



2017

Historiography and Hierotopy: Palestinian Hagiography in the Sixth Century A.D.

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Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2017.168>

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HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HIEROTOPY:
PALESTINIAN HAGIOGRAPHY
IN THE SIXTH CENTURY A.D.

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

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Director: Dr. David Olster

Professor of History

Lexington, KY

2017

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HIEROTOPY: PALESTINIAN HAGIOGRAPHY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY A.D.

Judean hagiographies are unusual. Some are unexpectedly structured: a saint's life in the form of a history text. Others offer surprising content. Expected hagiographic stylizations, for example, often depict moments in which the saint is offered money for a miracle. In such cases the saint invariably refuses. Judean saints, however, accept gratitude willingly – often with cash amounts recorded.

The peculiarities of these works have regularly been examined on literary and theological grounds. In this dissertation I propose a different approach: socio-economic context. The monasteries that produced these texts were utterly dominated by the environment of Christian Jerusalem. Although often commented upon, the unmined implications of this reality hold the key to understanding these hagiographies. It is only by examining these monasteries' ties to – and embeddedness within – their peculiar context that we can perceive the mindset that produced such baffling texts.

Lengthy historical, literary, and archaeological analysis force Judean hagiography to give up its secrets. These works were in fact not odd at all. Rather, they were hyper-specialized, a unique adaptation to a unique environment. True, we do not see their like in other eastern regions over the span of late antiquity. Yet this is to be expected. Nowhere else can we find the particular conditions that brought these works into being. Nor can we understand the Judean works absent their milieu. It is only upon the foundation of layers of context that these hagiographies stand high enough to view. They were, most accurately, Holy Land hagiographies: a label as unique as the land that produced them.

KEYWORDS: Palestinian Hagiography, Cyril of Scythopolis, Hierotopy, Networks, Context.

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To my wife Catherine,
sine qua non of dissertation and happiness both.
I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been singularly fortunate on this long academic journey: few students have received such care and attention from so many. Indeed, there have been so many angels along the way I may fail to include them all. Should such a one ever chance upon this work, please accept my apology. These acknowledgements were diminished by haste; my gratitude is not.

Among this legion of benefactors my parents must stand in the first rank. Few would have stood by such a foolish son; I have learned parenting from their example. Close behind are the many wonderful people at Stockton College (now University). The devoted staff and admirable faculty of that institution, together with the warm fellowship of its students, provided one of the great phases of my life. I'm afraid I took it for granted at the time, but now let me extend my deepest gratitude to Steven Phillips, Demetrios Constantelos, Lisa Rosner, William Lubenow, and the many others who set my feet upon the right road. Special thanks are due to Tom Papademetriou, whose patience with such a wayward mentee surpassed any expectation.

I have been equally blessed in my time at UK. Special thanks are due to the Boss, David Olster. Equally irascible and brilliant, his great passion for educating – and defending – his students will never be forgotten. Thanks also to my committee: David Hunter, Alice Christ, Daniel Gargola, and Jennifer Westerfeld. Their close attention to my long-winded screed is proof of professional dedication that exceeds the call of duty. The friendship of other students has lifted me up as well. In a special way I would like to thank Joshua Powell, whose fellowship and ideas have been a mainstay of my work for longer than either of us would care to recall.

Juggling graduate school and a full-time job has been a challenge. In this regard I owe a debt to two wonderful supervisors: without the patience and forbearance of Mark Dreves and especially Doug Culp, I doubt I could have finished this journey.

Juggling graduate school and a family has been harder still. My loved ones were unfairly forced to share this burden, but they have inspired me through their sacrifice. I will never understand what possessed my wonderful Catherine to marry me, but I know this accomplishment is hers as much as mine. Without her support, I never could have become Dr. Stearn – a title she held almost a decade before I did. In many ways, this was her second dissertation. Finally, thank you to my sons Bobby and Ricky for tolerating my absences. I will do my best to make it up to you.

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INTRODUCTION

The sixth century was a time of uncertainty in the Byzantine East. Chalcedon had shaken the Empire to its foundations, and 100 years later the eastern Mediterranean was still suffering its aftershocks. The decades following the Council had been dominated by imperial efforts to promote reconciliation. A century after Chalcedon Justinian was still following suit. War and conquest might have been the order of the day on the two frontiers, but at home the emperor sought to soothe conflict, not foment it.

Such titanic storylines of orthodoxy and diplomacy make for a crowded stage. Localized ecclesiastical narratives struggle to attract the audience's attention in the presence of their imperial counterparts. Yet such narratives deserve to be heard: for their own sake, but also because they often undergird and intertwine with their grander parallels.

At first glance Judean monasticism may seem an unlikely candidate for such a role. Yet Judean history is the late empire writ small, a microcosm of the eastern realm from the fourth to seventh centuries. Here we find ecclesiastical and theological conflict, imperial drama, and ethnic tensions. Judean texts overflow with institutional and economic information, and provide penetrating insights into the period's literary standardizations. This is fertile ground for the scholar's pen, and a small subfield has grown up from its rich soil.

Yet the study of these monasteries and their literary productions is fraught with obstacles, many of which mirror methodological problems of wider scope. The study of

Judean texts is confronted with such problems in rapid succession: what is the nature of institutional monasticism? What knowledge can be securely drawn from hagiographic texts? These larger questions about institutions and historicity provide frameworks for their narrower equivalents: how do we understand the Judean monasteries? To what extent can we rely on their textual representations? These problems cast shadows over the field, and many scholars have attempted to disperse them. In this dissertation I will draw from their work in an effort to glimpse the connections between the economic, institutional, and literary aspects of the Judean monasteries in late antiquity. In so doing, I hope to illustrate the relationship between context and identity for one small corner of the early Byzantine Empire.

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What, then, was late antique monasticism? Recent decades have brought new methodological challenges to the field, making previous answers to this question untenable. Waves of scholarship have emanated from the struggle to establish a new consensus. A new tradition has arisen from the work of Peter Brown, offering a fresh perspective on the relationship between the charismatic authority of the holy man and the ecclesiastical, institutional authority of the bishop. In the East, Brown claimed, many little *loci* of religious power grew around local holy men.¹ It was these holy men who “competed within the vested hierarchy of Church and State.”² Brown pictured the rise and authority of the eastern holy man as inseparable from its particular historical context,

¹ Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101.

² Brown, “Rise and Function,” 95.

and as a key element in a particular historical progression.³ He elucidated an antagonism between the different poles of early Christian authority, providing the underpinning for a new scholarly tradition. Brown's thought was further developed and concretized by scholars like Henry Chadwick, who argued that: "bishops and monks represented two antithetical aspects of early Christianity."⁴ Chadwick believed that the bishop's tie to his city and the concerns of its people produced a very different character and outlook than that of the monk.

Meanwhile, scholars like James Goehring were attacking the problem from another angle.⁵ Goehring argued against the idea that nascent monasticism was a single phenomenon. Instead of a monastic "big bang" kicked off by Antony in Egypt, Goehring saw monasticism as a spontaneous outbreak occurring simultaneously around the eastern Mediterranean. Once arguments for a common monastic source were allowed to expire, he claimed, scholars could concentrate on the localized causes of monastic expression.⁶

Philip Rousseau and Daniel Caner further developed this idea that monasticism was a series of local expressions of a late antique zeitgeist. To Rousseau, monasticism was the institutional stabilization of an ascetic movement that endangered late antique

³ Brown argued that: "the victory of Christianity in Late Roman Society was not the victory of the One God over the many: it was the victory of men over the institutions of their past. The medieval papacy, the Byzantine *laura*, the Russian *starec*, the Muslim Caliphate: these are all, in their various ways, direct results of attempts of men to rule men under a distant high God." Brown, "Rise and Function," 100.

⁴ Henry Chadwick, "Bishops and Monks," in Elizabeth A. Livingstone (ed.) *Studia Patristica* XXIV, (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1993), 45.

⁵ The historiographical development outlined in this section is meant to be indicative, not exhaustive. The number of significant scholars in the field is simply too great to do otherwise.

⁶ James E. Goehring, "The Origins of Monasticism," in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 250: "The 'big bang' lies not in one or more historical events, but deep beneath the historical plane of ancient Mediterranean culture. It was the spirit of the times and the new Christian faith that produced the explosion, and as it welled forth from below, it burst onto the plane of history independently throughout the empire. One may still discover influences on specific forms of asceticism and trace various paths of development, but the quest for the 'origins' of Christian monasticism should be let go."

society.⁷ Recognizing this danger, the Church spent decades trying to bring that movement under control. The tipping point of this effort came at Chalcedon, when ascetics were formally subjugated to their local ordinaries. After Chalcedon, many ascetic groups were slowly brought under control as formal monasticism took hold, thus providing an institutional frame (or cage?) for them.⁸ Yet the frame was home as well as fence, and stability gave a new identity.⁹

While Rousseau was examining monasticism's institutional formation, Daniel Caner was investigating its literary creation. Caner also disagreed with the notion of a monastic "big bang," but for him the institutional subjugation of asceticism was only one aspect of the process.¹⁰ The other involved the literary creation of retroactive continuity ("ret-conning") for the monastic movement, a practice through which "normative" monastic texts created a "distinct profession or order" from a "diverse or experimental background."¹¹ The development of this phenomenon created one tradition from many. Furthermore, Caner argued, many of these texts were written by bishops, whose own predilections dovetailed with their desire to keep ascetics from publicly antagonistic roles. Thus the normative discourse came "to define monasticism in terms of philosophical withdrawal – the improvement of one's soul through pursuit of tranquility

⁷ Philip Rousseau "Monasticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 745: "Distinguished at times by an appalling emaciation of the body, by filth and infestation, by ragged, colourless and skimpy clothes, large numbers of these ascetics converged, at moments of crisis, on the cities themselves, forming virtual mobs that were capable not only of menace but of real power."

⁸ Rousseau, "Monasticism," 756-57.

⁹ Rousseau, "Monasticism," 745.

¹⁰ Daniel Caner, "Not of this World: The Invention of Monasticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 588: "When speaking of 'monasticism' or 'the monastic movement,' I am referring to a widespread phenomenon that initially had no common identity, founders, leaders, appearance, organization, or direction." For Chalcedon and institutionalization, see Caner, 595.

¹¹ Caner, "Invention," 593-598.

(*hesychia*) – and that the promotion of monasticism as such was closely related to episcopal concerns and patronage.”¹² As these texts began to circulate, readers came to view monastic luminaries through the bishops’ lens. Consciously or not, the bishops made a significant contribution to monastic identity, while simultaneously granting it a pedigree. For Caner, then, the bishops’ endeavor to tame asceticism was hagiographic as much as institutional.

Forty years after Brown’s challenge to earlier narratives, a new consensus is beginning to emerge. Scholars are coming to understand the monastic phenomenon as the product of a tension between ascetics and bishops. The subjugated, institutionalized monasticism that resulted from the bishops’ victory retained elements of local flavor, allowing scholars to speak of “monasticisms” rather than “monasticism.” In this view, monastic life and literature were indeed different phenomena: the latter served to occlude the historical development of the former. A single origin for “true” monasticism was born from the latter, and the resulting narrative became the standard for centuries afterward.¹³

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Caner’s “ret-conning” argument brings forward another problem: how to deal with the literary sources of late antique monasticism? The problem of literature and historicity is not new, but it has been intensified in recent years. Rousseau’s caution that monastic life and literature were different phenomena is well taken.¹⁴ Yet we glimpse the

¹² Caner, “Invention,” 594-595.

¹³ Caner, “Invention,” 590ff.

¹⁴ Rousseau “Monasticism,” 748.

former mainly through the latter; neither can be understood in isolation. Here too older paradigms have proven untenable, resulting in another struggle to reach a new consensus. In this case, however, Caner is working from precedent: Herbert Hunger and Cyril Mango had long concluded that while the standardized tropes of the period did occlude historicity, studying the choice and arrangement thereof could provide a substitute to the acceptance of an author's narrative.¹⁵

The transition is laid out by Averil Cameron, whose concentration on the primacy of rhetorical discourse led her away from traditional economic, social, and institutional understandings of Christianity's rise. To understand that rise, she argued, historians must employ the textual and ideological *foci* used by New Testament scholars. For Cameron, rhetorical positioning was the true cause of Christianity's ascent. The "totalizing discourse" of Christianity effectively changed the themes of the age.¹⁶ The process was dynamic and elastic, and the ensuing dialogue changed both Christianity and the culture surrounding it.¹⁷ Even still, Christianity's rhetorical frame shaped the late antique mind, transforming a world comprised of many frameworks to a world dominated by one.¹⁸ To understand this transition, Cameron argued, scholars must adopt a more hermeneutical approach in their methodology.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Herbert Hunger, *Prooimion: Elemente der Byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* (Vienna: The University of Vienna, 1964) and Cyril Mango, *Byzantine History as a Distorting Mirror* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975).

¹⁶ Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley: The University of California, 1991). Cameron lays out her critique, argument, and methods on 2-11. See page 222 for the idea of new themes.

¹⁷ Cameron, *Rhetoric*, 4.

¹⁸ Cameron, *Rhetoric*, 9, 222ff.

¹⁹ Cameron, *Rhetoric*, 12: "The subject lends itself with peculiar appropriateness to a methodology based on hermeneutics, and I have learned much from this direction; it is an approach that also leads to the questioning of historical method and the nature of history, and to the problem of how truth can be known

Cameron's challenge to the field had strong implications for scholars of hagiography. It represented a long-standing dilemma: "what has hagiography to do with historicity?" In her work on the *Lives* of John of Ephesus, Susan Ashbrook-Harvey adapted frameworks like those of Hunger and Mango to answer this question.²⁰ Ashbrook-Harvey argued that the rhetorical conventions of hagiography need not cause scholars to despair of its historicity. Instead, an understanding of the rhetorical conventions themselves can reopen the door to historicity in the texts.²¹ Such an understanding, she contended, revolved around the relationship of hagiographic themes to their particular context. Equally important was the separation of these themes from the author's perspective. Thus the motive for their use could be established.²² For Ashbrook-Harvey, this method transforms the standardizations themselves into a window on the identity, context, and worldview of the hagiographer.

This key opened other doors as well: hence Rousseau could develop the idea that while monastic life and literature were different things, ideology was the basis for both. For Rousseau, it was the study of ideology that illuminated the hagiographer's worldview and motives.²³ Furthermore, Rousseau argued, each hagiography was but a single frame in a film, a frozen moment in a developing tradition. An understanding of the

and expressed. Now that these are central issues for all kinds of historians, we come back yet again to Christianity as a major area of hermeneutics and a fit subject for our time."

²⁰ Susan Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley: The University of California, 1990).

²¹ Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, xiii: "The nature of hagiography does not invalidate the historicity of John's *Lives* but it does require that we read the text with a particular understanding. Hagiography is a literary genre in which form is as important as content in understanding the text...Recognizing the formulaic, non-historical language of hagiography opens the route for treating the standardization itself as historical material."

²² Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, xiii.

²³ Rousseau, "Monasticism," 746.

relationship between ideology and literary convention, Rousseau contended, provides a window to that progression.²⁴

On the other side of the literary challenge, scholars have found new ways to pull historical material from hagiographic texts. The literary conventions of the genre may occlude historic transparency, but they do not turn it opaque. Instead the text becomes translucent: the light of historicity still shines through, albeit not as clearly as one might hope. If asceticism was institutionalized and ret-conned, then we know of this historical process mainly through literary analysis of late antique texts. As such, the study of standardization can lead to historicity. Caner described bishops creating a larger tradition in this fashion, while Rousseau wrote of hagiographers ret-conning smaller traditions as the need arose. In both cases, however, the resulting traditions provide windows into the historical process. The rhetorical conventions of hagiography do not banish historicity. They merely shift it. Each text reveals the mind of its author, and proper study can elucidate the author's motives, and perhaps a thesis.²⁵ A new consensus is emerging here too: a shift in methodology, as Cameron suggested, has allowed for a new historicity. Thus careful study of the text can provide us with as much historical material as ever it did; only questions and methodology have changed.

²⁴ Rousseau, "Monasticism," 746-47: "Broadly speaking, we catch in the sources, at various moments of frozen textuality, what was in fact a developing tradition, in which 'rules' and biographies (not always easily distinguished) attracted additions, made often undeclared adjustments and abandoned embarrassing antecedents. Now and again, a writer might look back in a more ordered and reflective way, and make a calculated statement about spiritual values, effective practices and hallowed or authentic genealogies."

²⁵ See Rousseau, "Monasticism," 747 and Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, 135. In speaking of hagiographies governed by conscious theses, both are referring specifically to John of Ephesus and Cyril of Scythopolis. As we will see, one of the main questions of Judean literature revolves around the substance of Cyril's thesis.

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The Judean Desert produced a number of texts to which scholars can apply such models. The corpus is fairly voluminous, comprised of eleven hagiographies written between 526 and 600 A.D. These were composed by at least four hagiographers, each from a different institutional tradition. They describe nine desert saints, meaning there are parallel hagiographies for two of these holy men. All the authors seem to have been familiar with one another's work. Most of them color within the lines, not deviating too much from hagiographic norms. Yet one of the hagiographers – Cyril of Scythopolis – is something of an enigma, and his presence in this corpus has transformed it into an object of historical fascination.

Written in 526 A.D., the *Life of Theognius* was the first of these hagiographies to be composed. Theognius was typical of Judean saints: a Cappadocian pilgrim who decided to stay in the Holy Land. He lived a long life in the desert, dying at 97 years old in 522 A.D. Theognius spent his early career in the monasteries of Theodosius and Calamon before founding his own. He ended as bishop of Bethalia, splitting his time between city and desert. Theognius' hagiographer was Paul of Elousa, himself a Greek pilgrim come to stay. Following an introduction by a certain Alexander, Paul became a monk at Theognius' monastery. Educated in secular rhetoric, Paul eventually succeeded Theognius as abbot. It seems Paul gave the *Life* as a homily, an *encomium* delivered to the monks on the fourth anniversary of Theognius' death.²⁶

²⁶ See Tim Vivian, *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 134-144; and J. Van den Gheyn, "Saint Théognius, Évêque de Bétélie en Palestine," *Revue des questions historiques* 50 (1891), 561-564, *op. cit.* in Vivian, 136.

The *Life of Theodosius* is a longer work finished sometime between 536 and 547 A.D. Theodosius was a major figure: the founder of the desert's largest *cenobium* and later archimandrite of them all. Another Cappadocian came to stay, Theodosius prospered in this desert climate, dying in 529 A.D. at 106 years old. The origins of his hagiographer are somewhat murkier. Likely steeped in classical *paideia* and trained in rhetoric, Theodore of Petra was a monk at Theodosius' monastery chosen by the abbot to compose the founder's *Life*.²⁷ The work was delivered to the 400 monks of the monastery on the first anniversary of Theodosius' death, but it was only published some years later, perhaps after Theodore had become bishop of Petra.²⁸

Of greatest importance is the seven hagiography corpus penned by Cyril of Scythopolis in 558 A.D. The first two of these are the longest of all Judean works. They are the *Lives* of Euthymius and Sabas, the monastic progenitors within whose traditions and institutions Cyril spent his life. Both fit the standard mold. Euthymius was a Cappadocian pilgrim who established himself in Judea, dying there at 96 years old in 473 A.D. He was the giant of fifth-century Judean monasticism, and was responsible for much of its growth and prosperity.²⁹ Sabas was also a Cappadocian who stayed in the desert and died there at 94 years old in 532 A.D. Having begun as a disciple of Euthymius and member of the latter's inner circle, Sabas went on to become an abbot and founder of monasteries. He finished as archimandrite of the *laurae* opposite Theodosius. It was he who recruited Cyril to Judean monasticism, and in whose monastery Cyril

²⁷ A. J. Festugière, *Les Moines d'Orient* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1962), 3: 86-87.

²⁸ Festugière, *Les Moines*, 85-86 and Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 4. Festugière argues for dates between 536 and 547, while Hirschfeld gives an end date of 556, but not a reason for it.

²⁹ See discussion in chapter one.

finished his career. The other five *Lives* of Cyril's corpus are much shorter. Two of these cover the aforementioned Theognius and Theodosius, providing a counterpoint to the works of Paul and Theodore. The other subjects were significant persons from Cyril's own tradition and line, at least two of whom he knew personally.

Cyril was connected to many of his subjects: some personally, others institutionally. He began his Judean career at the monastery of Euthymius, and ended it at that of Sabas. Along the way he met many others in this tradition or line, some of whom became subjects for his work. Yet Cyril's background was different from that of his subjects. He came from nearby Scythopolis rather than distant Cappadocia, and seems to have lived only until his late thirties. In this brief time he did something extraordinary. Cyril wrote *Lives* so different from those composed by his contemporaries that much of modern scholarship on Judea has focused on determining how and why that was so.

The *Life of Chariton* was composed sometime after the work of Cyril, but before the Persian invasion early in the seventh century. Chariton too came as a pilgrim and decided to stay, founding monasteries and living to an old age. Yet Chariton's *Life* comes with a twist: the anonymous author claims him as the originator of all Judean monasticism. Chariton did indeed live early enough to qualify as the ur-founder: the *Life* describes his suffering during pre-Constantinian persecutions in his native Lyaconia. He was active in Judea for decades, and was still founding monasteries in the 330s. Leah Di Segni has speculated that the author of the *Life* was a monk in Chariton's monastery

possessed of a background in secular rhetoric, and chosen by his abbot to apply this skill in response to the work of Cyril.³⁰

The final sixth-century work is the *Life of Gerasimus*, also written in the latter half of the century. Gerasimus was active during the time of Euthymius. He founded a monastery near the Jordan and established a Rule, but not much else is known about him. His is a shorter hagiography of disputed authorship, and is composed mainly of only a few tales from the life of its saint.³¹

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Scholarship on the Judean monasteries is dominated by the approaches to these eleven texts. In this regard contemporary historiography fits neatly into categories: those who read the whole Judean corpus, translators who read only the text at hand, and those who read Cyril alone. The latter group subdivides into a wide spectrum based on how the author reads Cyril. For Cyril really is the problem here: his work is difficult to classify, and seems not to fit comfortably within any of the dominant categories of hagiographical literary analysis.³² Many scholars have crafted arguments to fit Cyril within such

³⁰ Leah Di Segni, "The Life of Chariton," in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 393-396.

³¹ The *Life* was traditionally attributed to Cyril of Scythopolis, and was thought to be another entry in his corpus of shorter *Lives*. This position was challenged by Bernard Flusin in the early 1980s, and the *Life* was reassigned to an unknown hagiographer, presumably of Gerasimus' line. See Bernard Flusin, *Miracle et Histoire dans l'Oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris: *Études Augustiniennes*, 1983), 35ff.

More recently, however, Binns has argued that the work was indeed penned by Cyril, and thus far that has been the last word. See John Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine, 314-631* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 47ff.

³² For example, Cyril was not a bishop but a monk living in the tradition and institutions of his subjects, some of whom he knew. More importantly, however, the rhetorical conventions of his work are often not conventions: he subscribes to and departs from standardizations by turns in such a way that some scholars have wondered whether his works should be viewed as hagiography at all. The size of Cyril's library makes his choices more confusing: he had enough literary models at hand to use as rhetorical boilerplates. Hence the general problem of how to read hagiography here becomes the specific problem of how to read Cyril.

categories, while others attempted to determine his purpose in departing from them. Regardless, modern scholarship on Judea seems to begin and end with Cyril.

The reputations of the other Judean hagiographers have suffered through comparison with Cyril. Their redemption is only newly begun; balanced praise is now emerging from new commentaries and translations. Vivian, for example, praises Paul's work as a homily even while analyzing it as a hagiography.³³ Di Segni, on the other hand, affects clinical detachment from the *Life of Chariton*, offering praise and criticism by turns.³⁴ Yet even this moderate praise is recent, and comes from those who are reading such texts in isolation rather than alongside Cyril. Scholarship has long held the latter in exceptional regard, causing him to stand out from his contemporaries. He seems uncommonly precise, painstakingly meticulous, and they appear shoddy and artificial by contrast. Cyril's process and method have long appealed to scholars, providing a welcome break from literary convention, a ready tool for analysis and, perhaps, the work of a kindred spirit in methodical research. Regardless, for centuries Cyril's reputation was impeccable, and the others were harshly judged in comparison.³⁵

These trends continued into the latter half of the twentieth century.³⁶ Festugière, for example, offered a stark contrast between the works of Cyril and Theodore in his

³³ Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 136-44.

³⁴ Di Segni, "The Life of Chariton," 393-96.

³⁵ Daniel Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis' Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism* (Rome: Sant'Anselmo, 2001), 41ff. Hombergen has crafted a summary of Cyril's scholarly reception dating back centuries. He provides two main categories: unreserved praise and moderate criticism that nonetheless leaves Cyril's historicity largely unquestioned. Systematically listing the positions of the scholars, Hombergen comments throughout that: "...Cyril of Scythopolis bears an almost classical reputation of historical reliability...[more recently] more refinements were introduced in the judgment of Cyril's accuracy...However, notwithstanding such concessions, the fundamental appraisal of Cyril's qualities, both as a hagiographer and a historian, remained unaffected."

³⁶ For the sake of brevity, I will confine this section to the major works of the last half-century.

translation and commentary of them both. He was engaged by Cyril's "charming candor," and felt a need to justify the inclusion of Theodore's "insipid piece of rhetoric" alongside the work of Cyril.³⁷ To Festugière, Cyril was simply in a different class than his contemporaries.³⁸ This opinion was shared by Bernard Flusin, writing some twenty years later.³⁹ For Flusin, Cyril's education and formation (or sometimes lack thereof) gave him a unique focus.⁴⁰ As a result, Flusin contended, Cyril established "miraculous history" as a new genre, and thus should be seen as less a hagiographer and more a variant of Church historian.⁴¹ Where earlier historians had bemoaned Cyril's inclusion of miracles as an unfortunate sidebar to his "objective" narrative, Flusin maintained that they were the main point of the work.⁴² Thus the saint is the agent of God, miracle is the

³⁷ Festugière, "Les Moines," 10, 83. Regarding the latter: "Trois raisons m'ont conduit à joindre au texte de Cyrille cet insipide morceau de rhétorique... Enfin, il m'a semblé utile de donner un exemple d'une sorte de littérature qui encombre l'hagiographie ancienne et qui fait mieux apprécier, par contraste, la candeur et la précision du récit de Cyrille."

Theodore's poor repute continues to this day, and some continue to see his worth only in comparison to Cyril: "Theodore of Petra's *Life of Saint Theodosios* is a verbose, exaggeratedly rhetorical, poorly executed piece of panegyric... For all its faults, however, it is of some value as a control with which Cyril's *Life of Saint Theodosios* may be compared." Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril*, 8. Redeeming Theodore will be a goal of chapter six below.

³⁸ Festugière, "Les Moines," 12.

³⁹ Flusin, "Miracle," 9, 84. Flusin shares the general high opinion of Cyril, although he will later adapt it for his own purposes: "Cyrille a la réputation justifiée de se distinguer parmi les hagiographes byzantins par una étonnante sûreté historique." He later notes that the difference between Cyril and Theodore lay not in their culture, but in the genre of their works: Cyril "choisit résolument le style historique," while Theodore remained bound by the standardized rhetorical conventions of hagiography.

⁴⁰ Flusin, "Miracle," 85, 153. Flusin argues that the historical repetition found in Cyril's work, together with a lack of originality on its hagiographic side, is a major clue to Cyril's purpose. For Flusin, this is partially a result of Cyril's purely religious formation, and his lack of an education in secular rhetoric. These factors have served to shift Cyril's focus away from the individual and toward the institution.

⁴¹ Flusin, "Miracle," 210.

⁴² Flusin, "Miracle," 9.

indication of his agency, and history is the story thereof.⁴³ This approach, Flusin argued, was crafted by Cyril for the benefit of his community and institution.⁴⁴

A decade later John Binns was also impressed by the “clarity and pace” of Cyril’s style.⁴⁵ Binns joined his predecessors in contending that education was a key difference between Cyril and his contemporaries.⁴⁶ Once again, Theodore and Paul suffer in the comparison: Binns describes them as overly rhetorical, excessively flowery, and “long-winded.”⁴⁷ To explain the obvious divide, Binns argued, required new categories. Thus where Flusin had posited “miraculous history,” Binns followed suit with “historiographical hagiography.” For Binns, the constitution and structure of this new genre meant that Cyril should be grouped with Eusebius rather than Athanasius.⁴⁸ Binns therefore emphasized Cyril’s historicity, creating a further contrast with the literary convention employed by Cyril’s contemporaries.⁴⁹ Having crafted an argument for Cyril’s historicity, Binns was then free to use Cyril as a source for his main thesis

⁴³ Flusin, “*Miracle*,” 210-11. Cyril’s originality is not in identifying God as the miraculous author of history, Flusin contends. Rather, “L’originalité de Cyrille est ailleurs. Il partage certes l’idée que l’étude historique est l’étude des *gesta Dei*. Mais pour lui, elle est plus spécialement l’étude des *gesta Dei per monachos*. Il a en commun avec son époque l’idée que l’événement historique par excellence est le miracle, qui montre à nu le vrai sens et le vrai moteur de l’histoire. Il a en plus – toujours d’accord avec son époque – la certitude qu’ existe un lien privilégié entre le miracle et la sainteté, qu’il y a un agent du miracle: le saint, plus précisément, pour l’époque qui suit les persecutions, le saint moine. Le lien alors s’établit simplement et fortement: l’histoire est miraculeuse; le saint moine est l’agent du miracle; le saint moine est donc l’agent véritable de l’histoire, celui par qui Dieu gouverne les événements.”

⁴⁴ Flusin, “*Miracle*,” 212ff.

⁴⁵ John Binns, introduction to R.M. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), v.

⁴⁶ Binns, *Cyril*, xvii-li, and Binns, *Ascetics*, 74-75. Binns is optimistic about historicity of the work that resulted from Cyril’s lack of secular education: “Most saints’ lives show little interest in historical information. This was a result of literary convention rather than any lack of evidence. Cyril’s writing shows that there was no lack of archival and inscriptional material that could be drawn on in the course of composition. The combination of the historical awareness of the monks and the careful collation of information by Cyril ensured a full and accurate historical record [emphasis mine] of the monasteries which is a testimony to the lively interest of the monks in events going on around them.”

⁴⁷ Binns, *Cyril*, xviiiiff, and Binns, *Ascetics*, 41ff.

⁴⁸ Binns, *Cyril*, li, and Binns, *Ascetics*, 36-40.

⁴⁹ Binns, *Ascetics*, 68ff.

concerning the relationship between Judea and Constantinople.⁵⁰ In this regard Binns' work is indicative of the field more generally: to study Judea, scholars must first contend with Cyril.

Seven years later Daniel Hombergen took a very different approach in his work on the Second Origenist Controversy. Cyril is the only source for this event, and so Hombergen was forced to a singular focus on the question of Cyril's historicity. That dilemma drew his attention away from the other Judean authors; ultimately he used only one other Judean source (Theodore), and then only in his relation to Cyril.⁵¹ Reading Cyril apart from his Judean contemporaries pushed Hombergen in a different direction than his predecessors: grouping Cyril with Athanasius, rather than Eusebius.⁵² To Hombergen, Cyril's historiographical elements do not obstruct his hagiographical pedigree.⁵³ Cyril's historicity, Hombergen maintained, must be understood through the *discours hagiographique* framework crafted by Van Uytfanghe.⁵⁴ In this way Cyril's work is reduced to a series of edifying stories. Hombergen has no genre distinction to make when he lays Cyril alongside Theodore: when noting contradictory passages he

⁵⁰ Binns, *Ascetics*, 1-2. Binns argues that, in the minds of the monks, the history of their monasteries, the Church, and the Empire are intertwined. Thus he can argue that the interactions of the great Judean figures with Constantinople, faithfully recorded by Cyril, are indicative of the monks' conception of their role in the world. The desert then becomes less of a retreat from the world, and more of a base of operations.

⁵¹ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 113ff.

⁵² Hombergen, *Controversy*, 50-51. Hombergen's isolated reading goes further still: he does not read the Cyrillian corpus as a unified work, but rather concentrates upon the *Life of Sabas* as a separate work with a separate purpose.

⁵³ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 93ff.

⁵⁴ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 95-105. Hombergen lays out this framework at length before explaining how it frames Cyril's work.

explains them as “chauvinistic” competition or embarrassing jokes. To Hombergen, neither account is historically accurate: both are merely hagiography.⁵⁵

Yet the outright dismissal of historicity made elements of his argument problematic, and on occasion Hombergen was forced to fall back to another position: Cyril’s facts must be separated from his biased interpretation of them.⁵⁶ In this way he could shore up his argument via the only available source of narrative. By the end of his work, however, Hombergen advocated a contextual approach similar to that of Ashbrook-Harvey.⁵⁷ Twelve years later Augustine Casiday covered the same ground, and gave a fuller voice to Hombergen’s methodological frustrations and concessions.⁵⁸ Yet those

⁵⁵ Hombergen, “*Controversy*,” 113-30.

⁵⁶ Hombergen, “*Controversy*,” 50-54, 88-89. By this point Hombergen is riding out a methodological storm in a teacup. He wants to “prove” Cyril’s lack of historicity. In the absence of other sources, however, he has to read Cyril through methodological assumptions that may or may not apply. His attempt to ameliorate the problem by determining “context” is marred by his peremptory dismissal of contemporary regional sources. He is forced to undertake feats of methodological acrobatics: he grasps for a literary hermeneutic whenever possible, and falls back upon a discreet assumption of historicity whenever necessary.

Yet for all that Hombergen’s fall-back is probably the only tenable position. In the face of an absolute lack of alternate verification, and the obvious insufficiency of “indirect” methods to achieve a balanced position (i.e. they can dismiss historicity entirely, but not give a criterion to separate “facts” into two groups based on historicity), one can either accept the historicity of Cyril’s facts or throw up one’s hands and walk away. Hombergen reluctantly accepts the former when necessary, realizing that there really is no alternative.

⁵⁷ Hombergen, “*Controversy*,” 367-71. In his conclusion, Hombergen echoes Cameron in seeking a hermeneutic related to modern biblical exegetical methods. He echoes Ashbrook-Harvey as well in arguing that we must examine authorial context to establish authorial content, but his approach has left this statement untested.

⁵⁸ Augustine Casiday, “Translations, Controversies, and Adaptations at St. Sabas Monastery during the Sixth Century,” *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies* 2 (2013), 5, 7. Casiday echoes Hombergen’s division of facts and interpretation: “Cyril’s claims about the sequence of events, and the positions taken by various actors in them, command our attention because Cyril himself or perhaps his informants directly witnessed them. Cyril’s reliability as a judge of theology, however, is a separate matter entirely.”

Casiday also recognizes Hombergen’s basic problem in studying the Controversy: “The problem that remains is our relative lack of primary sources about the Second Controversy, which skews our perspective toward Cyril’s uncompromising opposition to Origen and his ‘followers’. Consequently, scholars grappling with the sparse evidence often find themselves obliged to take on Cyril’s paradigm for the events.” Note the difference, however: Casiday embraces the facts, rather than grudgingly conceding them. It is the perspective and paradigm he laments.

frustrations were mitigated for Casiday: he was in possession of texts he believed could verify Cyril's account.⁵⁹

Here the narrative of modern Judean monastic historiography ends. Cyril remains the central problem, and a bevy of questions surround him: what is he doing and why, can he be trusted as a historical source, what his genre is and how it should be analyzed, can corroborating evidence be found for his account, etc. These questions about Cyril are now the questions of Judean monasticism. The shift from economic and institutional history to literary hermeneutics advocated by Cameron is clearly felt. Textual studies have now dominated Judean history for a generation. Institutions and economics are now an auxiliary focus of archaeological study, and merit only a footnote or two in the works of historians. Any attempt to reintegrate them lies on the other side of the textual challenge.

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How, then, to pierce Cyril's veil? Hombergen and Casiday offer the first step: separate Cyril's historical narrative from his rhetorical use of it. This is the distinction needed to solve the genre problem: Cyril was both a historian *and* a hagiographer. His

⁵⁹ Casiday, "Translations," 2, 15-16. Discovery of corroborative sources made Casiday generous to Cyril regarding the latter's historicity of events and details, while allowing him to criticize Cyril's understanding of the beliefs of the other side. Thus Casiday could open with an admission of using Cyril's narrative while attributing to him the negative aspects of a heresiologist in regard to the actual doctrines of "the party opposite," and conclude with an admission of the existence of "Origenists" of the Evagrian tradition.

In his view Cyril understood the conflict, but not the adversary: "First, I am not arguing that Cyril simply made up sixth-century Origenism. The correspondences between content with *KG-S₂* [an Evagrian text associated with sixth-century Judean monasteries (see chapter four)] and the anti-Origenist polemic – as established by Guillaumont's research – indicate that there were indeed sixth-century followers of Evagrius who were preoccupied with speculating about metaphysical aspects of Christian theology. I no more think that Origenism was a fictional construct than I think John Cassian was. What I am claiming instead is that Cyril's understanding of Origen's followers is suspect, and that neither Cyril nor Justinian are trustworthy guides to the reconstruction of the teachings of Origen's followers in the sixth century."

reputation for historicity and the challenges to it are *both* deserved.⁶⁰ His work is remarkable, and he is praised for his method and its product still.⁶¹ Cyril's historical narrative, his "facts," should be accepted in its Euthymian and Sabaite stages.⁶² Indeed, scholarship seems unified in this practice already.⁶³ The historical narrative constructed by Cyril is meticulously crafted and painstakingly researched. It "commands attention" for Casiday, and its "thematic stylizations...in no way undermine(s) the historical integrity of the biographical narrative," as Ashbrook-Harvey observed. The narrative is believable, and reliable, and can be used accordingly.

Cyril's use of it is a different matter. He certainly works from a thesis, and willingly employs rhetorical interpretations to support it.⁶⁴ Even the skeptical Hombergen, however, draws historical conclusions on the other side of literary analysis.⁶⁵ Thus Cyril's narrative can be used as a historical source even while his rhetoric/interpretation becomes a subject for literary analysis. The demarcation line appears when Cyril begins to act as a reporter rather than a historian, giving over his

⁶⁰ The extent of Cyril's innovation will be discussed in chapter seven. For now, we can say that reductionist approaches to his work are unhelpful.

⁶¹ Not all commentaries were captured in Hombergen's summary. See, for example, Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, 135: "...despite his formality, [Cyril] does not write heavily stylized hagiography. His language is clean and unadorned, carefully worked...but unaffected."

"Cyril does, of course, use familiar hagiographical themes...that might be called "thematic stylization." But the presence of these incidents *in no way undermines the historical integrity of his biographical narrative.*" [Emphasis mine].

"Cyril writes with a fastidious attention to detail. He marks and countermarks every verifiable point: where his information came from and how he got it, locations, relationships, and, above all, dates."

Ashbrook-Harvey goes on to give cautions about giving too much credence to Cyril's "welcome sense of order," but her basic respect for the narrative is quite clear.

⁶² The same can be said for most elements in his shorter *Lives* also. See chapter seven.

⁶³ For all the cautions regarding the latter parts of Cyril's work – especially the Origenist issues – none of the scholars here presented seem to have any reservations about using the Euthymian and Sabaite narratives as historical material.

⁶⁴ That Cyril wrote with conscious thesis is a common notion, and not limited to authors working specifically on his text (e.g. Binns, Hombergen). See Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, 135, and Rousseau, "Monasticism," 747-48.

⁶⁵ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 370.

research methods to rely on his own interpretation of a struggle he was party to.⁶⁶ Yet literary analysis need not stand alone in dealing with such passages. Those who used it still sought corroborating evidence to counterbalance Cyril's more problematic sections. Such corroborative evidence has usually been sought in other texts, with mixed results.⁶⁷

Yet there are other places to look: texts must be read in context. Cyril lived in a particular institution, in a particular time and place. The historicity of his narrative helps reconstruct that local context, which in turn illuminates the worldview and purpose behind Cyril's rhetoric. This is not to say that the relationship of text to context is simply causal. Rather, it is relational; formative for Cyril and his contemporaries, but not exclusively so. The latter group must not be forgotten: a contextual/institutional/economic framework grants understanding of their texts as much as Cyril's, thus reintroducing them as corroborative evidence.

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The socio-economic context of the Judean monasteries was unique in the late antique world. Their sustenance came not from agricultural estates, as it did for the Egyptian monasteries along the Nile. Neither did they achieve symbiotic relationships with neighboring villages, as did the Syrian monasteries. The Judean wilderness did not allow for such crop production, and these monks had hostile Jews, Samaritans, and

⁶⁶ Casiday, "Translations," 2. Casiday himself draws the distinction between the narrative sections and the heresiological/polemical sections, the latter in this case being the Second Origenist Controversy: "...I will regularly use hagiographies of Palestinian monks that Cyril of Scythopolis (525-558) wrote – particularly those of Sabas and Cyriacus – for the general framework of events. But Cyril's accounts must be treated with more caution than many modern scholars have used. He never disguised his conviction that Origen and company should be repudiated. Like many heresiologists, Cyril was less interested in dispassionately recording the events of the controversy than in vividly characterizing the party opposite."

⁶⁷ Hombergen, for example, was foiled in this attempt. Casiday, on the other hand, found what he was looking for through an examination of newly discovered manuscripts.

Saracens for neighbors. Craft-making and modest agricultural production (mostly oil and wine) did take place in Judea, but were only enough to sustain the ascetic monks. The needs of the monastery, on the other hand, were met by donations.⁶⁸

In place of the Nile or friendly locals, the Judean monasteries had Jerusalem. Yet to be in Jerusalem's orbit was to have a tiger by the tail: the religious economy of the region was all-encompassing, and the Judean monks had no choice but to participate in it. They were dependant on Jerusalem for patrons, visitors, income, activity, and even personnel: the monks themselves were often former pilgrims. The Judean institutional demographic was shaped by proximity to Jerusalem. That demographic, in turn, came to shape the culture of that institution: the monasteries were home to Greek-speaking foreigners, possessed of ties abroad but isolated from their neighbors.⁶⁹ If a local zeitgeist helped create a monastic culture, as scholars of monasticism have maintained, so too did a local economy.

Monasteries elsewhere required patronage to survive, but rarely with such singular focus or lack of alternatives. The Judean monasteries were situated within the inescapable framework of the "Holy Land" economy, and received their sustenance from it. Yet that framework also constituted an obstacle to their survival: the pilgrimage sites of the "holy land" dwarfed the importance of the "holy man." Travelers from throughout the Mediterranean world flowed to sites associated with Christ, and their patronage

⁶⁸ E.g. the digging of wells, the building of churches, the acquisition of liturgical garments and objects, the building of tombs, the welfare of pilgrims and the poor, etc. For a discussion of these elements see the extended discussions in Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 102ff and Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, 4th to 7th Centuries* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Pub. 1995), 194-5.

⁶⁹ Lorenzo Perrone, "Monasticism in the Holy Land: From the Beginnings to the Crusaders," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 45 (1995), 32-34 and Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*.

streamed to the great shrines and churches built atop them. Monasteries could never achieve a privileged place in this region, regardless of any ascetic celebrities housed therein. Indeed, one wonders if even such a luminary as Symeon Stylites would have shone as brightly against the backdrop of the Holy City.

Nor could the Judean monks compete through the creation of new Biblical sites, as had their counterparts in Sinai and Nebo. The Holy Land was a known quantity, especially by the sixth century, and the New Testament did not leave room for the topographical ambiguity provided by the Old Testament.⁷⁰ Thus the Judean monasteries found themselves bound to an interplay of culture and economics, of individuals and institutions, that would shape their identity and define their activity for the entirety of the Byzantine period in Jerusalem.

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The last thirty years have been something of a golden age for the study of institutions and their behavior. New fields have developed new ideas, among them the idea that economic behavior cannot be understood absent its cultural context.⁷¹ Without

⁷⁰ Hagith S. Sivan, "Pilgrimage, Monasticism, and the Emergence of Christian Palestine in the 4th Century," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Chicago: University Press, 1990), 60.

⁷¹ Mark Granovetter's 1985 article advancing this idea has catapulted the field of economic sociology to the fore. At the time the relationship of economic and social systems was explained in one of two ways. The minority view was a form of social determinism, while the majority held (and still hold) that economic laws exist independently of social systems. Granovetter argued that individual choice was relevant, but within a context of networks and institutions which were "embedded" within particular cultural systems. See Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *The American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 3 (1985), 481-510.

Of special relevance here are three of Granovetter's main points. First, all economic actions are social actions. Second, individuals (and thus their economic actions) are "embedded" in social networks of personal relations. Third, this argument applies also to institutions which, ultimately, are social constructions. In addition to Granovetter, "Embeddedness," see also the summary of his arguments found in Bernard Gazier and Isabelle This Saint-Jean, "Authority and Power in Economic and Sociological Approaches to Interpersonal Relations: From Interactions to Embeddedness," in *Economics and Social Interaction: Accounting for Interpersonal Relations*, ed. Benedetto Gui and Robert Sugden (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 241ff.

disagreeing, I maintain that this relationship works both ways: an examination of an institution's socio-economic context can reveal its cultural elements, for the two exist in dialogue. Economic sociologists are asserting a check on orthodox economic theory, which claims economic laws to be objectively independent and universally applicable.⁷² Instead, the former argue, all economic systems are "embedded" within social systems and networks.⁷³ In Judea, I believe the reverse is also true: social systems and networks are embedded within economic systems. Or perhaps it would be better to simply say that the two are inseparably interwoven, and that the study of one can facilitate the study of the other.

Regardless, Judea's unique institutional culture was partially a product of that socio-economic context. Monasticism looked different elsewhere because it was partially a local phenomenon, a synthesis of local conditions with a universal idea which, scholars have argued, was the product of episcopal intervention. Yet Judea's unique institutional focus was not purely the result of an economic environment. It was also the result of intense fifth-century ecclesiastical conflict that pushed it in a definite direction.

Early monasticism may have been the result of an episcopally-driven institutionalization, but a century after Chalcedon that process was well developed.

⁷² Economic sociologists perceive a number of "fallacies" within orthodox positions. Among these are the ideas that social and economic realms are separate, that social and cultural elements "interfere" with an economy's function, that individuals make conscious calculations to maximize utility absent social dimensions, and "that individual behavior is straightforward and unproblematic." Mauro F. Guillén, Randall Collins, Paula England, and Marshall Meyer, "The Revival of Economic Sociology," in *The New Economic Sociology: Developments in an Emerging Field*, ed. F. Guillén, Randall Collins, and Paula England (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 2005), 2-3.

⁷³ The famous "embeddedness" argument sprang from Granovetter's 1985 article. The field has since taken it up and developed it further, but a decade later economic sociologists were still struggling to give it precise definition. See Brian Uzzi, "The Sources and Consequences of Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: The Network Effect," *American Sociological Review* 61, August (1996), 764.

Episcopal views had been stamped upon the monastic institutions, and local syntheses had been achieved. So while Philip Rousseau had been among those arguing for monasticism as caged asceticism, he also argued that sixth-century Judea found some of its primary characteristics and attributes in its institutional nature and relations.⁷⁴ Thus while opposition to the episcopate may have been a factor in many early scenarios, but by this point that tension had been resolved. Indeed, for at least one Judean tradition such conflict lasted for only two years, and by the mid-sixth century traditions antagonistic to the episcopacy had disappeared from the region.⁷⁵

The intense institutionalism of Judean monasteries has not escaped the notice of modern scholars. Ashbrook-Harvey argued that Cyril of Scythopolis was concerned to lift up the Patriarch of Jerusalem as an equal to the others. In her view, Cyril was writing to far-off elites, attempting to demonstrate that institution's proper stature and authority.⁷⁶ To Ashbrook-Harvey, Cyril's monasteries are interwoven with the Patriarchate, sharing interests and priorities. This also explained the nature of Judea's ministries to the poor – conducted by monasteries rather than holy men – as further evidence of

⁷⁴ For Rousseau ideology was also a factor: "In describing and explaining, therefore, the structures of ascetic life we have to recognize the influence of ideology – both the theories proper to the ascetic communities themselves, and the principles that affected their relations with the outside world." Rousseau, "Monasticism," 746.

⁷⁵ Claudia Rapp's dismissal of antagonisms between emperors, bishops, and holy men is particularly helpful here: "To assume that in the later Roman Empire the secular and the religious were perceived as separate and that our view of this period should adhere to this dichotomy is a misleading result of modern thinking. It is more fruitful to conceive of secular and religious authority as the opposing ends of a sliding scale, where each individual, whether emperor, holy man, or bishop, has his own place, depending on his role in society and his own personal conduct." Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in the Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 6.

⁷⁶ "As Cyril recounts events, the work of [the holy men of the Judean monasteries] effectively raises Palestine to a stature befitting its identity as patriarchal seat, sufficient stature to match the monastic and ecclesiastical authority of Egypt and Alexandria, and of Syria and Antioch. Indeed, Cyril presents Jerusalem as the patriarchate most loyal to the imperial throne. Cyril is aiming for a high audience, seeking it as far away as Constantinople, he addresses a cosmopolitan and powerful elite, centered in the great cities and their networks of great families. John of Ephesus seeks only the audience of the East, a poorer and more provincial lot." Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis*, 136.

institutionalization.⁷⁷ Binns took a different tack, focusing on monastic links to imperial (rather than ecclesiastical) structures.⁷⁸ Hombergen, on the other hand, presented the Second Origenist Controversy as a reaction against Sabas and, more especially, the institutionalization he represented.⁷⁹

In the first half of this dissertation I argue that such high-level institutionalism was a product of the local context.⁸⁰ Over the first four chapters I trace the development of that context. Late antique Jerusalemite culture may have been unique, but it had been a long time building. In chapter one I examine the process of its construction, together with the implications for Judean monasticism. A series of relationships created the Judean context: the fusion of Christianity and economics; the interwoven tapestry of

⁷⁷ Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism*, 138.

⁷⁸ “At the start of his work, Cyril presents his fundamental conviction that the ascetics of the tiny area of desert land to the east of Jerusalem are as essential to the welfare of Christendom as the Emperor in Constantinople or the Patriarchs of the great urban centres. Both have a part to play in the evolution of a unified, harmonious orthodox Christian society. The emperor fights the battles and promulgates pious laws while the saint struggles against evil. Without either of these actors the divine drama would falter. For the monks, the little world of the monastic community and the universal dimensions of the Christian Empire interlock... The history of the monasteries of Jerusalem and the history of the Church and Empire proceed together.” Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors*, 1-2.

⁷⁹ Hombergen argued that a desire for a more individual or mystical spirituality among the monks conflicted with those superiors whose role it was to safeguard Judean institutional structures. The latter was especially exemplified by Sabas, and Hombergen reads Cyril as providing polemical cover for the conflict. In this view Cyril takes the facts of the conflict and presents them through a heresiological lens, thus creating a tale of heroes and villains: “In this conflict the Origenists appear to represent the desire for mystical experience nourished by the Jewish-Christian exegetical tradition and the legacy of Hellenistic philosophy, as it had been originally cultivated on a large scale in fourth-century Egyptian monasticism. However, such a desire had become more and more difficult to realize in the sixth century, because of all the circumstances described in the present study. In brief we may state that within the political and ecclesiastical structures of the early Byzantine theocracy, with its hostility to the Hellenistic inheritance and with a particular role assigned to the monastic movement, spiritual progress had become to a high degree subordinated to the interests of a well-organized institution. In such a context, the interest in the interior aspects of the spiritual life tended to shift away from the individual to the collective, exterior dimension. Sixth-century ‘Origenism,’ in all its various manifestations, can best be understood as the natural reaction to this shift.” Hombergen, *Controversy*, 370.

⁸⁰ For more on this idea see Gazier and Saint-Jean, “Authority and Power,” 244: “...in spite of their apparently objective existence, institutions are in fact the result of a long social process of creation. This is why an institution cannot be understood without studying the historical process from which it derives. Before an institution is created there exist many possibilities, and the resulting institution is the product of the ‘crystallization’ of some peculiar personal relations.”

imperial, ecclesiastical, and ascetic networks, etc. Two such networks arose in the Holy Land: the great web inherited by Peter the Iberian, and the nascent connections forming around Euthymius. This chapter follows their development until Chalcedon, an event that reshaped the culture and networks of Palestinian monasticism.⁸¹

Chalcedon transformed the Holy Land, and the two networks found themselves at a crossroads when their bishop came home a patriarch. The second chapter examines the consequences of their responses. Peter's established network rejected Chalcedon; its defeat at Chalcedonian hands would push them from prominence to exile by 518. The Euthymian network, on the other hand, catapulted to dominance through its embrace of the Council. Step by step the Euthymians rose to occupy major ecclesiastical positions: within fifty years they had fielded two patriarchs and countless bishops from their ranks. Through this narrative of Euthymian rise and anti-Chalcedonian fall, therefore, we arrive at a fuller understanding of Judean institutional history.

Navigating the the political and socio-economic conditions of the Holy Land was a generational project: inherited patrimony was a means of confronting contemporary problems.⁸² In this regard the Euthymius' heirs were particularly fortunate: by the time Sabas inherited the Euthymian network his colleagues from the Euthymian inner circle occupied a number of ranking positions in the Jerusalemite church. Sabas would use those contacts to strengthen the Euthymian web. Over a generation he dotted the

⁸¹ For a general background on the construction and maintenance of social networks as they pertain to the advancement of an individual or group, see Charles Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, and Findings* (Oxford: University Press, 2012). Compare also Uzzi on the benefits thereof: "the network acts as a social boundary of demarcation around opportunities that are assembled from the embedded ties that define membership and enrich the network." Uzzi, "Sources and Consequences," 693-94.

⁸² H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Batlimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2000), xvi.

landscape with new monasteries led by his own disciples. The third chapter traces this process of network expansion.

By the early sixth century the interpersonal Euthymian network was transformed into its institutional Sabaite successor, but not without cost. Rebellions and factionalism arose among the Sabaites, forcing their leader to call in his connections to maintain order. The struggle ended, however, when the Sabaites became enmeshed in a new Chalcedonian struggle. This chapter ends with the prominence they achieved through victory.

Suppressed internal factionalism boiled over in the wake of Sabas' death. The great network was torn in two, and the halves competed for and through their most powerful contacts. The fourth chapter follows their civil war to its conclusion. The winners would preside over a scorched earth: most, if not all, major patrons and allies had been expended during the course of the struggle. Cyril of Scythopolis, a member of this victorious faction, would soon subject his enemies to a second, literary defeat. Yet polemical rhetoric would not solve his problem: Sabaite patronage resources had passed to Jericho and the Jordan. The victors now struggled to pay the bills. This dilemma, and the localized methods of grappling with it, were in the front of Cyril's mind when he set his pen to paper.

The dissertation's second half examines factional responses to defeat or decline in the Holy Land. Change had come to the region, and the declining networks did their best to adapt. My final three chapters examine the literary, architectural, and artistic strategies these factions employed to survive. In the fifth chapter I consider the early case of Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians. Pushed ever further from Jerusalem, their hierarchs

struggled to offset the Chalcedonian influence of the holy sites. The pioneering anti-Chalcedonian writer John Rufus innovated a new genre in response: the same blend of history and hagiography often credited to Cyril. Although the two wrote in different conditions, I argue that this uniquely Palestinian response to defeat was adopted and adapted by Cyril to fit his own circumstances. The relationship of Rufus' works to their surrounding context, then, further elucidates the parallel relationship of the Judean Sabaites.

The sixth century brought change to all Judean ascetic traditions: the Sabaites and their neighbors both had to adapt to a changing context that threatened to leave them behind. My penultimate chapter surveys four distinct responses employed by such traditions. Varying adaptive strategies physically transformed the Judean monasteries, renovating them into luxury hostels and pilgrimage destinations. For such monasteries archaeological data has lifted the veil of hagiographic silence, allowing more threads to be added to the reconstructed Judean tapestry. Some of these traditions sought refuge in hierotopic construction, the intentional interweaving of art forms to create new sacred space. Prominent among these is the literary approach of Theodore of Petra, whose maligned work was instrumental in the creation of a holy site that draws pilgrims to this day. Like John Rufus, Theodore will be appraised as a literary model for Cyril, who readily adopted and developed the stylizations innovated by his near-neighbor.

Rufus, Theodore, and Cyril all composed literary responses to local problems, and my final chapter pursues the particularities of Cyril's effort. The Judean's situation may have differed from that of his anti-Chalcedonian predecessor, but Rufus' historicizing approach enabled Cyril's own tale of heroes and villains. Rufus had crafted the story of a

movement in hagiographic disguise. Now Cyril would follow suite, spinning the epic of an institutional network. There was sleight-of-hand at work here: ostensibly the sagas of founding fathers, Cyril's works are in fact about the fatherland.

Hence the "oddities" of the *Life of Sabas*, which continues for twenty-five years after the saint's death. The narrative's "extension" past Sabas' burial is in fact nothing of the sort. Comprised of posthumous miracles in the Great Laura and tales of the Sabaite civil war, the latter part of the *Life* is an institutional story that continues into the *Lives* of John the Hesychast and Cyriacus. That story had begun long before, encapsulating the lives of the founding fathers. The deeds of Sabas, therefore, are actually the deeds of the monastery's founder and patron saint.

The distinction is subtle, but important. In the absence of a great saint or holy man, Cyril directed his brothers to the founders who had been both. The founder-saint had given guidance and aid while on earth; now he offered intercession from heaven. Yet heaven wasn't too far away: intertwining the methods of his predecessors, Cyril had done more to institutionally appropriate his saints than either. Read aloud at meals, Cyril's texts led the monks to internalize this relationship and express it in prayer. The holy patron was thus ensconced as institutional patron saint, and his life contextualized as an important part of the institution's heroic history.

The external publication of the *Lives* allowed the monks to address financial difficulties with confidence. Their patronage network was lost, but Jerusalem's pilgrimage trade lay on their doorstep, and the saint would intercede for them as he had always done. Cyril would therefore adapt Theodore's hierotopic stylizations to a historicizing narrative. Posthumous miracles were multiplied and anecdotalized,

becoming a larger element of the text. Presentation was blunt: even Theodore's heavy-handed suggestions falter before Cyril's candid examples. His *Lives* serve as guidebooks, offering behavioral models for prospective visitors. A pattern emerges: the supplicant travels to the saint's tomb, receives a miracle, and leaves a reciprocal donation.

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Judean bookshelves were replete with Christian texts. Many originated abroad: the works of Athanasius, Theodoret, Palladius, and others could be found in Judean libraries. Absorbing the content of such luminaries, the Judean monks would nonetheless deviate from it in form and purpose. Their own texts were specialized affairs, intense adaptations to a unique habitat. To such authors the view out their window was more important than the texts on their shelves. Egyptian wisdom mattered, but the sacred topography and socio-economic reality of the Holy Land was more immediate. The story of Antony resonated, but less so than the factional and institutional histories that had sat these monks in their seats. Internalizing *apophthegmata* was a priority, but interplay with other local hagiographies was routine. Such were the factors that gave rise to Rufus and Theodore. Ultimately, these were the determinants of Cyril's work as well.

PART I:
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

CHAPTER ONE: AN EVOLVING ENVIRONMENT

The symbiosis between the Judean monasteries and their environment was not a single unchanging union but the result of a series of unique fusions. The cultural and institutional identity of these monasteries was crafted by the ongoing interaction between conceptions of orthodox Christianity and ascetic monasticism on the one hand and the complex realities of the Holy Land – imperial, ecclesiastical, religious, and socio-economic – on the other. As one set or another of these elements changed, the institutional needs and identity of the monasteries would enter a period of transition. Sometimes gentle, often not, these transitions would usher in a new synthesis even while the process itself continued. Amid these transitions, it is possible to demarcate four distinct phases in this process during the Late Antique period. Yet it is important to note that this development of institutional identity was not a matter of alternating periods of stasis and transition. It might be more appropriate to consider it as a centuries-long progression of transitions that occasionally slowed down enough for coherent stages to emerge. These stages, and the transitions between them, provide the foci for many of the chapters in this dissertation. This first chapter provides an overview of the long transition into the first phase, followed by the transition to the second. By the time of the latter a distinct union of imperial, ecclesiastical, and monastic networks and institutions had arisen, overlaid atop the sacred topography and Christian identity of the region. The beginning of this process lies in the time of Christ, and it is there that this survey begins.

Mention of ancient Palestine immediately evokes the picture painted by the New Testament: an embattled Judaism living under the yoke of the Roman military and

governing elite. Yet while the Jews did live under Roman occupation, they did not surrender their culture, especially not in their holy city of Jerusalem. Jewish culture, religion, and economy intertwined there, a union famously preserved in the image of the moneychangers of the Temple. Jerusalem was the beating heart of Jewish life even while providing the economic centerpiece of the region. Change was coming, though: the land in which Christ walked would transform dramatically in the coming decades.

The relationship between the Jews and their Roman conquerors became decidedly more aggravated in the years following the events of the Gospels. The period of Jewish resistance encompassed by the Great Revolt, the Kitos War, and bar Kokhba's Revolt led to a series of Roman responses whose impact fundamentally altered the character of Palestine. Before these uprisings Jerusalem was a Jewish city, the centerpiece of Jewish life in a foundational and perhaps unique way.⁸³ It was a nexus for culture, worship, and economy. Roman vengeance would change all that, pressing down hard with the stamp of its own cultural mark.

The Temple and the city itself joined the Jewish people as casualties of these wars.⁸⁴ Judaism and Jerusalem would both rise again to be sure, but greatly changed. Judaism entered its rabbinic phase as the loss of the Temple centered the religion on synagogues. Jerusalem was reborn as the Roman *polis* of Aelia Capitolina, a city found not in the land of Judea, but the province of Syria Palestine. Jews were banned from Hadrian's new Roman city except for one day a year. Statues of Jupiter and Hadrian

⁸³ Robert Louis Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (Yale: University Press, 1994), 20-100.

⁸⁴ For the significance of the Temple to the Jews of this period and region, and the meaning of its loss, see Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 37ff.

himself stood where the Temple once had. Where Jewish culture had thrived, a newly Roman land now grew.

This newly Roman land was an urban land, soon housing more cities than any other eastern region of the empire.⁸⁵ Partly a Roman stratagem, partly an unintended consequence, this process of urbanization and provincialization was wholly transformative.⁸⁶ These cities became home to a “pagan” Roman elite and their attendant culture and economy. Yet more than aristocrats came to Palestine from the Eternal City: from the time of Bar Kokhba’s Revolt to the end of the third century, Rome housed between 20,000 and 25,000 soldiers in Palestine, the highest soldier to population ratio of any province in the empire. The influx of the army alone had tremendous implications for the new Roman economy of Palestine.⁸⁷ The centuries following the Revolt were a time of significant population growth in the region, a growth not limited to Roman cultural elites and soldiers. Conspicuously absent from this growth, however, was the

⁸⁵ A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative History*, 2 Vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 523-62.

⁸⁶ For a discussion of Roman policy in this regard see Hayim Lapin, *Economy, Geography, and Provincial History in Later Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 153-194. Lapin centers his argument particularly in the northern region: “...in aggregate, and over an extended period of time, Roman imperial administrative decisions – the initial incorporation of territory into a province or client kingdom; the placement or removal of soldiers; the elevation or reduction in status of particular sites – transformed the human landscape of northern Palestine.” (10) The process in the southern region around Jerusalem was of course not so gradual, but many of the same factors come into play.

⁸⁷ Ze’ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 339-348, 456-457. Safrai concludes: “(1) In order to support the Roman expeditionary forces in the land of Israel there was a need for an influx of capital and supplies of at least 10-20 per cent of the gross national product of the province. This influx was of great importance in changing the economic fabric of a province from a closed agricultural system to an open one based on trade and commerce. (2) The influx of capital was used to buy goods and services from local residents, providing, therefore, a source of income in addition to agriculture, labor, and services. (3) The army was a consumer of luxury items and its presence in the province served as a stimulus for the production of high-quality items and merchandise. (4) Most likely settlements of merchants and providers of services were established near military camps (*vicus, pagus*) and near the camps there eventually developed markets, labor, and commercial centers.”

declining Jewish population, meaning that the Romanization of the region was as much a demographic phenomenon as a cultural one.⁸⁸

The Palestinian countryside was equally affected. Depleted in numbers and banned from Jerusalem, many of the remaining Jews of Palestine occupied rural regions, especially in Galilee and the north. Although differently expressed, the pressures of change were felt here too. Material conditions were changing even while the rabbis struggled to maintain the fundament of Judaism without the Temple. Intense cultivation of small plots was taking a toll on the land, and rural Jews were slowly transitioning from free-holding landowners to tenant farmers. Harder work for lesser results under the eyes of hated Roman masters led many Jews to a different opinion of rural life.⁸⁹

Disenchanted with their lot amidst the new physical and social structures of rural Palestine, many Jews left to settle in Palestine's newer cities.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the historiographic background and challenges of this issue, as well as the archaeological evidence that underlies it, see Safrai, *Economy*, 436ff.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of the rabbinic sources of northern Palestine in this period and what they can tell us of these villages, see Safrai, *Economy*, pg. 55. For a discussion of the historiography related to life in these Jewish villages more generally, see Lapin, *Economy*, pg. 1-10. For the transition of life in rural Palestine, see Daniel Sperber, *Roman Palestine, 200-400, the Land: Crisis and Change in Agrarian Society as Reflected in Rabbinic Sources* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1978), 5ff. For a comparative view of the phenomenon occurring roughly 150 miles to the north, see Paul Newson, "The Consequences of Roman Imperialism: Cultural Change in the Basalt Region of Homs, Syria," *Levant* Vol. 47, No. 3 (Autumn 2015), 267-292.

⁹⁰ Population transfer from rural to urban areas during times of economic stress is hardly unique to late antique Palestine. The subject of the economic relationship between the cities and villages of the region has been a fruitful one for scholars' pens, however. For more on the subject see Lapin, *Economy*, throughout, but especially 153-194 for a general discussion and detailed historiography. For a summation of the causes of urbanization, see Safrai, *Economy*, 454ff: "The development of a more open economic system, the dependence on land and sea trade and provision of services and the increase of population in general and of non-agricultural sphere population in particular, necessitated increased urbanization...During the remainder of the Roman period, and during the Byzantine period, the number of cities in the land of Israel continued to increase while the urban sector became stronger."

For a longer view of the urbanization process beginning in the reign of Herod the Great, see also José Ramón Ayaso Martínez, *Iudaea Capta: La Palestina Romana entre las dos Guerras Judías (70-132 d. C.)* (Valencia: *Institución San Jerónimo*, 1990), 167-90.

For a more specific treatment of Palestinian cities in this period, see Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Romanization had replaced the Jewish religio-economic system once responsible for stability in the region.⁹¹ The infusion of Roman elites, Roman soldiers, and rural Jews into the cities changed the socio-economic framework of both rural and urban society in Palestine, albeit more slowly than had occurred in Jerusalem proper. The cities were unprepared for so many new inhabitants, and the countryside suffered a diminished capacity to provide food for the cities. Population transfer resulted in economic hardship.⁹²

The instability of the Roman system in Palestine became more pronounced as culture and economy recombined in new ways. The Romans had their own methods of taxing production and distributing largesse, but these did not seem adequate to mitigate the problems caused by the new system. There was another side to the equation as well: the empire had its needs too. Palestine, in Roman eyes, benefited from the advantages of Roman rule. It should do its part to shoulder the cost. The implications of “the burden

Many scholars have argued that this process was very difficult for the native Jewish population, but see Doron Bar, “Was there a 3rd-c. Economic Crisis in Palestine?” in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, Vol. 3, ed. J.H. Humphrey (Portsmouth, Rhode Island: *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 2002), 43-54.

⁹¹ See Lapin, *Economy*, 193: “It is within the context of a Roman Empire that Palestine came to have the political and economic landscape that it did, and in which the cities that dominated that landscape came to have their peculiar needs for consumption and display.”

⁹² See Sperber, *Roman Palestine*, 210: “This flight from the country to the towns undoubtedly swelled the urban population. Indeed, the cities could barely support their new burden. This led to unemployment, lowered the wage-rates, thus reducing labour-costs.”

For a starker summation of this process and its effects, see the recent article by Drijvers: Jan Willem Drijvers, “Transformation of a City: The Christianization of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century,” in *Cults, Creeds and Identities in the Greek City after the Classical Age*, ed. Richard Alston, Onno M. van Nijf and Christina G. Williamson. Drijvers opens his article with a bleak pronouncement: “Jerusalem was a backwater in the Roman Empire by the beginning of the fourth century C.E., with nothing left of its first-century splendor...very much a garrison town. However, in spite of these military contingents, Aelia was an insignificant provincial town, and it was considerably smaller than Jewish Jerusalem had been in the first century CE in terms of residential area and number of inhabitants.”

caused by Roman occupation, taxes, extortions, [and] wars,” upon an already fragile economy proved too much for the region to bear.⁹³

This combination of factors drove the Palestinian economy into a prolonged period of turbulence and collapse in the third century.⁹⁴ Yet economic Romanization continued: policy decisions and even local attempts at relief for the poor were products of the Roman mind. The very nature of charity had changed in Palestine as result, as the Roman model of networks and patronage often left out the idea of charity toward the destitute who had nothing to offer in return.⁹⁵ Social models adjusted accordingly.

⁹³ Gildas H. Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4. Hamel also notes that: “Although the bulk of goods produced (especially agricultural goods) may have sufficed to cover the basic needs of the population as a whole, the critical issue is how fairly it was distributed.” For more on the Roman system of distributing work and revenue in Palestine and the cultural causes and justifications thereof, see Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 8-163.

For the later effect of Christianization on systems of charity in Jerusalem, see Drijvers, “Transformation,” 315: “Caring for the poor and the less fortunate – widows and orphans – was the Christian virtue par excellence, and it has always been one of a bishop’s most important tasks. The bishop was by profession a ‘lover of the poor.’ The bishop’s support of the poor led in its turn to the poor’s support of the bishop, and made him a leader of a large part of the urban population.”

⁹⁴ See Safrai, *Economy*, 456-458: “Population increase is a social process and like any other similar process it does not stop all at once in a drastic manner. Moreover, it takes 20-30 years from birth until maturity. The preparations for the crisis of economic stagnation had to begin a generation before the actual crisis and it is unlikely that anyone could foresee the problems so far in advance. Thus at the end of the first generation of the period of anarchy (225-284), conditions in the land of Israel were quite bad. Population increase was still taking place and with it the need for additional sources of food and support, while economic growth and development had halted and there had maybe even been a decline in national production.”

⁹⁵ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 239: “In Judaism, the poor were protected by laws that were accepted as an integral part of the covenant with God. Charity was injustice. Failure to enact these laws could be perceived as threatening the existence of the Jewish people. A minimal degree of protection was extended almost without question to people whose existence was threatened. But concerning other situations, religious authorities tended to restrict the use of the word ‘poor’ to those people answering to a number of material and spiritual criteria. Those people whose lack of means was partly responsible for their religious failures – in terms of purity, tithing, or religious education – were not recognized as poor. To be recognized as poor and receive the full benefits of the law, it was essential also to behave in a certain religious manner.”

Here we see again the depth of the Jewish religio-economic system that existed before the Romanization of Palestine. Yet its replacement was just as all-encompassing: “Greco-Roman culture, on the contrary, had no reason to be cautious in its use of the words ‘poor’ or ‘needy.’ Like Judaism, it encouraged various forms of social aid, sometimes on the basis of friendship among equals and a desire for order in the community. It was the social status of people that mattered, more so for the rich of course, and it was this sort of need that philanthropy attended to rather than the purely physical needs of people. The needy were not necessarily helped, and the ‘working poor’ could expect a measure of help or relief only

Another transformation was coming, however: a transformation brought about by a profound change to the Roman Empire. This process would alter Palestine yet again, triggering an economic recovery but also fundamentally changing the cultural foundation of the land.⁹⁶

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While Aelia was developing inside Palestine, Jerusalem's role in Christian thought was being debated outside it. The eschatological locus of the city was a point of contention among Christians from the beginning: they were unsure whether to read the New Jerusalem of Scripture in a heavenly or earthly sense. By the end of the third century no resolution had been achieved.⁹⁷ Yet while Christians were not united on the specific nature of Jerusalem's place in their religion, they knew it had one, both historically and eschatologically. The fourth century would shift the grounds of that debate: as the Church transitioned from persecution to triumph circumstances would change for Christianity and Jerusalem both.

Constantine's blend of Christianity and Romanity sent shock waves throughout the empire, and nowhere was this more true – and more immediately true – than in Palestine. Constantine's desire to pay homage to his new God manifested in the repair of

insofar as they were able to return the favor, either as a group or an individual.” For a more detailed explanation, see Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 212-238.

⁹⁶ Sperber, *Roman Palestine*, 1: “Thus the agrarian crisis reached a peak around the ‘60’s and ‘70’s of the third century, the point at which the value of the coinage plummeted down to new records of inflationary depths. General improvements began to make themselves felt in the second half of the fourth century, that period in which the monetary situation enters upon a new phase of relative stability.” Even the monetary situation, however, was intertwined with the coming of the new socio-economic reality.

⁹⁷ See Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 46-64. Wilken traces the debate from the books of Hebrews and Revelation through Irenaeus, Justin, Tertullian, the Chiliasts, etc. For a more introductory view of Christian attitudes toward Jerusalem before Constantine, see E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire A.D. 312-460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1-6.

older churches and the construction of new, larger ones throughout the empire. Unlike his undertakings in Rome and Constantinople, however, Constantine's project in Jerusalem was tied to a specific historical place and time:

Such was the situation [the Council of Nicaea, various ecclesiastical affairs] when another memorable work of great importance was done in the province of Palestine by the Godbeloved. It was this. He decided that he ought to make universally famous and revered the most blessed site in Jerusalem of the Saviour's resurrection. So at once he gave orders for a place of worship to be constructed, conceiving this idea not without God, but with his spirit moved by the Saviour himself.⁹⁸

Eusebius' exuberance for both the man and his project comes through strongly, but the stir caused by Constantine's imperative should not be downplayed as mere rhetorical device. The emperor threw his weight mightily behind this project, as he himself informed Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem in a letter on this subject:

The thing therefore which I consider clear to everybody is what I want you in particular to believe, namely that above all else my concern is that that sacred place, which at God's command I have now relieved of the hideous burden of an idol which lay on it like a weight, hallowed from the start by God's decree, and now proved yet holier since it brought to light the pledge of the Saviour's passion, should be adorned by us with beautiful buildings.⁹⁹

Furthermore, Constantine desired of Macarius:

...make such order and provision of what is needed that not only a basilica superior to those in all other places, but other arrangements also, may be such that all the excellences of every other city are surpassed by this foundation...It is right that the world's most miraculous place should be worthily embellished..¹⁰⁰

Constantine's determination would lead to the creation of the beautiful Church of the Anastasis, also known as the Holy Sepulchre. In his letter we find – repeatedly – the idea of the sanctity of this place in Constantine's mind. It was a “sacred spot,” “a spot which

⁹⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 3.25 (132).

⁹⁹ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.30 (134).

¹⁰⁰ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.31 (134-35).

has been accounted holy from the beginning,” “the most marvelous place in the world.” Transforming this vision into reality,¹⁰¹ however, would be a laborious undertaking, for Constantine’s dream of a beautiful church annexed to Christ’s empty tomb immediately met with an obstacle: his letter was sent not to the Jewish Jerusalem of Christ, but to the Roman Aelia of Hadrian’s fashioning. In Aelia Christ’s tomb had been covered over with a temple to Venus. This was the “heavy weight of foul idol worship” to which the emperor referred.

Constantine was equal to his task, and soon “disencumbered” the tomb from its “pagan” superstructure. Eusebius, exuberant again, informs us that the attempt of the godless “to consign to darkness and oblivion that divine monument to immortality” was futile.¹⁰² The temple to Venus was soon cleared away, even to the dirt that touched it. Moreover, below the temple’s foundations,

As stage by stage the underground site was exposed, at last against all expectation the revered and all-hallowed Testimony (*martyrion*) of the Saviour’s resurrection was itself revealed, and the cave, the holy of holies, took on the appearance of a representation of the Saviour’s return to life. Thus after its descent into darkness it came forth again to the light, and it enabled those who came as visitors to see plainly the story of the wonders wrought there, testifying by facts louder than any voice to the resurrection of the Saviour.¹⁰³

Beneath Aelia was the Jerusalem of the Jews; here and elsewhere it saw the light of day once more. Jerusalem began to slowly eclipse Aelia, but certainly more slowly than Aelia had eclipsed it. Yet the resurrected Jerusalem was a Jewish city no more. It was

¹⁰¹ See W. Telfer, “Constantine’s Holy Land Plan,” *Studia Patristica* 1 (1957), 696-700. For a more general description of Constantine’s role in the transition to a Christian Jerusalem, see Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 6-49.

¹⁰² Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.26 (132).

¹⁰³ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.27 (133).

not the Temple that was to be exhumed, rebuilt, and adorned, but the places of Christ, places clearly holy in the minds of Constantine and Eusebius.

Constantine ensured the greatness of the Anastasis, sending both “ample supplies of money” and orders to his eastern governors that “by generous and lavish grants to make the building out of the ordinary, huge, and rich.”¹⁰⁴ Yet while the Anastasis was the centerpiece of Constantine’s work in Palestine, it was far from the totality of it. The emperor built elsewhere also, commemorating the places of Christ in Bethlehem and at the Mount of Olives. Perhaps prompted by his mother-in-law Eutropia, Constantine expanded the idea at Mamre, a site associated with Abraham.¹⁰⁵ Money and directives flowed into Palestine from the Christian court, and one more thing also: Helena, Constantine’s mother.

Helena’s association with Palestine is most clearly and famously expressed in her discovery of the True Cross, the greatest Christian relic of the age. But this was not the totality of her involvement in the Holy Land. Donating funds and commissioning churches, Helena played a large part in the construction of the new Holy Land.¹⁰⁶ Between them, Constantine and Helena unveiled Holy Sepulchre and True Cross,

¹⁰⁴ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.29 (134).

¹⁰⁵ The best available text remains Sozomène, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, ed. J. Bidez, Bernard Grillet, and Guy Sabbah, trans. André-Jean Festugière (Paris: *Les Éditions du Cerf*, 1983). There is need for a new English translation: the most recent printing is Kessinger’s reprint of Walford’s 1855 edition: Sozomen, *The Ecclesiastical History Of Sozomen: Comprising A History Of The Church From A.D. 324 To A.D. 440*, trans. Edward Walford (Montana: Kessinger Reprints, 2000), 2.4 (53-54). The most recent translation, however, remains that of Hartranft (used here): Sozomenus, *Church History from A.D. 323-425*, ed. and trans. Chester D. Hartranft, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 2* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2004), 2.4 (261).

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.42ff (137ff). For an account of Helena’s contributions in the Holy Land, especially as it appears in later sources, see Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 50-82. For a more recent discussion of Helena’s impact in the region, see Jan Willem Drijvers, “Helena Augusta: Cross and Myth. Some new Reflections,” *Millenium 8. Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millenium C.E.* (2011), 125-174. See also Kenneth G. Holum, “Hadrian and St. Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage,” in *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, 66-84.

elements of Christ's saving passion, thus providing a new identity to the city. Their many new buildings gave the city a new landscape as well. Through Helena and her son, a fusion of Christianity and elite Roman society traveled to Palestine – and transformed it.

Of course, Constantine was not responsible for bringing Christianity to Palestine. While the Romans had effectively dispersed the Christians from Jerusalem after the Jewish Wars, thus breaking the cohesion and influence of Christianity in Palestine, the faith had never fully left the area.¹⁰⁷ Origen had been there more than a century before Constantine's conversion, and Eusebius was keeping watch over his magnificent library in Caesarea even while the Holy Sepulchre was being constructed. Monasticism had also beaten Constantine to Palestine: the traditions of Hilarion and Chariton had sprung up in Palestine before or around the time Helena set foot there.

Born to pagan parents in Thabata near Gaza in 292 A.D., the youthful Hilarion had spent two months living with Antony in Egypt. Supercharged by his time with the ur-desert father, Hilarion returned to Palestine in 307 and promptly entered the wilderness near Gaza in hopes of emulating his mentor.¹⁰⁸ Jerome describes him

¹⁰⁷ In point of fact it had shifted to the northwest: "By the second century [Caesarea] also had a significant Christian minority, and *its* bishop, not the bishop of Jerusalem, was the metropolitan, the presiding bishop of the region. Only in the fourth century, with the building of Christian Jerusalem, did the ancient holy city of the Jews regain its former glory as the heart of the holy land." Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, in *Early Christian Lives*, ed. Carolinne White (London: Penguin, 1998), S. 3 (90-91). Note that White uses different pagination for Jerome's section headings than the commonly used critical edition: Jérôme, *Trois Vies de Moines (Paul, Malchus, Hilarion)*, trans. Pierre Leclerc (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2007).

spending time in feats of fasting and prayer, battling the temptations of the devil and the threats of brigands: in short, a world-class hermit and ascetic.¹⁰⁹

Jerome indicates that Hilarion's ascetic life in Palestine began in 307, but states that his public life only commenced in the aftermath of Helena's visit and the cultural shock waves it generated. By then, Jerome relates: "[Hilarion] had already spent twenty-two years in solitude and was known to everyone solely by his reputation, and was talked about throughout the cities of Palestine." The turning point came when Hilarion healed a sterile woman from Eleutheropolis. She might have been the first person bold enough to break into the presence of the blessed Hilarion, but she would not be the last.¹¹⁰ Jerome informs us that "This first miracle was succeeded by another still greater and more notable. Aristaenete the wife of Elpidius who was afterward praetorian prefect, a woman well known among her own people, still better among Christians," came to him for the (speedily effected) healing of her sick children.¹¹¹ Afterwards,

When this incident became known the news of it spread far and wide, people came flocking to him eagerly from Syria and Egypt, and as a result many came to believe in Christ and adopted the monastic way of life. For at that time there were as yet no monasteries in Palestine nor had anyone in Syria previously known a monk before St. Hilarion. He was the founder and teacher of this way of life and this discipline in that province. The Lord Jesus had the elderly Antony in Egypt and in Palestine he had the youthful Hilarion.¹¹²

Jerome draws the parallel between Antony and Hilarion with his wonted rhetorical skill, which is of course the point. More pertinent, however, is the gap between Hilarion's

¹⁰⁹ Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, 3-12, (90-94). Some have speculated that Jerome gave pride of place to Hilarion because of his own antagonism to the Jerusalemite Church. See Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, "Monasticism in the Holy Land," in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Strouma (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 257-92.

