⁷ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27, 66, Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 104.

⁸⁸ Rousseau, *Basil*, 266;

⁸⁹ Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) on μυστήριον.

⁹⁰ Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27, 66, Hildebrand, *On the Holy Spirit*, 105.

doctrine and the Church,' a link, Rousseau writes, 'most vividly attested by his treatment of baptism' but most certainly clear at other points also.⁹¹

It is apparent that Basil considered the psalms as of great importance, even going beyond their significance as the backbone of daily worship for his ascetic followers. As we have seen above, Basil, his homily on the first psalm, promotes the use of the Book of Psalms as a creation of the Holy Spirit to be a gentle, even pleasant, training in sound doctrine, a smearing of the medicinal cup with honey.⁹²

The use of psalm singing in communal prayer has, moreover, a further benefit:

Psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity and joining the people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces only the greatest of blessings, charity.⁹³

Basil sees worship as a 'sacrifice of praise', but also as closely associated with the teachings of the Church. For him all prayer, whether private and personal or public and communal, is the prayer of the whole Church, and its immediate aim is a striving towards personal development, the heavenly life on earth. Earthly worship, however, points towards the goal of an eschatological future. Both of these elements show a distinctly different emphasis from Origen.

10.4 Gregory of Nyssa – the Psalms as a way of life.

We have encountered above, an attempt on the part of Gregory of Nyssa to promote the use of psalmody as an alternative to possibly bawdy ballads at weddings and similar social feasts.⁹⁴ However, a fuller quotation indicates that he wishes to encourage psalm singing as an all embracing popular activity:

Let us consider the design through which the Psalter has made living in accordance with virtue, which is such a hard and intense pursuit, along with the enigmatic teaching of the mysteries and the esoteric teaching about God hidden in doctrines which are hard to understand so pleasant and easy to accept. Consequently, it is not only perfect men who have already experienced the purification of the faculties of

⁹¹ Rousseau, *Basil*, 130.

⁹² Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 1*, 1; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 152.

⁹³ Basil, *Hom. on Ps. 1*, 1; Way, *Exegetic Homilies*, 152.

⁹⁴ See section 8.6.

their soul who zealously pursue this teaching. It belongs also to the women's quarters; children find it pleasing as a toy, and among the elderly it replaces the cane and the nap. The cheerful person thinks the gift of this teaching is his, and the one who is depressed by his circumstances believes that such a delight in Scripture has been given on his account. People whether walking, at sea, or engaged in sedentary activities, are occupied with these words. In short, all people in all pursuits, both men and women, healthy and ill, consider it a loss not to proclaim this sublime teaching. For instance, both banquets and wedding festivities include this philosophy as a part of the rejoicing in their celebrations, so that, in these night festivals, by means of these psalms, we are in the presence of enthusiastic hymn singing and the philosophy of the Churches which is enthusiastically pursued in them.⁹⁵

That is, for Gregory, song, life, and prayer are bound together. Thus he makes use of musical metaphor when he comments that, although there are those 'who devote their mind to the speculative and contemplative philosophy,' and so 'establish a virtue which is unclear to the majority'. There are others who 'make the rhythmical order of their life known publicly, as if it were a verbal statement' and, continuing the metaphor, he goes on to draw a parallel between song and the godly life.⁹⁶ Effective prayer, he says, requires that 'nothing unrhythmical or out of harmony should occur in our daily pursuits,' this is because, 'prayer is not executed by means of words but by life. He [Jesus] says, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your sins."⁹⁷

Gregory, moreover, develops the significance of music, and particularly the psalms, in worship, going beyond the 'honey-sweetening' model in two ways. There is, he believes, much more to music: 'the philosophy that comes though

⁹⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (17), GNO 5.29.18 – 30.14, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 87-8.

⁹⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 2.3.26-29, GNO 5.75.29 - 76.27, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 130.

