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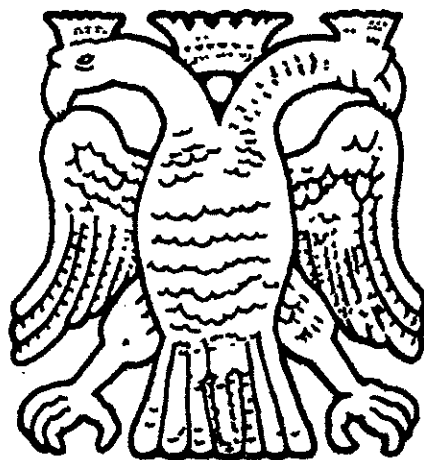
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# PORPHYROGENITA

Essays on the History and Literature  
of Byzantium and the Latin East  
in Honour of  
JULIAN CHRYSOSTOMIDES



edited by

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## 10. The Luxeuil Connection: The Transmission of the *Vita* of Julian and Basilissa (BHG 970)

The transmission of Byzantine texts in the Mediaeval West is an interesting and often very rewarding field of research, especially with regard to hagiographical texts. The *Vita* and *Passio* of Julian and Basilissa of Antinoopolis is one such text, relating the tale of a Christian couple who attained sanctity in a celibate marriage. The Greek text was edited by F. Halkin based on three manuscripts dated to the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> The principal manuscript, *Vat. gr.* 1667,<sup>2</sup> was collated in the first part of the edition, comprising the *Vita* of the saintly couple, with *Athos, Vatopedi* 84,<sup>3</sup> and in the second part, comprising the *Passio* of Julian and his companions, with *Athos, Dionysiou* 143.<sup>4</sup> It appears that no earlier manuscripts of the Greek text survive.

However, an early Latin translation of the *Vita* and *Passio* is contained in *Par. lat.* 9724, the lectionary discovered by J. Mabillon in the Monastery of Luxeuil in France.<sup>5</sup> Luxeuil was the home of Columbanus' first community in Burgundy, established in the 590s.<sup>6</sup> Under the firm guidance of the Irish monk, the Monastery, with its famous scriptorium, had an enormous impact on Merovingian monasticism, placing emphasis on asceticism and austerity.<sup>7</sup> Based on palaeographical evidence, E.A. Lowe demonstrated that the lectionary was written at Luxeuil in the late seventh or early eighth century.<sup>8</sup> The lectionary is the earliest witness of the nineteen

<sup>1</sup> 'La Passion ancienne des saints Julien et Basilisse: BHG 970-971', *AB* 98 (1980), pp. 241-96.

<sup>2</sup> A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 50-52 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1937-1952), I, pp. 641-45; C. GIANNELLI, *Codices Vaticani Graeci, Codices 1485-1683* (Vatican City, 1950), pp. 410-15.

<sup>3</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung*, I, pp. 358-62.

<sup>4</sup> S.P. LAMPROS, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mt Athos*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1895-1900), I, p. 343; EHRHARD, *Überlieferung*, III, pp. 450-53.

<sup>5</sup> P. SALMON, *Le Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, *Collectanea Biblica Latina*, 7 (Rome, 1944).

<sup>6</sup> JONAS, *Vita Columbani*, I, 14, ed. B. KRUSCH, MGH, SRM (Hannover-Leipzig, 1905), p. 4. For the confusion in sources over the date of Columbanus' arrival, see I. WOOD, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London-New York, 1994), pp. 195-96.

<sup>7</sup> For Luxeuil's impact see P. RICHÉ, 'Centers of Culture in Frankish Gaul between the Sixth and Ninth Centuries', in *Instruction et vie religieuse dans le haut Moyen âge* (London, 1981), pp. 230-33; WOOD, *Merovingian*, pp. 191-97. For Luxeuil's importance as a scriptorium see D. GANZ, 'The Luxeuil Prophets and Merovingian Missionary Strategies', in *Beinecke Studies in Early Manuscripts, The Yale University Library Gazette* 66 (1991), 105-17; R. MCKITTERICK, 'The Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: a survey of the evidence', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, eds. H. CLARKE and M. BRENNAN (Oxford, 1981), pp. 177-82. For the extent of Columbanus' authority see FREDEGAR, IV, 36, trans. J.M. WALLACE-HADRILL, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (London, 1960).