¹¹⁰ Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, 13, (94).

¹¹¹ Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, 14 (94-96).

¹¹² Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, 14 (95-96).

ascetic beginnings and his entrée into public life, which came only after Helena's visit. Imperial support, popular upswell, and monastic beginnings all had their Palestinian inception at roughly the same time, although the institutional fusion was still generations away.

This correlation is strengthened by the account of Chariton, the founder of monasticism in Judea. A native of Lycaonia, Chariton came to Palestine in possession of strong Christian credentials, having endured persecution and torture for his faith.¹¹³ Released from prison, Chariton became the first (known) ascetic immigrant to Palestine: “a breathing martyr, carrying the stigmata of Christ on his own most pure body, Chariton entered the path that leads to the holy city of God, having chosen to imitate Elijah's and John's life in the desert.”¹¹⁴ Settling in the Judean Desert outside Jerusalem, Chariton soon began to attract followers. Sometime during the episcopate of Macarius of Jerusalem (314-334 A.D.), Chariton founded at least one of his three monasteries.¹¹⁵ Thus while Chariton was not the first solitary in the Judean Desert, he was the first to organize communities.¹¹⁶ This shift in local culture was indicative of the situation

¹¹³ Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 2-8 (387-402). The unknown author of the *Life of Chariton* places the date of this persecution in the time of Aurelian (270-275 A.D.). This date has been called into question by Leah Di Segni, who notes the time lapse between the actual life of Chariton and the publication of that *Life* (559 A.D.), a gap of more than 200 years. From both what is known about Aurelian and the general chronology of the *Life*, Di Segni argues that “If the story of Chariton's confession is not entirely a legend, it must therefore be placed at the time of Diocletian's persecution in 303-304, or under one of the last emperors of the East who persecuted the Christian faith: Galerius (d. 311), Maximinius Daia (d. 313), or Licinius (d. 324).” (Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 387-98, n.12). The *Life of Chariton* is notably not as reliable a historical source as Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*, which was written much closer to the actual life of its namesake, and the reliability of which has been lauded by scholars for some time (Schaff). Yet as DiSegni notes, other elements of the *Life of Chariton* can be treated as trustworthy (394). Cf. n33.

¹¹⁴ Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 8 (402).

¹¹⁵ In this instance Di Segni believes the document to be on solid ground: “there is no reason to reject the tradition ascribing to Macarius the consecration of the old church in the Laura of Pharan.” Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 394.

¹¹⁶ A point made by Di Segni, who references Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem in the time of Commodus and Caracalla. Eusebius (6.9-10) tells of the years Narcissus spent in the Judean Desert to escape the attacks of slanderers. Chariton was not the first, then, but his “innovation was the fact that he

throughout the region: Palestine had passed through its Jewish and Roman phases. The exploding Christian movement was about to produce the next progression in Palestine's identity: the Christian Holy Land.

* * * *

Yet the birth of the Christian Holy Land required more than patronage and a monastic presence. Plutarch records Alexander as saying that Achilles was particularly fortunate to have had a great chronicler (Homer). Constantine may have been equally fortunate in Eusebius. Yet Eusebius crafted more than an imperial image. He helped construct the idea of a new Jerusalem. While preserving Constantine's determinations regarding the Church of the Anastasis, Eusebius also – and perhaps intentionally – advanced the discourse of a Holy Land:

New Jerusalem was built at the very Testimony to the Saviour, facing the famous Jerusalem of old, which after the bloody murder of the Lord had been overthrown in utter devastation, and paid the penalty of its wicked inhabitants. Opposite this then the Emperor erected the victory of the Saviour over death with rich and abundant munificence, this being perhaps that fresh new Jerusalem proclaimed in prophetic oracles, about which long speeches recite innumerable praises as they utter word of divine inspiration.¹¹⁷

Clearly aware of the city's Jewish and Roman phases, Eusebius put forward a Christian Jerusalem in their place, giving people a way to think about the physical and religious changes around them.¹¹⁸ In lionizing Constantine, Eusebius created not only a template

saw asceticism not as a private choice, but as an experiment in organized life, and not for a limited time, like a Jewish Nazarite or Narcissus himself, but for life." Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 395. See also Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2, trans. J.E.L. Oulton (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 6.8-6.10 (31-37).

¹¹⁷ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.33 (135). Absent from the following discussion is the importance of sacred "space" in such a transformation. This topic will be brought forward at greater length in chapter six. As an introduction, see Ora Limor, "'Holy Journey': Pilgrimage and Christian Sacred Landscape," in *Christians and Christianity*, 321-54.

¹¹⁸ "In contrast to his earlier works, in which he had indentified this city with the heavenly city, Eusebius here applies the image of the eschatological city to the actual city in Judea, the new Christian city,

for Christian emperors, but also a schema through which the Holy Land was to be understood. Both visions would outlive their creator by far.¹¹⁹

Eusebius' was not the only pen to advance the cause of a Christian Holy Land. In his *Catecheses*, Cyril of Jerusalem carried forward the idea of holy places as "proofs" of the vision Constantine and Eusebius had inaugurated. For Cyril, Jerusalem and its holy sites had become a teaching tool, part of an ingrained mindset. He refers to the opposition between the new and old Jerusalem, and makes special reference to "this city in which we now are," but in several places he goes much further.¹²⁰ For Cyril, the places and relics of Christ are to be counted as witnesses to the truth of Christ:

at whose center stood the 'new temple' of the Lord. Roman Palestine, like the ancient land of Israel, had again a holy temple in its midst." Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 97.

¹¹⁹ Scholars have debated Eusebius' role in the construction of the Christian Jerusalem. All seem to agree that Eusebius was against the creation of a Christian Holy Land in his earlier works. Yet Wilken has argued that: "Responding as he had throughout his life to a new form of events, Eusebius had made yet another shift in his thinking. Now the earthly Jerusalem is beginning to clothe itself in the images of the eschatological city. The prophecies to which Eusebius appeals are the same ones that Christian chiliasts and Jews had used in constructing their visions of a glorious future. For Eusebius, however, the prophecies are being fulfilled in his own lifetime, not in a future eschatological city. His is a more radical interpretation of the prophets than that of the chiliasts." Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 96.

Peter Walker, on the other hand, has argued against such a shift in Eusebius' thinking: "[Eusebius] only ever refers to 'holy places' as such in perhaps his final work, the *Life of Constantine*...these references, however, must be seen as more exceptional than normative within Eusebius' thought, as late additions to his vast theological corpus." (Walker 44-45) What is more, Walker claimed, "Too often [Eusebius'] thought...has been assessed merely through the study of a couple of his works, (especially the *Life of Constantine* and the *Onomasticon*), wrenched from this wider theological context and read with seemingly too much hindsight...For what is revealed is a far more interesting picture, of a Palestinian Christian who yet found himself committed to a theology that tended to play down the role of such holy places and of Jerusalem, of a metropolitan bishop who found himself on the losing side of an ecclesiastical struggle with the bishop of that 'Holy City,' Jerusalem, and of an elderly theologian who had thought deeply about these issues and who retained to the end of his life certain convictions that others after him would never share." Peter Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: University Press, 1990), 44-45, xii.

I find the surmise of a "shift" in Eusebius' position more likely, and moreover I find the image of the New Jerusalem painted by Eusebius to be especially telling. Regardless, the intent behind Eusebius' writing can be subjugated to the effect of it: whether or not he meant to participate in the creation of a Christian Holy Land, his writing was instrumental to it.

¹²⁰ Cyrille de Jérusalem, *Catéchèses Mystagogiques*, ed. Auguste Piédagnel, trans. Pierre Paris (Paris: *Les Éditions du Cerf*, 1988): 13.7, 14.16. For a partial English translation, see Edward Yarnold, S.J., *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2000). For a discussion of Cyril's role in the transformation of the city, see Drijvers, "Transformation," 313ff.

The holy wood of the Cross, still to be seen among us today, bears witness; its fragments were taken from here by the Faithful and now virtually fill the whole earth. The palm-tree in the valley bears witness, which provided the palms for the children who greeted Christ there. Gethsemani bears witness, which all but reveals Judas to the mind's eye. Holy Golgotha, which rises above us here, bears witness. The Holy Sepulchre and the stone still lying there bear witness.¹²¹

Constantine's legacy is here preserved; Cyril's list of witnesses includes: "this building of the holy church, which the Emperor Constantine of happy memory out of his love of Christ undertook to erect and to adorn with the splendor which is before your eyes."¹²²

The same proofs were used negatively as well, as they "give the lie" to those who would deny Christ.¹²³ For Cyril, writing only ten short years after Eusebius, the holy sites are an established fact. Aelia was fading, and a Christian Jerusalem was beginning to shine through. Yet Cyril was still early enough in this process to play a foundational role. He relentlessly tied the holy sites to Christ, forming his catechumens to view the two as linked. In so doing, Cyril helped to create what has been called the "incarnational" view of Jerusalem. The Incarnation was already central to Christian theology: in Christ God had become incarnate in man, who had thereby become holy. Cyril used this framework elsewhere, as in regard to baptism, which was sanctified because Christ had undergone it.¹²⁴ He was now extending the idea to a place. Christ had sanctified specific sites through his association with them, had sanctified a city, even a land. Jerusalem was holy because of its association with Christ, and Christians were being attuned to direct their attention to this fact.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 10.19 (127).

¹²² Yarnold, *Cyril*, 14.22 (166).

¹²³ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 13.39 (162).

¹²⁴ Cyrille, *Catéchèses*, 1.2.

¹²⁵ On this point scholars are in agreement. Wilken holds that: "When linked to oral tradition, to written texts, sight bridges the gulf between past and present: in Eusebius' day for the first time – or at least for the first time since the tomb of Christ was covered over – sight begins to be a component of Christian faith. As this new 'fact' penetrated Christian consciousness in the fourth and fifth centuries, Christians

Constantine and Helena, Hilarion and Chariton, Eusebius and Cyril: these figures and others like them were responsible for the opening steps in the development of a Christian Holy Land. They provided monuments – in wood and stone, in holiness of life, in word and thought – that established the foundations for a new Jerusalem. Of course, the identity of a city is more than the sum of imperial support, monastic beachheads, and rhetorical framework. It has been argued that Jerusalem was not a particularly Christian city with regard to its native population.¹²⁶ Yet while all the people of Aelia may not have been Christianized, the city itself had assumed a pivotal role in the new Christian Empire. Thus the city, or at least the Christian and imperial conception of it, had been Christianized. Furthermore, a sustained pilgrimage wave would soon establish a religious economy in Jerusalem once again, cementing Christian Jerusalem atop the others.¹²⁷

realized that seeing the holy places was a way of ‘renewing the image’ of what had happened, that is, representing the saving events of the past in the present, of allowing believers through ‘memory’ to ‘become spectators of history.’ If there were no places that could be seen and touched, the claim that God had entered human history would become a chimera. Sanctification of place was inevitable in a religion founded on history and on the belief that God ‘became flesh’ in a human being. The holy places and the tombs of the patriarchs and prophets as well as the sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem became witnesses to the truth of the biblical history and of the Christian religion. It would take time for these ideas to work their way into Christian piety and thought, but the discovery of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem helped to hasten the inevitability. By ‘exposing to sight’ the tomb of Christ Constantine unveiled the ‘deeds of God.’” Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 90-1.

Compare Walker: “...if the new and exciting demands of a Christian empire caused the Church to seek out its historic roots, to test out its new identity with the yardstick of its original identity, what was more natural than to look once again to Palestine, the place of the Church’s origin, in order to receive, as it were, a new mandate which was both authentic and original? If the eschatological hope of the persecuted minority gave way to a sharper historical sense, a new desire to find and locate God in this world rather than in the next, what was more natural than to increase veneration for ‘holy sites’ and relics, things which could mediate God to the believer not from above, but from below? Above all, if Christians now desired to affirm ‘this world,’ if they sensed that they were now at home in the world and not merely called out ‘from the world,’ what better way to celebrate it than to focus on the locality of the Incarnation, that event which more than any other might legitimize such an affirmation of the world? A Christian Palestine, or at least a Christian Jerusalem, thus fitted the mood of the moment perfectly.” Walker is careful to point out, however, that Eusebius did not share such an incarnational view. Walker, *Holy City*, 15-16, 348-349.

¹²⁶ Cf. Walker, *Holy City*, 18-19.

¹²⁷ Cf. Wilken, *Land Called Holy*, 1, 100.

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Constantine et al. augmented Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but they did not create it. Helena was the most notable pilgrim, not the first. Not much is known of pre-Constantinian pilgrims to the Holy Land; only a few names survive from the period before Chariton's arrival. Sparse as it may be, however, the existence of such early Christian pilgrimage raises another question: what were they going there to see?¹²⁸ This was the time of Aelia, not Jerusalem (Christian or Jewish). The Holy Sepulchre was hidden under the temple of Venus. The Temple was also connected to Christ's life, but it was destroyed. On its foundation stood a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus. Aelia was manifestly a pagan, Roman city. Christ's Jerusalem was lost to history. What, then, were pre-Constantinian pilgrims going to see?

Christians resurrected and transformed religious pilgrimage in Palestine, but they did not create it. They inherited it from the Jews. Even in the time of Christ, Jews went to see more than just the Temple. They visited the places where great events had occurred, places where their forbears and patriarchs had walked with God or battled His enemies. Early Jewish Christians seem to have accepted these places and the pilgrimage to them. After the Revolt most of the sites in Jerusalem were destroyed, yet others were scattered throughout the countryside, and many of these became part of the earliest Christian pilgrim itineraries.¹²⁹ At least one of these sites remained quite active in the centuries before Constantine.

¹²⁸ See John Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, 41-53. See also Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 4; and *Egeria's Travels*, ed. and trans. John Wilkinson (Warminster: Aris and Philips, 1999), 4-5.

¹²⁹ "In New Testament times the Christians accepted Jewish holy places. When Peter mentioned King David he said, "His tomb is still with us today." (Acts 2:29) But there was a price to be paid. For if

At Mamre, south of Jerusalem, stood an ancient oak affiliated with Abraham. This site remained active long after the Temple was a memory, exercising an appeal not limited to Christians, or even Jews:

Here the inhabitants of the country and of the regions around Palestine, the Phoenicians and the Arabians, assemble annually during the summer season to keep a brilliant feast; and many others, both buyers and sellers, resort thither on account of the fair. Indeed, this feast is diligently frequented by all nations; by the Jews because they boast of their descent from the Patriarch Abraham; by the pagans because angels appeared there to men; and by the Christians because He who for the salvation of mankind was born of a virgin manifested Himself there to a godly man...Once while these customs were being celebrated by the pagans, after the aforesaid manner, [Eutropia] the mother-in-law of Constantine was present for prayer, and appraised the emperor of what was being done.¹³⁰

Constantine's reaction was swift, decisive, and telling. He believed his task was to sweep away the pagan and replace it with the Christian, and nowhere was this truer than Palestine: for the Holy Sepulchre, for Aelia as a whole, and now for Mamre. In a letter to the bishops of Palestine, Constantine wrote:

The single greatest service to us of my most saintly mother-in-law has been to inform us through her letters to us of the mad folly of evil men, which has so far escaped attention among you, so that the neglected fault may receive appropriate corrective and restorative action from us, late perhaps but yet necessary...The place by the oak which is known as Mamre, where we understand Abraham made his home, has been completely spoiled, she says, by superstitious persons. Idols fit only for absolute destruction have been set up beside it, she explains, and an altar stands nearby, and foul sacrifices are constantly conducted there. Since therefore this appears to be both alien to our times and unworthy of the sanctity of the

Christians revered Jewish holy places, they had already inherited the muddled topography of the Jews...It is thus to be presumed that from the outset Christians in the Holy Land inherited pilgrimage from the Jews, which included some sort of veneration at a holy place." Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 6. See also Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 1-6.

¹³⁰ Sozomenus, *History*, 2.4 (261). Although both Jews and pagans predated Christians in pilgrimage in Palestine, it would appear that the Christians inherited the practice from the Jews, because they shared the figures and events of their religion, rather than from the pagans, whose interest sprang from a different source: "...from the mid-fourth century onward sacred architecture, the liturgy and an extensive traffic in objects of devotion all heightened the impact made by the holy places and endowed them with an inherent sanctity not unlike that of pagan holy places. However, especially in Palestine, this inherent sanctity of place arose primarily from sacred history and sacred texts and not, as pagans believed, from nature." Sabine MacCormack, "Loca Sancta: The Organization of Sacred Topography in Late Antiquity," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, edited by Robert Ousterhout (Illinois: University Press, 1990), 7-40.

site...I would have your Reverences know that a letter has been written by us to Acacius our most distinguished *comes* and Friend, directing that without delay such idols as he may find on the aforementioned site be consigned to the flames, the altar completely demolished, and in short, when all such things there have been got rid of, he should devote all possible effort and endeavour to clearing the whole area. After that, according to such instructions as you yourselves may give, he is to have built on the spot a basilica worthy of the catholic and apostolic Church.”¹³¹

There was no place for paganism in the new Holy Land. Constantine’s irritation and impatience leap off the page: he is rebuking the bishops, not telling them to fix a problem. He has already taken care of it.

The temple of Venus and the idols of Mamre had to go: one more front on Constantine’s war on “paganism.” Yet the same was not true of things Jewish. Here as elsewhere, Christianity assimilated Jewish elements. Like the earliest Christian pilgrims, Constantine recognized the validity of Jewish holy sites. He even allowed the Jews back into Aelia. Pilgrims began incorporating Old Testament sites in their accounts almost immediately after Helena initiated the pilgrimage wave.¹³² The oldest extant account was written by the Bordeaux Pilgrim, who came to the Holy Land within five years of Helena’s trip. The Pilgrim makes mention of 53 holy sites, of which 21 were associated with the New Testament and 32 with the Old. They are tightly interwoven, and many of the passages of the Pilgrim’s account mingle the two together. Hence on the way to Jerusalem he describes:

...the place called Shechem. This is the site of the tomb in which Joseph is buried, in the estate given him by his father Jacob. That too was where Dinah,

¹³¹ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.52-53 (141-42). Constantine’s vexation at the bishops in having to hear of this through his mother-in-law is abundantly clear: “What then is it, wellbeloved brothers, which has escaped your Intelligence, and the aforesaid lady’s reverence for the divine would not let her suppress?”

¹³² “In making the transition from empress to pilgrim, Helena smoothed the way for her successors; the journeys of those who sought out the holy places became a natural element in a Christian Roman Empire.” Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, 49.

Jacob's daughter, was seized by the sons of the Amorites. A mile from there is the place called Sychar, where the Samaritan woman went down to draw water, at the very place where the Samaritan woman went down to draw water, at the very place where Jacob drew the well, and our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with her. Some plane trees are there, planted by Jacob, and there is a baptistery which takes its water from the well.¹³³

Although there was less to see, the Pilgrim encountered the same phenomenon at Jerusalem. The Pools of Solomon were still there, and they provided a touchstone for both Solomon and Christ. Yet elsewhere Jewish and Christian sites alike had been consumed by Aelia:

...you can see the place where once the house of Caiaphas used to stand, and the column at which they fell on Christ and scourged him still remains there...you can see where David had his palace. Seven synagogues were there, but only one is left – the rest have been “ploughed and sown,” as was said by the prophet Isaiah.¹³⁴

Aelia's transformation to Christian Jerusalem encountered this problem frequently. In response pilgrims were shown where things used to be. Yet there were glimmers of what was to come: the Pilgrim references also the rising building projects of Constantine, at Golgotha, at the Mount of Olives, and in Bethlehem.¹³⁵ This was before the completion of the Anastasis, however; the great centerpiece of Christian pilgrimage was not yet in place.

Much had changed by Egeria's visit fifty years later, but not the intermingling of Jewish and Christian sites. That had become established practice and was often commemorated by the Church, as in Sebastia: “Sebastia, once called Samaria, has in its Church the resting-place of the holy John the Baptist, and also of Elisha and Obadiah.”¹³⁶

¹³³ Bordeaux Pilgrim, 588, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 27.

¹³⁴ Bordeaux Pilgrim, 592, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 30.

¹³⁵ Bordeaux Pilgrim, 594-598, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 31-33.

¹³⁶ Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, V6 (99). This is one of many examples of such elements in proximity to one another.

Yet the fully Christian element had surged forward with the completion of the Anastasis, and Egeria was able to attend the great high liturgies that became a vital aspect of the pilgrim's experience. So central was this experience that she devoted a quarter of her extant narrative to their description.¹³⁷ The establishment of Christian pilgrimage was anchored by Constantine's architecture. The Christian frame given to Jewish sites helped to round out the whole, even while creating other problems.¹³⁸

The crafting of a Holy Land was a joint effort that continued through the fourth century. Monks and clergy had helped to anchor Christianity in Palestine five decades before, and they continued to play a supporting role in Egeria's day. Egeria spent three years in and around Jerusalem. Much of the manuscript detailing her time in Jerusalem itself is lost, but the remainder serves to illustrate the relationship between the Church and the holy sites. At Sinai, for example, Egeria found a great number of monks serving as guides for pilgrims. Her journal clearly expresses her regard for them:

I am far from worthy to have visited all these holy places. And I cannot do enough to express my gratitude to all the holy men who so kindly and willingly welcomed so unimportant a person as me to their cells and, what is more, took me round all the biblical sites I kept asking to see. And most of the holy men who lived at the Mount of God or near it – at least the ones who were strong enough – were good enough to escort us all the way to Paran.¹³⁹

Going to Paran may have been above and beyond the call of duty, but monks whose dwellings were attached to holy sites often acted as guides. Egeria would soon encounter

¹³⁷ Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 142-164.

¹³⁸ Identifying some of the holy places in Aelia was hit or miss, and sometimes competing sites had to be accounted for. See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 7-8. For example, to the already mentioned tomb of Joseph in Shechem a rival tomb arose in Hebron. Piacenza Pilgrim, 30, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 27, 27 n7.

Yet it is not necessary to fall into complete cynicism: "Pilgrimage in the Holy Land was not following an imaginary topography, but one which was about half accurate." John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris and Philips, 2002), 30.

¹³⁹ Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 114.

this practice again in Egypt. Heroopolis held a further bonus: in addition to *martyria* and cells, there was the bishop of Arabia, who: “is now quite old, a man of a godly life since he became a monk, and an approachable man, who is very good at welcoming pilgrims...”¹⁴⁰ A great many of the churches being built in Palestine had their attendant monasteries, housing monks and clergy who practiced hospitality through service to pilgrims.

Jerome’s account of his traveling companion Paula, a wealthy Roman noblewoman, provides an example. About two years after Egeria’s departure, Paula arrived in the Holy Land as a pilgrim and the patroness of her attendant troop of holy virgins. Once there, she intended to take up permanent residence as consecrated religious. Yet her plan was almost derailed: time spent with monks and a bishop in Egypt nearly led her to settle there. Had Paula removed to Egypt and invested her considerable funds there, we might know more of Egypt and less of Palestine. But it was not to be: she was “summoned away by a still greater longing for the holy places,” and so “it was not long before she was back in Bethlehem for good, living for three years in a tiny lodging till she had finished building her cells and monasteries, and different places where a pilgrim would be able to stay...”¹⁴¹ In a sense Paula was a special case: not all pilgrims possessed the status to be welcomed by the Palestinian elite or the wealth to endow monasteries.¹⁴² Yet she was part of a crucial subset of pilgrims - mostly women - whose support played a vital role in the construction of the Holy Land.

¹⁴⁰ Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 115-117.

¹⁴¹ Jerome, *Letter 108*, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 91.

¹⁴² “The Proconsul of Palestine, who had known her family extremely well, sent his chamberlains on ahead to make the Praetorium ready for her,” Jerome relates this tidbit so he can give its sequel: “but she chose a humble cell, and started to go round visiting all the places with such enthusiasm that there was no

Notable examples aside, most pilgrims to the Holy Land did not come to stay. These too wrote of their experiences in the Holy Land. Egeria and the Bordeaux Pilgrim were the first, but the genre they created would long outlast them. By 400 A.D., pilgrims could refer to guidebooks and itineraries like the *Brevarius* to build and concretize expectations for their journeys. In addition to practical works, the Holy Land had found a new literary advocate in Jerome. The Latin Father's works were read throughout the Christian Empire, but especially in the West, and his lavish praise for the Holy Land drowned out occasional dissidents like Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁴³ A web of Christian literature now connected the Holy Land to Christians throughout the Empire. By the sixth century there were a number of guidebooks and topographies, and the Holy Land was extolled in a variety of other genres: letters, panegyrics, hagiographies, and more. Pilgrims' accounts were beginning to pile up, and the successors of Eusebius and Cyril had done their work well.¹⁴⁴ Many came to Palestine because of their efforts.

taking her away from one unless she was hurrying on to another." Jerome, *Letter 108*, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 83.

¹⁴³ "Two academics reacted to Christian pilgrimage about 380. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa and an expert Platonist went to Arabia to settle a dispute. Afterwards he wrote a letter condemning the whole notion of pilgrimage. He was far too concerned with the spiritual beliefs of Christians in his diocese to waste any time over the historical places of Jesus. The second and opposite reaction came from Jerome, a biblical commentator who actually lived in the Holy Land. He was very hard on ignorant guides to the Holy Land, and took immense trouble to work out the correct places for the biblical events. But these battles over pilgrimage were in the academy. On the roads toward the Holy Land pilgrims continued to come in increasing numbers." Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 8.

Wilkinson may have underestimated the influence of the "academy." Jerome was being read, and widely. Perhaps this is what led Wilkinson to amend his own view of the subject twenty years later: "Jerome's influence spread rapidly during his own lifetime. Thus his description of the site of the Ascension was reproduced both by Paulinus of Nola and by Sulpicius Severus within ten years of being written. But, as the collection in this book will show, western Christians interested in the Holy Land often took Jerome as a guide." Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrim*, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Excepting works already mentioned, this count includes Eucherius' *Letter to Faustus*, the *Topographies* of Theodosius and Cosmas Indicopleustes, the *Life* of Peter the Iberian by John Rufus, the *Travels* of the Piacenza Pilgrim, and later copies of the *Brevarius*, for which two different versions survive.

All pilgrims may have been equal in the sight of God, but not all were in a position to be bountifully generous during their pilgrimages. Fourth-century patronesses like Helena, Eutropia, Egeria, and Paula built churches, founded monasteries, and provided endowments for their upkeep. They also circulated donations among the places they visited, contributing to the local economy through their efforts. Churches were being built, lavishly and in abundance. So many building projects caused a construction industry boom in and around Jerusalem. Work was available - at least for the skilled - and Palestine at last climbed out of its long economic slump.¹⁴⁵ Patronesses continued to arrive in the fifth century: Poemenia, Flavia, and the two Melanias picked up where their predecessors had left off. More churches and monasteries were built and endowed, and millions of *solidi* flowed into the Holy Land. The prosperity of the region continued, and its economy acquired a more permanent character.¹⁴⁶ The scale of the boom was tremendous; the Empress Eudokia alone would have created an economic sensation in Jerusalem: “In all, Eudokia is reported to have spent during her time in Jerusalem the enormous sum of 20,480 pounds of gold, the equivalent of about 1,500,000 gold pieces –

¹⁴⁵ “...there can be no doubt that the enormous building activity connected with these donations (such as the building in Jerusalem and its vicinity of three big basilicas – the Anastasis, the Eleona and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem as well as a church at Mamre) must have produced employment for masons, quarrymen, transport workers, etc., and thus stimulated the economic life of at least the Holy Land and its vicinity... This stimulus was passed on to other parts of the country as well. We also learn that some artisans and mastercraftsmen (*technitai kai ergatai*) were brought from abroad, and many of them may have settled in Jerusalem and thus enriched the country with their technical skills... Some of the workmen were probably forced labour, but the skilled men needed to erect a building over a long period could not be ‘press-ganged;’ they had to be paid.” M. Avi-Yonah, “The Economics of Byzantine Palestine,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 8 (1958), 39-51.

¹⁴⁶ The impact of these wealthy patronesses could sometimes precede their arrival. Melania the Younger, for example, spent much of her life in Jerusalem, endowing monasteries and distributing largesse. Long before she came to Jerusalem, however, she sent to Palestine: “fifteen thousand [pieces of money (Πολυαιστίνη νομίματα μύρια πεντακισχίλια)].” See *Palladius: The Lausiatic History*, trans. and annotated by Robert T. Meyer (New York: Newman Press, 1964), S. 61 (142-43) and Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiatic History of Palladius: A Critical Discussion together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Cambridge: University Press, 1898), 61 (156). For a fuller list of patronesses and their contributions see Avi-Yonah, “Economics,” 42ff.

and that at a time when two gold pieces sufficed to keep a person for one year...”¹⁴⁷ Not to be outdone by the imperial ladies, the emperors continued with their projects as well. Procopius recorded his master’s commitment to the Holy Land, writing of substantial construction, repairs, and endowments.¹⁴⁸ Architects, masons, artisans, and many more got the message: there was work to be found in Jerusalem.¹⁴⁹

Most pilgrims were not able to endow monasteries in Palestine, but they could and did donate to the Christian institutions they found there. The influx of such pilgrims led to an established pilgrimage “circuit” by the sixth century, and a great many sites sprung up - not all of them tended by monks or clergy.¹⁵⁰ On his way to Jerusalem, the Piacenza Pilgrim found a wonder in Sarepta: “The chamber which was made for Elijah is there and in it is the very bed on which he lay, and the marble vessel which was filled by the widow woman. Many offerings are made there, and many miracles take place.”¹⁵¹ Passing to Diocaesarea the Pilgrim and his companions “venerated what they said was the flagon and breadbasket of Saint Mary. Three miles further on we came to Cana,

¹⁴⁷ Avi-Yonah, “Economics,” 44.

¹⁴⁸ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 124-29. See Procopius of Caesarea, *Buildings*, trans. H.B. Dewing and Glanville Downey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 6.1-7.3 (343-349). Procopius’ report is perhaps the best evidence for the continuation of the construction boom in the sixth century. He records in detail the work of surveyors, architects, masons, craftsmen, etc. The passage is too long to reproduce here, but elements of it will be brought forward in chapter four.

¹⁴⁹ The short break in the line of Christian emperors also, paradoxically, worked in the economic favor of Palestine. As part of his struggle against Christianity, Julian resolved to take from the Christians their Holy Land, and give it back to the Jews. Sozomen informs us that Julian contacted Jewish leadership, and “gave them public money, commanded them to rebuild the Temple, and to practice the cult similar to that of their ancestors by sacrificing in the ancient way. The Jews...sought out the most skillful artisans, collected materials, cleared the ground, and entered so earnestly upon the task that even the women carried heaps of earth and brought their necklaces and female ornaments toward defraying the expense.” Sozomenus, *History*, 5.22 (343-44). The project was never completed, and workers died in the process. Yet the influx of capital into the region remained, and although the motives were different, their result was the same.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Theodosius, *The Topography of the Holy Land*, 6-7b, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 107 and John Rufus, *Life of Peter the Iberian*, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 101.

¹⁵¹ Piacenza Pilgrim 2, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 131.

where the Lord attended the wedding, and we actually reclined on the couch.”¹⁵² Such instances abound. Not all of the Holy Land’s marvels were sites, and not all were bound to great basilicas and monasteries: in many cases the pilgrimage experience of the traveler became the pilgrimage trade of the locals. Nor was it only the Christians of the region who took part therein. There are strong indications that the Jews did likewise: “We travelled on to the city of Nazareth, where many miracles take place. In the synagogue there is kept the book in which the Lord wrote his ABC, and in this synagogue there is the bench on which He sat with the other children.”¹⁵³ There were souvenirs to take away, and a great many miraculous, or even miracle-giving, things to see.¹⁵⁴

Nor were the sites themselves the only beneficiaries: the great ladies travelled with retinues that had to be fed, housed, guided, etc; as did the more common run of pilgrims. Thus there were auxiliary jobs as well. Inns and hostels sprang up in many places in the area.¹⁵⁵ The hostels were often run by the Church in one form or another, but not so the inns, and both innkeepers and their employees were in demand.¹⁵⁶ Guides too were necessary: not only to relate the stories of sites and relics, but also to lead pilgrims to them. By the sixth century a well-placed guide or escort could make a considerable wage in a single trip.¹⁵⁷ Nor were guides, innkeepers, and relic-keepers the only economic beneficiaries: then as now, Palestine could be a dangerous place. The

¹⁵² Piacenza Pilgrim 4, Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 131.

¹⁵³ Piacenza Pilgrim 5, Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 132.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, Piacenza Pilgrim, 16-22, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 138-40. Other examples are interspersed often through the later sources.

¹⁵⁵ See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 28-55.

¹⁵⁶ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 95.

¹⁵⁷ The Piacenza Pilgrim records paying a guide $3\frac{1}{2}$ *solidi* for a single trip from the Holy Land to Mount Sinai. While not all trips were this long, shorter trips could be made more often and with a smaller retinue. See Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 37 n52.

Samaritans were particularly hostile - even before their rebellion in the sixth century - and the pilgrimage road passed through their homeland:

There were several Samaritan cities and villages on our way down through the plains, and wherever we passed along the streets they burned away our footprints with straw, whether we were Christians or Jews – they have such a horror of both. This is what they tell Christians, ‘Don’t touch what you want to buy till you have paid the money. If you do touch anything without buying it there will soon be trouble.’ Outside each village there is a guard posted to give this warning. You must put your money into water, since they will not take it from your hand. When you arrive they curse you. Nor must you spit. If you do, you start trouble, and later they have to purify themselves with water before entering their village or city.¹⁵⁸

The Samaritans were not the only danger to pilgrims; good jobs were available for bodyguards and strong-arms in the region. Guards like those posted to the Samaritan villages didn’t even need to travel.¹⁵⁹

By the sixth century Aelia was fully transformed. The Christian Holy Land had taken its place, although elements of its antecedents remained. The Roman elite were

¹⁵⁸ Piacenza Pilgrim, 8, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 135. Cf. also the 800 guards posted at Paran to protect against the Saracens. Piacenza Pilgrim, 40, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 148.

Cornelia Horn gives motives to continued Samaritan hostility in her discussion of Peter the Iberian, a fifth century Palestinian ascetic and anti-Chalcedonian saint (see chapters one and two for an extended discussion on Peter’s life, doings, and biography):

“The *Life of Peter the Iberian* indicated that Emperor Theodosius II had encouraged the settlement of Jerusalem and Palestine by granting ownership of any unclaimed real estate and Peter and John took advantage of this policy to establish a *xenodocheion*, or inn, for pilgrims in Jerusalem (see *Vit. Pet.* SS 64-67 [R 44-47]). Of course, ‘unclaimed’ in this case meant ‘unclaimed by another Christian party.’ Jews and Samaritans were not accorded much attention in this imperial policy. It is possible that the intermittent rebellions of the Samaritans and Jews in Palestine were in part responses of the native landowners to this usurpation of their property. These rebellions were always crushed by harsh Roman reprisals. As late as the time of the Emperor Justinian (527-565), Samaritans were agitating against what in their eyes had become simple elimination of non-Christians from Palestine.” *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus*, ed. and trans. with an introduction and notes by Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), xliii.

¹⁵⁹ Also in play was the Christian desire to convert the Samaritans via the holy places. We know of at least one such attempt by the Empress Eudokia, in which she built a Christian shrine in a Samaritan village. Such attempts may have made Samaritan villages desirable destinations as well, perhaps increasing antagonism between the two groups. On the other side of the coin was the destruction of Samaritan holy places. The wealthy Christian patroness Poemenia, for example, destroyed an “idol” on Mount Gerizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritans, that was worshipped by the local inhabitants. See John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 43 (61) and (166) 242-24. For Peter’s own interactions with the Samaritans see John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, (170) 248-49 and 184 (268).

present in force, and imperial patronage was a local standard. The Jewish sites had been incorporated into the pilgrimage canon, and Christians were not their only visitors. Once again, this was especially true at:

...the Oak of Mamre, the resting place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah and also of Joseph's bones. The basilica has four porticoes and no roof over the central court. Down the middle runs a screen. Christians come in on one side and Jews on the other, and they use much incense. On the day following Christ's Birthday the people of this area celebrate the Deposition of Jacob and David with much devotion, and Jews from all over the country congregate for this, too great a crowd to count. They offer much incense and lights, and give presents to those who minister there.¹⁶⁰

The Holy Land caught more than Christians in its net. Jews and even hostile Samaritans both catered to pilgrims, and at times were pilgrims themselves. The new Christian identity of the Holy Land had woven them into its fabric.

In addition to its new social and religious identity, Palestine had once again adopted a new economic aspect. Christian patronage and pilgrimage had transformed the land, physically and otherwise. A vast and steady influx of cash; large and long-term building projects; the need for skilled labor in Jerusalem and at the other building sites and unskilled work everywhere; the need to guide, guard, feed, shelter, and cater to the pilgrims and the larger retinues of major patrons; all these elements combined to give Palestine back what it had lost: a religious economy. Yet it was a religious economy, not only a pilgrimage economy. The lavish patronage of the emperors and great patronesses had transformed and created the Holy Land. The period of economic stagnation in Jerusalem between the efforts of Eudokia and Justinian demonstrates that the flood of

¹⁶⁰ Piacenza Pilgrim, 30, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 143. Constantine's expulsion of the pagans from Mamre apparently didn't extend to the Jews. Here as elsewhere, an accommodation was found for the Jewish element of the Christian Holy Land.

modest pilgrims was insufficient to uphold Palestine's economy.¹⁶¹ Yet with the exception of those decades, this period gave Jerusalem and the surrounding area its greatest prosperity for long centuries before and after. As a result many aspects of Palestinian life were deeply interconnected with the land's new religious economy.¹⁶² It was different from the region's previous religious economy in that it was tied into a much larger system. Rather than a centerpiece for the land of Israel, Jerusalem was becoming a centerpiece for a Christian Empire, and it drew funds and people from throughout that

¹⁶¹ See Avi-Yonah, "Economics," 41ff. Stagnation, but not the depression of two centuries before.

¹⁶² There is some question of the geographic extent of said prosperity. For most scholars, the standard line remains that of Avi-Yonah: "The Byzantine period thus indubitably represents a very high point of material development attained by this country. Various historical causes have been suggested for this phenomenon: the comparative peace enjoyed by the eastern half of the Roman Empire (which continued into the Byzantine period), and in particular the peace and quiet which reigned in Palestine after the Jewish Wars ended and before the Samaritan revolts and the Saracen inroads began. Another more localized cause may have been the tendency of the Byzantine emperors to develop the Aila (Erath) route from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, which passes through the Palestinian Negev. This was meant to serve as an alternative to the Egyptian route by way of Clysma (Suez). The wars with the Persians had closed the land routes to the Far East, and the Byzantine emperors were therefore endeavouring to outflank the barrage on the Euphrates via the Red Sea. Their aggressive policy on both Iotabe and Yemen can best be described this way.

Both these considerations, however important they are in themselves, seem to carry less weight than a third, namely, the influx of capital into Palestine which took place after Constantine. The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire naturally revolutionized its position completely; from an obscure province it became the Holy Land, pampered by the emperors whatever their treasurers might say. The stream of capital which then began to flow explains better than any other factor the astonishing prosperity of Palestine in the Byzantine period; its cessation must be accounted among the main causes of its collapse." Avi-Yonah, "Economics," 40-1.

More recently, Safrai has limited said prosperity to Jerusalem and its surrounding area: "Contributions and official grants of Christians were sent to the Land of Israel for the purpose of building and supporting churches, 'holy sites,' monasteries, and the like. All of this was in addition to profits of the pilgrim trade. Many of the monks and pilgrims were from the upper classes and came with large entourages. Needless to say, all of this was relevant only from the fourth century onwards, and Christian capital replaced Jewish capital to a large extent. It is difficult to estimate the relative effect of this imported economy on the economy of the land of Israel. There certainly was a good deal of Christian capital brought to the Land of Israel, but there is no quantitative tool which would enable us to measure its effect on the economy. It is likely that the economic growth of Jerusalem in the fourth century C.E. and afterwards was the result of this process, but Jerusalem was always the exception to the rule and should not be considered indicative of the situation in general." Safrai, *Economy*, 456.

Yet while places like Bethlehem and Mamre could also be considered to be in Jerusalem's orbit, the economic effect appears to be extended much further. From the mosaic workshop in Gaza to the inns, guides, and guards on the pilgrimage roads leading to the north and south of Jerusalem, the effect would appear to be greater than Safrai credits.

Empire. Some of the latter came to stay, and by their efforts the land was further transformed.

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Ecclesiastic and monastic structures grew and intertwined within this particular fusion of religion, economics, and imperial politics. In this case both institutions began humbly. Jerusalem's episcopacy reckoned itself back to Saint James, but his successors were not destined to play a great role in the ante-Nicene Church. Most of these early bishops are simply names on a list.¹⁶³ Others were the stuff of monastic anecdotes; a prime example being Narcissus, the second-century bishop who was chased from his see and fled to the Judean Desert, an unwilling pioneer of Judean asceticism.¹⁶⁴ Some early bishops may belong wholly to legend, such as the Bishop Silvanus mentioned by Timothy of Trimethius.¹⁶⁵ Regardless, the bishops of Jewish Jerusalem and Roman Aelia do not seem to have had much influence outside their own sees.

The situation did not change greatly during the Constantinian transformation of Jerusalem and its environs. Jerusalem remained subject to the metropolitan of Caesarea, and in the Constantinian period it was Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea whose star burned brightly. Yet both sees would soon find their ecclesiastical importance dwarfed by nearby Antioch. In the time before the First Council of Ephesus, then, Jerusalem's

¹⁶³ See, for example, the list found in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. Kirshopp Lake (New York: Putnam, 1926), 5.2 (465-67).

¹⁶⁴ Narcissus' tale can be found in Eusebius, *History* vol. 1, 6.9-6.10 (33-37).

¹⁶⁵ Timothy's work remains untreated since Migne. For Silvanus, see Timothy, Bishop of Trimithuntis, *On the Life, Exile, and Afflictions of the most blessed John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople*, in *Patrologia Graeca* 47, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1863). See also Honigmann's brief commentary on the work and passage: Ernest Honigmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 5 (1950), 211 n. 9.

ecclesiastical advancement did not keep pace with its socio-economic and religious (in a non-ecclesiastical/hierarchical sense) development.¹⁶⁶

Judea's monastic institutions were also developing at a sedate pace during the Constantinian explosion taking place in Jerusalem. They began around the same time: Chariton and Helena were contemporaries, and Chariton would provide an early exemplar for the Judean monk as Helena would for the Holy Land pilgrim. Yet Judea was built upon Jerusalem's foundation. Judean monasticism was a cosmopolitan affair, the beneficiary of pilgrimage in monks as much as money. Like Chariton, many who came to the Holy Land elected to stay on as ascetics. Only a few miles from Jerusalem, the Judean Desert was ready to hand for such persons. These immigrant ascetics came from throughout the Eastern Empire, creating a mostly Greek-speaking monastic population.¹⁶⁷ They had come for Jerusalem, and they remained oriented around it. Origin and language augmented this connection and set them apart from much of the local native population. Religious affiliation, cultural orientation, and economic dependency tied Judea tightly to Jerusalem, and eventually to the larger imperial world beyond, but that was in the future. The pioneers of this first phase were interested in asceticism, not institutions. The monasteries of this time occasionally interacted with the bishops of Jerusalem, but not in a permanent or binding way.¹⁶⁸ Yet this situation would change dramatically with the arrival of Juvenal and Euthymius, the two giants of fifth-century Palestine. The former would transform the episcopacy of Jerusalem, the latter

¹⁶⁶ The best treatment of the rise and development of Jerusalem's episcopate remains Honigmann, *Juvenal*, 209-279.

¹⁶⁷ The language barrier was to prove a crucial element for the orientation of the Judean monasteries. See the following chapters for commentary and consequences of this cultural tie.

¹⁶⁸ One such early point of contact can be found in Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 13 (404-05). See also Di Segni's defense of the passage's historicity on Di Segni, *Life of Chariton*, 394.

the monasteries of the desert, and between them they would leave a legacy that defined the region for years to come.

That is not to say that no one had achieved prominence in the region. There was already a network to be reckoned with in Jerusalem a generation before Juvenal and Euthymius. The waves of wealthy patronesses from the West had established monastic bulwarks within the Holy City. These bulwarks grew to something more in 417 A.D. with the arrival of Melania the Younger.

Melania and her husband Pinianus had committed themselves to asceticism and celibacy following the death of their young children. This commitment reached its apex with the decision to relocate to the Holy Land. Upon their arrival, the pair built and occupied monasteries on the Mount of Olives.

Once ensconced, Melania could not help but assume a leadership role in the region. She held the authority of both patron and ascetic, and was formidable in both regards. Yet her influence went beyond money and piety. Melania brought with her an ecclesiastical and imperial network to rival any in the Empire. She was friends, at one time or another, with Rufinus *and* Jerome, with Augustine *and* Pelagius, with Cyril of Alexandria, Palladius, Paulinus of Nola, Proclus of Constantinople, and many more. Theological boundaries were no bar to her network: Elizabeth Clark has argued that Melania had associations with Origenists, Pelagians, and Donatists.¹⁶⁹ To her credit, she occasionally tried to play peacemaker between these groups, as witnessed by her (failed)

¹⁶⁹ Gerontius, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth A. Clark (New York: The Edward Mellon Press, 1984), 141ff. Melania seems also to have been on friendly terms with the Jews of Palestine. See Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 217-218.

attempt to reconcile Pelagius and Augustine. She drew the line only at Nestorius. Nor were these the extent of her ecclesiastical connections. Melania had also inherited the friendships of her famous grandmother, Melania the Elder.

Melania the Younger's "secular" network was equally impressive. She had friends at court in Constantinople. Her husband's father had been Prefect of Rome. Her uncle was the current Prefect of Rome. It is an understatement, therefore, to say Melania was a person of influence in Jerusalem. It seems more accurate to say that the synthesis of Melania's largesse, piety, and connections made her a (perhaps *the*) force to be reckoned with in the Holy Land.

Melania's network was a living thing. It continued to grow and act through the nexus of events and persons that moved the Late Antique world. New connections were made and formalized by major events; new actors were brought to the stage. These actors, in turn, began to play scenes together. Two such incidents were particularly important in the development of the Holy Land.

The first was Melania's visit to Constantinople in 437 A.D. Melania apparently made quite a splash during her 40 days at court. She kept regular company with noble and senatorial ladies, conversing with them for whole days to draw them toward "orthodoxy." She also convinced Emperor Theodosius to allow his wife Eudokia to visit the Holy Land.

Melania's visit was a formative experience for two of Jerusalem's future stars. The elder of these was Gerontius, a former ward of Melania's. Gerontius had been taken in by Melania and Pinianus while still a youth, either in Rome, North Africa, or

Jerusalem.¹⁷⁰ By the time of this visit he was a man and a priest. He would later become abbot of Melania's monastery, archimandrite of monks in Jerusalem, and Melania's biographer. He accompanied Melania during her sojourn at Constantinople, and spent the appropriate time among the great and the good.

The other rising luminary was an eastern prince named Nabarnugios. Nabarnugios was a member of the Iberian royal family. His father had given him – while still a boy – to Theodosius as a “hostage” to ensure an alliance between the two lands. The modern connotations of the term do not apply: Nabarnugios was treated with friendship and respect, and was raised in the Byzantine imperial household.

Nabarnugios was only twenty at the time of Melania's visit. If we are to believe his biographer, the young man had been increasingly drawn to an ascetic life in the time before her arrival. This trajectory made him more and more uncomfortable at court. Melania's presence seems to have amplified Nabarnugios' inclinations. He soon developed a yearning to visit the Holy Land. It is unknown whether the two interacted in Constantinople, but it seems probable: he was at her monastery in Jerusalem a few months later.¹⁷¹

A short time after Melania's visit Nabarnugios escaped the friendly confines of the Byzantine court. He fled the city by night, accompanied by his friend Mithridatos the eunuch. The two had absconded with the relics of certain Persian martyrs, which now

¹⁷⁰ The latter view is now dominant. See Clark, *Melania*, 13ff, and Cornelia Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 71.

¹⁷¹ For the story of Melania's visit to court and its aftermath from Gerontius' point of view, see Clark, *Melania*, 53-59 (64-72). For the same events and their aftermath from the perspective of John Rufus, disciple of Peter the Iberian, see John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 39-50 (53-71). See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism*, 74ff.

provided them with guidance and protection on the road. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem, we are told:

The later Melania, the wife of Pinianus and daughter of Albina, was the one who received these saints with joy like beloved sons. For having been received by her, there they were also conferred with honor through the examples of the ascetic ways of life in the men's monastery. At the same time they were esteemed worthy of the habit of the solitary life from the holy hands of the holy and famous Gerontius, who was the priest and archimandrite of the Holy Mount of Olives.¹⁷²

They received new names along with their new habits. Nabarnugios became Peter, and Mithridatos became John. These were the symbols of new relationships, not only between Peter, John, and Christ; but also between Peter, Gerontius, and Melania. The latter connections, fired in Constantinople, were now forged through these symbolic actions in Jerusalem.

The second great event took place not long after. Peter's ceremony had been the first fruit of Melania's trip, but the second was greater. In 438 A.D. Empress Eudokia fulfilled her desire to visit the Holy Land. She took the opportunity to visit with Melania, and (presumably) renewed her acquaintance with Gerontius. She already knew Peter; he had been raised in her household.

Eudokia's timing was good. Her visit coincided with the completion of St. Stephen's *martyrion*. Eudokia took advantage of this moment. She prevailed upon Cyril of Alexandria to visit as well, in order to perform the consecration of the *martyrion*.¹⁷³ Melania induced him to do the same for her own *martyrion* while he was there. Cyril

¹⁷² John Rufus, *Peter the Iberian*, S. 44 (61).

¹⁷³ For an account of Cyril's visit and actions see John Rufus, *Peter the Iberian*, 49 (67), and Clark, *Melania*, 58-59 (70-72). The latter account focuses on the two women, and omits Cyril.

assented, and installed for Melania the relics of the Martyrs of Sebaste, together with those of Peter's Persian martyrs.

These consecrations – especially that of St. Stephen's – were a bonding of old and new. Primarily they honored the glory of Christ and His martyrs. Yet they also linked together the generations of Melania's network.¹⁷⁴ The senior representatives were old allies. All had been part of the victorious anti-Nestorian party. Gerontius and Peter had been part of that conflict only by later association with its members. On this day, however, old and new were united in friendship, faith, and liturgy. The bonds between Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem were on full display.¹⁷⁵ The Empress and the Patriarch stood together with Melania and her protégés for all to see.¹⁷⁶ The moment was brief: Eudokia and Cyril soon left, and Melania passed away a year later. Nevertheless, the connections had been strengthened: Jerusalem to Alexandria, the Empress to the ascetics. Yet this is not the full tale. There was another actor on this stage: Juvenal, the bishop of Jerusalem.

¹⁷⁴ Aryeh Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine," in *Liber Annuus* 47, ed. Claudio Bottini (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1997), 212.

¹⁷⁵ See the discussion of this point in Horn, *Asceticism*, 74ff.

¹⁷⁶ Eudokia got something from the associations as well: a major power shift in her quiet struggle against Pulcheria. See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 189: "Early in 439 Eudocia returned to Constantinople in triumph. Her oration in Antioch had been a smashing success. Her intimacy with Melania and her exchange of gifts with Barsauma proved that she was indeed a woman of imperial piety. She had, like Helena, visited the holy places, and she had prayed at Christ's tomb. Moreover, when she returned she brought with her not only Barsauma's cloak but also additional remains of Stephen Protomartyr, the saint whose very name invoked victory. The emperor and the people of Constantinople received both Eudokia and the relics in a public *adventus* celebration. As E.D. Hunt has demonstrated, to come home blessed with relics compounded the authority normally acquired in one's community as a result of the exertion of a pilgrimage. Thus for the first time Eudocia commanded resources like those of Pulcheria's sacral *basileía*."

Juvenal's beginnings are unclear. He may have come from a Judean monastery. He may have been a deacon who rose through the ecclesiastical ranks of the city.¹⁷⁷ Regardless, Bishop Juvenal quickly attained a reputation as an ambitious man who desired to increase the size and influence of his dominion. He soon broke Jerusalem free of Caesarea's control, and then began to carve out pieces of Antioch's territory.

Juvenal also hitched his ecclesiastical wagon to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. He supported Cyril at Ephesus in 431, and stood beside him at the consecration of St. Stephen's in 438. Juvenal continued this association during the following decade. His star rose commensurately.

In 443 Juvenal's link to Eudokia was strengthened when she began her permanent exile in the Holy Land.¹⁷⁸ Eudokia's residence was a tremendous boon to the region. She gave lavish gifts, endowed institutions, and created construction projects.¹⁷⁹ In the economic sense, Eudokia was to the Holy Land what Constantine was in the fourth century, and Justinian would be in the sixth. More than this, however, she was a boon to Juvenal personally. His association with her helped create his place in a wider ecclesiastical world.

Cyril died a year later in 444, but Juvenal's connection to Alexandria did not die with him. That bond was renewed with the association of Juvenal and Dioscorus, the

¹⁷⁷ While the subject of Juvenal seems fertile ground for further research, it has nevertheless been left largely untouched since Honigmann's article of 1950. Juvenal's origins are murky; the possibilities given above are both from Monophysite sources not friendly to Juvenal, and both are far from certain. For a discussion of the sources and their implications, see Honigmann, *Juvenal*, 209-279. For a discussion of Cyril's presentation of Juvenal, see Cynthia Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril of Scythopolis* (Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1991), 17-20.

¹⁷⁸ For a brief summary of Eudokia's epic fall from grace, see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 193-94. For a discussion of the dating of her arrival, see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 193 n. 81.

¹⁷⁹ See earlier this chapter for details.

new Patriarch of Alexandria. The relationship between the sees had also been internalized by the Church of Jerusalem, which approved when Juvenal backed Dioscorus at the “Robber Council” of Ephesus in 449. That moment did not mark the apex of Juvenal’s career, but it was probably the peak of his local popularity. His next major act would cost him that popularity, and almost his see to boot.

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Meanwhile another network was growing in nearby Judea. The weaving of this Judean web began with the arrival of Euthymius, the other transformative figure of the Holy Land in the fifth century. Chariton came first, but Euthymius was responsible for the early institutional proliferation of Judean monasticism. Like Juvenal, Euthymius’ earliest days are murky; it appears that Cyril filled in the gaps with elements from his own boyhood.¹⁸⁰ Fortunately Cyril provided concrete details regarding Euthymius’ youth, including his strong connections to the church of his native Melitene. Euthymius was educated in that church by the clerics Acacius and Synodius, and his relationship with them would hold over the course of their lives. As he grew, Euthymius was also watched over by Bishop Letoios of Melitene, who ordained him priest and made him the superior of the region’s monasteries at a young age. Euthymius soon fled this post of administrative responsibility, an act he would later repeat.¹⁸¹ Shortly thereafter Euthymius arrived in the Judean desert via the holy places in Jerusalem, bearing his Melitene connections with him.

¹⁸⁰ See especially Binns, *Cyril*, xxxviiiiff.

¹⁸¹ The details of Euthymius’ early life can be found in Cyril’s *Life of Euthymius* (hereafter *VE*), 2-5 (4-9) in Price, *Cyril*. To what extent the repeated retreat from authority is simply a trope we have no way of knowing, but we may infer some truth to it from the way the rest of the life proceeds.

Some time after his arrival Euthymius and his friend Theoctistus left the established monasteries to strike out on their own. They soon attracted followers, then founded monasteries to house them. Theoctistus has no hagiography of his own; what little we know of him we know from Cyril, who displays him as Euthymius' faithful, but decidedly subordinate, colleague.¹⁸² The two founded their monasteries together, intertwining them from the beginning. Theoctistus built a *cenobium*, a monastery in which monks lived and worked in community. Euthymius was responsible for the accompanying *laura*, a loosely arranged set of cells for solitary monks who came together only for weekly liturgy. Euthymius soon established a rule whereby younger, less experienced monks (especially those with a feminine appearance) were barred from the *laura* until they were older and more seasoned in the monastic life.¹⁸³ Thus the younger monks were preserved from ascetic labors beyond their abilities while the solitaries were protected from additional temptation. The rule had the added effect of turning Theoctistus' *cenobium* into a training ground of sorts for the accompanying *laura*.

Euthymius eventually fled from this increasingly crowded place, removing himself from the press and duties that came with the administration of the *laura*. After establishing himself in solitude, Euthymius inevitably found himself attracting new disciples. A new monastery was born, and Euthymius himself soon selected a superior to administrate, then moved on.¹⁸⁴ He founded several monasteries in this way, but it was

¹⁸² Cyril's presentation of this relationship will be more fully explored in chapter seven.

¹⁸³ This practice began as Euthymius' personal preference: "take care not to let your youngest brother come near my cell, for because of the warfare of the enemy it is not right for a feminine face to be found in a *laura*." Cyril, *VE*,16 (21). This practice would soon become institutional tradition, and would be carried on by abbots through the sixth century.

¹⁸⁴ See the discussion of Cyril's work in the introductory chapter.

that first joint effort with Theoctistus that ultimately bore his stamp. Eventually Euthymius found another way to balance activity with solitude: taking the favored few of his inner circle with him on annual retreats to the deep desert of Roubâ.¹⁸⁵

Cyril's account of Euthymius' life and activity portrays him in two very different roles. He presents Euthymius as a quiet desert ascetic removed from the world: a simple priest and monk. Yet Cyril also gives us a Euthymius deeply involved in a larger world of elite social networks, politics, and patronage far beyond the desert. In this regard Euthymius arrived in Judea as a well-connected member of the elite, and increased in prestige and influence over time. This is the more detailed of the two Cyrillian narratives; this aspect of his work earned him a reputation for creating "historical hagiography" as a new literary genre.¹⁸⁶ Yet the two spheres of Euthymius' activity cannot be understood apart from each other; together they create a more complete picture of the institutional life of the Judean monasteries. The interweaving of spiritual authority and interpersonal connections allowed Euthymius to transition the desert into the next phase of its institutional activity.

Euthymius' relationship with Bishop Letoios of Melitene formed the early part of his religious career, but his relationships with his teachers would follow him to Judea. Acacius and Synodius would become bishops of Melitene in their turn, and Euthymius

¹⁸⁵ Euthymius' retreats at Roubâ may have started as solitary affairs, but they soon became opportunities for the great monk to shape his closest disciples. Even during his earlier retreats to this "deep desert," however, he was apparently accessible. Thus Gerasimus, whom Cyril records as confused by the teaching of Theodosius, sought Euthymius' counsel, and so: "went to him at Roubâ, and after staying with him for a considerable time was persuaded to accept the definition issued by the Council of Chalcedon and break off his association with Theodosius, as did other anchorites also." Cyril, *VE*, 27 (41).

¹⁸⁶ See discussion of Cyril in the introductory chapter.

maintained his connections with both. The tie to Synodius, however, would prove of greatest importance in shaping the desert.¹⁸⁷

Several events occurred in short order once Euthymius and Theoctistus were established in their monasteries. First of these was the arrival of the Saracen chief Aspebetus, who came bearing his son Terebôn. The latter was very ill, and Aspebetus had exhausted the medical and supernatural means of healing available to him. Hearing of Euthymius' asceticism, holiness, and *parrhesia* before God, Aspebetus brought his son to Euthymius in hope of healing.¹⁸⁸ This healing was miraculously achieved, and Aspebetus converted to Christianity along with his entire tribe. Euthymius had played the role of patron and intercessor before God on Aspebetus' behalf. He would now do the same before Juvenal. Euthymius sent to the archbishop and requested a bishop for this new Christian community. Juvenal assented, and Euthymius sent Aspebetus, now christened Peter, to Juvenal for ordination.¹⁸⁹ Bishop Peter would come to Euthymius for advice and aid for the rest of his life. The connection would bear other fruit as well: Euthymius' strong link to this local bishop would soon combine with his larger network outside Judea. Furthermore, this family would bestow considerable financial gifts to Euthymius' monasteries for years to come, most notably the large bequest left behind by Terebôn. More immediate was Euthymius' impression on Terebôn's uncle Maris, who

¹⁸⁷ Much of the following pages will deal with a network-based approach to relationships between ecclesiastical figures in Late Antiquity. For adaptations of this framework to an earlier, fifth-century context see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Context of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: University Press, 1992), and Adam Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2011). For a more general introduction to network theory, see Kadushin, *Networks*.

¹⁸⁸ *Parrhesia*, or open boldness of speech before a figure of higher authority (in this case God) was a concept of great importance in the late antique world. It will be treated at greater length in chapters six and seven below.

¹⁸⁹ For Terebôn's healing, see Cyril, *VE*, 10 (14-17). For the ordination of Peter, see Cyril, *VE*, 15 (20-21).

decided to join the monastery himself. Upon so doing Maris gave the entirety of his considerable wealth to Euthymius for the monastery.¹⁹⁰ The desert was being transformed, sometimes in tangible ways.

Shortly afterward Synodius began sending Melitene's promising young ecclesiastics to Euthymius. Cyril carefully recorded these young men and their subsequent careers in great detail. They came in two batches of three, the first being Synodius' own cousins Stephen, Andrew, and Gaianus. The second were three Cappadocian brothers: Cosmas, Chrysippus, and Gabrielus.¹⁹¹ These quickly became part of Euthymius' inner circle, and eventually became important players in the region. The first step in that progression came when Synodius visited Euthymius in 431, and made a point of visiting Juvenal while in the area.¹⁹² Doubtless they discussed many things, but during the course of the meeting Synodius requested that Juvenal ordain Stephen and Cosmas deacons. This was done, and some time later Juvenal elevated them further, making Stephen bishop of Jamnia and Cosmas priest and Guardian of the Holy Cross.¹⁹³ These two continued their connection with Euthymius, whose regional network was growing.

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¹⁹⁰ Terebôn's bequest: Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus* (hereafter *VCy*), 6 (249). Maris' tale: Cyril, *VE*, 10 (16).

¹⁹¹ The arrival of these six men is found in Cyril, *VE*, 16, (21-22)

¹⁹² The main purpose for Synodius' visit, Cyril tells us, was to venerate the holy places. Nevertheless, he found time to visit both Euthymius and Juvenal. Cyril, *VE*, 20 (28). By this time Juvenal had already visited Euthymius to consecrate the *laura* and ordain priests and deacons. One of these, Domnus, would later become Patriarch of Antioch: Cyril, *VE*, 16 (22). Domnus will be discussed further in the next chapter.

¹⁹³ Cyril, *VE*, 20 (28-29).

A Palestinian ecclesiastical elite arose in the first half of the fifth century. At the center of that elite was Juvenal, by position if not by prominence. Eudokia, Gerontius, Peter, and Euthymius: all were associated with the bishop of Jerusalem to some extent. Yet Chalcedon was coming, and with it Juvenal's greatest decision. Chalcedon would be a repudiation of Dioscorus' actions in Ephesus, and the acclamation of Leo's famous Tome. More pertinently, it was the moment Juvenal broke his stated word to his monks, clergy, and laity. At Chalcedon Juvenal famously crossed the floor, abandoned Dioscorus, and affirmed Leo's Tome. Thereby, it was the moment Jerusalem became a Patriarchate.

The Chalcedonian earthquake shook the foundations of the Holy Land, and its shockwave beat the new patriarch home. A Palestinian monk named Theodosius had been present at Chalcedon as an observer. Outraged at Juvenal's betrayal of Dioscorus/Alexandria, Theodosius rushed home to alert his brethren. These coalesced into an angry mob, which marched to Caesarea to meet Juvenal's ship. They confronted the Patriarch outside the city, and an angry interrogation ensued. Interrogation led to furious accusation, and Juvenal was forced to flee. Emboldened, the monks elevated Theodosius to the Jerusalemite Patriarchate. Juvenal, meanwhile, hurried to Constantinople.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ For the details of this encounter see Honigmann, *Juvenal*, and Horn, *Asceticism*, 74-84.

CHAPTER TWO: EUTHYMIANS

The immediate aftermath of the Council was a time of abrupt and dramatic conflict. The years 451-453 witnessed an intense struggle for control of the region. It was a period of insurrection and suppression, marked by reversals of fortune and even loss of life. The years that followed, from 453-479, were a time of moderation and reconciliation. The period witnessed a generational culture shift, in which the moderate anti-Chalcedonians were restored to communion and young Chalcedonians gradually assumed preeminence.¹⁹⁵ The final decades of this period saw the coalescence of the Chalcedonian ascendancy and the ouster of the remaining anti-Chalcedonians. It

¹⁹⁵ Describing the opposition to Chalcedon is an exercise in loaded terms. There are many choices: Monophysite, Miaphysite, non-Chalcedonian, and anti-Chalcedonian. In today's climate, justifications for one's choice of term seem to be an expectation. See, for example, Horn, *Asceticism*, 8-9, in which she provides a detailed list of reasons for her choice of "anti-Chalcedonian." See also Paul Parvis, "How to Lynch a Patriarch without Really Trying: Peter the Iberian and the Ambiguities of Late Antique Sanctity," in *Studia Patristica* 52, ed. by A. Brent and M. Vinzent (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 306, in which he provides his rationale for "Monophysite." Finally, see Lorenzo Perrone, *La Chiesa di Palestina e le Controversie Cristologiche: Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)*, (Bologna: Brescia, 1980), 94-104.

Following Horn, I have decided against "non-Chalcedonian" because of the term's implied neutrality. The group in question was not neutral to the Council.

Perrone uses "anti-Chalcedonian" and "Monophysite" interchangeably, because he views them as equivalent. For Perrone, opposition to the Council is basically theological in nature (although the motives of the emperor and ecclesiastical hierarchy seem not to be). Parvis sticks with theological terms like "Monophysite" and "Miaphysite" for similar reasons.

I have decided against "Monophysite" or "Miaphysite," because they seem to imply a group united by an agreed upon, articulated theological position. That articulation was not always a priority for the Palestinian faction. Instead, they were defined by their hostility to and rejection of the Council of Chalcedon. That hostility sometimes played itself out in non-theological ways.

For these reasons I am in agreement with Horn, and more specifically with Gaddis: "Monophysite' opponents defined their identity less by a common theological program than by what they were against – Chalcedon, and the corruption and betrayal associated with it." Michael Gaddis, *There is no Crime for those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 327.

The group in question was not neutral to the Council. An articulated theological position was not the big tent that enfolded various subgroups. Instead, those subgroups were brought together by their opposition to the Council. Some of them did indeed have an articulated theology, but that was not the unifying factor, especially on the popular and local levels. The latter could just as easily center on spirituality as theology, or indeed lean heavily on social or cultural factors.

concluded with the final Chalcedonian triumph following another phase of abrupt conflict.

These decades also witnessed the victories and consequent rise of the Euthymian network. Every anti-Chalcedonian defeat seemed to lift the Euthymian monks up a rung on the ladder of prestige, influence, and authority. At the same time, the anti-Chalcedonians who remained in the region began to construct a literary response to their defeat and its consequences. Both of these elements – Euthymian rise and anti-Chalcedonian literary response – are instrumental to an understanding of the world and writings of Cyril and his contemporaries a few decades later.

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The selection of Juvenal's replacement was the insurrectionists' first order of business. This was a momentous event, an act of defiance to both emperor and council. It was an occasion not to be missed, and Euthymius excepted, most of the region's ascetic luminaries were on hand.¹⁹⁶ Even in such a crowd, however, a few names stand out.

¹⁹⁶ The event is remarkably well-attested, and from both sides. By and large, the surviving anti-Chalcedonian sources were written closer to the time of the elevation. First of these is *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity*, ed. Geoffrey Greatrex, tr. Robert R. Phenix and Cornelia B. Horn, intro. Sebastian Brock and Witold Witakowski (Liverpool: University Press, 2011), Book 3.3d (116-17). Next are the two works of John Rufus: *Peter the Iberian*, 77 (111-13) and *Jean Rufus, Évêque de Maïouma: Plérôphories, c'est-à-dire témoignages et révélations (contre le concile de Chalcedoine)*, ed. and tr. F. Nau and M. Brière in *Patrologia Orientalis* 8.1 (Paris, 1911), 25 (57-63). The Chalcedonian side in Palestine is represented by the later work of Cyril in *VE* 41, 20ff (38).

Extra-Palestinian sources are Chalcedonian, and come after. Evagrius Scholasticus, writing in the late sixth century, seems to have used the anti-Chalcedonian Zacharias as one of his sources. His account is found in: *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, trans. with an introduction by Michael Whitby (Liverpool: University Press, 2000). Later still is *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, Trans. with Introduction and Commentary by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 107 (165).

Finally, and far and away the earliest, is the epistolary of Marcian and Pulcheria in the *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. by Eduard Schwartz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1933) II.I 3.124ff (Hereafter *ACO*). Both were writing in response to a letter from the Palestinian monks, in which

The first of these is Romanus, one of the more prominent desert monks. The staunch anti-Chalcedonian John Rufus had already assigned Romanus a key role in the lead-up to Juvenal's ejection.¹⁹⁷ He now went on to record Romanus' centrality in Theodosius' election. Rufus was not alone in putting Romanus at the scene, however. His more moderate friend Zacharias Rhetor related that Romanus was actually a candidate for election himself:

[Then] the contingent of monks and clerics returned to Jerusalem, where the people and the bishops who were with them assembled to consider what they should do. [So] they decided to make someone else bishop in place [of Juvenal]. Having considered chaste monks such as Romanus, Marcian[us], and other exceedingly marvelous men, they finally chose to make Theodosius [bishop], who was found [to be] zealous and who for years had struggled on behalf of the faith. They seized him by force, though he refused and swore oaths, pleading with them in order to try and persuade them to allow him to be the assistant of the one from among them whom they might appoint, but they were not persuaded and they blessed him and placed him on the throne.¹⁹⁸

The presence of Romanus, Marcianus, and others served to legitimize the event in the uncertain days following the council. Romanus in particular would continue this function

the latter attempted to justify their actions to the throne. The scathing imperial reply (see below) makes clear the emperor's anger at this act of rebellion, and presages Marcian's more forcible response of a year later.

¹⁹⁷ In the period of confusion immediately following the Council, Rufus tells us, Romanus was tasked by his fellow monks to go alone into the deeper desert in order to commune/converse with God. It was hoped such communion would lead to clarity regarding the Council's decisions. After a prolonged series of visions, Romanus pronounced anathema on Chalcedon, and helped lead the charge to confront Juvenal. Rufus, *Plérophories* 25 (57-63). Later in the same passage Rufus references a letter of Romanus as proof of the righteousness of the anti-Chalcedonian position and argument.

¹⁹⁸ Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.3d (116-17). John Rufus gives two accounts of this event, both of which stress the importance of Romanus. His *Life of Peter* has: "Inspired by [Christ's] grace and having with them both zealous orthodox bishops and the holy Romanus, the father of the monks, they chose the blessed Theodosius from the holy rank..." John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 77 (111). In the *Plérophories* Rufus puts Romanus at the scene, and while he doesn't mention him in the ordination proper, he does give him as the source of the event: "Si quelqu'un ne croit pas ce qui vient d'être raconté, celui-là pourra se procurer la lettre que leur écrivit l'abba Romanus, près de l'impératrice Eudocie, lors de son séjour à Antioche où l'avait exilé l'impie et le tyran Marcien, et il y trouvera un témoignage en faveur de toute la vérité, sur le fait que l'on a rapporté ci-dessus..." Rufus, *Plérophories*, 25 (62-62).

after his death: his long and public career allowed anti-Chalcedonian writers to demonstrate the “orthodoxy” of the event via the participation of this holy man.

Peter the Iberian was also represented as a significant player in the proceedings, even though he does not appear in the election narratives proper. In Rufus’ account the insurrection would have died stillborn had it not been for Peter’s intervention.¹⁹⁹ The anti-Chalcedonian authors also take care to insert him into the passages immediately following the election.²⁰⁰ Eudokia too is sometimes given a role to play, and the presence of other figures must be assumed. Most pivotal among these are Gerontius and Elpidius, the latter being abbot of Passarion’s monastery.²⁰¹

Election accomplished, Theodosius moved quickly to secure his position. He dealt expeditiously with the local episcopate, deposing Juvenal’s people and installing his

¹⁹⁹ In this account, Juvenal sent a *decurion* to deal with the upstart Theodosius. All might have been lost, had not Peter used his authority as a holy man to threaten the *decurion* with fire from heaven. It may also have helped that the *decurion* knew Peter from his time at court. Regardless, the *decurion* recognized Peter’s authority, grabbed Juvenal, and fled. See Rufus, *Plérophories*, 56 (111-113).

Horn uses this passage to demonstrate Peter’s pivotal importance to the rebellion: “...Peter revealed to the *decurion* his identity as a quasi-member of the imperial family. Rufus skillfully managed to connect the imperial authority Peter was able to claim for himself with an element of ascetic and prophetic authority...In the end, therefore, Peter’s intervention saved the day for the monk Theodosius, the very initiator of the monk’s rebellion. Thus Peter and the authority he commanded were crucial for the success of the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine...” Horn, *Asceticism*, 86.

²⁰⁰ It should be noted, however, that the later pro-Chalcedonian accounts omit the roles of Peter, Romanus, and Marcianus in the election narratives. Evagrius focuses solely on Theodosius, while both Cyril and (much later) Theophanes tie in Eudokia’s support.

²⁰¹ Evagrius adds an interesting (especially if true) background to Theodosius, citing a letter of the Palestinian monks to Bishop Alcison. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 52 (78-79). Theophanes is more concerned with Theodosius’ violent crimes as bishop and seems factually confused. He does, however, add that said crimes were carried out with the help of Eudokia’s men. See Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 107 (165). Cyril is eager to tie in Euthymius and Eudokia (perhaps to highlight her later conversion), and makes the election itself an act of violence: “When the news circulated, as people reported that the great Euthymius had accepted the definition of the faith proclaimed at Chalcedon, all the monks were about to accept it, had they not been prevented by one Theodosius, in appearance a monk but in reality a precursor of Antichrist. Coming to Palestine, this man beguiled the empress Eudocia, who was here at that time, and seduced all the monastic population, inveighing against the Council of Chalcedon as having subverted the true faith and approved the doctrine of Nestorius. After affecting his murderous intent in this way, he seized in barbarous fashion the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem...” Cyril, *VE*, 41.20-42.4 (38).

own. Theodosius was subtle in accomplishing the latter: he invested the population in their new bishops by involving them in the choice thereof. His only requirement: qualification hung on rejection of Chalcedon.²⁰²

Peter was among these new bishops.²⁰³ The others received similar promotions: Gerontius and Elpidius became archimandrites of the Palestinian monks. Romanus and Marcianus became major players in the movement. In addition to these, Theodosius could also count Eudokia's on support, together with that of a host of lesser figures.

Theodosius' elevation is a revealing moment. The list of attendees guaranteed local stability for the new patriarch. Unlike the public display of unity at the consecration of St. Stephen's, however, there were no foreign dignitaries on hand. Here lay Theodosius' biggest problem: he was alienated from major powers abroad.

Alexandria was still reeling in post-conciliar shock. The antagonism of Pope Leo in Rome is self-evident. More immediate was the break with Constantinople. Marcian was unlikely to forget the violent ejection of his patriarch.²⁰⁴ Theodosius was

²⁰² See John Rufus, *Peter the Iberian*, 52-53 (73-77), and *Plérophories*, 25 (57-63). See also the commentary and analysis in Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian," 214. Finally, see Horn, *Asceticism*, 87-88: "Not without tactical considerations did Patriarch Theodosius allow the population of various Palestinian cities to participate in the ordinations of the new bishops he was conducting. As Kofsky remarks, it was with an eye towards strengthening the anti-Chalcedonian hold on the Palestinian communities that Theodosius wished to ordain candidates who already possessed extensive popular support among their own constituencies. According to what can be learned from the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Theodosius let the people forward the names of episcopal candidates they wanted to have ordained as leaders for their communities. Anti-Chalcedonian loyalty was the primary qualification."

²⁰³ As a holy man with elite connections, Peter could be an influential patron for his see. The people of Maiuma were apparently the first to realize this, and they ousted him from his dwelling near Gaza and "forced" him to become their bishop: "After travelling from place to place they arrived at the outskirts of Gaza and Maiuma, and the men, women, and all ranks of the administration seized Peter and transported him to Theodosius in Jerusalem, entreated him to make [Peter] their bishop. He leveled many accusations against himself and declined, but [Theodosius] placed his hand on him and ordained him, because he knew the man." Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.4b (118).

²⁰⁴ The later Chalcedonian sources are keen on the element of violence, especially Theophanes: "By means of murder, [Theodosius] seized the bishop's throne in a barbaric manner, and with the Augusta's men as his assistants, he ordained bishops in every city, while the [other] bishops were still at the synod.

temporarily shielded from the economic consequences of imperial anger: he had a mighty patroness in Eudokia. Yet he stood foursquare against the triumphant Chalcedonian alliance, and the clock was ticking. Theodosius desperately needed an intermediary through whom he could reach out to Marcian.

Peter and Eudokia were the obvious choices, but neither was viable, for their connections were weakened: Emperor Theodosius was dead, and Pulcheria was adversarial to the anti-Chalcedonian cause in general and to Eudokia in particular. Furthermore, both were tarnished by their active part in the insurrection. Their ties to court were sufficient to protect their own persons from reprisal, but no more. They were not sufficient to secure Theodosius on his patriarchal throne. All Theodosius' connections were local. He needed to find someone with a network that extended abroad. He needed to find a holy man who had taken no part in the rebellion. There was only one local figure that fit the bill.

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When Severianus, bishop of Skythopolis, would not submit to his heresy, Theodosi[us] drive him out of the city and murdered him and then incited a persecution of those who refused to be in communion with him. Many he tortured, others he punished with confiscation, and he had the houses of yet others burned down, so that the city seemed to have been captured by the barbarians. He slaughtered Athanasios, deacon of the church of the Holy Resurrection, for reproaching and chiding him for his godlessness, and after parading that man's holy body round the city, he threw it to the dogs." Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 107 (165).

Fortunately, we don't have to rely on Theophanes' polemic. In the post-Conciliar documents of the *ACO* are found letters of Marcian and Pulcheria to the Palestinian monks, dated late 452/early 453. They are in response to a letter of the monks protesting that they were not responsible for the acts of violence of which Marcian has heard (much of which is reproduced in Theophanes' account), blaming instead an undesirable urban element, and/or the Samaritans. Marcian's response was rather harsh. From these we can conclude that violence did surround Theodosius' elevation. See *ACO* II.I, 3.124ff. See also the summary in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, Trans. with an Introduction and Notes by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, Vol. 1 (Liverpool: University Press, 2005). Finally, see the commentary in Perrone, *La Chiesa*, 97-99.

Only one Chalcedonian remained among Palestine's ascetic luminaries. That was Euthymius, and his affiliation placed him in an interesting position. His hagiographer is at pains to expound Euthymius' heroic role in this troubled time.²⁰⁵ Euthymius is portrayed as staunchly orthodox, with an arsenal of Chalcedonian arguments ready to hand.²⁰⁶ Beyond theological conviction, however, Euthymius was enmeshed in an extra-Palestinian network that firmly tied him to the Chalcedon side.²⁰⁷ It was this network that made him indispensable to the rebel patriarch.

Rather than expel the influential monk from the region, Theodosius made exceptions for him. He courted Euthymius, hoping to transform the well-connected ascetic into his ambassador abroad. Evidently the patriarch went to some trouble in his wooing; Cyril informs us that Theodosius sent both his archimandrites to make the attempt:

²⁰⁵ Cyril's account is typical of his style. His verified (and in this case verifiable) facts are colored with a heavily-biased embellishment: "When the news had circulated, as people reported that the great Euthymius had accepted the definition of the faith proclaimed at Chalcedon, all the monks were about to accept it, had they not been prevented by one Theodosius, in appearance a monk but in reality a precursor of Antichrist..."

Perpetrating many brutal acts of war, he achieved control for twenty months. While at that time almost all the urban population and the monks of the desert followed his apostasy, of the whole desert only Euthymius refused to be of his communion." Cyril, *VE*, 41-42 (38).

Regarding violence perpetrated against Chalcedonians during Theodosius' reign, see Horn, *Asceticism*, 91, referencing Gaddis, *No Crime*.