⁹⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 2.3.29, GNO 5.76.25-6, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 130, quoting Mt. 6.14.

the singing seems to hint at something more than what most people think.⁹⁸ Beginning from the idea, widespread in Greek thought, that each human being is a model of the cosmos in miniature, Gregory adds the Pythagorean teaching that the cosmos is a musical harmony, although the human mind ‘listens to the singing of the heavens by transcending and being above the faculties of sense-perception that belong to our flesh’, and suggests that we may learn from the psalms that David, their presumed author, ‘heard the heavens describing the glory of God.’⁹⁹ That is, in Gregory’s words, ‘the concord of all creation with itself ... is truly a hymn of the glory of the inaccessible and inexpressible God.’¹⁰⁰ The consequence of this argument is, of course that, just as the cosmos is created for the musical glorification of God, so is mankind.¹⁰¹

This is, however only part of Gregory’s view of psalms in worship, for he also has an understanding of the psalms as encapsulating teaching which is more fully developed than Basil’s. Thus, the greater portion of the first part of his treatise is concerned with the idea of the whole Book of Psalms as a course of instruction in Christian progress towards God. The very first word of the book, ‘blessed’ (μακάριος), indicates that blessedness is ‘the goal [τέλος] of the virtuous life’ and thus the goal of the whole work.¹⁰² This goal Gregory sees as ‘the summation and object of everything conceived in relation to the good’, and ‘all [the] sublime concepts about the divine’ and thus, for human beings, blessedness is ‘likeness to God.’¹⁰³ The five sections of the book, Gregory sees as stages, carefully constructed by the second person of the Trinity, on the way to achieving the blessed state:

In each part of the things which are divided in these sections, the Word has observed some particular good through which blessedness comes

⁹⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (18), GNO 5.30.22-24, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 88.

⁹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (19), GNO 5.30.13-16, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 88-9, cf. Ps 19: 1.

¹⁰⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (20), GNO 5.31.17-20, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 89.

¹⁰¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.3 (22), GNO 5.32.16 – 33.6, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 90-1.

¹⁰² Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.1 (5), GNO 5.25.11, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 84.

¹⁰³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, I.1 (5, 6), GNO 5.25.16-17, 26.11, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa’s Inscriptions*, 84.

about for us from God in accordance with some sequential order of the good things beheld in each section, always carrying the soul on to what is more sublime until it reach the peak of good things.¹⁰⁴

This peak is the praise of God as described in the final psalm. But for Gregory this psalm, because of its position in the psalter, cannot be about merely human praise but refers to the eschatological future. Indeed, he interprets ‘praise the Lord with the euphonious cymbals’ which requires ‘the coming together of cymbal with cymbal’ as a symbolic reference to the union of human nature with the angelic.¹⁰⁵ This union in praise of the divine, is the achievement of the eschatological goal:

Then the praise of every breathing creature occurs, which continues the gratitude for ever, and causes the blessedness to abound, through increase, to perpetuity, I mean, of course, the true blessedness.¹⁰⁶

Thus, Gregory adopts ideas from Basil, that the Holy Spirit inspired the psalms as a pleasant way to doctrine and that psalmody has an eschatological aspect. However, he focuses on the idea that worship, like other factors of Christian life is directed towards ascent to the divine, as Moses, his exemplar of the perfect life, ‘did ascend the highest mount of perfection.’¹⁰⁷

10.5 Worshipping with Angels

As noted earlier, the omniscience of God even raises questions about the need for praise. Nevertheless, Jews and Christians have found endorsement for the practice of worship in the vision of Isaiah: ‘Seraphs were in attendance ... and one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”’¹⁰⁸ What angels do, humanity must imitate and this remains a key text for earthly worship, while forming the basis for a view that links

¹⁰⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 1.9 (114), GNO 5.65.16-21, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptiones*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 1.9 (117), GNO 5.66.14-24, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptiones*, 121; quoting Ps. 150: 5, Heine's translation following LXX.

¹⁰⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 1.9 (122), GNO 5.68.20-22, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptiones*, 122-3; with a paraphrase of Ps. 150: 6.

¹⁰⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, (New York: Harper-Collins, 2006), 132.

¹⁰⁸ Is. 6: 2, 3, NRSV

such worship to angelic practice, a particularly important concept for the Cappadocians, as we shall show, after highlighting a few precedents.