<sup>8</sup> E.A. LOWE, *Corpus Latines Antiquiores* (Oxford, 1950), V, pp. 18-19; IDEM, 'The Script of Luxeuil: A title vindicated', *RB* 102 (1953), 132-42. Luxeuil's earliest extant manuscript, *New York, Pierpoint Morgan M-334*, has been dated to A.D. 669: LOWE, *Corpus*, XI (Oxford, 1966), no. 1659.

extant Latin copies of the *Vita*, yet its text was not used in the Bollandists' edition,<sup>9</sup> nor mentioned by L. Traube in his *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*.<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt that the Luxeuil version of the *Vita* is of great significance for the transmission of the text. For, in contrast to the version edited in the *Acta Sanctorum* which contains a large number of variant readings with the Greek text, the Luxeuil version is an almost word-for-word translation of the Greek *Vita*. Moreover, the Luxeuil lectionary provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Greek *Vita* and evidence on its transmission in the West. It is, therefore, important to establish the context in which this Latin translation may have taken place.

In the Luxeuil lectionary the *Vita* of Julian and Basilissa is contained in the readings during Epiphany (ff. 33-72: 'vita et passio sancti ac beatissimi Iuliani martyris').<sup>11</sup> Scholars have been undecided as to why the *Vita* was included as the reading for the vigil of 5 January.<sup>12</sup> The date of Julian's martyrdom is commemorated in the Greek *Synaxarion* on 8 January<sup>13</sup> and 21 June,<sup>14</sup> Jerome's *Martyrologium* places Julian's feast-day also on 8 January, while the *Martyrologium Romanum* lists him under 9 January.<sup>15</sup> The confusion arises from the two dates given in the *Passio*. According to the text, Julian and his companions suffered martyrdom on 21 June ('ἔπαθον δὲ οἱ ἐνδοξότατοι μάρτυρες ... πρὸ δέκα καλανδῶν ἰουλίῳν,' ed. HALKIN, § 63.10-12), which agrees with one of the dates in the *Synaxarion*. We are not given another date in the text until the final miracle of the *Passio*. Ten lepers are healed in the church of Julian, where his relics are buried 'ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ πάθους αὐτοῦ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς Ἐπιφανείας' (ed. cit., § 64.8-9). Thus, the date of Julian's *Passio* is considered to be on Epiphany, hence his inclusion for that particular day. Given that he is also commemorated on 8 and 9 January, then we might propose that Julian is venerated throughout the octave of Epiphany.

In addition, the *Vita* of Julian and Basilissa provides a framework for the New Testament readings for 6 January, John 2:1-12, which is the account of the Wedding at Cana. Two other Latin lectionaries of the period (seventh/eighth centuries) use the same passage for Epiphany: the *Bobbio*

<sup>9</sup> AASS, 9 January.

<sup>10</sup> MGH, III. 1 (Berlin, 1896), p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> F. MASAI, 'Pour quelle église fut exécuté le lectionnaire de Luxeuil?', *Scriptorium* 2 (1948), 41; SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, pp. lxxiv-lxxv, xcvi-xcviii.

<sup>13</sup> *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Brussels, 1902), pp. 375-80: 'ἔθλησις τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Ἰουλιανοῦ καὶ βασιλείσεως καὶ τῶν σὺν αὐτοῖς τελειωθέντων.'

<sup>14</sup> Incorrectly adding that the martyrdom occurred in Antioch, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, pp. 759-62, esp. p. 75: 'ἔθλησις τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων Ἰουλιανῶν (sic) τοῦ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτοῦ τελειωθέντων.' Only Diocletian is listed as the persecuting emperor for this date. There is no mention of Maximianus.

<sup>15</sup> *Martyrologium Romanum*, eds. H. DELEHAYE et al., *Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Decembris* (Brussels, 1940), p. 13.