²⁰⁶ Euthymius' theological confession is surprisingly articulate in its defense of the Council. See Cyril, *Lives*, 42-44 (39-40). It is much more detailed than Antony's rebuttal of the Arians as crafted by Athanasius, which Cyril had to hand.

²⁰⁷ These go beyond the examples from the previous chapter. Synodius had once reached out to Euthymius before First Ephesus, instructing him to hold fast to Acacius, now bishop of Melitene, along with Cyril of Alexandria. Euthymius, in turn, had advised his client Bishop Peter of the Saracens to do exactly that when he went to the Council. For a discussion on the relationship between Euthymius, Juvenal, and Bishop Peter see Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril*, 17.

A similar event played out regarding Chalcedon. Bishop Stephen of Jamnia, Synodius' cousin and a former member of Euthymius' monastery, reached out to Euthymius for the latter's opinion on Chalcedon. John, bishop of the Saracens (Peter's successor) did the same. In both cases Euthymius was able to "joyfully affirm" Chalcedon's proceedings. For the events tying Euthymius and his circle to Chalcedon see Cyril, *VE*, 27 (37-41). For a final example that ties Euthymius' circle to the Patriarchate of Antioch, see the story of Euthymius' disciple Domnus. Cyril, *VE*, 20 (28-29).

Theodosius was clever enough to send for [Euthymius] because of his great reputation; since the great Euthymius refused to come to the holy city, Theodosius sent to him two monastic archimandrites to invite him to join his party – Elpidius, the disciple and successor of the great Passariôn, and Gerontius, who had succeeded blessed Melania. When these men arrived and began their plea, the great Euthymius said, ‘Far be it from me to share in the murderous crimes of Theodosius or be seduced by his heresy.’ Elpidius and Gerontius replied, ‘But ought we to share the doctrines of Nestorius, which have been approved by the council now assembled at Chalcedon by means of the expression “*in two natures?*”’²⁰⁸

Euthymius replied with a dazzling Chalcedonian apologetic,²⁰⁹ and then:

When the saint had said all this, Elpidius admitted and confessed that the great Euthymius had spoken throughout in accordance with truth and piety, even if he did not immediately break off association with Theodosius; Gerontius, however, remained unconvinced, and so it was in disagreement that on taking their leave they returned to him who had sent them.²¹⁰

In Cyril’s account Theodosius continued his efforts until Euthymius fled to the deep desert.²¹¹ There the ascetic began to win converts for Chalcedon, most notably the desert father Gerasimus.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 42-42 (38-39).

²⁰⁹ Stallman-Pacitti provides a thorough demonstration of Cyril’s reliance on Chalcedonian and Justinianic doctrinal statements to provide the confessional statements of his heroes. See Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril*, 41-60.

²¹⁰ Cyril, *VE*, 44 (40). The case of Elpidius is curious. He would in fact cross over to the Chalcedonian side five years later. At that point it was easier to break “association” with Theodosius, who was in defeated exile in Egypt. Elpidius was in fact reconciled to Juvenal by Euthymius, when the latter did the same for Eudokia (see below). What part this conversation may have had in that reconciliation is impossible to know. Did Euthymius’ words ring in Elpidius’ ears for five years, quietly troubling him, and so enable his reconciliation? Or, did he put the story about to lessen his image as a Johnny-come-lately to the Chalcedonian camp? Perhaps a little of both, and all subconsciously? We cannot know, but in both instances Gerontius remained committed to the anti-Chalcedonian cause.

²¹¹ Cyril, *VE*, 44 (40-41).

²¹² An event related by two accounts, and possibly by two authors, depending on the authorship of the *Vita Gerasimi*. That work notes that: “...Afterwards, having been led by divine love and having been eager to advance from glory into glory, he went to Jerusalem. After doing obeisance at the holy places he went down to the Jordan River and spent time in the desert around the Dead Sea, seeking the solitary life. In the time of the ecumenical synod in Chalcedon he, with the other hermits of the desert, was seduced by the evil teachings and contentious contempt of Schism. However, through the teaching of the great father Euthymius he was persuaded to agree with the boundary laid out by the ecumenical synod.” *Vita Sancti Gerasimi anonyma*, edited by K. M. Koikylides, in *Αναλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτης Σταχυολογιας* 4 (Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation, 1897), 175-76 (1:11-20). This translation is my own; no modern translation was available at the time of reading. The Greek runs thus:

Although locally secure, Theodosius proved unable to establish his *bona fides* with the emperor. His adversary Juvenal was in the opposite position. Juvenal may have been reviled in his own see, but Chalcedon had established his communion with Marcian and Leo. They were now invested in him.²¹³ Juvenal had no need of an intermediary: he spent a comfortable exile with Marcian at court.

In 453 Marcian sent an army to Palestine and had Juvenal forcibly reinstalled.²¹⁴

The anti-Chalcedonian sources portray this as a violent affair:

While Theodosius was making progress in these affairs, Emperor Marcian caught wind of all that he was doing. Juvenal returned with the *comes* Dorotheus and an army in order to arrest Theodosius, imprison him, depose any bishop whom he had consecrated by his authority, and punish the monks and the people and persecute them for their insolence and audacity because they had made Theodosius bishop in Jerusalem. [Marcian] spared only Peter the Iberian, because

“...μετέπειτα δὲ ὑπο τῆς θείας ἀγάπης ἀγόμενος καὶ "ἀπο δόξης εἰς δόξαν" προκόπτειν ἐπειγόμενος ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ προσκυνήσας τοὺς ἀγίους καὶ σεβασμίους τόπους κατήλθεν εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην καὶ διήγεν ἐν τῇ Νεκρᾷ Θάλασσᾳ ἐρήμῳ, τὸν ἀναχωρητικὸν μετερχόμενος Βίον. Ὅστις ἐν τῷ καιπῷ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐν Χαλκηδόνι συνόδου μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τῆς, ἐρήμου ἀναχωρτῶν συνυπήχθη τῇ τῶν Ἀποσχιστῶν κακοδιδασκαλίᾳ καὶ ἀλόγῳ φιλονεικίᾳ· ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς τοῦ μεγάλου πατρὸς Εὐθυμίου διδασκαλίας ἐπέισθη συνθέσθαι τῷ ὄπῳ τῷ ἐκτεθέντι ὑπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης συνόδου.”

Cyril contextualizes the incident into Euthymius’ struggle against Theodosius, placing it right after the latter’s repeated attempts to win him over: “Noting Theodosius’ utter shamelessness, the great Euthymius told the fathers not to share in his apostasy and so departed to the utter desert; on hearing of this, many of the anchorites adopted the same policy. At that time there was a great anchorite of Lycian origin, called Gerasimus, who after succeeding in the monastic life in his own homeland and displaying many combats against the spirits of wickedness had recently left his homeland and was practicing the anchoritic life in the desert by the Jordan. He with the other anchorites had been seduced by the false teaching of Theodosius; but on hearing from almost all the anchorites of the resplendent grace of the great Euthymius he went to him at Roubâ, and after staying with him for a considerable time was persuaded to assent to the definition issued by the Council of Chalcedon and break off his association with Theodosius, as did other anchorites also, Peter surnamed Gournites, Mark, Joullôn and Silvanus. The great Euthymius remained there until Theodosius remained ousted.” Cyril, *VE*, 44ff (40ff). See chapter seven for a discussion of the two passages.

²¹³ Leo may have supported Juvenal’s restoration as a matter of policy, but his letters make clear that he saw Juvenal as an ambitious, grasping, and untrustworthy man. Nevertheless, Leo did affirm Juvenal’s restoration as both proper and necessary, even while informing Juvenal that his problems were his own fault. Thus Juvenal could count on Leo’s (backhanded) support. See the discussion of Leo’s letters in chapter one.

²¹⁴ Ultimately the emperor had no choice but to move against a rebel patriarch installed without his blessing: “The emperor did, however, move inexorably, if with measured tread, toward direct action against the bishops, for a rival hierarchy in what German historians please to call the *Reichskirche* was intolerable.” See Parvis, “How to Lynch a Patriarch,” 314.

he had been persuaded by the empress, even though [Peter] did not want to be in communion with the rest of the bishops.

When [Juvenal] arrived in Neapolis, he found many monks there. At first he tried to seduce them with enticements. They were simple folk whose weapon and whose helmet were the true faith and righteous works. He tried to persuade them to be in communion with him. When they indignantly refused unless he condemned the violent acts that had taken place at Chalcedon, he said, ‘It is the emperor’s will,’ but they still refused. So he gave orders to the soldiers and the Samaritans, who beat and killed the monks, while they were singing, ‘God, the nations have entered your inheritance, and have defiled your holy sanctuary, and see: they are making Jerusalem a ruin!’ Some of the soldiers were moved with pity and wept; others of them and the Samaritans killed many monks, whose blood was shed upon the ground.²¹⁵

John Rufus fleshed out the details. Theodosius and most of his bishops fled to Egypt.

Romanus was captured and sent to Antioch.²¹⁶ Peter was spared, but eighteen months later God apparently instructed him to join the others in Egypt.²¹⁷ The fate of Gerontius, Elpidius, and Marcianus is not recorded. They next appear at Eudokia’s side, however, so it seems reasonable to assume that she sheltered them from reprisal. The restoration was a stunning blow to anti-Chalcedonian leadership in Palestine.

²¹⁵ Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.5d (119-120).

²¹⁶ After noting that Marcian was the willing host and agent of the devil, Rufus relates that the devil made Marcian “[issue] an imperial decree to the holy and true high priests, [those] zealous for the fear of God who had been appointed by Theodosius, the great and apostolic high priest, [that] they should be removed from their thrones in all the cities of Palestine and if they were unwilling they should be expelled by force and be subject to punishment, whereas Theodosius, the head of the shepherds, where[ever] he be found, should suffer capital punishment, since the emperor issued what is called a *forma* against him. At that time all [the bishops of the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine] relented and left [their sees], this being what the Patriarch Theodosius advised in that he judged it more pleasing to God that the preachers of the truth should be preserved and not [that] when they would die and be slain the orthodox faithful would be deprived of those who had edified them and sustained them.” John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 81 (123).

Regarding Romanus and those who did not escape: “When according to the command of Marcian [Theodosius] was driven away and had departed from Jerusalem, he dwelt in Egypt, hiding himself and remaining unknown. At that time also Abba Romanus, the father of the monks, having been captured according to Juvenal the Apostate’s malice and plan, was ordered to remain under guard in Antioch. Together with him, Timothy was seized, who was archimandrite of the monastery of Hypatios, about seven miles from the Holy City, because he was a bishop, [having been appointed] by the blessed Theodosius in one of the cities under his [jurisdiction].” John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 2 (283).

²¹⁷ For Peter’s departure see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.7a (120-21), John Rufus, *Life of Peter* 82 (123-125), and John Rufus, *Plérophories* 56 (111). See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism*, 92, esp. n207.

Eudokia was the final obstacle to that restoration. Juvenal couldn't touch her; she was immune to any methods at his disposal. Yet there were other methods. Eudokia's family members, both emperors (east and west), and even Pope Leo wrote to her attempting to make her reconsider her position and affiliations.²¹⁸ Eudokia suffered a number of personal tragedies at the same time, and the combined weight of these elements gave her pause.²¹⁹ In her moment of doubt she reached out to Symeon Stylites for advice. Symeon pointed Eudokia toward Euthymius, to whom she reached out through the mediation of a rural bishop, Anastasius. Euthymius replied through the aforementioned Cosmas, who relayed Euthymius' conditions for a meeting.²²⁰ At that meeting Euthymius successfully convinced Eudokia to "depart from the communion of Dioscorus and enter into communion with Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem."²²¹

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The late 450s were a mixed bag for anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine. The erstwhile Patriarch Theodosius was taken and dead by 457.²²² On the other hand, Juvenal declared an amnesty in 458 (perhaps at Eudokia's urging), leading to Romanus' return.²²³ Juvenal himself died later that year, and Eudokia followed him two years later.

²¹⁸ Leo's letters are particularly instructive in this regard. See Letters CXVII (to Julian, Bishop of Cos), CXXIII (to Eudokia), and CXXIV (to the monks of Palestine). Pope Saint Leo the Great, *Epistolae*, in *Patrologia Latina* vol. 54, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: *Imprimerie Catholique*, 1846). Leo was much more involved in Palestinian events than might be expected.

²¹⁹ For a summary of Eudokia's indecision and misfortunes, see Honigmann, *Juvenal*, 258ff.

²²⁰ This episode can be found in its entirety in Cyril, *VE*, 30 (43-46).

²²¹ Cyril, *VE*, 30 (45). By this time Euthymius' ties to Juvenal were already quite strong.

²²² For accounts of Theodosius' death see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.9a-b (121-24), and John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 3-7 (285-295). See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism*, 28-30. In brief, Theodosius left Egypt for Antioch, was captured and taken to Constantinople, was given over to a Chalcedonian monastery for safekeeping, and died as a result of overexposure to lime.

²²³ For Romanus' return see John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 9 (297-299). Eudokia seems to have played a role both in his return and the founding of his monastery; her support for her anti-Chalcedonian friends did not end with her conversion. See Horn, *Asceticism*, 98-99. See also Cornelia Horn, "Empress

Eudokia's conversion outstripped all these events. It was a devastating blow to the anti-Chalcedonian cause, and it left her former allies reeling in shock. Some opted to join her in reconciliation with Juvenal and the Chalcedonians:

She went to the holy city immediately; and on being reconciled to the archbishop and through the information provided by the priests Cosmas and Anastasius, she returned to the communion of the Catholic Church. By her example she drew back to the Catholic communion a great number of laymen and monks who had been led astray by Theodosius.²²⁴

This was the so-called First Union (of 456). It was a reconciliation of anti-Chalcedonian moderates, including some of their leadership. Not all followed Eudokia into reconciliation, however:

Of the two archimandrites, Elpidius shook off his error and was reconciled to the Church, but Gerontius maintained his previous irrational opposition and drew after him a considerable flock, including two monks called Marcianus and Romanus who, persevering in error, withdrew from Elpidius' community and founded cenobia, one near holy Bethlehem, the other at the village of Thekoa.²²⁵

By 460 the anti-Chalcedonian party was on its heels. Only Gerontius, Romanus, and Marcianus remained from the heady days of 451. They were able to provide leadership to the remaining movement, and their respective monasteries served as bases for the causes' remaining adherents.²²⁶ Yet the situation was not quite dire. The anti-Chalcedonians retained the sympathies of a great many Palestinian Christians.

Eudokia and the Monk Peter the Iberian: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Love of a Foster-Mother in Fifth-Century Palestine," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 28 (2004), 197-213.

The issue of Eudokia's continued affiliations is still an open question. It is hoped that it will be clarified with the publication of recently discovered writings of the monk Marcianus, if said publication is still forthcoming. See Michael Kohlbacher, "Unpublizierte Fragmente des Markianos von Bethlehem (nunc CPG 3898 a-d)" in *Horizonte der Christenheit*, ed. Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski (Erlangen: Lehrstuhl für Geschichte und Theologie des christlichen Ostens, 1994), 137-166.

²²⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (45-46).

²²⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (46). Cyril's timeline seems a little muddled, but the events, division, and importance of these remaining leaders and their monasteries is not in dispute.

²²⁶ See Perrone, *Chiesa*, 113ff.

Euthymius, on the other hand, could not have been in a better position. He had remained loyal to the Chalcedonian alliance during the insurrection. His ties to Juvenal were beyond question. Most importantly, he had brokered Eudokia's reconciliation. He was ideally situated with both Patriarch and Empress, and the senior members of his inner circle would reap the benefits of his augmented influence.

The rise of Euthymius' disciples had begun before Chalcedon: Synodius' cousin Stephen, for example, was already bishop of Jamnia at this time.²²⁷ Yet the trickle of such elevations was about to become a flood. Stephen's brother Andrew was made superior of Eudokia's new shrine to St. Menas.²²⁸ Their brother Gaianus would later become bishop of Medaba.²²⁹ Cosmas became bishop of Scythopolis a few years later. By that time Cosmas' brother Gabrielus was already superior of St. Stephen's.²³⁰ When Cosmas was elevated, his other brother Chrysippus took his place as Guardian of the Holy Cross.²³¹

These elevations did not deplete Euthymius' ranks; others were taking their places in the inner circle. It had already been augmented by Martyrius and Elias, who had been archimandrites in Egypt. Fleeing the anti-Chalcedonian reaction in that region, these two had made directly for Euthymius. They quickly became part of the select group that

²²⁷ See chapter one.

²²⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 30 (46).

²²⁹ The rise of Gaianus was also connected to Euthymius' continued association with the Saracen Terebôn. Euthymius would intercede for Terebôn twice more. During the first incident he cured the barrenness of Terebôn's wife. The second occurrence was an entirely different matter. Cyril informs us that Terebôn was "wrongly" imprisoned during a trip to Bosra. Euthymius sent Gaianus as intermediary to intercede with Antipatrus, the bishop of Bosra. The intercession was successful. Terebôn was released, and Antipatrus ordained Gaianus shortly afterward. Cyril, *VE*, 34 (49).

²³⁰ Gabrielus would also later become an intermediary for Eudokia. Cyril, *VE*, 30 (46), 35 (50), 37 (52-53).

²³¹ Cyril, *VE*, 30 (46), 37 (42). Chrysippus would later provide the necessary introductions between Patriarch Anastasius and the next group of Euthymius' disciples.

accompanied him on his annual retreat to Roubâ.²³² Both would found their own Judean monasteries not long after. The circle continued to grow in the years that followed, and future luminaries like Sabas and John the Hesychast were added to its ranks. As time went on, the previously elevated senior members of that circle would assist in the elevation of their confreres.

The downfall of Theodosius and subsequent rise of Euthymius shifted the locus of ascetic authority eastward.²³³ Major institutional positions would henceforth be filled by Judean monks. The Euthymian network began to intertwine with imperial and patriarchal authority to shape the region for the next 100 years. Within half that time, the Euthymians would be playing a major role in the ecclesiastical policies of the entire eastern empire.²³⁴

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Meanwhile a new generation of Chalcedonians was emigrating from Cappadocia. Theodosius, Theognius, and Sabas all arrived during the tumultuous years following Chalcedon, and Cyril takes care to situate their appearance against the ecclesiastical politics of the period.²³⁵ Fortunately enough, all were able to find sheltered enclaves in which to weather the storm.

²³² Here as elsewhere, Euthymius “prophesied” the rise of his followers. Cyril’s desire to cement Euthymius’ second sight aside, the great detail he gave to Euthymius’ network relationships with all these figures lends a different kind of credence to his accounts. Cyril, *VE*, 220 (30-31), 32 (47-48). By this time Euthymius had already done likewise for Eudokia’s intermediary Anastasius, who went on to fulfill that prediction by becoming Juvenal’s successor.

²³³ See also Binns, *Ascetics*, 177f.

²³⁴ See chapter three.

²³⁵ An issue with the sources here: Theodosius and Theognius each have two literary traditions. For this narrative I am primarily relying on Cyril because of a) his greater historical veracity (see my introduction above), b) nothing in the other sources appears to contradict the major points of Cyril’s early

Theodosius arrived in Jerusalem during the insurrection. He quickly found and attached himself to Longinus, a monastic elder and fellow Cappadocian. Fearing that Theodosius would be seduced by the anti-Chalcedonians, Longinus sent him to stay with the patroness Hicelia outside Jerusalem.²³⁶ In time Theodosius rose to become superior of Hicelia's church, but soon fled to the desert.²³⁷ There "he learnt the rule of the desert from [the blessed Marinus the anchorite and Abba Luke of Metopa], while they had originally been taught monastic discipline by Saint Euthymius."²³⁸

Theognius arrived at or around the time of the First Union. He gravitated to Flavia's new Chalcedonian monastery on the Mount of Olives, downslope from Gerontius' anti-Chalcedonian stronghold.²³⁹ Like Theodosius, Theognius soon rose through the ranks. He too would later flee to the desert.

The scion of a well-to-do, well-born family, Sabas arrived in the Holy Land shortly following the First Union. He attached himself to a fellow Cappadocian at Elpidius' monastery, but soon asked the latter's permission to go follow Euthymius.²⁴⁰ The latter accepted him and placed him under his own disciple Domitian. Soon afterward

narratives, and c) I am following the example of Festugière and Vivian who, although working on the other texts, nevertheless rely on Cyril. See Festugière throughout, and Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 143.

²³⁶ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 236 (262). Here we also find a member of the next round of minor patronesses in the region. Theognius' Flavia is another.

At this time Stephen and Cosmas were deacons at the Anastasis. Cyril, *Life of Euthymius*, 32 (28). The life of this community would have been very tense. They might have been protected by Patriarch Theodosius' desire not to alienate Euthymius and his extra-Palestinian connections, but certainly the monastery of Peter the Iberian lay almost alongside the Tower of David, perhaps increasing Longinus' concern. Might the other monasteries be casting their nets for young talent like Theodosius? For Peter's monastery, see John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 64 (93-95).

²³⁷ The Cathisma of the Mother of God, situated on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

²³⁸ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 237 (263).

²³⁹ Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 241 (269).

²⁴⁰ Cyril, *Life of Sabas* (hereafter *VS*), 90 (98-99).

Sabas was sent to live in Theoctistus' *cenobium*, accompanied by Euthymius' prophecy regarding his future prominence.²⁴¹

Sabas would eventually gain entry into the inner circle, and was present at the elderly Euthymius' final retreat to Roubâ. The guest list was not what it might have been: many of Euthymius' protégés had by then achieved prominence and promotion. Yet it was an impressive group nonetheless. Martyrius and Elias were there, as was Domitian, Euthymius' personal companion for over fifty years. Theoctistus had since passed on, but his successor Longinus (Euthymius' appointee) was in attendance. Also present were Bishop John the Solitary and the monk-priest Thallelaeus.²⁴² All these connections would later prove vital to Sabas' career and its aftermath.

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Juvenal's final years were marked by a policy of moderate toleration. His successor Anastasius (459-478) seems to have continued that policy.²⁴³ He was successful in that regard: Palestine remained quiet for 15 years. Yet it was not to last.

²⁴¹ Cyril gives two versions of this prophecy. The first is found in the *Life of Euthymius*, directly following the prophecies regarding Martyrius and Elias. This is the briefer account: "Receive this youth and attend him, for, as I see, he is going to attain prominence in the monastic life." Cyril, *VE*, 31 (46-47).

Cyril's account in the *Life of Sabas* is much richer in detail. Here Euthymius sends Sabas to Theoctistus as part of his training. Cyril reads this as Euthymius' recognition and preparation of his own successor: "It was not aimlessly, it seems to me, that the great Euthymius acted in this way; rather, foreseeing by second sight that Sabas was going to be archimandrite of all the anchorites in Palestine, nay more, that he was going to found the greatest and most famous laura, surpassing all those in Palestine, and would himself be leader and lawgiver of all those who withdraw by themselves..." Cyril, *VS*, 7 (99-100).

²⁴² These two being Cyril's sources for the story. Cyril, *VE*, 38 (53-54).

²⁴³ Jan-Eric Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2002), 12. Perrone has argued that Anastasius' elevation was designed to accomplish exactly that end: "É in questa situazione delicata che si pose il problema del successore di Giovenale. Non è dunque privo di particolare importanza che la scelta sia caduta sulla persona del corepiscono Anastasio. Cirillo di Scitopoli riferisce che fu eletto <<col voto di tutto il popolo>>, un'affermazione che vuole forse indicare l'assenza di contrasti intorno al nome del candidato. In effetti Anastasio poteva essere giustamente considerato persona capace, dopo l'opera svolta a favore della prima unione. Inoltre non era solo in buone relazioni con Eudocio o con Eutimio, ma in quanto discepolo di Passarione non doveva neppure risultare

In 475 Basilicus overthrew his brother-in-law Zeno and took the throne. Perhaps in search of allies, he annulled Chalcedon via his *Encyclical*, which received overwhelming episcopal subscription.²⁴⁴ Anastasius was among the signatories. The following year Basilicus rescinded the *Encyclical* with his *Anti-Encyclical*, to which Anastasius did not subscribe. Shortly thereafter Zeno retook his throne, and voided all of Basilicus' acts *in toto*. Anastasius remained quiet throughout, and the Holy Land remained at peace. Pilgrims from both sides continued to pour into Jerusalem and its environs.²⁴⁵

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The anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine had received a boost from the *Encyclical*. They soon received another: Peter the Iberian returned that same year. Peter had left 20 years before as a well-connected – if generally retiring – ascetic. He returned as a battle-hardened anti-Chalcedonian war leader. During his time in Egypt he had transformed into a charismatic firebrand of a holy man, and his influence and authority had grown accordingly.²⁴⁶

sgradito agli ambienti monofisiti. La sua elezione significata per questi il mantenimento di un clima di moderazione e di relativa tolleranza.” Perrone, *Chiesa*, 118.

²⁴⁴ For the *Encyclical* and episcopal response see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.1a-5c (174-90); Evagrius, *History*, 3.4-9 (133-143); John Rufus, *Life of Peter* 106-110 (161-65); John Rufus, *Plérophories*, XLVI (98-9), LXXXII (137-38), LXXXVI (139-40); and Cyril, *VE*, 62 (59).

²⁴⁵ Perrone argues that this was one of Anastasius' motives: Perrone, *Chiesa*, 126. Based on Anastasius' subscription to the *Encyclical* and Euthymius' reluctance to meet with him, Binns has argued that Anastasius was in league with the anti-Chalcedonians, or at least under their thumb. Binns, *Ascetics*, 188. Others have argued that Anastasius was simply a flexible moderate. See also Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (London: Blackwell and Mott, 1966), 95; and Perrone, *Chiesa*, 126. Horn has argued both positions, the latter in Horn, *Asceticism*, 102; the former in her introduction to Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 69.

²⁴⁶ For Peter's time in Egypt see John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 82-103 (123-57), and Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 4.4a (133-34). For a discussion of the events there and their effect on Peter's character see Horn, *Asceticism*, 93-97 and Kofsky, “Peter the Iberian,” 215.

In 475 Peter arrived at Ashkelon, near Gaza.²⁴⁷ He built a monastery there, and began to transform the area into his base of operations. He forged connections with the remaining anti-Chalcedonian institutions. He also took to traveling, creating and consolidating anti-Chalcedonian networks throughout the region.²⁴⁸

Events were unfolding in Judea as well. Euthymius had died in 473, and the aftermath of his death was a major political event.²⁴⁹ Anastasius journeyed to the desert for the funeral with Gabrielus and Chrysippus by his side. Also in the Patriarch's company was Fidus the deacon, with whom Anastasius had visited Euthymius years before.²⁵⁰ Fidus was designated to construct the burial vault, and after its completion Anastasius returned to celebrate the *synaxis*. Chrysippus took advantage of the

²⁴⁷ In the wake of the *Encyclical* Peter's constituents in Maiuma sent messengers "[earnestly] entreating him also to visit his flock in Palestine, since it was rightfully his flock, and not to neglect it, which all this time was left widowed of its superintendence and of his spiritual teaching." John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 104 (157). Apparently the confluence of factors (*Encyclical*, atmosphere in Palestine, etc.) persuaded Peter that the time was right.

²⁴⁸ The best source of Peter's activity in this period is John Rufus, who dedicated a large part of his work to Peter's activities in this period. See John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 105-179 (157-263). Perrone has argued that Peter's activity was made possible by the atmosphere of tolerance prevalent in Palestine at the time: "Da questa sede si mise a percorrere la località della Palestina da Gaza e Maiuma a Caesarea, oppure nella regione di Gerusalemme o ancora fino alla provincia d'Arabia. Lo scopo di questo peregrinare non era solo la propaganda dell'ideale monastico, che attirava uomini e donne alla pratica dell'ascetismo sull'esempio di Pietro, bensì anche il consolidamento e l'organizzazione del partito monofisita. Secondo quanto riferisce la biografo dell'Iberico, non senza un evidente trionfalismo, in tutti i luoghi da lui visitati furono istituite comunità di credenti <<ortodossi>> e vennero eretti monasteri e chiese per le loro necessità spirituali.

La missione monofisita di Pietro Iberico rivela come nell'atmosfera tollerante, già instaurata da Giovenale sul finire del sup episcopato e mantenuta dal patriarca Anastasio, si fosse realizzato un *modus Vivendi* fra sostenitori (verosimilmente un poco tepidi) del concilio e i loro avversari." Perrone, *Chiesa*, 121.

²⁴⁹ The immediate question was who would take over the monastery. Domitian was the obvious choice, but he passed away seven days later. The task fell to a certain Elias (not Martyrius' companion), to whom Euthymius prophetically entrusted the transformation of the *laura* to a *cenobium*. Elias governed the monastery for 38 years, but is barely mentioned in Cyril's text after the dedication of the new *cenobium*. Cyril, *VE*, 39 (54-56); 47 (65).

All of these passages demonstrate the simultaneity of Cyril's two methodologies. Domitian died seven days after his master, and the *laura* was indeed transformed into a *cenobium*, albeit years after Euthymius' death. Like Euthymius' prophecy regarding Sabas' career, Cyril is appending the interpretation of his tradition to documented historical events. We cannot know the accuracy of the interpretation, but in chapter seven it will be shown to be a historical source in itself.

²⁵⁰ Cyril, *VE*, 40 (57).

opportunity, and introduced the Patriarch to Martyrius and Elias. Anastasius took these two back to Jerusalem and ordained them priests of the Resurrection. Six years later Martyrius succeeded Anastasius as patriarch, with Fidus as his trusted associate. Three years after that, Fidus was made bishop of Dôra.²⁵¹

By this time the détente had held for a quarter century. The Euthymians had risen far, and the anti-Chalcedonians had lost much. Yet they had not lost all. They had taken advantage of the ceasefire to reconsolidate. An institutional network formed the backbone of a still-living organism: Gerontius on the Mount of Olives, Marcianus in Bethlehem, Romanus in Thekoa and Eleutheropolis, and now Peter in Ashkelon.²⁵² The movement was far from dead.

The armistice ended during Martyrius' tenure (478-86). Early in his patriarchate Martyrius took advantage of his predecessors' policies to negotiate a compromise with moderate anti-Chalcedonians. This was the so-called Second Union: the reconciliation of a wave of moderates led by Marcianus.²⁵³ After the Union, however, the gloves came

²⁵¹ Cyril, *VE*, 42-44 (58-63).

²⁵² Romanus spent little time in his monastery in Thekoa (south of Bethlehem) after his exile in Antioch. Instead he founded another monastery in Eleutheropolis (about halfway between Gaza and Jerusalem) on an estate given to him by Eudokia. John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 9 (297-99). See also Patrich, *Sabas*, 108.

²⁵³ There are two accounts of the Second Union. Cyril's puts the impetus for reconciliation on Marcianus, who prompts his followers to make a choice about reconciliation: "Let us test ourselves whether we are in the faith; following the Apostolic precedent let us cast lots representing the bishops and the monks. If the lot falls on the monks, let us remain where we are; but if on the bishops, let us join the Church." When he had said this they agreed and cast lots: the lot fell on the bishops. Fully convinced, they all in unanimous agreement went to the holy city, having pledged themselves to reunion with holy Church." Cyril, *VE*, 45 (63-64). This is not an atypical approach for Cyril: capturing the substance of the Second Union (the event, its timing, and its participants), but applying heavy bias to its interpretation.

Zacharias gives Martyrius as the instigator of the reconciliation, and relates excerpts of his public address on the subject. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.6a-d (190-92). Perrone accepts the possibility of the vote recorded by Cyril, but uses the address in Pseudo-Zacharias' *Chronicle* to suggest that Martyrius held anti-Chalcedonian sympathies. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 127-39. Horn notes that Zacharias excerpted those passages most favorable to his position. Horn, *Asceticism*, 103. Certainly Cyril wants to claim Martyrius as a staunch Chalcedonian, and Zacharias is equally concerned to portray the patriarch as a moderate anti-Chalcedonian.

off. Martyrius quickly reclaimed the remaining anti-Chalcedonian monasteries in the Jerusalem region, including Thekoa. Gerontius and others were ejected and exiled.²⁵⁴

Bethlehem was lost when Marcianus turned. In the blink of an eye anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine found their institutional activity confined to Ashkelon and Eleutheropolis.

They reconsolidated anew. After forging a partnership with the famous Abba Isaiah (the Egyptian), Peter began shaping an inner circle of his own, a fusion of senior monks and talented young students. These would be the leaders of the next generation: John the Canopite and Theodore of Ashkelon, Mamas, Zacharias Rhetor and John Rufus, and finally Severus of Antioch. These and others were Peter's "heirs," and they would preside over almost three decades of decline, defection, and defeat in Palestine.²⁵⁵

It seems more likely that Martyrius was in fact a moderate Chalcedonian. His flight from the anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt in the company of a staunch Chalcedonian (Elias) into the arms of a Chalcedonian loyalist (Euthymius) seems to argue against the possibility of anti-Chalcedonian leanings. As time went on he became embedded into the Chalcedonian circle in Judea. Furthermore, it will shortly be seen that Martyrius went on to exile staunch anti-Chalcedonians and patronize Judean Chalcedonians, including those who pushed a Chalcedonian reading of Zeno's *Henotikon*, the document many believe to have been based on Martyrius' own Second Union. Finally, a short time later we find the head of Martyrius' own monastery firmly ensconced on the Chalcedonian side of things. In light of this larger context Perrone's claims seem difficult to sustain.

²⁵⁴ Zacharias notes in passing that Marcianus expelled the holdouts from his own monastery: "[Martyrius] convinced the good monk Marcian[us], and he accepted and admonished his colleagues, but the others who did not accept him he expelled." Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.6a (190-91). Cyril gives a fuller account of the fallout: "The whole mass of the Aposchists returned to communion, apart from Gerontius the archimandrite, who had governed the monasteries of blessed Melania for forty-five years, and Romanus, who had founded the monastery at Thekoa. These monks, persisting in their irrational contentiousness, were for this reason expelled from their monasteries; after wandering hither and thither, they died excommunicate." Cyril, *VE*, 45 (64).

²⁵⁵ Anti-Chalcedonian sources make much of Peter's heirs: three different authors use the term. John Rufus relates that: "Knowing that the time of his calling from above was near, [Peter] made a will, appointing four heirs. The first was Abba John the deacon, whom he loved much, the one called the Canopite...and with him were Zachariah and Andrew, his cell-mates, and with them Theodore of Ashkelon the ex-lawyer, who remained with him at the end, together with the old man John. [To these he bequeathed] his whole monastery and the administration and leadership of the brethren, those who alone were sufficient and able to take up this guardianship and guidance that is from God." John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 176-78 (257-59).

Compare Zachariah of Mytilene (Zacharias Rhetor), *The Life of Severus*, translated with an introduction by Lena Ambjörn (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), 88: "Nevertheless we learned that the great Peter had left heirs. The first, indeed, was John, who was called the Canopite, a philosopher who was chaste in soul and body, even in the senses of the body, and whose mind was contemplating God. The

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The Judeans' ascent accelerated in the years that followed the expulsion of anti-Chalcedonian hard-liners from Jerusalem. Martyrius promoted Chalcedonians to fill administrative and institutional vacancies, and his old friends and allies made for obvious choices. The younger generation now began to rise as well, and a new group of Judean monasteries arose during Martyrius' tenure. Theodosius founded his *cenobium* in 479. After staying under Theodosius' roof for a time, Theognius went on to do the same. Sabas founded his Great Laura a few years later in 483.²⁵⁶ The prestige of these monks grew along with their monasteries, situating them to take further steps up the ladder.

others were Zachariah and Andreas, and Theodore, who was actually mentioned as the fourth, but by the choice of the two before him, it was decided that he should lead the monastery together with the great John. The altar was to be assigned to John, called Rufus, who had earlier studied law together with the said Theodore..."

Compare also Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, traduits et annotés par M. A. Kugener in *Patrologia Orientalis* 12 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907), 224: "[Severus] se rendit en ce moment au convent du grand Pierre don't il a été question plus haut. Les supérieurs du convent l'accueillirent avec joie, et comprirent alors qu'une prophétie di grand Pierre s'était accomplie à son sujet. Ces supérieurs étaient: Jean, surnommé le *Canopite*. Théodore le grand, et Jean qui s'était enfui d'Antioche pour ne pas y devenir évêque, qui avait embrassé la vie monastique auprès de l'admirable Pierre, et avait hérité de sa prescience. Ce furent là, en effet, les héritiers que Pierre laissai ils étaient très savants et éloquents, et lui ressemblaient."

Finally, it is worth noting that Zacharias Rhetor ends his *Life of Abba Isaiah* with the idea of an "heir" as well. In this occasion that heir is Peter himself: "And so [Isaiah] conquered, for he had shown himself to be free from all passions and superior to vain glory. God had given him power over the devil and his demons, just as was written, and so, having established himself as a second Anthony in the sight of God, he laid down his transitory earthly body and departed to Him who he loved. [Upon this departure, Isaiah] left behind Peter, his disciple, heir, and successor."

No English translation was available at the time of writing, and so the above is my own (rather free) translation. The Latin runs as follows:

"Et, cum se iam ab omnibus passionibus liberum et vana gloria superiorem ostendisset, et potestate sibi a Deo data diabolum et demones et cunctam potentiam eorum, sicut scriptum est, conculcasset, et Antonium secundum se coram Deo constituisset, corpus temporarium terrae reliquit, et ad eum quem diligebat discessit, herede et vicario Petro discipulo su relicto." *Vita Isaiae Monachi*, auctore Zacharia Scholastico, ed. E. W. Brooks, in *Patrologia Orientalis, Series Tertia, Tomus XXV* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907), 10.

In this regard the two *Lives* form something like a record of monastic lineage, from Abba Isaiah's formation in Egypt, through Peter, to Peter's heirs.

²⁵⁶ The careers and achievements of this generation of Chalcedonians will be covered in the next chapter.

When Martyrius passed on and Sallustius (486-94) succeeded him, they would go on to do exactly that.

Sabas in particular flourished under Sallustius. The Patriarch ordained him priest and supported him in his endeavors. These were many: Sabas built hostels in Jerusalem and near the Great Laura in 491, the monastery of Castellium in 492, and the so-called Small Cenobium in 493. When Marcianus died in 494, Sallustius made Sabas and Theodosius archimandrites of the monks.²⁵⁷ Theodosius was placed over the *cenobia* of the region (this, plus the great size of his own *cenobium* led others to christen him “Cenobiarch”). Sabas’ authority was broader. He maintained control over his own *cenobia* and *laurae*, but now added jurisdiction of all other *laurae* in the region. Furthermore, as Euthymius’ heir he was given authority over the older monasteries of Euthymius and Theoctistus, both now *cenobia*. From a certain perspective, it could be said that Theodosius was archimandrite over all *cenobia* not already given to Sabas. Each was given a second: Theodosius was supported by Abba Paul, abbot of Martyrius’ monastery; Sabas by Abba Eugenius, abbot of Gerasimus’ monastery. The founders of both these monasteries had been on excellent terms with Euthymius, and it would appear that those associations continued into the next generation.

Sallustius passed in 494, shortly after raising the two monks to positions of archimandriteship. His successor was Elias (494-516), former companion to Martyrius

²⁵⁷ The position of archimandrite was one of religious, administrative, economic, and institutional authority over a range of monasteries. It had, in times past, been held by one or more persons at a time. Passarion had held the post while Euthymius was still new to the desert, and it was divided among a group upon his death. During the insurrection Gerontius and Elpidius divided the post. Elpidius was succeeded by Elias and then Lazarus; Gerontius was succeeded by Anastasius. Sallustius deposed them both for incompetence and corruption in 491, and appointed Marcianus the sole archimandrite of the monks. He held the post until his death in 494. See the discussion of the history and details of the archimandrite position in Patrich, *Sabas*, 288ff.

and member of Euthymius' inner circle. Elias' dedication to Chalcedon was never in doubt: the new archimandrites would follow him to battle against the anti-Chalcedonian emperor Anastasius (491-518). In the meantime, however, the Chalcedonian ascendancy in Palestine continued. Theognius was made bishop of Bethalia shortly after Elias' accession. Sabas' network continued to grow by leaps and bounds, and encroached further into the remaining anti-Chalcedonian territory. By 509 Thekoa was reborn as Sabas' New Laura.

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Until 507 the anti-Chalcedonians in the east were still doing well. John Rufus inherited Peter's see in Maiuma. Zacharias Rhetor would eventually become bishop of Mitylene. Mamas became superior of Romanus' monastery in Eleutheropolis, and in 512 Severus became Patriarch of Antioch.²⁵⁸

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Yet the final reversal had already begun. In about 507 the Chalcedonian monk Nephalius arrived in Gaza. Zacharias Rhetor painted him as a gifted orator and agitator, who used his gifts to foment insurrection against the anti-Chalcedonians of the region.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ The details of this latter-day anti-Chalcedonian circle are largely drawn from the two *Lives* of Severus, those by Zacharias Rhetor and John of Beth Aphthonia. Zacharias' *Chronicle* had been composed in the 490s, and John Rufus' *Life of Peter* around 500. The only other work that was composed late enough to be of help was Rufus' *Plerophoriae*, which will be covered at length in the following pages. The two *Lives* indicate the strong connections of this group and of the two monasteries. Zacharias Rhetor, for example, had been a law student at Beirut with Severus and John Rufus' brother Evagrius. Both *Lives* make much of Severus' connections to the monasteries at Ashkelon and Eleutheropolis. Several of the inner circle would become advisors to Severus during his rise in Constantinople and Antioch, etc.

²⁵⁹ Nephalius apparently had an interesting career. His opponents describe him as a grasping man, whose real aim was power. Toward that end Nephalius began by agitating against Chalcedon in Alexandria and for it in Palestine. See Zacharias Rhetor, *Life of Severus*, 104-10, and Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 231-33. For more on Nephalius' activity in Alexandria and Constantinople, see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 6.1c, 6.2a-c, and 6.4bff (212-29). The *Chronicle* was written before Nephalius' Palestinian activity, and so contains no record of it. See also Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (175).

Perhaps in some degree of cahoots with the hierarchy in Jerusalem, he turned the Chalcedonian laity against their neighbors, breaking the long-standing peace.²⁶⁰ He stirred up the younger monks against their older, anti-Chalcedonian counterparts. He enlisted the help of local Chalcedonian clergy and bishops against those older monks as well. The latter were ejected – perhaps violently – and fled to Severus in Constantinople. Severus’ intercession led to the expulsion of Nephalius and the restoration of the anti-Chalcedonian monks. The anti-Chalcedonian hold on the region, however, had begun to slip away.

In 516 Mamas had a falling out with Severus. Sabas took advantage of the moment to convert Mamas to the Chalcedonian party, and the anti-Chalcedonians sustained the grievous loss of the monastery in Eleutheropolis.²⁶¹ By 518 the

²⁶⁰ Horn takes an especially strong view of Patriarch Elias’ involvement in the matter: “After his election in AD 494, Patriarch Elias immediately sought to strengthen his connections with the emperor in Constantinople. In his effort he broke the unity between Jerusalem and the anti-Chalcedonian patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria. When finally, in AD 508, he commissioned the formerly anti-Chalcedonian monk Nephalius, now converted to Chalcedon, to expel the anti-Chalcedonian monk from Palestinian monasteries, peace in the Holy Land was destroyed or restored, depending on one’s perspective.” Horn, *Asceticism*, 108.

Patrick Gray, on the other hand, presents an entirely different view. In what he admits to be a “rather radical reworking of the evidence” (243), Gray makes a case for Nephalius the peacemaker. Gray’s position breaks rank with some recent scholarship, putting the onus of angry, revisionist rhetoric on the anti-Chalcedonians, rather than Cyril and his compatriots:

“We should not swallow the negative picture of Nephalius painted by Severus’ admiring biographers. For them, Severus was an innocent victim of Nephalius’ persecution... The charge of disputatiousness and persecution is typical rhetoric and should not be taken seriously except for what it reveals, not directly about Nephalius, but about the anti-Chalcedonians who reacted so strongly against him: they hated him, and gave him such a bad press, because of his eirenicism. Nephalius, and neo-Chalcedonians in general, represented a profound threat to Severus precisely because they presented Chalcedon in terms so sympathetic to the objections of anti-Chalcedonians that there was the alarming possibility that his followers might really find in Chalcedon so presented an acceptable position. No one hates a peacemonger so much as someone who is convinced of the righteousness of the cause for which he is waging war. As for the modern charge of instability, can we really describe a man as unstable because he changed his mind *over a period of twenty-five years*? One has only to think in concrete terms to realize the ridiculousness of the charge.” Patrick T.R. Gray, “The Sabaitic Monasteries and the Christological Controversies (478-533) in *The Sabaitic Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 240.

²⁶¹ For Mamas’ defection see Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (177), and Cyril, *VS*, 55 (157).

Chalcedonian Justin I had become emperor, with his wily nephew Justinian as the power behind the throne. They began an aggressive policy against the anti-Chalcedonians of the region, whose remaining monasteries appear to have been lost in this period.²⁶² Severus lost his patriarchate in Antioch at the same time. The Chalcedonian struggle in Palestine was over. The Euthymian Judeans were victorious.

²⁶² Peter's monastery among them: "The last and only notice regarding the fate of Peter the Iberian's leading monastery near Maiuma is the short note in passing by John of Ephesus: "...a great convent called that of father Peter the Iberian ...was expelled with the rest, and came to the territory of Alexandria..."” Aryeh Kofsky, "What Happened to the Monophysite Monasticism of Gaza?" in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 184.

CHAPTER THREE: SABAITES

The Euthymians were key players in the post-Chalcedon struggle in Palestine. Martyrius had expelled the anti-Chalcedonians from Jerusalem and Judea. Elias had sent agents to foment strife in their western strongholds.²⁶³ Sabas had accomplished the defection of Mamas. Step by step the Euthymians had pushed their rivals from the Holy Land. In time they would occupy the places once held by the older anti-Chalcedonian ascetic network, claiming both the offices and physical locations left vacant after the anti-Chalcedonian expulsion. In the process the Euthymians would accomplish a feat their forebears had never attempted: the solidification of an ascetic network into institutional structures.

Under Martyrius the Chalcedonian Judeans had begun their advance on multiple fronts. It was during this time that a new generation of founders began their monastic projects: Sabas, Theodosius, and Theognius all began the construction of their great monasteries under his protection. The anti-Chalcedonians had been concentrated in the city proper; their Chalcedonian successors would prefer the wilderness to the east. By the sixth century, however, “wilderness” was becoming a rather loose term. Centuries before, Athanasius had related how Antony had “made the desert a city.” The phrase had stuck in Christian imagination, and Cyril would employ it to link Sabas and Antony in his readers’ minds.²⁶⁴ Yet the Judean usage was more than rhetorical appropriation: scholars

²⁶³ Nephalius (see chapter 2) was only one of these. See the discussion of Theognius and Severianus below.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Athanasius: “The desert was made a city.” [ἡ ἔρημος ἐπολίσθη μοναχῶν]. Athanase d’Alexandrie, *Vie d’Antoine*, trans. and ed. G.J.M. Bartelink (Paris: *Les Éditions du Cerf*, 1994), 14 (174). Cyril has: “to make the desert a city.” [πολίσαι τὴν ἔρημον]. Cyril, *VS* 37 (135), Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 126.

have found it to be an accurate description. Thousands of monks dwelt in the Judean wilderness by Cyril's time. In this context the phrase evokes the image of a monastic polity, and that image has fired the scholarly imagination in its turn. Chitty, for example, borrowed the expression for the title of his book, and Binns took it for his section on Sabas' institutional activity.

In the latter, Binns argued that Judean monasteries should be viewed as an urban addition to the urban empire, another link in the chain of cities that made up the *oikoumene*.²⁶⁵ A colonizer's worldview, he claimed, would have been instinctive for the monks, who were steeped in a culture that saw the world through an urban lens.²⁶⁶ In Binns' framework the monastic founder-figure paralleled a city-founder, creating an urban community through a series of discernable steps. Such a figure, he argued, would choose the site himself; provide for the safety, spiritual needs and material necessities of his population; and plug his new city into the larger urban network surrounding it. The founder himself would then stand as mediator and intercessor between his city and the others of said network.²⁶⁷

This model both fits and flatters the career of Theodosius, a Judean ascetic-turned-monastic-founder. Theodosius did more than choose his spot; he chose it very well. Pushed into an institutional vocation by the wealthier and more prominent of his

²⁶⁵ Cf. Chitty, *Desert*, and Binns, *Ascetics*, 161-179.

²⁶⁶ "Sabas lived in a society which valued civic culture and inhabited one of the few regions of the Empire in which the civilizing effects of urban administration had not yet been applied. It was an area waiting to be urbanized." Binns, *Ascetics*, 165. For discussion on the nature of urban life, structures, and networks in Late Antiquity, see *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich (New York: Routledge, 1992).

²⁶⁷ This list is indicative, not exhaustive. Binns gives other requirements also: lawgiver, for example. Binns, *Ascetics*, 161-79.

disciples, Theodosius laid his foundations along the southern Jericho road.²⁶⁸ The site was only four miles from Jerusalem, placing it among the closest of the great monasteries to the holy city. Such proximity enabled growth, and sufficient growth lent prestige, setting Theodosius on the path to becoming the “cenobiarch” of the holy land.

Theodosius’ hagiographer Theodore informs us that such growth was enabled by steady stream of pilgrims and patrons. On occasion, he adds, donations would appear in miraculous fashion to fit *ad hoc* needs.²⁶⁹ Such stories highlight the cenobiarch’s divine connection and intercessory efficacy. Usually the donor remains anonymous; only once does Theodore expand such an anecdote to include personal description. This exception is made for the *comes orientis* Kérykos (Κήρυκος), recipient of an imperial commission to stave off the looming Persian threat. Kérykos was eager to obtain God’s favor in this

²⁶⁸ They supplied initial funding as well: “Comme les pères logés dans la caverne y étaient très à l’étroit, et que d’autres en grand nombre, parmi lesquels certains des plus élevés en dignité et plus abondants en richesses, pressaient Théodosios de se faire pour eux aussi le guide de la voie du salut, et qu’à cause de cela ils lui demandaient avec instance de bâtir un monastère, toute la dépense d’argent étant évidemment fournie par eux-mêmes...” Théodore de Pétra, *Vie de Saint Théodosios*, in Festugière, *Les Moines*, 29 (117). Hereafter given as (Theodore, *VThd*, 29 (117)).

This is a contested account: Cyril and Theodore give different versions. Of the two, however, Theodore’s narrative is both earlier and more directly connected to Theodosius and his community. Reasons for the divergence of the accounts will be brought forward in the literary discussion of my final chapter.

Finally, a similar event begins the institutional career of Theognius a few years later: “...[Theognius] became famous for his noble way of life, and certain Christ-loving men came and, vigorously entreating him, persuaded him to build a suitable little tower, which very thing happened. And although many wished to remain with him, never did he allow himself to mix with a large crowd, but having received a certain few, he spent his time with them, performing the offices required by ascetics with the fear of God.” Paul of Elousa, *Life of Theognius*, in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 10 (151). (Hereafter Paul, *VThg*, 10 (151)).

²⁶⁹ As when the necessary 100 *solidi* appeared when the monastery stood in need of new vestments: “Une autre fois, comme le moment était venu où l’on avait coutume d’acheter les vêtements des frères et qu’on n’avait aucune somme pour cela, les frères chargés de ce service importunaient Théodosios, lui demandant sans cesse où trouver de l’argent. Il leur dit: <<Il est écrit (Mt 6, 34): ‘Ne vous faites pas de souci pour le lendemain.’>> Et ainsi Dieu confirma par le fait la foi sans ombre de doute qu’il avait en Lui et lui envoya le lendemain celui qui devait subvenir à cette dépense, apportant cent sous d’or.” Theodore, *VThd*, 81 (147-48). A similar example of a miraculous sudden alternative to a failed donor stream can be found at Theodore, *VThd* 27-28 (116-17).

endeavor, and so took care to worship at the holy places while passing through Jerusalem.²⁷⁰

Luck or grace was with the *comes*, for he ran into Theodosius during his visit. Theodore describes their meeting, which concluded with Kérykos carrying off Theodosius' shirt as a sort of relic.²⁷¹ Shirt in hand, the *comes* won a great victory against his Persian foe. Kérykos was appropriately grateful for divine favor, and made certain to revisit the holy places on his way back to the capital.²⁷² Theodosius was included in his thanksgiving: Kérykos gifted the cenobiarch with the properties of Coronam and Antecoronam. These Theodosius attached to his monastery, so that it might draw financial support from them in perpetuity.²⁷³

Reinvestment in the monastery was a recurring element in Theodosius' career. The habit paid off: decades later, Cyril would describe the monastery as “a great and populous cenobium, that surpasses all and reigns supreme among the cenobia in all of Palestine.”²⁷⁴ This, however, was the view from 558, and Cyril was depicting the

²⁷⁰ The *comes* also sought divine assistance for a number of personal maladies. Theodore, *VThd*, 83 (149). Unfortunately Theodore declines to date the episode.

²⁷¹ “[Kerykos / Κήρυκος] lui demanda de lui donner cette camisole, persuade que ce lui serait là un phylactère qui l'emporterait sur toute espèce d'engin ennemi. Il l'obtint donc avec des bénédictions et reprit son chemin.” Theodore, *VThd*, 83-84 (149).

²⁷² “Peu de temps après, il revint vainqueur du pays des Perses, après avoir fait montre, grâce à sa foi, de grands exploits de valeur. Il se rendit de nouveau aux Lieux Saints, et, lorsqu'il eut offert les plus grandes actions de grâces au Christ Sauveur pour sa très grande victoire, il revint auprès du vrai serviteur du Christ, et pour le remercier comme il convenait, et pour lui rapporter la façon don't il avait été sauvé à la guerre par ses saintes prières.” Theodore, *VThd*, 84 (149).

²⁷³ “En retour donc de cette victoire si brillante et si utile à l'universalité de tout l'État Romain, Kérykos, sur sa fortune proper, donna pour l'entretien du monastère les deux beins-fonds nommés Kourôné [Κουρώνη] et Antikourôné [Αντικουρώνη].” Theodore, *VThd*, 85 (150).

This sort of gift seems to have been rare in the Judean Desert, with most patrons preferring to give money. See Leah Di Segni, “Monk and Society: The Case of Palestine” in *The Sabaite Heritage*, 31. Di Segni adds that while this sort of contribution was unique, it was still not sufficient to make the monastery financially independent. See also Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 103-104.

²⁷⁴ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 2 (264).

monastery in its full maturity. Theodore, on the other hand, provided his readers with a window into the cenobium's adolescent growth. His account indicates that expansion accelerated after Theodosius enabled the permanent housing of tradesmen and their workshops on premises.²⁷⁵ This step eased the monastery's daily activities, expedited the construction of new structures, and presumably simplified the maintenance of pre-existent ones.²⁷⁶ There were disadvantages also: Cyril names the distractions of such growth as the reason Theognius left to strike out on his own.²⁷⁷ Yet the positive results of the arrangement outweighed such annoyances. Theodosius' monastery was soon the jewel of the region, capable of institutional activity of surprising scale. It became home to hundreds of monks, and could lodge large numbers of visiting ascetics as well. There was also a large hostel for lay pilgrims and guests, containing a spectrum of accommodations arranged to oblige the visitor's requirements. Theodore is quick to assure us, however, that all lay visitors received appropriate care and attention, which he describes as "equity in inequality."²⁷⁸

There was more. Theodosius also employed his resources on behalf of those in need. The cenobiarch institutionalized charity, an innovation seemingly unique among Judean monasteries.²⁷⁹ Under his direction the monastery was equipped to supply housing, food, clothing, and medical care on a large scale. These resources and structures

²⁷⁵ Theodore, *VThd*, 34 (120-21). For the archaeological challenges associated with this monastery, see chapter 6.

²⁷⁶ Theodore, *VThd*, 34 (121).

²⁷⁷ "[Theognius] saw that [Theodosius'] monastery, with the help of God, was growing gradually in size and wealth, and was worried about the turmoil that arises from distraction. Consequently he withdrew..." Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 269-70.

²⁷⁸ Theodore, *VThd*, 34 (121).

²⁷⁹ Theodore, *VThd*, 34-36 (121). See also DiSegni, "Monk and Society," 32 n12: "Only in the case of the monastery of Theodosius do we hear of organized assistance; in all other cases charity is given to beggars who come to the monastery gate."

were directed toward the needs of beggars, the sick, and the handicapped.²⁸⁰ Such activity appears in the works of no other Judean author, but it should not be dismissed as rhetorical innovation. Archaeologists accept these descriptions as indicative of real structures.²⁸¹ The passage constitutes only a small part of Theodore's work, but few better communicate Theodosius' greatness to a modern reader.

The great distinction and prestige of the monastery remains a persistent theme throughout Theodore's work.²⁸² The hagiographer expresses it not only in structures and services, but also in his enthusiastic portrayal of the people inhabiting and orbiting the cenobium. No less than 400 monks, he wishes the reader to know, dwelt there at the time of his composition. Nor did this include – as Theodore pointedly noted – the 693 who had already passed on.²⁸³ Neither, he continues, does this number account for the many monks who went on to be solitaries, bishops, or abbots elsewhere. These, Theodore assures us, were beyond count.²⁸⁴

Yet he remains frustratingly silent regarding the individual members of Theodosius' network and circle. Few are mentioned by name. The disciples Julian and

²⁸⁰ Theodore, *VThd*, 36 (121). Theodore employs the passage to demonstrate Theodosius' concern for human dignity, itself an indication of the cenobiarch's exemplary devotion to the two great commandments of Christ.

²⁸¹ E.g. Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 199ff. See also penultimate chapter of this dissertation.

²⁸² As later in the narrative, when Theodore proclaims that the monastery: "surpasse tous les autres saints monastères de ce pays et il rivalise avec eux par l'ampleur des bâtiments et par le grand nombre de ceux qui veulent y être sauvés." Theodore, *VThd*, 92 (154).

²⁸³ Theodore, *VThd*, 46 (127-28). This massive population included several ethnicities with their own worship centers. The great cenobium of Theodosius could boast no less than four churches. Theodore, *VThd*, 45-26 (127).

²⁸⁴ Theodore further stresses that many of these had been scholars, magistrates, or military officers before their arrival. Theodore, *VThd*, 46-47 (127-28). Theodore composed his work a year after Theodosius' death (d. 529), but this section could have been added or revised for the later, published edition (c. 536-547). Regardless, it still precedes Cyril's work by a decade at least, giving a stunning picture of Theodosius' success.

Sophronius are rare exceptions: one would become archbishop of Bosra; the other succeeded Theodosius as abbot.²⁸⁵ It was he who commissioned Theodore's work, and the latter was careful to drape his superior in broad compliments.²⁸⁶ Surprisingly, we must look to Cyril for specifics regarding Theodosius' successor. The young Sabaite was apparently quite impressed with Sophronius' administrative gifts; nearly a quarter of his *Life of Theodosius* is given to Sophronius. Cyril gives the expected lauds to Sophronius' *praktike* and *parrhesia*, but the core of his Sophronian narrative centers on neither:

The blessed Sophronius had a relative called Mamas, who, having had an accident in his youth and been castrated by doctors, went up to Byzantium, where he became a *cubicularius* of the emperor Anastasius and, after a time, advanced to the rank of *praepositus*. This man gave a huge and uncountable offering to the monastery. Out of this offering the sainted Sophronius enlarged and expanded the monastery fourfold after the death of blessed Theodosius, and erected from the foundations in this holy monastery a church to the mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, hymned by all. But why should I speak at length? The labors and achievements of Sophronius are conspicuous in the monastery of blessed Abba Theodosius, for he not only enriched it with property and annual revenues, but also increased threefold its community in Christ. In a word, having governed the monastery well for fourteen years and two months, he died in joy on 21 March of the fifth indiction. [542 A.D.].²⁸⁷

Sophronius, it seems, continued his master's model of vertical reinvestment in a single monastery. It proved a sound strategy, and as time went on Theodosius' cenobium came more and more to resemble in fact the rhetorical city in the desert.

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²⁸⁵ Bosra was likely in southern Syria. This Julian was deposed by the anti-Chalcedonian Anastasius but later restored by Chalcedonian successor Justin. This occurred after the "heretical tempest" that marked the Severan push in the final years of Anastasius' reign. Theodore, *VThd*, 81-83 (148-49). See also Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (177). Zacharias, on the other hand, claims that rather than subscribe to Severus' union, Julian and Epiphanius of Tyre: "...even abandoned their cities in which they were bishops, although nobody forced them!" Zacharias Rhetor, *Life of Severus*, 114 (118).

²⁸⁶ E.g. Theodore, *VThd*, 99 (158-59).

²⁸⁷ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 5 (267). The importance of institutional and administrative ability in Cyril's narrative will be covered in the last chapter.

Binns' framework makes a good match for Theodosius' career.²⁸⁸ It may prove surprising, therefore, that the scholar never applied his model to the cenobiarch. In fact, he constructed it specifically and exclusively for Sabas. Herein lies a problem. Binns' model holds strong explanatory power for the institutional activity of Theodosius. Yet a wealth of archaeological and literary evidence indicates that Sabas' institutional activity diverged widely from that of the cenobiarch, and was an order of magnitude more complex.²⁸⁹ This difficulty in applying the same model to both founders challenges a seemingly useful framework. If not as a parallel to city-founding, then, how should we understand Sabas' career?

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Sabas' rise to prominence must be understood within the context of the Euthymian network. He had been a latecomer to the inner circle, too young to receive the direct patronage of Euthymius himself.²⁹⁰ Instead, it was his connections to the other members of the circle that proved decisive: Sabas would emerge as a privileged client of Euthymius' senior disciples. Indeed, few benefited more from Martyrius' reign than he.²⁹¹ At the time of the former's ascension to the patriarchal throne Sabas was merely a

²⁸⁸ There are exceptions. The category of lawgiver, for example, fits Theodosius poorly. The cenobiarch preferred the installation of Basil's Rule to the crafting of his own. For a detailed analysis of monastic *regula* in the Judean monasteries, see Patrich, *Sabas*, 255-78.

²⁸⁹ Archaeological citations can be found throughout this chapter, but see especially the penultimate chapter, where field reports are discussed in detail.

²⁹⁰ Cyril, however, does not tire of informing his readers that Sabas was Euthymius' handpicked successor. See final chapter.

²⁹¹ Cyril quickly reminds us of the connection between the two: "Martyrius at this time had been entrusted with the episcopate; he had known Sabas from the time of the great Euthymius, and had a great love for him." Cyril, *VS*, 18 (112). This may be exaggeration, but Sabas' career is too bound up with the patriarch for it to be pure invention.

forty-year-old solitary. By the time of Martyrius' death, he would be abbot of one of the desert's foremost monasteries.

God called Sabas away from spiritual combats in the years following the anti-Chalcedonian expulsion the region.²⁹² His time in the desert had served him well: like Theodosius, he would begin his institutional project with a circle of disciples already in place. Bolstered by this talented group of subordinates, Sabas moved to fill the institutional void left by the departure of prominent anti-Chalcedonian ascetics like Gerontius and Romanus.²⁹³ The first steps were modest: a tower to claim the site, followed by a small oratory and consecrated altar.²⁹⁴ Anchorites were given a small cell and cave, and the community quickly grew to about seventy inhabitants.

Thus far the careers of Theodosius and Sabas bear the expected similarities. The city-founder schema applies equally well to both, an association reinforced by Cyril's own description of the early disciples as a "city of the pious."²⁹⁵ The model continues to hold going forward: growth soon caused Sabas to fret about a lack of resources, but the problem would be solved through Sabas' own free access to God. Hearing Sabas' prayer, the Almighty led him to first a nearby spring, then a cave naturally shaped like a

²⁹² "[Sabas] was persuaded by the word of God not to devote time pointlessly to enemies who had been defeated [i.e. practicing spiritual combats against demons in the desert] but to transfer his spiritual energies from a warlike disposition to husbanding those who had grown rank with evil thoughts, for the benefit of many, in accordance with the words of the prophet, 'Beat your swords into plowshares and your spears into pruning hooks.'" Cyril, *VS*, 16 (108). See chapter 2 for the expulsion of hardliners in the wake of the Second Union.

²⁹³ Cyril is much more forthcoming about such early disciples than Theodore. Important clients and allies would spring from this group, and Cyril does not hesitate to weave them into his history. Cyril, *VS*, 16 (108).

²⁹⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 16 (109). Acquisition of land via construction was apparently a standard procedure. Cf. Paul, *VThg*, 10 (151), and n.6 above.

²⁹⁵ Cyril, *VS*, 16 (109).

church.²⁹⁶ Sabas could now provide for his monks both materially and spiritually, and the monastery continued its growth. Now providing governance for 150 anchorites, Sabas constructed a tower for his own administrative use and stood vigil over the monks with a watchful eye.²⁹⁷

During this time Sabas continued to parallel Theodosius. The Great Laura is an easy analogue to Theodosius' great cenobium, and the comparison is reinforced by Sabas' own reinvestments in his institution.²⁹⁸ Cyril assures us that the monks lived in perfect concord during these golden years, yet such industrious harmony was not to last: Sabas' authority was weakened by Martyrius' death in 486, and a faction arose to challenge his rule.²⁹⁹ The group quickly moved to secure an audience with the new

²⁹⁶ The organic contours of this "God-built church" could have been made to order, allowing for the crafting of an apse to the east, a sacristy to the north, and a wide entrance to the south that admitted a goodly amount of light into the cave. Cyril, *VS*, 17-18 (110-11).

²⁹⁷ "Above the church built by God there is an extremely high and abrupt crag; on this our father Sabas built himself a tower, finding a secret passage like a spiral staircase within the holy cave, leading up from the sacristy to the tower. Here he would stay for the office and the rest of his administration." Cyril, *VS*, 18 (111). Now known as Mar Saba, the Great Laura will be discussed further in chapter seven.

²⁹⁸ Since [Sabas'] fame spread everywhere, many came to him bringing plentiful offerings, particularly when they saw his angelic mode of life and his existence detached from matter. The blessed man preferred to spend most of the offerings on buildings and the maintenance of the place..." Cyril, *VS*, 18 (111-12).

²⁹⁹ This early rebellion prompts speculation regarding this entire section of Cyril's work. It could be that the miraculous frame given to the discoveries of the spring and church obscures an altogether different narrative. One cannot shake the feeling that something else could lie beneath the miraculous frame of these stories. One might infer that, as with Theodosius' cenobium, prominent disciples took the lead in the construction of this monastery. Patriarchal connections and administrative skill may have given Sabas greater control over the monastery than those disciples had originally intended. In this read such disenfranchised monks could have instigated an attempted coup following the death of Sabas' great patron.

For his part, Cyril presents this as a spontaneous rebellion rather than the power play of a preexistent faction: "There sprang up in [Sabas'] laura some who were fleshly in thought and, in the words of Scripture, 'lacking in the Spirit.' For a considerable time they concocted intrigues and caused [Sabas] trouble of every kind..." Cyril, *VS*, 19 (112). Such a presentation accentuates a juxtaposition with the early harmony and meek submission to Sabas' authority that Cyril had repeatedly highlighted in his narrative at Cyril, *VS* 18 (111-12): "[the monks] were in turn most willing to be shepherded and guided by [Sabas]," and later: "whatever [Sabas] thought pleasing to God, this he did, and none of his subjects presumed to oppose him in anything." The latter statement is immediately followed by a reminder of the connection between Sabas and Martyrius.

The interpretation given above would challenge this construction and relegate such statements to devices employed by Cyril to establish Sabas' uncontested authority in the early period. Such an establishment would have been important in the fractious years of Cyril's own monastic career. See my

patriarch, Sallustius. The substance of that meeting, Cyril relates, was the anchorites' request for an abbot. When the bemused patriarch asked after Sabas, a telling dialogue ensued:

They answered, '[Sabas] is incapable of directing the place because of his extreme rusticity. To add a further point, neither is he himself ordained nor has he let someone else become a cleric. How then can he govern a community of a hundred and fifty persons?'

A certain Cyricus, worthy of mention, priest and [abbot] of the holy church of the Resurrection and guardian of the Cross, who was present on this occasion and had heard what was said, asked them, 'Did you accept him into this place, or was it not rather he who accepted you?'

They replied, 'He indeed accepted us, but because of his boorishness he is unable to govern us, now that we have multiplied.'

The thrice-blessed Cyricus asked again, 'If he, as you say, brought you together in this place and colonized this place which was a desert, how could he govern still more both the place he has colonized and you whom he brought together in union? God, who assisted him in bringing you together and founding the place, will assist him still more in governing it.'³⁰⁰

last chapter for discussion. While this interpretation cannot move beyond the realm of speculation, it could contextualize Cyril's uncharacteristic silence on his sources for these anecdotes. The idea of Sabas' growing control also throws an ominous cast over Cyril's boast that, in the time following the discovery of the church, Sabas' providence made it unnecessary for the monks to ever leave the monastery. Cyril, *VS*, 18 (111).

Regardless, scholars have offered their own varying judgments on the make-up and motives of the dissidents. Patrich, for example, opines that Sabas' provincial background:

"...makes it easier to understand the complaints of the dissidents regarding Sabas' rural nature. This was undoubtedly evident both in his appearance and his way of life. He was cross-eyed..., sturdy, and of great physical strength...The thirty-four years that had elapsed since his arrival in the Holy Land he had spent in asceticism and struggle against the rigors of existence in the desert; this way of life undoubtedly hardened his nature...His opponents were undoubtedly of urban origin and of Hellenistic upbringing and education, which was therefore of much broader scope than that of the countryman Sabas." Patrich, *Sabas*, 199. See also 43ff. Patrich notes the probable links between the social causes of this rebellion and the later, "Origenist" uprisings. His opinion on the nature of the latter is echoed in Lorenzo Perrone, "Palestinian Monasticism, the Bible, and Theology in the Wake of the Second Origenist Controversy," in *The Sabaitic Heritage*, 257ff and Hombergen, *Controversy*, 231ff.

Rebellions such as these were a recurring problem in Sabas' career, and Cyril's list of prominent early disciples may represent the leaders of the "loyal" faction in the earliest cases of internal strife. See below.

³⁰⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 19 (112-13). By this point Cyril has offered two pre-emptive contextualizations of Sabas' lay state. The first is set during the early construction of the oratory: "[Sabas] himself would not accept ordination, for he was of great meekness and true humility, imitating in this respect Christ, true God, who offered himself for imitation to the willing with the words, 'Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart.' Looking at this model, he humbled himself, making himself both the least and the servant of those under him." Cyril, *VS*, 16 (109).

Thereupon Sallustius chose to end the audience, stating that he would answer them the following day.

The sequel was abrupt, striking, and unequivocal. Here we find not only the dramatic conclusion to a literary frame, but also a naked display of administrative pragmatism. On the next day, then:

...sending for the blessed Sabas as if for some other reason, and summoning his accusers as well, [Sallustius] ordained [Sabas] priest in front of their eyes, and said to them, 'See, here you have your father and the superior of your laura, elected by God from above and not by man, for by laying on hands I have simply confirmed the divine election.' After saying this, he took the blessed Sabas and these men and came to the laura, accompanied by the above-mentioned guardian of the Cross Cyriacus. [Sallustius] dedicated the church built by God and fixed a consecrated altar in the apse built by God, placing many relics of holy and victorious martyrs under the altar...³⁰¹

Cyril is clearly using the passage to cement Sabas' authority over the monastery. Yet that need not reduce the episode to mere convention. Assuming the meeting has some basis in fact, such would have been its likely conclusion. The dissidents had committed a serious blunder, challenging the institutional authority of an abbot in a distinctly institutional setting. Cyriacus would have been invested in defending his fellow administrator, and Sallustius was impelled to set precedent. Through this dramatic reply he sent a message to monks and abbots alike, probably forestalling similar issues going

The second contextualization comes after the discovery of the church: "He postponed, however, consecrating the said cave, that is, the church built by God, because he did not wish to be ordained priest or in any way to be appointed a cleric; for he said that the desire to be made cleric is the origin and root of thoughts of love of power." Cyril, *VS*, 18 (111).

Such positioning not only provides cover for Sabas' deficiencies, it also reinforces the narrative arc and provides foreshadowing for its conclusion.

³⁰¹ Cyril, *VS*, 19 (113). The timeline here is muddled. Martyrius died in 486; the church was dedicated in 491. Cyril does not explicitly say that the rebels met Sallustius in the beginning of his patriarchate, although that is implied. Nor do we know how long passed between Sabas' ordination and the consecration of the God-built church. The timeline is more important than the individual dates: these are chronologically ordered instances of the reciprocal relationship that would exist between Sabas and the patriarchs throughout his career.

forward. The malcontents had miscalculated, inadvertently forcing Sallustius to reestablish Sabas' patriarchal backing. Rebellion quashed, Sabas was now reconnected to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, invested with the further authority of ordination, and free to continue his earlier activity.

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Causally or not, the patriarchal consecration of the God-built church marked a turning point in Sabas' career. More seemed to be happening, and faster. That same year (491) saw a cluster of new arrivals. Among these was a group of Armenian emigres whom Sabas welcomed with open arms. He set aside the small oratory that they might pray in their own language, and when word of this got around, Sabas found himself in possession of a growing Armenian community.³⁰²

Sabas' father died around the same time. The passage depicting the incident exemplifies one of the consistent oddities of Cyril's work. Here as elsewhere, there appears an institutional flavor to personal events, a literary linkage between saint and monastery:³⁰³

In the above-mentioned year of the consecration of the church built by God, John surnamed Conon, the father of our Abba Sabas, died in Alexandria, after attaining authority and distinction in the Isaurian regiment. On learning that her son Sabas had become famous for monastic achievements, blessed Sophia, who was already well advanced in age, sold all her possessions and came to Jerusalem with a considerable sum of money. She was received by the blessed Sabas, who persuaded her to renounce all the things of this world. When a short time later she died, he conducted her burial and laid her to rest in a holy tomb. Her wealth he secured for his own laura. It was with this wealth that he acquired the [hostel]

³⁰² The Armenians were led by Jeremias, and included his disciples Peter and Paul. The latter is one of Cyril's named sources. The fugitive bishop John the Hesychast arrived that year (491) also. John became a friend of Cyril's family, and later Cyril's own spiritual director. He too was one of Cyril's sources, and would be the subject of another of Cyril's *Lives*. Cyril, *VS*, 20-21 (114-15).

³⁰³ The presence of such relationships in Cyril's texts will be a major theme of the last chapter.

at Jericho with the gardens there, also buying a water supply for them, and built the [hostel] in the laura to serve the fathers, and achieved much else besides.³⁰⁴

The acquisition of an urban hostel was an important step for the Great Laura. More than just an opportunity to practice hospitality and charity, an urban hostel was a point of contact between monks and laity. It was a base of operations from which the monks could establish and maintain links with the local middle and upper classes. It tapped into the pilgrimage trade, thus further embedding the monastery within its particular socio-economic environment.³⁰⁵ The hostel served as a natural introduction to the monastery and its holy men. Local and pilgrim laity could then be directed from there to the hostel in the monastery proper.³⁰⁶ Urban hostels were therefore a means for the monastery to graft a detour onto the pilgrim's road. They served to facilitate donations and recruitment

³⁰⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 25 (118). [Hostel] in this instance translates the Greek ξενοδοχεῖον, which Price gives as “hospice.” In American English the latter translation emphasizes the charitable aspects of the institution; the former concentrates on its socio-economic function. Liddell and Scott lists the term as “a place for strangers to lodge in, an inn,” but both translations seem correct depending on the circumstance of use and the translator's emphasis.

There are clear instances when “hospice” is an appropriate choice (cf. *Chronicon Paschale: 284-628 AD*, trans. and ed. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (Liverpool: University Press, 1990), 119, 199 n 354, and 195, where the word denotes a house for the sick). “Hostel” seems preferential in the Palestinian context, however, and I have followed Cornelia Horn in her choice of “hostel” for the *Life of Peter the Iberian*:

“The *Life of Peter the Iberian* indicated that Emperor Theodosius II had encouraged the settlement of Jerusalem and Palestine by granting ownership of any unclaimed real estate and Peter and John took advantage of this policy to establish a *xenodocheion*, or inn, for pilgrims in Jerusalem (see *Vit. Pet.* SS 64-67 [R 44-47]). Of course, ‘unclaimed’ in this case meant ‘unclaimed by another Christian party.’ Jews and Samaritans were not accorded much attention in this imperial policy. It is possible that the intermittent rebellions of the Samaritans and Jews in Palestine were in part responses of the native landowners to this usurpation of their property. These rebellions were always crushed by harsh Roman reprisals. As late as the time of the Emperor Justinian (527-565), Samaritans were agitating against what in their eyes had become simple elimination of non-Christians from Palestine.” Horn, *John Rufus*, xliii.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Binns, *Ascetics*, 174. Patrich adds that the Jericho hostel also served as a point of contact for the monastery's business dealings in the city. Patrich, *Sabas*, 165-66. Other uses of the hostel are in evidence as well, e.g. the meeting between Sabas and two other abbots in Cyril, *VS*, 46 (146-47).

³⁰⁶ This was not, however, the only economic function of the monastery hostel: “In the Great Laura the guest master was entrusted with an additional task: the baskets (τὰ μαλάκια) that each of the monks had woven in his cell were given to him (*V.Sab.* 44, 135). This may indicate that the hostelry of the Laura also served as a center for marketing local products to the outside world. Agents apparently came there to purchase the products and market them in the cities and villages.” Patrich, *Sabas*, 181. For more on monastery hostels see chapter six.

for the monastery.³⁰⁷ The Jericho hostel was hardly the crown of such an endeavor, but it was an important beginning.

To this point the activity of Theodosius and Sabas both fit equally well within Binns' schema. Their monasteries are mirror images: the apices of cenobitic and lauritic life, respectively. Both had continually employed their resources to reinvest in the vertical growth of their great foundations. Even the Jericho hostel falls under this heading: while geographically distant, it remained an extension of the Great Laura rather than a quasi-independent entity. A few months after the consecration of the God-built church, however, Sabas' undertaking began its sharp divergence from this model.

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Sabas spent the following Lent on retreat at the hill of Castellium, roughly two miles northwest of the Great Laura.³⁰⁸ The hill was a known haunt of demons, and Cyril employs the passage to parallel the spiritual combats of Sabas and Antony.³⁰⁹ The struggle raged for a time, but at last the demons:

...were thwarted by his perseverant prayer, [and] they departed from the place, shouting in human speech the words, 'What violence from you, Sabas! The gorge you colonized does not satisfy you, but you force your way into our place as well. See, we withdraw from our own territory. We cannot resist you, since you have God as your defender.'³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Cf. Di Segni, "Monk and Society," 31-36.

³⁰⁸ Sabas continued Euthymius' custom of Lenten retreats, but not necessarily in Roubâ, and often either alone or in the company of his disciple Agapêtus.

³⁰⁹ "The hill was terrifying and unfrequented because of the large number of demons who lurked there, so that none of the shepherds in the desert dared to go near the place. The revered old man, however, making the Most High his refuge and sprinkling the place with oil from the all-holy Cross, stayed during the season of Lent; and by his ceaseless prayers and divine praises the place was tamed. He underwent on this hill many trials inflicted by the demons. Doubtless he himself, as a man subject to fear, would have wished to withdraw, but He who had formerly appeared to the great Abba Antony appeared also to him, bidding him have confidence in the power of the Cross; so, taking courage, he overcame by faith and endurance the insolence of the demons." Cyril, *VS*, 27 (119).

³¹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 27 (120). Cf. Athanase, *Vie d'Antoine* 14 (172-75).

There was truth to the accusation: the gorge alone did not satisfy Sabas. He soon returned with monks to clear the ground and transform the hill into a cenobium.³¹¹ This monastery of Castellium soon grew into a large community, for Sabas used it to relieve population pressure in the Great Laura.³¹² From its ranks would rise the Melitene blood-brothers Sergius and Paul, later the bishops of Amathus and Aila, respectively.

In 493 Sabas added a third monastery a mile to the north of the Great Laura. This was the so-called Small Cenobium, built to serve as a training center for the novitiate.³¹³ The Small Cenobium represents an important shift in institutional thinking: Euthymius had farmed out novitiate formation to Theoctistus and Gerasimus. Sabas apparently preferred to keep this operation in-house.³¹⁴ The benefits were obvious: novices would be trained by senior Sabaites in close proximity to the other Sabaite monasteries. Sabaite rules and practices could be instilled from the beginning. Retention was likely increased: progression to the Great Laura (rather than a laura in general) would be the goal, and novices could be introduced to certain transitional expectations: novices of means, for example, were encourage to finance the construction of their own lauritic cells.³¹⁵ The Small Cenobium represented a pragmatic step forward for the Sabaite project.

³¹¹ This took place in steps. The monks built cells and a church, then Sabas installed a certain Paul as administrator. The archimandrite Marcianus (see chapter 2) sent aid for the project in the form of food and manpower. Cyril, *VS*, 27 (121).

³¹² Patrich stresses its function as a “punishment monastery.” Patrich, *Sabas*, 137ff, 200ff.

³¹³ Under the watchful eyes of senior monks from the Great Laura. Cyril, *VS*, 28 (122).

³¹⁴ While still following Euthymius’ injunction not to house senior monks alongside beardless youths. Sabas continued to send the latter to Theodosius. Cyril, *VS*, 29 (123).