Certainly heavenly worship, the task of angels, can be seen as providing an example for earthly practice. Thus the author of the first letter of Clement, quoting Isaiah 6:3, seems to be exhorting his readers to imitate the worship of angels, 'let us mark the whole host of his angels, how they stand by and minister to his will.'¹⁰⁹ Similarly, at an early stage of Christian history, Paul uses words, very possibly taken from a Christian hymn, quoting Isaiah 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear', though Paul, or his hymnologist, directs the submission to Jesus Christ and expands on 'every' with the words, 'in heaven and on earth and under the earth.'¹¹⁰ The intention of this insertion is to emphasise the universal nature of the homage using the language and concepts of the time.¹¹¹ The three adjectives, ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, though neuter, clearly designate rational beings since only such can acknowledge divine supremacy, thus 'the writer describes angels, human beings and demons as joining together in an act of worship.'¹¹²

The author of *Hebrews*, perhaps less universalist, expands the idea in other ways: 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ... and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.'¹¹³ While this passage, like that from *Philippians*, certainly looks forward to an eschatological future, the use of the perfect tense, 'you have approached' (προσεληλύθατε), suggests that that future is breaking through into the present. If we accept the view that *Hebrews* was originally a sermon, then these words were presumably first delivered in the context of Christian worship, presenting this earthly act as united with the heavenly adoration of angels and saints.¹¹⁴ Once again, we encounter an exercise in legitimation, though here on

¹⁰⁹ 1 Clement 34: 6-7.

¹¹⁰ Is. 45: 23; *Philippians* 2: 10.

¹¹¹ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary v. 43, revised by Ralph P. Martin, (Nashville: Nelson, 2004), 127-8. Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi*, revised edition, (Grand Rapids Mi: Eerdmans, 1983), 257-265.

¹¹² Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 128.

¹¹³ *Hebrews* 12: 22-23, NRSV.

¹¹⁴ For *Hebrews* as sermon see e.g. Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, (Oxford: The University Press, 2004), 411.

a grand scale, providing considerable support, not only for the prayers but also the faith, of those attending, as Ellen Muehlberger points out:

As the author [of Hebrews] populated his imagined community with a heavenly city, an infinity of angels, and even God himself, he also loaded the message to those reading the text: though they might lose heart, they should be reassured by the gathered number of those whom are part of their community – on high and of high number. The assumption that there was an angelic cohort, available in heaven, allowed writers like the author of Hebrews to manifest a latent majority, existing invisibly behind the apparent paucity of believers.¹¹⁵

Origen develops the idea by uniting angelic and human prayer: ‘Not only does the High Priest [Jesus Christ] pray together with those whose prayer is genuine but so also do the angels ... and likewise the souls of the departed saints who have fallen asleep.’¹¹⁶ To this he adds the concept of an angelic sponsor: ‘each man’s angel ... always beholding the face of the Father which is in heaven and gazing on the divinity of him who created us, prays with us.’¹¹⁷

Such beliefs were, however, not exclusively Christian. Thus the Qumran *Community Rule*, speaking of ‘God’s chosen ones’ (presumably the community itself) comments that God ‘has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones. He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven.’¹¹⁸ Similarly the *Apostolic Tradition*, in some versions, suggests that in the middle of the night, ‘all the hosts of angels worship with the souls of the righteous.’¹¹⁹ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips add the suggestion that, behind the expression ‘the tradition of the elders’ quoted in *Apostolic Tradition* to justify this claim, ‘lie Jewish legends about the praise of God by the angels and all the orders of creation.’¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity*, (Oxford, The University Press, 2013), 181-2.

¹¹⁶ Origen, *De Oratione*, 11.1, Jay, *Origen’s Treatise*, 111.

¹¹⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, 11.5, Jay, *Origen’s Treatise*, 114.

¹¹⁸ 1QS.11.8, Geza Vermes (trans), *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, (London: Penguin, 1998) 115.

¹¹⁹ *Apostolic Tradition* 41.15 in Latin, Sahidic, Arabic, Ethiopic, and the *Canons of Hippolytus*, see Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson, and Edward Phillips. *The Apostolic Tradition, A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 198-201.

¹²⁰ Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips. *Apostolic Tradition*, 212.