*Missal* (Par. lat. 13246) and the *Wolfenbüttel Weissenbuch* 76.<sup>16</sup> John's Gospel is a fairly standard text to use to illustrate Epiphany, since it describes the first of Jesus' seven miracles. Julian and Basilissa's story falls into two separate sections: the *Vita* of Julian and Basilissa (where she dies of 'natural' causes) and the *Passio* of Julian and his companions. The title of the *Vita* in the Luxeuil lectionary does not include Basilissa's name, yet the story of the couple's early life together is included. In this narrative the author describes Julian and Basilissa's decision to have a celibate marriage. Their commitment to a virginal union is celebrated by a vision of Christ Himself with Mary and tens of thousands of angels. The unqualified divine approval which meets the couple's decision allows this illustration of the true nature of marriage to accompany the account of the Wedding at Cana.

The prominent place of the text within the lectionary in palaeographical codicological terms is also significant. It is the only text in the codex to have a whole page devoted to its lavishly illustrated title (f. 32).<sup>17</sup> The letters of the heading sit beneath a colonnaded portico capped by three arches; below are three birds and five lines of capital letters coloured in yellow, red and green (this decoration is very similar to the illustration for the first missal of Easter in the *Missale Gothicum*).<sup>18</sup> As only Julian's name appears in the title, scholars have suggested that the lectionary was destined for a church or abbey dedicated to Julian.<sup>19</sup> But this Julian has been confused with Julian the Hospitaller as well as with Julien of Brioude and Julien le Pauvre. It seems, however, that there is a clue.

In 1648 workmen who entered a chapel of Morigny, near Étampes, to repair the main altar, discovered a lead casket placed in a small vault beneath the altar.<sup>20</sup> The casket was opened in the presence of the local authorities. Inside lay a piece of a skull, an arm bone in three pieces, a vertebrate bone and some powdered bone. In addition, the casket contained a plaque with the following engraved inscription on the obverse: 'Hic iacet caput S. Juliani martiris, quod Severinus attulit de Antiochia civitate, temporibus Brunegildis Reginae'. On the reverse it read: 'De ossibus S. Christophori. Brachium S. Gamalielis'.

According to this inscription, a certain Severinus (probably a bishop) brought Julian's relics from Antioch to Gaul. No date is mentioned. The

<sup>16</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. cvi.

<sup>17</sup> MASAI, 'Pour quelle église', p. 41; SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. xxviii.

<sup>18</sup> Both designs show an Irish influence: SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. xxxviii.

<sup>19</sup> According to MASAI, 'Pour quelle église', p. 41, and G. MORIN, 'Le Lectionnaire de l'église de Paris au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *RB* 10 (1893), pp. 438-41, it was destined for Paris; SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, for Langres; and C. CHARLIER, 'Note sur les origines de l'écriture dite de Luxeuil', *RB* 63 (1948), 149-57, for Clermont.

<sup>20</sup> MASAI, 'Pour quelle église', p. 44; P. GUÉRIN, *Les Petits Bollandists: Vies des saints de l'ancien et du Nouveau Testament du martyrs, des pères, des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques des vénérables et autres personnes mortes en odeur de sainteté* (Paris, 1872-74), see under 9 January.

confusion over Antioch and Antinoopolis as Julian's place of origin was noted in the *Acta Sanctorum* edition.<sup>21</sup> Gregory of Tours (c.540-594) also thought that Julian was from Antioch.<sup>22</sup> The Greek *Vita* and *Passio*, however, states clearly that he lived and died in Antinoopolis. According to the Greek text, following his martyrdom on 21 June, Julian's relics were buried under the altar of the 'great church'.<sup>23</sup> There is no mention of such a church in the papyri of Antinoopolis. Moreover, the burial could hardly have taken place immediately after Julian's martyrdom, given that it was a time of persecution. A possible explanation for the double commemoration of his feast-day therefore may be that after Julian was martyred on 21 June in Antinoopolis, his relics were transferred from there to Antioch where they were finally buried during Epiphany.<sup>24</sup> This hypothesis is corroborated by the inscription found with the relics, which states that they were brought to Gaul from Antioch.