³¹⁵ “When [Sabas] judged that those who had made their renunciation had learnt the office of psalmody accurately and become capable of keeping a watch on their minds, purifying their thoughts from recollection of the things of the world, and putting up resistance to alien desires, it was then that he provided them with cells in the laura. If they were rich, he told them to build one themselves, affirming, ‘Whoever in this place builds or rebuilds a cell, counts as building a church of God.’” Cyril, *VS*, 28 (122).

This license for the wealthy to build their own cells may be linked to the dramatic disparities among anchoritic cells in Sabaite laurae. Larger cells soared to 2,200 square feet, including several rooms,

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Sabas' rise to prominence was interwoven with his tie to the patriarchate. The friendship of Martyrius and support of Sallustius had been pivotal to the growth of the Sabaite project, and this trend would continue in 494, when the pragmatic Sallustius wove Sabas more tightly into his own ecclesiastic network.

The patriarch had his own cares to manage. One of these – shared by all bishops of the post-Chalcedon era – was the need to achieve greater control over local monks. Bringing monastic leadership into the structures of ecclesiastical authority was a key part of this endeavor. Sallustius' previous support of Sabas should be read in this light. That had been only a small piece of the puzzle; the post of archimandrite was a much larger one.

The position of archimandrite had fallen into disrepair following the expulsion of prominent anti-Chalcedonian leaders in 479.³¹⁶ Recognizing its usefulness, however, Sallustius had reformed the office in 491. Whereas there had traditionally been two archimandrites of the monks, the patriarch now collapsed the office to a single occupant. He gave the post to the now senior and venerable Marcianus. The tactic was successful: dignity was restored to the office, and Sallustius achieved greater institutional control

a balcony, garden, and private cistern. Most cells were more modest, but those of the Great Laura were larger on average. See chapter six.

³¹⁶ “After the deaths of Elpidius and Elias, the successors of sainted Passarion, who had been archimandrites in succession, one Lazarus succeeded to their office; likewise, after the death of Gerontius who had succeeded to blessed Melania and separated from the Catholic communion, one Anastasius succeeded to his office. There resulted a degree of anarchy, and among the monks at that time there prevailed a multiplicity of rulers, which naturally gives birth to disorder and faction. In consequence, with the monastic order in a state of confusion, with Lazarus and Anastasius, having already slackened in monastic strictness and devoted themselves to earthly cares and worldly profits, especially when Anastasius succeeded to the throne of Zeno and gave full freedom to the Aposchists...” Cyril, *VS*, 30 (124). For a history and explanation of the archimandrite position see Patrich, *Sabas*, 287-300.

over the region's monastic population. When Marcianus died in late 492, however, Sallustius was forced to reconsider his solution.

The patriarch took his time with the decision. It was well he did, for these were years of rapid change in the local monastic establishment. The growth of Theodosius' cenobium and the explosion of the Sabaite project were hastening the transfer of ascetic power from city to desert. The Judean population was swelling, and its increased strength might account for Cyril's report of Sallustius' decision. According to Cyril, a large group of Judean monks converged on the aging, ailing patriarch and unanimously proclaimed Sabas and Theodosius as the new archimandrites of the region.³¹⁷ The office was redivided: they were to be archimandrites of the laurae and cenobia, respectively.

Even if true, this tale of a "common vote" does not preclude simple prudence. The selection of Sabas and Theodosius was a sound administrative decision. The two most prominent monks of the desert had now received authority from the patriarch, and would report directly to him. The choice of these two brought the desert under a greater degree of ecclesiastical control. Methodical to the end, Sallustius took care to place limits on their powers also. It would appear they held no sway over the monasteries in Jerusalem proper. Theodosius' jurisdiction over cenobia seems to not have applied to those under Sabas' care. Finally, the two were saddled with seconds, abbots from other nearby monasteries.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 30 (124-25), Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 4 (265-66). Theodore is silent on the matter. Partich has argued that Sallustius' delay led to the formation of "pressure groups." If so, the burgeoning populations of the new archimandrites' monasteries would have helped them significantly. Partich, *Sabas*, 290.

³¹⁸ Theodosius was assigned Paul, abbot of the monastery of Martyrius. Sabas was given Eugenius, abbot of the monastery of Gerasimus. Cyril, *VS*, 30 (124-25), Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 4 (265-66).

These limitations did not overshadow the unmistakable investment of patriarchal authority in the new archimandrites. They now held administrative oversight over all the monasteries of the desert under the patriarchal seal. The strengthened tie to Jerusalem would eventually propel both to international stature. Sabas, moreover, was on the cusp of an additional windfall. Sallustius would die later that same year, to be succeeded by the Euthymian Elias.³¹⁹ As previously, Sabas would leverage his old connections into a new stage of institutional growth.

Before treating those events, however, it might be best to stop and take stock. We have already seen how the careers of Sabas and Theodosius mirrored each other in their nascent period. Both had fit equally well into Binns' city-founder schema. Yet the two had diverged in the years following Sallustius' consecration of the God-built church. They stood in different circumstances when they were elevated to archimandriteship in 494. Theodosius was founder and abbot of the greatest and most prolific monastery of the region. Sabas had taken a very different direction: his project included three interconnected monasteries with a satellite hostel in Jericho. He had also inherited responsibility for the monasteries of Euthymius and Theoctistus.³²⁰ By 494, then, we find that Sabas' activity is straining the limits of Binns' model.

³¹⁹ Cyril wastes no time in reminding the reader of the connection. Cyril, *VS*, 31 (125).

³²⁰ Cf. Cyril, *VS*, 58 (168): After giving the list of Sabas' monasteries, Cyril adds that: "He gave no less assistance to the two ancient cenobia of our holy fathers Euthymius and Theoctistus." Patrich notes that: "This does not refer to building projects – these were older monasteries – but to their economic maintenance and organizational linkage." Patrich, *Sabas*, 163. Throughout his narrative Cyril is at pains to stress the connections, especially between the Sabaites and the cenobium of Euthymius. See also Cyril, *VS* 46 (146-47), *VS* 90 (208), *Life of John the Hesychast* 20 (235-36), and *Life of Cyriacus* 5ff (248ff).

By this time significant changes had occurred in the structure of these two monasteries. See chapter four for the events in these monasteries and how they affected Cyril's writing. See also Patrich, *Sabas*, 162-63 for a general timeline and summary of these events.

The framework of imperial model still holds, but by this point Sabas had outgrown the archetype of city-founder. The Sabaite project was not a large city spread out over the desert.³²¹ Now comprised of a capital (the Great Laura), colonies (Castellium and the Small Cenobium),³²² subordinate allies (the cenobia of Euthymius and Theoctistus), and an outpost (the Jericho hostel); this institutional network resembled less a city than the empire itself. This is still the nascent era of the Sabaite domain; its elements are in their early stages. By the time of his promotion, however, the distinct nature of Sabas' endeavor is already coming into focus.

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Elias ascended the patriarchal throne in mid-494. Finding a number of ascetics loosely scattered around the Tower of David in Jerusalem, the new patriarch collected them into a newly-built monastery, thus bringing them under a greater degree of institutional organization. The former cells of these monks were now vacant, and Sabas purchased a number of them. These he transformed into a hostel for the Great Laura.³²³ This acquisition was a meaningful step forward for the Sabaites, who had heretofore lacked an institutional presence in the holy city. Rather than consolidate or solidify, however, Sabas immediately moved to acquire another such property. The endeavor provided the occasion for a financial miracle:

³²¹ Binns recognizes the interconnectedness of the institutions, but collapses them into a single entity: "These new settlements were not independent of the Great Laura but retained their relationship with the original foundation. They were connected through the acknowledgement of a common founder, Sabas, and were referred to as 'Sabaites.' Access from one to another was made easy by the elaborate system of interconnected paths which joined the monasteries together. Together the monasteries of Sabas constituted one large city, established on several sites." Binns, *Ascetics*, 170. This model also does not account for the relationship of these monasteries with those of Euthymius and Theoctistus.

³²² The superiors of these monasteries were administrators, not abbots. See Patrich, *Sabas*, 170ff.

³²³ Cyril, *VS*, 31 (125).

[Sabas] tried to find a sufficient quantity of money, but had only one half solidus. Relying on faith in God, he gave the half solidus as a deposit, with the words, ‘If I do not pay you in full tomorrow, I forfeit the deposit.’ On the same day, before sunrise, as he was thinking about this and praying mentally, a completely unknown stranger came up to him, gave him one hundred and seventy solidi, and immediately withdrew, not even giving his name. Astonished at the prompt assistance of God, the blessed one gave the price of the cells and founded a second [hostel] for the relief of monks coming from abroad. He also acquired two [hostels] for Castellium, one in the holy city not far from the Tower of David and the other in Jericho in one of the gardens he had bought.³²⁴

The Sabaite monasteries were now in possession of *five* urban hostels, three in Jerusalem and two in Jericho. In a very short time Sabas had crafted a strong operational network for contact with urban and pilgrim laity, a network almost as important as his own Euthymian connections.

The hostels further strengthened the Sabaite foundation, setting the stage for the next phase of expansion. Previous stages had served to create an influx of resources and recruits into the Great Laura; the next step was self-evident. It came with the arrival of the Isaurian brothers Theodulus and Gelasius, with whose help Sabas began the expansion of the Great Laura itself. Together they constructed a number of new additions to the monastery, a new church prominent among them.³²⁵ The latter, Cyril relates, was a necessity. The Armenian monks had by then outgrown the oratory, and all others had outgrown the God-built church. The construction of this new church, named for the Mother of God, allowed the Armenians to take possession of its God-built predecessor. Elias made the journey to consecrate the new church of his old associate,

³²⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 31 (125-26). Cyril would have found models for such financial miracles in Theodore’s work. Cf. n.7 above. See penultimate chapter below for a literary analysis of the passage.

³²⁵ “First [Sabas] built a bakery and an infirmary in the laura, and erected above them the great church of the mother of God and ever-virgin Mary...between the two churches he constructed a forecourt...and he constructed large cisterns in the gorge.” Cyril, *VS*, 32 (126). The nature of the brothers’ assistance is not explicitly described, but the implication is architectural rather than financial.

and all seemed well. The Great Laura now stood as the glittering capital of an expanding institutional network.³²⁶

Cyril positions this growth as a second golden age for the monastery. He soon declares, however, that this era of prosperity suffered its predecessor's fate, shattered by the grasping of malcontent monks. As before, Cyril quickly transitions his narrative from triumph to civil strife:

When by the grace of God he had in a short time enlarged the laura, increased the community, founded the cenobium of Castellium, and become exarch of all the other lauras and anchorites, his disciples and accusers mentioned above, all the more envious at the founding of Castellium, suborned others in the community and, now forty in number, were driven by some evil demon to foment sedition against him.³²⁷

We cannot be certain of the actions and motives of this group; Cyril's heavy-handed interpretation obscures the details.³²⁸ It appears, however, that Sabas was forced to withdraw from his own institutions and settle near Scythopolis.³²⁹ Returning to the Great Laura some time later, Sabas found that the forty had become sixty. According to Cyril the archimandrite stayed with them for a time, attempting to reestablish concord and order:

At first he opposed patience to their irascibility and love to their hate, controlling his speech with spiritual understanding and integrity. Subsequently, however, when he saw them grow bold in wickedness and resort to shamelessness, not bearing to walk in the humble path of Christ but alleging excuses for their sins and inventing reasons to justify their passions, he left scope for divine anger and withdrew to the region of Nicopolis...³³⁰

³²⁶ Cyril, *VS*, 32 (126-27).

³²⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 33 (127).

³²⁸ See n41 above.

³²⁹ Where he attracted new disciples in exile. Some of would later achieve prominence on their own. Cyril, *VS*, 33-34 (127-29).

³³⁰ Where the local bailiff built him a cell. Sabas again collected new disciples in exile, who would later transform this cell into a cenobium. Cyril, *VS*, 35 (129-30).

Sabas' second exile left room for the rebels to obtain audience with Elias, petitioning once more for a new superior. This time, however, they were ready for the patriarch's obvious question. Sabas, they told Elias, had been eaten by wild animals. Cyril claims that the patriarch disbelieved them, and that when Sabas later reappeared in Jerusalem, Elias ordered him back to his monastery.³³¹

What should we make of this account? Certainly the episode strongly echoes its earlier equivalent. It seems Cyril was working from a standard model in these portrayals of factional strife. Yet there are differences, and the similarities may be more than just a trope. It seems odd, for example, that Sabas did not go to Elias immediately. This holds true in all cases, from the earlier rebellion to these two expulsions. Cyril gives humility as Sabas' motive; a literal reader might theorize a desire to avoid looking weak or incompetent.³³² Perhaps there is something else behind the passage instead. Regardless, it seems more likely that Cyril was contextualizing uprisings rather than inventing them. Sabas' greatness would have been more easily communicated via an unbroken golden age. Nor is this a simple casting backward of the factional strife of Cyril's day. Scholars have argued for a continual undercurrent of resentment during Sabas' rule, and this seems the most likely scenario.³³³

Di Segni views Sabas' activity in Nicopolis as further evidence of the pattern of his social behavior: "Sabas, conqueror of the desert, when forced to abandon it founded monasteries near the cities of Nicopolis and Gadara and wove personal relations with citizens of Scythopolis. He bought real estate in Jerusalem and Jericho, maintained profitable relations with wealthy citizens of Madaba and the innkeepers of Jerusalem, hobnobbed with the notables of Scythopolis, the aristocracy of Constantinople and Jerusalem, and of course with the high clergy." Di Segni, "Monk and Society," 34-35.

³³¹ Cyril, *VS*, 35 (130-31).

³³² Patrich, on the other hand, speculates that there was friction between Sabas and Elias. This seems difficult to support, however, in light of later episodes. Patrich, *Sabas*, 201.

³³³ See next chapter.

Whatever the motive, Cyril set his stage well. In his account the patriarch extracts the details from the reluctant Sabas, then orders the archimandrite back to his laura. Here Cyril again stresses patriarchal intervention as the solution to factional discord, and such was likely the case. Only Elias had the authority to reinstate Sabas. The latter now returned to the Great Laura in possession of a patriarchal missive. The letter presented the dissidents with a stark choice: accept Sabas, or leave.³³⁴

The rebels chose the latter, but they did not go quietly. They vented their frustrations on Sabas' office tower,³³⁵ then went to Souka seeking admittance. Turned away by the abbot of that place, the malcontents journeyed to the abandoned cells of Romanus at Thekoa.³³⁶ Here they settled, organizing themselves into the independent "New Laura," roughly ten miles southwest of Sabas' Great Laura.

That may have seemed a safe distance, but Sabas rose to the occasion. Cyril has it that he took pity on the rebels, resolving to ameliorate their miserable condition. Regardless, at this moment Sabas gave a full demonstration of his connections and administrative savvy:

...[Sabas] took pity on them and referred their case to the patriarch, asking [Elias] to give them assistance. The patriarch handed him one pound weight of gold coin

³³⁴ The credibility of Cyril's account is bolstered by the inclusion of said letter: "I wish you to know, beloved brethren, that your father is alive and has not been eaten by lions. He came to me for the feast, and I have kept him and forbidden him to abandon his own laura, which he himself labored to found with the help of God. You are therefore to receive him back with due honor and to be subject to him in every way. For you did not choose him, but he accepted you; this is why you must be subject to him. If any of you are stubborn, arrogant, and disobedient, and cannot bear to be humbled, then do not stay there. It would be intolerable for him not to recover his own monastery." Cyril, *VS*, 35 (131).

³³⁵ "Taking the letter of the patriarch, the sanctified Sabas returned to his laura. When the letter had been read out in church, those valiant sixty, fiercely indignant and blinded by their own wickedness, made a league by common accord and arrayed themselves against the holy father as if for war. While some of them got ready the clothing and baggage for the whole party, the rest took axes, shovels, spades, and levers and, ascending to his tower, demolished it to the foundations in fierce rage, and threw its boards and stones down into the gorge." Cyril, *VS*, 36 (131-32).

³³⁶ Abandoned after the Second Union. See chapter 2 above.

and also gave him authority over that place and those living in it as being of his own community. So the godly old man returned to them with skilled workmen and all the requisites and, spending five months with them, built a bakery and a church, which he furnished and then consecrated in the sixty-ninth year of his life [507 A.D.].³³⁷

The old Euthymian network continued to serve Sabas well. Patriarchs continued to augment and defend his institutional authority. His ties to Elias allowed him first to reclaim his own monastery, then to co-opt the settlement of his adversaries and transform it into his own monastic colony. Here, then, was a new tool in Sabas' expansion kit: conquest.

Again and again Sabas had systemically leveraged the connections of Euthymius' interpersonal network. The pattern would continue going forward, with Sabas constructing (or seizing) a monastery, then installing a member of his inner circle as administrator. Over time the institutional Sabaite network took the place of its Euthymian predecessor. Yet this was continuity, not rupture. The replacement of the anti-Chalcedonians by the Euthymians is no precedent here. Sabas had given solid, institutional expression to the socio-religious accomplishments of Euthymius. The network of people became a network of monasteries administered by trusted subordinates. Such placements continued beyond the foundation. When Sabas took control of the New Laura, for example, he installed John, a member of the inner circle that predated the Great Laura.³³⁸ Upon John's death Sabas instated a certain Paul. When Paul proved a disaster after only a few months, Sabas turned to his longtime disciple and

³³⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 36 (132-33). One pound of gold being equal to the wages of fifty workmen for about six weeks. Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 102ff.

³³⁸ See n31 above.

retreat companion Agapêtus. Stability was reached, and the Sabaite network now housed a second large laura in its folds.

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The completion of the New Laura in 507 set off a new wave of Sabaite expansion. A year later Sabas established the cenobium of the Cave, roughly half a mile northwest of Castellium. The Isaurian brothers lent their skills once again, but theirs was not the only assistance of note:

One Marcianus, priest at the holy Resurrection and superior of holy Sion, [who] made frequent visits to our sainted father Sabas, bringing with him many offerings. Carried away by faith, he would toil with his own hands, together with his children Antony and John, in helping those laboring at the building of the [Cave].³³⁹

Such aid was not to be forgotten. Later in the same passage Cyril assures us that:

Archbishop Elias came to love [Marcianus] and ordained him bishop of Sebaste [Samaria], and Antony bishop of Ascalon [Ashkelon], while he made John deacon at the holy Resurrection.³⁴⁰

These were ties that bound, especially respecting John. His relationship with Sabas would – according to Cyril – prove a turning point in local history.³⁴¹ The Cave had expanded the Sabaite network in more ways than one, and not for the last time: a monk of the Cave was later sent to Zoilus, the Palestinian-born, Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria. Zoilus ordained the monk and installed him as bishop of Pelusium.³⁴²

³³⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 37 (136).

³⁴⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 37 (136).

³⁴¹ See chapter 4 below.

³⁴² Sabas had named one Paul as administrator of the Cave, and given him senior monks of the Great Laura to be his support. These were George, Cyriacus, and Eustathius. The latter two would become administrators in their turn, while George was sent to Zoilus. Cyril, *VS*, 37 (135-36). For Zoilus see W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), 275, 293; and John Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church: The Patriarchate of Alexandria* (London: Joseph Masters, 1857), vol. II, 39ff.

In 509 Sabas resolved a longstanding irritation. Near his monasteries stood the so-called Tower of Eudokia, which had been an anti-Chalcedonian abode until their expulsion in 479.³⁴³ Sometime later a pair of “Nestorians” took up residence in the vacant structure. Aggravated by their proximity,³⁴⁴ Sabas would at times visit these “Nestorians” in hopes of talking them round. Eventually his efforts paid off: the “Nestorians” were restored to communion, and summarily shipped off to Theodosius. The Tower stood empty once more.

It did not remain so for long. Sabas had plans for the site: he gave authority, supplies, and manpower to his disciple John (the Scholarius),³⁴⁵ along with instructions to transform the Tower into a cenobium. John was equal to the task: during the thirty-five years of his administration the Tower grew into one of the largest cenobia of the desert.³⁴⁶ Sometimes referred to as the Monastery of the Scholarius, the completed Tower would now enjoy all the benefits of membership in the Sabaite network.³⁴⁷

In 510 Sabaite expansion was threatened by internal strife: there was once again trouble in the Great Laura. Led by a certain James, a group of Sabaite monks left the monastery to construct a laura of their own. Their site was well-chosen, standing adjacent to the cistern of Heptastmos alongside the Jerusalem road. James pushed its

³⁴³ The Tower had been constructed by the empress for her meeting with Euthymius. Eudokia gave shelter to a number of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics in the wake of Juvenal’s return; this may have been one of the sites she used for that purpose. See chapter 2.

³⁴⁴ “Our father Sabas was distressed at having these men on the peak overlooking his three monasteries and was considerably annoyed at them.” Cyril, *VS*, 38 (136-27)

³⁴⁵ Formerly of the palace guard, “the first *schola* of the *scholarii*.” Cyril, *VS*, 38 (137). Although identified, the ruins of this monastery have not been excavated. See chapter six.

³⁴⁶ John serves as one of Cyril’s models for good governance. Cyril, *VS*, 38 (137-38), Patrich, *Sabas*, 153ff.

³⁴⁷ “Our sainted father Sabas devoted much labor to building and founding this cenobium, and did not cease till death to visit the place and shower it with benefits.” Cyril, *VS*, 38 (138).

speedy construction, taking advantage of Sabas' absence to build an oratory and cells. When the Laura fathers expressed concern, he feigned Sabas' blessing and continued work.³⁴⁸

In some ways James' project was a greater threat than the New Laura had been. Hasty construction had presumably given James formal rights to a very threatening location.³⁴⁹ His laura stood on the road between the Great Laura and the Holy City. It would naturally intercept pilgrims and siphon their patronage, while also putting the Heptastmos cistern beyond Sabaite reach. Upon his return, therefore, Sabas rebuked James and instructed him to abandon the project.³⁵⁰ Cyril has it that James refused, causing God to strike him with affliction. The divinely besieged James capitulated, and Elias sent men to demolish his construction.³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 39 (138).

³⁴⁹ See n32 above. Construction of small structures had granted Sabas and Theognius land rights. Presumably proximity superseded the claims of more distant institutions. See the discussion of "marking" distant cisterns or reservoirs in Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 159ff.

³⁵⁰ Sabas' remarks strike right at the heart of the problem: "God is not pleased at your work, my child, founding another laura in the same district as the [Great] laura, specially when the fathers of the laura do not approve but are indeed extremely concerned at its being on the road and by our cistern. Even if someone was to say that the building is going to be subject to the [Great] laura, I do not want the [Great] laura to extend so far." Cyril, *VS*, 39 (138).

³⁵¹ "In November [the afflicted James] was despaired of, and asked the fathers to be carried and taken into the church of the laura and to be placed at the feet of the saint in order to receive forgiveness before dying. When this was done, the saint said to him, 'Do you recognize the penalty for self-will and opposition? Have you learnt from your own arrogance?' When with difficulty he managed to open his mouth and say, 'Forgive me, father,' the saint said, 'God will forgive you'. Giving [James] his hand, he raised [James] up and told him to partake of the spotless mysteries. When [James] had done so, [James] immediately took food and recovered his strength, so that all were astonished to see the sudden change in James. From then on he no longer returned to that building." Cyril, *VS*, 39 (139).

The repentance of James cleared the way for Elias' action and Sabas' new construction. Cyril, however, was not done with James. The following sections of his narrative are concerned with other incidences of James' institutional disobedience, punishment, and eventual repentance and reconciliation. James serves Cyril as an extended cautionary tale and lesson: God is displeased by willful opposition to rightful authority. Cyril, *VS*, 39-41 (138-41).

The incident of James' laura makes for an interesting tangent. In many ways he came a generation too late. His career began in much the same way as those of his elders. By his day, however, patronage networks and institutional authority barred the path of potential founders who lacked the right connections. He is, in some ways, a failed city-builder in the vein of Binns' model.

Sabas did not risk a recurrence of this problem. He quickly took some of his monks to a spot north of James' site and constructed the new laura of Heptastmos.³⁵² Rarely had Sabas exhibited such a naked display of institutional authority and priorities. In short order he had leveraged his connection to the patriarchate, removed a rising rival, and set up a monastic colony to secure resources. His position as archimandrite had given him opportunities not previously available: first with the conquest of the New Laura, and now with an act of monastic mercantilism.

The period of explosive growth came to a close with the construction of one last cenobium in 511.³⁵³ Twenty-eight years after the foundation of the Great Laura, the Sabaite network sprawled across a sizeable portion of the Judean Desert. Under Sabas were five cenobia, three laurae, the cenobia of Euthymius and Theoctistus, and a number of urban hostels. We have still not reached the extent of Sabas' "city," but by now the insufficiency of the term is manifest. He was not acting as a city father, but working on a more direct imperial model: seizing resources, extending colonies, beautifying his capital, etc. Sabas presided over a network of cities, not a single one, and he would soon enter the final stage of his institutional project: the strategic placement of allied monasteries.

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Regarding said networks and authorities, the extent of Elias' involvement in the affair is obscured by the anecdote's miraculous frame. Given his role in the demolition of James' laura, however, we may speculate that Sabas had been in communication with the patriarch regarding the matter.

³⁵² The project was underwritten by one Zanagôn, a lay donor who provided the land and continued patronage for the monastery thereafter. Upon completion Sabas installed the Greek blood-brothers Paul and Andrew as administrators. Cyril, *VS*, 39 (139-40)

³⁵³ This was the so-called cenobium of Zannus. Sabas entrusted its construction and administration to the blood-brothers Benjamin and (the eponymous) Zannus from Hebron. He provided them with the necessary manpower and supplies, himself took charge of the building of the church, and gave "the rules of his other cenobia to this one also." Cyril, *VS*, 42 (142).

Meanwhile the struggle against the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians was reaching its critical phase. The Euthymians had played a key role in the expulsion of their adversaries from the Holy Land in 479; they would now do the same in Gaza thirty years later. By this time Elias was actively attacking anti-Chalcedonian strongholds in eastern Palestine.³⁵⁴ Incursions were a favorite tactic: recall the insertion of Nephalius into Maiouma in 507.³⁵⁵ Equally important were strategic installations of allied bishops. The Sabaites were part of this effort: the ordination and placement of Antony as bishop of Ashkelon falls under this heading.³⁵⁶ The institutional push to the east was not, however, a purely Sabaite endeavor.

Paul's *Life of Theognius* constitutes a previously unmined source in the history of Elias' strategy. This early *Life* has never been connected to the conflict; likely because of Paul's near-total omission of all things anti-Chalcedonian.³⁵⁷ Yet we are fortunate to have two versions of the *Life*. Comparison of the texts clears up Paul's more obvious *lacunae*, placing Theognius' activity in a more helpful context.

Theognius arrived in Jerusalem perhaps two years following Juvenal's restoration. A Cappadocian Chalcedonian, Theognius had emigrated to a city still seething with factional animosity. Cyril's account of his arrival makes sense in this context:

On coming to Jerusalem in the fifth year of the reign of Marcian, [Theognius] found the Aposchists [anti-Chalcedonians] in control of the holy city but, since he refused to be seduced by their irrational opposition and love of turmoil, he attached himself to a virtuous lady, protected by the Holy Spirit, called Flavia, who at this time was founding near the Mount of Olives a monastery and church of the saintly martyr Julian. She received him and, having tested him for a

³⁵⁴ See chapter 2.

³⁵⁵ See chapter 2.

³⁵⁶ See n78 above. Sabas and Elias would partner in other ways also: recall the defection of Mamas. See chapter two.

³⁵⁷ Written c. 526, four years after Theognius' death.

considerable time and found him reliable and virtuous, made him administrator of her monastery.³⁵⁸

The nascent monastery of Flavia was located at the foot of the Mount of Olives, near Gethsemane. It stood downslope of Melania's famous monastery, run at that time by the prominent anti-Chalcedonian Gerontius, an archimandrite with ties to Eudokia.³⁵⁹ Flavia's Chalcedonian alternative was a better fit for Theognius, however, and he rose to prominence within its walls.

Paul's account in no way contradicts Cyril's later version. It does, however, redact all details of factional strife or theological preference:

...[Theognius] took himself away from his homeland and sought Jerusalem, in order to pray in the holy places, and there he was received by pious men in the place called "the monastery of Flavia." Having lived in that place and holding to his accustomed quiet and gentleness, he benefited everyone who lived with him, and he resolved to give offense to no one, not even once. Then, within a short time, the Christ-loving woman who founded the monastery through her entreaties persuaded him to be in charge of the administration of the place, the very monastery that is outside the Holy City in the place called Gethsemane.³⁶⁰

Paul's omissions regarding Theognius' choice of monastery constitute a seemingly deliberate choice. Certainly Cyril gives greater context for his own narrative purposes, but this inclusion is not innovation. Jerusalem *was* seething with unavoidable factional strife at the time of Theognius' arrival. His choice of monastery would have been inescapably tied to his position on Chalcedon. Both sources do agree, however, that Theognius soon fled his administrative post and entered the cenobium of Theodosius to refocus on his ascetic practice.

³⁵⁸ Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 269.

³⁵⁹ See chapter two.

³⁶⁰ Paul, *VThg*, 5 (147-48).

In time he left that cenobium as well, although the two sources disagree on the details.³⁶¹ Theognius' own foundations would soon rise under the auspices of the Chalcedonian Martyrius following the anti-Chalcedonian expulsion.³⁶² This association with Chalcedonian patriarchs would continue: in 495 Elias tapped him for the episcopate of Bethelia. This was a precarious posting: the Gazan region was the heart of a still-vibrant anti-Chalcedonianism in 495. Theognius would be in the vanguard of Elias' incursions into the anti-Chalcedonian west. While not a Euthymian, therefore, Theognius clearly stood as trusted ally to the patriarch. Here, then, is a distinctly Chalcedonian career. Theognius had been raised in Chalcedonian territory, emigrated to one Chalcedonian monastery before moving to another, became a founder under one Chalcedonian patriarch and a bishop under another, and even warranted a panegyric from the staunchly Chalcedonian Cyril. Given all this, we should assume Theognius' Chalcedonian credentials to have been above reproach.

Yet Paul's omissions continue. The twin accounts of Theognius' ordination, for example, mirror the earlier divergence. Cyril's version, therefore, holds that:

After some time had passed, Archbishop Elias heard about [Theognius] and ordained him bishop of [Bethelia], which is a small seaside town ninety miles distant from the holy city; the godly Theognius unwillingly accepted episcopal office.³⁶³

³⁶¹ Cyril claims that Theognius left because the ongoing growth and construction interfered with his spiritual life. Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 269-70. Paul, on the other hand, holds that Theognius became afflicted with an inflammation of the finger, and left for the warmer airs of the Jordan region in hopes of relief. Paul, *VThg*, 7 (149).

³⁶² The sources differ on the details once again: Cyril says simply that: "Becoming famous [as a result of wonder-working, Theognius] founded for himself, in gradual stages, a famous cenobium." Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 270. Paul's version resembles the account Theodore gives for Theodosius' beginnings: "As a result [of spiritual combats, Theognius] became famous for his noble way of life, and certain Christ-loving men came and, vigorously entreating him, persuaded him to build a suitable little tower, which very thing happened." Paul, *VThg*, 9 (151). Here as with Theodosius, Cyril alters his source material to excise the story of internal financing for monastic foundations. See analysis in final chapter below.

³⁶³ Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 270.

Paul, on the other hand, was forced to employ an awkward construction to avoid use of the patriarch's name:

After a period of time had elapsed, at the prompting of some and the force and compulsion imposed upon him by the order of the one holding the patriarchal throne in Jerusalem at that time, he became bishop of the church in Bethelia. The city itself was very small, ninety miles distant from here.³⁶⁴

Paul never deviates from his pattern of omission: the patriarch is never named, and never again referenced. Cyril, who admits to using Paul as a source, had to reinsert the name into the narrative.³⁶⁵

The redactions are more overt when Paul describes Theognius' political activity. He declines, for example, to date Theognius' embassy to Anastasius. Readers are thus prevented from discerning the visit's political context, or situating the embassy within a given stage of the antagonism between Anastasius and the Chalcedonian Palestinians. Paul further refuses to give a purpose to the mission, or to connect it with Elias in any way.³⁶⁶ The interview itself is presented as a ritual exchange of gifts, then given a vague conclusion:

At this the emperor smiled and embraced him and gladly received the things presented to him, and he inquired about all of [Theognius'] business, an annoyance that the old man patiently endured. And soon, having handled himself

³⁶⁴ Paul, *VThg*, 10 (151).

³⁶⁵ "But what need have I of further words about the famous Theognius, especially since Abba Paul, solitary of the city of Elusa, a man radiant in monastic virtues and orthodox doctrines who illuminates our godly steps by his life and teaching, has preceded me in writing the life of the same blessed Theognius both accurately and comprehensively?" Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 271. In light of such a statement, one might well wonder why Cyril felt the need to write his work at all. See the final chapter for analysis.

³⁶⁶ "At the time when Anastasius was emperor, the inhabitants of Bethelia decided that the great man, for the purpose of public business, should sail to the royal city of cities." Paul, *VThg*, 11 (152). The identities of Theognius' travelling companions are left vague also, given simply as "certain brothers."

It is not unlikely that Elias commissioned Theognius' trip (see below). At the very least the patriarch would have been the subject of intense discussion if the embassy took place between 508 and 516. See below.

well, within a few days with every honor and full provisions for the journey, he sailed back to Bethelia.³⁶⁷

Theognius may have been well-treated at court, but his mission likely ended in failure.

Comparison with the later embassy to Justin draws out Paul's omission in his Anastasian narrative:

At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Justin, again compelled by some urgent matter, [Theognius] went down to Constantinople and was honored above all the other bishops that could be found there at that time. It happened that the emperor himself learned about the virtues of the man from certain members of the senate who especially revered Theognius. The emperor granted the petition for which [Theognius] had come to Byzantium and with the greatest honors, along with all the senate he reverently honored the holy man and dismissed him.³⁶⁸

Once again Paul refuses to provide the embassy's purpose, commissioner, or factional context. He does, however, date the visit (518) and note its success. The latter element, absent from the earlier account, heightens the suspicion that Paul was indeed covering Theognius' failure.³⁶⁹

Paul continued to exercise his editorial prowess in the subsequent passages. He chose to "omit by silence" Theognius' doings in Constantinople, and "keep silent" regarding the events of Theognius' journey home. The latter, which passed through the anti-Chalcedonian strongholds of Caesarea, Ashkelon, and Gaza, would have been of great interest. Paul deigns only to "reveal a very few things" regarding Theognius' time

³⁶⁷ Paul, *VThg*, 11 (152-53).

³⁶⁸ Paul, *VThg*, 21 (160). Van den Gheyn found in this passage an explanation for Theognius' seeming absence at the Council of Jerusalem in 518. He concluded that the assembly of bishops to which Paul refers was in fact the Council of Constantinople (518), held in the first year of Justin's reign. As the Council of Jerusalem took place only two weeks later, Theognius could not have returned to the Holy City in time to attend. J. Van den Gheyn, "St Théognius," 559-576.

³⁶⁹ Other interpretations run into immediate obstacles. Omission of a successful result, for example, only makes sense if Paul is covering up anti-Chalcedonian activity. Participation in such pursuits would have run counter to all of Theognius' known activity and connections to this point in his life. Nor do Theognius' Chalcedonian credentials falter after this interview: witness his success with the Chalcedonian emperor Justin and inclusion in the Chalcedonian corpus of Cyril. Paul is covering failure rather than betrayal. The subsequent passage (see above) reinforces such an interpretation.

in these locales, providing his reader only a few miracle stories to cover the episode.³⁷⁰

Any other events are intentionally consigned to oblivion. We can only speculate on the factional strife observed or experienced by Theognius in Bethelia and elsewhere in the Gazan region. We may, however, infer the stress it caused him by the joy he felt during retreats in his old monastery:

So, having come up here from the plain, and having entered the place called “the cell,” he would raise his hands and give thanks to the Lord, and afterwards he would say: “Greetings, my kingdom; for truly I think that this old and little dwelling of mine is a kingdom. And like someone having been storm-tossed on the great sea and so having been saved from the surf, I flee into the harbor of the little cell so I can return to my former state of mind.”³⁷¹

In light of Theognius’ assigned task and role, we should resist dismissing such statements as mere hagiographic convention, or even an emphasis on the monastery itself. The latter is certainly true, but in this passage Paul is multitasking. Such may be deduced from the immediate sequel:

But a certain one of the brothers, having spoken freely, said to [Theognius] once, “You, father, at such an old age and after having overcome all the adverse passions, should not still hold before your eyes, as I think you do, that which is spiritually harmful, but both in your city and here you should keep to the same sensible conditions.” The noble old man said to him, “Believe, son, that until the time my soul departs from my body, I have no security, courage is not at hand; for we clothe ourselves in flesh, and making our way among the various traps, we are afraid of getting ensnared.”³⁷²

Theognius spent a quarter century in Bethelia amidst a roiling sea of factional strife. The spiritual danger of the episcopate may be a hagiographic commonplace, but the tenure of a Chalcedonian bishop in Gaza must have been doubly stressful. Theognius could not have avoided involvement in such turmoil, and would have felt the weight of it. Spiritual

³⁷⁰ “Keeping silent about most of what happened in Caesarea, [Ashkelon], and Gaza, I shall now reveal a very few things.” Paul, *VThg*, 11 (153).

³⁷¹ Paul, *VThg*, 10 (152).

³⁷² Paul, *VThg*, 10 (152).

insecurity, coupled with joy at temporary respites in a safe, familiar place, are real human responses to such difficult circumstances.

How, then, should we understand Paul's consistent policy of silence and omission? Paul was a native of Elousa, another town in the Gazan region. It was there that he became a monk, and in that context that he met Theognius. He was close enough to the bishop to write his panegyric, and trusted enough to be named abbot of his mentor's monastery. Such a Judean posting would not have been possible for an anti-Chalcedonian in the 520s, so we may conclude that Paul shared his master's affiliations. If we cannot find reason for the omissions in the author's factional sympathies, then, suspicion must fall on pastoral motives. Theognius would have needed tact and discretion to achieve any success in Bethelia. Paul may have learned such pastoral sensitivity at his master's knee. He was not Cyril, writing thirty years later for an exclusively Chalcedonian audience. The conflict was still fresh in Paul's day, and he was aware that his audience extended to Bethelia as well as Judea. He would have been careful not to needlessly antagonize such readers in the course of his work, which was crafted to praise Theognius, not Chalcedon.

This interpretation of Paul's work may uncover a tantalizing possibility: that it was Elias who sent Theognius to Anastasius. If correct, we may infer two possible motives for the embassy. The first is tax relief. This was a common mission for such ambassadors: Sabas would attempt it twice, first in 511 and again in 531.³⁷³ The other possibility is that Theognius was sent by Elias in an effort to ameliorate the growing

³⁷³ Cyril, *VS*, 54 (155-56), and 72 (184-85).

tension between Constantinople and Jerusalem. Such an interpretation provides another connection between the factional conflicts of Jerusalem with Gaza and Constantinople in a turbulent period. It would situate Theognius' visit somewhere between 508 and 516, either before or after Sabas' journey for the same purpose. We cannot know at what stage of the conflict he may have been sent, but the need for such an embassy is beyond question. Elias was about to land in serious trouble.

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Prior to 508 the anti-Chalcedonian Anastasius had preserved ecclesiastical peace via a program of factional toleration.³⁷⁴ The Henotikon remained the central instrument of eastern religious policy, but room was given for varying interpretations of it. Bishops and clerics were permitted to hold both pro- and anti-Chalcedonian readings of the document, allowing a fragile armistice to be maintained on the international level.³⁷⁵

That peace was shattered following the arrival at court of Severus and Philoxenus of Mabbög in 508.³⁷⁶ The two anti-Chalcedonians stayed at the emperor's side for the next three years, prompting a titanic shift in imperial policy. Hardliners both, they convinced Anastasius to abandon his previous policy in favor of a forced unity. The latter, they argued, should be based on an anti-Chalcedonian reading of the Henotikon.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ For a summary of Anastasius' ecclesiastical policies see F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (Oxford: Francis Cairns, 2006), 143-62 and Mischa Meier, *Anastasios I: Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2009), 250ff.

³⁷⁵ Cf. the praise of Evagrius in this regard: Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 30 (166-67).

³⁷⁶ Mabbög was a crucial front in the war against the Persians. Situated in Syria, it was also an anti-Chalcedonian stronghold. Personal inclinations aside, it was vital for the emperor to have good relations with the anti-Chalcedonian population in that region. When Bishop Philoxenus arrived in Constantinople, therefore, he held the personal religious sympathies of his emperor, but had a fair supply of political bargaining chips also. See Haarer, *Anastasius*, 142ff. For Severus see chapter 2.

³⁷⁷ See n113 above. See also Frend, *Monophysite*, 221ff and Perrone, *La Chiesa*, 151ff. Cf. also the alarm of Theodore of Petra on the transformation: "Notre époque a produit au jour un empereur qui

The newly-minted imperial advisors spent three years ejecting Chalcedonian bishops and replacing them with anti-Chalcedonian allies.³⁷⁸ This was a strategy designed to ripen over time, and it reached fruition in 511, when the two had sufficient backing to depose Macedonius, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Constantinople.³⁷⁹ Macedonius' throne was given to the more malleable Timothy, leaving only Elias and Flavian of Antioch to stand against the coming assault.³⁸⁰

It was not long in coming. Shortly after Timothy's accession Anastasius directed a missive to Elias. In it the emperor expressed his expectation that the latter would formally approve this transfer of the patriarchal throne. Elias played it coy: he recognized the installation of Timothy while passing over Macedonius' deposition in silence.³⁸¹

paraissait, dans les premiers temps, comme un <<paradis de délices>> (Gn 2,8 ss), mais qui devint, et fut à la fin, une plaine de desolation.” Theodore, *VThd*, 54 (132).

³⁷⁹ The events that follow (508-18) are remarkably well-attested. The Judeans were understandably keen to describe the conflict and their role in it. Both of these, however, were also related by a wide range of eastern and western authors, including Evagrius, Zacharias Rhetor (both the *Chronicle* and the *Life of Severus*), John of Beth-Aphthonia, Bar Hebraeus, Theodore Lector (whose account of Sabas' involvement significantly predates that of Cyril), Victor Tunnennsis, Liberatus of Carthage, and Theophanes.

See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 30ff (166f); Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 7.8ff (254ff) and *Life of Severus*, 108ff (112ff); Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère* 152ff; Bar Hebraeus, *The Ecclesiastical Chronicle: An English Translation*, trans. by David Wilmshurst (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2016), 74ff; Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, in *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Berlin : Akademie Verlag, 1971), 54ff (135ff); *Victoris Tunnunensis Chronicon, cum reliquis ex Consularibus Caesaraugustanis et Iohannis Biclarenis Chronicon*, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, CLXXVIII A*, ed. Carmen Cardelle de Hartman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 80ff (27ff); Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium*, in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum II.5*, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1936), XIX (134-35); *Chronicon ad annum Domini 846 pertinens*, edidit E.-W. Brooks et interpretatus est I.-B. Chabot, in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri Series Tertia Tomus IV* (Paris: Carolus Poussielgue, 1903), 220-21 (168) and Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 153 (232).

³⁸⁰ Zacharias and John of Beth-Aphthonia both relate the emperor's desire that Severus live with Timothy. We may surmise an intent to form the new patriarch in the Severan line. Severus declined the invitation in both accounts. Zacharias, *Life of Severus*, 110 (114); Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère* 153.

³⁸¹ See n113 -17.

Anticipating imperial ire over his response, Elias sent Sabas and other desert fathers to court, hoping their embassy might ameliorate his position.³⁸²

It was well he did. The situation escalated when Philoxenus tried to manipulate a synod in Sidon in 511. The bishop of Mabbög was eager to inscribe anti-Chalcedonian policy in the heart of enemy territory. Yet his effort went astray. Not even the powerful Soterichus of Caesarea could help him overturn Flavian and Elias in their own backyard. The anti-Chalcedonians suffered a stunning defeat: Sidon produced an overtly Chalcedonian interpretation of the Henotikon.³⁸³

Sabas was present at court when news of Sidon reached the emperor. He alone had stayed the winter; his confreres had been content to receive imperial gifts and return to their respective monasteries.³⁸⁴ Sabas had larger ambitions: his time in the capital was

³⁸² Cyril provides a lengthy backstory for this ecclesiastical/imperial conflict. See Cyril, *VS*, 50 149-51. He concludes: “First, charging Macedonius with various false accusations, [Anastasius] expelled him from his see and promoted Timothy to it; he demanded the assent of Flavian and Elias, who approved the synodical letters of Timothy but not those deposing Macedonius. At this juncture, with the emperor vehemently excited against both of them, a fierce storm hung over both churches.

It was because of this that blessed Elias, as has been said, sent our father Sabas and other superiors with him to Constantinople, with the following letter to the emperor: ‘The elite of the servants of God, good and faithful and leaders in the whole desert, including our Lord Sabas, the colonizer and guardian of our desert and luminary over all Palestine, I have sent to entreat your majesty.’” Cyril, *VS*, 50 (150-51). See also Frend’s discussion of the relationship of Euthymius, Sabas, and Elias: Frend, *Monophysite*, 189ff. For a critique of Cyril’s account see Perrone, *Chiesa*, 158ff.

³⁸³ For the synod of Sidon see Theodoros, *Kirchengeschichte*, 59 (141); Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 7.10d (268-70), and Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 153-54 (234-35). John of Beth-Aphthonia, for whom Flavian is the real enemy, confuses Sidon with the later synod of Antioch that deposes his foe. Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 154. Zacharias allows Flavian and Elias to share the stage: “Unwilling to obey, Flavianus of Antioch, Elias of Jerusalem, and a few others who were against [the proposed union], greatly disturbed both themselves and the public.” Zacharias Rhetor, *Life of Severus*, 108 (112).

See also Cyril, *VS*, 50 (151) for the opening of Sidon and 52 (153-54) for the result. Cyril dates the synod during Sabas’ trip in late 511: “When [Sabas] had been sent on his way and was completing the journey, the emperor Anastasius, possessed with uncontrollable fury against the patriarchs Flavian and Elias, gave orders that there was to be a council at Sidon of the Oriental and Palestinian bishops, and that the presidents of the council were to be Soterichus of Caesarea and Philoxenus of Hieropolis [Mabbög], who had been signal in anathematizing the dogmatic decree of Chalcedon and embracing Eutyches and Dioscorus and their heresy.”

³⁸⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 51 (151-52).

spent networking with the powerful Chalcedonian ladies of the court.³⁸⁵ There would be other benefits to his extended stay as well: he was twice gifted with a thousand *solidi* by the emperor, and almost obtained regional remission of the *superflua discriptio* as well.³⁸⁶ More importantly, however, Sabas was on hand to mollify Anastasius' rage at the report from Sidon. His timely intercession allowed Elias to retain his seat. Where Theognius may have failed, Sabas succeeded.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁵ Cyril eagerly name-drops the most important of these ladies: "Leaving the emperor's presence, the old man went to see the Augusta Ariadne, and, after blessing her, exhorted her to hold firmly onto the faith of her father the great emperor the sainted Leo... The patrician Juliana, the grand-daughter of the emperor Valentinian, and Anastasia, the wife of the patrician Pompeius, who at present is conspicuous on the Mount of Olives for monastic attainments, visited him frequently where he was staying, to pay their respects to him and enjoy his godly teaching; for these ladies were of great faith and outstanding both for orthodoxy and the other virtues." Cyril, *VS*, 53 (154-55).

Cyril came to know Anastasia personally, and she was likely the source for this story as she was for others regarding Sabas' embassy (see note 123). Juliana's legacy would also be known to the monks of Palestine, for her retainers came seeking Sabas after her death (see final chapter).

All three were figures of importance. Pompeius was a consul and nephew to Anastasius, whose career (and its unfortunate end in the wake of the Nika Riot) appears in any number of ancient sources. Juliana and Anastasia are recalled as fierce Chalcedonians by Theophanes centuries later, and Juliana's philanthropy and Church-building are recorded in the *Anthologia Graeca*. See Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 158 (239), and *Anthologia Graeca, Buch 1*, übersetzt und erläutert von Jens Gerlach, et al.; herausgegeben von Dirk Uwe Hansen (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2011), i.10.12-17. All three were also frequent correspondents with Hormisdas, the Chalcedonian Pope of Rome. Their letters are preserved in the *Collectio Avellana*, 2 vols., edited by Otto Guenther, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* XXXV (Vindabona: Tempsky, 1895).

³⁸⁶ This was almost certainly an additional task of Sabas' embassy: "Summoned again [for the third time] a short time afterwards, [Sabas] went into the emperor's presence and, when the subject of the holy city was raised, made the following request: 'The whole Roman empire thanks your Serenity for having been already freed these thirteen years from the iniquitous *collatio lustralis*. We now beseech you to reduce the *superflua discriptio* relating to indigent and insolvent persons, imposed on the holy church of the Resurrection and the landowners of the holy city.'" Cyril explains at length why the tax should be remitted. He relates also that the emperor consented, but that execution was prevented the imperial counselor Marînus. The angry Sabas prophesied misfortune to the latter, which Cyril affirms later occurred. Cyril cites Anastasia, one of Sabas' patronesses at court, as the source of the story. Cyril, *VS*, 54 (155-56).

For the details of the two taxes see Price, *Lives*, 215 n68 and 69: "The *collatio lustralis* was a tax levied on tradesmen and craftsmen, and also on prostitutes, instituted by Constantine and suppressed by Anastasius in May. *Superflua discriptio* was the redistribution of taxes, in this case the transfer of liability from the insolvent to the Church of the Resurrection."

³⁸⁷ This episode forms a lengthy passage in Cyril's work. The details of the conversation are lost in the flowery, tropic language draping the story. Not much can be said about it, except that Sabas successfully bought time for his Euthymian compatriot. Cyril, *VS*, 52 (153-54). See also Frend, *Monophysite*, 219.

He could not, however, save Flavian. Philoxenus engineered the latter's deposition not long after Sabas' departure, instigating a riot that forced Flavian into exile in 512. Severus was installed as patriarch of Antioch later the same year, and the anti-Chalcedonians were now in the catbird seat at last. The emperor required the other eastern patriarchs to recognize Severus and receive him into communion. The bishops of Constantinople and Alexandria readily complied. Elias now stood alone.³⁸⁸

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In many ways Elias is a Chalcedonian analogue to his predecessor Theodosius. Sixty years earlier, the latter had led a Palestinian ecclesiastical revolt against imperial religious policy.³⁸⁹ Locally secure, Theodosius had lacked friends abroad. That state of affairs ultimately cost him the patriarchal throne when the emperor retook the Palestinian church by force.

Elias' position was similar. He too was locally secure. When Severus sent to synodicals for his signatures, he had local support in his refusal to sign. When Severus resent the synodicals with military accompaniment, Elias' allies took the situation in hand: Sabas instigated a Chalcedonian demonstration that left the soldiers powerless to

³⁸⁸ Philoxenus conducted his attack on two fronts. After instigating a popular riot in Antioch, he held a council there to validate Flavian's expulsion. Cyril's account is bluntly concise: "[Philoxenus and Soterichus] armed with the authority they desired [from the angry Anastasius] and distributing large sums to the people of Antioch, they caused Flavian trouble of every kind, and by virtually throttling him forced him to anathematize the Council of Chalcedon; they then expelled him from his see and condemned him to exile." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (158). See also Perrone, *Chiesa*, 162. For a discussion of Philoxenus' "ten-year duel" with Flavian see Frend, *Monophysite*, 215ff, and notes 113-17 above.

³⁸⁹ Cf. chapter 2.

act.³⁹⁰ Yet Palestinian backing would not be sufficient in an ecumenical fight, and larger conflict loomed.

Both sides spent the vigil shoring up allies. Anastasius dispensed honors and gifts to Palestinian notables, ostensibly for innocent purposes.³⁹¹ In reality, the Judeans record, his purpose was to “corrupt” religious leadership and bring them to his side. One such offering was sent to Theodosius the Cenobiarch. Perhaps to his hagiographer’s consternation, Theodosius accepted the gift.

Theodore of Petra does his best to contextualize the affair. He notes that Theodosius did in fact perceive the real purpose of the gift. Instead of returning the thirty pounds of gold (!), however, Theodosius cleverly kept the money. Theodore assures us that this was a virtuous act, for it kept the money from other evil use. In fact, Theodore continues, the cenobiarch’s decision should be compared to the despoliation of the Egyptians.³⁹² We may have pity on Theodore: he wrote only fifteen years after the

³⁹⁰ “On seizing the patriarchate, Severus exhibited great cruelty towards those not in communion with him. He sent his synodical letters to Archbishop Elias and, on not being recognized, stirred the emperor to anger; in May of the sixth indiction he again sent the same synodical letters to Jerusalem together with certain clerics and an imperial force. On learning this, our sainted father Sabas went up to the holy city and, collecting the mass of monks from all directions in front of the holy church of Calvary, shouted out together with the people of Jerusalem, ‘Anathema to Severus and those in communion with him,’ while the *agentes in rebus*, magistrates and soldiers sent by the emperor stood by and listened.” Cyril, *VS*, 56 (158-59). The demonstration was a clever tactic: unless they were willing to attack the crowd, there wasn’t much the officials could do.

Cf. Theodore Lector: “The monks of Palestine, who were pious, virtuous, and zealous on behalf of the faith, went up [to Jerusalem?] against the monks of those in Severus’ party.” This translation is my own; the Greek follows: “Μοναχοὶ ζηλωταὶ τῆς πίστεως ἐκ τῆς παλαιστίνες ἀνήλθον κατὰ τῶν μοναχῶν τῶν ὄντων σὺν τῷ Σεύηρω, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς καὶ ἐνάρετοι.” Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 55 (137).

³⁹¹ Theodore, *VThd*, 55 (132-33).

³⁹² “Théodosios comprit les artifices de l’ennemi. Il ne renvoya pas le present, no que, comme la plupart, il se fût laissé prendre à l’amorce, mais pour châtier doublement le rival, et en le privant de ce qu’il avait attendu de ce don, et en le protégeant contre l’avarice: il imitait anise d’une autre manière le peuple d’Israël qui avait justement dépouillé les Égyptiens.” Theodore, *VThd*, 55 (133).

incident, and local memory probably forced him to deal with it. Contextualization achieved, Theodore could then frame Theodosius as Anastasius' staunchest opponent.³⁹³

Sabas proved more consistent in his alliances. He spent these years shoring up the patriarch's weak spots. During this time he placed his first disciples in monasteries of their own, often at some distance from the Holy City.³⁹⁴ They were sent in surprising directions: Severianus, for example, was positioned eighteen miles to the south. James and Julian Curtus, on the other hand, were installed near the Jordan.³⁹⁵ Patrich has argued that these placements were strategic, designed to plug holes in the Chalcedonian line. If so, the strategy was a success. The Jordanian monasteries soon supplanted the monasteries of Gerasimus as the established voice of the district. That process intensified over time, and by 536 it was the Sabaites, not the Gerasimans, who spoke for the Jordan at ecclesiastical synods.³⁹⁶

Sabas had again grown his institutional empire, but not all his contributions were administrative. This phase of the conflict is the setting of his major coup: the defection

³⁹³ See final chapter below.

³⁹⁴ Comparatively little is known about these monasteries. Cyril declines to give foundation dates; this timeline is the result of archaeological excavation. Patrich, *Sabas*, 170. In fact they are rarely mentioned at all. Three such monasteries appear together in list form in Cyril, *VS*, 16 (108). Severianus' monastery appears later as the refuge of the failed abbot Paul. Archaeology and council notes must be employed to fill in the gaps of Cyril's hagiography. See below.

The exact relationship of Sabas to these monasteries is unknown: subordinate ally seems more likely than direct subordinate. Certainly they were an expansion of Sabas' influence and vision of the monastic life. It was after his death, however, that they truly came into their own. That was the time of the final push against the anti-Chalcedonians, when the Sabaite Empire became the Sabaite Confederacy. See Patrich, *Sabas*, 9, 177ff, and 170-74. See also Patrich, "The Sabaite Heritage: An Introductory Survey," in *Heritage*, 23. Finally, see next chapter for details and extended discussion of the Sabaite Confederacy.

³⁹⁵ For the strategic placement of Severianus against the anti-Chalcedonians see Patrich, *Sabas*, 161-62; and chapter six below. For the Jordanian monasteries see Patrich, *Sabas*, 121: "[James' monastery of the Towers] was established in the very heart of the influence of the laura of Gerasimus. The later development shows that this Sabaitic institution assumed the status of priority previously held by the laura of Gerasimus among the monks of the Jordan valley. It is not inconceivable that initially this was the very reason for the establishment of the laura of the Towers in this area." See next chapter for details. We know less of Curtus' monastery near Neelkeraba in the Jordan region.

³⁹⁶ See next chapter.

of Mamas, anti-Chalcedonian archimandrite and abbot of Romanus' monastery in Eleutheropolis. Sabas had repaid the trust of his Euthymian allies: at every step he stood by Elias' side. The patriarch's position was notably strengthened by his efforts. Their anti-Chalcedonian adversaries, however, had been busy too.

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In 512 the anti-Chalcedonians had replaced Flavian with Severus. Two years later they held a synod at Tyre to negate their setback at Sidon. This time they succeeded: the proceedings at Tyre codified their desired reading of the Henotikon and condemned Chalcedon.³⁹⁷ Eastern Chalcedonians were understandably concerned, and Elias' position was growing more precarious by the moment. Yet there was a side effect: the bigger the target on Elias' back, the greater his prominence in Chalcedonian circles. His monastic allies seem to have risen in profile as well. When Sergius the Grammarian wrote his tract against Tyre, therefore, he sent it to the monks of Palestine.³⁹⁸ For their part the monks entered an anxious correspondence with Bishop Alcison of Nicopolis, relating the nefarious doings of Philoxenus and Severus and the resultant apprehension

³⁹⁷ Tyre was a major victory for the anti-Chalcedonians, and anti-Chalcedonian authors laud it accordingly. Later Chalcedonian chroniclers, on the other hand, pass over the synod of Tyre in silence. In light of their later victories, Chalcedonian authors may not have considered the synod to be of much importance. For the events of the synod see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 7.10a-c (268ff) and 7.12a-c (272ff), and *Chronicon ad annum Domini 846*, 221 (168), which gives credit for the Synod to Philoxenus.

³⁹⁸ "Sergius the Grammarian composed a book of censure of the synod of Tyre after a short time and gave it to the monks of Palestine who shared his opinion." Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 7.10c (270). The anonymous author of the later *Chronicon* seems to have lifted this passage from Zacharias almost verbatim: "Sergius autem Grammaticus calumniatus est sanctum et scripsit librum reprehensionis adversus eam synodum Tyri eumque tradidit monachis Palaestinae suae opinionis fautoribus." *Chronicon ad annum Domini 846*, 221 (268). Both accounts note that Severus published a refutation of Sergius' work. The Grammarian's attack must have been noteworthy to merit a personal response from the anti-Chalcedonians' greatest mind. Cf. the account of John of Beth-Aphthonia, who devotes a surprisingly lengthy passage to Severus' response. Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère* 164-66.

that prevailed in the Holy Land.³⁹⁹ Their fears would soon prove justified. Ecclesiastical control of Palestine would secure the East for the anti-Chalcedonians, and in 516 they would attempt that final step of the campaign.

In that year Olympius, *dux* of Palestine, was tasked to deliver a message from Anastasius to Elias: accept Severus into communion or be deposed. Elias chose the latter, and was exiled to Aila.⁴⁰⁰ Casting about for a successor, Olympius lit on John,

³⁹⁹ Alcison was a prominent Chalcedonian theologian. The monks' letter to him encompasses a (partisan) account of the successes of Severus and Philoxenus against Macedonius, Flavian, and etc. It also provides corroboration for Cyril and Theodore's accounts of the fates of Mamas and Julian of Bostra (see above), and describes the maneuvering of the embattled Elias. The apparent conclusion of the letter describes the general situation in Judea: "The monasteries here and in Jerusalem itself are, through God, in accord concerning the correct faith, as are very many other cities with their bishops. For all these and ourselves, pray that we may not enter into temptation, our most holy master and most honoured father." The letter was preserved by Evagrius in his history. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 31ff (168ff) and 33 (176-78). For the other pockets of Chalcedonian resistance see Frend, *Monophysite*, 227-29.

⁴⁰⁰ There are multiple accounts of Elias' deposition. Theodore Lector (c. 530) wrote that "Emperor Anastasius commanded Elias the bishop of Jerusalem either to enter communion with Severus or to be expelled from the episcopate. Coming together, those of the monasteries fortified and affirmed [Elias], and he deemed it better to be cast from the episcopate than to enter communion with Severus." [My translation of the following: "Ο βασιλεὺς προσέταξεν Ἀναστάσιος Ἡλιαν τὸν Ἱεροσολύμων ἐπίσκοπον ἢ κοινωῆσαι Σευήρω ἢ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἐκβληθῆναι. οἱ δὲ τῶν μοναστηρίων συναχθέντες τοῦτον ὠχύρωσαν καὶ διεμαρτύραντο. ὁ δὲ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς μᾶλλον ἐκβληθῆναι προετίμησεν ἢ κοινωῆσαι Σευήρω." Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149).].

Victor Tunnunensis (c. 569) gives a stripped-down account: "The Emperor Anastasius commanded Elias, bishop of Jerusalem and a defender of Chalcedon, to receive Severus of Antioch into communion. Yet Elias refused, as Severus was an enemy of the Apostolic Faith, and so was exiled to the city of Parasenensis..." [My translation of the following: "...Helyas episcopus Iherosolimitanus sinodi Calcidonensis defensor, nolens Seuerum Antiochenum apostolice fidei inimicum in communion precipiente Anastasio imperatore suscipere, exilio Parasenensi castello traditur..." Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, 90 (29).]. Centuries later, Theophanes followed Theodore Lector's inclusion of the monks' involvement: "Helias of Jerusalem, compelled by the emperor either to enter into communion with Severus or be expelled from his bishopric, with the monks fortifying him, chose to be deposed from his bishopric." Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 156 (237).

Joseph Patrich has argued that Olympius achieved his goal by dividing the patriarch from the support of his Judean allies. Relying on Cyril's account, Patrich centers his argument on Olympius' possession of a letter written by Elias to Anastasius in the aftermath of the Chalcedonian victory at Sidon. In that letter, it was claimed, Elias expressed regret and in fact repudiated Chalcedon. Thus Patrich holds that: "In order to damage Elias' credibility in the eyes of the monks and his supporters, the emperor entrusted Olympius with a copy of the letter of remorse he had received from Elias upon the conclusion of the Synod of Sidon, in which [Elias] denied the Council of Chalcedon and almost accepted the *Typos* of Severus. This undoubtedly sowed confusion among the monastery heads and weakened their stand on behalf of the patriarch." Patrich, *Sabas*, 306.

Such a claim easily proceeds from an isolated reading of Cyril's account: "This destructive corrupter of souls the emperor Anastasius was pressing Archbishop of Elias to receive Severus into his communion. When [Elias] refused to do this in any way at all, the emperor bubbled over with rage and sent along one Olympus of Caesarea, *dux* of Palestine, with the diplomatic letter written from Sidon which

deacon of the Anastasis and guardian of the Holy Cross. John professed himself willing to communicate with Severus, but there would be a complication of which Olympius was likely unaware. John was the son of Marcianus, Sabas' client. John, his brother Antony, and their father all owed their positions to their relationship with Sabas and Elias.⁴⁰¹

Olympius' plans were frustrated, therefore, when John's benefactor arrived to speak with him. A dramatic volte-face followed, and John refused to follow through on his promises to Olympius.⁴⁰²

professed disapproval of the Council of Chalcedon, in order by any and every means to oust Elias from his see. Olympius arrived with an imperial force and, by employing many methods and stratagems and displaying the said letter, ousted Elias from his see and banished him to Aila..." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (159-60).

Patrich's read, however, is not be the only way to interpret the event. Theophanes and Theodore Lector both highlight the monks' support of Elias during the time of the deposition. Theodore, it should be recalled, is our earliest source for the event, writing decades before Cyril. More important still is the letter of the monks to Alcison, written at least a year before the arrival of Olympius. In the letter they affirm that they *already knew* of this charge against Elias, and had an answer for it: "Meanwhile [Philoxenus et al.] also demanded from the bishop of Jerusalem a written statement of faith; this he produced and dispatched it to the emperor by means of men who were followers of Dioscorus. They presented this, which contained an anathema of those who spoke of two natures. But the bishop of Jerusalem himself, asserting that it had been forged by them, presented another without such an anathema. And no wonder, for indeed [the anti-Chalcedonians] have forged many works of the Fathers, and many works of Apollinarius they have through their headings attributed to Athanasius and Gregory the Wonder-Worker and Julius. By these means above all they attach many to their particular impieties." Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (171).

The work of Theodore Lector and the Letter to Alcison steer us away from Patrich's view that the letter was decisive in dividing Elias and the Sabaites. More likely is the literal read of Cyril's passage: "...employing many methods and stratagems *and* displaying the said letter..." [emphasis mine, the Greek runs: "καὶ πολλοῖς τρόποις καὶ μηχανήμασιν χρησάμενος καὶ τὴν εἰρημένην ἐπιστολὴν ἐμφανίσας." Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 150]."

Elias' letter was not a decisive element in the deposition. The evidence in favor of continued monastic support for Elias holds. We should not be surprised, therefore, that Elias' exile would be set in Aila, whose bishop was a client of Sabas, nor that Sabas would later visit him there. Cyril, *VS*, 60 (170ff). Sabas could not prevent his ally's deposition, but the Euthymian bond between them did not break.

⁴⁰¹ See above.

⁴⁰² "The sanctified Sabas and the other fathers of the desert, on learning that John had made this promise, gathered together and adjured him not to receive Severus into communion but to bear the brunt of the battle on behalf of the Council of Chalcedon, with all of them for his allies. And so John broke the promise he had made to the *dux*, out of respect for the fathers." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160). The earlier Theodore Lector includes Theodosius in the visit, while Theophanes notes the volte-face but not the embassy of monks. Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149); Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 237. Theodore of Petra, on the other hand, omits the episode entirely, as he does with John and Sabas generally. His narrative places Theodosius alone on the stage against Anastasius. See final chapter. Frend reads this episode in a starker light than Cyril presents it, emphasizing Sabas' irritation at his client's actions: "When the new patriarch John (516-24) vacillated between anathematizing Chalcedon or not, Sabas forbade him." Frend, *Monophysite*, 230.

Olympius' successor Anastasius was charged with bringing John to heel.⁴⁰³
Finding John to be resolute, the new *dux* abruptly threw the patriarch into prison.⁴⁰⁴
There John was visited by the governor of Palestine, who offered a crafty solution.⁴⁰⁵
Following his advice, John dissembled to the *dux* and promised to publicly affirm
Severus if released from prison. *Dux* Anastasius believed him, and two days later John
stood before a great assembly of monks at St. Stephen's in Jerusalem. Possibly flanked
by Sabas and Theodosius, John broke his promise to the *dux* and issued a thundering
denunciation of the patriarch of Antioch.⁴⁰⁶

The anti-Chalcedonian sources, on the other hand, skim over the events of the deposition as quickly and quietly as possible. In this they mirror the Chalcedonian authors' approach to Tyre, passing over defeat to focus on victory. Elias' downfall merits no more than a few clauses in the works of Zacharias and his anonymous successor. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 7.10c (268); and *Chronicon ad annum 846*, 222 (169).

⁴⁰³ Olympius having died. See Patrich, *Sabas*, 306-7. Cyril's account runs: "The emperor Anastasius, furious at learning that John had canceled his compact, sent Anastasius son of Pamphilus and *dux* of Palestine (Olympus was now out of the way) to make John receive Severus into communion and anathematize the Council of Chalcedon, or oust him from his see." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160). Theodore Lector and Theophanes both claim that the new *dux* had procured his position with a wager, betting the emperor 300 lbs. of gold that he could force John to communicate with Severus. See Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149); and Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 158 (240).

⁴⁰⁴ See Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 17 (149), Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 158 (240), and Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160). Cyril records the people's irritation at John's possible role in Elias' downfall and subsequent delight at his imprisonment. Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160).

Perrone has argued for a divide between the Jerusalemite clergy and the local monks in this conflict. The former's *oikonomia*, he contends, led to a desire for accommodation. The monks' *akribeia*, on the other hand, led to a firm stand for Chalcedonian orthodoxy. In this light Cyril's passage could mask the clergy's satisfaction at John's imprisonment because he *refusal* to honor his initial promise to Olympius. Perrone himself, however, only applies his speculative claim to the earlier events of John's accession. Regardless, there is no direct evidence for such local division in either case. Even if true, however, Perrone's contention does not alter the factional argument put forward here. See Perrone, *Chiesa*, 166.

⁴⁰⁵ Governor Zacharias' visit is preserved in Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149), Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 158 (240). Cyril's presentation runs: "One Zacharias, governor of Caesarea, entered the prison secretly and advised John as follows: 'If you want to act well and not be deprived of your see, be induced by no one to receive Severus into communion, but pretend to make a compact with the *dux*, in these words: "I shall not now postpone fulfilling my offer but, lest some will say that I acted by forcible constraint, please release me from here, and in two days' time, on the Sunday, I shall willingly carry out your orders.'" Convinced by these words, the *dux* restored him to his church." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160).

⁴⁰⁶ Descriptions vary. There is no mention of the archimandrites in Theodore Lector (Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149)) or Theophanes (Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 158-59 (240)). Theodore of Petra omits both Sabas and John, inserting a disconnected episode wherein Theodosius alone

Dux Anastasius was checkmated and forced to flee from the angry crowd of monks and laity. The emperor's nephew Hypatius, also on hand for the occasion, was wise enough to temporize. He protested that his purpose in the Holy City was the fulfillment of a vow to God. Hypatius further proclaimed that he had nothing to do with Severus and cemented his credibility with lavish gifts of gold to the archimandrites and the local church. He walked away unscathed.⁴⁰⁷

Like their anti-Chalcedonian predecessors, the Sabaites (et al.) had defied a ranking agent of imperial policy and ejected him from the city. They too now reached out to the court to forestall retribution, but here their methods diverged. The anti-

issues a dramatic anathematization of Severus at the Anastasius. The other sources put event at St. Stephens'. Theodore, *VThd*, 55 (133).

Cyril puts both Sabas and Theodosius on stage with John: "On being released, however, the archbishop summoned all the monks to the holy city overnight, gathering them from all sides: those who counted the multitude announced that the total came to ten thousand monks. Since no church could hold so great an assembly, it was decided that all should assemble at the church of the holy protomartyr Stephen, which was capacious enough to receive the multitude...When all the monks and city-people had assembled in the revered convent just mentioned, the *dux* Anastasius and the consular Zacharias joined them. When Hypatius arrived and went with the multitude into the convent of the protomartyr Stephen, and the *dux* was expecting the will of the emperor to be done, the archbishop ascended the pulpit, accompanied by Theodosius and Sabas, the chiefs and leaders of the monks, and the whole congregation shouted out many times, 'Anathematize the heretics and confirm the council.' Without delay the three with one voice anathematized Nestorius, Euthyches, Severus, Soterichus of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and everyone who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (161). See the final chapter for analysis, and the comparison of the two accounts given by Perrone on 167-68.

This is the account accepted by Patrich (307) and Frennd (230-31); compare Perrone's comparison of the accounts in *Chiesa*, 167ff; and my analysis in the final chapter below.

⁴⁰⁷ The story of Hypatius is given by Theodore Lector, Theophanes, and Cyril. The recipients of his largesse change: Theodore states that Hypatius refused communion with Severus, entered communion with John, then gave 100lbs. of gold "...to Theodosius, who was exarch of the monasteries, for distribution among those monks who were zealous on behalf of the right faith and the Council of Chalcedon." [παρῆν δὲ καὶ Ὑπάτιος ὁ ἀδελφιδὸς τοῦ βασιλέως, μὴ κοινωνῶν Σευήρω τὸ σύνολον, οὗτος κοινωνήσας Ἰωάννη τότε χυψίου λίτρας ρ δέδωκε Θεοδοσίῳ τῷ ὀσίῳ, ἐξάρχῳ ὄντι τῶν μοναστηρίων, εἰς διανομὴν τῶν ὑπερ τῆς ὀρθῆς τίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐν Χαλκηδόνι συνόδου ζηλούντων μοναχῶν." Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149)]. As elsewhere, Theophanes follows Theodore almost verbatim.

Cyril gives a different account of the gift and its distribution: "Hypatius assured the fathers with oaths, 'I came [to St. Stephen's for the proclamation] not in communion with Severus but out of desire for the honor of your communion.' And he made an offering of a hundred pounds of gold coin to each of the holy churches of the Resurrection, Calvary and the venerable Cross, and gave Theodosius and Sabas a hundred pounds of gold coin to distribute to the monks of the region." Cyril, *VS*, 56 (161). Theodore of Petra omits Hypatius entirely. Perrone (*Chiesa*, 169), and Patrich (*Sabas*, 307) accept Cyril's account. See final chapter below.

Chalcedonians of 451 had understood the audacity of their act. They understood Jerusalem's importance to the empire. They knew the emperor would respond, and so they offered terms.

The anti-Chalcedonians had proposed submission, but on condition that they be allowed to retain their offices and opposition to Chalcedon. Such a proposition could never be acceptable at court. Their subsequent refusal to surrender prompted the inevitable imperial response, and they were ejected from the region when the emperor forcibly reclaimed it two years later.

The Chalcedonian rebels of 516 had learned the lesson of their vanquished forebears. They too sent missives to the court, but in very different style.⁴⁰⁸ The Judeans spoke boldly, careful not to criticize the emperor directly but making it clear that they would not be moved:

Your Serenity, on receiving favorably the written assurance of this petition from the humility of us all, will deign to issue a decree that from now on must cease the reckless misdeeds and continual disruptions perpetrated each day against this holy city of God and our most pious archbishop John by the enemies of the truth in the name, allegedly, of Your Piety, once Your Majesty has been convinced before God and elect angels that in no way nor for any reason do we accept union with the said Aposchists [anti-Chalcedonians], without a lawful and canonical decision, and that neither do we agree to any innovation respecting the faith for whatever reason nor will we accept the forcible ordination at whatever time of one of the Acephaloi [anti-Chalcedonians].⁴⁰⁹

They did not stop at such professions of immobility. Knowing that the axe would fall, the Judean monks issued the one threat capable of forestalling it:

If some such misfortune should occur on account of our sins, we assure Your Piety before the holy and consubstantial Trinity that the blood of all of us will

⁴⁰⁸ These are by Cyril and Theodore of Petra. They will be unpacked in the final chapter.

⁴⁰⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 57 (166) and Theodore, *VThd*, 57 (133-34). The monks also issue protestations of Elias' fate and direct attacks on Severus. See final chapter.

willingly be shed and all the holy places be consumed with fire before such a thing come to pass in this holy city of God. For what benefit is there in the bare title of the holy places if they are so ravaged and dishonored? “The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard” His holy Church and put an end to the scandals pressing upon it, at the command of Your Majesty, to his glory and for the vaunting of your reign, dear to God.⁴¹⁰

Here was their trump card: should imperial retribution fall, Anastasius would still forfeit Jerusalem.⁴¹¹ The anti-Chalcedonians had attempted to hold Jerusalem through simple possession; the Chalcedonians had learned better. Their threat, combined with Vitalian’s timely rebellion, forced the emperor to table the matter for the time being.⁴¹²

It would be two years before the emperor could give the Palestinians his full attention. The monks had stalled for time, and their gamble would pay off. When at last Anastasius commissioned documents of exile for the two archimandrites, it was too late. The eighty-eight-year-old emperor died before the orders could be issued.

Elias died the following day, and Cyril assures us that they were meant to face the judgement seat together.⁴¹³ Their deaths mark the end of a chapter of Sabaite history. Once again the successors of Euthymius had proved their Chalcedonian mettle in the face of strong opposition, and once again they would reap the rewards of victory. By the end of the year they would enjoy the favor of a Chalcedonian emperor as well as a client

⁴¹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 57 (166-67) and Theodore 60 (135).

⁴¹¹ Thus they presented in epistolary form a response to the problem of Jerusalem that John Rufus addressed through literature, with both a different approach and a different result. See chapter five.

⁴¹² Report of this letter apparently traveled. Victor Tunnunensis heard of it in North Africa, and centuries later Theophanes recalls the letter and its attendant threat: “The monks of the desert, moved by divine zeal composed four solemn declarations of which they sent two to the emperor, one to the authorities of the region, and one to John, bishop of Jerusalem. They declared that they would neither transgress the holy synod of Chalcedon, nor enter into communion with the impious Severus since they were ready to die and even to set fire to the holy places.” Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 162 (246), and Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, 98 (32).

⁴¹³ Cyril, *VS*, 60 (170-71).

patriarch. From that foundation they would rise to ecumenical prominence, then plummet from the apex of their influence.

CHAPTER FOUR: CIVIL WAR

Anastasius died in 518 without child or designated heir. His wife had predeceased him, and so the crown fell to Justin, an illiterate general with ties to the west.⁴¹⁴ Not all were pleased:⁴¹⁵ Justin was a western Chalcedonian, and a major reversal to imperial policy could be assumed. The ecclesiastical powers that had been were no longer powerful enough to oppose it. Justin had the support of the army, and was palatable to both of the violently unstable circus factions.⁴¹⁶ He was flanked by his nephew Justinian and the warlord Vitalian, both staunch Chalcedonians in their own right. Ascendant at last, the astonished Chalcedonians prepared to welcome the winds of change.

A dizzying Chalcedonian blitzkrieg followed Justin's crowning.⁴¹⁷ Justin and his nephew reached out to Pope Hormisdas, seeking to end the Acacian Schism. They offered a generous list of concessions, and unity with Rome was restored.⁴¹⁸ A synod

⁴¹⁴ Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 8.1 (189); *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys et al. (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 17.1 (230).

⁴¹⁵ One of the scholars actually rushed Justin and split his lip. A.A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 68.

⁴¹⁶ Justin's accession was a piece of high theater, and the optics of military backing were inescapable: the new emperor was revealed to the Hippodrome when the *testudo* formation of his soldiers broke apart. The army's loyalty was assured: every soldier in the army received a pound of silver, on top of a year's pay in gold. Succession was clearly established. For the salary of a Byzantine soldier, see Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy*, c. 300-1450 (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 166ff. For the story and details of Justin's accession see Frend, *Monophysite*, 233ff and especially Vasiliev, *Justin*, 68ff.

Justin also had the enthusiastic support of the recently submerged Chalcedonian population, who looked on him as a hero. See the exuberant public pronouncements of Chalcedonian bishops in Vasiliev, *Justin*, 137ff; and the calmer statements of Chalcedonian chroniclers like Theodore Lector, who describes Justin as "a man zealously burning with the right faith." [ἀνήρ...τῆς δὲ ὀρθῆς πίστεως ἔμπυρος ζηλωτής.]. Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 77 (151).

⁴¹⁷ This was Frend's "revolution that shook the Byzantine world." Frend, *Monophysite*, 232ff. In this case the hyperbole may be warranted. See below.

⁴¹⁸ Said concessions reversed decades of imperial policy and condemned those responsible for it. Frend is quick to note, however, that while Hormisdas' apparent "shattering victory over the pretensions of

was called in Constantinople, and Chalcedon speedily inscribed in the diptychs.⁴¹⁹ Pope Leo was elevated to equal footing with Cyril of Alexandria. Chalcedonian bishops were returned to their sees, and Severus ejected from his.⁴²⁰ Barely a month had passed since Justin had taken the throne, but it was already a different world.⁴²¹

Copies of the synod's resolutions were dispersed throughout the empire. Bishops and patriarchs were expected to subscribe, and a flurry of local councils were called for the purpose. Moving with ecstatic speed, Patriarch John convened such a synod at Jerusalem within a few weeks.⁴²² Sabas was present at this council, and John tasked him with the promulgation of its decrees.⁴²³ As congratulatory Chalcedonians sent letters

New Rome" led to the "almost total collapse of the Byzantine position," the pope owed his triumph to imperial power. Regardless, this new situation left the Pope in a more amenable mood. Frend, *Monophysite*, 236-37.

⁴¹⁹ Vasiliev, *Justin*, 146ff.

Frend argues that the shift in policy was cemented by more than riots and synods. In addition, he argues, the people were tired of what they saw as Severus' puritanical quibbles, and wanted respite from theological wrangling. The swift finality of Justin's acts seemed to accomplish an end to dispute, and so was welcomed by the bulk of the populace. "Not everyone even in sixth-century Byzantium," he concludes, "was a religious fanatic." Frend, *Monophysite*, 239-40.

This council likely coincided with Theognius' second embassy to the capital. See Paul, *VThg*, 21 (160); Van den Gheyn, "St Théognius," 559-76; and Vasiliev, *Justin*, 252-53.

⁴²⁰ Evagrius adds that Justin ordered Severus' tongue cut out, perhaps at Vitalian's urging. Regardless, the defeated Patriarch of Antioch fled and joined the former monks of Peter the Iberian's monastery in exile at Ennaton, Egypt. Liberatus claims that Justin summoned him back, requiring that he answer for his statements against Chalcedon. Severus prudently declined. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV.4 (202-3); Liberatus, *Breviarum*, XIX; and Perrone, *Chiesa*, 186ff.