Further evidence for the idea of the joint worship of mankind with angels as a Christian concept based on Jewish beliefs, is found in the prayers of allegedly Jewish origin found in *Apostolic Constitutions*. One of these, after describing heavens, seas, and mankind praising God, passes on to ‘the flaming army of angels’ whose various orders and songs are detailed.¹²¹ The prayer continues: ‘And Israel your earthly assembly from the nations, vying night and day with the heavenly powers, sings with a full heart and willing spirit’ (Ἰσραὴλ δέ, ἡ ἐπίγειός σου Ἐκκλησία ἡ ἐξ ἔθνῶν, ταῖς κατ’ οὐρανὸν δυνάμεσιν ἀμιλλωμένη νυκτὶ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν καρδίᾳ πλήρει καὶ ψυχῇ θελούσῃ ψάλλει.)¹²²

By the fourth century Cyril of Jerusalem encouraged the people of his flock to envision a community of angels in order to give authority to his theological positions, to inspire certain behaviours, and ‘to bring angels into their presence as they participated in rituals.’¹²³ In particular, the central action of the Eucharist was associated with angelic worship by the use of the song of the Seraphim. ‘As Cyril explained, by repeating the words of the angels, Christians celebrating the ritual became “participants” (κοινωνοί) in the heavenly retinue.’¹²⁴ Likewise Theodore of Mopsuestia ‘used similar imaginative techniques to make Christian rituals into multi-layered, multitemporal events’, Muehlberger, suggests, adding that Theodore ‘directed Christians to see the rituals they watched as traces of another more important reality: the ongoing heavenly service they would join at the resurrection.’¹²⁵ John Chrysostom, however, sees angels as attendees at the celebration of the earthly Eucharist: ‘When he [the priest] invokes the Holy Spirit and offers that awful sacrifice ... At that moment, angels attend the priest, and

¹²¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 7.35.1-10; D.A. Fiensy (intro.) and D.R. Darnell (trans.), ‘Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers’ in James H. Charlesworth (ed), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 669-697.

¹²² *Apostolic Constitutions*, 7.35.4.

¹²³ Muehlberger, *Angels*, 182ff, quote p. 186.

¹²⁴ Muehlberger, *Angels*, 187; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis* 5.6, Auguste Piédagnel (ed.), Pierre Paris (French trans), *Catéchèses mystagogiques, Cyrille de Jérusalem*, Sources Chrétiennes: 126, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966), 152-4.

¹²⁵ Muehlberger, *Angels*, 188, 189.

the whole dais and sanctuary are thronged with heavenly powers in honour of Him who lies there.¹²⁶

In this tradition then, Gregory of Nyssa exhorts his hearers: 'Proclaim with us those things which also the six-winged Seraphim sing as they hymn with the perfect Christians.' (Φθέγξαι μεθ' ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνα, ἃ καὶ τὰ ἑξαπτέρυγα Σεραφίμ μετὰ τῶν τελείων Χριστιανῶν ὑμνοῦντα λέγει.)¹²⁷ The meaning of τελείων here, is not completely certain. It is possible to take it as 'complete' or, for a human being, 'full-grown' and referring to established members of the congregation. But, recalling that Gregory sees the goal (τέλος) of human existence as blessedness and noting that he contrasts you and us with the Seraphim and the τέλειοι it appears that, like the author of *Hebrews* and Origen, he understands departed saints ('the spirits of the righteous made perfect') as joining the heavenly chorus. Thus 'perfect' (or perhaps 'perfected') as a translation for τελείων is to be preferred, and Gregory here is seeing angels and saints as worshiping in parallel to mortals, rather than attending and participating in the earthly baptism.¹²⁸

As noted above, Gregory of Nyssa also looks forward to an eschatological joining of human and angelic worship in his treatment of Ps. 150: 5, 'Praise him with tuneful cymbals' (ἐν κυμβάλοις εὐήχοις). 'I take this to mean the union of our nature with the angels ... For such a combination, I mean of the angelic with the human, when human nature is again exalted to its original condition, will produce that sweet sound of thanksgiving through their meeting with one another. And through one another and with one another they will sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God for his love of humanity which will be heard throughout the universe.'¹²⁹

Two passages, however, provide the image of a much closer connection between earthly and heavenly worship. The first of these is found in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus

¹²⁶ John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, 6.4, in *John Chrysostom, Six books on the Priesthood*, trans & intro. Graham Neville, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1964), 140-1.

¹²⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus eos qui differunt baptismum oratio*, GNO 10.2.362.16-17 (*Sermones* v. 2 pt. 3), my translation.

¹²⁸ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) on τέλειος; Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, on τέλειος, (4g) 'martyr'.

¹²⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones*, 1.9 (117), GNO 5.66.14-23, Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Inscriptions*, 121.