Most importantly, the inscription provides evidence as to the date of their transportation, namely during the reign of Queen Brunhild. She was a Visigothic princess who married King Sigibert of France in the late 560s and was executed in 613 following a very active political career.<sup>25</sup> The discovery of the inscription in the church of Morigny suggests that Brunhild donated the relics to the foundation she is said to have established.<sup>26</sup> The *Chronicle of Morigny* (1095-1152) relates that in its earliest years a church of St Julian was given to Morigny:

ecclesiam Sancti Juliani, ubi antea fuerat abbatia sanctimonialum, dedit nobis Emmauricus, Stanpensis oppidanus, vir egregius, filius suis et uxore concedentibus; quam multi monachi, etiam data multa pecunia, voluerunt nobis subripere, sed, gracia Dei, non potuerunt prevalere.<sup>27</sup>

This church was 'prope turrim Brunchildis sitam'.<sup>28</sup> Emmauricus remains unknown, and though Brunhild is not specifically associated with the relics, Julian's church is indeed part of her foundation at Morigny and situated near her tower. Brunhild is also said to have donated part of Julian's skull

<sup>21</sup> *AASS*, 1 January, p. 571.

<sup>22</sup> GREGORY OF TOURS, *The History of the Franks*, trans. L. THORPE (London, 1974), IV, p. 40: 'the two great cities of Antioch in Egypt and Apamea in Syria were captured by the Persians and their people were led into slavery (AD 572/3). It was then at that time that the Church of Saint Julian, the martyr of Antioch, was burnt down.'

<sup>23</sup> 'τὰ ἅγια λείψανα ... ἔθαψαν ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὑπὸ τὸ θυσιαστήριον', ed. HALKIN, § 63.12-14.

<sup>24</sup> I am very grateful to Charlotte Roueché for this suggestion.

<sup>25</sup> WOOD, *Merovingian*, pp. 126-36; J. NELSON, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', repr. in EADEM, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London-Ronceverte, 1986).

<sup>26</sup> DOM B. FLEUREAU, *Les Antiquités de la ville et du duché d'Estampes* (Paris, 1683), ch. ix-x, states explicitly that Brunhild established 'une petite abbaye de Religieuses' nearby which included a chapel of St Julian's.

<sup>27</sup> L. MIROT, *La Chronique de Morigny (1095-1152)* (Paris, 1909), I. 3, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> MIROT, *Chronique de Morigny*, I. 3, p. 12; FLEUREAU, *Antiquités de la ville*, ch. ix.

to a church of the 'chanoinesses régulières' of St Basilissa in Paris.<sup>29</sup> This shows awareness of the close association between the two saints.

Thus, the prominence given to the *Vita* in the Luxeuil lectionary indicates that the book was intended for a church or abbey dedicated to Julian. The discovery of the relics in Morigny suggests two things. First, that Julian's church in Morigny was the likely destination of the lectionary.<sup>30</sup> Secondly they provide strong evidence for locating the relics of Julian in a certain area of Merovingian Gaul at a certain time, namely Brunhild's reign. Perhaps one further step can be made, to link the relics to the Latin translation of the *Vita*.

The Luxeuil lectionary is also an important witness for the study of the transmission of the Vulgate, as it contains several lessons from the Old and New Testaments. Interestingly, a collation of families and groups of manuscripts containing the Vulgate<sup>31</sup> with the Luxeuil texts shows a very close relationship between Luxeuil and a group of Spanish manuscripts.<sup>32</sup> According to P. Salmon, the 'biblical text of the Old Testament used by the Luxeuil lectionary is of the Vulgate, apparently of the group of Spanish manuscripts and of a remarkable quality.'<sup>33</sup> If the text of Isaiah is used as a control, for example, then from twenty readings of 'témoins rares', Luxeuil is found to be similar to the Spanish group no less than ten times.<sup>34</sup> The same results appear with the New Testament readings. When a study of the text of the Acts is undertaken, yet again the Spanish group is seen as closest to Luxeuil.<sup>35</sup>

The Spanish provenance of the lectionary could be associated with Brunhild. According to Gregory of Tours,<sup>36</sup> the Visigothic Queen maintained contacts between Gaul and Spain.<sup>37</sup> Whether the cult of Julian arrived

<sup>29</sup> GUÉRIN, *Petits Bollandists*, 9 January. Also R.P. PIOLIN, *Supplément aux 'Vies des saints' et spécialement aux 'Petits Bollandists': d'après les documents hagiographiques les plus authentiques et les plus récents* (Paris, 1885-1903), 9 January. The church is not mentioned in the extensive list produced by D. BEAUNIER, *La France monastique: recueil historique des archevêchés, évêchés, abbayes et prieurés de France*, 1: *Province ecclésiastique de Paris* (Paris, 1905).