⁴²¹ Anti-Chalcedonian sources intimate that persecutions resulted in the following years of Justin's reign. See Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 8.3ff (192ff); *Chronicon ad annum 864*, 169ff; and Frend, *Monophysite*, 241.

⁴²² Narrowly beating out Epiphanius' similar synod at Tyre. See Vasiliev, *Justin*, 148ff; and Frend, *Monophysite*, 234.

The synods of 518 heaped invective and condemnation upon Severus. Perrone has commented pithily that the assembled fathers so exhausted themselves attacking the vanquished Patriarch of Antioch that they had no energy left for theological formulation. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 177-78.

⁴²³ The decrees of the two synods of 518 are preserved in *Collectio Avellana*, Epistles 233ff (708) and 234 (711ff); and *Collectio Sabaitica contra Acephalos et Origeniastas destinata, insunt Acta Synodum Constantinopolitanae et Hierosolymitanae a. 536* in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Tomus Tertius*, ed. Eduardus Schwartz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1940). Hereafter *ACO III*.

flying across the Mediterranean,⁴²⁴ Sabas embarked on his mission to Caesarea and Scythopolis.⁴²⁵

Received by Bishop John of Caesarea and feted by Metropolitan Theodosius of Scythopolis, Sabas looked to be taking something of a victory lap.⁴²⁶ In some ways he was. Decades before, the Euthymians had risen to local prominence through their association with Chalcedon and affiliations with Chalcedonians. The Sabaites had done the same in the intervening years, as Sabas maintained his loyalties to prominent Euthymian comrades. Although in the same vein, however, Sabaite resistance to the Severan agenda differs in scale. The Sabaites were now players on the imperial level. They had done more than back a Chalcedonian ally; the Sabaites had organized a Chalcedonian resistance. They now emerged as a Chalcedonian faction to be reckoned with, and stood on the brink of ascent to the highest ecclesiastical and theological circles in the empire.

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⁴²⁴ The epistolary of the *Collectio Avellana* is a roll-call of victorious Chalcedonians. Authors and recipients include Hormisdas, Justin, Sabas' patronesses Anastasia and Juliana Anicia, Pompeius, Epiphanius, Syrian and Jerusalemite monks, and more. *Collectio Avellana*, Epistles 141ff (586ff).

⁴²⁵ "...Justin, on succeeding to the throne, immediately issued decrees ordering all those exiled by Anastasius to be recalled and for the Council of Chalcedon to be inserted in the sacred diptychs. When the decrees of the emperor Justin reached Jerusalem, there gathered an infinite multitude of monks and laypeople, there assembled in haste Saint Sabas and the synod of bishops, and, at a festival on 6 August, the imperial decrees were published and the four councils inserted in the sacred diptychs.

At this juncture Archbishop John of Jerusalem persuaded our sainted father Sabas to proceed to Caesarea and Scythopolis with some other superiors of the desert in order to publish the decrees of the emperor and insert the four councils in the sacred diptychs in both cities." Cyril, *VS*, 60-61 (171-72).

⁴²⁶ "Reaching Caesarea, they were met by the sainted John of Choziba [in Judea], who had been appointed bishop there. After fulfilling their instructions there, they went to Scythopolis, where all the citizens together with the most holy metropolitan Theodosius came out to meet them at the apostolic shrine of Saint Thomas. They made their entry with psalms, the liturgy was celebrated in the ancient church, the imperial letter was read out, and the four councils were inserted in the sacred diptychs." During his time in Scythopolis Sabas also met with local dignitaries in the bishop's palace. Cyril, *VS*, 61 (172).

The victory lap continued for a full decade. The anti-Chalcedonians had been defeated at home and abroad. Judean monasteries grew and prospered in the light of imperial favor and local security. The patriarch and his archimandrites seem to have enjoyed the relative peace of the time. Theodore has little to say of these years: the great combats of his hero are over and won. Paul likewise skips over the beginning of this period.

Cyril's account of the 520s is made up of a few quiet anecdotes. We find, for example, Sabas enjoying the hospitality of Patriarch John at a dinner with Theodosius, and the patriarch's brother Antony.⁴²⁷ Around the same time Sabas miraculously ended a drought in Palestine at the patriarch's request.⁴²⁸

Theognius died in his monastery in 522. Paul passes over the details of his funeral and interment, but we are assured that a great multitude flocked to the monastery on the day of his death.⁴²⁹ Patriarch John followed in 524. He was succeeded by Peter of Eleutheropolis who, Cyril points out, held Sabas in appropriate honor. The two were close, Cyril claims: the patriarch was a frequent visitor to Sabas, who miraculously cured Peter's sister of a "dire illness."⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 64 (174-75). Theodore also tells of Theodosius chairing a meeting of abbots in Jerusalem during this period. Theodore, *VThd*, 70-73 (141-43).

⁴²⁸ Sabas had already provided water for some of his own monasteries. Hearing of this, one of John's magistrates urged the patriarch to seek Sabas' intercession for the whole region. John implored his archimandrite at some length, and eventually Sabas gave in. The "cisterns of the holy city were filled to the brim" as a result of his intercessory prayers. Cyril, *VS*, 66-67 (176-79). The length of the drought is unknown. Cyril claims five years; Zacharias Rhetor notes that a river ran dry in Jerusalem for fifteen. Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.4 (204).

⁴²⁹ Paul, *VThg*, 21-22 (160-61); cf. Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 271.

⁴³⁰ "The thrice blessed Peter, having obtained the patriarchal throne of Jerusalem, paid the same honor to blessed Sabas and frequently showed eagerness in descending to the desert to visit him. This patriarch had a sister in the flesh called Hesychia, outstanding in godly virtues. When she fell victim to a dire illness and was despaired of by the doctors, her brother, overcome by sympathy, sent for blessed Sabas and begged him to take the trouble to go to her house and say prayers for her. The saint, not knowing how

The period of quiet came to an end with the death of Theodosius in 529. The cenobiarch was one of the last great opponents of Anastasius; the 520s had seen the peaceful retirement and passage of that generation. Peter arrived to celebrate Theodosius' funeral, and Sophronius succeeded him as abbot.⁴³¹

Four months later the Samaritans of Palestine rose in revolt, and the idyll came to a close. In their rage the Samaritans took long-sought revenge on the Christians and their holdings. By the time the rebellion was put down, large swathes of the holy land lay devastated.⁴³² Unable to meet the challenge from his own resources, the embattled Peter sent Sabas to the capital. The archimandrite set out on one last mission, hoping to beg financial aid and tax relief from the emperor.⁴³³

Cyril presents the embassy as an unbroken string of triumphs. The archimandrite's holiness is immediately perceived by the emperor, who begs him to bless

to refuse, went to see her and, finding her despaired of, said prayers for her, sealed her three times with the sign of the cross, and restored her to health. When the miracle was reported throughout the holy city, all gave glory to God." Cyril, *VS*, 68 (179-80).

Cyril's presentation of Sabas during these quiet years aligns well with traditional expectations for holy men. In these passages we find Sabas performing the sort of intercessory miracles usually associated with such figures, albeit with a twist: here, as with the drought, Sabas is sought by patriarchs. See final chapter below for analysis. In this way Cyril fills the lull between the waves of his heroic narrative, before Sabas steps back onto the larger stage one last time. See below.

⁴³¹ Theodore, 94-97 (155-57); Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 4-5 (266-67).

⁴³² The rebellion is well-attested: see Procopius of Caesarea, *Secret History, or Anecdota*, trans. Richard Atwater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), 27 (73-74); Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.8 (321-32); and *Chronicon Paschale*, 111. Details of the rebellion's defeat can be found in Malalas, *Chronicle*, 18.35 (260-61). Cyril's presentation runs: "In the fourth month after Abba Theodosius' death, the Samaritans of Palestine marshalled their whole race against the Christians and performed many lawless acts: pillaging and setting fire to the churches that fell into their hands, mercilessly killing by various tortures the Christians who fell into their hands, and setting fire to whole estates, specially in the region of Neapolis. Thereupon in usurpation they crowned a king for themselves, one Julian of their race. Then they slaughtered Bishop Mamónes of Neapolis and seizing and butchering some priests, roasted them together with remains of holy martyrs. They performed many such acts, so that the so-called imperial highroads became unusable and impassable for the Christians. When all this came to the ears of our most pious emperor Justinian, the most glorious counts Theodore and John received orders to gather an army and march against the Samaritans; a battle ensued, in which Julian and a great mass of Samaritans with him were killed." Cyril, *VS*, 70 (181-82).

⁴³³ For Sabas' role as an economic emissary to court, see Patrich, *Sabas*, 309-23.

Theodora. The latter asks Sabas for a child, which prayer Sabas diplomatically declines to offer, lest the child grow to be a follower of Severus.⁴³⁴ In Cyril's account it was Sabas who dealt with the Samaritan instigator Arsenius.⁴³⁵ The archimandrite kept his poise at all times, refusing even to be put off track by the emperor's offer to endow one of his monasteries.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ To the grief of the empress. Cyril, *VS*, 71 (183).

⁴³⁵ Arsenius makes for an interesting case study. Procopius holds that he was an intimate of Theodora who had risen to power and rank. He had made a *pro forma* conversion to Christianity to retain his status and wealth, but the act was only superficial. Trusting in his authority, Arsenius' father and brother persecuted Christians in Scythopolis until the citizens rose up and murdered them. Arsenius, in collusion with Patriarch Paul of Alexandria, later colluded in torture and murder on orders from the emperor. Procopius concludes by noting that it became convenient for the emperor to disavow the act and feign horror, whereupon: "Liberius, at Theodora's order, crucified Arsenius, and the Emperor confiscated his property, though he had no charge to bring against him except that he had been intimate with Paul." Procopius, *Anecdota*, 27 (73-74). Liberatus records only the collusion, murder, and fallout. He omits both Arsenius' conversion and Justinian's culpability. Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIII.

Cyril's version is different, being tied up with Sabas at multiple points. In his account we first meet Arsenius' father Silvanus during Sabas' embassy to Scythopolis in 518. Learning of Silvanus' wicked treatment of Christians, Sabas prophesies his public death by fire. Cyril, *VS*, 61 (172-73). Silvanus' "most shameful death" is given in passing by Procopius. Cyril grants it more space, constructing it as the fulfillment of a prophecy. The burning of Silvanus is the gateway to Arsenius in Cyril's narrative, and his description largely pairs up with Procopius' version.

Cyril never mentions Arsenius' ultimate fate, preferring to stop at the latter's conversion. This, Cyril relates, was not the act of an ascending courtier seeking firmer footing. Rather it was an act of fear and desperation, for it was Sabas who prompted imperial anger at the Samaritans and Sabas who effected the baptism of Arsenius: "[Sabas and his retinue] were invited to lodge in the palace. When the divinely protected emperor received from the godly old man the petition of the churches of Palestine, his anger against the Samaritans returned. He was roused into issuing a decree or law that Samaritan assemblies should cease, that they should be expelled from the whole country, and that they should not have the right of bequeathing to their coreligionists or making transfers to each other in the form of gifts; he also decreed the death penalty against them, specially their leaders guilty of lawlessness. At this juncture, with the emperor ordering his execution, Arsenius disappeared for a time; but later he took refuge with the blessed Sabas, while he was still staying in the imperial city, and was baptized, both himself and his whole household." Cyril, *VS*, 71 (183-84).

Procopius's *Anecdota* is a lengthy screed against Justinian. For this reason the author insistently places blame for the revolt on the emperor's inhumane practices; for this reason Arsenius' activity and fate are framed to discredit the emperor. Procopius, *Anecdota*, 11 (35-37), 27 (73-74). Both accounts, then, are slanted: Procopius against Justinian, Cyril for Sabas. It may not be possible to untangle them enough to arrive at an unvarnished historicity, but it is possible to reinforce our earlier framework of historicity and interpretation. These events occurred, and Sabas' embassy played a role in them. The actual extent of Sabas' agency, however, and the literary frame that houses it: these are Cyril's to manipulate. See introduction chapter above.

⁴³⁶ This refusal should not be read in isolation; it forms an important component of Sabaitic history. See below. Cyril, *VS*, 72 (184).

Sabas laid five requests at the foot of the throne. Two of these concerned his embassy: first funds to rebuild churches and holy sites damaged or destroyed in the revolt; then financial aid and tax relief for the Christians of Palestine, who had been impoverished by said revolt.⁴³⁷ His other three requests seem tangential: funding for a) a hospital for sick pilgrims in Jerusalem, b) completion of the Church of the Theotokos, and c) a desert fortress to protect his monasteries from Saracen attack.⁴³⁸ In return Sabas promised the emperor reconquest of the west and victory over the heresies of Arius, Nestorius, and Origen.⁴³⁹

The emperor responded with (rather stunning) largesse to Palestine.⁴⁴⁰ Sabas had accomplished his goals,⁴⁴¹ and now made ready to return to Jerusalem.⁴⁴² He bore the

⁴³⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 72 (184).

⁴³⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 72 (184).

⁴³⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 72 (185).

⁴⁴⁰ The emperor granted all five requests. He decreed that bishops Antony of Ashkelon and Zacharias of Pella inspect the regions of Palestine, to determine which buildings and communities stood in greatest need. From their findings they were to apportion the remission of thirteen hundred pounds of gold from Palestinian taxes. They were further ordered to “inspect the burnt houses of prayer and to determine the sums to be given for the restoration of each sacred edifice, and that these sums be provided either out of public funds or the property of the Samaritans by the eminent count Stephen, who was also ordered to rescue the bishops with whatever help they needed.” Cyril, *VS*, 73 (186).

Sabas’ other requests were answered as well. Justinian commanded “a hospital of one hundred beds to be built in the center of the holy city, assigning it a tax-free income for the first year of 1,850 *solidi*; he ordered the same hospital to expand subsequently to two hundred beds, adding the same income, regular and tax-free.” The emperor concluded by ordering the Church of the Theotokos to be completed at public expense, and for Sabas to be given 1,000 *solidi* for the construction of a fort. Cyril, *VS*, 73 (186-87). Cyril would attend the consecration of the Theotokos as a young man. Cyril, *VE*, 49 (68).

⁴⁴¹ That Cyril is projecting details backward does not negate the agency of Sabas’ embassy. The Samaritan revolt and Justinian’s largesse are attested elsewhere, and the embassy itself is neither implausible nor in dispute. Were we to read the passage literally, however, Sabas would have been personally responsible for the sixth-century economic boom in the holy land. For the reconstruction of churches in the holy land see Patrich, *Sabas*, 316-19.

⁴⁴² Binns rests the major thesis of his work *Sacetics and Ambassadors* on the final anecdote of this embassy. He argues that Cyril is constructing a dual, intertwined hierarchy in which the emperor cares for the empire materially, while the Judean monks care for it spiritually. The anecdote itself runs: “While our divinely protected emperor was engaged in these matters with the quaestor Tribonian, in the so-called Magnaura, the blessed Sabas drew slightly apart and recited Davidic psalms to himself, performing the divine office of the third hour. One of his disciples called Jeremias, deacon of the Great Laura, came up to him and said, ‘Revered father, when the emperor is displaying such zeal in fulfilling your requests, why do you keep yourself to one side?’ The elder answered him, ‘They, my child, are doing their work. Let us in

imperial rescripts, together with a personal donation from the emperor.⁴⁴³ The latter would prove a bone of contention. Sabas apportioned this money among his monasteries upon his return. Greatly displeased by the particulars of this allocation, one Jeremias parted ways with Sabas. Jeremias was a deacon of the Great Laura, and had been part of Sabas' embassy to Justinian.⁴⁴⁴ Now disaffected, he departed the Great Laura to settle in a gorge roughly a half mile north of the Cave. Sabas, however, had the situation well in hand:

Our father Sabas visited [Jeremias] and was overjoyed on seeing the place. Taking suitable men, money, and materials, he built by great exertion in a few days a small oratory there and various cells; he provided brethren to live there, entrusting their direction to Jeremias and giving them the rules of his own Great Laura. This laura still flourishes, and is named after blessed Jeremias.⁴⁴⁵

Once again crisis became opportunity, and the Sabaite Empire added its final laura.

Sabas had improved his technique with age: with Jeremias he achieved something new.

Years before, Sabas had co-opted the lands of rebellious monks, transforming them into the New Laura and Heptastmos. In those cases he reabsorbed the rebels into the fold, placing them under the eyes of his senior disciples. In neither case, however, had he co-opted the dissident leadership. In some ways, the acquisition of Jeremias' laura was a

turn do ours." Cyril, *VS*, 73 (187). Conversely, Cyril may simply be implying that the work of monks is prayer.

⁴⁴³ See Patrich, *Sabas*, 316-18.

⁴⁴⁴ It is unclear whether this is the same Jeremias that led the first Armenians to the Great Laura fifty years before. See chapter three above.

⁴⁴⁵ Sabas emerges from this passage as a wily old administrator. By constructing the first buildings on Jeremias' site, Sabas has secured a legal claim to it. The deacon is checkmated, but Sabas does not eject him. Rather, Jeremias is left with a choice: accept the post of administrator in a Sabaite monastery, or walk away with nothing. Unsurprisingly, he chose to reconcile. Rather than suffer the fate of previous malcontents, Jeremias would oversee a flourishing new monastery. Cyril, *VS*, 75 (188). See also Patrich, *Sabas*, 113.

singular moment, fit to cap a fifty-year administrative career.⁴⁴⁶ Cap it would be, for Sabas died not long after in 532.⁴⁴⁷

Sabas' funeral was a public event. The monks arrived in force, and Jerusalem gave up its depths: commoner and upper-crust alike turned out for the memorial liturgy, with the patriarch presiding.⁴⁴⁸ Sabas was laid to rest in his own Great Laura, and the Sabaite Empire was interred with him. Yet the institutional network lived on. From the moment of Sabas' death the Empire transformed into a Confederacy: an alliance of abbots under the Sabaite banner. These would have their work cut out for them. Severus and his followers were about to emerge once more, and so the Sabaites would have to stand against their anti-Chalcedonian foes one last time.

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The *Life of Sabas* follows a basic pattern: first a golden age of institutional order, then a period of rebellious, factional strife. Cyril had employed this device to contextualize earlier uprisings against Sabas' rule, and would now utilize it one last time in the wake of Sabas' death. This final tale of division and disorder forms the unlikely

⁴⁴⁶ It was not quite the final act of his career. Once again the patriarch tapped Sabas to publish the imperial rescripts in Caesarea and Scythopolis. It was in the latter that Sabas met the young Cyril and called him to the monastic life. Cyril, *VS*, 75 (188-90).

Caesarea and Scythopolis were the metropolitan sees of the other two Palestines, and so by such embassies the Patriarch of Jerusalem was sending word to his major suffragans, that they might pass the decrees to bishops throughout their dioceses.

⁴⁴⁷ Sabas fell ill in the Great Laura. Cyril relates that Peter visited him, and ordered him to be removed to the episcopal palace for better care. The archimandrite would soon return, however, for he wished to die in his own monastery. After naming a new abbot for the Great Laura and handing down his last instructions, Sabas passed away after receiving communion in the early hours of Sunday morning, December 5th, 532. Cyril, *VS*, 76 (191).

⁴⁴⁸ "The news of his death circulated through all the surrounding region and brought together an immense crowd of monks and lay people. The most holy archbishop Peter also arrived with the available bishops and the leading men of the holy city. And so his precious remains were laid to rest in the Great Laura between the two churches, in the spot where he had seen the pillar of fire." Cyril, *VS*, 77 (192).

crescendo of the *Life of Sabas*: unlikely because the story continues for twenty years after the archimandrite's death. This is Cyril's ultimate saga of good and evil: the war of Sabaites and Origenists. The latter, we are told, were long suppressed by Sabaite leadership. The great leader had died, however, and so the hidden Origenists slithered forth to usurp the Sabaite legacy and patrimony. That, at least, is Cyril's tale. He paints his foes with a polemicist's brush, obscuring them with the colors of his bias. For this early period, however, there is no other account. The winners had written history once again.⁴⁴⁹

The story opens in the New Laura during the failed administration of Paul.⁴⁵⁰ This hapless superior, Cyril relates, inadvertently admitted four problematic monks into the Laura. These were the first Origenists, a group that repeatedly advanced via the weakness and ignorance of Sabaite leadership. Such is Cyril's explanation, for reasons that will become clear shortly. Regardless, we are told that Paul was "simple-minded," and acted "out of ignorance," when he admitted the four, who:

...whispered in secret the doctrines of Origen. Their leader was Nonnus, who, pretending to be a Christian and simulating piety, held the doctrines of the godless Greeks, Jews, and Manichees, that is, the myths concerning preexistence related to Origen, Evagrius, and Didymus.⁴⁵¹

The four Origenists were discovered by Paul's successor Agapêtus, himself a close companion to Sabas. Concerned at their presence, Agapêtus sought consultation with

⁴⁴⁹ This situation prompted Hombergen's despair, and led to his ultimate solution: we must accept Cyril's account, or pack up and move on. I will follow the facts vs. interpretation method championed by Casiday and Price until the more varied source material of the later period allows for greater maneuverability. See below.

⁴⁵⁰ Paul served as administrator for six months sometime in the 510s. See chapter three.

⁴⁵¹ Cyril, *VS*, 36 (133-24).

Patriarch Elias. The latter urged their expulsion, and so the Origenists were forced out onto the plain.⁴⁵²

Peace returned to the New Laura, but it was not to last. Elias was deposed in 516, and the Origenists soon brought their grievance to his successor. The passage feels familiar: earlier dissidents had applied to Sallustius after the death of Martyrius. Yet the repetition need not be trope. Sabas was unassailable during the tenure of his Euthymian comrades. Only a patriarch could overcome the ecclesiastical systems that reinforced Sabas' authority, and so the Origenists were forced to wait for Elias' deposition. Patriarch John's early days must have seemed promising to them. If they did not know of Sabas' ties to John, an audience with the new patriarch would have been a reasonable step for the Origenists.⁴⁵³

John prudently summoned Sabas and Agapêtus for a conference. Cyril claims that they convinced him of their view, and so the Origenists were – literally – forced onto the plain once more.⁴⁵⁴ They soon returned, however, secretly readmitted by Agapêtus' successor Mamas.⁴⁵⁵ Henceforth they remained in the shadows, biding their time until Sabas' death opened the door to their advancement.

⁴⁵² Cyril, *VS*, 36 (134).

⁴⁵³ See chapter three.

⁴⁵⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 36 (134).

⁴⁵⁵ The language of golden age appears here as well: "When the blessed Agapêtus had governed the New Laura well for five years and then died, the monks of the New Laura appointed one Mamas superior. At this juncture Nonnus and his companions, hearing of Agapêtus' death and Mamas' appointment, came and were privately readmitted by Mamas into the New Laura, maintaining in their souls their wicked fictions but keeping them totally secret from the hearing of the monks out of fear of our sainted father Sabas; for, as long as he was still alive, there was only one confession of faith in the desert." Cyril, *VS*, 36 (134).

They next appear during Sabas' embassy to Justinian in 530. Two figures of great importance emerge from that narrative. The first is a certain Father (πάπας) Eusebius. Administrator of the Great Church and ecclesiastical attaché to the court, Eusebius was a man of significance in the capital.⁴⁵⁶ It was appropriate, therefore, that Justinian sent him to greet Sabas upon his arrival.⁴⁵⁷ The second figure was a member of Sabas' train. Cyril names him as Leontius of Byzantium, an Origenist and associate of Nonnus from the plain.⁴⁵⁸

Sabas, we recall, had promised the emperor victory over the Arians, Nestorians, and Origenists.⁴⁵⁹ Shortly thereafter, the archimandrite was shocked to discover such heretics among his own retinue. Leontius was one of these, and so Sabas abandoned him in the capital before sailing for Jerusalem in September of 530.⁴⁶⁰ That Sabas left

⁴⁵⁶ Although a relatively unexplored figure, Eusebius is in fact the key to understanding much of ecclesiastical history in the 530s. Previous scholarship has indicated the importance of Eusebius, but perhaps understated his role. See *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1939), 401ff; and Perrone, *Chiesa*, 200ff.

⁴⁵⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 71 (182-83).

⁴⁵⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 72 (185).

⁴⁵⁹ Cyril employs these passages to foreshadow the coming Origenist conflict. This was not the first time: the problem of Origenism is foreshadowed in the *Life of Euthymius* as well: "...when those of Origen's persuasion numerous at that time especially in the region around Caesarea, came to him with a show of piety, [Euthymius] combated courageously their myth of a preexistence of minds, he completely refuted, and with ridicule, the consequent monstrosity of a general restoration, and he pilloried the godless and impious doctrines that these tenets gave birth to." Cyril, *VE*, 26 (36).

Here Cyril claims Euthymius for his own side. To what extent Euthymius ever came across such persons or beliefs is unclear, although his association with Antipatrus of Bostra makes it possible. The latter, it is recalled, secured the release of Euthymius' ally Terebôn from prison and ordained Euthymius' disciple Gaianus to the episcopate. Antipatrus also wrote a treatise against Origen that the Sabaites would later employ to some effect. Cyril, *VS*, 84-85 (198-200).

Cyril's choice of heresies does, however, make sense in itself. From his vantage in 558 it would have appeared that Justinian had triumphed over all three.

⁴⁶⁰ [Sabas] included the destructive heresy of Origen in the rejection of said heresies, since one of the monks with him, Byzantine by birth and named Leontius, who was one of those admitted with Nonnus into the New Laura after the death of the superior Agapêtus, had been found embracing the doctrines of Origen; though claiming to support the Council of Chalcedon, he was detected holding the views of Origen." Cyril, *VS*, 72 (185). Cyril repeatedly hurled the charge of false Chalcedonianism against the Origenists. See below.

Leontius behind seems plausible; we can confirm that he was still in Constantinople a year later. The manner of his departure from Sabas' retinue, however, is another matter.

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A new phase of ecclesiastical history opened during Leontius' time in the capital. It began simply, with the arrival of a letter for the emperor. In it a group of anti-Chalcedonian clerics alleged that their views had been misrepresented. Acknowledging that they would never accept Chalcedon, the clerics nonetheless claimed that their beliefs mirrored the emperor's own, and attempted to prove it from the emperor's own public statements.⁴⁶¹

Justinian perceived an opportunity. Desirous of ecclesiastical unity,⁴⁶² the emperor now opened formal dialogue with several anti-Chalcedonian factions.⁴⁶³ A number of colloquia resulted. Among these was a conference with the Severans that

⁴⁶¹ Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.15a-k (345-354). See also Fergus Millar, "Rome, Constantinople, and the Near Eastern Church under Justinian: Two Synods of C.E. 536," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), 69ff.

⁴⁶² Millar has argued that all of Justinian's endeavors – military, legal, and ecclesiastical – should be viewed as interlocking manifestations of one grand ambition: the unmitigated unification of empire. Millar, "Two Synods," 62ff.

⁴⁶³ By the mid-sixth century the Severans were one of several anti-Chalcedonian factions. Among these Justinian also reached out to the so-called Tritheites, an offshoot held in some contempt by the Severan party. The court attempted a reconciliation between the Tritheites and another anti-Chalcedonian sect. The two sides met for four days in the presence of the Chalcedonian patriarch of Constantinople. Coming to believe the Tritheites' arguments were actually directed against him, the patriarch broke up the assembly. This, it appears, was the end of the Tritheite party. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle*, 79-80. These accounts of the Tritheites were preserved by John of Ephesus in his *Ecclesiastical History*: see *Iohannes Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae: Pars Tertia*, 2 vols., trans. E. W. Brooks, in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri* 54 (Paris: Carolus Poussielgue, 1935-36), throughout. Volker Menze has argued that the interpretation of hardliners like John of Ephesus was a reconstruction of an extremist view of events. If true, it would explain the casting of this episode as a debate, rather than a dialogue. See Volker L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 194ff.

Michael Gaddis has argued convincingly that anti-Chalcedonian moderates could work better with Chalcedonians than with the extremists of their own party. The latter were condemned on both sides as "separatists," narrow-minded extremists who had rejected imperial and ecclesiastical hierarchical authority. Not open to compromise, they posed a danger to the efforts of the Severans. Gaddis, *No Crime*, 327-28.

spanned more than a year.⁴⁶⁴ Six Severan bishops answered the emperor's call,⁴⁶⁵ and these now began a discourse with five of their Chalcedonian counterparts. The latter were accompanied by six representatives of the major Chalcedonian powers. Most prominent of these was the emperor's own agent, the aforementioned Eusebius. Four others stood for the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch. Unexpectedly, the sixth was Leontius. He stood as the representative of "the fathers of the holy city," and on first glance, his presence is something of a mystery.⁴⁶⁶

That mystery is most easily explained by the presence of Eusebius.⁴⁶⁷ The erudite Leontius could have attached himself to the prominent priest on his own merits. Also possible, however, is a scenario in which Sabas did not eject Leontius from his retinue, but rather intentionally placed him at court.⁴⁶⁸ Were this the case, we might infer an

⁴⁶⁴ Grillmeier argues that Theodora, not Justinian, was behind these conferences. See Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, trans. John Bowden (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1975), Vol. 2, 344ff.

Theodora has traditionally been viewed as the major patroness of the anti-Chalcedonians during her lifetime; several ancient sources name her as the reason for their ascendancy during this period. See for example, Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV. 10 (209); Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XX (134-35), etc. The accompanying view that Theodora was a staunch anti-Chalcedonian, however, has been challenged in recent years. Recent scholars have preferred the claims of Procopius and Evagrius, who believed that Justinian and Theodora were acting in concert to manipulate both sides. See also Procopius, *Anecdota*, 10 (34); Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.10 (209); Millar, "Two Synods," 70; and most recently, Menze, *Justinian*, 208.

⁴⁶⁵ Severus himself having declined. His letter of polite refusal is preserved in Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.16a-h (354-61).

⁴⁶⁶ A partial transcript from the colloquium is preserved in ACO IV.2, which gives the first place to Eusebius and the last to Leontius: "nobiscumvero dominus uir uenerabilis Eusebius presbyter et cimiliarcha sanctissimae maioris ecclesiae...cum Leontio uiro uenerabili monacho et apocrisario patrum in sancta ciuitate constitutorum." *Innocentii episcopi Maroneae epistula de collatione cum Seuerianis*, in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Tomus Quartus, Volumen Alterum*, ed. Eduardus Schwartz (Strasbourg: Charles Trübner, 1914), 70.

See also the translations and discussion of the anti-Chalcedonian documents from the colloquium: Sebastian Brock, "The Conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)," in *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, and Theology* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1992), 87-121; Sebastian Brock, "The Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox Conversations of 532," in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Ashgate, 1984), 219-27; and "Textes monophysites: Fragments divers," ed. F. Nau, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 13 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1919).

⁴⁶⁷ A connection first pointed out, although not fully explored, in Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 391, 401-403.

⁴⁶⁸ The suspicion of Joshua Powell.

association between Sabas, Eusebius, Leontius, and Patriarch Peter of Jerusalem. This possibility is strengthened by later events,⁴⁶⁹ and if true, stands Cyril's interpretation of the Origenist conflict on its ear. Regardless, the relationship between Eusebius and Leontius would shape Judean history for the next decade.

The year-long conference dissolved without result, and the Severan bishops quickly returned to hiding.⁴⁷⁰ Yet Justinian continued his efforts, and in 535 succeeded in bringing Severus himself to the capital. The erstwhile patriarch quickly bonded with Theodora, and through her exerted influence over patriarchal appointments.⁴⁷¹ Soon Alexandria was occupied by the Severan Theodosius⁴⁷² and Constantinople was given to the sympathetic Anthimus. Severus himself soon converted the latter. Once again Antioch and Jerusalem stood against an anti-Chalcedonian assault. There was a new wrinkle, however: Ephraim of Antioch stood firm, but Peter seems to have wavered.⁴⁷³ This time the Chalcedonian counter-attack would come from Judea, not Jerusalem.

⁴⁶⁹ See below.

⁴⁷⁰ Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.15j (353-54).

⁴⁷¹ Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sources alike claim that Theodora was behind the anti-Chalcedonian surge of 535-36. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.10 (208ff); Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.19a (367); *Chronicon ad annum 864*, 170-73; Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XX (134-35); Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 168-73. Bar Hebraeus adds that at this time Theodora was sheltering 500 anti-Chalcedonian monks in her palace. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle*, 73.

⁴⁷² Marked by the uprising of a rival anti-Chalcedonian faction in Alexandria, the early days of Theodosius' patriarchate reflect the numerous problems that beset the Severans in this period. Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XIX-XX (133-35).

⁴⁷³ Peter's wavering weakness is a regular theme among contemporary sources: "While [Severus, Anthimus, and Theodosius of Alexandria] were joined together in love and in faith and were inseparable from each other, Ephraim of Antioch was alarmed and became very disturbed, especially over Peter of Jerusalem, who although he was not of his own will contentious or a heretic conducted himself according to the times, being weak, lazy, and without vigor." Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.19b (368). Cf. Facundus of Hermiana, *Pro defensione trium capitulorum*, in *Facundus Hermianensis: Opera Omnia*, ed. J.-M. Clément et al., in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* XC.A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1974), 124. Michael the Syrian goes a step further: "surtout parce que Petrus de Jérusalem n'était pas courageux, mais changeait selon les temps." *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. J.B. Chabot (Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation, 1963), Vol. 2, IX.23 (199). Cf. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 195 n50.

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Judea had changed during Leontius' stay in the capital. The dying Sabas had named Melitas of Berytus abbot of the Great Laura, thus conferring on him the leading role in the nascent Sabaite Confederacy.⁴⁷⁴ Yet Melitas, Cyril pronounces, was no Sabas. The Origenists would reemerge on his watch, but this was not the foundation of Cyril's case against him. Such heresiological tolerance was supporting evidence. The main – and damning – charge was administrative incompetence.

Cyril had to walk a fine line to make this case, for Melitas had been chosen by Sabas. The latter had to be extricated from the former's failings. Ironically, however, Sabas was responsible for Melitas' major failing. The loss of Sabas had been a grave blow to his followers. Patronage donations had flowed through the archimandrite's hands, but now there was no successor to fill that void. More than this, Sabas had *actively* declined to secure permanent incomes for his monasteries. Justinian had offered him such an endowment, but Sabas had turned him down.⁴⁷⁵ Patrich has argued the wisdom of this decision, claiming that it preempted the problem of court interference going forward.⁴⁷⁶ Perhaps, but more immediately this decision probably forestalled internal problems. The monks *needed* Sabas, for he had ensured their reliance upon him.

The monks' frustration at this state of affairs can be measured by Cyril's need to contextualize it. The hagiographer devoted two lengthy anecdotes to the purpose, both

⁴⁷⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 76 (191).

⁴⁷⁵ "A few days later the emperor summoned the sanctified Sabas and said to him, 'I have heard, father, that you have founded many monasteries in the desert. For whichever of them you wish, ask for a revenue for the needs of the inmates and we shall provide it, so that they may pray for the state entrusted to our care.' Sabas replied, 'Those praying for Your Piety do not need such a revenue, for their portion and revenue is the Lord...'" Cyril, *VS*, 72 (184).

⁴⁷⁶ Patrich, *Sabas*, 316.

situated during the extended drought and famine of the 510s-520s. The first of these addresses the issue directly:

Though exercising care and oversight over these seven monasteries, [Sabas] *totally declined to give them an income* [emphasis mine]. Nevertheless, relying on faith and confidence in God, he never fell into despondency through anxiety, and this specially in the time of famine. At the same time as the exile of Archbishop Elias the sky was closed from raining on the earth for five years, and in addition to the drought there was a fierce infestation of many locusts and countless caterpillars, so that the whole face of the earth failed. In the year after the locusts, came a further infestation of locusts, who covered the sky and ate all the trees of the field. There resulted severe famine and loss of life, so that the people of Jerusalem said that these ills had descended on account of the sin committed over Archbishop Elias. At this time our sainted father Sabas exhorted the leaders of his monasteries never to be anxious about things of the flesh; and he reminded them of the saying of the Lord that runs, ‘Do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What shall we wear? For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added to you.’ These were the thoughts and teaching of this godly old man. God provided his every need without stint, *so that it was those who relied on property and income who fell short rather than the monasteries in his care* [emphasis mine].⁴⁷⁷

Cyril abandons subtlety in this anecdote; the bookends admit no confusion or ambiguity.

Sabas’ free access to God made property and income superfluous or, worse, sacrilegious.

Those who relied on such things did so in contradiction to God’s commands, and so always came to naught in the end. This theme is immediately reinforced in the sequel, in which Sabas lectures the steward of the Great Laura regarding reliance on Providence.

The steward’s anxieties are abated when God does in fact provide the needed supplies, and a saintly I-told-you-so caps the episode.⁴⁷⁸

None of this, however, helped Melitas. Fundraising was a necessity, and financial issues had divided Judean institutional coalitions before. Melitas must have been aware

⁴⁷⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 58 (168-69). This passage is doing double duty, reinforcing another of Cyril’s major themes. See final chapter.

⁴⁷⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 58 (169).

of this: Cyril gives two local examples in the course of his narratives. The first was quite close to home: the division of the monasteries of Euthymius and Theoctistus. These had been joined during Euthymius' life, and on his deathbed the great man had expressed his wish that the association continue. Yet it was not to be:

...the monasteries of our fathers Euthymius and Theoctistus were then in harmony, having a common life and one administration under a single steward in accordance with the injunction of the great Euthymius. But twelve years after his holy death, when Abba Longinus, the superior of the monastery of Abba Theoctistus had died and Paul had succeeded as superior, Terebôn the Saracen, who had earlier been baptized and healed by the great Euthymius, left, when about to die, considerable property to both monasteries. When Paul willfully seized hold of both the remains and property of Terebôn, turmoil resulted and a separation of the monasteries.

When in consequence the lands round the monastery of the pious Euthymius were divided, Paul built a tower on the lands so divided and gave two hundred *solidi* for the purchase of a [hostel], in order to keep sole possession himself of the shared [hostel] in the holy city. It was at this time that the monks of the monastery of the great Euthymius bought for these two hundred *solidi* a [hostel] near the Tower of David from the fathers of the laura of Souka.⁴⁷⁹

Paul's tower presumably claimed the best of the land, and his desire to keep the existing hostel rather than buy a new one for himself likely indicates the former's superior value. Paul had taken advantage of this one-time windfall, but without additional fundraising ability it would not be enough. It wasn't long before both monasteries would find themselves under Sabas' financial care.⁴⁸⁰

The second such episode took place near the end of Sabas' life, only a short time before Melitas received his promotion. Sabas' patroness Juliana Anicia died at this time. Her eunuchs inherited much of her wealth, and they came to Sabas, seeking to enter the monastic life. Fearing the possible effect of feminine faces in his laurae, Sabas passed

⁴⁷⁹ Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 6-7 (248-49).

⁴⁸⁰ See chapter three.

the eunuchs on to Theodosius.⁴⁸¹ In time they petitioned for their own monastery, and the patriarch sent them to the conjoined monasteries of Elias to prepare. Their great wealth, however, induced Alexander, abbot of Elias' monasteries, to divide his own institutions. One of these was co-opted to create the "Monastery of the Eunuchs." Cyril looks on the episode with great disapproval: in his view Alexander had put wealth and gain above his institutional responsibilities.⁴⁸²

These were the acts of abbots in financial exigency, and Melitas would have been faced with such problems from the day of his installment. The loose nature of the Confederacy ameliorated the issue by spreading it around: every Sabaite administrator now had to deal with the dilemma on a micro level. Therefore financial pressure was a general Sabaite predicament in 532, and so it is no accident that Cyril's judgment on Melitas takes financial form. Melitas, he informs us, was a weak man. The new abbot was easily manipulated by those of greater experience and cunning. Cyril draws out this claim immediately, opening the tale of Melitas' administration with a reference to his predecessor's patronage successes. Sabas, Cyril reminds us, had obtained 1,000 *solidi* from Justinian to build a fort. Melitas now lost that money.⁴⁸³ The new abbot, we are led to infer, was unable to obtain or retain funds. Such ineptitude was a mortal sin in Cyril's

⁴⁸¹ Cyril, *VS*, 69 (180). This tradition Sabas inherited from Euthymius. See chapters two and three above.

⁴⁸² A loathsome vice, just as Sophronius' institutional talents constituted shining virtue. See chapter three above. The act, moreover, was against the express wishes of Elias, as transmitted on the latter's deathbed. Hence Cyril's distaste: "Alexander, whether enslaved by avarice or possessed by vainglory, setting aside the injunctions of Archbishop Elias and trampling on his own conscience, separated his monasteries..." Cyril, *VS*, 60 (171) and 69 (181).

⁴⁸³ This was taken by Patriarch Peter and dispersed to the monasteries of his choosing. Cyril narrows Melitas' culpability in the episode to "either indifference or inexperience," both serious pronouncements against the administrator. Cyril, *VS*, 83 (196).

desert. Character assassination followed, setting the backdrop and rationale for the rise of the Origenists.

Nonnus et al. reappeared on Melitas' watch. Emboldened by the failings of this "inexperienced shepherd," Cyril claims, the Origenists began to openly promulgate their heresy. Perhaps, but Melitas' "weakness" can be explained another way. In Leontius the Origenists had a representative at court, through whom they could claim Eusebius as patron. Cyril never speaks of financial benefits to this relationship, but later events make it feasible (see below). An ability to occupy a patronage vacuum could well have won Melitas over. If the new abbot had therefore tolerated or enabled the Origenists, their ascent is more easily explained.

Regardless, the Origenist message found favor among educated monks. By 535 they held sway over much of the desert. They had taken the New Laura entire; the administrator Theodore Ascidas was one of their men. They had infested the laura of Sabas' disciple Firminus as well, and made headway into the Great Laura also. More than this, they could now count Domitian, abbot of Martyrius' monastery, as an ally. In a stunningly short time, then, the Origenists had come to dominate the new confederacy of Sabaite monasteries.⁴⁸⁴

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⁴⁸⁴ "Nonnus and his party, taking advantage of the death of our father, I mean Sabas, made public the heresy of in the depths of their hearts and instilled in their neighbor a turbulent upheaval. They seduced into their own foul heresy not only all the more educated in the New Laura but also those of the monastery of Martyrius and of the laura of Firminus, at a time when its fathers Firminus and Sozomen, the disciples and fellow-combatants of the godly old man, had already died. In addition, they succeeded in a short time in sowing the heresy of Origen in the Great Laura and the other monasteries of the desert." Cyril, *VS*, 83 (197). Cf. Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 13-14 (253-55). Patrich accepts Cyril's argument of weak leadership in this monasteries as the cause of the Origenists' rise. Patrich, *Sabas*, 203.

Back in the capital, the return of Severus had put Chalcedonians on high alert. Leontius was among these, and he called to his Origenist allies for help. They responded enthusiastically. Many actually came to Constantinople themselves, Theodore Ascidas and Domitian among them.⁴⁸⁵ The Origenists fortified themselves in the capital, making alliance with like-minded monks from Antioch and Constantinople.⁴⁸⁶ Together they pressed Patriarch Anthimus to publicly express a Chalcedonian affiliation. When he refused, the group reached out to the one person still capable of meaningful intervention: Pope Agapetus in Rome.

The monks penned an urgent missive to the Pope, warning of Anthimus and the Severan teachings he endorsed.⁴⁸⁷ These, they reminded Agapetus, had already been condemned from his own papal throne. Therefore they begged the Pope to rouse himself against those heretics who would discard his papal authority. Persuade the emperor, they beseeched him, to eject the Severans and consign their works to the flame. Finally, they handed the Pope the means to accomplish all this. A canonical technicality, they explained, prevented Anthimus' transfer from his previous see in Trebizond. Anthimus' patriarchate, therefore, was illegitimate.⁴⁸⁸

To this letter the monks appended a long list of subscriptions. Judea was well-represented among these signatories: sixteen monks endorsed the letter on behalf of six monasteries. Four of these were Sabaite: the Great Laura, the New Laura, Firminus' laura, and the Towers near the Jordan. The cenobia of Theodosius and Martyrius

⁴⁸⁵ Cyril, *VS*, 83 (197).

⁴⁸⁶ See Perrone, *Chiesa*, 194ff; Millar, "Two Synods," 74ff; and Frend, *Monophysite*, 272.

⁴⁸⁷ Patriarch Ephraim of Antioch wrote a similar letter at this time.

⁴⁸⁸ *ACO* III, 68 (141).

rounded out the group. Domitian led the latter embassy himself, speaking for both his own monastery and “all monks in the desert of the Holy City.” Theodore Ascidas headed the monks of the New Laura, and Leontius spoke for “the whole desert.” To be sure, not everyone on this list was an Origenist: Cassian of the Great Laura is a notable exception.⁴⁸⁹ The roster of Judean monks was, however, an Origenist-dominated group. The Sabaite Confederacy was transforming into an Origenist proposition. This burgeoning network took the opportunity to strengthen its ties to the capital: Leontius was forging a relationship between Eusebius, Ascidas, and Domitian.⁴⁹⁰

As it happened, Agapetus was already en route to the capital when he received the monks’ plea.⁴⁹¹ Forewarned of the situation, the Pope arrived poised to attack. The papal offensive was stunning: within two weeks Agapetus had deposed Anthimus, issued a synodical rebuking those who had accepted Anthimus’ installation (Peter among them), and personally consecrated Menas as the next patriarch of Constantinople.⁴⁹² Shortly thereafter Justinian signed a reaffirmation of the Chalcedonian position, and a synod was called to finalize the downfall of the Severans.⁴⁹³

Agapetus died a few weeks later, but the issue was no longer in doubt.

Unequivocal papal and imperial support had made Menas unassailable, and the new

⁴⁸⁹ The Judean signatories can be found in *ACO* III, 68 (145-46).

⁴⁹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 83 (197-98).

⁴⁹¹ Agapetus had been commissioned by Theodatus, King of the Goths, to persuade Justinian to remove his army from Italy. Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXI (135-36)

⁴⁹² Anthimus was deposed on the canonical regulation suggested by the monks. *ACO* III, 152ff. The theme of Peter’s chastisement is emphasized in Grillmeier, *Christ*, 348-49. Liberatus declares that Agapetus had to run roughshod over Theodora to accomplish these ends. Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXII (136).

⁴⁹³ The anti-Chalcedonian account of these events can be found in Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.19c-e (368-71), and *Chron. ad 864*, 170. Both report the miraculous punishment levied upon Agapetus for his role.

patriarch wasted little time in convening said synod.⁴⁹⁴ Once again the Judeans played a prominent role: signatories to four of the five sessions, and co-authors of *libelli* to Justinian and Menas.⁴⁹⁵ Upon the synod's conclusion Menas penned a letter to Peter, who then called a hasty synod in Jerusalem. There the Palestinian bishops subscribed to the proceedings from Constantinople. The Severans were finished, and for the last time.

Consequences were immediate. The Severans quickly fled the capital: Anthimus was hidden by Theodora, and Severus escaped to Egypt, where he died shortly thereafter.⁴⁹⁶ Reconciliation had failed, and the anti-Chalcedonians now established a separate, permanent hierarchy.⁴⁹⁷ A new Chalcedonian unity took their place. The Severan Theodosius was soon deposed in Alexandria, and the Chalcedonian Paul installed in his place. The five great sees were in communion once more.

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⁴⁹⁴ For the proceedings of the synod see *ACO* III, throughout. See also the commentaries in Millar, "Two Synods," (throughout), and Perrone, *Chiesa*, 196ff.

⁸⁵ In these *libelli* the monks brought a number of specific charges against the Severans. These included general issues like rebaptism, as well as specific accusations against Severus from his time in Antioch. The latter are wide-ranging, from theological abuse to charges of employing Jewish gangs to accost Chalcedonian pilgrims. The latter allegation could reflect the Palestinian influence: interference with pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem – true or imagined – would have been a serious matter to them. Their requests were wide-ranging as well: from the aforementioned ejection of Severan leadership to the destruction of the cave in which rebaptisms had occurred. Finally, the accusations against Severus were partially based on Severus' communications to Peter the Iberian from years before. Perrone has speculated that awareness of such communication was a contribution of the Palestinians. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 199-200. If true, this would suggest that the Judeans had an awareness of the literature produced in anti-Chalcedonian Gaza, an important point to which we will return in the final chapter.

For two of the three *libelli* the monks signed in their customary block. The second *libellus* to Justinian, on the other hand, appended only six signatures. Single members of respective delegations signed this *libellus* on behalf of all their representatives. Hesychius of Theodosius' monastery, placeholder for Sophronius, signed this document on behalf of all Judean monks. *ACO* III, throughout.

⁴⁹⁶ The lengthy epistolary of the Severan bishops following their ejection is preserved in Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 9.20aff (372ff).

⁴⁹⁷ See Frend, 272ff. Interestingly, John of Bar-Aphthonia presents the events of 536 as an anti-Chalcedonian victory, in which Anthimus et al. spoke the truth before the emperor. The synod and its fallout are omitted, and the episode concludes with the empress helping Severus to leave the capital. Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 168-73.

The stubborn resistance of the monks must have greatly frustrated those seeking rapprochement with the Severans. Leontius had been prominent among the subversive monks who had thwarted the powers-that-were, a risky position had things gone the other way.⁴⁹⁸ Presumably he would not have done so against the wishes of his patron Eusebius. The latter certainly took an active role in the subsequent synod, and rewarded Leontius' Origenist comrades in its aftermath. Might we surmise that he took an active role in initiating the ecclesiastical reversal of 536 as well?⁴⁹⁹ Additional material lends weight to such a speculation.

The first piece of evidence is found in a letter from Menas to Peter written between the two synods of 536. In it Menas gave assurances that Peter was favored at court. The relevant passage highlights a fascinating and underemphasized connection:

Word of your great love for God reaches us daily. Many speak of your virtuous acts, especially our common brother – or better to say, our common *benefactor* [emphasis mine] – the most God-loving priest, Eusebius.⁵⁰⁰

Tantalizing possibilities arise from these sentences. First, it seems unlikely that Agapetus would have selected Menas on his own. The Pope was a stranger to the capital, and the future patriarch was only the administrator of a hospice in Constantinople at the time.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ A number of historiographic questions surround the identity and beliefs of Leontius and the Origenists. We have now come far enough to address the first: who was Leontius? The problem springs from the large number of Leontii involved in contemporary events. The debate concerns whether a) the Origenist villain of Cyril, b) the participant in the 532 colloquium, c) the participant in the events of 536, d) the theologian Leontius of Byzantium, and e) the theologian Leontius of Jerusalem were all the same person. A disputed issue for much of the twentieth century, a majority consensus has held for the last forty years. Following Evans, it is established that (a-d) are in fact the same Leontius, while Leontius of Jerusalem is a separate individual who was not involved in these events. See David Beecher Evans, *Leontius of Byzantium: An Origenist Christology* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1970), 147ff.

⁴⁹⁹ See below.

⁵⁰⁰ Translation mine. The Greek runs: “λόγος τῆς σῶς θεοφιλείας πολὺς καθ’ ἡμέραν. τὰ ἐν ὑμῖν κατορθώματα πολλοὶ μὲν διηγοῦνται, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ ὁ κοινὸς ἀδελφός, μᾶλλον δὲ εἶπειν, ὁ κοινὸς εὐεργέτης ὁ θεοφιλέστατος πρεσβύτερος Εὐσεβίος.” *ACO III*, 48 (124).

⁵⁰¹ Theophanes, *Chronicle*, AM 6029.

A patron's recommendation was required, and Eusebius is a likely source. Eusebius' connection to Peter is more difficult to decipher. The passage does suggest a previous relationship, which lends credence to an earlier association between Eusebius, Sabas, and Peter. That possibility, in turn, strengthens the notion that Leontius' expulsion of 530 should be regarded as Cyrillian polemic.⁵⁰²

Eusebius' benefaction continued in the aftermath of the two synods. Domitian and Ascidas were immediate beneficiaries: Eusebius secured for them the sees of Galatia and Caesarea in Cappadocia, respectively.⁵⁰³ More obscure is Eusebius' trip to Jerusalem at this time. Justinian's *novellae* record a communication from the emperor to Peter in May of 538. In it we learn that Eusebius had visited the holy city, and obtained an annual income of 30 pounds of gold for the church there. This return had required a one-time purchase of 380 pounds of gold, part of which had been procured on credit. In sum, Eusebius had arranged for long-term investment via short-term expense, and borrowed money to accomplish it.

By 538 the creditors wanted payment, leaving the church of Jerusalem in an awkward position. To this situation Eusebius proffered a solution: the sale of church property within the holy city. Such property was in demand: many pilgrims were willing to pay top dollar for permanent holdings in Jerusalem. Yet imperial law forbade the

⁵⁰² See above.

⁵⁰³ "Through recommendation by the above-mentioned Leontius of Byzantium they attached themselves to father Eusebius and through him to our most pious emperor. Veiling their heresy by abundant hypocrisy and enjoying immediate access to the palace, Domitian received the first see of the province of Galatia, while Theodore succeeded to the see of Caesarea of Cappadocia. Nonnus and his party, gaining greater strength from this, were zealous and tireless in sowing the seeds of Origenism throughout Palestine." Cyril, *VS*, 83 (197-98).

church from selling such property. Eusebius' intercession now overcame that obstacle: the object of Justinian's missive was to grant Peter permission to conduct such sales.⁵⁰⁴

Eusebius had occasion to visit Palestine again not long after: by 539 Patriarch Paul of Alexandria had proven himself unfit for office.⁵⁰⁵ Concerned to preserve the nascent Chalcedonian alliance, representatives of the major powers gathered for a synod in Gaza c. 540. Patriarchs Ephraim and Peter attended personally, Deacon Pelagius stood for Rome, and Eusebius for Constantinople.⁵⁰⁶ The assembled fathers deposed Paul, and gave his place to the Palestinian monk Zoilus, a client of Peter. Disaster had thus far been averted, and the alliance was holding. Eusebius had figured prominently in its creation and maintenance: patron to Menas and Peter, advisor to Agapetus, and now participant in the rise of Zoilus.⁵⁰⁷ Over the course of only a few years, Eusebius had helped craft a network that reached as high as the court and great sees, but extended its reach to Leontius and Judea as well. Through him the Origenists achieved prominence at

⁵⁰⁴ *Corpus Iuris Civilis, Volumen Tertium: Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell and G. Kroll (Berlin: Wiedmann, 1895), *Novella XL* (258-62). Eusebius may have been a powerful patron, but one wonders about his financial acumen.

⁵⁰⁵ Via scandal, and possibly murder. The episode is recounted in several sources (see next footnote).

⁵⁰⁶ Liberatus, Evagrius, Procopius, and Cyril all take note of the synod, but diverge on its particulars. The resolution of this divergence offered by Schwartz, however, has gained seemingly universal acceptance: "Liberatus [...]nennt an erster Stelle den römischen Diakon und Apokrisiar am konstantinopler Hofe Pelagius, sodann die Patriarchen Ephraim von Antiochien und Petros von Jerusalem, ferner den Hofbischof Hypatius von Ephesus, fügt aber hinzu *cum aliquantis episcopis*. Prokop [...] erwähnt nur Pelagius, was bestätigt, daß Kyrill ihn niemals nennt, bei ihm treten in deiser Affäre nur Ephraim con Antiochien und der πάπας Eusebius auf. Der Fortsetzer des Zacharias [...] hat nur Ephraim und Abraham bar Chili aus Amida, einen fanatischen Chalcedonenser wie Ephraim, [...]. Ort der Zusammenkunft ist Gaza nur bei Liberatus und Kyrill; daran ist festzuhalten gegen die übrigen, die sie in Alexandrien stattfinden lassen. Die Zeit ist nicht überliefert; als spätesten Termin bestimmt Jülicher [...] das Frühjahr 540; ich möchte bis 539 zurückgehen, um für all das was sich zwischen der Zusammenkunft und dem Anfang 542 [s.u.] erlassenen Edikt gegen Origenes ereignete, die nötige Frist zu gewinnen." Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 401 n3.

⁵⁰⁷ The North African Liberatus, on the other hand, assigns the lead role in these events to Deacon Pelagius of Rome. Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIII (138-40).

court, places from which they could patronize their comrades in turn. Eusebius' own part in this play, however, was not quite complete.

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Melitas had enabled the rise of the Origenists in Judea, but their opponents were waiting in the wings. Sabas' death in 532 had opened a door for the former; Melitas' passing in 537 would now do the same for their adversaries. The new abbot Gelasius was their man,⁵⁰⁸ and he wasted no time in expressing his priorities. Supported by John the Hesychast, the Galatian scribe Eustathius, Stephen of Jerusalem, and Timothy of Galba; Gelasius caused Antipatrus of Bostra's arguments against Origen to be read aloud in the monastery church.⁵⁰⁹ The Origenists responded with "unauthorized" assemblies in which they promulgated Origenist teachings. The group now numbered around forty monks, led by the deposed deacon John of Antioch, with the support of John Thunder-Demon, and a certain Ptolemy. Gelasius countered by expelling the forty. These now made their way to Nonnus at the New Laura, where they were joined by the recently-returned Leontius.⁵¹⁰

By 540 the lines were clearly drawn: Gelasius and the Sabaites of the Great Laura against Nonnus and the Origenists of the New Laura. Less clear are the composition and motives of the two groups. Theological and spiritual affiliations were evidently at play, but what these actually were is another matter. Scholars have made free with labels of

⁵⁰⁸ The same Gelasius who had helped expand the New Laura. See chapter three.

⁵⁰⁹ Antipatrus and his work are a running theme in Cyril's works. Antipatrus had been a friend to Euthymius, and was favorably remembered by the Euthymians and Sabaites. These would later carry his work to Patriarch Ephraim of Antioch during the Origenist conflict. Cyril, *VE*, 34 (49); *VS*, 84 (198); and *VS* 85 (200).

⁵¹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 84 (198-99).

paleo-Chalcedonian, neo-Chalcedonian, Origenist Chalcedonian, and crypto-Nestorian. That both sides had stood against the anti-Chalcedonians is universally agreed upon; their theological aims in doing so are not.

Cyril was not alone in labeling his opponents “Origenists.” That view was shared by a wide range of his contemporaries.⁵¹¹ Generations of scholars accepted the near-universality of the accusation; the view stood until Brian’s Daley’s challenge in the late 1970s. Daley argued that the Origenists were a group united by intellectual pursuit rather than doctrinal coherence.⁵¹² To this Daniel Hombergen appended a common love of Evagrian *πρακτική*, and the “Origenist” label was slowly pushed to the polemical sidelines of ecclesiastical history.⁵¹³

We should be wary of taking this position too far. A preponderance of older arguments and recent discoveries has complicated Daley’s arguments. Judea *was* home to an indeterminate number of Origenists. The confirmed Origenist Stephen bar Sudaili visited there in the early sixth century, perhaps establishing a “line” of teachers and students and prompting a Sabaite literary response.⁵¹⁴ The archimandrite Marcianus was writing an epitome of Origen’s works around the same time.⁵¹⁵ Theodore of Petra felt the need to condemn Origenism decades before Cyril.⁵¹⁶ Finally, a number of recent studies

⁵¹¹ Including Liberatus, Facundus, Evagrius, and others. See below.

⁵¹² Brian Daley, “The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* Vol. 27 No. 2 (Oct. 1976), 366.

⁵¹³ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 222ff. This position is taken up by Price: *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople 553*, 2 vols., trans., ed., and with an introduction by Richard Price (Liverpool: University Press, 2009), 272ff.

⁵¹⁴ Istvan Perczel, “Pseudo-Dionysius and Palestinian Origenism,” in *The Sabaite Heritage*, 261-82.

⁵¹⁵ Michael Kohlbacher, “Unpublizierte Fragmente,” 137-66. Severus was fighting an Origenist around this time also. Zacharias, *Life of Severus*, 106 (110).

⁵¹⁶ “[Theodosius] exécrait en particulier les enseignements impies du maudit Origène, parce que, comme de la boue à un parfum, il avait pétri et mêlé les doctrines démoniaques des Grecs à la pure et odorante prédication des apôtres.” Theodore, *VThd*, 70 (141). Barsanuphius and John were dealing with a

have demonstrated the presence of Evagrian and Origenist texts in the Judean monasteries of Cyril's day.⁵¹⁷

In light of this it seems sensible to follow Casiday: Origenism was real, but Cyril is not a reliable guide for reconstructing it.⁵¹⁸ The following, therefore, appears reasonable: the "Origenists" were a large group joined by affinity for intellectual pursuit and Evagrian *πρακτική*. Within that group were several doctrinally coherent subgroups, varying stripes of actual Origenists among them. Cyril collapsed these subgroups; through ignorance, polemical intention, or both.⁵¹⁹ Failing additional material, that may be as far as we can go.

Placing Origenist leaders within these subgroups is more challenging, and perhaps unnecessary. Named individuals reacted differently to various condemnations of Origen over the coming decades. The difficulty is separating out particular affiliations from Daley's claim that the Origenists were joined by commitment to academic freedom.⁵²⁰ Different levels of reaction may boil down to temperament rather than doctrinal affinity.

surge of Origenism in Gaza around this same time. *Barsanuphius and John: Letters*. Trans. by John Chryssavgis (Washington: CUA Press, 2007), Vol. 2, 600ff (179ff).

⁵¹⁷ For example, Istvan Perczel, "Finding a Place for the Erotapokriseis of Pseudo-Caesarius: A New Document of Sixth-Century Palestinian Origenism" in: *Palestinian Christianity: Pilgrimages and Shrines, ARAM Periodical 18-19* (2007): 49-83; Panyiotis Tzamalikos, *A Newly Discovered Greek Father: Cassian the Sabaite Eclipsed by John Cassian of Marseilles* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Casiday, "Translations." There is also the case of Theodore of Scythopolis, who formally recanted his Origenism in 552. See the *libellus* and a discussion thereof in Franz Diekamp, *Die Origenistischen Streitigkeiten im sechsten Jahrhundert und das fünfte allgemeine Concil* (Münster, Druck und Verlag, 1899), 125-29. Bishop Alexander of Abila, on the other hand, lost his seat for refusing to recant. Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208).

⁵¹⁸ Casiday, "Translation," 16.

⁵¹⁹ Following Daley, Casiday views the latter possibility as a near-certainty. Casiday, "Translation," 16.

⁵²⁰ Regarding Leontius: "...all the evidence suggests he himself was an Origenist only in so far as he was one of those λογιώτεροι who believed theological speculation like Origen's or Evagrius' was in any event a useful way for a monk to spend his time, was worth reading and respecting, even if one disagreed with it in the end – and that the freedom to indulge in this kind of theological research was worth fighting for..." Daley, "Origenism," 369.

That much applies to Nonnus, Domitian, and Ascidas. Leontius is another matter: much ink has been spilt in the effort to determine his theological loyalties.⁵²¹ Richard argued that Leontius was simply a humble Chalcedonian ascetic and theologian who fell in with a bad crowd.⁵²² Most of his fellows, however, called Leontius Origenist.⁵²³ Daley, on the other hand, viewed Leontius as a paleo-Chalcedonian living in a neo-Chalcedonian world.⁵²⁴ Subsequent scholars have generally lined up in one of these two camps.

Harder still is determining the theological positions and motivations of Cyril and the Sabaites. Daley argued that they were neo-Chalcedonians, a position that caused them to misunderstand Leontius and view him as Origenist.⁵²⁵ Others have called them crypto-Nestorians.⁵²⁶ Daley's assessment seems more likely in light of the Sabaites' earlier affiliations with neo-Chalcedonians like Nephalius. Regardless, it may be more useful to concentrate on spirituality rather than theology. That the Sabaites pursued a

⁵²¹ Cyril, on the other hand, admits no ambiguities: "The sower of all these tares [Origenist doctrines] and cause of these evils was Nonnus, who, taking advantage of the death of our blessed father Sabas, began to make his neighbor drink of a foul concoction, having Leontius of Byzantium as his assistant, champion, and fellow-combatant." Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 13 (254).

⁵²² Marcel Richard, "Léonce de Byzance était-il origéniste?" *Revue des études byzantines* 5 (1947), 31-66.

⁵²³ A position that reached culmination in Evans, *Leontius*.

⁵²⁴ Daley, "Origenism," 361ff.

⁵²⁵ Daley, "Origenism," 364. This position is adopted by Stallman-Pacitti, who states that Cyril would have viewed neo-Chalcedonianism and Chalcedonianism as synonyms, causing him to look on Leontius as a "false Chalcedonian." Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril*, 44ff, 104ff. Krausmüller, on the other hand, has argued that Cyril would have immediately picked up on an aspect of Leontius' thought elusive to modern scholars: Leontius was Origenist, not in his Christology, but in his anthropology. Dirk Krausmüller, "Origenism in the Sixth Century: Leontius of Byzantium on the Pre-Existence of the Soul," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 8 (2014) 46-67.

⁵²⁶ Most notably Hombergen. Working from passages in Leontius' *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos*, Hombergen notes that Nonnus et al. saved him from a group of Nestorianizers. Leontius himself was dead-set to drop the hammer on said Nestorianizers, hence the purpose of that work. Hombergen equates these Nestorianizers with the Sabaites. Hombergen, *Controversy*, 153, 175ff, 205ff, 252ff. This argument found acceptance by Price in *Acts*, 277ff, but was preempted by Daley in "Origenism," 362ff.

non-intellectual spirituality focused on models of ascetic heroism and saintly intercession seems likely. This would explain their particular attachment to Sabas, and also the derision hurled at them for being “Sabas’ men.”

Spiritual flashpoints for the conflict will be discussed in later chapters. These include issues of charisma, institutionalism, and etc. For now, however, Hombergen’s claim that the Origenists were anti-institution should be handled with care.⁵²⁷ Evagrian *πρακτική* may have led them away from institutional *spiritualities*, but they had no difficulty with institutional *authority, per se*. The Origenists aspired to possess such authority, not degrade it.

Whatever the *casus belli*, the factions would do battle with networks for weapons and institutions as battlegrounds. Cyril records instances of physical violence around or against the latter. In one of his more dramatic passages, the Sabaite claims that Leontius led an assault on the Great Laura in response to Gelasius’ actions. He began with a visit to the Great Cenobium, seeking to bring Sophronius to his cause. Turned away, Leontius and his Origenists armed themselves for battle and marched on the Great Laura:

Then, enraged with Gelasius and the Great Laura, Leontius and his party sent to various places and collected pick-axes, shovels, iron crowbars and other tools of demolition, together with a work-force of peasants; with these they set off in utter fury to demolish the Great Laura.⁵²⁸

Fortunately “the God of the Sabaites worked a great miracle:” darkness and mist descended upon the Origenists, and they wandered lost for the rest of the day. When the mist cleared they found they had strayed far afield, and so went home defeated.

⁵²⁷ Hombergen, *Controversy*, 360ff.

⁵²⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 84 (199).

We have no way of corroborating or contradicting this armed march; it may be best to leave it as it is. Two elements of the tale ring true, however: the importance of the Great Laura itself in the struggle, and the refusal of Sophronius to throw in with the Origenists. This conflict was largely a Sabaite civil war, but both sides attempted to secure local allies in the course of the struggle. The large cenobium of Martyrius already stood with the Origenists; the larger cenobium of Theodosius would now ally with the Sabaites. Unfortunately, we know little of their part. Cyril gives only tidbits, and Theodore's work was written too early to encompass the conflict. The crumbs left by Cyril suggest that Sophronius played a role commensurate with his stature. More than that we cannot say.

This effort to secure allies was not limited to the large cenobia of the desert. According to one Cyriacus, the Origenists employed nefarious means to ally with Souka, a laura roughly a mile to the north of the New Laura. Cyriacus was a famed holy man and former associate to Euthymius and Sabas.⁵²⁹ He had spent a decade living in Euthymius' monastery. He remained committed to Sabas' heirs during the Origenist controversy, and so stood on good terms with Cyril, to whom he related the following:

At first [Nonnus] seduced into his abominable heresy the more lettered, or rather the more unlettered, in the New Laura. He was not satisfied with these monks, but strove to give the other monasteries of the desert a share in his own plague. What stratagems did he not use to drag in as well poor lowly me? But God showed to me by revelation the filth of this heresy. What schemes did he not employ to communicate his evil teaching to the community of Souka? But he failed, since I by the grace of Christ warned and exhorted each one not to depart from the true faith. When he strove to make a supporter of this heresy – I mean Peter the Alexandrian – superior in our laura and thereby to enslave the

⁵²⁹ Cyriacus was quite old by the time of Cyril's association with him. He had been close to many members of Euthymius' inner circle, and so served as the major source for Cyril's earlier anecdotes. See Cyril, *VE*, 19 (25-26), 21 (29), 22 (31), 28 (42); *Life of Cyriacus*, 11ff (252ff).

community, he did not succeed: on the contrary, the community bestirred itself and expelled Peter from being superior.⁵³⁰

Nonnus' failure to turn Cyriacus was a defeat in itself. An acknowledged holy man who held sway with the Sabaites, Cyriacus could have done much to enhance the cause of the Origenists in Judea. His refusal to join Nonnus kept those benefits within the Sabaite camp. Here and elsewhere, we find Cyriacus' prestige put in service against the Origenists. Meanwhile the expelled Peter the Alexandrian went to join Nonnus in the New Laura. The latter, however, had not yet given up his effort to secure Souka.

Cyriacus continues:

Again, Nonnus shamelessly bestirred himself into setting up another Peter, the Greek, a supporter of the plague of Origen, as our superior, but the community was again stirred by spiritual zeal into expelling Peter from being superior; going to the laura of the blessed Sabas, it took for itself its present superior, Abba Cassianus, who is of Scythopolis by birth, orthodox, and adorned both in his life and in his teaching. It was then that we succeeded, with difficulty, in repelling the supporters of Origen."⁵³¹

Cassianus was already a Sabaite of note. He had been the Great Laura's representative at the synod of 536, and would later play a significant role in the fight against the Origenists. His installation permanently secured Souka for the Sabaite faction.

If true, Cyril's tale of the failed assault makes sense in this context. Ejected from the Great Laura and stonewalled at two other monasteries of note, a sense of frustration may have settled over the Origenists. The outlet offered by physical violence may have seemed appealing. Regardless, Cyril's account of the assault's sequel seems plausible in either case.

⁵³⁰ Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 14 (254).

⁵³¹ Cyril, *VS* 14 (254-55).

In 540 Father Eusebius passed through Jerusalem on his return from Gaza. Leontius met him there, bringing the Great Laura expulsées in his train. These pled their case to Leontius' patron. In response,

Father Eusebius, misled by Leontius' words and knowing nothing of their heresy, sent for Abba Gelasius and, in an attempt to resolve the dispute, pressed him either to receive back those expelled or to expel their opponents. In the face of such pressure the fathers, after deliberation, sent out of the laura Stephen, Timothy, and four others of the brethren...⁵³²

Cyril has covered his tracks once again: Eusebius suffers no malignment at his hands. Indeed, Eusebius' decision seems even-handed, an attempt to restore balance between antagonistic factions. His authority, on the other hand, is unmistakable. Interfering in Judean affairs was perfectly within his ken.

The ejected Sabaites sought allies of their own. Cyril does not say whether they reached out to Peter, perhaps because he refused their plea. Alternatively, they may not have bothered. Peter may have been involved in his patron's decision, but if not he likely would not have overturned it. Instead the monks turned to the other great ecclesiastical powers. Here accounts diverge: Cyril claims they reached out to Ephraim in Antioch, while Liberatus says it was Pelagius of Rome. Perhaps it was both. Regardless, Liberatus has it that the monks caught Pelagius on his return from Gaza. They came bearing chapters from Origen's works, and besought Pelagius to carry these to the emperor for formal condemnation.⁵³³

Cyril's account gives greater detail. In his version two of Gelasius' lieutenants led a successful embassy to Ephraim in Antioch. They provided him Antipatrus' work

⁵³² Cyril, *VS*, 200.

⁵³³ Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIII (139-40).

against Origen, and related the evil doings of the Origenists in Judea. Incensed, Ephraim issued a synodical condemning the works of Origen.⁵³⁴ Nonnus responded by reaching out to Leontius, Domitian, and Ascidas in the capital. Together, Origenist leadership pressured Peter to remove Ephraim's name from the diptychs.⁵³⁵

Liberatus claims that Pelagius and Ascidas came to loggerheads when the former returned to court. Certainly Ascidas would play the villain by common consent: on this Cyril, Liberatus, Facundus, Vigilius, and Evagrius would all agree. His actions would fracture the Chalcedonian alliance, marring the work of his patron. If Cyril is correct, however, the Origenists worked toward that goal from an early stage. Driving a separation between the sees of Jerusalem and Antioch to uphold Origen was a dramatic move, a nuclear option. For this reason we may look askance at Cyril's account. If true, however, the sequel makes sense:

At their causing this great discord, [Patriarch Peter] sent secretly for Sophronius and Gelasius and told them to compose a petition against the Origenists, adjuring [Patriarch Peter] not to remove Patriarch Ephraim's name from the sacred diptychs. When the fathers had composed this petition and presented it, the archbishop on receiving it sent it to the emperor with a letter telling him of the innovation of the Origenists.⁵³⁶

What might we glean from such a tale? If the first anecdote is true, this was a display of prudence from Peter. The two abbots lent weight to enterprise, while also obscuring Peter's driving role. If successful, Peter would be able to prevent the breakdown of the alliance between the five great sees.

⁵³⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 85 (200).

⁵³⁵ Cyril, *VS*, 85 (200-201).

⁵³⁶ Cyril, *VS*, 85 (200-201).

Here the narratives of Cyril and Liberatus rejoin. The latter had claimed that the monks acted through Pelagius; Cyril had named Ephraim and Peter as their intermediaries. Both agree, however, that an imperial edict against Origen was the result. Justinian promulgated his decree through Menas and a home synod; from there it went to Vigilus, Zoilus, Ephraim, and Peter for subscription.⁵³⁷ All signed. The alliance held.

Origenist reaction varied. Domitian seems to have been the most theologically committed,⁵³⁸ and so took it particularly hard:

Domitian and Theodore [Ascidas] were also forced to sign [the Edict against Origen], but their hypocrisy became obvious to all. For after signing, Domitian, learning that some of the Origenist heretics had managed to evade signing, fell into distress and anguish and, cutting off his beard, separated himself from the Catholic communion, and so died of dropsy in Constantinople excommunicate; to the hypocrisy of Theodore [Ascidas] bears witness the fierce persecution he initiated against the orthodox after he had given his signature.⁵³⁹

Nonnus found the situation difficult to bear as well. Not being a bishop or abbot, however, he was not required to sign. Nevertheless, Cyril's presentation of his response bears similarity to Domitian's:

The edict against Origen was published in Jerusalem in the month of February [543]...All the bishops and superiors of the desert appended their signatures to it, apart from Bishop Alexander of Abila. In indignation Nonnus, Peter [the Alexandrian], Menas, John, Callistus, Anastasius, and other leaders of the heresy left the Catholic communion and, withdrawing from the New Laura, settled in the plain.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ Cyril, *VS*, 85 (201); Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIII (140). For an English translation of the Edict, see Price, *Acts*, 281ff. For a discussion of the theological assumptions and implications of the Edict, see Grillmeier, *Christ*, 385-402.

⁵³⁸ Facundus twice alludes to a letter from Domitian to Vigilus regarding Origen, and provides an excerpt as evidence. Facundus, *Pro defensione*, I.II.3-4 (8-9), and IV.IV.13-15 (125-26).

⁵³⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 85 (201).

⁵⁴⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 86 (201). This is the third withdrawal of the Origenists to "the plain." Perhaps they were staying with friends; the coastal plain was harbor of Origenists in the fifth and sixth centuries. See Price, *Lives*, 213 n45.

The distress of the Judean Origenists is valuable for the list of names: Cyril's antagonism is personal. We cannot go far in parsing the details of his account, but the specificity of targets for his righteous anger is telling. His fury and indignation remind us of the bitterness of factional dispute; his repeated use of the word "war" (πόλεμος) reminds us of its intensity. Cyril often lists the individual combatants in a given stage of the conflict. The network aspect of the struggle is unmistakable. Perhaps this was about good and evil in the abstract, but it was us and them in the particular.

Ascidas responded differently. He had learned a lesson from his defeat: the dead could be condemned. He pivoted accordingly and conceived an attack on the so-called Three Chapters as a response.⁵⁴¹ Playing on Justinian's desire for unity with the anti-Chalcedonians, Ascidas framed his attack on the "Nestorian" Three Chapters as a way to prove the falsity of the anti-Chalcedonian formula "Chalcedonian = Nestorian." There were problems with the approach. Part of Ascidas' strategy involved an assault on the work of Theodoret, who had been vindicated at Chalcedon. What's more, the Three Chapters were favored in the West, and apparently in Palestine also.⁵⁴² The assault on the Three Chapters, therefore, was an assault on Pelagius and Peter, the adversaries of Ascidas.⁵⁴³ The former two, of course, had already used Origenism against Ascidas, and

⁵⁴¹ The Chapters in question were works of the fifth-century figures Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa. Ascidas positioned the three as Nestorian, and sought the condemnation of the person and writings of Theodore, along with select writings of Theodoret and Ibas.

⁵⁴² Such favor could account for the view that the Sabaites were crypto-Nestorians. If one holds that the Three Chapters were in fact Nestorian, the Judeans' acceptance of them would equal Nestorianism.

⁵⁴³ This was the consensus contemporary read of Ascidas' motivations, and has found favor among some modern scholars. See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (244-46); Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIV (140); Facundus, *Contra Mocianum*, edited by J. M. Clement et al., in *Facundus Hermianensis: Opera Omnia; Corpus Christianorum Series Latina XC.A* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), 6 (402); *Bishop Vigilius to [his] most glorious and clement son, the Augustus Justinian*, in *Collectio Avellana* Vol. I, Ep. 83 (230-319); Grillmeier, *Christ*, 404ff, etc.

would do so again. Such infighting and power politics would dominate the ecclesiastical scene for the next decade; clearing them up would be the work of an ecumenical council. Justinian himself was among the greatest losers at the end: his interventions neither gained the anti-Chalcedonians nor preserved the Chalcedonian alliance. In the aftermath, Liberatus would examine Ascidas and Pelagius and declare a plague on both their houses. We may sympathize with his frustration.⁵⁴⁴

This, however, was not the “fierce persecution” to which Cyril alluded. To Cyril it was Ascidas’ war against the Sabaites that mattered, not his battles with Rome. Cyril’s narrative centers on Judea, albeit with a trimmed cast of characters. Eusebius and Leontius had died in early 543, and Domitian was falling from grace. Ascidas, therefore, had inherited the part of villain-in-chief. Nonnus held the second position, and the relationship between the two was the relevant axis of evil in Cyril’s mind. This may not, however, have been the view of his younger self: Cyril’s Sabaite raising was not sufficient to convince his mother he would not end up an Origenist himself.

Price, on the other hand, places all intrigue on the Sabaite side. He adopts Hombergen’s view of the Sabaites as crypto-Nestorians, and argues for their constant scheming against the Origenists. These, he claims, did not craft the Three Chapters controversy as a counterattack.

Price consistently defends the supporters of Origen, stating that Liberatus’ claims regarding Ascidas were “malicious gossip,” and that: “By the sixth century the speculations of Origen certainly appeared heretical; but they were not a danger to post-Nicene orthodoxy, and Origenist spirituality and Origenist biblical interpretation had exerted an immense and positive influence on the development of Christian thought. The condemnation of Origen is evidence of an increasing narrowing of outlook, and is an indelible blot on the ecclesiastical policy of Justinian.” For Price, the actual author was Justinian, who was consumed by a desire to reconcile the anti-Chalcedonians. Ultimately, he argues, the Sabaites were willing to abandon their own theological positions to rhetorically link Origenism and Nestorianism. This was the strategy that allowed them to bring down the Origenists. Price, *Acts*, Vol. I, 19; Vol. 2, 276-80.

⁵⁴⁴ “I believe it is clear to all that this scandal entered the Church through Pelagius the deacon and Theodore the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The same Theodore publicly proclaimed as such: that he and Pelagius were the vital agitators, through whom this scandal entered the world.” Translation mine. The Latin runs: “illud liquere omnibus credo per Pelagium diaconum et Theodorum Caesareae Cappadociae episcopum hoc scandalum in ecclesiam fuisse ingressum, quod etiam publice ipse Theodorus clamatauit se et Pelagium uiuos incendendos, per quos hoc scandalum introuit in mundum.” Liberatus, *Breviarium*, XXIV (141).

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Cyril was born and raised in Scythopolis. His father John was attached to the metropolitan; his mother is described only as “devout” and a “servant of God.” Cyril’s father made contact with Sabas at the metropolitan’s palace, and soon introduced the archimandrite to his wife and son. Sabas had a powerful effect on their small family. He named the boy Cyril a future disciple, and made more than one visit to their house. The death of Sabas did not deter Cyril from the monk’s path. When the New Church in Jerusalem was to be consecrated in 543, therefore, going to the ceremony served as his pretext for entering monastic life.⁵⁴⁵

The need for a pretext can be deciphered from his mother’s injunction. Evidently wise to her son’s intentions, she gave him words of warning upon his departure:

Just before leaving the metropolis of Scythopolis, I received instructions from my devout mother to take no decisions as regards my spiritual welfare without the advice and permission of the inspired solitary Bishop John, who lived in the laura of blessed Sabas and shone in all the godly virtues...⁵⁴⁶

Cyril’s mother was sending him to a staunch Sabaite: the same John the Hesychast who had helped overthrow the Origenists in the Great Laura. He was also a friend. Cyril’s house served as a Sabaite lodging in Scythopolis, and so Cyril’s mother knew John personally.⁵⁴⁷ That she directed Cyril to John may be expected. Less expected is the fear she held for her son, and what it may tell us of the young Cyril:

‘my fear,’ she said, ‘is that you be carried away by the error of the Origenists and so lose the basis of your stability.’⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (68-69); *VS*, 63 (174), 75 (188ff); *Life of John the Hesychast* 20 (235-36).