1786, a fragment of a Christian hymn.¹³⁰ As regards the date of this, Charles Cosgrove, having surveyed the evidence, concludes, ‘considering together the evidence of handwriting (third century and not early fourth), lapse of time before re-use of a piece of papyrus (probably before 300), and the internal evidence (more closely associated with traditions of the fourth century than the third), we may incline to a date close to the end of the third century.’¹³¹ Although the small fragment of papyrus is incomplete, Cosgrove argues that ‘the hymn was originally probably not much longer than what we have, consisting perhaps of only the five partially intact manuscript lines that have come down to us.’¹³²

The hymn, as we have it, begins with a call for cosmic stillness, a common theme for Greek (pagan) hymns, also found in Jewish tradition.¹³³ Then, accepting Cosgrove’s reconstruction of the text and translation, we have in lines 3 to 5:

... ὑμνοῦντων δ’ ἡμῶν

[π]ατέρα χυῖδον χᾶγιον πνεῦμα πᾶσαι δυνάμεις ἐπιφωνούντων ἀμήν
ἀμήν, κράτος αἴνος

[ἀεὶ καὶ δόξα θεῶ] δ[ωτ]ῆ[ρι] μόνω[ι] [πάν]των ἀγαθῶν, ἀμήν ἀμήν.

... While we hymn Father and Son and Holy Spirit, let all the powers answer, ‘Amen, amen. Strength, praise [and glory forever to God], the sole giver of all good things. Amen, amen.’¹³⁴

The ‘powers’ (δυνάμεις) are clearly angels.¹³⁵ Indeed what follows is very similar to the angelic hymn of Rev. 7:12. ‘While we hymn’, again a common way of introducing Greek hymns, also makes the hymn self-referential and in a way

¹³⁰ P Grenfell and Arthur S Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol 15, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1922) 21-25; Charles H Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); A. W. J. Holleman, ‘The Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786 and the Relationship between Ancient Greek and Early Christian Music’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Mar., 1972) 1-17; E. J. Wellesz, ‘The Earliest Example of Christian Hymnody’, *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 39, no. 1/2 (Jan-Apr, 1945), 34-45.

¹³¹ Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 130.

¹³² Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 65.

¹³³ Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 39-44.

¹³⁴ Greek text and translation from: Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 37.

¹³⁵ Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 49-50.

which is deictic; that is, as Cosgrove points out, ‘referring to the here and now of the poem’s performance.’¹³⁶ Intriguingly this deictic self-referentiality carries the main weight of this short hymn’s substance; the praise offered to God being sung by the earthly congregation, is actually expressed as an angelic response to that same praise. The net effect is that, while this is a hymn of communal praise, the community is expanded to be much greater than the local congregation or even that of the earthly church.

A later example, from Gregory Nazianzen, appears to describe a vigil at which monastic choirs of men and women sing psalms, invoking angelic response:

Τὸ δ’οὖν ἀεὶ πᾶσιν τε γνωριμώτατον,
Ὅραξ ἀγρύπνους παρθένων ψαλμωδίας
Ἀνδρῶν, γυναικῶν, φύσεως λελησμένων·
Οἴων θ’ ὅσων τε, καὶ ὅσον θεουμένων!
Σύμφωνον, ἀντίφωνον ἀγγέλων στάσιν
Δισσῆν, ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τεταγμένην,
Θείας ὑμνωδὸν ἀξίας καὶ φύσεως;¹³⁷

What is surely always well known to everyone:
you see the wakeful psalmodies of virgins,
men and women, forgetful of the general order of nature;
what people these are, how many and how God-inspired,
a two-fold rank of angels, harmonious and sounding in answer,
arrayed both above and below,
singing hymns of God’s majesty and nature!¹³⁸

Here we see a move from earlier ideas in which earthly worship imitates or parallels that of heaven, or looks forward to an eschatological future, and which even goes beyond the concept of angels attending silently upon an earthly Eucharist. Here, as in Oxyrhynchus 1786, communal praise includes the angels

¹³⁶ Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn*, 73, deictic self-referentiality being discussed fully in the pages 73-81.

¹³⁷ Gregory Nazianzen, *Carmina Moralia 10 (De virtute)*, PG 37.746.11 – 747.3.

¹³⁸ My translation.

as participants in human worship, and humanity as equal partners in the angelic ('harmonious and sounding in answer'). There is even a suggestion here that the earthly singers are not merely participating in heavenly worship, or sharing with the angelic community, but are somehow transformed into angels: 'a two-fold rank of angels ... arrayed both above and below.'