<sup>30</sup> MASAI, 'Pour quelle église', pp. 43-46, also linked the relics with the *Vita* in the lectionary.

<sup>31</sup> Jerome's edition: *Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam Vulgatum Versionem ad codicum fidem iussu Pii PP. XI*, ed. A. GASQUET (Rome, 1926-).

<sup>32</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. lvi.

<sup>33</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. lxi.

<sup>34</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. lvii.

<sup>35</sup> SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, pp. lxxvii ff.

<sup>36</sup> GREGORY OF TOURS, *The History of the Franks*, v.1, states that a representative of Brunhild was sent 'on a mission to Spain to attend to the affairs of Queen Brunhild'; ix.28: 'Queen Brunhild had a great salver of incredible size made out of gold and precious gems. This she dispatched to the king in Spain, together with a pair of wooden dishes, commonly called basins, which were decorated with gold and jewels. She entrusted the commission to Ebregisel, for he had often been sent on missions to Spain' [my italics].

<sup>37</sup> J. HERRIN, *The Formation of Christendom*, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 232-49, esp. p. 246, has noted the 'importance of Spain in the transmission of eastern material to Ireland and thence to Northumbria eventually to become an established feature in the English church.'

in Gaul through Spain *via* Brunhild,<sup>38</sup> remains to be ascertained. However, it is very possible that the translation of Julian's relics from Syria to Gaul during Brunhild's reign prompted the translation of his *Vita* into Latin, probably commissioned by her or a member of her entourage. The fact that when Columbanus, the founder of the Luxeuil Monastery, arrived in Gaul, his patron was none other than Brunhild's son, Childebert,<sup>39</sup> shows the close links between Brunhild (and her close circle) with the Monastery, where the lectionary which includes the earliest extant Latin translation of the Greek *Vita* was produced. However, since the Queen died in 613, and the lectionary has been dated to the late seventh or early eighth century, it seems that the Latin version of the *Vita* in the Luxeuil lectionary is most probably a copy of an earlier MS. which has not survived.

In conclusion there is no doubt that the Luxeuil lectionary plays a very important part in joining the various strands of the later life of the *Vita et Passio* of Julian and Basilissa. Firstly, it provides a *terminus ante quem* of the late seventh or early eighth century for the Greek text contained in the tenth-century Greek Mss. Secondly, the discovery of Julian's relics brings the date of his cult, and probably his *Vita* as well, further back to Queen Brunhild's reign in the early sixth century, whilst the accompanying inscription helps to elucidate the confusion over Antioch and Antinoopolis. Thirdly, the prominence of the *Vita* within the lectionary indicates that the book was intended for a church dedicated to Julian, located in Morigny where his relics were discovered. Why the lectionary was found at Luxeuil and not at Morigny it remains uncertain – perhaps it never reached its destination or it was returned to Luxeuil before the Morigny church was destroyed. Finally, it can be postulated that at some level Queen Brunhild must have played a significant role in the transmission of the cult of the saint and the text of his *Vita et Passio*. The Spanish provenance of the lectionary indicates that, though it was composed after her death, the links she had established between Gaul and Spain may well have prompted the Latin translation of the *Vita* and *Passio* of Julian and Basilissa. Above all, the Luxeuil lectionary exemplifies the importance of western witnesses in the transmission of eastern texts in the late seventh century, illustrating clearly that the two halves of the Empire cannot be separated when we study how texts were diffused throughout the Byzantine world. Luxeuil exemplifies an interaction which continues right up to the fifteenth century, as Julian Chrysostomides has shown so convincingly and faithfully throughout her scholarly work.

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<sup>38</sup> Suggested by SALMON, *Lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, p. lxxvi.

<sup>39</sup> NELSON, 'Queens as Jezebels', p. 28.