⁵⁴⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (68-69).

⁵⁴⁷ Cyril, *Life of John the Hesychast*, 20 (235-36).

⁵⁴⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (68-69).

After worshipping at the holy places Cyril dutifully went to the Great Laura to speak with John. The latter directed him to enroll in Euthymius' cenobium. Cyril's response is surprising:

But I being young and foolish, despised his injunction and went down to the Jordan, wishing to enter one of the monasteries there...⁵⁴⁹

The Jordan did not agree with Cyril, and he soon fell dangerously ill. At this time John appeared to him in a dream, and rebuked him:

‘You have been sufficiently punished for disobeying my injunction. But now rise and go to Jericho, and you will find one Gerontius, a monk, in the [hostel] of Abba Euthymius. Follow him to the monastery and you will be saved.’⁵⁵⁰

Cyril joined Euthymius' monastery and was healed. We may wonder why his mother worried about him falling into Origenism, and why he disobeyed John and chose not to enter a Sabaite monastery. The answer may lie in Scythopolis itself. The city was an Origenist bastion. Cyril may have fallen in with the wrong crowd, or perhaps absorbed anti-Sabaite sentiments. Perhaps it was simply a literary device. Regardless, the young monk had seen the light. Now a committed Sabaite, Cyril entered the conflict as a message-bearer, running communications between John the Hesychast and Cyriacus in Souka. When the “war” was over, Cyril would go on to write *vitae* for them both.

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In early 544 Ascidas convinced Justinian to issue an Edict against the Three Chapters. Although busy with such larger issues, however, Ascidas never forgot his old comrades in Judea.⁵⁵¹ At this time he bullied Patriarch Peter into readmitting Nonnus,

⁵⁴⁹ Cyril, *Life of John the Hesychast*, 20 (235-36).

⁵⁵⁰ Cyril, *Life of John the Hesychast*, 20 (236).

⁵⁵¹ Origenist/Sabaite conflict in the years 543-48 is attested only by Cyril. The narrative of the following pages comes directly from three of his works: the *Life of Sabas*, the *Life of John the Hesychast*,

Peter the Alexandrian, et al. into the New Laura.⁵⁵² In response the patriarch revisited the successful strategy of 543. Calling upon the Judean abbots, he caused them to draft a libellus protesting the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Perhaps thinking to reinforce the document with his own patriarchal authority, Peter undertook the journey of delivery himself.⁵⁵³

Peter risked more than he knew. Ascidas ran the palace, and now employed his power against the patriarch. He forced Peter into submission, compelling him to subscribe to the condemnation he had come to protest.⁵⁵⁴ Nor was this the end of it.

Cyril records Peter's further humiliation:

Then Ascidas forced Archbishop Peter, who had gone up to Constantinople, to take as chancellors Peter of Alexandria and John Strongulus, while he made John the eunuch, who ruled the monastery of Martyrius, superior of the New Church. This gave Nonnus and his party greater confidence in proclaiming their impiety publicly and from house to house and in plotting various persecutions against the fathers of the Great Laura. If they saw an orthodox monk in the holy city, they

and the *Life of Cyriacus*. Our ability to parse and interpret his account is limited; the facts vs. interpretation approach remains our best option, but analyses of Cyril's biases and speculation cannot reach beyond educated speculation. In giving Cyril's version, I will attempt to pull out and parse details of factionalism, networks, and institutions. For the rest, we are forced to leave his account as is.

⁵⁵² In Cyril's account Ascidas was furious enough to threaten Peter with deposition. The latter was forced not only to readmit the Origenists, but to give them private theological assurances going forward. Cyril, *VS*, 86 (201-202).

⁵⁵³ Cyril, *VS*, 86-87 (202-204). Cf. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 210ff.

⁵⁵⁴ Facundus nearly screams in rage against the eastern patriarchs for their capitulation to Ascidas. None escape his contempt. He informs us, for example, that upon the threat of deposition Ephraim was found to love honor more than truth. Peter he hoists upon his own petard: "And what of Peter of Jerusalem? Is it not public record that, being surrounded by a multitude of monks, he took oath and proclaimed, 'if someone should consent to [the Edict], he would act against Chalcedon.' Therefore does he not hang by his own agreement?" The preceding is my translation of: "Quid etiam Petrus Hierosolymitanus? Nonne publica notitia refert quoniam conveniente ad se multitudine monachorum, iuratus pronuntiauit, quod si quis eidem decreto nouitio consentiret, contra Chalcedonense concilium faceret, nec tamen se ab eius consensione suspendit?" Facundus, *Pro Defensione*, IV.IV.9 (125).

Like Peter, Vigilius presided over a flock amenable to the Three Chapters. As he remained in the west, however, Vigilius was not forced to subscribe to the condemnations at this time. Price, *Acts*, Vol. I, 45. In comparing the situation of the two bishops, Price states that Peter was "summoned" to Constantinople. I have retained Cyril's version, however, because a) Price gives no source, and b) I have not found such a version in any source myself. I have therefore taken Price's comment as speculation. Cf. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 210-11; Patrich, *Sabas*, 337, and etc., who also follow Cyril.

would get some persons of the world to assault him and insult him as [‘Sabaite’],⁵⁵⁵ and so drive him from the holy city.⁵⁵⁶

Peter was checkmated. Ascidas’ Origenist allies controlled his affairs and were gatekeepers to his person. The Sabaites were barred from the episcopal palace. The Origenists now attempted to appropriate the holy city for themselves as well:

When several of the orthodox fathers had been assaulted and war had started against the pious, the Bessi of the Jordan, incited by godly zeal, came up to the holy city to help the orthodox who were being warred against. [Civil war]⁵⁵⁷ was waged against the Bessi and the rest of the orthodox and, when they took refuge in the [hostel] of the Great Laura, their adversaries descended on them suddenly, wishing in their utter fury to kill the fathers. Finding the [hostel] secured, they broke open the windows with stones and mercilessly stoned those within.⁵⁵⁸

Salvation came in the form of a Bessi champion who scattered the “three hundred” adversaries at the cost of his own life.

Ascetic violence was a commonplace in late antiquity, but several points emerge from the passage. First, the Origenists were not simply assaulting the Sabaite fathers. They were attempting to bar them from the holy city. The final conflict in and around the Great Laura’s hostel is no coincidence: the Origenists were aiming to strike a mortal blow. Lost access to the holy city had crippled the anti-Chalcedonians; it would do no less to the Sabaites. Inability to visit Jerusalem, inability to make use of their own hostel: such impotence would eliminate the Sabaites’ social and economic interactions with local and pilgrim laity. More than a factional dust-up, this was a serious threat to Sabaite

⁵⁵⁵ Price translates “Σαβαίτην” as “Sabas’s man.” I have preferred the more literal, factional label. Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 193.

⁵⁵⁶ Cyril, *VS*, 86 (202).

⁵⁵⁷ Cyril twice uses this term to describe the fighting in Jerusalem. This passage reads: “δημοσίου πολέμου συγκροτηθέτος.” A similar description in the *Life of Cyriacus* has: “περὶ τοῦ γεγονότος ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ πόλει δημοσίου πολέμου.” Price translates the first as “open warfare,” and the second as “civil war.” Either is correct, but in light of the relationship between the factions I have chosen the latter for both passages. Cyril, *VS*, 86 (203); and *Life of Cyriacus*, 11 (252); Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 193, 229.

⁵⁵⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 86 (202-203).

existence. Only the timely assistance of the Bessi – occupants of a church in the great cenobium⁵⁵⁹ – prevented institutional tragedy.

Gloom descended upon the embattled Sabaites. In the skirmish's aftermath John sent Cyril with a message to Cyriacus. He wrote of the "civil war" in the city, and besought Cyriacus' spiritual intercession against the Origenists.⁵⁶⁰ Cyriacus' response betrays their mood: [Cyril,] Say to the one who sent you: Let us not be despondent, father...⁵⁶¹ Such dejection was understandable: victorious in 543, the Sabaites were under siege only two years later.

Abbot Gelasius decided to go to court and lay the situation before the emperor.⁵⁶²

Unfortunately, Ascidas proved too much for him:

When [Gelasius] arrived at Byzantium, Ascidas was informed of his arrival, and those of the orphanage [where Gelasius was to lodge], the patriarchal residence, and the palace were told not to receive a monk from Jerusalem. So Abba Gelasius, unable to gain entrance anywhere and fearing the intrigues of Ascidas, left Byzantium for Palestine, making the journey by foot. On reaching Amorium he died, [in October of 546].⁵⁶³

The Sabaites soon applied to Peter for a new abbot. Their effort was in vain: Peter's

Origenist gatekeepers physically ejected them from the episcopal palace.⁵⁶⁴ The

Origenists took advantage of their opportunity, and quickly installed their man George as

⁵⁵⁹ See Price, *Lives*, 218-19 n129.

⁵⁶⁰ Cyriacus responds with a prophecy, foretelling the deaths of Nonnus and Leontius, and the expulsion of the Origenists from the New Laura. That Cyril is retconning is obvious: Leontius had died a year before. The passage serves to highlight Cyriacus' role as a holy man, reinforce his Sabaite allegiance, and further emphasize the role of God in the ultimate Sabaite victory. Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 11 (252).

⁵⁶¹ Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 11 (252).

⁵⁶² In this same passage Gelasius expresses his regret over signing the libellus previously borne by Peter. The anecdote is foundational to Hombergen's argument that the Sabaites were crypto-Nestorians. Cyril, *VS*, 87 (203-204). Perrone, on the other hand, reads the passage in exact opposite fashion. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 211.

⁵⁶³ Cyril, *VS*, 87 (204).

⁵⁶⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 87 (204).

abbot of the Great Laura. He required armed guards to assume his post, but Origenist victory was now at hand. They expelled the Sabaitic leadership and took full control of the Great Laura.⁵⁶⁵ Yet “God worked a great prodigy,” for that very day saw the death of Nonnus.

The disparate blocs of the Origenist party had been held together by Nonnus’ leadership for thirty years. Bereft of universally acknowledged leadership, these now fell victim to internal squabbles. A rift appeared between two theological subdivisions of the party: the “Protoktists” based in Firminus’ laura, and the “Isochrists” of the New Laura.⁵⁶⁶ The actual theological distinctions held little interest for Cyril. In his view both were heretics struggling against the true faith of the Sabaites.⁵⁶⁷ The resulting change in conditions, however, was another matter:

⁵⁶⁵ John the Hesychast, for example, was forced retreat to the Mount of Olives. Many left with him. Cyril, *VS*, 87 (204).

⁵⁶⁶ “Evidentemente per l’agiografo questi nomi non avevano bisogno di spiegazioni, poiché erano il pane quotidiano della polemica con gli origenisti. Né egli si è dato cura di esporre e confutare le idee dei due diversi gruppi, dal momento che, quando scriveva su questi avvenimenti (557 circa), nel suo stesso monastero c’era chi stava lavorando ad una replica dettagliata di entrambi gli errori. Così se vogliamo ricostruire le dottrine degli <<Isocristi>> o dei <<Protoktisti>> dobbiamo affidarci a delle congetture, anche se almeno per i primi disponiamo, grazie agli anatematismi antiorigenisti del 553, di un termine di confronto assai prezioso.” Perrone, *Chiesa*, 211-12.

Cf. Cyril: “The fissiparous impiety of both [the Protoktists and the Isochrists] has been recorded at the present time in a more detailed and comprehensive account by some men, dear to God, of our flock, receiving the refutation it deserves.” The work itself is lost. Cyril, *VS*, 89 (206). The ability to differentiate the groups based on the canons of 543 and 553 is demonstrated in A. Guillaumont, *Les ‘Kephalaia Gnostica’ d’Evagre le Pontique et l’histoire de l’Originisme chez les grecs et chez les syriens* (Paris: Patristica Sorbonensia, 1962), 136-59. See below.

⁵⁶⁷ “Whoever wishes may easily discover their impiety from the very names they give each other, those of the New Laura calling those of Firminus’ ‘Protoktists’ or ‘Tetradites’ and those of Firminus’ naming those of the New Laura ‘Isochrists;’ for each was allotted a name from the particular doctrines of their impiety.” Cyril, *VS*, 89 (206). Cyril is not incorrect; the names do allow for informed speculation:

“L’oggetto delle dispute fra i due gruppi sembra essere stato un diverso rilievo che ciascuno assegnava alla cristologia, entro lo schema definito dalla preesistenza delle anime e dall’apocatastasi. Se l’etichetta imposta loro dagli avversari non è troppo arbitraria, gli <<Isocristi>> sostenevano la completa identificazione con Cristo nella restaurazione finale. Questa posizione implicava la Perdita del ruolo unico e primario di Cristo, un aspetto che sembra invece essere stato particolarmente a cuore ai <<Protoktisti>>. Si può supporre che essi volessero salvaguardare il posto privilegiato di Cristo, in quanto la prima di tutte le creature e l’unica a restare pienamente unita con il Logos. Da qui forse l’accusa espresa nell’appellativo

Theodore [Ascidas] of Cappadocia, who was in control of the affairs of state and belonged to and supported the party of the Isochrists, had many of them ordained bishops of Palestine and made [another] Theodore superior of the New Laura be appointed guardian of the Cross and metropolitan of Scythopolis. This brought storms and waves not only to our flock but also to that of the most impious doctrine of the Protoktists, whose superior was [=abbot of Firminus' laura] Isidore.⁵⁶⁸

Ascidas' "support" need not reflect a doctrinal position. He had been abbot of the New Laura. It was there that he bonded with Leontius and Nonnus. Presumably he still had friends there. The rise of the Isochrists, then, can be viewed as the rise of Ascidas' associates. There were certainly parallels and precedents: Nonnus and Ascidas might be compared to Euthymius and Sabas. All four lifted up their disciples, and in the second generation both networks attained the heights of influence.

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The Origenist schism afforded an opportunity to the Sabaites. Abbot George soon proved to be a disaster, and was deposed by the leaders of his own faction. The charges were "profligacy and foul conduct;" dealings so dark that Cyril eschews polemical opportunity for decorum.⁵⁶⁹ Taking advantage of their opponents' disarray, the Sabaites successfully contacted Peter. The patriarch gave them Cassianus, the committed Sabaite who had won Souka years before. Cassianus had since left the region to found his own monastery in Scythopolis. Peter's choice therefore underscores the gravity of the situation: the recall and transfer of such a man was a rare event.⁵⁷⁰ Cassianus, however, died after eight months as abbot. He was succeeded by the formidable Sabaite Conon.

polemic di <<Tetraditi>>, perché agli occhi degli avversari tali affermazioni avrebbero trasformato la Trinità in quaternità." Perrone, *Chiesa*, 212.

⁵⁶⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 89 (206-207).

⁵⁶⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 88 (205).

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. Patrich, *Sabas*, 323.

For Cyril Conon was the cause's latter-day hero. The new abbot collected the scattered Sabaites, reestablished the Great Laura as a place of strength, and received the submission of the embattled Protoktists. The opponents of Ascidas were now united under one banner.⁵⁷¹ Together with Isidore, abbot of Firminus' laura, Conon now travelled to Constantinople in hopes of reaching Justinian.

Conon's arrival at court reunites Cyril's account with the larger ecclesiastical narrative. This was a busy time in the capital. It was late 551, and Ascidas was in the midst of his struggle with Pope Vigilius.⁵⁷² Perhaps this was why the abbots were able to reach the court.⁵⁷³ Certainly they could not have come at a better moment. They were present when word of Patriarch Peter's death reached the emperor. More importantly,

⁵⁷¹ “[Isidore, abbot of Firminus' laura], unable to withstand Ascidas and the monks of the New Laura, came over to the shepherd of our flock Abba Conon and, giving him his word by holy Sion that he did not hold the doctrine of preexistence but would oppose the impiety with all his strength...” Cyril, *VS*, 89 (207).

“Le convinzioni sostenute dai <<Protoktisti>> si prestavano maggiormente ad un accord con I monaci <<ortodossi>> della Grande Laura, tanto più che sia gli uni che gli altri so trovavano ormai dinanzi ad un avversario commune, il gruppo degli <<Isocristi>> guidato da Teodoro Ascida...” Perrone, *Chiesa*, 212ff.

⁵⁷² Ascidas was the author of Vigilius' forced submission on the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Along with the patrician Cethegus, it was Theodore Ascidas who received the Pope's oath of surrender in 550, which opens: “The most blessed Pope Vigilius swore as follows to the lord the most pious emperor in our presence, that is, in the presence of myself, Bishop Theodore of Caesarea in Cappadocia...” and closes: “I, Theodore, by the mercy of God bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, have as a witness to the oath signed this document.” The text of the oath is translated in Price, *Acts*, Vol.2, 96-97.

After Vigilius recovered his freedom to act in 551, therefore, Theodore Ascidas was among the prime targets of his papal wrath. Vigilius' letter to Ascidas and Menas spends several pages on Ascidas' misdeeds and personal failings before leveling the deadly blow: “...we therefore – with the role and authority of the blessed Peter the apostle, whose place we occupy, despite our inadequacy, together with our brothers and fellow bishops...by this promulgation of our sentence decree that you, Theodore, formerly bishop of the city of Caesarea in Cappadocia, are stripped both of priestly dignity and Catholic communion and of every episcopal office and faculty. We resolve that in future you are to be free for no business save tears of repentance, by which, after receiving forgiveness for your faults, you may recover your rank and communion, if you deserve it, through the mercifulness of either myself or, after my death, my successor.” The text of the letter is translated in Price, *Acts*, Vol. 1, 161-65.

This letter was penned in 551 and made public in early February, 552. Conon and Isidore, therefore, were able to step into a charged atmosphere to take advantage of a distracted Ascidas. For more on the struggle between Vigilius and Ascidas, see Price, *Acts*, Vol. 1, 42-58.

⁵⁷³ Perrone muses that the abbots were aware of the state of affairs, and timed their visit to take advantage of it. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 213.

they were on hand to take advantage of the report's sequel: the monks of the New Laura, confident in the power of their patron, had raised a new patriarch themselves.

Conon did not waste his golden opportunity. He apprised Justinian of all that had transpired in Jerusalem. The wrathful emperor predictably deposed the Origenist patriarch, and Cyril claims that Conon who suggested his successor:

...the most pious emperor, incensed against Ascidas and the Origenists, gave orders for [their patriarch] Macarius to be ousted from the episcopacy. Abba Conon's party, seizing the opportune moment, informed the emperor of their situation and presented him with a petition revealing all the impiety of the Origenists, Isidore having died. Then, employing complete frankness [παρρησία], they proposed Eustochius, administrator [οἰκονόμος] at Alexandria, who was at Constantinople, as bishop of Jerusalem.⁵⁷⁴

The Origenists' stunning blunder cost them Jerusalem. The ascension of Eustochius, however, seems murkier than Cyril makes it. Little is known of the new patriarch.

Victor Tunnunensis gives nothing more than the bare details: one patriarch deposed, another raised.⁵⁷⁵ Evagrius simply includes the episode in a list of patriarchs:

...and then Peter, and after him Macarius, though the emperor had not yet approved; he was expelled from his throne, for they said that he professed the doctrines of Origen.⁵⁷⁶

Theophanes does not give a reason for the deposition, but he does give backstory on Eustochius. According to him Eustochius had been incarcerated for bad management, then fled to Constantinople afterwards.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 90 (207).

⁵⁷⁵ "Macharius Iherosolimitanus episcopus eicitur et eo superstitite Eustochius ordinatur." Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, 146 (48).

⁵⁷⁶ Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (242).

⁵⁷⁷ "In the same year, the monk Agathon, a brother of Apolinarius the bishop of Alexandria, after coming to Alexandria and having examined the accounts of Eustochius, a monk who was at that time important and oikonomos of Alexandria, imprisoned him because of his stewardship. Eustochius escaped through the roof and came to Byzantium just when Macarius had been expelled from the Church as a result of a plot. Eustochius was ordained bishop of Jerusalem in place of Macarius." Theophanes, *Chronographia*, (356).

Assuming Theophanes is correct, one wonders how the disgraced οἰκονόμος of Alexandria made the leap to patriarch of Jerusalem. Cyril is the only one who offers an explanation, but he stretches the relationship between Conon and Eustochius beyond credibility:

...[Justinian] gave orders for there to be an ecumenical council. Abba Conon, when sending Eustochius on his way to Jerusalem, asked him to send Eulogius, superior of the monastery of blessed Theodosius, so that he too should be present at the council that was assembling.⁵⁷⁸

Conon's role in Macarius' downfall seems likely; his subsequent choice of Eustochius less so; the ability to "send a patriarch on his way" least of all. We have no evidence that Conon was patron to Eustochius: the latter makes no previous appearance in Cyril's account. Evagrius links the two, but Conon appears only as Eustochius' agent.⁵⁷⁹ Cyril, it seems, is simply inflating the role of his hero. The rise of Eustochius must remain a mystery: whether disgraced or no, he was more likely the choice of Justinian than Conon.

This roster of delegates looks very different from the monastic delegation of 536. That group had boasted sixteen Judean monks, eight of them Sabaite. Now Eustochius sent four, with Conon the only one from a Sabaite monastery.⁵⁸⁰ Lacking a patron at court, without a close tie to the patriarch, the Sabaites were effectively shut out of the fifth ecumenical council.

⁵⁷⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208).

⁵⁷⁹ Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (244, 248).

⁵⁸⁰ In addition to Conon, there was abbot Eulogius from Theodosius' cenobium, abbot Cyriacus from "the spring," (near Jericho) and Pancratius the Stylite. Three bishops went also. Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208); Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (248). Perrone's argument that the victorious Sabaites had no interest in the Three Chapters controversy seems problematic. If nothing else, attendance granted status and prestige, issues of perennial concern. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 218ff.

Perhaps this is why Cyril centers his presentation of the council on the condemnations of Origenism.⁵⁸¹ He depicts the synod as the affirmation of victory over the Origenists of the New Laura. More surprisingly, however, his version finds agreement with other Greek sources. Evagrius' "rather confused account,"⁵⁸² while significantly botching the order of events, nevertheless agrees with Cyril on several main points. His given cause for the council certainly fits the Cyrillian narrative:

...Justinian summoned the Fifth Synod for the following reason. Because those who revered the doctrines of Origen were increasing in power, especially in the so-called New Lavra...⁵⁸³

Evagrius names Theodore Ascidas as the Origenists' champion, and portrays Conon favorably. Even Theophanes, later patriarch of Constantinople, puts the Chapters in a supporting role:

In this year [553] the Fifth holy and ecumenical Synod was convened to oppose Origen's aberration, Didymos the blind, and Euagrius for their pagan nonsense and, once again, the headless Chapters.⁵⁸⁴

The actual council notes correct this Greek historical tradition: the council was in fact about the Chapters. Nevertheless, these histories point to an important truth: the Origenist conflict in Judea had become a real issue in the capital. When the council fathers assembled ahead of the synod, therefore, Justinian turned the issue over to them.

⁵⁸¹ Cyril does not preclude the Three Chapters, but places them in the background: "When the fifth holy ecumenical council had assembled at Constantinople, a common and universal anathema was directed against Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia and against the teaching of Evagrius and Didymus on preexistence and a universal restoration, in the presence and with the approval of the four patriarchs." Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208).

⁵⁸² Whitby, *Evagrius*, 243 n119.

⁵⁸³ Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (242).

⁵⁸⁴ Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 228-29 (334).

They dealt with it at a pre-conciliar assembly, and issued a set of canons against Origen in early 553.⁵⁸⁵

These canons differ markedly from Justinian's decree of 543. The latter was a general attack on "Origenism," that might be framed as a poor understanding of the issue, or even simply a polemical cannonade. Post Guillaumont, however, the dominant reading has been that the 553 canons were in fact aimed at the Evagrian position of the Isochrists in the New Laura.⁵⁸⁶

Certainly the Isochrists themselves took it that way.⁵⁸⁷ The canons arrived in Jerusalem shortly thereafter, and all bishops of Palestine save one subscribed. That was Alexander of Abila, who had also refused to sign the canons of 543. He was now ejected from his see.⁵⁸⁸ The New Laura, however, rejected the canons en masse. Like Eusebius a decade before, Eustochius now attempted to achieve factional balance amidst strife. Eight months of failed negotiation followed before he cleared the *dux* to eject the Origenists from the province.⁵⁸⁹ The New Laura was not empty long. Eustochius drew 120 monks from other Judean monasteries to reoccupy it. Of these, the new abbot and sixty others came from the Great Laura. The rest were pulled from other monasteries of the desert. Cyril was one of these, coming from the cenobium of Euthymius on the recommendation of John the Hesychast.⁵⁹⁰ In the six years since the death of Nonnus,

⁵⁸⁵ See discussion and translated documents in Price, *Acts*, Vol. 2, 270-99.

⁵⁸⁶ Antoine Guillaumont, *Les 'Kephalaia Gnostica'*, 136-59. Cf. Perrone, *Chiesa*, 215ff. Perczel, on the other hand, argues that the canons were filtered through a lost Sabaitic refutation of Judean Origenism: Perczel, "Pseudo-Dionysius," 261 ff.

⁵⁸⁷ Evagrius did as well, marking out the Ascidas and the monks of the New Laura for special rebuke. Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (249).

⁵⁸⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 86 (201); 90 (208).

⁵⁸⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208). The incident is a prime example of Evagrius' confusion, as he places the expulsion before the council itself. Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (242).

⁵⁹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 90 (208).

then, the Origenists lost the entirety of their hold on the Judean desert. On every factional front, the Sabaites were victorious.

It was a pyrrhic victory. Conon now presided over a much smaller confederacy: perhaps as small as the Great Laura, the New Laura, and Euthymius' cenobium.⁵⁹¹ Ascidas had blocked Sabaite promotion to court and episcopal positions for fifteen years, and by 557 the major Sabaite spiritual masters John the Hesychast and Cyriacus had passed as well. The Sabaites lacked imperial patrons. The patriarch of Jerusalem, while cordial, was himself neither Sabaite, patron, nor client. The Sabaite model would have to change.

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At last we have found the context in which Cyril wrote: factional triumph, yes, but also institutional anxiety. The Sabaites had inherited a network that had flourished for a century, with a host of resources at their command. Now this great Sabaite network was broken. The major patronage streams had changed their course, and the influence that had belonged to the Sabaites now passed to the Jericho region. For long years the Sabaites had relied on the fruits of their successes for sustenance. Those fruits were gone. Worse, their great founder had consistently and intentionally refused to create incomes or annuities to provide nourishment. Yet the monasteries had expanded to a certain level of expectation, and there was no great intercessor to stand on their behalf.

What was Cyril doing? There have been many answers to that question. Scholars have applied a range of methodologies to elements of his work; his theology and literary

⁵⁹¹ See final chapter.

devices have been scrutinized at length. Without disagreeing with any such studies, I would like to highlight another antecedent to Cyril's work: institutional exigency. The character of the Sabaitic monasteries had been formed by their specific religious and socio-economic context. Cyril would seek solutions in that same context. His work would be part of a larger effort, an institutional endeavor to place the monasteries back on firmer footing. Like the monasteries themselves, that effort would be embedded in the unique contours of the holy land.

PART II:

LITERARY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

CHAPTER FIVE: CONTEXTUALIZING DEFEAT

Palestinian hagiographies were products of their specific environment. This would prove true of Cyril in 558. It was just as true, however, for John Rufus writing fifty years earlier. Like the later Cyril, Rufus' works reflect particular moments in the progression of local history. In this case, "progression" meant decline, the story of a fall from power, and the literary response to a long defeat that began shortly after Chalcedon itself.

The anti-Chalcedonians were never so strong as they were in 451. The reprisal of 453 ejected their leadership, most of which never returned. A wave of anti-Chalcedonian moderates defected in 456. The cause's remaining adherents did not recoup their losses in the two decades of quiet that followed.

Then came Basiliscus and his *Encyclical*, prompting a seeming resurgence of anti-Chalcedonianism in Palestine. Yet this moment needs to be put in context. Basiliscus reigned for only a year, and had himself voided the *Encyclical* by the end of his tenure. Regardless, all of his acts were voided by Zeno a few months later. Martyrius' declination to sign the *Anti-Encyclical* is overemphasized. There was no need: the Patriarch sidestepped the whole mess by accepting Zeno's decree.

Another wave of anti-Chalcedonian moderates defected in 479. Following that reconciliation Martyrius ejected the remaining hardliners from the Holy Land, and made Chalcedonians the beneficiaries of patronage and promotion. The anti-Chalcedonians were left to consolidate their remaining positions in eastern Palestine.

These were not to last. Rent by further defections and internal strife, the anti-Chalcedonians lost their remaining monasteries in the early sixth century. By that time Chalcedonian Palestine was sufficiently united to stand against Anastasius. The accession of Justin in 518 was the final coffin nail. Although Severus and his allies would later return to Constantinople, in Palestine the anti-Chalcedonians were defeated.⁵⁹²

Anti-Chalcedonian literature arises at specific moments in this progressive defeat. The works that survive reflect Rousseau's "frozen moments of textuality," snapshots along this journey of loss. Their major literary contributions arise in the latter part of that history, the period between Martyrius' Second Union in 479 and the final anti-Chalcedonian defeat in 518. They are the product of Peter the Iberian's inner circle, the young men he crafted into the final phase of anti-Chalcedonian leadership.⁵⁹³

Whatever Peter's intentions, however, many of these men left embattled Palestine for greener pastures. Their works reflect the paths they took. Severus' corpus, for example, is composed of theological, homiletic, and epistolary works that reflect realities in Constantinople and Antioch. The patriarch's years in Gaza may have been formative,

⁵⁹² See also Horn's introduction to the *Life of Peter*, lvi: "The adoption of Zeno's *Henotikon* had held in Palestine, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem remained in communion with the capital. Yet the interpretation of the *Henotikon* in a strictly Chalcedonian manner was taking firmer root in the *laurai* founded in Jerusalem and Palestine. In 494, the Chalcedonian defender Sabas, who founded the great *laura* in the Wadi Kidron as well as many other smaller houses, became archimandrite of all *laurai* in Palestine at the appointment of Sallustius the patriarch of Jerusalem (486-494). Peter's followers were increasingly isolated after Sabas's appointment. The decline and ultimate extinction of the number of anti-Chalcedonian holdouts in Palestine seems to have been unstoppable. Despite the embattled Emperor's Zeno's attempted patronage of Peter at the end of his *imperium*, Palestine was lost to the anti-Chalcedonians."

⁵⁹³ John of Beth-Aphthonia is the exception. We know little of him; he is not the "saint et vénérable archimandrite" John bar Aphthonia who rebuilt St. Thomas' monastery on the Euphrates or to whom Severus wrote, although the two are easily confused. His surviving work is a *Life of Severus*, written during the latter's patriarchate, which treats Palestine only insofar as it applies to the titular subject.

For John bar Aphthonia see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, viii.5b; and Jean de Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 257.

but they were comparatively few.⁵⁹⁴ His works illuminate his own victories and defeats, not Palestine's.

Zacharias Rhetor is a similar case. He was a native of the Gaza region, and maintained links to it as he grew older. Most of Zacharias' life, however, was spent elsewhere. Educated abroad, his subsequent career kept him from Palestine. Much of it was spent in Constantinople, enmeshed in the larger doings of the empire. A moderate anti-Chalcedonian, Zacharias tended to look approvingly at efforts toward compromise. He himself would reconcile later in life, ending his days as the Chalcedonian bishop of Mitylene.⁵⁹⁵

Zacharias' works reflect this experience: moderate and distant. His *Chronicle*, written in the 490s, is our best source for many Palestinian events in the decades following Chalcedon. The interpretation of those events, however, is filtered through Zacharias' own hopes and expectations. Martyrius' Second Union, for example, receives high marks in the *Chronicle*. Such was the view of a Constantinopolitan moderate looking for successful models of compromise. Yet this interpretation is disconnected from the reality experienced by the associates Zacharias had left behind. For the hard-line anti-Chalcedonians of Palestine, the Second Union was a disaster.

Zacharias' *Life of Severus* is a few steps further down this road. Composed during Severus' patriarchate, it is the product of an author caught up in high imperial and ecclesiastical politics. Severus' opponents had alleged a number of charges and slanders

⁵⁹⁴ For Severus' years in Palestine see Zacharias Rhetor, *Life of Severus*, 92-108; and John of Beth-Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*, 223-233.

⁵⁹⁵ For background on Zacharias see Honigmann, "Zacharias of Mitylene," in *Patristic Studies*, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), 194-204. See also Horn's introduction in Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 1-12; and Horn, *Asceticism*, 44-47.

aimed at the patriarch's younger days, intended to discredit and undermine Severus' efforts in Antioch and Constantinople. Zacharias was well-qualified to defend Severus against such charges, having been his friend at school.⁵⁹⁶ Zacharias' *Life of Severus*, then, is largely concerned with Severus' time as a student, his battles against paganism, and his later baptism. The latter part of the work covers the patriarch's early ascetic and diplomatic endeavors. Having fulfilled his purpose, Zacharias draws his work to a close before coming to Severus' patriarchate. The *Life* does cover Severus' time in the monasteries of eastern Palestine, but so as to reflect Zacharias' rather pointed purpose, not a local Palestinian perspective.

We must look to John Rufus to find the authentic expression of Palestinian anti-Chalcedonianism. Rufus left behind three texts: the *Life of Peter*, the *Death of Theodosius*, and the *Plerophoriae*.⁵⁹⁷ An aggressive, hard-line tone and rhetoric are maintained throughout this corpus. At first glance this might surprise: John is known to have had moderate friends like Zacharias. He had been part of Peter's network, and remained connected to Peter's "heirs" and the old Beirut law circle.

Yet Rufus had remained in Palestine.⁵⁹⁸ He was Peter's successor as bishop of Maiuma. Past a certain date, he was likely the remaining spiritual leader for the anti-Chalcedonian community. He inherited its problems, and the aftermath of the Second

⁵⁹⁶ Zacharias opens the life with a dialogue between himself and an unnamed interlocutor. The latter is troubled, having heard slanders against Severus' youth. In the text, Zacharias allows himself to be persuaded to respond to a *libellus* that was circulating these slanders: "But because you say that you are afraid that simple people might be injured by this booklet, I will tell about [Severus], for the sake of truth and your friendship! For I was with him from his early days, in Alexandria and in Phoenicia, listening to the same teachers and sharing the same life. Those of our fellow students who are still alive – which is quite a few – can confirm what is said." Zachariah of Mitylene, *Life of Severus*, 6.

⁵⁹⁷ For the background and dating of these texts, see Horn, *Asceticism*, 10-30 and Steppa, *Rufus*, 61-80.

⁵⁹⁸ For a discussion of Rufus' life, see Horn, *Asceticism*, 30-43 and Steppa, *Rufus*, 57-61.

Union hardened him. Left to manage the slow defeat, Rufus was insufficiently served by his allies. His, then, is the voice of embattled, isolated anti-Chalcedonian Palestine.

Rufus' use of that voice sheds a great deal of light on Cyril of Scythopolis. The question, "what is Rufus doing?" bears more than generic similarity to our earlier question, "what is Cyril doing?" The two authors share central themes and dilemmas. Both are constructing literary responses to defeat or loss. Both suffer a dearth of living holy men. Both are cut off from once-powerful networks. Perhaps most importantly, both have suffered defeat in the same socio-economic context. Each must struggle with degrees of proximity and separation from the holy sites when constructing their responses to defeat.

There the similarities end. Rufus' position is much worse. His burdens were different than Cyril's, and heavier. The weight of theological condemnation had removed many assets and resources from Rufus' reach, and transformed others into liabilities. Cyril would be able to construct his response very differently.

It is important to keep these comparisons in mind as we approach John Rufus' works. The two authors constructed seemingly unique responses to particular circumstances. Yet there is overlap in both elements. Examination of Rufus' works, therefore, aids in the analysis of Cyril's corpus. The latter likely had access to Rufus' texts, and the narrative method employed in the *Life of Peter* finds a ready imitator in the Judean hagiographer. Before moving to Cyril, however, we must examine John Rufus' problems, and the literary solutions he fashioned for them.

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Rufus' corpus bookended the anti-Chalcedonian collapse in western Palestine. His first two works, the *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius*, were written c. 500 to deal with internal strain and tension among his faithful. The years from 480 to 500 had been calm for the remaining anti-Chalcedonians of the region: they had mostly been left alone following their ejection from the Holy Land proper. Yet the astute Rufus could see problems bubbling below the surface, and crafted his two works in response.

Rufus wrote the *Plerophoriae* at the end of this period, perhaps as late as 518. By that point the issues were no longer below the surface: they had boiled over during Nephalius' revolt of 507-8. The situation was further exacerbated by the defection of Mamas and subsequent loss of the remaining anti-Chalcedonian monasteries. The remaining believers were in dire straits, and Rufus did his best to steer them through.

His literary gifts were on full display in both cases. Rufus' efforts were extraordinary: he pioneered two new genres in his attempts to stave off the erosion of his movement. His seeming failure should not overshadow his literary innovation, for his influence extended beyond his flock. While Rufus may not have approved of his literary descendents, it turns out that the methodological questions often directed toward Cyril might actually be better addressed to Rufus.

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By 500 A.D. the *détente* had held for twenty years. The loss of Jerusalem was two decades past, and the two factions had begun to intermingle in the absence of direct conflict. The long peace was sapping anti-Chalcedonian resolve. Pressure to assimilate was mounting, and the Holy Land itself was furthering the process of integration. The

anti-Chalcedonian flock in Palestine was bedeviled with pastoral problems that theological argument was impotent to solve. It was in such an environment that Bishop Rufus took up his pen, hoping to craft a radicalizing polemic designed to widen the closing gap between the parties.

The immediate threat to anti-Chalcedonian coherence was found in the faction's own monasteries. A lack of shared experience had created a fault line along a generational divide. The formative influences of the older and younger monks were markedly different. The elder had been forged by battle: most had lived through Peter the Iberian's spiritual guerilla campaign. Many could remember the loss of Jerusalem. Some had been present during the heady days of Gerontius, Romanus, and Theodosius. For them, the great Chalcedonian struggles were recent memory, not ancient history.

The younger generation bore no such battle scars. For those who had come from abroad, the loss of Jerusalem was an inherited irritant. The Holy City had drawn them to the region, and the inability to access it rankled. Participation in Chalcedonian liturgies at the holy sites could remove such roadblocks, and in this regard it was their own elders, not the Chalcedonians, who stood in their way. Locally raised monks, on the other hand, had grown up during the *détente*. Neither western Palestine nor Jerusalem had been a theological war zone in their lifetime. The local heroes who might have shaped these youths were gone: Peter and Isaiah to their graves, and Severus to Constantinople. To such monks, the struggles of the past were the stories of old men.

Nephalius would take advantage of this generational divide a few years later. After his arrival the younger monks rose up against their elders, thoroughly dispossessing them of their own institutions. So complete was this revolt that it would take the

intercession of Severus and the intervention of Emperor Anastasius to reinstall the elders in their monasteries. In 500 A.D. that conflict still lay in the future, but already Rufus could see the writing on the wall.

Rufus needed to tear down the newly-built bridges and re-ignite the fires of conflict.⁵⁹⁹ The past must be made present: the youth had to internalize the struggles of their elders.⁶⁰⁰ His solution was extraordinary: a polemical fusion of hagiography and historical narrative designed to re-antagonize the two factions. It was a unique framework, robust enough to support a spirituality meant to safeguard the movement for generations to come. The result of Rufus' innovation was the *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius*, two literary monuments to the relationship between Palestinian monks and their singular environment. In the pages of these works Rufus attempted to manipulate that relationship. He had three main tasks: to radicalize the younger monks and divide his people from their neighbors, to contextualize the loss of the Holy Land, and to construct a spirituality that could cope with that loss.

⁵⁹⁹ Horn argues that Rufus “composed his literary portrait of Peter the Iberian”... [for] “his fellow anti-Chalcedonian monks who had come to the Holy Land...” Horn, *Asceticism*, 399. Elsewhere, however, she seems open to the idea of an additional lay audience: John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, xix. She further argues that elements of the *Life of Peter* are “designed to create of Peter a character through whom Rufus inspires his readers to resist the pressure to enter into communion with the Chalcedonian establishment.” John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, xxxiii. Compare similar statements in Kofsky, “Peter the Iberian,” 210, 216ff. See also Steppa: “The harsh polemical tone is clearly the most important feature in John Rufus’ *Life of Peter the Iberian*.” Steppa ascribes similar divisive motives to the composition of the *Death of Theodosius*: “The immediate purpose of the *Commemoration of the Death of Theodosius* is to present, in the form of a short narrative, the importance of remaining steadfast in the orthodox faith until death.” Steppa, *John Rufus*, 70, 73.

⁶⁰⁰ The methodology of forming identity via interaction with a text will be explored in greater length over the next two chapters. In the interim, for the general theory see Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990) and Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). For a more particular application see Kim Haines-Eitzen, “Textual Communities in Late Antique Christianity,” in *The Companion to Late Antiquity*. Finally, for Horn’s argument that the *Life of Peter* was delivered to the monks as an oral address see her arguments in *Life of Peter*, 72n1, 82n3, 92n3, 257n5, and 270n1. Details of the memorials for Peter given at the monasteries (annual and otherwise) can be found in the *Life of Peter*, 177, 192 (259, 279-82).

The latter was no easy task. Rufus needed something strong enough to resist the cultural and spiritual gravity of nearby Jerusalem. His resultant blend of historiography and hagiography was designed to address these issues, to grapple with the particular problems of monks caught in Jerusalem's orbit. As such it warrants close examination, for if Rufus' approach was *sui generis*, Cyril's was not.

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Polemical language undergirds the whole of Rufus' literary structure. Its omnipresence is striking: Rufus frequently calls down God's judgment on persons and events, and his *ad hominem* attacks serve as the reader's constant companions. They are as consistently present here as they are noticeably absent in Zacharias' treatment of the same material.⁶⁰¹ Abstract targets hold small interest for Rufus: direct theological attacks rarely suit his purpose. Even impersonal objects like the Council and the Tome don't receive the full force of his ire.⁶⁰² When he does address them, it is usually to name them "evil," "wicked," or "ungodly," – a point we shall return to shortly.⁶⁰³

Rather than the events or documents of the Council, Rufus' true interest lies with the adherents thereto. His is a tale of heroes and villains, not the clash of opposing

⁶⁰¹ Zacharias generally prefers to contextualize Chalcedonians' behavior in a negative light rather than indulge in polemical or personal attacks. He extends this courtesy to Leo, Gennadius, Calendon, Marcian, and even Juvenal. Zacharias does, however, make two notable exceptions to this practice, which will be covered shortly.

For examples of Zacharias' usual methods in regard to the figures named above, see Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.1c (101-2), 3.3a-d (114-17), 4.10d (151), 4.11a (151), 5.5b (189), 5.9c (204), etc.

⁶⁰² Zacharias is more willing to attack the Tome, but usually prefers to do so through the inclusion of a document that disparages it. See Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 4.11b (152) and 5.2a-d (177-79).

Chalcedon itself is usually treated in similar fashion, save for in Zacharias' justification for his own work, in which he tells us that the Council "added evil upon evil, ... tore into myriad divisions the perfect robe of Christ..." etc. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.1a (97-8).

⁶⁰³ See, for example, John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 76 (111) and 87 (129).

theologies. His heroes are God's soldiers, earthly reflections of His divine light, caught up in a battle against the forces of darkness.⁶⁰⁴ His villains are blacker than pitch, for they willingly serve as the devil's agents in the world. Rufus' method is disarmingly simple: he seeks to radicalize his monks not through the deconstruction of an opposing idea, but through the literal demonization of the opposing party.⁶⁰⁵

For this reason Rufus uses his polemical brush to color even the minor figures of his narrative. Some of these are counterintuitive: Rufus' local focus sometimes causes him to abbreviate the role of certain international heavyweights. Even figures like Pope Leo and Patriarch Gennadius (of Constantinople) make only brief appearances. Rufus generally calls them onstage only long enough to condemn them, and always to further the narrative that Chalcedonians are demonically inspired. In a story about Timothy the

⁶⁰⁴ The *Life of Peter* and *Death of Theodosius* are hagiographies, and instances of such descriptions are too numerous to count. By way of example, in one passage Rufus praises two of his saints consecutively, illustrating their agency on God's behalf:

"When holy Timothy [the Cat] was already about to be sent again into exile a second [time] by imperial authority, God, the one who decides the contest of the saints and justly bestows crown[s] to those who fight on account of his name, saw that the high priest Timothy had finished his course and fought the good fight and kept the apostolic faith to the end without transgression, in much patience, in calamities, in persecutions, in deprivations, [and] in exiles, persevering until death. He transferred [Timothy] to the place of life reserved for him at a ripe old age, with glory and honor, on his throne with his flock...As soon as [Timothy] had finished his life, at that [very] moment when through the *quaestor* Martyrius the command arrived to go into exile, it brought everyone to amazement and glorification [of God], when they saw how [God] exerts great effort on account of those who love him, glorifying those who glorify him, and not allowing them to be tried more than what they are able to [bear].

Now when thus the heretics' error of the two natures had yet again entered the holy churches of God and Peter, the archbishop of Antioch, and Paul of Ephesus were cast into exile, the blessed Peter [the Iberian], dwelling in Palestine, was a support for everyone. In the likeness of the light of the sun he was enlightening the souls of the orthodox, not only those in Palestine but also in Egypt and everywhere else, for he did not allow them to be weary and depressed by the dark fog of ungodliness." John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 110-11 (163-5).

⁶⁰⁵ Steppa argues for the role of cosmological battle primarily in the *Plerophoriae*, but also in the *Life of Peter*: "The realism of the *Life* involves a highly mythological conception of a world characterized by the conflict between good and evil. The saintly protagonist stands in the center of a world constantly involved in a struggle between the powers of the material world and the heavenly realms. To the advocates of the orthodox faith are allotted the common attributes of blessedness and holiness in the panegyric style, while the enemies of faith are given imaginative portrayals, complete with attributes fetched from the darker side of nature." Steppa, *John Rufus*, 69ff.

Cat, for example, we find that: “After the blessed Timothy had remained in the episcopate for seven years, again an envious demon, not suffering to see the salvation of men, with anger stirred up bishops everywhere to evil and envious zeal, especially the one in Constantinople [Gennadius], and the one in Rome [Leo].”⁶⁰⁶ Small touches such as this are frequently used to provide the darker shades of Rufus’ narrative.

The brush-strokes grow heavier as Rufus draws closer to home. Calendion of Antioch suffers accordingly: “The church in Antioch had been delivered up to the foul name Calendion, a man who was a hard and rapacious wolf, who did not spare [his flock], and [who was] a zealot of the heresies that were [taught] in Chalcedon.”⁶⁰⁷ Proterius of Alexandria does far worse. He rates a notable place in Rufus’ pantheon of villains. Rufus calls him a “rebel,”⁶⁰⁸ “wicked,”⁶⁰⁹ and “God-fighting.”⁶¹⁰ So treacherous was he, Rufus informs us, that he was wont to publish under the name of Peter the Iberian. In one such work, “[Proterius] deceitfully and covertly recounted...the evil of the Council of Chalcedon with the slyness of great hypocrisy, mixing poison with honey.”⁶¹¹ Such evil did not go unnoticed, and at one point the hatred of the Alexandrines for Proterius grew so hot that, “moved by a divine power,” they began to cry:

May the bones of Proterius be burnt! Drive Judas [=Proterius] into exile! Cast Judas out! Other voices joined in, demanding [Dioscorus’ return]...and that the wolf [=Proterius], ravenous and contending against God, the new Caiaphas, should be cast out and utterly driven away from the holy churches...⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁶ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 97 (145).

⁶⁰⁷ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 83 (125).

⁶⁰⁸ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 82 (123).

⁶⁰⁹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 85 (127), 87 (129).

⁶¹⁰ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 87 (129).

⁶¹¹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 87 (129).

⁶¹² John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 83 (125).

Several common themes emerge from this passage. God's inspiration of his people is one. The presentation of the Chalcedonian Proterius as a rebel and Judas figure is indicative of another. Rufus would revisit this trope often, usually to highlight the Chalcedonian tie to the devil, presented as the prince of rebels.

Rufus found other uses for his hatred of Proterius.⁶¹³ The latter served as a paradigmatic Chalcedonian patriarch, a paradigm readers were meant to superimpose on Proterius' contemporary equivalents. This image of Proterius helped readers understand that they were caught up in a historical struggle between good and evil. It also revealed that the heroes of the Chalcedonian tradition were actually villains, oppressors and persecutors of the godly:

Yet this hard and bloodthirsty wolf Proterius was exulting and raving with great joy and cheerfulness as one who now had firm and undisturbed governorship [Dioscorus having died]. Henceforth he exhibited harsh and evil treatment to those laypeople and monks who were not in communion with him. He bought the magistrates and through them brought all kinds of insults and intolerable sorrows upon the orthodox [i.e., the anti-Chalcedonians], bringing into the city multitudes of wild barbarian soldiers. He inflicted without pity unrepeatable evils, both full of a myriad of lamentations and against the laws of nature, until he had extended his madness even to the holy virgins. Yet the just, powerful, and longsuffering Judge was no longer willing to continue suffering such evils.⁶¹⁴

Here as elsewhere, God's intervention provides a literary orientation between good and evil. This narrative of divine intervention also enabled the contextualization of Proterius' murder:

When Proterius departed with the soldiers, one of them became moved with zeal and killed him...When this happened all the laypeople and soldiers immediately fled, [and] he was left cast down on the street, like a pig or dog, those [animals] like which he had become in his manners and in his mad passion, when he had drawn destruction upon himself. The [events], indeed, that then took place [and]

⁶¹³ Said hatred may have resulted from Proterius' decision to have Peter the Iberian assassinated. John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 97 (145).

⁶¹⁴ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 90 (133-35).

that are thoroughly inappropriate for an audience of the God-fearing, we leave for others to tell and write. For even if he deserved what he suffered, it is not proper for us to hear things of this sort or to repeat [them]. Nevertheless, we shall see that the divine Word was fulfilled concerning him, as it is written, ‘Evil shall hunt the unjust to [his] destruction,’ and this [word], ‘You humbled the boastful ones like the ones who have been slain,’ and ‘The Lord makes war against the boastful ones,’ and ‘The wicked one is kept for the day of his slaughter.’⁶¹⁵

This framework enabled Rufus to transform violence, murder, and “zeal” into God’s just judgment. Zeal is a major positive theme in the *Life of Peter* and *Death of Theodosius*, employed more than fifty times to favorably contextualize the actions of Rufus’ heroes and partisans.⁶¹⁶ The trope served another purpose as well: if readers internalized zeal as a component of anti-Chalcedonian identity, they might be stirred to it themselves.

Murder could therefore be seen as a possible instrument for God’s will. Rufus’ smugness on that score is palpable, but the rhetorical device he employed to put himself above the fray seems to have failed. He claimed to be content to leave the unfortunate (albeit deserved) aftermath for others to discuss, deeming it unsuitable for pious ears. Perhaps he was relying on the account of his friend Zacharias, already extant and presumably accessible.⁶¹⁷ It seems such allusions failed to pique his readers’ interest, however: Rufus would feel the need to discuss such events himself eighteen years later.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 95 (144-45).

⁶¹⁶ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 17n9.

⁶¹⁷ Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 4.2ff (136ff). Proterius is the other subject that caused Zacharias to abandon his moderation and reserve. He preceded Rufus in his use of epithets like “Judas” and “wolf,” stating that Proterius was “a betrayer, like Judas [the betrayer of] his Lord, and like Absalom [who betrayed] his father [David], and he showed himself to be a rapacious wolf among the flock.” Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.2a (113).

Again anticipating Rufus, Zacharias was happy to recount Proterius’s dirty deeds and nefarious theology, together with the people’s attendant hatred for him. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 3.2a-b (113-14), 3.10a-b (124-25), 3.11a (125-26). Even here, however, he stopped short of Rufus’ polemical heights. Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 4.2a (136). He would also relate the account more dispassionately later in his narrative.

⁶¹⁸ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 7, 34 (19, 77-8).

The supernatural battle between saints and rebels reaches its apex in Rufus' treatment of Marcian. His was the blackest name of all: Marcian was the architect of Chalcedon, the engineer of Theodosius' fall, and the power behind Proterius' infamous reign. Rufus signposted Marcian's dark affiliation in the usual ways, naming him "God-hating"⁶¹⁹ and "fighting against God."⁶²⁰ Yet these tags would not be sufficient. Surely the Chalcedonian emperor had been the ranking piece on the devil's board. Rufus could not portray him as less than an archfiend, lest he undermine his own narrative.

Rufus therefore elevates Marcian to a higher plane of spiritual warfare. The devil, it would appear, acted through Marcian directly:

[Peter the Iberian] stayed in his holy church for a time of about six months, while everyone was feasting and leaping for joy and calling the inhabitants of the city of Maiuma blessed because of the good pleasure of God and the protecting care of such a high priest. They were holding him up like an angel and were hanging on his compassion and on his love. [But] the devil, [who] fights against God and is envious, that first rebel and advisor and patron of rebels, because he could not endure to see such great praise of God and the salvation of humans because he was afraid that perhaps there would be a reversal [of the deed] that [his] diligence had contrived in writing at Chalcedon against the fear of God, entered the emperor who at that time was ruling and [who] readily listened to his commands. He made [Marcian] [issue] an imperial decree to the holy and true high priests, [those] zealous for the fear of God who had been appointed by Theodosius, the great and apostolic high priest, [that] they should be removed from their thrones in all the cities of Palestine and if they were unwilling they would be expelled by force and be subject to punishment, whereas Theodosius, the head of the shepherds, where[ever] he be found, should suffer capital punishment, since the emperor issued what is called a *forma* against him.⁶²¹

Marcian, then, was the devil's conscious and willing collaborator. Two other elements of this passage are important going forward: that the devil was behind the loss of Jerusalem,

⁶¹⁹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 88 (131).

⁶²⁰ John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 8 (295).

⁶²¹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 81 (121-3).

and that Theodosius was the true successor to the apostle James. Both of these would be used by Rufus to contextualize the loss of the Holy City.

Perhaps it was the devil's use of Marcian that prompted God to take greater interest in the evil emperor. Regardless, Rufus depicts Marcian as part of a direct proxy war between God and the devil. Marcian might have been "fighting against God," but God was indeed fighting back:

Marcian, indeed fighting against God, imprisoned the blessed [Romanus in the city of Antioch]... [Marcian] expected that the mighty soldier of Christ, the blessed Romanus, would either be persuaded and perverted by the heretics or be in danger and perish. But the one who frustrates the clever plans of the wise, the one who fights on behalf of all those who hope in him, turned [Marcian's] assault to the contrary. He gave his servant such grace, wisdom, and strength that [Romanus] caused many of the heterodox, changing and arousing [them] from [their] ungodliness, to return to the fear of God and made [them] zealous for the orthodox faith...⁶²²

God intervenes against Marcian in a way that pushes the limit of his regular involvement in the struggle. Still, this scene is a difference in degree from the other divine interventions that Rufus describes. It is not a difference in kind. The story of Marcian's death, however is another matter. Rufus relates the event in both works. The shorter account, found in the *Death of Theodosius*, holds that: "At this time it happened that Marcian died, since the Lord struck him."⁶²³ The longer version in the *Life of Peter* is more elaborative:

He, the Lord, who strikes and heals and chastises and cures, was aroused like one from sleep, who flashed his spear and with it killed the winding dragon, - I am speaking of Marcian, the new Assyrian. An angel struck him on his neck [with] an incurable blow as with a sword, as those who saw [it] with their eyes and were assured [of it] bore witness.⁶²⁴

⁶²² John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 8 (295-97).

⁶²³ John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 6 (291).

⁶²⁴ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 90 (133-35).

Proterius and others were killed through divinely-inspired human agency. Not so Marcian. The Chalcedonian emperor warranted a personal visit from God's avenging angel. Most immediately the angelic attack was retribution for Marcian's support of Proterius. In a larger sense, however, it was tied to Marcian's support of Juvenal.

Each of Rufus' polemical targets served a specific purpose. The righteous fury he unleashed against the "rapacious wolf" Proterius facilitated the justification of radical anti-Chalcedonian zeal, even to the point of murder. His depiction of Marcian as a demonic collaborator enabled a narrative of high spiritual warfare that also began to account for the loss of Jerusalem. Juvenal occupies a different niche: traitor. More than Proterius, Juvenal fills in for Judas in Rufus' narrative. The image makes for a carefully constructed parallel: Marcian stands in for the devil, Juvenal for Judas, and Theodosius for Christ.

Rufus takes his time in constructing this interpretation. He begins long before his account of Juvenal's treachery at Chalcedon. Antagonism against Juvenal is used to establish Gerontius' holiness directly before the latter bestows the habit on Peter the Iberian and his companion. Rufus tells us that Gerontius ended his life well, and became a confessor in the time following Juvenal's return, even though he could have opted out:

Although [Gerontius] often was urged by rulers and by many illustrious persons to consent merely to speak with Juvenal the apostate even if he would not communicate with him, and [so] be relieved from [his] distress, he never once consented, but said, "The Lord forbid that I should see the face of Judas the betrayer!"⁶²⁵

⁶²⁵ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 47 (63-65).

Here too Rufus for the first time joins the Judas image to that of the apostate. He frequently plays on the similarity of the names Juvenal and Julian in order to transfer the latter's negative connotation.⁶²⁶ This association allowed Rufus to create a pre-emptive narrative of Juvenal's illegitimacy.

This idea of the need to be "worthy of the episcopacy"⁶²⁷ first finds expression in the story of Peter's ordination to the priesthood. God protected Peter from Juvenal's attempts to ordain him, even going so far as to warn Peter in a dream when Juvenal was about to force the issue.⁶²⁸ When Juvenal's nephew succeeds in tricking Peter into ordination shortly thereafter, Rufus is quick to inform us that Peter does not consider himself ordained.⁶²⁹ In the account of Juvenal's betrayal Rufus states that the newly-minted Chalcedonian was merely "called high priest of Jerusalem."⁶³⁰

Juvenal's treachery costs him not only the validity of Peter's ordination, but also the validity of his own. Yet Rufus is not looking to leave a vacuum at the position. Here we find the nascent Donatism that would come to maturity Rufus' later writings: validity is transferred to Theodosius, the "new James," whose commemoration date he happily shares.⁶³¹ Theodosius, of course, would in Rufus' account ultimately be handed over to torture and death. While spiritual victory would belong to Theodosius, however, the earthly Jerusalem was lost to the anti-Chalcedonian faithful in the process.

⁶²⁶ See Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 76 (109-11) and 100 (151), and *Death of Theodosius* 2 (293) and 9 (297). See also Horn's commentary at 150 n4, 292 n4, and especially 64 n4.

⁶²⁷ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 72 (103). See also 103 n11, in which Horn discusses how this positive description of Peter is being used as a veiled attack on Juvenal.

⁶²⁸ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 74 (105-7).

⁶²⁹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 75 (107).

⁶³⁰ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 76 (109).

⁶³¹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 131 (S. 88), and *Death of Theodosius* 293-95 (S. 7). See also Horn's commentary on Rufus' use of this motive at 292n1 and 2, and in Horn, *Asceticism*, 188-96.

Yet this narrative would allow Rufus to craft and cement a claim to Jerusalem. The claim was meant to transform longing to anger, to tell the younger monks that it was not their elders who were responsible for their inability to visit Jerusalem. Rather, it was the evil Chalcedonians who had taken the Holy City from its rightful inheritors. One should not be fooled by the Chalcedonians' physical possession of Jerusalem and attendant spiritual prestige. The anti-Chalcedonians were the true, spiritual possessors of the city, the true Jerusalemites in exile.⁶³² Longing for Jerusalem should therefore manifest as greater loyalty, attachment, and zeal for the cause.

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The circumstances of Jerusalem's loss and the issue of its possession had been dealt with via polemical narrative. The spiritual difficulties resulting from that loss had not. The gravity of the Holy City continued to be a force for integration in Rufus' time. Those who visited the holy places or traversed the pilgrimage routes were forced to thoroughly intermingle with Chalcedonians. Jerusalem built Chalcedonian bridges, as pilgrims were obliged to travel, eat, and sleep together. Furthermore, anti-Chalcedonians who visited the holy places were subject to Chalcedonian liturgies, and tempted to partake of Chalcedonian communion. Possession of Jerusalem was a tremendous asset to the Chalcedonians, granting them both spiritual legitimacy and a form of soft power.⁶³³ This situation led to what scholars have termed a "difficult position," a "particular

⁶³² Flusin found this claim convincing: Bernard Flusin, "L'Hagiographie Palestinienne et la Réception du Concile de Chalcédoine," in *AEIMΩN: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* 6 (Uppsala: University Press, 1996), 37-8.

⁶³³ For the uses to which the possessors of the Holy City could put that possession, see Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian," 218 and Horn, *Asceticism*, 311-31.

dilemma,” and a set of “special problems:”⁶³⁴ anti-Chalcedonian travelers to Jerusalem were compelled to make a choice between purity and pilgrimage.⁶³⁵

Rufus crafts his solution through two key anecdotes. In the first we find Peter and his disciples making a pilgrimage to Mount Nebo.⁶³⁶ Over the course of the visit Peter and his companions behave in the manner expected of pilgrims, thereby affirming that under certain conditions physical pilgrimage to holy sites was a positive good.⁶³⁷ The site was both the burial place of Moses and the former home of a famous ascetic, and Peter venerated both aspects during his pilgrimage there.⁶³⁸ Through this tale of Peter’s journeys – for which Rufus claims to have been present – Rufus comforts his readers, letting them know that pilgrimage is not an unacceptable practice. At the same time, however, he sets up the idea that it may become unacceptable under certain conditions. In this passage Rufus lays the foundation for what is to come: his assertion that holy places, while retaining their holiness – can be stained by Chalcedonian taint to a point at which they can no longer be visited in person.

In the second anecdote Rufus resolves the dilemma he set up earlier. There was a way to venerate the holy sites while not patronizing Chalcedonian institutions,

⁶³⁴ Horn, *Asceticism*, 322 and Kofsky, “Peter the Iberian,” 210.

⁶³⁵ “Anti-Chalcedonian attachment to holy places under Chalcedonian domination might lead to cooperation and a certain level of communion with Chalcedonians, their archenemies. The sincere anti-Chalcedonian living at a holy place had to choose between giving up his or her veneration of the holy place or accepting to share liturgical space and thus not being able to completely break communion with Chalcedonians in order to continue venerating at the holy places.” Horn, *Asceticism*, 322.

⁶³⁶ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 169-81 (S. 114-22).

⁶³⁷ “Here, we encounter Peter and his circle participating in an act of pilgrimage with all its paraphernalia, without any signs of reservation. This may be explained by the fact that the area was not specifically identified as being under heterodox Chalcedonians, and it may further indicate that the new sensitivity towards the holy places and pilgrimage, focused on the Chalcedonian domination and had not become opposition to pilgrimage as a principle.” Kofsky, “Peter the Iberian,” 220.

⁶³⁸ For the different elements of holy space on Mount Nebo see Horn, *Asceticism*, 309.

participating in Chalcedonian liturgies, partaking of Chalcedonian communion, or even mingling with Chalcedonians at all: spiritual pilgrimage. Rufus unpacked his remarkable solution through a lengthy account of Peter the Iberian's prototypical example. The narrative opens with the grumbling of Peter's disciples, here standing in for the concerns of Rufus' readers:

After these [things], when the time after summer arrived, the blessed one returned to the brethren in the plain. When he went, some were indignant in their soul and said, "How, when he abode all these days beside Jerusalem, did the blessed one not desire greatly to enter the Holy City, even if by night, and venerate the worshipful places, and especially the holy Golgotha and the life-giving tomb?"⁶³⁹

Here the central question is addressed directly: how can one possibly not desire to visit the holy places when they are close at hand? It could well be argued – and probably was – that the innate holiness of the sites made intermingling palatable, perhaps as a lesser evil. Yet Rufus, aware of the dangers of such intermingling, had an answer ready to hand. Perhaps seeking to bolster the authority of that answer, Rufus declined to give the response to Peter, whom he spares the need to reply. Rather than codify the solution on the level of saintly teaching, Rufus elevated it to the realm of divine revelation:

The day after [Peter's] departure, one of the brethren who was very simple and innocent came and said to them, "I saw a fearful vision this night. For it seemed to me that I was seeing Abba Peter the bishop, who was saying to me, 'Can you give me a hand, brother?' When he alone took me in this vision to the Holy City, in the same night in which he was about to depart, he first entered the *martyrion* of the holy Stephen, upon which he happened [to come] first. And when he went down to the cave, he venerated [Stephen's] sarcophagus. And when he went out from there, he ran to the holy Golgotha and the holy Tomb. And from there he went down to the church that is called [that] of Pilate and from there to that of the Paralytic. And after this, to Gethsemane. When he had gone around also in the holy places that [are in] its surroundings, after this he went up to the Upper Room of the disciples, and afterwards to the holy Ascension, and from there to the house of Lazarus. Next he came onto the road bringing [him] from there until he arrived at the holy Bethlehem. When he had prayed there, he turned [back] toward

⁶³⁹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 134 (195).

Rachel's Tomb. And when he had prayed there and in the rest of the temples and houses of prayer on the road, he went down to [the Church of] Shiloah. From there, after he had gone up to holy Zion and had completed a holy course and had worshipped the Lord in every place, finally he returned to the village of Beth Tafsha, while I, indeed, in every place was supporting him. On the very next day, [after the one on] which I had seen that vision, the Abba returned to his journey. This, however, was done so that those who were indignant might be instructed that the blessed one was offering in every holy place every day, undoubtedly also at every hour, worship to the Lord in [his] spirit. For it is written, "The spiritual one judges everything. He himself, however, is not judged by anyone."⁶⁴⁰

The seemingly tedious level of detail in this account serves a purpose: it illustrates that Peter "completed a holy course," that is, performed the entire pilgrimage circuit. The whole range of Holy Land pilgrimage is thus affirmed to be an acceptable practice open to the anti-Chalcedonian faithful. Believers can complete the course exactly as before, but in spirit rather than in person. The spiritual benefit, however, is still gleaned. What is more, everyone can do this. It wasn't only Peter performing this spiritual act, but the brother also.⁶⁴¹ Having established the new position,⁶⁴² Rufus was equally keen to make sure of its reception. It wasn't enough for his readers to internalize the narrative and solution; they had to internalize the proper response:

When that brother had told these [things], those [brethren] fell down upon their faces and worshipped the Lord. They glorified his unspeakable compassion for humanity and his grace, how he did not leave the doubt that was in them without instruction, not even for a short time, and how those saints, being clad with Christ and living with him and in him, in every place are near [to him] in spirit and are offering to him everywhere rational service and worship, even if they seem to be far away in body. Making this known, Paul said, "For I, being yet far away in body, but being near in spirit, have already pronounced judgment as [though] I were near, while you and my spirit are gathered together in the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ." And again, "For even if I am far away in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, rejoicing and rejoicing together [with you] because I am seeing your [good] order."⁶⁴³

⁶⁴⁰ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 134 (198-99).

⁶⁴¹ Horn, *Asceticism*, 323.

⁶⁴² Pace Kofsky (220-21) but *contra* Horn, who argues that the innovation was Peter's, not Rufus'. Horn, *Asceticism*, 254, 323.

⁶⁴³ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 135 (199).

The pedigree of Rufus' answer is established through saintly behavior, divine revelation, and scriptural affirmation. The possible objections of the reader are pre-emptively satisfied through God's response to the grumblings of Peter's disciples. Here is a detailed answer to the anti-Chalcedonian dilemma. Yet this is only the first half of Rufus' solution.

Polemic had enabled the narrative of loss which in turn allowed Rufus to construct a new response to the pilgrimage problem. The true spiritual possessors of the Holy City could visit it spiritually. The prestige and soft power granted by physical possession of the sites was – theoretically – undermined.⁶⁴⁴ Spiritual pilgrimage and the endorsement of neutral sites like Mount Nebo made for a good start.

They did not, however, solve Rufus' problems by themselves. Palestine was a land of sacred space, and the vast majority of it was in the hands of the Chalcedonians. It was imperative that Rufus make the anti-Chalcedonian faithful aware of a legitimate alternative. Historical narrative had enabled Rufus to tear the Chalcedonians down; now hagiography could be used to lift anti-Chalcedonian heroes up. These were, in the eyes of Rufus and others, martyrs and confessors for Christ. They had endured persecution at the hands of unbelievers, as had the martyrs of old. The latter were omnipresent: the landscape of late antique Christianity was replete with the relics of such saints. It was Rufus' task to add the anti-Chalcedonian saints to their roll. To do so, he had to bring together the intercession of the saint and the sacred space of the holy site. It would be a Palestinian answer to a Palestinian problem.

⁶⁴⁴ Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian," 221.

Rufus established the importance of relics and *martyria* early on in the *Life of Peter*. Near the beginning of his account we find Peter and his companion John taking the relics of Persian martyrs with them when they fled the imperial court. Cyril of Alexandria arrived soon after to consecrate the *martyrion* of St. Stephen's, and Melania prevailed upon him to conduct another ceremony. That was the consecration of Melania's own *martyrion*, at which the relics in Peter's possession were interred alongside Melania's relics of the Martyrs of Sebaste.⁶⁴⁵

Later in the text a group of martyrs appear to a humble gardener, informing him that their relics were buried nearby. They instructed the man to find Peter the Iberian, dig up the relics, and give them to Peter. The latter was despondent at the news, and wept over both his unworthiness and inability to carry out this task:

Who am I, I the unworthy and first of sinners that the saints should show such love to me? Or how can I receive them and carry them around with me, when I am a stranger and a foreigner and do not have a single place in which I could lay them and honor them as they deserve?⁶⁴⁶

God reassured Peter of his worthiness, and the saint soon regained his composure. The proper answer quickly became apparent to him, and he relayed it to the gardener:

Do what I tell you, for I am doing all these [things] for the honor of the saints. Since I am a stranger, as you see, and am moving about from place to place, I cannot bear them and carry them around to the saints. But go, make these [things] known to the bishop of the town! For he is a pure [man], and knows how to honor them as they deserve and [how to] perform their deposition.⁶⁴⁷

The need to deposit the relics in a fixed place trumped Peter's desire to possess them. So great was it that they were delivered up to the local bishop who was, in fact,

⁶⁴⁵ See chapter one.

⁶⁴⁶ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 144 (213).

⁶⁴⁷ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 145 (215).

Chalcedonian – one of the rare good ones, apparently. It was imperative that the relics be properly housed so that veneration and proper liturgies could take place in the sacred space of a *martyrion*. Horn has identified this story, together with the anecdote of Peter’s pilgrimage at Mt. Nebo, as indicative of Rufus’ desire to highlight the creation of sacred space through the presence of a holy person (or their relics).⁶⁴⁸ While these relics were added to an already existent *martyrion*, however, Rufus laid great stress on the process and purpose of the ceremony. A great crowd took part as the relics were laid down alongside those that were already “venerated and honored there.”⁶⁴⁹ Peter and his companions also partook of the blessings to be had from both the reliquary itself and the blessed soil in which the martyrs’ bones had been found.

Such anecdotes served to reinforce the veneration of holy relics and sites among the anti-Chalcedonian faithful. Rufus was clearly indicating that sites not in Chalcedonian hands – or that were in the hands of very moderate Chalcedonians – could be accessed as before. The Chalcedonian taint made the remaining sites dangerous to the anti-Chalcedonian believer. Spiritual pilgrimage could defuse that danger while still allowing the faithful to access the powerful intercessory efficacy of the holy places.

This strategy shielded Rufus from the need to condemn the holy sites altogether. Yet while his flock was thus guarded from a corrupting Chalcedonian influence, the lack of a negative did not make for a positive. The anti-Chalcedonian pilgrims would still not be subject to a formative anti-Chalcedonian culture. Such sites as they could visit were not surrounded by anti-Chalcedonian clergy and liturgies. Rufus needed to do more.

⁶⁴⁸ Especially at Horn, *Asceticism*, 307.

⁶⁴⁹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 145 (215).

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Rufus could not use existing relics and *martyria* to steady the wavering faith of his people. Yet perhaps he did not need to. A host of anti-Chalcedonian holy men, confessors, and martyrs had emerged from the conflicts over Chalcedon. The remains and relics of such heroes were close to hand, already embedded in local anti-Chalcedonian monasteries. In Rufus' presentation the remains of saints created sacred space *ipso facto*. Here, then, was all that an anti-Chalcedonian needed: a saint to emulate and call upon, a holy place to visit, and relics to venerate. It remained for Rufus to inform or remind his flock that such blessings could be found in a thoroughly anti-Chalcedonian environment.

He needed to begin by re-establishing the sanctity and *parrhesia* of the anti-Chalcedonian saints. This was true across the board: Rufus invested significant time and effort to build up Theodosius and Romanus. He took care also to establish a link between Romanus' burial place and that of Moses at Mt. Nebo.⁶⁵⁰ Yet it was Peter whose disciple Rufus had been, and it was Peter upon whom he would dwell most fully. The *Life of Peter* is replete with the expected anecdotes unpacking Peter's *παρρησία* before God.⁶⁵¹ Rufus was also at pains to provide accounts of the efficacy of Peter's intercessions before God, such as this early one from his time with John the Eunuch:

Once when the blessed John had fallen sick with a severe infirmity, so that [all hope] concerning him was lost, Abba Peter was very despondent and did not cease making supplication to the Lord on behalf of his recovery. [Then] a voice came to him saying "Take heart! Behold, I shall grant him recovery because of

⁶⁵⁰ John Rufus, *Death of Theodosius*, 10 (299-301).

⁶⁵¹ These appear throughout. See especially Horn's commentary at John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 218n1 and 299n10, where she unpacks Rufus' use of the familiar "Jesus" to demonstrate the close relationship of the anti-Chalcedonian saints (especially Peter) to Christ.

your request I am adding twelve more years to his life.” So it happened. Following [this there occurred another] wonder. When he recovered his health and began to grow strong, his body began to husk off thick scales from his [toe-]nails to his neck. When they were all distressed that perhaps, if this scaling should continue, it would also spoil his face, again Abba Peter made supplication and prayed, [and] thus the affliction did not spread beyond his neck. When he was healed, his body and flesh were like that of a newborn infant...⁶⁵²

Clearly indicative as they were, such signposts would not be sufficient in themselves. It was necessary to demonstrate that this efficacy did not stop with Peter’s death. Rufus began to signal Peter’s place in heaven among the saints even before the latter’s death, through a vision granted to one of his companions:

Since [Peter] was about to surrender his spirit in this very night, Athanasius, the Egyptian priest of whom we made mention above, saw a vision like this: a great church, full of light and much glory; and an assembly of many saints; and the body of the blessed one laid out in [its] midst; the martyr Peter, archbishop of Alexandria standing on a high *bema* and wearing, indeed, some white and splendidly shining vestment and in a loud voice delivering a homily of eulogies about the blessed Peter, while all those saints together were listening and were praising him together in great joy and exultation. From this we understood that the end of the blessed one would be taking place on that same day...⁶⁵³

The aftermath of Peter’s death was a frantic affair. His disciples and “heirs” hastened to get the body back to Peter’s own monastery before others might take it for themselves.⁶⁵⁴

They made a successful getaway under cover of darkness and headed for Peter’s monastery in Maiuma. They buried him the same night, laying the body to rest between the sarcophagi of John the Eunuch and Abba Abraham, according to Peter’s instructions.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 60 (87).

⁶⁵³ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 180 (263).

⁶⁵⁴ “For they were afraid that, if the inhabitants of the city would hear [about it] ahead of time, they would come at a run and take his holy body by force and lay it in one of the temples in these cities because of the great faith and love they had for him.” John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 183 ff (267ff). Later in the passage Rufus expresses an additional fear: that the Chalcedonians might obtain Peter’s body.

⁶⁵⁵ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 188 (273).

The regrettably clandestine burial had been necessary, for the need to protect the body had not abated. The local populace also desired to possess Peter's body, or at least his vestments.⁶⁵⁶ It was necessary to get Peter in the tomb before they could take him by force. Their arrival the following morning came too late to realize their desires. Rufus, however, quickly puts their frustrated hopes to good use. The reaction of the people affirms Peter's sanctity, which in turn instantly transforms the monastery into a holy site: "But when [the people] found they had buried [Peter], they fell down and [performed acts of] veneration at his holy sarcophagus."⁶⁵⁷ The relics of a holy man had created a holy site *de facto*. Rufus probably embellished this event, and certainly capitalized on it. Yet it appears he was not the first to recognize its significance: Peter's "heirs" were a step ahead of him on that score.

Rufus tells us that the monastery was small at that time, lacking facilities to house more than the thirty monks who lived there.⁶⁵⁸ The heirs, however, had big plans for the place. They intended to build a great monastery around Peter's body. They must have felt the time was ripe, for they began immediately after Peter's Trisagion memorial, only forty days after his death. Yet they quickly hit a snag: the monastery had neither capital nor income for such an undertaking. Peter, Rufus states, had given away the monastery's money to the poor. Furthermore, he informs us, the labor of the monks produced no

⁶⁵⁶ "When it was morning and [the news of] the departure of the blessed one and the burial of his body was heard by the inhabitants of Maiuma and Gaza, all of them together with their wives and their children ran to the monastery, anxious to take his holy body by force, and if they were not allowed to do this, at least to tear asunder and distribute the long outer garment that was lying upon him, [so that] this should be for them a guardian of [their] souls and bodies and a great blessing." John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 189 (275). The patriarch's guards forcibly dispersed a crowd attempting the same with the body of Theodosius forty years later. See chapter six.

⁶⁵⁷ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 189 (275).

⁶⁵⁸ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 191 (277).

income because their task had been to care for Peter's many visitors.⁶⁵⁹ The heirs had only one resource to hand. They had their saint, both his body and his heavenly intercession. Relying on God and strengthened by Peter's prayers, the heirs began to implement their grand plan. Led by Theodore of Ashkelon, one of the heirs, they began an impressively extensive renovation. In short order there stood a tower, a church, many new cells, porticos, pillars, a courtyard and a well, together with an inner and outer wall.⁶⁶⁰

The reinstallation of Peter's remains was the piece de resistance. In this matter the needs of the monastery were deemed to supersede the wishes of the saint: "When [Theodore] had finished the construction of the building and they had decorated the house of prayer, they dug a place of reverence under the altar and transferred to there the body of the saint during the following year, one day before the anniversary of his departure."⁶⁶¹ The saint was now incarnate in his monastery, but this may not have been the grand solution the heirs had intended. Perhaps entombing Peter under the altar had been a mistake. Doing so had hidden the tomb from view, transforming it in the process. What had been a visible focus for veneration and supplication was now a liturgical object. Two unintended consequences resulted.

First, it disincentivized pilgrimage. True, Moses had been entombed thus at Mount Nebo, but Peter was not Moses. He was a local saint, and lacked the biblical patriarch's scriptural pedigree and prestige. The lack of a visible tomb made a side trip from Jerusalem to Maiuma less attractive, and it was already quite a journey: a hundred

⁶⁵⁹ A claim made dubious by Peter's peripatetic lifestyle.

⁶⁶⁰ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 191 (277). See also Horn 206ff.

⁶⁶¹ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 191 (277-79).

mile round trip. Nebo, by contrast, was only twelve miles from the Holy City – and in the other direction. A feedback loop resulted: without pilgrims to spread Peter’s fame, he was likely to remain a local saint. Perhaps the heirs should have respected the saint’s wishes after all. If so, this was not a mistake the Judeans would repeat.

Overcoming this difficulty was not Rufus’ direct aim. Yet the issue surely added to his problem, for the second consequence was internal: if people were not coming to see Peter, the saint was likely diminished in the eyes of his monks. This state of affairs served to intensify Rufus’ need to reintroduce the younger monks to their patron, and to remind them of his miraculous presence in their monastery.

Rufus made sure that the monks did not miss this important point, reminding them of Peter’s presence and patronage. Through Peter’s mouth, Rufus had already instructed the monks not to seek *παρρησία* themselves.⁶⁶² Now he would provide them the positive alternative, highlighting Peter’s demonstrable presence and efficacy within their own walls:

Although the blessed one had his body laid here, he had [a] dwelling in the heavenly mansions, standing in the spirit before the Lord and serving him with all the saints. There he was offering petitions and prayers and supplications for us with much freedom [of speech (= *parrhesia*)], frequently visiting the brotherhood and protecting and inspiring and guiding [them] and for the most part was singing together with them. To some he appeared personally, both healing the sick and comforting and strengthening those who in sincerity of faith and in purity of [their] ways of life went on the straight [path] and were esteemed worthy to be in such converse with the saints.⁶⁶³

Given his audience and motive, it is telling that Rufus felt the need to remind the monks of Peter’s numerous appearances. The saint had only been in the ground ten years; surely

⁶⁶² John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 179 (261), and esp. 260 n6.