There is a timeless element to this, or rather, one that is beyond time. Taft criticises those who regard the liturgy of the hours as "a sanctification of time" distinct from the "eschatological" Eucharist.¹³⁹ On the contrary, he claims, 'The Liturgy of the Hours, like all Christian liturgy, is an eschatological proclamation of the salvation received in Christ ... the Liturgy of the Hours – indeed, all liturgy – is beyond time.'¹⁴⁰

By the fourth century then, we find that, while matters of praxis such as bodily attitude remain much the same, the concepts involved in worship have developed significantly beyond the petitionary, which tend to be uppermost in the mind of Origen, to the formative and eschatological viewpoint of the Cappadocians. Worship for them is communal, even when performed by a single person and the use of psalms as a vehicle for formation has become much more significant.

¹³⁹ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 334.

¹⁴⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 359.

11 Overall Conclusions.

As stated in the introduction, the aim of this thesis has been to achieve a deeper understanding of daily prayer in fourth century Cappadocia. Conclusions have been presented at the end of the various chapters. However, I take this opportunity to re-present generally significant ideas and pull together threads which have recurred throughout.

In Part I we established some important matters of method and context, which are necessary for a better understanding of Cappadocian daily prayer. In chapter 1 and chapter 2 we examined the scholarly context and in the latter we proposed a method for reading the Cappadocian sources. This method, based on the hermeneutics proposed by Bradshaw, and socio-rhetorical method of Robbins, both extended in the light of experience with the present work, has been used in a number of patristic texts throughout Part II and it has offered a new way of looking at those texts.

In chapter 5, we demonstrated that the of influence from Egyptian monasticism, whether eremitic or coenobitic, should be rejected. This means that Cappadocian monasticism should be judged on its own qualities, and its office should not be regarded as a hybrid form of cathedral and desert monastic offices.

In chapter 3, we have similarly rejected the synagogue (or what little we know of it) as a source of Christian worship. Jewish influence is clear, however, as New Testament examples show. And at that early stage the most likely source of influence on Christianity seems to be Jewish private or family prayers. In chapter 4 we focussed on prayer in paganism.

Until recently, 'popular' or domestic religion, whether found in paganism, Judaism, or Christianity, has been largely ignored by scholars, but recent work has indicated that it should be given greater prominence. This has been confirmed by our findings. We have repeatedly encountered the theme of domestic prayer, and this is particularly significant in Macrina's progressive conversion of family household to monastery and consequently family prayer to monastic office, studied in chapter 6. This relationship is made most clear in Gregory of Nyssa's account of the, originally domestic, lamp-lighting ceremony (chapters 6 and 9). The interpretation of this ceremony as a bridge between domestic and church practice is one of the most significant contributions of this thesis.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 progressively completed an analysis of daily prayer in Cappadocia. By comparing Basilian times of prayer with earlier evidence, in chapter 7, we showed that the Macrinan-Basilian Monasteries developed a prayer schedule based on the pattern elsewhere. But to this they added the synaxis now known as compline. A thorough examination of the evidence regarding the times of daily prayer has enabled us to establish this as a distinctive contribution of Macrinan-Basilian Monasticism. In chapter 8 we achieved a clearer picture of the daily synaxes of the Cappadocian office by demonstrating that the synaxis described in Basil's letter 207 was just such a one. Chapter 9 demonstrated (i) that the *Phōs Hilaron* hymn has certain characteristics which are not found elsewhere, and (ii) that explanations of Christian lamp-lighting ceremonies as originating a universal pagan light cult or Jewish sabbath lamp-lighting should be rejected, and once again domestic origin was proposed. All these conclusions either challenge or add significantly to previous scholarship.

Finally, in chapter 10 we argued for a deeper understanding of the Cappadocian theology of prayer. We challenged assumptions about clear Origenian influence, pointing out particular theological differences. We showed that the Cappadocians had a significant eschatological emphasis: the idea of worshipping with, or like, the angels. This helps to confirm some of our other findings: for example, it helps explain Basil's emphasis on heavenly citizenship discussed in chapter 8. Again, the use of more theological reflections on prayer together with more descriptive sources is an original aspect of this project and has deepened our understanding of daily prayer in Cappadocia.

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