⁶⁶³ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 192 (279).

his frequent manifestations should have been the talk of the monastery. Sixty years later Cyril would tell an external audience of miraculous appearances in his monasteries.

Rufus, on the other hand, was writing to the monks themselves. His need to provide such instruction seems to contradict the passage itself.

In her commentary on this section Cornelia Horn noted that: “Rufus presents Peter here as the ideal intercessor who has found unlimited access to God but who at the same time stayed intimately close to and involved in the community and its affairs.”⁶⁶⁴ The need for such a presentation, coupled with the lack of specific details, helps to illuminate Rufus’ situation. He was trying to reinforce in writing a system that had foundered in practice, interweaving it into a spirituality that could cope with the loss of Jerusalem. Should individual monks object that they had not seen Peter, moreover, Rufus had an answer ready to hand: perhaps they had not been “esteemed worthy to be in such converse with the saints.”

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The influence of the Holy Land was a major problem for Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians during the long *détente*. True, Rufus’ flock was far enough away from Jerusalem to escape its socio-economic pressure. Rufus did not suffer from Cyril’s problems in this regard. He could still count on a semi-stable lay network to support his church. Yet the Holy Land still dominated his people as a spiritual reality, and that reality was slowly robbing his monks of their dedication to the cause.

⁶⁶⁴ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 278 n2.

The *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius* can be understood as Rufus' response to this particular set of problems. His genre-bending work of radicalizing polemic, spiritual pilgrimage, and holy site creation was an effort to put the remaining Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians on firmer footing. When the détente collapsed a few years later, however, that new foundation quickly shattered to pieces. Rufus scrambled to respond to the new situation that engulfed the ever-shrinking remnant of his flock.

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By 518 Rufus' situation had deteriorated badly. The neo-Chalcedonian compromise pushed by Nephalius had torn his strongholds apart, and the Chalcedonian hierarchy had rushed through the gaps. The solution Rufus had crafted in the *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius* was no longer feasible. The monasteries were lost, and the relics of Peter and Romanus along with them. There were no longer potential anti-Chalcedonian holy sites to promote. The now-aggressive Chalcedonian hierarchy in Jerusalem had transformed the holy sites there from problematic to poisonous. Spiritual pilgrimage had been an adequate approach to the problem during the détente; open war made it untenable.

Rufus rose to the occasion a second time. He had pioneered a genre to deal with the problems of 500. He would do it again to deal with the problems of 518. He was able to keep little of the themes and structure of his previous work. Only the radicalizing rhetoric remained, but this was separated from its previous historiographic framework and inserted into a series of divine assurances, or πληροφορία, meant to convince his flock to stay the course. This was easier said than done: social and ecclesiastical pressure had devastated the anti-Chalcedonian faithful. Rufus' people had either assimilated or

were wavering, and many of his monks had left in one way or another. An aggressive, isolating polemic was more necessary than ever to build a wall between his flock and their neighbors.

The core of that polemic was not substantially different from before. The great villains of the *Life of Peter* and *Death of Theodosius* were still present, and continued to serve as the agents of demons.⁶⁶⁵ “The impious, heretical, and pagan Calendion” makes an appearance,⁶⁶⁶ and Proterius is repeatedly condemned as an evil persecutor of the faithful.⁶⁶⁷ Marcian fares worse than before. In this case Rufus linked the emperor to the pharaoh of Exodus, telling us that a great darkness covered the land on the day of Marcian’s coronation.⁶⁶⁸ Rufus takes a great leap forward, however, when relating a vision seen by a soldier named Zeno. To him God revealed the eternal fates of the emperors Theodosius and Marcian. The former was aglow with heavenly glory. The latter, however, was roasting in hellfire, suspended on iron hooks.⁶⁶⁹

Juvenal fares worst of all. He is apostate,⁶⁷⁰ Judas,⁶⁷¹ Simon Magus,⁶⁷² Nestorius’ friend and heir, and even anti-Christ.⁶⁷³ Other expected elements are also present. The *Tome* is not spared, and comes off the worse in a trial by fire against the *Encyclical*.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Steppa, *John Rufus*, 146.

⁶⁶⁶ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 89 (147).

⁶⁶⁷ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 34 (77), 68ff (124-25), 76ff (130ff).

⁶⁶⁸ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 10 (25).

⁶⁶⁹ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 37 (68-69).

⁶⁷⁰ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 16 (32-33).

⁶⁷¹ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 16 (32-33), 25 (59).

⁶⁷² Rufus, *Plérophories*, 25 (59), 20 (40-41).

⁶⁷³ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 40 (91), 68 (114).

⁶⁷⁴ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 46 (98).

Chalcedonianism, of course, is divinely condemned throughout, and Rufus adds his own ten-page denunciation thereof as the work's grand finale.⁶⁷⁵

Rufus still used these polemical devices to radicalize his audience, but now to the point of isolation. The condemnation of compromise is a major theme of the *Plerophoriae*, and moderation is denounced accordingly. Henceforth Rufus' historical anecdotes would denounce moderates alongside committed Chalcedonians. Zacharias might be pleased to praise the conciliatory efforts of Patriarch Martyrius and Emperor Zeno, but Rufus was not. He had passed them over in the *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius*. A similar courtesy would not be extended in the *Plerophoriae*.⁶⁷⁶

This condemnation of compromise and intermingling lies at the heart of the *Plerophoriae*. Its message is simple: remain orthodox and isolate yourself from those who are not.⁶⁷⁷ To deliver this message Rufus composed the work as a long chain of divine "assurances," in which God and His saints bolster the wavering convictions of the faithful. God's agents also point out the omnipresence of threats to a pure faith, and strongly encourage quarantine to prevent the spread of the Chalcedonian contagion.⁶⁷⁸

The Chalcedonian clergy were the source of that disease, and their agents of transmission were many. The anti-Chalcedonian faithful must be protected against all of these, and so Rufus once again took up his pen to construct a spirituality capable of warding off such threats. In this case, his solution resembles nothing so much as a

⁶⁷⁵ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 89ff (147ff).

⁶⁷⁶ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 22 (47ff). See also Steppa, *John Rufus*, 55.

⁶⁷⁷ See Kofsky, "Peter the Iberian," 216ff; Steppa, *John Rufus*, 121, 140, and 155; and Lorenzo Perrone, "Dissenso Dottrinale e Propaganda Visionaria: Le *Pleroforie* di Giovanni di Maiuma," in *Sogni, Visioni e Profezie nell'Antico Cristianesimo, Augustinianum* XXIX (December 1989), 451 and 487-88.

⁶⁷⁸ For the repeated theme of heresy as a contagious disease in Rufus' *Plérophories*, see Steppa, *Rufus*.

Palestinian variant of Donatism and Montanism. Yet the variance is crucial to the work, for the North Africans never had to deal with the holy sites.

The denigration of Chalcedonian Eucharist and liturgy was an essential component of this strategy. Rufus had to demonstrate that both had been invalidated, and undertook a comprehensive effort to do so. The miraculous confirmation of the anti-Chalcedonian Eucharist and condemnation of its Chalcedonian equivalent is a running theme in the *Plerophoriae*.⁶⁷⁹ Absolute anathema was placed on Chalcedonian liturgy: one anti-Chalcedonian woman was placed in the dock of God's judgment simply for watching a Chalcedonian liturgy.⁶⁸⁰ This episode, moreover, serves as a window into the uniquely Palestinian nature of Rufus' work: the woman was a pilgrim come to stay, and the liturgy had been held at the Holy Ascension.

This *volte-face* on the holy places is one of the most striking features of Rufus' later work. Such sites could no longer be managed, and so they must be denied – within certain limits. To argue that the Chalcedonians had invalidated the holy places as they had their Eucharist and liturgy would have been beyond the pale. Rather than invalidation, then, Rufus argued for pollution. The Chalcedonian taint, he claimed, lay so heavy upon the holy sites as to make them unapproachable. Nor would spiritual pilgrimage work, for the saints themselves were spiritually abandoning their *martyria*. This is another constant feature of the *Plerophoriae*. Many of the faithful are torn between love of the holy places and hatred of the Chalcedonians who possess them.

⁶⁷⁹ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 33 (75), 38 (89), 77 (133), etc. See also Perrone, "Dissenso," 492ff, in which he argues the importance of this theme, and also the need to provide an anti-Chalcedonian substitute in regions where there were no anti-Chalcedonian clergy (e.g. Jerusalem).

⁶⁸⁰ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 80 (136ff). The offense was eventually forgiven following a full profession of anti-Chalcedonianism. See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism*, 328-30.

God's answer is relentless: flee from such holy sites, for the Chalcedonians have defiled them beyond immediate repair. A mighty chorus of saints echoes God's call. From John the Baptist to John the Evangelist, and all the way back to the patriarch Jacob, the saints reveal that they are abandoning their own sites. The faithful are instructed to follow suit.⁶⁸¹

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Rufus upholds his anti-hierarchical⁶⁸² narrative by opposing saints to institutions. Ascetic lineage and instruction is brought forward to trump apostolic succession and teaching; charismatic authority is used to undermine its ecclesiastical equivalent, and martyrs are lifted up above clerics.⁶⁸³ Yet it is the issue of the holy places that concerns us most, for the history and literature of the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine cannot be separated from their relationship to the Holy Land. They were embedded in and conditioned by their singular environment. In this regard the *Plerophoriae* were a response to the Holy Land as much as were the *Life of Peter* and the *Death of Theodosius*. The latter were an attempt to manage the holy sites; the former was an attempt to reject them. Yet neither could ignore them, or pretend that the Holy Land was not a – or perhaps the – formative influence on the anti-Chalcedonian laity, clergy, and religious.

The entirety of the anti-Chalcedonian experience in Palestine was caught up in this unavoidable dialogue with the holy sites. Chalcedonian possession of the holy city

⁶⁸¹ Rufus, *Plérophories*, 35ff (S. 18), 69ff (S. 28), 72ff (S. 30), etc. See especially the discussion of this issue in Horn, *Asceticism*, 322ff.

⁶⁸² I.e., local, Chalcedonian hierarchy.

⁶⁸³ See the discussions in Perrone, "Dissenso," 490-94, Steppa, *John Rufus*, 11 and 88, and Horn, *Asceticism*, 332ff.

put those sites increasingly out of reach during the long *détente*. The widening gap between Rufus' people and the holy sites weakened the anti-Chalcedonian community to the point that a final push could topple them completely. As such, Rufus' works document the deteriorating state of the relationship between anti-Chalcedonians and the holy sites, together with the anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy's responses at various stages of this crisis.

The history of Rufus' movement, then, is the history of a changing orbit around the Holy Land. Rufus' writings capture two frozen moments in the course of that orbit. The anti-Chalcedonian trajectory repeatedly intersected with that of the Judeans along the way, and the course of each was altered as a result. The literary relationship, however, is more derivative than dialogic. Cyril's situation never required him to pull from the *Plerophoriae*, but the parallels between his work and Rufus' innovative *Life of Peter* are striking. For these reasons, the history and literature of the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine is vital for an understanding of the Judean context. Although the anti-Chalcedonians were finished before Cyril was born, the study of their movement provides a fresh perspective on our original question: what was Cyril doing?

CHAPTER SIX: RESPONDING TO CHANGE

In the mid-sixth century the great Judean monasteries were united by a common challenge. All had lost their founders, and now had to cope with a new institutional reality. The severity of this challenge differed from monastery to monastery: they had retained patrimony and position to varying degrees. Yet all had to adapt to survive. At this time the Judean monasteries went their separate ways, pursuing different strategies to survive the same ecosystem. Many factors determined their approach: location, relationship to the founder, available resources, and more. In this chapter we will examine four such solutions: those employed by the monasteries of Martyrius, Chariton, Euthymius, and Theodosius.

THE MONASTERY OF MARTYRIUS

Most Judean monasteries left no written record. We must reconstruct their history through others' hagiographies and/or archaeological excavation. Although the monastery of Martyrius is such an institution, we are nonetheless able to glean a surprising amount about it. Its ruins are in good condition, and a full excavation has revealed much. Furthermore, figures of this monastery were tied to Cyril's heroes, and so appear periodically in his works. It is possible, therefore, to partially reconstruct this monastery's early history.

We first meet Martyrius in 447 A.D., when he and Elias fled Egypt to find refuge with Euthymius. After accepting his hospitality for a year, the two went seeking more comfortable accommodations:

Since the cells of [Euthymius'] lura were extremely cramped and uncomfortable, the great Euthymius having ordered them to be built this way, after a year Elias went down to Jericho and built himself a cell outside the city, where his holy and celebrated monasteries are now situated, while Martyrius, having found a cave about fifteen stades [about 1.75 miles] to the west of the lura, lived in it as a solitary and there with God's help founded a most celebrated monastery.⁶⁸⁴

Martyrius' monastery began simply: a cave, and probably a small chapel.⁶⁸⁵ Martyrius lived in his monastery for fifteen years. During this time he continued to attend the deep desert retreats Euthymius hosted for his intimates. Those connections would pay off: in 473 Chrysippus, Guardian of the Cross and a fellow Euthymian, introduced Martyrius to Patriarch Anastasius. The patriarch took Martyrius back to Jerusalem, and soon ordained him a priest of the Anastasis.⁶⁸⁶ It was probably at this time that Martyrius named a certain Paul as the new abbot of his monastery.

In 478 Martyrius was ordained patriarch of Jerusalem. During his tenure the anti-Chalcedonians were expelled from the holy land, and the foundations of the great Chalcedonian monasteries were laid. The monastery of Euthymius was transformed and expanded; the endeavors of Sabas, Theodosius, and Theognius were begun. It was under Martyrius that Chalcedonian asceticism laid its institutional claim on the Judean Desert.

His own monastery was not left out. Martyrius may have begun subsidizing his cenobium during his time as priest. He certainly patronized it now as patriarch.⁶⁸⁷ Now enclosed by a fortified wall, the monastery had expanded to include a central courtyard,

⁶⁸⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 32 (48). Price speculates that the monks' problem was space for their followers, not for themselves. Price, *Lives*, 90 n 92.

⁶⁸⁵ Y. Magen and R. Talgam, "The Monastery of Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim (Khirbet el-Murassas) and its Mosaics," in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land: New Discoveries: Essays in Honour of Virgilio C. Corbo, OFM*, ed. G.C. Bottini et al. (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1990), 91ff, 109, and throughout. See also Yitzhak Magen, *The Monastery of Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim: A Guide* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1993).

⁶⁸⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 40-42 (57-58).

⁶⁸⁷ Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 149-50.

large stables and cisterns, and a church paved with a figurative mosaic.⁶⁸⁸ By the time of Martyrius' death in 486 the monastery was the second-largest cenobium in Judea. It seems fitting, therefore, that Patriarch Sallustius made abbot Paul the second to archimandrite Theodosius. Not much is known of Paul's tenure beyond this: he does not play a major role in Cyril's *Lives*. We can surmise that he ruled the monastery for several decades, oversaw its expansion, and ended his days in possession of an important administrative post. That he was remembered fondly is evident from his gravestone, installed in a place of honor and engraved with a cross surmounted by palm fronds.⁶⁸⁹

Cyril does not mention the monastery again until the early days of the Origenist conflict, when Abbot Domitian was "seduced" by Nonnus and his associates. Many other monks followed Domitian into the Origenist fold. Domitian himself would rise high, becoming bishop of Galatia before his fall in the wake of the canons of 543.⁶⁹⁰ Yet his Origenist compatriots did not forsake their Martyrian allies. Ascidas forcibly installed the Martyrian abbot John (the eunuch) in the prestigious post of superior in Jerusalem's New Church a few years later.⁶⁹¹ There is no indication that John lost this position when the Origenists fell from power. The monastery of Martyrius, therefore, was not without resources in the fallout of defeat. Perhaps they were even better off than we know: the Origenists promoted many party members during their years in power.

⁶⁸⁸ Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," throughout. Similar mosaics were created at the same time at Khirbet ed-Deir (possibly the monastery of Severianus) and the church on the summit of Masada/Marda. Rina Talgam, "The Mosaic Pavements," in *The Early Byzantine Monastery at Khirbet ed-Deir in the Judean Desert: The Excavations in 1981-1987*, ed. Yizhar Hirschfeld (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1999), 107ff.

⁶⁸⁹ See Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 91, figure 1. See also the discussion of the tomb's inscription in Leah DiSegni, "The Monastery of Martyrius at Ma'ale Adummim (Khirbet el-Murassas): The Inscriptions," in *Christian Archaeology*, 153.

⁶⁹⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 83ff (197ff).

⁶⁹¹ Cyril, *VS*, 86 (202).

Domitian and John may not have been the only Martyrians to benefit: the monastery may have possessed other friends in high places post-553.

Regardless of any allies outside the walls, Martyrius' monastery was gifted with foresighted leadership. Anticipating change, its abbots employed what resources they had to prepare for a different world. Their subsequent renovation program would stand the monastery in good stead for years to come.

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The Christian Holy Land was the realm of the Bible, a sacred topography of overlapping New and Old Testament sites.⁶⁹² These sites were by their nature immovable,⁶⁹³ and although some were of questionable pedigree, by the sixth century the holy landscape was fixed. Attachment to such a site granted purpose and solvency in the local religious economy. The Martyrians lacked such a site. Nor did they house a living holy man to whom pilgrims might flock:⁶⁹⁴ their most charismatic figure had been dead half a century. Here was another problem. Having died a patriarch, Martyrius was buried in Jerusalem. His monastery therefore could not construct a new sacred space

⁶⁹² "In Jerusalem sanctity was embedded in topography; each *locus sanctus* was fixed, provided with frame and ritual, immutable: 'history, ritual, and *loca sancta* merged in the experience of early Christian visitors to Jerusalem.' Therefore in such places one could experience the 'real presence' of holy persons and events, a validation of Scripture, that gave the *loca sancta* their power." Robert Ousterhout, "The Sanctity of Place and the Sanctity of Buildings: Jerusalem vs. Constantinople," in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, ed. Bonna Wescoat and Robert Ousterhout (Cambridge: University Press, 2012), 281-82. See chapter one.

⁶⁹³ Immovable in both place and meaning. Cf. Ousterhout on the Holy Sepulchre: "...because of the fundamental importance of the events it commemorates, the Holy Sepulchre does not allow any flexibility to its interpretation; it inspires no metaphorical flourishes, for the meaning of the building is firmly grounded in the Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection. Unlike Hagia Sophia, in which ritual invokes the sanctity of the building, at the Holy Sepulchre, it is the inherent sanctity of the place that inspires ritual – and gives meaning to architectural forms." Ousterhout, "Sanctity," 295.

⁶⁹⁴ That Cyril does not mention such a person might be ascribed to factional sympathies. That the monastery seems not to have commemorated a holy man after this period is more telling.

centered on the remains and relics of a saint.⁶⁹⁵ It would have to look elsewhere for a solution.

Fortunately there was another way to attract pilgrims and their patronage. Elite visitors to Jerusalem often sought long-term accommodations outside the city, from which they might make day-trips to holy sites.⁶⁹⁶ Institutions arose to cater to such individuals. Situated roughly three and a half miles west of Jerusalem, the cenobium of Martyrius was ideally placed to become one of these. This course was not open to most Judean monasteries: the laurae were too decentralized, and most of the cenobia were too far away. That is not to say the Martyrians had a corner on the idea. Not all local monasteries were in the Judean vallies. Another cenobium seems to have had a similar notion around this time. This was the so-called “Monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus,” located less than a mile and a half from Jerusalem’s Damascus Gate.⁶⁹⁷ The commonality of structures in the two monasteries indicates a common method for solvency, and may elucidate the nature of the Martyrian shift. Regardless, the Martyrians had a head start.

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The Martyrian remodel was quite extensive, and the process of addition and renovation spanned a quarter century. The church was expanded, and the impressive new

⁶⁹⁵ The central space given to such a shrine was used for the grave of Paul instead. Future abbots would be buried there also. DiSegni, “Martyrius,” 153.

⁶⁹⁶ See the discussion of this phenomenon in Leah DiSegni, “A Greek Inscription in the ‘Monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus’ on Mount Scopus,” in *One Land - Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in honour of Stanislao Loffreda OFM*, ed. by G.C. Bottini et al. (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 2003). 149-50.

⁶⁹⁷ D. Amit et al., “The ‘Monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus’ on the Eastern Slope of Mount Scopus, Jerusalem,” in *One Land – Many Cultures*, 139ff.

“Chapels of the Three Priests” was added. Four other aspects of the remodel, however, speak more directly to its purpose: the hostel, hostel chapel, bathhouse, and dining hall.

The hostel complex was massive. Its walls encompassed roughly 1,200 square meters of space (more than 12,500 square feet), including guest-rooms, a chapel, and stables. The latter were completely walled off, accessible only from a separate entrance on the other side of the complex. The guest-rooms could accommodate sixty to seventy visitors at a time, assuming there was no second story. The low-slung ruins can neither confirm nor rule out such a possibility, which would make the hostel complex a formidable pilgrimage center indeed.⁶⁹⁸

Together with its adjoining hall, the hostel’s chapel measured 88 square meters (roughly 950 square feet), enough to accommodate all the visitors at once. Most of these would come through the main entrance, but two of the guest-rooms had doors opening directly into the chapel. At the busiest of times the narthex of the church could be used to house overflow, providing additional space for worshippers during the day and makeshift sleeping quarters at night.⁶⁹⁹

The entirety of the complex was well-appointed. The floors were covered in mosaic pavements,⁷⁰⁰ and the columns were capped with stunning “basket” capitals.⁷⁰¹

Those staying at the complex might have agreed with Hirschfeld’s observation: it can be

⁶⁹⁸ Magen, *Martyrius*, 55-60; Magen and Talgam, “Martyrius,” 106-107.

⁶⁹⁹ Magen, *Martyrius*, 55-60; Magen and Talgam, “Martyrius,” 106-107.

⁷⁰⁰ For photographs and discussion of the mosaics in the hostel complex, see Magen and Talgam, “Martyrius,” 142-44. Regarding the monastery mosaics in general, these were laid down over the course of the two construction periods. The second period, to which these buildings belong, comprised more detailed and complicated mosaic pavements. See the extended discussion and comparison of the mosaic pavements over the two periods in Magen and Talgam, “Martyrius,” 110-50.

⁷⁰¹ See discussion in Magen and Talgam, “Martyrius,” 108-109; and the beautiful illustration of the basket capital in Magen, *Martyrius*, 57.

difficult to distinguish between such monasteries and the villas of the well-to-do, apart from location and the aspects bespeaking religious space.⁷⁰²

The monastery of Martyrius was not simply a stop-over for pilgrims arriving too late to gain admission into the city. There were any number of pilgrim hostels outside the walls for just that purpose. The monastery hostel was meant for extended stay, a comfortable base from which to take jaunts to holy places in Jerusalem or its environs. Here stood a quiet retreat removed from the bustle of the city, catering to an affluent, long-term clientele.⁷⁰³

The monastery also housed the only known bathhouse in the Judean Desert. This too was an impressive structure, 117 square meters (roughly 1,260 square feet), divided into three sections. The hypocaust (furnace) emitted heat through ceramic pipes into the calidarium (hot-room). Finally, the bathers could make use of the adjoining pool as well.⁷⁰⁴ The baths were fed by an extensive water-catchment system that sustained huge reservoirs.⁷⁰⁵ One can only speculate at the difficulty of maintaining such a bath complex in an orographic desert.

The dining hall complex covered a remarkable 775 square meters (roughly 8,340 square feet). About 41% of this is taken up by the main hall, which was basilica-shaped

⁷⁰² Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 68.

⁷⁰³ This is the argument of DiSegni, made for the similar hostel complex at the nearby monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus. She concludes: "It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, that people of status and substance who came to Jerusalem on pilgrimage, and planned to spend weeks or months attending the liturgy in the holy places, might have chosen to stay in the monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus, and come to the city every day or several times a week, carried in a litter or riding a horse and attended by an escort suitable to their position. They would also have given generously, in exchange for the hospitality." DiSegni, "Theodorus and Cyriacus," 149-50.

⁷⁰⁴ The bathhouse and its mosaics are depicted and discussed at Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 106, 144; and Magen, *Martyrius*, 45-46.

⁷⁰⁵ For depiction and discussion of the catchment system and reservoirs, see Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 107-108; and Magen, *Martyrius*, 61-62.

with two rows of columns running through it. The monks sat on benches attached to the walls, which were plastered, inscribed, and covered with paintings and drawings. A number of marble table fragments were recovered from the hall, presumably meant for guests and the more senior monks. The dining hall pavement has been preserved entire. All the mosaic pavements of the renovation feature impressive representation and workmanship; one of the surviving figures in the church approaches 240 tesserae per square decimeter.⁷⁰⁶ Even still, the dining hall mosaics literally loom large among their confreres. In addition to the main mosaic carpet running the length of the hall, the room also boasts fourteen incolumnar carpets, each decorated with a different motif.⁷⁰⁷

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Fundraising for such expansion would have been a prodigious undertaking. Friends in high places were undoubtedly of great help; the patronage of promoted Martyrians like John the Eunuch would have made a significant difference. Yet they may not have been sufficient in themselves. Other streams of income were required. Donations would have been a key element in the renovation, and while hostels were technically a free service, donations were customary. These could take the form of cash, but commissioned objects and funding for mosaics and construction were not uncommon. Here as elsewhere in Judea, donors left their mark. We are fortunate that many of them did so literally.

Fragmentary remains of marble objects have been found in many monasteries in this region. Marble tables were evidently a common feature: altar tables in churches and

⁷⁰⁶ Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 123-25.

⁷⁰⁷ Magen and Talgam, "Martyrius," 132-40.

chapels, polylobed tables in refectories and dining halls. Such objects were expensive, even if commonplace,⁷⁰⁸ causing us to suspect their origin. Some of the surviving fragments confirm that suspicion: many of the marble objects were the donations of patrons and visitors to the monasteries. Thus we find part of a marble altar in Khirbet ed-Deir with an inscription along its edge: “O Lord, remember the donors, Alaphaeos the deacon and Aias the monk.”⁷⁰⁹ Unsurprisingly, the marble chancel screen at the monastery of Martyrius bore a similar inscription: “Offering of Antonia and Auxentius.”⁷¹⁰ The many fine marble objects and furniture pieces found at the monastery, therefore, provide clues regarding the relationship of donors to the renovation.

Not all could afford the fine gift of a marble object, but that did not stop pilgrims of varying means from leaving their mark on the monasteries. In the case of poorer (and later) visitors that might mean a graffiti supplication somewhere on the monastery grounds.⁷¹¹ Those who could give did so in varying amounts and for different purposes; not all of these warranted their own inscription. Some donors were included in general inscriptions, as in the nearby monastery of Choziba: “For the salvation and deliverance of past-donors and present-donors, whose names the Lord knows.”⁷¹² More well-to-do

⁷⁰⁸ See especially the detailed discussion of marble objects in Lihi Habas, “The Marble Furniture,” in *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 119-32. Of course, not all expensive objects in the desert were made of marble. Fine pottery and ceramics, metalwork, and even glass windows were in evidence in Martyrius’ monastery and elsewhere.

⁷⁰⁹ Depiction and discussion of the table and its inscription can be found in Leah DiSegni, “The Inscriptions,” in *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 99.

⁷¹⁰ Depiction and discussion of the screen and its inscription can be found in DiSegni, “Martyrius,” 155-56.

⁷¹¹ These were especially common at the monastery of Theoctistus. Many remain there and elsewhere, mostly in the vein of “Lord, remember your servant John;” “for the salvation of Thomas the deacon...;” “Lord, guard your servant Aksilna;” and etc. See H. Goldfus et al., “The Monastery of St. Theoctistus (Deir Muqallik),” *Liber Annuus* 45 (1995), 285ff; and the inscriptions of Judean monasteries in *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum XXXVII* (1987), ed. H. W. Pleket and R. S. Stroud., 469ff.

⁷¹² Joseph Patrich, “The Cells (*ta kellia*) of Choziba, Wadi el-Qilt, in *Christian Archaeology*, 216. A similar inscription has been preserved on a mosaic pavement in nearby el-Haditha: “Lord God of Hosts,

guests might endow a wall painting,⁷¹³ or at the upper echelons a mosaic pavement. Such gifts might be inscribed with a supplication or memorial for the donors, a lost loved one, or even the fundraisers.⁷¹⁴

Fundraising was a probably a significant part of the renovation and expansion of Martyrius' monastery. The process spanned several decades, and so could become self-fulfilling. Beautiful and comfortable accommodations could draw additional visitors and patrons, whose donations would in turn support the monastery and enable its further beautification and expansion.

The hostel model stood the monastery in good stead. The abbots had planned well, but they could not have forecast the events of the following centuries. In their day Justinian held the Persians at bay; by 614, however, the tables had turned. In that year the Persian army swept the region and conquered Jerusalem. It was a bloody affair: great loss of life resulted, and many edifices in the region were destroyed or damaged. The monastery of Martyrius was among the latter.

The Byzantines retook Jerusalem, but Christian pilgrimage suffered lasting decline when the Muslims invaded a few years later. Pilgrim hostels apparently consolidated over the following decades. The more distant monastery of Khirbet ed-Deir

save those who have contributed and do contribute in this place..." M. Avi-Yonah, "The Haditha Mosaic Pavement," *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 1 (1972), 120-21.

⁷¹³ Partial wall paintings and dedicatory inscriptions (e.g. "Christ, succor Procopius") have survived at the monastery of Theoctistus. Goldfus et al., "St. Theoctistus," 290ff.

⁷¹⁴ Such inscriptions can be found throughout the region. In addition to those at the monastery of Martyrius, several have survived at Khirbet el-Beiyudat on the edge of the Jordan Valley. See H. Hizmi, "The Byzantine Church at Khirbet el-Beiyudat: Preliminary Report;" and Leah DiSegni, "Khirbet el-Beiyudat: The Inscriptions," in *Christian Archaeology*, 245-73. A great many more can be found in M. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, Vol. II (1933), 136-81; Vol. III (1934), 26-73, 187-93. See also DiSegni, "Theodorus and Cyriacus," 150, on the prestige and status such a fundraiser could achieve.

was abandoned in the 650s for this reason.⁷¹⁵ The monastery of Martyrius was not far behind, for the decline in pilgrimage had benefitted hostels closer to the city. Many Judean monasteries had been damaged or destroyed in the Persian assault, leaving the remaining pilgrims even more focused on Jerusalem proper. Martyrius' monastery could not compete with institutions like the monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus, which stood half the distance to the city, and during these years that monastery experienced a renovation of its own. Now the monastery of Theodorus and Cyriacus installed new mosaic pavements, expanded its structures, and added a bathhouse.⁷¹⁶ One monastery's loss, it seems, was another's gain.

None of this diminishes the Martyrians' achievement. Lacking a holy site, holy relic, and holy man, this monastery found a different way to adapt to the local religious economy. Such adaptations disadvantaged the monastery in the wake of seventh-century calamities, and hindsight can therefore obscure our view of the shorter term: this was a success story.

SOUKA / THE MONASTERY OF CHARITON

⁷¹⁵ "While the Muslim conquest of Palestine (in the thirties of the seventh century) was not violent, it appears that it was followed by a considerable decrease in pilgrimage, resulting in a drastic reduction in the income of the monasteries...monasteries like that at Khirbet ed-Deir, located in remote areas far from pilgrim routes, were progressively abandoned...The lifetime of the monastery of Khirbet ed-Deir was thus about 150 years, from its foundation around 500 to its abandonment around 650 CE." Hirschfeld, *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 155.

Hirschfeld argues that the most immediate consequence of reduced pilgrimage income was the inability of the monastery to purchase grain, which had to be imported from Transjordan. Bread was a staple of the Judean monastic diet: a grain shortage would force the abandonment of the monastery in short order. Hirschfeld, *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 172 n3.

⁷¹⁶ For depictions and descriptions of the renovations and the priest who managed the fundraising, see D. Amit et al., "Theodorus and Cyriacus;" and DiSegni, "Theodorus and Cyriacus," 139-50.

Chariton had pioneered the Judean lauritic lifestyle in the mid-fourth century. This ur-holy man of Palestine founded three laurae: Pharan, Douka, and Souka.⁷¹⁷ The latter stood roughly three miles north of the New Laura which it predated by 150 years. Souka was an expression of its founders' ascetic views: its largest cell was little more than sixty square meters (roughly 670 square feet). An equivalent cell in the Great Laura was three times that size.⁷¹⁸

Souka had flourished before wealthy monks built cells to resemble suites. This was a working-man's monastery: excavations reveal that it mimicked a peasant's village rather than a patrician's villa.⁷¹⁹ It was a place of hard work and humble asceticism, and therefore more self-sufficient than its younger neighbors. Such qualities made it an obvious choice for the permanent retreat of the Sabaite holy man Cyriacus.⁷²⁰

Yet Souka too depended on pilgrimage revenue, and here it was at a disadvantage. Like the monastery of Martyrius, Souka had no attachment to biblical sites, holy relics, or saintly remains. Chariton had founded Souka, but his body lay in Pharan.⁷²¹ The hostel option was not open to Souka either: the laura was distant from major roads, large towns, and Jerusalem itself. Souka would have to be a pilgrim's destination, not his or her base of operations.

⁷¹⁷ See DiSegni, *Life of Chariton*," throughout. See also chapter one above.

⁷¹⁸ The next largest cell was more than 200 square feet smaller, and most were much smaller than that. See the discussion of Souka's cells in Yizhar Hirschfeld, "The Monastery of Chariton: Survey and Excavations," *Liber Annuus* 50 (2000), 334-60, and esp. 345.

⁷¹⁹ Hirschfeld, "Chariton," 361.

⁷²⁰ Although Cyriacus retained his Sabaite affiliation, he preferred the quieter Souka to the louder monasteries of his youth. Cyriacus spent forty years in Souka before leaving for the deep desert, then returned for another nine. Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus*, 7-21 (249-59).

⁷²¹ Hirschfeld, "Chariton," 315; Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites in the Vicinity of the Monastery of Chariton," in *Early Christianity in Context: Monuments and Documents*," ed. Manns et al. (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1993), 308; and Stephan Schiweitz, *Das morgenlandische Mönchtum, Vol. II: Das Mönchtum auf Sinai und in Palästina im vierten Jahrhundert* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1913), 139-43.

Nor was Chariton the draw he might have been, for the father of Judean monasticism was being eclipsed by his spiritual children. The works of Paul, Theodore, and Cyril had saturated the market, leaving little room for the lauritic innovator. Alarmed that Chariton was falling into oblivion, an unidentified monk endeavored to reinsert his founder into the public consciousness.⁷²² The monk focused on Chariton's conduct in persecution, personal holiness, and ascetic teachings. Writing two hundred years after Chariton's death, however, the author had to apologize for the paucity of miracle stories:

As for all the miracles that God did through Chariton, we shall pass them over, to be known to Him alone, for whom [Chariton] existed and piously lived, for whose sake he had endured dangers at the hands of the impious idolaters to the very point of death. For our part, we have disclosed to the uninformed a few of the many fine deeds of the holy man, which we ascertained, not by immediate hearing (for not a little time has elapsed from Aurelian's reign to our time, in order to prevent the fading away of his knowledge too, in the passage of time.

For among the other holy ascetes who shone for their monastic virtues much later, some had their God-pleasing lives written secretly by their followers during their lifetime, others immediately after their death, in order to keep fresh the memory of their pious deeds and not to surrender anything to silence. But nobody engaged in writing the life dear to God of this God-inspired man at that time, as in truth, not only were God-loving monks rare, but even the Christians were but a few, and those few were driven in confusion by their persecutors. Thus, only by word of mouth did the pious monks of the holy monasteries subject to Chariton hand down his story, one to another in turn, and so preserved until the present time the memory of the excellent virtues described above, until it reached us.

And if God accomplished some other miracle through [Chariton], now, at any rate, this miracle has been consigned to oblivion, understandably too, owing to such a long lapse of time, even though it bubbled over a long time in the ascetic gymnasium.⁷²³

The author accomplished his purpose: Chariton was brought back to public awareness.

Yet he could do little to underscore Chariton's monasteries. Unlike his fellow Judean

⁷²² "Therefore, although my account [will not do justice] to the story, I deemed it necessary to avoid giving up to complete oblivion, through complete silence, what should be 'proclaimed upon the housetops' for the salvation of mankind: rather, I propose to relate the virtues of Chariton, 'full of grace and truth,' of which I am partly informed." *Life of Chariton*, 1 (397).

⁷²³ *Life of Chariton*, 42 (419-20).

hagiographers, the anonymous author of the *Life of Chariton* cast monasteries as props, not supporting actors.⁷²⁴ His work did not alleviate Souka's institutional public relations issue: overshadowed by its larger, more impressive descendents, Souka was now called simply the "Old Laura."

The strategy employed by the Souka fathers finds no parallel in Judean literature or archaeology.⁷²⁵ In lieu of a major pilgrimage site, they linked together several minor ones. Judea was not teeming with *loca sancta*, but there were a few small holy sites scattered throughout the desert. These were usually places of prayer and quiet reflection.⁷²⁶ Taking stock of those holy sites near to the laura, the fathers of Souka fashioned them into a network.⁷²⁷

The closest of these sites was the so-called Rock of the Crosses. The Rock was a very large prayer niche cut from the rock itself to commemorate an unknown person or event. Its name is derived from the five large crosses carved into its wall. The Rock is something of a rarity: open air prayer niches were quite uncommon in late antique Christianity. It stood roughly a mile southeast of Souka, and the monks now constructed a path to connect the two locations.⁷²⁸

They did likewise with the chapel at Qasr 'Antar. This single-apsed chapel was simple if not small, measuring close to 900 square feet within its thick walls. It was built

⁷²⁴ In this regard archaeological remains appear to illuminate textual evidence rather than support it. See Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Life of Chariton in Light of Archaeological Research," in *Ascetic Behavior*, 425-47.

⁷²⁵ Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 308.

⁷²⁶ Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 223-34.

⁷²⁷ The argument of Hirschfeld in "Holy Sites."

⁷²⁸ For the Rock and its connection to Souka, see Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 224-26; and Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 303-304.

atop the grave of an unknown holy person, and located perhaps a mile and a half from Souka.⁷²⁹

In this way the fathers of Souka created a collection of minor holy sites in place of a single major one. The paths to these sites centered on the monastery, and monks were presumably available as guides. Priests of the *laura* may have accompanied the pilgrims as liturgants. Making such journeys on foot may have served the itinerants as pilgrimages in miniature,⁷³⁰ offering a day of prayer and liturgy in the wilderness where Christ had once sought quiet as well.

The reappearance of Cyriacus was a further boon to Souka. Returning from his nearby hermitage at Sousakim in 537, the holy man made his dwelling in the so-called Hanging Cave of Chariton. The latter had once occupied this cave at the southern end of the *laura*, and it served as residence for a second holy man. Pilgrims came to visit the Cave and its resident. When Cyriacus died two decades later, the fathers of Souka incorporated both Sousakim and the Cave into their network.⁷³¹

The network of Souka may not have rivaled the holy sites and objects of the region, but it was likely enough to achieve solvency. The cells of Souka were already hewn, and the *laura* apparently grew a larger percentage of its food than most Judean

⁷²⁹ For the chapel and its connection to Souka see Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 301ff.

⁷³⁰ Citing Turner, Cynthia Hahn argues that the journey itself was an important part of the baptismal rebirth offered by pilgrimage. See Cynthia Hahn, "Loca Sancta Souvenirs: Sealing the Pilgrim's Experience," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, 85-96; and Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 10-11. *Op. cit.* in Hahn, "Loca Sancta Souvenirs," 89.

⁷³¹ For Cyriacus' hermitage at Sousakim see Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 305-306. For the Hanging Cave see Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 228ff; Hirschfeld, *Chariton*, 348ff; and Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 299ff.

monasteries. Lacking the needs of other lauritic communities, Souka could function on a reduced income. The network they fashioned may have been enough to make ends meet.

The seventh century brought great changes to the *laura*. An increased danger of raids forced the outlying anchorites to cluster closer to the core. Pharan had been damaged in the invasion, and so the body of Chariton was transferred to Souka. Now centered on the saint's remains, the clustered monks rebuilt the monastery into a cenobium.⁷³² This rechristened "Monastery of Chariton" would be a pilgrimage site through the twelfth century, part of a group of "centrally located" monasteries that survived in this way throughout the middle ages.⁷³³ Like the Martyrians, the fathers of Souka could not have known the challenges that time would bring to their adaptations. Unlike the Martyrians, however, the anchorites of Souka were in a position to adapt again, and thrive.

THE MONASTERY OF EUTHYMIUS

East/West approaches to sacred space falter in Judea. In recent years the east has been viewed as a land of living holy men, interrupted by the non-repeatable phenomenon of the Holy Land. The latter was a sacred topography infused with biblical associations, sanctified and unique. The west, on the other hand, is presented as a land of relics and martyria, of tomb shrines controlled by bishops to augment their authority.⁷³⁴ Yet in Judea, as in Constantinople, this dichotomy breaks down.⁷³⁵ By the mid-sixth century this desert was precisely a land of tomb-shrines. The regional difference may reassert

⁷³² Hirschfeld, *Chariton*, 361-62; Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 307-308.

⁷³³ Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 307-308; Hirschfeld, *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 155.

⁷³⁴ See, for example, MacCormack, "*Loca Sancta*," 7ff.

⁷³⁵ Ousterhout argues that the sanctity of Constantinople was constructed through relics and shrines. Ousterhout, "Sanctity."

itself, however, regarding the rise of this phenomenon. What may have been a natural response in the west seems to have been a deliberate creation in the east. If so, the rise of tomb-shrines in Judea arose from a single source: the monastery of Euthymius.

In recent years Alexei Lidov has pioneered the study of intentionally-crafted holy sites. Eschewing the term “sacred space,” Lidov prefers “hierotopy,” which he defines as a concrete creative response to the hierophanes described by Eliade.⁷³⁶ In his view hierotopy was a complex and intentional endeavor, the creative fusion of elements often centered around a relic or icon.⁷³⁷ Behind it stood a creator, whom Lidov compares to a film director. Such a person manipulated and interwove the efforts of artists in different fields. Like the film director, the hierotopic creator was a creative artist in his own right. It was his task to direct and meld not only architecture and art, but also the many visual, audio, and tactile elements that went into the differentiation of sacred space.⁷³⁸ The necessarily cross-disciplinary study of creators like Abbot Suger or Leo the Wise and their endeavors is still in its early stages. It may come as a surprise, therefore, to find such a figure lurking in the shadows of late-fifth century Judea. This was Fidus, who oversaw the creation of Euthymius’ tomb-shrine and the renovation and transformation of his monastery around it.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ Alexei Lidov, “Hierotopy. The creation of sacred space as a form of creativity and subject of cultural history,” in *Hierotopy: Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Progress-Tradition, 2006), 32ff; Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* (New York, Harcourt, 1959), 26. *Op. cit.* in Lidov, “Hierotopy,” 33.

⁷³⁷ Lidov views such fusion as complex, but not uncommon: “A project of this kind was a matrix, or structural model, of a particular sacred space, subordinating all visual, audio, and tactile effects. It seems important to realize that practically all objects of religious art were originally conceived as elements of a hierotopic project and included in the ‘network’ of a concrete sacred space.” Lidov, “Hierotopy,” 35.

⁷³⁸ Alexei Lidov, “The Creator of Sacred Space as a Phenomenon of Byzantine Culture,” in *L’artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, ed. Michele Bacci (Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 2003), 135ff.

⁷³⁹ An earlier parallel is found in the *Life of Peter*. See previous chapter.

Fidus first appears as a young lector of the Anastasis during the episcopacy of Juvenal. We know little of his background: Cyril says only that he was the grandson of Bishop Fidus of Joppa. During his time at the Anastasis young Fidus seems to have forged a friendship with Anastasius, who was priest of that place and a “rural bishop” also. Together the two formed a relationship with the Euthymian Cosmas, by this time Guardian of the Cross.⁷⁴⁰ At this unspecified date, therefore, we find Anastasius, the young Fidus, and Cosmas all attached to Juvenal, with Cosmas serving as bridge to Euthymius.⁷⁴¹

When Anastasius expressed a desire to meet Euthymius, Cosmas arranged the appointment. Anastasius soon travelled to the desert with Fidus in tow. At this meeting, Cyril declares, Euthymius prophesied that Anastasius would one day become Patriarch of Jerusalem. Fidus himself is Cyril’s source for the event: in later years he would tell the story to Cyriacus, who passed it on to Cyril.⁷⁴²

Anastasius and Cosmas would soon prove instrumental in achieving the so-called First Union with the anti-Chalcedonians. The process turned on the anxious Eudokia’s desire to seek counsel from holy Euthymius, and this meeting was brokered by intermediaries: Anastasius for Eudokia, and Cosmas for Euthymius. We have already seen the Euthymian ascendancy that followed the reconciliation.⁷⁴³ Anastasius’ stock rose also, resulting in his ascension to the patriarchal throne three years later in 459.

⁷⁴⁰ See chapter two.

⁷⁴¹ See chapter two for the rise of Euthymius’ inner circle.

⁷⁴² Cyril, *VE*, 22 (31).

⁷⁴³ See chapter two.

Shortly thereafter the new patriarch ordained Fidus deacon of the Anastasis, and made him his emissary to Euthymius.⁷⁴⁴

The latter died in 479. His disciples had continued to advance: Cosmas was by then a bishop, and the Euthymians Chrysippus and Gabrielus had been given high-level posts in Anastasius' administration. These accompanied the patriarch for Euthymius' funeral. Fidus too travelled to the desert at his master's side. It was, therefore, a great and distinguished company that arrived at the monastery for the holy man's burial. They were enmeshed in a great crowd that sought miracles from Euthymius' remains, a desire eventually cut short at the patriarch's order. After the populace was driven off and the body committed to the earth, diplomacy began:

[The Euthymians and future patriarchs] Martyrius and Elias wept and lamented the loss of [Euthymius]. At the recommendation of Chrysippus the guardian of the Cross the archbishop invited them to attend upon him; and leaving Fidus the deacon in the laura with the responsibility for building a burial vault for the translation of the precious remains to a becoming place, he returned to the holy city, whence he sent skilled workmen and every assistance for the building.⁷⁴⁵

Fidus was left behind while the Euthymians moved on to bigger and better things.

Armed with a patriarchal commission and resources, the deacon set about building a tomb worthy of its occupant.

At first blush this commission seems foreign to "eastern" thinking, and more in line with "western" notions of sacred space. In the face of this contradiction we are left with two options: reduce the universality of "eastern" notions of sacred space, or admit western influence in Judea. The latter is not implausible: fifth-century Palestine was flooded with wealthy westerners. Fidus is a Latin name; perhaps his family was

⁷⁴⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 33 (48-49).

⁷⁴⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 40 (57).

associated with them in some way. We might also infer that western influence in Palestine gave John Rufus the idea of highlighting tombs, relics, and saints decades later. Regardless, the local pilgrimage industry catered heavily to western visitors. Perhaps their influence or desires led the patriarch to commission a “western” tomb-shrine, the first in Judea. On the other hand, perhaps “eastern” and “western” ideas of sacred space are more fluid than sometimes thought.

Influences and motivations aside, Fidus proved a competent choice. The deacon set to work with a will, and construction moved quickly:

Fidus the deacon speedily erected the burial vault on the site of the cave where the great Euthymius had originally been a solitary. Demolishing the cave, he built in only three months a great and marvelous vaulted chamber. In the middle he constructed the tomb of the saint; on either side he provided tombs for superiors, priests, and other pious men.⁷⁴⁶

Fidus centered his architectural designs on the body of the saint. Beyond being the project’s *raison d’être*, Euthymius’ remains were also the focal point of construction. The tomb was placed in the middle of the chamber, drawing the eye and allowing visitors greater access to the saint.⁷⁴⁷ Additional enhancement was foreseen as well, and space was designated for the interment of the monastery’s future hierarchs and holy men. This task of hierotopic construction, however, was not a purely architectural project. The patriarch soon provided further aid for the interior adornment of the tomb:

The archbishop, who had sent the tombstone in advance with a silver crucible and surrounding railings, came down to the laura and translated the precious remains

⁷⁴⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 42 (58).

⁷⁴⁷ The drive to improve access to relics and saints was a strong component of hierotopic architecture. See Evangelia Hadjistryphonos, “The Pilgrimage Monument as Space in the Eastern Mediterranean,” in *Routes of Faith in the Medieval Mediterranean: History, Monuments, People, Pilgrimage Perspectives*, ed. Evangelia Hadjistryphonos (Thessalonike: European Centre of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, 2008), 36ff.

to the place prepared, carrying them with his own hands.⁷⁴⁸ After laying them to rest securely, so that no one could open the tomb and carry off the remains, he laid the tombstone in place, fixing the crucible above the breast. This crucible, from then until this day, pours forth every kind of benefit for those who approach with faith.⁷⁴⁹

Anastasius celebrated the *synaxis* before departing for Jerusalem. In his wake he left a hierotopic space unique among Judean monasteries. The gravestone, railings, and crucible were all designed to augment the sanctity of the place and facilitate human connection to the divine. This was especially true of the crucible, which dispensed holy and miraculous oil. This could be taken from the holy space in *ampullae* designed to be worn about the person. The acquisition of such oil was an additional goal for many pilgrims.⁷⁵⁰ The commission, donations, and participation of the patriarch, therefore, had enabled Fidus to properly honor the saint while also providing the monastery with a holy site all its own.

The deacon's work was not finished. Martyrius' accession in 478 gave Cyril occasion for a fantastic story. Concerned over the anti-Chalcedonians in Jerusalem, the new patriarch sent Fidus to Constantinople. The deacon's ship went down during the voyage. Clinging to a plank in the sea, Fidus sought Euthymius' intercession. The deacon's pleas were answered when the saint appeared in person. In addition to aid, Euthymius gave Fidus two messages. The first was for Martyrius, whom Euthymius instructed to abandon this mission to the capital. All would be well with Jerusalem in due time. To Fidus himself the saint gave a commission:

⁷⁴⁸ Euthymius was diminutive to the point of dwarfism. It would have been possible for the archbishop to carry his remains unaided. Cyril, *VE*, 40 (56).

⁷⁴⁹ Cyril, *VE*, 42 (58).

⁷⁵⁰ For more on this phenomenon see Hahn, "Loca Sancta Souvenirs."

‘As for yourself, depart to my lura and build a cenobium in the place where you built my burial vault, after razing all the cells down to their foundations. For it is not the will of God that there be a lura in that place, but it is His good pleasure that the lura should rather be a cenobium.’ On hearing this, Fidus promised to do so.⁷⁵¹

To his amazement, the good deacon was flown back to Jerusalem in the blink of an eye.

He related the episode to his mother, who insisted he follow the saint’s instructions immediately:

So going in to the archbishop, he related everything in order. [Martyrius] replied in amazement, ‘The great Euthymius is truly a prophet of the Lord, for he foretold this to all of us when about to be perfected in Christ. Set off, therefore, to build the cenobium, and you have me as your fellow-worker in everything.’⁷⁵²

Cyril had already foreshadowed this conversation. The hagiographer is at pains to emphasize Euthymius’ role in the renovation, thereby providing legitimacy to the transformation and further incarnating the saint in his institution.⁷⁵³

Once again Fidus proved equal to the task, but he had much to do: the saint’s wishes had been remarkably specific. On his deathbed, Cyril declares, Euthymius had addressed the new abbot of his monastery:

The great Euthymius said to him in the presence of all, ‘See, all the fathers have elected you to be their father and shepherd. So attend to yourself and your flock, *and first of all know this* [emphasis mine], that it has pleased God to make this lura a cenobium and that this change will soon take place.’ He gave them directions as to the place where the cenobium was to be built, about its constitution, reception of guests [= ξενοδοχία] and zeal in the office of psalmody...’ This he said to the monk appointed superior. To all of them he made this declaration: ‘My beloved brethren, do not shut to anyone the door of the cenobium you are about to build, and God will then grant you his blessing.’⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵¹ Cyril, *VE*, 43 (60).

⁷⁵² Cyril, *VE*, 43 (61).

⁷⁵³ See next chapter.

⁷⁵⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 39 (55-56).

Cyril/Euthymius' emphasis on hospitality implied that his monks would not lack for practice. The saint had been precise in his commands, which Fidus now hastened to enact. Fortunately the deacon again enjoyed patriarchal support. With Martyrius behind him, Fidus set about his task:

So taking an engineer, a quantity of skilled workmen [= τεχνιτῶν, "artisans"], and many assistants, Fidus went down to the laura and built the cenobium, which he surrounded with walls and made secure. The old church he made into a refectory, and built the new church above it; within the cenobium he constructed a tower that was at the same time entirely secure and extremely beautiful, and he also contrived that the burial vault should lie in the middle of the cenobium.⁷⁵⁵

Lidov's film director analogy is apt: once again we find Fidus directing the efforts of different creative professionals. The newly-built cenobium was an extended reliquary, a way of enhancing the tomb it housed. In the next passage Cyril labored to convey the great majesty and clement climate of the cenobium. Employment of terms like "beautiful," "perfect," "delightful," and "marvelous" underscore both Cyril's own literary purpose⁷⁵⁶ and the hierotopic effort of Fidus and his artisans. The new design also facilitated access to the saint, for the cenobium model was far friendlier to pilgrims. The renovation proved a success: Euthymius' monastery would rapidly develop into Judea's most important pilgrimage destination.⁷⁵⁷

Work was completed three years later in 482. The patriarch returned to consecrate the new cenobium,⁷⁵⁸ to perform the *synaxis* and install martyrs' relics in the

⁷⁵⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 43 (61).

⁷⁵⁶ See final chapter.

⁷⁵⁷ Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Euthymius and his Monastery in the Judean Desert," *Liber Annuus* 43 (1993), 349-57; Hirschfeld, "Holy Sites," 307-308; Hirschfeld, *Khirbet ed-Deir*, 155.

⁷⁵⁸ The patriarch's return was preceded by a dramatic prologue. The fathers of the monastery wished to celebrate the consecration on the anniversary of the translation of Euthymius' remains. Unfortunately the drought had emptied the cisterns, and it was impossible for the monastery to support the inevitable crowd. Fidus and the abbot were at a loss, but the aid of other monasteries, together with the timely

altar.⁷⁵⁹ Fidus' task was finished at last, and a year later Martyrius ordained him bishop of Dôra. The cenobium's ruins do no justice to his achievement. This transformation allowed the monastery to survive for centuries, through a number of potentially fatal hardships.

In 659 the monastery was badly damaged in a major earthquake. Although the tomb-shrine remained intact, many of the structures had to be rebuilt. Centuries of incessant raids diminished the monastery's population; survival required the monastery to be renovated into a fortress-like structure. The Crusaders constructed a new chapel atop the tomb, and the Comnenians remodeled or rebuilt large sections of the monastery also. The structures excavated by archaeologists, therefore, are not the works of Fidus the deacon.⁷⁶⁰

The tomb-shrine itself has survived, but in severely damaged condition. Fidus had installed windows to allow for natural lighting and air circulation; the Crusaders blocked these up to build their chapel. The floor of the crypt is missing, and grave robbers have looted the tomb almost to the walls.⁷⁶¹

None of this, however, diminishes Fidus' achievement. The deacon had directed the work of architects, engineers, and artisans to create a milestone in Judean history. His singular hierotopic achievement showed that the sacred topography of the holy land was

appearance and intervention of Euthymius, saved the day. The consecration went forward on the desired date. Cyril, *VE*, 44 (62-63).

⁷⁵⁹ "...the holy and victorious martyrs Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus..." Cyril, *VE*, 44 (63).

⁷⁶⁰ Hirschfeld, "Euthymius," throughout. Other elements remain obscure through lack of excavation, a possible hostel among them.

⁷⁶¹ Hirschfeld, "Euthymius," 367-70.

not immutable. The fathers could embed themselves in the sacred landscape and its religious economy by creating new holy places in their own monasteries.

The monasteries that survived the transition to Muslim rule did exactly that. The adaptation allowed these institutions to survive in troubled times. More than providing necessary income, the concentration on the monastery's founder, hallowed tradition, and internal literature created a culture capable of withstanding a hostile environment. It was a strategy that gave the means – and the will – to survive.

THE MONASTERY OF THEODOSIUS

Sabas and Theodosius were laying their first foundations when Fidus was completing his work. Upon their deaths a new generation of hierotopic directors arose to shape their legacies. Such men were true innovators of hierotopic construction, going beyond the physical aspect of sacred space to add a new element to their art: text.

Greatest of these was Sophronius, heir to the cenobium of Theodosius. Archaeology does little to rediscover his work: the ruins of his monastery have not been seen for more than a hundred years. All that remains are Schick's preliminary observations from 1877, for a group of monks reoccupied the site and built atop the ruins thirty years after his brief survey.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶² B. Schick and K. Marti, "Mittheilungen von Baurath C. Schick in Jerusalem über die alten Lauren und Klöster in der Wüste Juda," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-Vereins*, ed. H. Guthe (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1880), Band III, 33-37. See also Yizhar Hirschfeld, "List of the Byzantine Monasteries in the Judean Desert," in *Christian Archaeology*, 26-30.

Yet Sophronius' work is not lost to obscurity. Like Fidus, he has benefited from the local literary tradition. We have already seen Cyril's glowing report of Sophronius' building activities:

[Using the donation of a relative] the sainted Sophronius enlarged and expanded the monastery fourfold after the death of blessed Theodosius, and erected from the foundations in this holy monastery a church to the mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, hymned by all. But why should I speak at length? The labors and achievements of Sophronius are conspicuous in the monastery of blessed Abba Theodosius, for he not only enriched it with properties and revenues, but also increased threefold its community in Christ. In a word, having governed the monastery well for fourteen years and two months, he died in joy on 21 March of the fifth indiction [542].⁷⁶³

From Theodore we know that that Theodosius' grave, like Euthymius' was equipped with a crucible to dispense holy oil.⁷⁶⁴ Schick's survey can add little: in a very few pages he writes of walls, several unidentified compounds, the ruins of churches, and what may have been a hostel. Tradition says the tomb itself occupied the cave where the Magi slept. That tale is kept alive by the monks of the current Monastery of Theodosius: they have reopened the cave, which is a popular pilgrim destination once again.

Yet the most innovative element of Sophronius' work remains: the *Life* itself. Long dismissed as "an insipid piece of rhetoric,"⁷⁶⁵ the *Life* is nothing of the kind. It is the craft of a different kind of artisan, a work of words rather than paint or stone. Commissioned and shaped by Sophronius, the *Life* is every inch a hierotopic project. The author's ham-fisted presentation can be excused by the novelty of his aim: to ensconce the intercessory efficacy of the saint in his tomb, and incarnate his holiness into the monastery itself.

⁷⁶³ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 5 (267).

⁷⁶⁴ Theodore, *VThd*, 92 (154).

⁷⁶⁵ Festugière. See introduction chapter above.

Theodore's work can be understood in three parts. The first is traditional: the heroic life and mighty deeds of the saint. Theodore's aim was to establish Theodosius' exceptional sanctity and *παρρησία*, bold speech before God. The latter was especially important, for the saint's intercessory efficacy depended on it. The main narrative, therefore, is intended to cement Theodosius' status as a holy man capable of efficacious intercession.

This narrative stands in service to the innovation of the second part. Throughout the narrative Theodore takes pains to link Theodosius with the monastery itself, to depict the institution as an extension of the saint's holiness.⁷⁶⁶ The posthumous miracles represent the culmination of this theme. In the presentation of these stories Theodosius' holiness and intercessory efficacy are incarnated in the monastery itself. This element that transforms the *Life* into a work of hierotopic construction: the posthumous miracles signify a conscious and intentional augmentation of sacred space.

Finally, full exposition is provided in the concluding peroration. Theodore's final exhortation is addressed directly to the monks.⁷⁶⁷ Grounding his message in the authority of the abbot, Theodore draws out the themes of the *Life*, gathering them into a single, powerful message: Theodosius is the source of our identity and activity, both of which emanate from his tomb.

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. John Rufus' similar, but historically obstructed attempt. See previous chapter.

⁷⁶⁷ The perorations of Palestinian hagiography make an interesting study. The works of John Rufus and Paul of Elousa focus primarily on the spiritual teaching of their respective saints. John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 177ff (259ff); Paul, *VThd*, 23ff (162ff).

Cyril largely eschews the practice; in his works spiritual teaching is often overshadowed by institutional outlook. Even the final words of Euthymius (see above) mostly concern the future of the monastery itself.

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It is the narrative that gives Theodore his bad reputation. Much of the early *Life* follows the standard pattern: a lengthy profession of orthodoxy, the childhood of the saint and his journey to Jerusalem. There are spiritual combats and miracles; we find the foundations and expansion of the monastery, and a focus on liturgy and psalmody. The most touching passages concern Theodosius' care of and concern for the disadvantaged: the elderly, poor, and those sick in body and mind. The first act, then, is a straightforward demonstration of saintly virtue and conduct.

The combat against Anastasius, however, causes Theodore to abandon all reserve. The greatness of Theodosius is now established: both his life and conduct are shown to accord with a prophecy of Symeon Stylites.⁷⁶⁸ The skirmishes of the second act, however, are meant to demonstrate the cenobiarch's unshakeable faith, bold leadership, and impeccable orthodoxy. To achieve this depiction Theodore utterly eschews historical accuracy for hagiographical rhetoric. In so doing he earns his centuries-long reputation as Cyril's marked inferior.

A hero is only as good as his villain, and so Theodore blackens the name of Anastasius, depicting him as malicious, scheming, and treacherous. The appearance of such a foe transformed the mild archimandrite into a mighty warrior. Theodosius was now "like a lion," burning with a zeal "hotter than fire."⁷⁶⁹ Theodore transforms his hero

⁷⁶⁸ Theodore, *VThd*, 3 (106-108); 12 (118).

⁷⁶⁹ Theodore, *VThd*, 21 (132-33). Zeal, a vital theme for John Rufus, is largely absent in Judean hagiography. Neither Paul nor Cyril concentrate their efforts on the zeal of their heroes. Theodore is the exception, perhaps because of his focus on the conflict with Anastasius.

in a twinkling. The gentle lover of the poor now detests heresy with all his heart, and hates the enemies of God with a consuming hatred.⁷⁷⁰

The conflict itself opens with the emperor's failed bribe,⁷⁷¹ which signals the beginning of a relentless *mano-a-mano* struggle between emperor and saint. Framing the battle this way required a herculean editorial effort on Theodore's part. The conflict itself, we recall, escalated over a period of years before culminating in the deposition of Patriarch Elias and installation of the amenable John, who was later turned by Sabas and Theodosius. With their help and the crafty advice of the governor, John deceived the *dux*. Flanked by the two archimandrites, the patriarch thunderously denounced Severus to a cheering mob of ascetics, forcing the *dux* to flee and Hypatius to extemporize. In response the emperor considered exiling John, Sabas, and Theodosius. Hoping to forestall such retribution, the monks sent a letter to the emperor threatening to burn down the holy places.⁷⁷²

This is the story as told by Cyril, Theodore Lector, and others. It is not the narrative given by Theodore. His account rapidly pushes past the bribe to set Theodosius against faceless (and absent) minions of the evil emperor. In response to their machinations, Theodosius gathers the nameless fathers of the desert to compose a letter of defiance to Anastasius.

The need to put Theodosius front and center forced a number of omissions on Theodore. He excised the whole backstory and the persons of John and Sabas. The letter

⁷⁷⁰ Quoting Psalm 138. Theodore, *VThd*, 21 (141).

⁷⁷¹ See chapter three.

⁷⁷² See chapter three.

is heavily excerpted and temporally recontextualized. Its lacunae begin immediately.

Cyril had opened the letter with its full salutation:

To the most dear to God and most pious emperor, by God's will Augustus and Emperor, Flavius Anastasius the lover of Christ, a petition and supplication from the archimandrites Theodosius and Sabas, other superiors, and all the monks inhabiting the holy city of God, the whole desert round it and the Jordan.⁷⁷³

Theodore, however, eschewed the salutation in favor of a brief heading:

From the letter written to the emperor Anastasius from Theodosius the archimandrite and the other abbots of the desert.⁷⁷⁴

The full letter opens with extended praise for the emperor before describing the plight of Jerusalem, its patriarch, and his loyal servants. Theodore omits these sections in their entirety. Praise for this emperor is unacceptable: Theodore's hero would never laud a heretic, even *pro forma*. Indeed Theodore would later question whether Anastasius was even worthy of his title.⁷⁷⁵ In Theodore's version Theodosius is the letter's primary author, and so the opening had to go. As for circumstances and allies, these are nameless props at best. There is no room in the play for supporting characters and complicated plots: the hero and villain share this stage with no one.

Theodore's version preserves the wording of the letter at all times, but with a great many words missing. His excerpt begins in the middle, with the denunciations of Severus, Nestorius, and Eutyches. The selection stops before the trickier theological statements of the anathemas, allowing Theodore to redact the following as well:

Your Serenity, on receiving favorably the written assurance of this petition from the humility of us all, will deign to decree that from now on must cease the reckless misdeeds and continual disruptions perpetrated each day against this holy

⁷⁷³ Cyril, *VS*, 57 (162).

⁷⁷⁴ Theodore, *VThd*, 21 (133).

⁷⁷⁵ Theodore, *VThd*, 69 (140).

city of God and our most pious archbishop John by the enemies of the truth, in the name, allegedly, of Your Piety...⁷⁷⁶

Theodore has successfully omitted both Patriarch John and any hint of particular circumstances. He does not excise the letter again. In fact, Theodore carries the story where Cyril does not: noting that upon receipt of the letter Anastasius marveled at Theodosius' *παρησία*, and wrote him a letter of apology.⁷⁷⁷

That letter is manifestly odd. It includes no salutation or valediction. Indeed, it includes no names at all. The letter claims that the emperor had no hand in recent troubles, for these were the work of quarrelsome clerics and monks, self-proclaimed defenders of orthodoxy but in fact liars and sycophants. It is they who have caused division between bishops, and discord between sender and recipient. The emperor then thanks the recipient for his blessing. A decision regarding the recipient's petition, he concludes, will be forthcoming.⁷⁷⁸

This hardly seems a response to the monks' fiery missive of 516, but Theodore's comprehensive editorial work makes it difficult to say much more. There is no specificity anywhere in the letter. The "troubles" are never described; no name, place, or date is given. The letter could be from any emperor to any recipient, regarding a wide number of scenarios. Out to demonstrate the emperor's recognition of Theodosius' spiritual force and authority, Theodore does not retain many scruples along the way.

Anastasius soon returned to his wicked ways.⁷⁷⁹ Here Theodore crafted a remarkable piece of rhetoric: Theodosius resisted the villain yet again, testifying by blood

⁷⁷⁶ Cyril, *VS* 57 (166).

⁷⁷⁷ Theodore, *VThd*, 61 (135).

⁷⁷⁸ Theodore, *VThd*, 61 (135-36).

⁷⁷⁹ "Like a dog returning to its vomit." Theodore, *VThd*, 62 (136).

and proving himself worthy of the martyr's crown. Yet this claim seems immediately insupportable: Theodosius never suffered physical harm, nor indeed persecution of any sort. Theodore, however, warns against misunderstanding: we must judge by anticipated choice (προαιρέσεις), not outcome (ἐκβάσεις).⁷⁸⁰ Theodosius therefore falls into a new category: martyr-by-intent.

All were powerless to resist Anastasius' new decrees. Or perhaps, Theodore muses, they may have desired to yield παρρησία to their leader. Regardless, Theodosius valiantly employed said παρρησία⁷⁸¹ against the absent emperor. Now the archimandrite thundered his mighty proclamation: "four Gospels, four Councils!" Cyril had included this declaration as well, but the scene is quite different. In Cyril's account the pronouncement came at the tail end of John's rally, the punctuation of his triumph. In Theodore's version John and Sabas are absent. Cyril places the assembly at St. Stephen's; Theodore has Theodosius ascend the podium of the Anastasis alone. Theodore also appends a sequel, in which Theodosius is responsible for the insertion of Chalcedon into the diptychs. It is this action that infuriates the emperor, causing him to consider banishing Theodosius – and Theodosius alone.⁷⁸²

In the accounts of Cyril and others the letter had been the final response of the monks to the emperor. In Theodore's version it was an opening salvo. Theodosius soon led an army of abbots against the foes of orthodoxy in city after city. Fortunately Divine Justice struck down the emperor before he could respond, thus preserving Theodosius as

⁷⁸⁰ *Der Heilige Theodosios: Schriften des Theodoros und Kyrillos*, ed. Hermann Usener (Leipzig: Teubner, 1890), 87.

⁷⁸¹ Theodore uses the word twice.

⁷⁸² Theodore, *VThd.*, 62-63 (136-37).

a living memorial of virtue in the holy land. All were amazed; Pope Agapetus and Patriarch Ephraim wrote to Theodosius to honor him and make confession that they shared his faith. Those letters Theodore neglects to include.

Theodore's Anastasian narrative makes a strong case for the dichotomy between hagiography and historicity, but historicity was never his purpose. Theodore's object was to drive home the dramatic sanctity and *παρρησία* of the saint. Never again did he let his foot off the gas. Theodosius, he tells us, is the new Basil, the new Moses, and equal to Elisha. His virtues parallel the ancient patriarchs and saints: Theodosius possesses Moses' governance, Abraham's unconditional obedience, Jacob's simplicity, John the Baptist's asceticism, Peter's fervor, Paul's compassion and servitude, and Job's patience. He is Moses to Kérykos' Joshua, Elijah to his disciples' Elisha.⁷⁸³ The comparisons are driven home in a parade of miracle stories that conclude only on the saint's deathbed. The point is clear: Theodosius is singularly blessed. In no other saint can one find this "acropolis of virtues."⁷⁸⁴ In no other saint can one find such *παρρησία*.

That *παρρησία* is demonstrated by miracle after miracle. Illness, famine, drought, locusts, sterility, endangered children: there is no manner of petition his intercession cannot reach.⁷⁸⁵ Theodore assures us these anecdotes are but few of many. Believing that many of his fellows hungered for such stories, he has chosen these particular stories for the edification of his future readers.⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸³ Theodore, *VThd*, 9 (114); 78 (145); 85 (150); etc. Theodore adds that he is greater than any, because equal to each. Theodore, *VThd*, 88-89 (151-52).

⁷⁸⁴ "ἀκροπόλις τῶν ἀρετῶν." Usener, *Theodosios*, 89.

⁷⁸⁵ Theodore, *VThd*, 71-96 (142-157).

⁷⁸⁶ Theodore, *VThd*, 70 (142).

When it came to the saint’s intercession, Theodore was inclined toward delivering said edification rather bluntly. Some of Theodore’s stories are quite concise, driving this message home in only a few lines. Confidence in the saint’s intercession, Theodore declares pointedly, has brought healing to the terminally ill.⁷⁸⁷ Astonishingly, that intercession was efficacious in the saint’s absence – during his lifetime. Once, Theodore relates, a traveler and his ox were set upon by a lion. The traveler called on Theodosius, and was saved by the saint’s intercession.⁷⁸⁸ In another story, monks in trouble at sea invoked Theodosius’ intercession.⁷⁸⁹ The saint miraculously appeared in a vision and told them to have courage: God would save them.

At this point Theodore has accomplished his narrative goal. Here, he informs his readers, is a mighty hero and powerful patron. Yet the epic tale remains impersonal: fascinating Theodosius’ life may have been, but it had concluded nonetheless. The reader must be convinced this was not so: a relationship with this patron is still available to them. Building these connections, therefore, was Theodore’s second task.

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If demonstrating the saint’s *παρρησία* was the theme of the first act, the point of the sequel was to locate that *παρρησία* in time and space. The relationship between Theodosius and his monastery has been established: the saint looks after his foundations,

⁷⁸⁷ “τῆ πεποιθήσει τῶν αὐτοῦ προσευχῶν...” Usener, *Theodosios*, 86.

⁷⁸⁸ “τῆ τοῦ ὀσίου εὐχῆ ἀβλαβῆς μετὰ τοῦ κτήνους διεφυλάχθη.” Usener, *Theodosios*, 86.

⁷⁸⁹ “Ἀδελφοῖς ἐν θαλάττῃ κινδυνεύουσι καὶ ἐκείνου εὐχας ἐπικαλεσαμέοις...” Usener, *Theodosios*, 85-86.

miraculously providing protection, food, or money at need.⁷⁹⁰ Theodore's account of the archimandrite's last discourse punctuates this theme.⁷⁹¹

The dying saint made a compact with his monks. Were they to remain in the monastery and follow the abbot, he would intercede for them on judgment day. The proof of his continued *παρησία*, he declared, would be the incessant growth of the monastery. In the following passage Theodore offers his own response to Theodosius' final prediction. Once more the hagiographer abandons subtlety, preferring to drive his point home with a sledgehammer:

Therefore, father, your ardent love for God expelled any remaining fear and gave you the ineffable *παρησία* of one who ranks as a son. *Proving this is the oil that flows continuously from your precious body, and the cures it often produces for the sick* [emphasis mine]. Furthermore, this holy monastery which you founded through the grace of God has, through your prayers, come to progress greatly in the eyes of God and men. To this the facts themselves bear witness, for it surpasses all the other monasteries of this country, bettering them in both scale of buildings and the great number of those who wish to be saved here.⁷⁹²

Theodore's message is clear: the monastery itself is proof of its founder's continued *παρησία*. It has grown as the saint foretold, because Theodosius himself has ensured the prophecy's fulfillment. The saint's relationship with the monks continues also, for he will save them from the final judgement:

[Theodore addressing Theodosius:] You fully bring about your promises, which are never false. May you never cease to pray for us, that we may obtain *παρησία* before the inflexible tribunal of Christ, God of our hope, and so be judged worthy to be placed on His right with the sheep.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹⁰ See chapter three.

⁷⁹¹ According to Theodore, with his dying breath Theodosius repeated the declaration of Christ: "Lord, into your hands I commit my spirit." Otherwise, these are the saint's last words.

⁷⁹² From Festugière's French translation. Theodore, *VThd*, 92 (154).

⁷⁹³ From Festugière's French translation. Theodore, *VThd*, 92 (154).

There is more in this vein: the intercession of Theodosius for his monks will ameliorate the inevitably harsh judgment of God. A proper response, therefore, is in order:

What's more, my brothers, we have firm assurance that this great Theodosius, our father, will not cease to do so. What, then, is our duty? We must not stand open-mouthed before such promises, nor give rein to our lusts, lest like foals we be led to the precipice. For the Lord of the Universe shall not deprive us of His mercy *because* [emphasis mine] of the holy prayers of his servant.⁷⁹⁴

Thus far Theodore is speaking to the monks. It was imperative they know that salvation comes through Theodosius, and is tied to his monastery. Perhaps more importantly, salvation and intercession occur *at* his monastery. The institution was the special place of his attention and care, the place where the efficacy of his intercession could be accessed, because of his promise.

The monks, however, were not the whole of Theodore's audience. His text was also published for external readers.⁷⁹⁵ Posthumous miracles were a definitive mark of sanctity, and their inclusion might have been an expectation to this group. The Greek hagiographical tradition of Palestine had incorporated such elements before Theodore; the idea did not spring fully-formed from his brain. We have already seen the brief statement of John Rufus on the subject:

Although the blessed one [Peter the Iberian] had his body laid here, he had [a] dwelling in the heavenly mansions, standing in the spirit before the Lord and serving him with all the saints. There he was offering petitions and prayers and supplications for us with much freedom [of speech (= *parrhesia*)], frequently visiting the brotherhood and protecting and inspiring and guiding [them] and for the most part was singing together with them. To some he appeared personally, both healing the sick and comforting and strengthening those who in sincerity of faith and in purity of [their] ways of life went on the straight [path] and were esteemed worthy to be in such converse with the saints.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁴ From Festugière's French translation. Theodore, *VThd.* 92 (154).

⁷⁹⁵ See final chapter for details on the publication of hagiographic texts.

⁷⁹⁶ John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 192 (279).

This passage may be the direct forebear to Theodore's work. Rufus' attempt to incarnate the saint into his monastery failed for historical reasons beyond his control. Yet he had written in Greek, and the documents issued by the council of 536 make clear that works of and concerning Peter the Iberian were circulating in Judea.⁷⁹⁷ Writing thirty years after Rufus, therefore, Theodore may well have been impacted by his work.

Yet there are no specifics to Rufus' approach. The saint appears to monks, and no real details or examples are given. Theodore's immediate predecessor Paul does even less with the topic. His posthumous miracles all take place shortly after the death of Theognius. They concern a flood following a drought, a larder that fed more people than it could have, and a voice in a waterspout. None of these is connected to a petition, nor does Theognius ever appear.⁷⁹⁸ In this regard, therefore, Rufus' work seems the more direct ancestor to Theodore.

Theodore, however, takes the idea much further than either of his antecedents. He provides an extended example meant to evoke a pattern of behavior. After Theodosius' interment, Theodore narrates, a certain Stephanos came to the monastery seeking exorcism. Seeking deliverance via Theodosius' intercession, the man took up residence in the tomb alongside Theodosius' "precious body."⁷⁹⁹ For days he implored the saint's aid:

With how many tears did he bathe the feet of the saint, crying: 'Have pity on me, man of God. Show that – even after your departure from this life – you never cease to make supplication to God on behalf of those who take refuge in you.

⁷⁹⁷ See chapters four and seven.

⁷⁹⁸ Paul, *VThg*, 22 (161).

⁷⁹⁹ Theodore, *VThd*, 95 (156).

Deliver me from the evil spirit that persecutes me. Do not send me away deprived of the confidence I have ever had in you.⁸⁰⁰

Here is the direct petition that Rufus and Paul lack. Like the growth of the monastery, the subsequent miraculous cure proves that Theodosius' *παρησία* did not cease to function at his death. It could still be accessed – in his monastery – by those who maintain confidence in the saint. The story ends as it should, with the affirmation of the man's belief. God, Theodore reminds us, is accustomed to working miracles through His saint.⁸⁰¹

In life Theodosius had answered petitions of every sort. Perhaps fearing that his audience would lose track of this aspect of this point, Theodore recovered the thread and wove it into a posthumous tapestry:

Give me but a little of your attention, beloved, and see of what sort was this admirable saint. Through his ascent to heaven he had shown beforehand the verdict Heaven would give in his favor. He had since delivered a supplicant from an impure spirit [at his tomb, above]. Hardly was there a prayer [for rain] he has not immediately answered with rain from the sky. Those imperiled at sea he has kept safe and sound, thus making known the Savior to the saved. On land, an infinity of miracles made manifest the brilliance of his glory. Truly, had it been possible to accomplish miracles elsewhere [than land and sea], Theodosius would have done that as well.⁸⁰²

Again and again Theodore hammers home that the saint's full *παρησία* is incarnate at his tomb. No element of the earth had been proof against Theodosius' intercession in life. That reality, Theodore impresses upon his audience, has not been altered by the saint's death. Indeed it has been augmented: as Theodore will explain in his concluding

⁸⁰⁰ From Festugière's French translation. Theodore, *VThd.* 96 (156).

⁸⁰¹ Theodore, *VThd.* 96 (156).

⁸⁰² From Festugière's French translation. Theodore, *VThd.* 96 (156-57).

remarks, Theodosius was now present in the monastery and at God's side, simultaneously.⁸⁰³

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Theodore's final address begins with a mournful cry to his patron saint. All, he declared, now search for Theodosius in vain. Beggars seek their benefactor, fugitives their refuge, and pilgrims their cheerful host.⁸⁰⁴ The laity seek their guide; the fathers their governor. The monks, however, should know better. They should be happy for Theodosius, who now resides with God. Yet they too lament, Theodore explains, for the saint is no longer with them on earth.⁸⁰⁵

They must recall, however, that because of Theodosius they may stand confidently before God. In their dejection, therefore, the monks should recall the voice of Sophronius, who calls them to rise and aspire to true virtue and the principle (ἀρχήν) of life in Christ. True virtue, Theodore interprets, is to be found in Theodosius. Here is an injunction of the first order, he explains, for all virtues are discovered through those the saint had impressed upon his monks. These were "true asceticism with true faith to the highest degree, full and undiluted welcome for paupers and pilgrims,"⁸⁰⁶ and devotion to the divine liturgy. Cheerful attendance on pilgrims, therefore, was a moral imperative.

⁸⁰³ A supposedly western idea. See MacCormack, "*Loca Sancta*," 7ff.

⁸⁰⁴ "οἱ ξένοι τὸν ἱναρὸν ξενοδόχον." The latter could also be given as "innkeeper," or "the one who runs the hostel." Usener, *Theodosios*, 98.

⁸⁰⁵ Theodore, *VThd*, 98 (158).

⁸⁰⁶ In this passage Theodore amends his previous list of three virtues: severity of asceticism, zeal of faith, and ardor of charity (ἀγάπης). Theodore, *VThd*, 97 (157); 99-100 (159).

Such a life was enabled by Theodosius. The saint was now more purely united to Christ, true, but “let no one doubt that our common father is really present to us.”⁸⁰⁷ As formerly with them in body, soon to be more so in the perfected body offered by Christ. Earthly bodies might be abased clay, but even now Theodosius’ body was holy.⁸⁰⁸

Theodore concludes his exhortation with a final address to the saint. The passage recalls two central themes: Theodosius’ intercession brings unity to the monks, and the authority of the saint is bequeathed to Sophronius:

But that’s enough. We assure you, [O Theodosius], of what you knew already before my speech: we are all united in soul to your intercessions. We [therefore] see things the same way, following with prompt obedience – as is proper – the pastor who guides us in your footsteps. He governed this holy flock with you for many years. Now, he has been appointed to office with that same title of pastor.

Therefore [O Theodosius], attach yourself to the pastoral governance of the one you chose to watch over us. Be for him a guide to the things that lead to God. Through him take care of us and ensure our journey to divine pastures, with Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom the glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now an in the ages of ages. Amen.⁸⁰⁹

Theodore resides in the monastery guiding his monks’ identity and activity. The latter specifically included hospitality to pilgrims. The saint’s authority remained also in the person of Sophronius, his chosen successor. By the end of Theodore’s work, the process of institutional incarnation was complete.

In commissioning Theodore’s work Sophronius had advanced hierotopic construction beyond its physical aspects. In this regard the text was a multipurpose instrument, drawing people to the saint’s tomb on two fronts. *Ad intra*, it injected the saint into the monks’ identity and worldview, tying them to the sacred space they shared

⁸⁰⁷ Theodore, *VThd*, 100 (159).

⁸⁰⁸ “ἱεροῦ αὐτοῦ σώματος.” Usener, *Theodosios*, 100.

⁸⁰⁹ From Festugière’s French translation. Theodore, *VThd*, 101 (159).

with Theodosius, and implanting in them the founder's injunction to serve pilgrims. *Ad extra*, the *Life* worked to attract those pilgrims to the monastery. Here in the text, it proclaimed, one could encounter a saint of the first rank. Here in the monastery, it continued, one could access him directly while visiting the Holy Land. Susan Ashbrook-Harvey has argued that Cyril wrote for a high audience, the elites of the major cities.⁸¹⁰ If so, the hagiographer may have learned this tactic from Theodore, whose work had been published years before.

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Judean monasteries had to navigate a changing environment in the sixth century. In a sense nothing had changed: the religious economy of Jerusalem functioned as it had for more than a hundred years. In another sense, however, everything had changed. The loss of the great Judean founders had bereaved their institutions of the upper echelons of elite patronage. The monasteries were forced to refocus on the pilgrimage aspects of their socio-economic context. The survivors were transformed, renovated for an evolved specialization. Many had become inward-looking, focused on past heroes as their great networks broke down. Those that survived in the longer term did so because of the spiritual and material links they had forged with their patron saints.

In some ways these Judean responses hark back to their anti-Chalcedonian forebears. They shared a common emphasis on founder-saints and institutions, a search for ways to grapple with the peculiarities of the Holy Land. The gravity of their

⁸¹⁰ "Cyril is aiming for a high audience, seeking it as far away as Constantinople, he addresses a cosmopolitan and powerful elite, centered in the great cities and their networks of great families." Ashbrook-Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis*, 136.

situations, however, widened the gap between them. The Judeans were no longer the tightly-bonded allies of the patriarchate, but neither were they its enemies. They had incurred no condemnation, suffered no regional ejection. Judean problems were primarily economic. While John Rufus was forced to abandon his institutional strategy, they could emphasize theirs.

In all such cases, however, such responses were survival strategies adapted to and embedded within the Holy Land. It is in this light too that we must understand the works of Cyril of Scythopolis. To him, at last, we turn.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CYRIL OF SCYTHOPOLIS

Cyril's parents did not bestow a "classical" education on their son. Earmarked for a monk, the boy was given the Christian formation appropriate to life in a Sabaite institution.⁸¹¹ Rather than "pagan" rhetorical methodologies, therefore, Cyril's works are sprinkled with constructions from Scripture, saints' *Lives*, and other available Christian texts.⁸¹² His hagiographic reading was apparently quite broad, ranging from foreign classics like the *Life of Antony* to a fair assortment of local works. He admits, for example, to reading Paul and Theodore.⁸¹³ He almost certainly read Rufus as well.

Thirty years ago Flusin recreated Cyril's library from currently extant Greek texts. That approach came under scrutiny, however, as scholars began to study Greek texts extant in Cyril's day. Rufus' compositions were among these,⁸¹⁴ and some have argued that Cyril derived imagery from them.⁸¹⁵ By the early 2000s Flusin admitted the oversight: Cyril was versed in Rufus' work.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹¹ Binns, *Ascetics*, 27-29; Price, *Lives*, xlviii.

⁸¹² Flusin, *Miracle et Histoire*, 41-86.

⁸¹³ "...the most venerable Theodore, the most pious bishop of the city of Petra, who became [Theodosius'] disciple and is conspicuous for monastic and episcopal virtues, has written at length, with both clarity and accuracy, about his life pleasing to God." Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 4 (266). Cyril, however, will contradict Theodore's account at nearly every turn. See below.

"But what need have I of further words about the famous Theognius, especially since Abba Paul, solitary of the city of Elusa, a man radiant in monastic virtues and orthodox doctrines who illuminates our Godly steps by his life and teaching, has preceded me in writing the life of the same blessed Theognius both accurately and comprehensively?" Cyril, *Life of Theognius*, 271. Here too Cyril will have a contextualizing amendment to offer.

⁸¹⁴ See chapter four.

⁸¹⁵ E.g. the presentation of Euthymius' birth, and imagery of unity against Anastasius. Horn, *Asceticism*, 6-7, 55; Flusin, "L'Hagiographie Palestinienne," 25ff; Steppa, *Rufus*, 110ff; and John Rufus, *Life of Peter*, 132 n1.

⁸¹⁶ Flusin, "L'Hagiographie Palestinienne," 25ff.

In the *Life of Peter* Cyril found a new genre well-suited to his needs. Rufus' ostensible hagiography was actually factional history fashioned into a tale of heroes and villains; Cyril adapted this approach to craft a saga of networks: first interpersonal, then institutional. A wealth of oral and textual evidence provided his texts with structural support, and standard Christian conventions ornamented the whole.⁸¹⁷ Like Rufus, Cyril attempted few incursions into the realms of profundity: imperial and conciliar decrees took the place of spiritual teaching,⁸¹⁸ while heresiological polemic stood in for theological argument.⁸¹⁹ There were differences too: Rufus' character assassinations put Cyril in the shade. Such frontal assaults were not Rufus' legacy to Cyril. In the field of historical positioning, however, Cyril proved an apt pupil.

Cyril's *Lives* were the next phase of a developing Palestinian genre. His forebears possessed the rhetorical training he lacked; Cyril absorbed a new hagiographic rhetoric from them. He would better his teachers, adopting their methods and stylizations to provide the definitive narrative of their own subjects. The uses of that narrative, however, have been the subject of debate.

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Scholars of anti-Chalcedonian literature have taken disapproving notice of Cyril's historical manipulations. Anti-Chalcedonian narrative, they assert, is obscured by Cyril's efforts to place Euthymius and Sabas on the right side of history. Strongly favoring the

⁸¹⁷ Cf. Cyril's use of the *Life of Antony* to bolster Sabas' credentials. Cyril, *VS*, 27 (119).

⁸¹⁸ See chapter two.

⁸¹⁹ This could have been representative of a team effort, in which other Sabaite monks were commissioned to carry the faction's theological torch: "The fissiparous impiety of [the Origenist factions] has been recorded at the present time in a more detailed and comprehensive account by some men, dear to God, of our flock receiving the refutation it deserves." Cyril, *VS*, 89 (206).

anti-Chalcedonian narrative, some have argued that Rufus' account represents the accurate perspective,⁸²⁰ while others have levelled *ad hominem* attacks against those who accept Cyril's historicity.⁸²¹

The stress laid on Cyril's manipulation of fifth-century events seems exaggerated. Those were Rufus' battles. For him the defeats were fresh and raw; his omnipresent polemic is born of hurt, loss, and need. Not so Cyril. Rufus had failed to radicalize the younger generation fifty years after Chalcedon; Cyril stood at twice that distance. He wasn't alive for the fight against Anastasius; his parents hadn't been born when Martyrius expelled the anti-Chalcedonians. Cyril's contemporaries debated the interpretation of Chalcedon, not its validity. It was Rufus who sought factional legitimacy through Chalcedonian narrative. Cyril was concerned with the glory and positioning of his heroes, not the validity of their actions. He borrowed Rufus' methods, not his circumstances or motives.

The Origenist conflict is a different case: this *was* Cyril's fight. Enlisted at 19, Cyril battled this foe until war's end twelve years later. Only three years separated his composition from the recapture of the New Laura. Origenist sympathizers probably still dwelt in Sabaite monasteries: shaping this narrative *mattered* in a pressing way.

The heavy-handedness of that narrative, however, does not mean it was made from whole cloth. Cyril heavily colored his facts, but the events were too recent for him to invent many new ones. His challenge was to interpret the struggle rather than fictionalize it. Supporting evidence often bears this out, whether the issue be Sabas'

⁸²⁰ For example, Flusin, "L'Hagiographie Palestinienne," 30-31, 38-39, 44-47.

⁸²¹ For example, Steppa, *John Rufus*, xxvii; and Horn, *Asceticism*, 55.

abandonment of Leontius, the fallout of Gaza in 540, or the roles of Ascidas and Conon.⁸²² Casting a critical eye on Cyril's account, therefore, is not equivalent to overturning his narrative.

Regardless, Cyril's anti-Chalcedonian and Origenist histories have been examined elsewhere. Rather than literary battles against past enemies, I intend to focus on Cyril's use of historical narrative to undermine present rivals. Cyril's contemporaries were struggling to adapt to a changing environment. When their strategies overlapped, such institutions could find themselves competing for finite resources. That competition was the greatest *contemporary* danger to the beleaguered, shrunken Sabaite network of 558. Cyril's work was part of a defense against neighboring competitors, especially the Theodosians of the Great Cenobium.

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Cyril contextualized the conflicts of his desert, using them to position his heroes *vis à vis* the "villains." In addition, however, Cyril positioned his heroes in relation to other heroes. More than one local tradition had fielded Chalcedonian, non-Origenist holy men over the previous century. Some of these had worked and fought alongside the Euthymians and Sabaites. They provided Cyril's most delicate task: not to villainize these figures or push them offstage, but to place them one step down on the podium.

This could mean different things. Some holy men could be rhetorically enveloped within Sabaite folds. They could be exalted: shining stars to be placed firmly within the Sabaite constellation. Those without such connections needed to be contextualized, and

⁸²² See chapter four.

independent agents shown not to be. Holy men of other traditions must be simultaneously praised and subordinated to their Euthymian or Sabaite peers. That task was especially urgent where other traditions had produced hagiographies of their own. Cyril repositioned at least seven holy men in this way. Of these, lesser figures were primarily contextualized in Cyril's minor *Lives*, while greater threats were dealt with over the whole of Cyril's corpus.

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At first glance the minor *Lives* appear lesser, later additions to Cyril's corpus. They lack the grand narratives of the *Lives* of Euthymius and Sabas, either of which is longer than the others together. It is tempting to relegate them to a supporting role; at least one scholar has separated them from the *Life of Sabas* entirely.⁸²³ The minor *Lives*, however, are no burden to Cyril's corpus. Rather they constitute a unified work constructed around a central theme: completion of the contextualizations begun in the *Lives* of Euthymius and Sabas. United in purpose, each life is dedicated to the overt praise and covert repositioning of a single individual. In this category fall the *Lives* of John the Hesychast, Cyriacus, Abraamius, Gerasimus, and Theognius.

The central theme of these works is expressed in the first line of the first *Life*: "First in my account I place Abba John, solitary of the laura of blessed Sabas..."⁸²⁴ John the Hesychast was many things: bishop, holy man, veteran of the Origenist war and, lest we forget, personal friend of Cyril's family. Yet none of these are his primary

⁸²³ Hombergen, *Controversy*.

⁸²⁴ In this *Life* reestablishes that the *Life of Euthymius* was his first composition, and the *Life of Sabas* his second. He also takes care to place the *Life of John the Hesychast* (hereafter *VJH*) in the first rank of the minor *Lives*. Cyril, *VJH*, 1 (220); 14 (231).

characteristic. Before establishing John's holiness, Cyril placed him in his proper environment. Throughout the *Life* he will stress John's personal connections to Sabas and institutional connections to the Great Laura. The Great Laura was John's place; Cyril will revisit this fact regularly through the entirety of the *Life*.

John was born to privilege. Scions of a wealthy Armenian family, he and his siblings grew into their expected places in elite Byzantine society. John's brother and nephew rose high in imperial service, his sister married the Armenian governor Pasinicus, and John himself was bishop of Colonia by 18. Sadly, the death of John's sister disrupted this pattern of success. Cyril holds that John's erstwhile brother-in-law Pasinicus was a pagan and a villain, now freed by his wife's death to despoil churches to his heart's content. John heroically opposed Pasinicus, but to his cost:

Suffering terrible affliction as a result, the righteous one was forced to go up to Constantinople. After arriving there and securing the interests of his church with the assistance of [Patriarch] Euphremius... [John] conceived the plan pleasing to God of withdrawing to the holy city and living by himself in isolation from the affairs of this life.⁸²⁵

Unexpectedly, Cyril chose not to dwell on John's triumph over a pagan official. He may have lacked the details, or thought a fuller story would distract from his larger theme.

Alternatively, perhaps "securing the interests of the church" meant John's exile or flight.

Regardless, the bishop now sought refuge in Palestine.

John lodged in a hostel outside Jerusalem. Disappointed to find these accommodations to be worldly and bustling, John begged God for guidance. One night an answer came:

⁸²⁵ Cyril, *VJH*, 4 (223).

...[John] suddenly beheld approaching him a star of light in the shape of a cross, and heard out of this light a voice saying, 'If you wish to be saved, follow this light.' Believing the voice, he set off immediately and followed that light. Under the guidance of the light he came to the Great Laura of our sainted father Sabas.⁸²⁶

Concealing his rank from Sabas, John was placed under the Laura's steward.⁸²⁷ Assigned to menial labor, John cooked and hauled stones for the craftsmen who were building the monastery's hostel.⁸²⁸ Shortly thereafter he performed the same tasks for the construction of Castellium.⁸²⁹ Cyril's point is clear: John had been instrumental in constructing the Sabaite institutional network – literally.

Quickly ascending the Sabaite ranks, John was given the administration of the hostels he helped to build. Sabas eventually granted John's request to become an anchorite, but after three years appointed him steward of the entire Laura. John must have continued to impress, for in 498 Sabas took him to Elias, intending to foist the priesthood upon him.⁸³⁰

Escaping ordination meant revealing his secret to the patriarch, but Elias agreed to hold the matter in confidence. Fortunately God saw fit to inform Sabas via angelic messenger. Sabas too promised secrecy, but John was troubled. Thereafter he refused to leave his cell for four years, emerging only when Elias arrived to dedicate the Laura's new church. The patriarch, Cyril declares, fell in love with John's wisdom and conversation, and esteemed him thereafter.⁸³¹ Now enmeshed in the Sabaite web, John

⁸²⁶ Cyril, *VJH*, 5 (223).

⁸²⁷ Cyril quickly contextualizes Sabas' failure to perceive the truth about John. Cyril, *VJH*, 5 (224).

⁸²⁸ Cyril, *VJH*, 5 (224).

⁸²⁹ Cyril, *VJH*, 6 (224).

⁸³⁰ Cyril, *VJH*, 6-8 (224-26).

⁸³¹ Cyril, *VJH*, 8-10 (226-28).

withdrew to Roubâ when rebellion struck the Laura. He returned years later, when Sabas came to collect him.⁸³²

John's secret was revealed during the pilgrimage of Archbishop Aetherius of Ephesus. After completing the circuit,⁸³³ Aetherius found his departure blocked by divine messenger:

'It is inadmissible for you to sail unless you return to the holy city, go to the laura of Abba Sabas, and meet John the solitary, a righteous and virtuous man, a bishop abounding in worldly wealth [who humbled himself for God].'⁸³⁴

Going to the Great Laura, Aetherius revealed this vision to the fathers and stayed with John for two days. Compelling the Hesychast to divulge his secret, he then revealed it to the fathers.⁸³⁵ Although Cyril trips over who knew the secret and when, we might infer another version of the story. Aetherius and John were both Anatolian bishops. John's dispute with Pasinicus had gone all the way to court; Aetherius was likely familiar with it. Learning of John's location while in Jerusalem, he went to visit his erstwhile colleague. If so, the appearance of this prominent visitor would have revealed John's secret.

Cyril shaped Sabas' death as a turning point in John's life. As with Theodore's Theodosius, this was a transformation of withdrawn holy man into saintly warrior:

While [John] was in this state of despondency [for not seeing Sabas before his death], and in tears was lamenting being deprived of the father, our father Sabas appeared to him in his sleep and said to him, 'do not be distressed, father John, about my death. Even if I have been separated from you in flesh, I am with you in spirit.' John exclaimed, 'Entreat the Master to take me too.' The blessed Sabas

⁸³² During his time in the desert John had collected disciples, performed miracles, and flown through the air like Habukkuk. Cyril, *VJH* 11-13 (228-31).

⁸³³ During his sojourn Aetherius made the customary veneration, donations to the poor, and benefices to local monasteries. Cyril, *VJH*, 15 (232).

⁸³⁴ Cyril, *VJH*, 15 (232).

⁸³⁵ Cyril, *VJH*, 15 (232-33).

replied, ‘It is not possible for this to happen now. For tribulation is about to descend most grievously on the laura, and God wants you in remain in the flesh, so as to console and strengthen those contending manfully on behalf of the faith.’ On seeing and hearing all this, the inspired John was overjoyed and cast off his despondency about the father, except that he was concerned about the tribulation that had been mentioned.⁸³⁶

We have already seen Cyril’s account of John’s part in the Sabaite resistance.⁸³⁷ Here was the contextualization of that role: John was acting on Sabas’ orders, a decorated field officer committed to the plan of his commanding general. Proper positioning must be maintained: John was truly great, but his greatness is that of a talented, loyal subordinate.

Other than the Origenist conflict, the remainder of the *Life* is given to John’s miracle stories. In accord with his standing as a holy man, the Hesychast flew through the air, exorcised evil spirits, converted heretics, and spiritually travelled to Bethlehem in manner reminiscent of Peter the Iberian.⁸³⁸ There is one miracle, however, that Cyril would like to emphasize above the rest.

John’s cell in the Laura was high on a dry cliff, a place with neither water nor soil. Nevertheless, the Hesychast saw fit to make spiritual and botanical trial of his locale:

One day, taking the seed of a fig, the holy elder said to his disciples Theodore and John, ‘Listen to me, my children. If God in his mercy gives grace to this seed and power to this rock to bear fruit, know that he bestows on me as a gift the kingdom of heaven.’ Saying this he pressed the fig against the smooth rock. The same God who ordered the rod of Aaron, despite its dryness, to grow and flower, ordered this smooth and utterly dry rock to bring forth, so as to show future generations what grace his servant had attained. Seeing the shoot, the elder gave thanks to God with tears. The shoot, growing gradually in height and reaching the roof, which it even covered over, proceeded, in brief, with the passing of time to produce, lo and behold, three figs. Taking and kissing these with tears, the elder

⁸³⁶ Cyril, *VJH*, 16 (233-34).

⁸³⁷ See chapter four.

⁸³⁸ Cyril, *VJH*, 12-13 (229-31); 17-19 (234-35); 21-24 (237-39).

ate them, rendering thanks to God for his assurance, and giving a little of them to his disciples. Observe how this tree proclaims its witness to the elder's virtue.⁸³⁹

Cyril himself searched in vain for a fissure in which the roots might have grown. There was none. This was a miracle, proof of John's sanctity and a permanent tie between saint and Laura. It is not, however, proof of posthumous intercessory efficacy. Cyril consistently downplayed John's role as intercessor, giving enough examples to establish him as a holy man, but no more. John "offers petitions" (πολλὰ ἐδεήθην)⁸⁴⁰ for his disciples' safety. His prayer is sought (τῆς αὐτοῦ εὐχῆς)⁸⁴¹ to convert a heretic. Most directly, John intercedes⁸⁴² for a possessed child (ποιήσας εὐχὴν),⁸⁴³ but even here he is checked: the child is actually cured by oil from the Holy Cross. Never once does Cyril apply *παρρησία* to John.⁸⁴⁴ The choice is deliberate: the *παρρησία* of Euthymius and Sabas are frequent topics, but the term never appears in *any* of the minor *Lives*. Cyril is not constructing John as an ideal holy man, but an ideal *Sabaite* holy man. Obedience to Sabas was the foundation of all John's activity. Sent to the archimandrite by divine messenger, John spent many years helping to build and administrate Sabaite monasteries. He was later entrusted by the glorified Sabas to safeguard those monasteries against the Origenist menace. John's literary role, therefore, is to undergird the claim of the Sabaites to Sabas' institutional network.

⁸³⁹ Cyril, *VJH*, 25 (239-40).

⁸⁴⁰ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 215.

⁸⁴¹ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 219.

⁸⁴² In preference to Price's translation of this phrase as "prays over." Cyril, *VJH*, 21 (237).

⁸⁴³ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 218.

⁸⁴⁴ The earlier phrase: "'Listen to me, my children. If God in his mercy gives grace to this seed and power to this rock to bear fruit, know that he bestows on me as a gift the kingdom of heaven,'" is interpreted by Price as "equivalent to the gift of *παρρησία* in the *Lives* of Euthymius and Sabas." Price, *Lives*, 244 n28. As he declines to support his statement, or account for the Cyril's consistent choice against that word for *anyone other than* Euthymius and Sabas, I have elected not to adopt his argument.

John died surrounded by the Laura's fathers. His death scene contains a seeming *non sequitur*:

When [John's] death was drawing near, the patriarch sent a summons to Abba Conon the superior, a man who loved God and who was full of discretion as well as being perfect in the love of God, and sent him to Ascalon; with him [Conon] took a disciple of the holy elder. When the time of [John's] death arrived, the fathers hastened to him...⁸⁴⁵

Cyril is not trying to excuse Conon's absence; the passage appears as seemingly random praise for the abbot. Not so. In fact John's death is a reminder of John's role. Conon is praised above John to subordinate the Hesychast to the Sabaite faction; that John's disciple now entered Conon's service underscores that point. John's death is the final punctuation of Cyril's theme: John's *Life*, and thereby John's life, was not about John.

The Hesychast died as he lived, a Sabaite of the Great Laura. His credentials had eased Cyril's task, but the resumes of the remaining holy men were not so forgiving. Two were of disputed legacy. The others were not disputed at all, their own traditions' claims being firmly established. Two tasks therefore remained to Cyril: to appropriate the former, and to subordinate the latter.

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The first group consisted of Cyriacus and Abraamius, monks of Sabaite persuasion possessing no ties to the remaining Sabaite monasteries. Although formed in Euthymius' laura, Cyriacus spent most of his life in Souka, which by Cyril's day was developing Cyriacus' holy sites. Abraamius, on the other hand, had long dwelt in the monastery of the Scholarius, which had fallen out of Cyril's narrative soon after its

⁸⁴⁵ Cyril, *VJH*, 28 (242).

founding. Absent in Cyril's tale of the Origenist war, this monastery was likely not part of the Sabaites' remaining institutional network. Cyril's first task, then, was to tie these two to the Sabaite faction, its remaining institutions, or both.

Cyril contextualized Cyriacus' Soukan affiliation by highlighting the saint's early formation. The relationships formed at that time, Cyril would demonstrate, determined the course of Cyriacus' life. As in the *Life of John*, Cyril established these ties in the first sentence:

Of the anchorite, best of all anchorites, Cyriacus I made repeated mention in the account I gave of the great Euthymius.⁸⁴⁶

The relationship between the two saints would define Cyriacus' *Life*. That process began even before their first meeting:

After spending the winter there, the servant of God Cyriacus conceived the desire to settle in the desert. Hearing from virtually everybody about the godly Euthymius, he asked [the abbot] to be sent on his way with [the abbot's] blessing.⁸⁴⁷

God was refining Cyriacus' desires: early yearnings for Jerusalemite asceticism, he was beginning to understand, were best realized under Euthymian tutelage.

After receiving his abbot's blessing Cyriacus travelled to "the laura of the great Euthymius," and soon "made obeisance [προσεκύνησε] to the great Euthymius and was clothed by his holy hands in the habit."⁸⁴⁸ As Euthymian policy forbade the presence of

⁸⁴⁶ Cyril, *Life of Cyriacus* (hereafter *VCyr*) 1 (245). Price repeatedly translates Cyril's variations on Εὐθυμίου τοῦ μεγάλου as "the great Euthymius." Although I have let his version stand, I find the established tradition more convincing. Cyril was fashioning a title for his saint: "Euthymius the Great." Price translates this construction similarly in regard to other saints, e.g. "Theodosius the Great," in *VE* 40 (57).

⁸⁴⁷ Cyril, *VCyr*, 3 (247).

⁸⁴⁸ Cyril, *VCyr*, 4 (247).

youths in the laura, however, the young Cyriacus was sent to Gerasimus in the Jordan.⁸⁴⁹ The latter was impressed by the young man, and so included him in Euthymius' annual retreats. There the two rubbed elbows with the Euthymian inner circle, "receiving communion each Sunday from the hands of the great Euthymius."⁸⁵⁰ They attended Euthymius' funeral together, and following Gerasimus' death in 475, Cyriacus successfully applied for an anchorite's cell in Euthymius' laura.⁸⁵¹ There he labored for ten years, helping transform the laura to a cenobium. Preferring the anchoritic lifestyle for himself, however, Cyriacus left for Souka in 485. There he occupied various posts, was ordained a priest, and finally withdrew to what solitude his growing fame allowed.⁸⁵²

Cyril spends little time on Cyriacus' ascetic labors and miracles. The saint's intercessory role is softened also: thrice he calls upon God,⁸⁵³ once prays over a disciple,⁸⁵⁴ and once intercedes on a supplicant's behalf.⁸⁵⁵ Once again, however, the accompanying miracle is actually effected by oil from the Holy Cross. Never does Cyriacus act with *παρρησία*; any "bold speech" is directed against the Origenists in the form of lengthy doctrinal condemnations and narrations of the villainy practiced by Nonnus, Leontius, and their associates. Extended space is provided for Cyriacus' relationships with anti-Origenist allies, i.e. the Sabaites. Cyril dwells on Cyriacus'

⁸⁴⁹ Cyril, *VCyr*, 4 (247). Cyril claims Cyriacus was sent to Gerasimus because Theoctistus had already died. The choice may be an expression of Euthymius' preference for interpersonal relationships: he had been close to both Theoctistus and Gerasimus: the former had passed on, the latter had not. Regardless, the choice allowed Cyril to recall the tie between Euthymius and Gerasimus, while also minimizing the importance of Theoctistus' monastery following its founder's death. See below.

⁸⁵⁰ Cyril, *VCyr*, 5 (248).

⁸⁵¹ Cyril, *VCyr*, 5 (248).

⁸⁵² Cyril, *VCyr*, 6ff (248ff).

⁸⁵³ "παρακάλεσεν τὸν θεὸν;" "τοῦ Χριστοῦ χρώμενος;" πρὸς τὸν θεὸν παρεκάλει." Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 227-28, 232.

⁸⁵⁴ "ἐπευξάμενος." Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 227.

⁸⁵⁵ "εὐχὴν ἐποίησαν." Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 228.

wartime correspondence with John the Hesychast, his own role as messenger, and the grounds for the budding bond between himself and Cyriacus:⁸⁵⁶

[Cyriacus] the servant of God, overjoyed at learning that I am of the great monastery of blessed Euthymius, said to me, ‘See, you are of the same cenobium as I.’⁸⁵⁷

A subsequent meeting played out similarly:

On seeing us, the elder was overjoyed and said, ‘Here is Cyril, of the same cenobium as myself!’⁸⁵⁸

In both cases the comment springboards Cyriacus’ reminisces about Euthymius and Sabas. Cyriacus’ time in their inner circle had made him an ideal source for – and device in – Cyril’s narrative.

The point is clear: Cyriacus was a Sabaite. His time in Souka was incidental, for his character, identity, and connections were formed via Euthymian relationships. Cyriacus had been habited by Euthymius, belonged to his inner circle, and labored to transform his monastery. He later lined up with Euthymius’ Sabaite successors, going so far as to eject their opponents from Souka⁸⁵⁹ and serve as confidant and advisor to Sabaite leadership (John). His instant bond with Cyril was based on mutual institutional affiliation, thus tying him to the monastery of Euthymius.⁸⁶⁰ No posthumous miracles, intercessions, or petitions grace this narrative: by the time of Cyriacus’ death his *Life* has served its purpose. Cyril had no desire to paint Cyriacus as a heavenly intercessor, particularly in light of his final resting place in Souka. Instead, and once again, Cyril

⁸⁵⁶ Cyril, *VCyr*, 11-15 (252-55).

⁸⁵⁷ Cyril, *VCyr*, 15 (255).

⁸⁵⁸ Cyril, *VCyr*, 16 (255).

⁸⁵⁹ See chapter four.

⁸⁶⁰ A final reminder of that affiliation is found in the *Life*’s concluding summary. Cyril, *VCyr*, 20 (258-59).

successfully illuminated the life of a Sabaite war hero, thereby reenlisting the Soukan holy man into permanent Sabaite service.

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At first blush Abraamius seems almost a hagiographic afterthought. Neither the saint nor his monastery play any role in the Sabaite factional narrative. Indeed, other than his own *Life* Abraamius makes only one brief appearance in the whole Cyrillian corpus.⁸⁶¹ To make sense of his presence we must recall the shifting socio-economic circumstances of sixth-century Judea. Similar adaptive strategies brought institutional competition, and the monastery of the Scholarius was a likely competitor. Abraamius was its holy man, and to bring him into Sabaite alignment Cyril had to emphasize – and exaggerate – his Sabaite connections.

Rather than spend time on Abraamius' youth, Cyril quickly transitions to the saint's early career. The young Abraamius, it appears, was the favorite of his abbot. The latter recommended him to the *comes* John, who was busily transforming the church in Cratea into a family affair. Having already secured Cratea's episcopacy for his brother Plato, John sought to build a monastery at his parents' tomb. The abbot's favor made Abraamius the superior of that monastery, which he governed for the next decade.⁸⁶²

Cyril claims that Abraamius was unsettled by his growing fame, and so fled to Jerusalem in 518. Luck or grace was with this fugitive, however, for he fell in with John

⁸⁶¹ Abraamius makes the briefest of appearances in the *Life of Sabas*. After Sabas built the monastery of the Scholarius, Cyril notes that: "Into this cenobium the *scholarius* attracted a large community, and it is to this community that belongs the venerable Abraamius, bishop of Cratea." Cyril, *VS*, 38 (137).

⁸⁶² Cyril, *Life of Abraamius* (hereafter *VAbr*), 1-2 (273-74).

the Scholarius while praying at the Anastasis.⁸⁶³ John took Abraamius to Sabas at the hostel of the Great Laura and, with his master's permission, enrolled Abraamius in his monastery. There Abraamius would be enriched through obedience to Sabas' chosen elders.⁸⁶⁴

Not all were pleased at Abraamius' newfound joy. Aggravated at Abraamius' absence, Bishop Plato sent one Olympius to fetch him back. The opposite occurred: Abraamius' discourse and the Sabaites' example convinced Olympius to stay. The determining factor, however, came when Olympius was:

...specially illuminated by the dazzling grace of our sainted father Sabas, who was making the Tower into a cenobium at this time and taking great care of these fathers.⁸⁶⁵

This monastery, Cyril reminds us, was a Sabaite environment. Abraamius lived in a Sabaite monastery, staffed with Sabaite elders, maintained by Sabaite largesse. Transformed by this milieu, Olympius joined his friend on the Sabaite roll.

Bishop Plato was not amused. His summons unanswered, Plato retaliated by excommunicating Abraamius. The latter sought aid from the Scholarius, who in turn went to Sabas. When the archimandrite brought the matter before Elias, however, the patriarch sided with Plato. Abraamius was sent to Cratea, where Plato restored his wayward sheep to community and his former post. When the bishop died shortly thereafter, Abraamius was pressed into service as his successor.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ Alternatively, as John had been an official in Constantinople, and Abraamius a young monk in Constantinople, and the *comes* an official in Constantinople, Abraamius may have had a previous connection to the Scholarius, and so looked him up.

⁸⁶⁴ Cyril, *V Abr*, 3 (274-75).

⁸⁶⁵ Cyril, *V Abr*, 4 (275).

⁸⁶⁶ Cyril, *V Abr*, 5 (276).

For fifteen years Bishop Abraamius performed works of charity, holiness, and ecclesiastical diplomacy in Cratea. Cyril declines to list them. Perhaps fearing to draw attention to pious actions performed outside a Sabaitic context, he does his readers a favor:

At this point, out of consideration for brevity, I shall pass over in silence the individual pious acts performed by him as bishop...⁸⁶⁷

Judea, not Cratea, is the proper locus for Cyril's stories. Accordingly, he quickly shifts attention to Abraamius' longing for the desert. In agony of indecision, Abraamius asked God for a sign.

He did not have to wait long. Forced to the capital on business, Abraamius soon received his answer:

On his arrival at Constantinople, [Abraamius] heard that our father the lord Sabas was there. Burning with desire to see [Sabas], he began to look for him eagerly and, when he could not find the beloved elder, made inquiries about him. He discovered that three days before his own arrival at Constantinople Sabas had left for Jerusalem. While he was keenly grieving at not having found him, the following night in his sleep he saw Sabas, who said to him, 'Do not regret so bitterly having missed me at Constantinople. If it is indeed your wish to be relieved of the cares of this life, return to your monastery and there you will find rest.'⁸⁶⁸

Joyful reunion with Olympius and the Scholarius followed, and here the *Life* begins to draw to a close.

Methodologically speaking, the *Life of Abraamius* is an odd duck. In every other *Life* Cyril names witnesses, supporting texts, or both; only here does he utterly eschew his customary citations. This abandonment of established *modus operandi* heightens the

⁸⁶⁷ Cyril, *V Abr.*, 6 (276-77).

⁸⁶⁸ Cyril, *V Abr.*, 7 (277).

sense that the *Life of Abraamius* was a rushed job, a hastily crafted and ill-fitting final piece to the puzzle. Indeed, the *Life of Abraamius* provides a rare opportunity to catch Cyril out. Cyril places Abraamius' vision four days after Sabas' departure in 530. He later adds that Abraamius had been back in Palestine a year when Sabas died in 532. The *acta* of Constantinople 536, however, list Bishop Abraamius of Cratea as a present participant.⁸⁶⁹ Abraamius' desire to see Sabas, together with the accompanying dream, are crafted specifically to place him firmly within a Sabaite context.

Abraamius' miracles are few and short: the saint "ordered" a demon to depart in the name of Christ; his seat in church cured a hemorrhage.⁸⁷⁰ The stories feel perfunctory, necessary sidelines to Cyril's presentation of Abraamius as a teacher and physician. Of course, at no point does Cyril ascribe Abraamius *παρρησία*, posthumous miracles, or posthumous petitions. The *Life* concludes with a vague statement of Abraamius' death; neither the death scene nor further commentary merit inclusion. This last *Life*, then, serves a single purpose: the subordination of Abraamius and his monastery to the great Sabas, patron of the Sabaite faction.

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Cyril's minor *Lives* are unified by motive and method, but separated by cases. Each saint was a different challenge, requiring the author to adapt a range of creative variations. John, for example, held secure Sabaite credentials. Cyriacus' credentials, on the other hand, were disputed. Abraamius' were expired. The latter *Life* was further marked by its hasty composition. The *Life of Gerasimus*, however, is a separate case.

⁸⁶⁹ A point first noticed by Price: *Lives*, 281 n10.

⁸⁷⁰ Cyril, *VAb*, 9 (279).

Gerasimus was neither Euthymian nor Sabaite. Furthermore, there is debate regarding whether Cyril wrote this *Life* at all.⁸⁷¹ Although final resolution to that question is beyond our scope, the categories employed above may yield a preponderance of evidence. The *Lives* of John, Cyriacus, and Abraamius were crafted to envelop or subordinate local holy men into the Sabaite narrative. Cyril minimized the miracles of these figures, denied them *παρρησία*, and omitted any possible posthumous petitions or miracles. All three of these elements are also present in the *Life of Gerasimus*, and others besides.

The *Life* itself is rather bland. A virtuous youth, Gerasimus made permanent pilgrimage to Palestine, founded a monastery, and established a Rule. Early sections of the text focus largely on his methods of governance. Gerasimus himself neither performs miracles nor holds *παρρησία*. He is given no death scene, receives no posthumous petitions, and performs no posthumous miracles. The *Life* concludes with the tale of a lion who followed Gerasimus in life, and was distraught unto death after his passing. Only four Judean monks appear alongside the saint. Two are his followers, but these receive the briefest of nods: Sabbatios directs the lion to Gerasimus' grave, and Eugene is named successor in the *Life's* penultimate sentence. The other two – Euthymius and Cyriacus – receive fuller treatment.

Two other facets of the *Life* argue for Cyrillian authorship: regular subordination to Euthymius, and consistent usage of passages from other Cyrillian works. Both elements appear from the *Life's* first section, in which Gerasimus falls into anti-

⁸⁷¹ See introduction.

Chalcedonian heresy before being rescued by Euthymius. It seems unlikely that Gerasimus' own monks would open the *Life* in this fashion. Yet the passage echoes Cyril in more than pitch. A side-by-side examination of the *Lives* of Gerasimus and Euthymius demonstrates that content, vocabulary, and sentence structure are nearly identical in a number of places. Regarding Gerasimus' quest for the anchoritic life in the Jordan, for example, the texts employ the same language:

Life of Euthymius (hereafter *VE*): τὸν ἀναχωρητικὸν μετήρχετο βίον⁸⁷²
Life of Gerasimus (hereafter *VGer*): τὸν ἀναχωρητικὸν μετερχόμενος βίον⁸⁷³

Descriptions of Gerasimus' descent into heresy offer more compelling evidence. In both accounts he and the other anchorites of the desert were “seduced” by the “evil teaching” of the enemy:

VE: μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀναχωρητῶν συνυπήχθη μὲν τῇ Θεοδοσίου
κακοδιδασκαλίᾳ⁸⁷⁴
VGer: μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τῆς ἐρήμου ἀναχωρητῶν συνυπήχθη τῇ τῶν Ἀποσχιστῶν
κακοδιδασκαλίᾳ⁸⁷⁵

In language and structure the two statements are nearly identical; the substitution of “the Aposchists” for their leader “Theodosius” is the only difference of substance. Resolution appears in parallel form also: in both cases Gerasimus is “persuaded” by Euthymius to accept the Conciliar definition:

VE: ἐπέισθη συνθέσθαι τῷ ἐκτεθέντι ὄρω ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν Χαλκηδόνι συνόδου⁸⁷⁶
VGer: ἐπέισθη συνθέσθαι τῷ ὄρω τῷ ἐκτεθέντι ὑπὸ τῆς οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷² Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 41.

⁸⁷³ *Vita Sancti Gerasimi anonyma* (hereafter *VGer*), 1 (176).

⁸⁷⁴ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 41.

⁸⁷⁵ *VGer*, 1 (176).

⁸⁷⁶ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 41.

⁸⁷⁷ *VGer*, 1 (176).

Such parallels, therefore, enable suspicion that this *Life* was either written by Cyril or drawn from his work.

Further examples appear in an episode related by Cyriacus, the *Life*'s only attributed witness.⁸⁷⁸ Recalling his early meeting with Euthymius, Cyriacus claims he received his monastic habit “from Euthymius’ holy hands.” This statement directly follows its predecessor in the *Life of Cyriacus*:

VCyr: καὶ τὸ σχῆμα διὰ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ χειρῶν⁸⁷⁹

VGer: καὶ τὸν μοναχικὸν σχῆμα διὰ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ χειρῶν⁸⁸⁰

Both *Lives* proceed to describe how Euthymius sent Cyriacus to Gerasimus and detail the latter’s vision of Euthymius ascending to heaven. The *Life of Gerasimus* expands the episode to include Cyriacus. Afterwards both *Lives* present the two traveling together to Euthymius’ funeral. Here, and throughout the *Life of Gerasimus*, the author echoes Cyril’s near-constant usage of “Euthymius the Great.”

The *Life of Gerasimus* shadows Cyril’s minor *Lives* in structure, method, and tone. Beyond subordination to Euthymius and a dearth of miracles and *παρρησία*, similarities are found in those passages lifted directly from Cyril’s other works. Such episodes flattered Cyril’s heroes in their original context, and do so again here. The author of this *Life*, therefore, had access to Cyril’s work and held no antagonistic

⁸⁷⁸ “Abba Cyriacus described [the following] to me, saying...” *VGer*, 5 (179). All translations from the *Life of Gerasimus* are my own.

⁸⁷⁹ Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 225.

⁸⁸⁰ *VGer*, 5 (179). Beyond its specific appearance here, this phrase makes regular appearances in Cyril’s accepted corpus. Cf. Cyril, *VE*, 32 (48) and *VCyr*, 5 (248), in which Cyriacus and Gerasimus accompany Euthymius on his annual retreats. Every Sunday, Cyril recounted, the two received communion “from the hands of Euthymius the Great.”

relationship to him. The dating of the work,⁸⁸¹ however, strengthens the likelihood that Cyril himself was the author of this *Life*.

The *Life of Gerasimus*, it would appear, should be counted as part of Cyril's project of minor *Lives*. Here as elsewhere, Cyril exercised his skills to reposition a Judean holy man into a more favorable relationship with his faction. This *Life*, like the two remaining, featured a saint manifestly not part of Cyril's tradition. Unlike the others, however, the *Life of Gerasimus* did not have to share space with a competing hagiography. Those cases would soon present special challenges of their own.

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Much of Cyril's project was preemptive: in four of six minor *Lives* he could shape legacies absent literary competition. To reposition the activity of Theognius and Theodosius, however, he would have to cross pens with an older generation of hagiographers. Paul and Theodore had written decades before; their works had been making the rounds since Cyril was a child. Their holy men were lodged in the public consciousness. Rather than invent a narrative, therefore, Cyril would have to subtly adjust – or convincingly overturn – those of his predecessors.

Of the two, Paul's work was the lesser problem. Driven by pastoral concerns,⁸⁸² Paul had exempted Theognius from ecclesiastical conflict and heresiological heroism. Theodore's innovations had come too late for Paul,⁸⁸³ whose few posthumous miracles

⁸⁸¹ See introduction.

⁸⁸² See chapter three.

⁸⁸³ See chapter four.

affirmed sanctity rather than *παρρησία*.⁸⁸⁴ The circumstances of Paul's work left Cyril little to do, and so the *Life of Theognius* is by far his shortest work. In a brief seventy lines, Cyril allotted Theognius a single miracle, no death scene, no *παρρησία*, and no posthumous miracles or petitions. Rather, he confined his efforts to narrative adjustment, reinserting Theognius into a Chalcedonian context to establish him as Elias' client.⁸⁸⁵ The reminder that Theognius owed his episcopacy to the Euthymian patriarch was Cyril's lone contribution to the saint's legacy.

The challenges posed by Theodore's work, on the other hand, would stretch Cyril's creative abilities to their limit. Theodosius was a saint of renown, already ensconced in the hierotopic pilgrimage site of his monastery. To shape his legacy Theodore had co-opted elements of Sabaite narrative while excising it of its Euthymian and Sabaite participants. His "insipid piece of rhetoric" had backed Cyril into a corner, leading the Sabaite hagiographer to respond on two fronts. In the *Life of Sabas* Cyril redirected the larger narrative, bombarding the Theodosian account with supporting evidence to restore the "proper" roles of the archimandrites. Cyril's *Life of Theodosius*, on the other hand, subtly undermines Theodore's presentation of the great cenobium. Together, the two strategies succeeded in raising the Sabaite legacy above its Theodosian rival.

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⁸⁸⁴ Neither petitioners nor Theognius himself appear in these miracles. See chapter six.
⁸⁸⁵ See chapter three.

Elements of the first strategy are prefigured in Cyril's treatment of Euthymius' friend Theoctistus. A villainous abbot, we recall, had sundered the monasteries of Theoctistus and Euthymius twelve years after the latter's death.⁸⁸⁶ That rupture had created a credible threat. Already in possession of Theoctistus' tomb, the abbot had "willfully seized" the bequest of Euthymius' client Terebôn, thereby augmenting his own resources at Euthymian expense. Cyril responded by demoting Theoctistus from Euthymius' early partner to his assistant. The prestige of their monasteries was repositioned accordingly, and Cyril gained experience in a technique that would serve him well when dealing with Theodosius.

In the *Life of Euthymius*, Cyril began honing that technique from Theoctistus' first appearance. Theoctistus and Euthymius had been anchorites together at Pharan before striking out on their own, and so Euthymius' early career could be viewed as a partnership, a joint venture with the saint who would found a nearby monastery. If not for the later institutional rupture Cyril might have let that narrative stand, for he would have another tomb-shrine to incorporate. In light of circumstance, however, it was important that Euthymius sit at table's head:

[Euthymius] had as a neighbor an inspired man called Theoctistus. He came to love him and grew so united to him in spiritual affection that the two became indistinguishable in both thought and conduct and displayed, as it were, one soul in two bodies. Announcing each to the other his godly aim they set off each year after the octave of the holy Theophanies to the desert of Coutila, sundered from all human intercourse and yearning to consort with God in solitude through prayer; they remained there till Palm Sunday, continuously subduing and enslaving the body while applying spiritual nourishment to the soul.

The great Euthymius carried off the prize for singleness of character, meekness of behavior and humility of heart. On account of this he received the grace of the

⁸⁸⁶ See chapters one and four.

Holy Spirit, in accordance with the divine saying, ‘Upon whom shall I look but on a man meek and quiet, who fears my words?’ Thence too his [παρρησία] to God increased each day.⁸⁸⁷

Euthymius’ virtues were singular, but Theoctistus’ virtues were subsumed into his greater companion. Although periodically called “blessed” or even “thrice-blessed,”

Theoctistus’ own accomplishments, characteristics, and teachings find no description in Cyril’s work. Euthymius “carried off the prize” and received παρρησία; Theoctistus would accomplish neither. Step by step Cyril pushed this prominent holy man into Euthymius’ shadow, until at the last he was completely lost to view.

When the pair’s first disciples appear, therefore, they come for Euthymius. As the latter’s spiritual activity left no room for mentoring, however, he foisted the task on Theoctistus. Cyril employs this passage to demonstrate Theoctistus’ willing subordination to Euthymius’ will:

In a short time, as Euthymius’ fame spread, many flocked to him and, hearkening to the word of God, desired to live with him. But Euthymius, as a hater of glory and lover of God, was eager to attain the first of the beatitudes as well as the rest and, as if possessing the status of a stranger, entrusted each of those who renounced this life to the blessed Theoctistus, after exhorting him in every way to take on this charge. He, *not knowing disobedience* [emphasis mine], accepted this charge and carried out everything in accordance with the wishes of the great Euthymius.⁸⁸⁸

Theoctistus takes regular steps down the ladder for the rest of the *Life*. Soon we find him preventing petitioners from interrupting Euthymius’ prayers,⁸⁸⁹ begging Euthymius to return when the latter left to found a laura,⁸⁹⁰ and seeking his intercession during a

⁸⁸⁷ Cyril, *VE*, 7 (10).

⁸⁸⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 8 (12).

⁸⁸⁹ Cyril, *VE* 10 (15-16).

⁸⁹⁰ Cyril, *VE* (14 (19)).

drought.⁸⁹¹ Subservience is Theoctistus' literary purpose, and so Cyril denies him any role in network activity. His spiritual endeavors are minimized as well: never does Theoctistus hear petitions, hold *παρρησία*, or perform miracles. When such is required the case is referred to Euthymius. His cenobium was subordinated also, transformed into a training ground for the higher calling of anchoritic life. It would later lose even that function, although whether by Euthymius' command or Cyril's pen is unclear.

The saint suffered a final indignity in death. Robbed of a deathbed scene, he was also reduced to a prop at his own funeral. That backdrop was used not to honor Theoctistus, but to position Euthymius *vis à vis* the patriarch. Theoctistus was barely a plot device:

Archbishop Anastasius, learning that blessed Theoctistus had died and that the great Euthymius was staying there for the funeral, snatching the opportunity to greet him, hastened down, and after depositing the remains of the venerable father took and kissed the hands of the holy Euthymius and said to him, 'Long have I desired to kiss these holy hands, and behold, God has granted it to me. And I now ask you venerable father, first to pray to God [*εὐχέσθαι*] that your prophecy about me [i.e. that he would become patriarch] that was fulfilled be safeguarded till the end, and then to write to me frequently and give directions on whatever matters seem good to you.'⁸⁹²

Theoctistus' interment is merely a pretext. Anastasius has come to seek Euthymius' prayers and direction; honoring Theoctistus is simply an excuse. Having enlisted the patriarch, Cyril went on to borrow his authority for the subjugation of Theoctistus' monastery:

The great Euthymius, with the grace he possessed from God, replied [to Anastasius], 'The request I make of your beatitude is to remember me in your prayers to God.' The archbishop said, it is rather I who make this request and

⁸⁹¹ Cyril, *VE*, 25 (34).

⁸⁹² Cyril, *VE*, 36 (51).

shall not cease to make it, for I know that the know that the gifts of divine grace are active in you and I have experienced their power.’ The elder modestly replied, ‘Grant me a request, venerable father, even though an importunate one: look after this monastery.’ The archbishop said, ‘even when Theoctistus was alive you were the one who chose this spot and who founded it and offered it to Christ as no longer wild but holy, by the power of the Holy Spirit within you, and so I now entrust to you your own.’⁸⁹³

Theoctistus is now wholly subsumed into Euthymius. The latter has the “gifts of divine grace;” the “power of the Holy Spirit” is in him. More importantly, he was responsible for Theoctistus’ administrative achievements. The latter’s cenobitic project was in fact the accomplishment of Euthymius, who now appointed its abbot. Cyril’s employment of ecclesiastic authority to legitimize Euthymius’ (and therefore Sabaite) possession of “this monastery” helped contextualize Abbot Paul’s later “villainy.” It also stripped Theoctistus of administrative virtues, just as the opening passage had stripped him of spiritual ones. Cyril’s persistence implies that the subjugation of Theoctistus would not wait. The figures of the minor *Lives* could be dealt with in turn, but Theoctistus (and therefore his monastery) required more immediate and thorough treatment. Theodosius required the same, and so in the *Life of Sabas* Cyril sought to duplicate his earlier success.

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Doing so would be Cyril’s great historicizing achievement. Appropriating the historian’s tool kit, Cyril crafted an account that was, above all, believable. Theodore’s work had been atemporal and ahistorical; Cyril’s would be neither. Taking the events of 516 as a narrative climax, Cyril methodically constructed a causal chain leading to it. He

⁸⁹³ Cyril, *VE*, 36 (51).

returned Severus and Elias to the stage, giving weight to their political and conciliar maneuverings. The clash of networks was placed in the spotlight and, as the stage began to crowd with alliances and secondary figures, Theodosius was slowly pushed to the margin.

This ensemble approach proved compelling. Positioning Elias and Severus amidst their allies empowered Cyril to grant Sabas a captaincy; the focus on patriarchal drama foreshadowed the archimandrite's promotion. Long depicted as Elias' Euthymian comrade and trusted subordinate, Sabas had also been prepositioned as Patriarch John's patron and strategist. By leaving his hero on the sidelines at the outset, Cyril could give him a growing role as the drama progressed.

More than this, the approach lent an accuracy that allowed Cyril's work to function harmoniously with other sixth-century chronicles. Theodore Lector, for example, had attributed John's volte-face to a clandestine meeting with "Theodosius the Cenobiarch and Sabas the Great."⁸⁹⁴ Theodore the hagiographer, however, eschewed the episode entirely to pursue his "Theodosius vs. Anastasius" narrative. Unobstructed on this front, Cyril could therefore chronicle a historical event while positioning the attendees as "the sanctified Sabas and other fathers of the desert."⁸⁹⁵ Such would be the hallmark of Cyril's Anastasian narrative. Rather than overturn Theodore's version for a Sabaite equivalent, Cyril crafted a historical account that could be read together with Theodore Lector, Evagrius, Victor, and etc.⁸⁹⁶ By emphasizing Sabas' role in verifiable

⁸⁹⁴ Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149).

⁸⁹⁵ Cyril, *VS*, 56 (160).

⁸⁹⁶ See chapter three.

events, Cyril claimed a position that was safely augmentative, rather than perilously contradictory. That ground he comfortably ceded to Theodore.

Cyril continued this approach in his depiction of John's public denunciation of Severus. Theodore had given that moment to Theodosius, placing him alone on the Anastasis' rostrum to thunder his cry: "four gospels, four councils!"⁸⁹⁷ Cyril responded by restoring context, returning the scene to St. Stephen's and stating that "the archbishop ascended the pulpit, accompanied by Theodosius and Sabas..."⁸⁹⁸ Theodore Lector gave the speech to John alone,⁸⁹⁹ but by flanking John with Sabas and Theodosius, Cyril offered a narrative acceptable to all – save Theodore. Thus the anathemas were delivered by "the three with one voice." This format also allowed Cyril to preserve Theodosius' battle-cry, even while diminishing it:

When the three had proclaimed this they descended, but Abba Theodosius ascended again and uttered the following declaration to the congregation...⁹⁰⁰

In Cyril's account, therefore, Theodosius' proclamation was a secondary event, a lesser sequel to the patriarch's great denunciation. Such treatment represents Cyril's general depiction of Theodosius: present, but not causally so. It continues through the episode's conclusion, in which the embattled Hypatius donated his way out of trouble. In Theodore Lector's account Theodosius had been the sole recipient of Hypatius' largesse, a presentation that could have reinforced the cenobiarch's hierarchical status.⁹⁰¹ In

⁸⁹⁷ Theodore, *VThd*, 62-63 (136-37).

⁸⁹⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 56 (161).

⁸⁹⁹ Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149).

⁹⁰⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 56 (161).

⁹⁰¹ Theodore Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72 (149).

excising that moment with the rest of the historical anecdote, however, Theodore enabled Cyril to enlarge Hypatius' donations to include Jerusalem's churches – and Sabas.⁹⁰²

Cyril delivered his coup de grace via textual evidence. Theodore had carefully excerpted the monks' letter to Anastasius; Cyril produced it in full.⁹⁰³ John and Sabas reemerged, making a favorable read of Theodore difficult. Comparison has caused Theodore's account to suffer for centuries; when Festugière labeled it “an insipid piece of rhetoric,” Cyril was whispering in his ear.

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Historicizing narrative was only part of Cyril's response to Theodore. As elsewhere, he took care to subordinate the saint to a contemporary Euthymian or Sabaite, in this case Sabas himself. Cyril begins, however, by twice noting that Theodosius had been formed by Euthymius' early disciples Marinus and Luke⁹⁰⁴ Later we find the cenobiarch a regular recipient of Sabaite castoffs: Sabas sent him the Nestorians and Eunuchs, and he housed the renegade James as well.⁹⁰⁵ Theodosius' speaking roles are limited: Cyril allows him one sentence each on three occasions. The first was his declaration at St. Stephen's; the last an anecdote regarding ascetic diet.⁹⁰⁶ The middle episode is most telling. In a construction reminiscent of his treatment of Euthymius and Theoctistus, Cyril wrote that:

Our father Sabas was humble of spirit, gentle in conduct and most simple in character, full of complete spiritual prudence and discernment. He maintained the

⁹⁰² Cyril, *VS*, 56 (161).

⁹⁰³ Cyril, *VS*, 57 (162-67).

⁹⁰⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 8 (12), *Life of Theodosius*, 2 (263).

⁹⁰⁵ Cyril, *VS*, 38 (137), 69 (181), 41 (141).

⁹⁰⁶ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 2 (263-64).

most unfeigned and sincere love towards the above-mentioned Theodosius, while he in his turn maintained the same sincerity towards our father Sabas. Truly both were ‘sons of light and sons of day,’ men of God and faithful servants, ‘shining luminaries in the world, proffering the word of life,’ ‘pillars and bulwark of the truth,’ both being men of higher desires. They led all the monks towards the kingdom of heaven.

The sainted Theodosius was leader and archimandrite of all the cenobitic order subject to the holy city, as was said above, while the sanctified Sabas was ruler and lawgiver of all the anchoritic life and all those who chose to live in cells. These two archimandrites had been appointed by the sainted Sallustius at the request of the whole monastic order as being true hermits and men detached, and as having been strictly trained in the things of God, attained monastic strictness and guided many towards the knowledge of God.

They could be seen visiting each other and conversing together frankly with spiritual affection.⁹⁰⁷ In these conversations the sanctified Sabas *frequently* [emphasis mine] addressed to Theodosius, now among the saints, the following remark: ‘My lord Abba, you are the superior of children while I am the superior of superiors, for each of those under me, in his independence, is the superior of his own cell.’ Theodosius would reply to this, ‘I shall take your remark as being not harsh but utterly charming, for friendship will endure all its experiences or hears.’ So much for these men.⁹⁰⁸

What are we to make of this passage?⁹⁰⁹ Nowhere does Theodosius receive a compliment of his own: Cyril demonstrates Sabas’ greatness as an individual, then the

⁹⁰⁷ This is the only time Cyril places Theodosius in any proximity to *παρρησία*. I concur with Price’s adverbial read of *παρρησία*, although it might be better expressed as “openly,” per Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1045. Otherwise we would be led to believe that while Sabas is often depicted as holding *παρρησία* with God, Theodosius holds *παρρησία* with Sabas. Even Cyril might blush to go that far.

⁹⁰⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 65 (176).

⁹⁰⁹ Answers vary. Festugière thought the Cyril won this round, for Sabas’ prominence forced silence on Theodore. Patrich gave Cyril the benefit of the doubt, assigning bias without intent. Flusin went further than either, arguing that Cyril intentionally denied miracles to Theodosius and subordinated cenobia to laurae. Festugière, *Les Moines*, 85; Patrich, *Sabas*, 297; Flusin, *Miracle*, 199.

Hombergen, on the other hand, reductively described the rivalry as “chauvinistic,” claiming that: “Only when one sees that the two accounts are irreconcilable, does it become clear that none of these themes can fit in with historical reality. This confirms our thesis that Cyril’s biography, in spite of its “historiographic” character, should be approached fundamentally as a compilation of edifying stories about an idealized hero, who assumed enlarged dimensions by a process of hagiographic stylization.” Hombergen, *Controversy*, 130.

Passing over Hombergen’s decontextualized reading of the text, it seems that Theodore likely had a wider range of rhetorical options available to him than silence. It was his choice of narrative approach that required the excision, rather than subordination, of Sabas. A read of Cyril’s minor *Lives*, on the other hand, makes a claim of unconscious bias far too generous. I am therefore *pace* Flusin in ascribing intentionality to conscious rivalry.

archimandrites' greatness together. The passage opens by lifting Sabas up, and concludes by pushing Theodosius down. Like Theoctistus, the archimandrite willingly accepted a subordinate role. In so doing, he validated the proper order of relationships from a Sabaite point of view.

If the *Life of Sabas* corrected Theodore's claims for the cenobiarch, Cyril's *Life of Theodosius* corrected his claims for the cenobium. Where Theodore had labored to establish an incarnational link between saint and monastery, Cyril would reverse course, allowing Theodosius no miracles at all. More surprising, however, is the percentage of the *Life* given to Theodosius' successor. Cyril's admiration for Sophronius' administrative gifts is unfeigned. His employment of it, however, serves to attribute elements of the cenobium's institutional greatness to Sophronius rather than Theodosius.⁹¹⁰ Theodore had excised Sabas from a historical narrative; Cyril returned fire by distancing Theodosius from his own monastery.

Cyril gave Theodosius only those saintly characteristics that fit his own purpose, making it necessary for him to shatter Theodore's incarnational framework. In another context, however, he was willing to grant Theodosius a holy man's ability to attract patronage:

While [Theodosius] was hidden in the cave, as I have said, in great voluntary poverty, subsisting on plants and devoting himself uniquely to prayer, a man coming from Byzantium, called Acacius, a lover of Christ and honored with the rank of *illustris*, who had heard of his virtue and was eager to acquire the fine pearls of the Gospel, came to visit him in the said cave and, after making obeisance to him, sat down to hear his exhortation and teaching. Knowing that [Theodosius] could not bear ever to receive anything from anyone, he buried in the cave without [Theodosius'] consent a box containing one hundred *solidi*, and

⁹¹⁰ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 5 (266-67).

so embraced him and departed. On his return to Byzantium he continued for a long time to send each year to the blessed Theodosius a large fixed sum as a gift. So much for Acacius.

The great Theodosius, on the day after the departure of the *illustris*, found the said money hidden in the cave. With it he first of all founded a [hostel] above the cave, where he welcomed everyone who visited him; he also bought two little asses, and would go on his own to fetch what was needed for the body. Then he commenced building the cenobium. From this time many began to hasten to him, asking to live with him; and he accepted them and guided them in following the perfect will of God. Gold helped him in everything, and 'he was a successful man,' as we hear of Joseph.⁹¹¹

Neither petition nor miracle is attached to the donation. More importantly, however, this story directly contradicts the corresponding anecdote in Theodore's work.⁹¹² The latter had claimed the cenobium's foundations were financed by Theodosius' first disciples. Where Theodore had saint→disciples→monastery, therefore, Cyril claimed saint→donor→monastery→disciples. Cyril had read Theodore's account; he was deliberately altering it. Why?

Apart from divesting the disciples of their causal role, Cyril was using the passage to promote outside patronage. Here is a model for readers to follow: arrive, receive benefit, leave donation. There is no danger in applying this pattern to Theodosius: that saint's lack of *παρρησία* or incarnational presence made this a historical episode. The model could be safely transferred to those saints who did hold *παρρησία* and the monasteries that preserved it. On another front, the passage is a window into Judean economic priorities: Theodosius' first act was to construct the hostel, not the monastery. Income necessarily undergirded community.

⁹¹¹ Cyril, *Life of Theodosius*, 3 (264-65).

⁹¹² See chapter three.

Cyril had systematically stripped neighboring saints of *παρρησία* and prominence. He had reduced them to moons in the Judean sky, destined to reflect the light of nearby stars. The particulars had been different: diverse institutional and literary challenges had led to variations on a theme. Cyril's underlying purpose and final achievement, however, remained fixed throughout his corpus. Yet the moons were the lesser task; placing his stars in the Judean heavens remained Cyril's great work. Toward this end he would steal from Theodore rather than Rufus, establishing his saints' *παρρησία* before institutionalizing it into their monasteries. The progressive factionalism and divisiveness of Judean history had left the Sabaites with two such luminaries, whose light Cyril would refine and hang in the heavens for all to see.

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Although brilliantly employed, Cyril's historicizing narrative would not be his lasting contribution to Judean hagiography. That honor went to his refinement of Theodore's hierotopic literature, the development of literary innovation into structured *topos*. There were noticeable differences in their approaches: Theodore's argument was tighter than Cyril could afford to be. His theme was direct: Theodosius had held *παρρησία* in life, become incarnate in his monastery after death, and could be supplicated there to this day. Cyril's work, on the other hand, was cluttered by his hybrid approach. While Cyril's minor *Lives* were often short, thematically pointed, and direct, the longer *Lives* were not. These contained Theodore's hierotopic constructions, but also Rufus' historicizing methods. Fusing the two methods resulted in longer, multipurpose texts. While historicizing narrative dominates these *Lives*, however, Theodore's influence and Cyril's contribution can be traced in the demarcated posthumous miracle sections. Here

stands a noticeable development of Theodore's construction: where Theodore had modeled successful supplication at the saint's tomb, Cyril added greater degrees of interaction between saint and supplicant. This adaptation made room for the supplicant's proper response: the reciprocal donation.

Ultimately, the *Life of Euthymius* is the more successful fusion of Cyril's twin influences. Historicizing narrative dominates the *Life of Sabas*; the pressing need to legitimize Sabaite institutional possessions and relationships governed Cyril's use of the work. Euthymius, on the other hand, was a more established and less controversial saint. Cyril had narrative aims in the *Life*, but these could be directed toward hierotopic goals. The advantage of a clearly defined hierotopic tomb allowed Cyril to shadow Theodore's augmentative approach to hierotopic construction. The posthumous miracles of the *Life of Euthymius*, therefore, form an organic conclusion not possible in the *Life of Sabas*.

Cyril allotted only a dozen miracles to the living Euthymius; the saint performed almost as many after his death. Eschewing quantity for scale, Cyril had established Euthymius' holiness through miracles striking enough to anchor the narrative. He began this approach in the early stages of Euthymius' ascetic career, when Euthymius "carried off the prize" of *παρησία* at Theoctistus' expense;⁹¹³ That theme was quickly reinforced through a marvelous anecdote that also introduced Aspébetus (later Peter) and Terebôn, future players in the nascent Euthymian network.⁹¹⁴ Cyril began by establishing the episode's *bona fides*:

⁹¹³ See earlier this chapter.

⁹¹⁴ See chapter one.

Concerning Terebôn the elder all the senior fathers gave me a unanimous report, but a more detailed one was recounted to me by his descendant and namesake, the celebrated Saracen chieftain of this region.⁹¹⁵

While a boy, it appears, Terebôn (the elder) was struck by an illness that paralyzed the whole right side of his body. Being a Saracen chieftain of means and prominence, Terebôn's father Aspébetus exhausted the full range of doctors, sorcerers, and astrologers in search of a cure. Continued disappointments kindled despair in the boy, who mused God's will must undergird a magician's efficacy. He therefore made a bargain with the Almighty: if healed, Terebôn would become Christian. That night the boy had a vision of Euthymius in his sleep. If Terebôn was serious in his promise, the saint told him, he should come to Euthymius for healing. The next day, therefore Aspébetus mobilized the tribe and headed for the Judean desert.⁹¹⁶

When they arrived, however, Theoctistus bade them return another time. Euthymius, it seemed, would be engaged in solitary prayer for some time to come. Terebôn countered by relating his vision, begging Theoctistus "not to keep hidden the doctor revealed by God." Theoctistus yielded, and went to Euthymius. The latter had no knowledge of Terebôn's dream, yet:

...judging it preposterous to oppose visions from God, came down to them. By praying fervently and sealing Terebôn with the sign of the cross, [Euthymius] restored him to health. The barbarians, astounded at so total a transformation and so extraordinary a miracle, found faith in Christ; and casting themselves on the ground they all begged to receive the seal in Christ. The miracle-working⁹¹⁷ Euthymius, perceiving that their faith in Christ came from the soul, ordered a small font to be constructed in the corner of the cave – the one preserved even

⁹¹⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 10 (14).

⁹¹⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 10 (14-16).

⁹¹⁷ Cyril often prefers "miracle-working" (σημειοφόρος) to the term παρησία. A thorough study of the derivation and/or equivalence of these terms in hagiographic literature might determine if Cyril's word choice is meant to establish a higher level of παρησία, in which the saint had been given preemptive power, and so does not need to seek intercession at every turn.

now⁹¹⁸ – and after catechizing them baptized them all in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Aspébetus he renamed Peter; him he baptized first of all and after him one Maris, his brother-in-law, both men of conspicuous wealth, and then likewise Terebôn and the rest.⁹¹⁹

Maris was particularly struck by the experience. Electing to become a monk himself, the Saracen “gave all his wealth, which was considerable, for the building and extension of the monastery.”⁹²⁰ Word spread, and a stream of supplicants soon flowed to Judea seeking Euthymius.

Soon Euthymius demonstrated power over wild animals and poisonous plants, droughts and famines, infertility and demons.⁹²¹ Of special note is his miraculous hospitality in the face of financial hardship, as when the Euthymian steward informed his master of a hungry hoard outside the door:

“...it happened that a crowd of Armenians, around four hundred in number, on their way from the holy city to the Jordan, deviated off the road to the right and arrived at the laura, as if by pre-arrangement – an occurrence, in my opinion, contrived by Providence to reveal [Euthymius’] virtue and God-given grace. On seeing them, the elder summoned Domitian and said, ‘Serve these people with something to eat.’ [Domitian] replied, ‘The cellar, venerable father, does not contain enough to feed ten persons. How, then, can I give bread to such a multitude?’ The godly Euthymius, filled with prophetic grace, said, ‘Proceed as I have told you, for the words of the Holy Spirit are, “They shall eat and have something left over.”’ Going accordingly to the small cell called by some the pantry, where a few loaves were lying, Domitian was unable to open the door, for God’s blessing had filled the cell right to the top. So calling some of the men, he took the door off its hinges, and out poured the loaves from the cell. The same blessing occurred likewise with the wine and the oil. All ate and were satisfied, and for three months they were unable to reattach the door of the cell.⁹²²

⁹¹⁸ To oral testimonies, therefore, Cyril could now add a concrete reminder.

⁹¹⁹ Cyril, *VE*, 10 (16).

⁹²⁰ Cyril, *VE*, 10 (16).

⁹²¹ Cyril, *VE*, 12-19 (18-28); 23-25 (31-36); etc.

⁹²² Cyril, *VE*, 17 (22-23).

Cyril's miracle stories function primarily to establish his saints' *παρρησία*. Some, however, contain an additional lesson for the reader. This is such a story. The miracle of the loaves is meant to reinforce an institutional virtue:

Just as God through the prophet's voice made the jar of meal and the cruse of oil well up for the hospitable widow, so in the same way he granted to this godly elder a supply of blessings equal to his zeal for hospitality [*φιλοξενίας*].⁹²³ Domitian in his amazement threw himself at his teacher's feet, begging to receive forgiveness for having felt something natural to human beings. The elder made him rise and said, 'My child, "he who sows with blessings will also reap with blessings." Let us "not neglect to show hospitality, for thereby (as the Apostle says) some have entertained angels unawares." Be confident that if you and those after you receive with faith and treat worthily all the strangers and brethren who visit you, the Lord will never fail this place from now till eternity. For God is well-pleased with such an offering.'⁹²⁴

The anecdote emphasized the monastery's hospitality to Cyril's extra-monastic audience.

Lest his own brothers miss the point, however, Cyril continued:

From the time of the miracle just related the *laura* began to be blessed in both income and expenditure and in other ways too.⁹²⁵

Cyril continued to stress the virtue of institutional hospitality throughout the *Life*:

Euthymius would die with directions for "the reception of guests"⁹²⁶ on his lips.

Cyril's Euthymius gave blessings with open hands. On occasion, however, he could also deliver punishment with a closed fist. Euthymius' powers of judgment were piercing: when dispensing communion, for example, he could discern who received grace and who brought judgment against himself.⁹²⁷ That powers of curse and condemnation

⁹²³ Rufus' Peter the Iberian and Theodore's Theodosius had shown zeal for asceticism and orthodoxy. Cyril's Euthymius showed his zeal through love of visitors to the monastery [*ξένου*].

⁹²⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 17 (23).

⁹²⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 18 (24).

⁹²⁶ Cyril, *VE* 39 (55-56).

⁹²⁷ Cyril, *VE*, 29 (42).

were Euthymius' to command is demonstrated in the case of Auxentius. The latter had repeatedly refused the post of muleteer, leading the steward to refer his case to Euthymius. The saint spoke with Auxentius, who revealed his fear of being corrupted by the outside world. Euthymius assured the monk of the protection of his intercession,⁹²⁸ but still Auxentius remained intractable. Doubt and disobedience to the saint himself, however, would not go unpunished:

Despite all these words Auxentius remained stubborn and disobedient. Then the most gentle Euthymius became irate and said, 'I have given you, my child, the advice I believe to be to your benefit. Since you persist in your refusal, you will now witness the reward for disobedience.' Immediately Auxentius was seized with demonic trembling and fell to the ground. The fathers present interceded for him⁹²⁹ with the great man, and the elder said to them, 'Now before your eyes is fulfilled the divine word that says, "Every wicked man stirs up rebellion, but the Lord will send him a pitiless angel."'

On being further importuned by the fathers, the compassionate elder took him by the hand and raised him up, and sealing him with the sign of the cross restored him to health. Then Auxentius prostrated himself to beg forgiveness for the past and prayers for safety⁹³⁰ in the future. The saint said to him, 'The reward for obedience is great, since God wants obedience rather than sacrifice, while disobedience causes death.'⁹³¹ And after praying for him,⁹³² he blessed [Auxentius]. Consequently Auxentius accepted the office with joy and alacrity.⁹³³

Euthymius soon dealt likewise with the flippant Clematius.⁹³⁴ In both cases the immediacy of effect is remarkable. Whether offering blessing or curse, Euthymius'

⁹²⁸ "ὁ δὲ μέγας Εὐθύμιος λέγει· παρακαλοῦμεν τὸν θεὸν μὴ βλαβῆναι σε ὑπ' οὐδενος τούτων." Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, 29.

⁹²⁹ "καὶ οἱ μὲν παρόντες πατέρες παρεκάλουν τὸν μέγαν ὑπερ αὐτοῦ..." Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, 29. As Euthymius intercedes with God, so his monks intercede with Euthymius.

⁹³⁰ "εὐχὴν ὑπερ ἀσφαλείας..." Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, 29. Note that Auxentius seeks Euthymius' forgiveness, not God's.

⁹³¹ Cyril is appropriating 1 Samuel 15:22: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord's command? Obedience is better than sacrifice, to listen, better than the fat of rams." In this case, however, the monk has failed in disobedience to Euthymius' command, rather than God's.

⁹³² "καὶ ποιήσας εὐχὴν ὑπερ αὐτοῦ..." Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, 29.

⁹³³ Cyril, *VE*, 18 (25).

⁹³⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 19 (27).

divine access was such that he could act without heavenly consultation. Miraculous power stood at his disposal: this saint did not always need to ask permission.

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Euthymius retained all his powers after death. Miracles began to issue from the saint's remains at his funeral,⁹³⁵ and a few days later he arrived in person to collect his favorite disciple:

In the night of the seventh day the great Euthymius appeared to [his disciple Domitian] in great glory with shining countenance and said, 'Enter into the glory prepared for you; for Christ the Lord, in response to my entreaty, has granted me the favor of⁹³⁶ having you with me.' On hearing this, Domitian went into the church and, after recounting the vision to the fathers, fell asleep in joy.⁹³⁷

Theodore's Theodosius had promised to intercede for his monks; Cyril's Euthymius made good within a week. Yet Cyril did not hammer home the *ad intra* message as strongly as his predecessor. Nor did he importune the monks directly, as Theodore had. Instead, Cyril's saint, monks, and monastery come together to undergird a tale of institutional growth and intercession aimed at an audience *ad extra*.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 40 (57).

⁹³⁶ “δυσωπηθείς γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης Χριστὸς ἐχαρίσατό μοι...” Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 61.

⁹³⁷ Cyril, *VE*, 41 (58).

⁹³⁸ Externally, Cyril wrote for the rich and powerful abroad, hoping thereby to provide a pattern for their patronage. See Ashbrook-Harvey, 136; and Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyriel*, 27-34,

Krueger posited that Cyril's writings should be construed as acts of personal devotion to cherished saints. Derek Krueger, "Writing as Devotion: Hagiographical Composition and the Cult of the Saints in Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Scythopolis," *Church History* 66 (1997); 713-19. Kalogeras, on the other hand, viewed Cyril as a hagiographer who sought historical accuracy in order to better edify his fellows. The longer *Lives*, Kalogeras mused, were likely for silent reading in the monastery's library, while the shorter works were meant for public recitation, perhaps during meals. "Having in mind his fellow monks," therefore, "Cyril recorded the events he considered important for the construction of their monastic consciousness." Nikos Kalogeras, "The Role of Audience in the Construction of a Narrative: A Note on Cyril of Scythopolis," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 52 (2002); 150-52.

The latter statement fits well with Brian's Stock's ideas of textual communities and the pre-modern reader's relationship with text in *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past*, 30-51; and *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text*, 86-114. Kim Haines-Eitzen would later use Stock's

The graves of Theodosius and Euthymius had both been affixed with an oil-dispensing crucible.⁹³⁹ While Theodosius made special note of this miraculous tomb-oil, however, it was Cyril who truly capitalized on its existence. The oil provided a medium between supplicant and saint. Available only in the hierotopic space of Euthymius' tomb, the oil could nevertheless be ported away in wearable *ampullae*.⁹⁴⁰ Tomb-oil played a role in several of Cyril's anecdotes, providing miracles often paired with a reciprocal donation. This construction was Cyril's great contribution, both to his own monasteries and to the Judean monks of the following century.⁹⁴¹

Death did not slow Euthymius' participation in the life of his monastery. To this place he had come to claim his disciple; concerning this place he gave posthumous instructions to Fidus. The monastery was *his* place, a hallowed ground infused by his holy presence, a Jerusalem-in-miniature. It was here that supplicants came to seek his intercession, here that he worked his miracles. This monastery, moreover, continued to benefit from Euthymius' patronage and protection. The saint took care of his cenobium: securing financial windfalls, preventing physical damage, and forging network connections – all from beyond the grave. Euthymius remained invested in his institution, of which the community was an extension. While clearly demarcated, therefore, the

frameworks to argue that while literacy remained a function of the elite in late antiquity, the combination of individual literacy with group orality could create a “textual community” based on a foundational text. See Kim Haines-Eitzen, “Textual Communities,” 246-57.

The intentional creation of such an effect to shape communal identity and institutional relationship is, I believe, the key *ad intra* purpose of Theodore and Cyril's works.

⁹³⁹ “[Fidus] laid the tombstone in place, fixing the crucible above the breast. This crucible, from then till this day, pours forth every kind of benefit for those who approach with faith.” Cyril, *VE*, 42 (58). Cf. Theodore: “Therefore, [O Theodosius], your ardent love for God expelled any remaining fear and gave you the ineffable *παρρησία* of one who ranks as a son. Proving this is the oil that flows continuously from your precious body, and the cures it often produces for the sick.” Theodore, *VThd*, 92 (154).

⁹⁴⁰ See chapter six.

⁹⁴¹ See conclusion.

posthumous miracle section of the *Life* flows neatly from the larger institutional narrative.

Cyril therefore opens the section by placing the miracles within their proper institutional context. Abbot Elias, he tells us, had died after 38 years in office. His successor Symeonius followed him only three years later. After him came Stephen, in whose tenure this section of the *Life* would open. Although they likely never met, Cyril was inclined to grant Stephen a favorable introduction:

...one Stephen, an Arab by race, succeeded as superior; he had a blood-brother called Procopius, priest of the church at Caesarea, at whose death Stephen made over all the family property to the monastery.⁹⁴²

Stephen's tenure would be a time of prosperity for the monastery. While this was in no small part due to the abbot's personal contributions, Euthymius played a role also.

Through the latter's intercession a powerful patron would attach himself to the monastery:

In [Stephen's] time an Antiochene called Caesarius, who had gained a high reputation in many city magistracies, came to the holy city and, after spending some time there, fell ill of a terrible bodily affliction. He was brought to the monastery and anointed with oil from the tomb of the miracle-working Euthymius, at which he was totally freed of all bodily disease; on receiving this favor,⁹⁴³ he presented a substantial [gift],⁹⁴⁴ and promised to give another each year.⁹⁴⁵

The healing of Caesarius approaches the pure form of a Cyrillian anecdote. Carefully placed within an institutional context, the story offers a clear pattern for the graduation of

⁹⁴² Cyril, *VE*, 47 (65).

⁹⁴³ "εὐεργεσία" could also be translated "service."

⁹⁴⁴ Where Price has "alms" for "εὐλογία," I have preferred "gift" in accord with Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* and Sophocles' *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*.

⁹⁴⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 47 (65).

supplicant to patron. Caesarius traveled to Euthymius' monastery, was healed in Euthymius' tomb using Euthymius' oil, and gave a reciprocal donation to Euthymius' institution. All that was missing was a network connection, but that was not long coming:

On his way back to Antioch [Caesarius] met in Tripoli Bishop Stephen, whom he told about the grace of the great Euthymius and the favor that had come to him. Leontius, a young nephew of the bishop, was thrilled in spirit to hear this, came to the monastery and renounced the world. When he had advanced in monastic life, he was summoned by Bishop Stephen, who made him superior of the revered shrine of St. Leontius the martyr, and left him as his successor as bishop when, not long after, he died. A certain Nilus, priest of the monastery, was sent to Antioch for the [gift] promised by Caesarius. Passing through Tripoli on the way, he was received by Bishop Leontius and ordained bishop of Orthosias.⁹⁴⁶

Euthymius had spent his life weaving a web of interpersonal relationships with the ecclesiastical elite. Death had not barred him from furthering that practice on behalf of his monastery. In this first posthumous miracle, then, we find all the hallmarks of Cyril's purpose and style. Together, saint and abbot were inaugurating a new golden age for the cenobium, uplifting it financially and forging links between the monastery and the ecclesiastical and civil elite. The institutional narrative went on, for the saint continued to be beneficently present to his monastery.

Cyril had taken care to place this first miracle within its proper institutional and administrative context. He would do likewise with its sequel, opening the anecdote with the transition from one abbot to the next:

Our father Stephen, having enriched and augmented the monastery of Euthymius to the best of his powers and leaving it six hundred solidi in minted money from his family property, died on 22 January after having completed twenty-one years

⁹⁴⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 47 (65).

as superior. A certain Thomas of Apamea took over the flock of Euthymius in flourishing condition, but diminished it.⁹⁴⁷

Caesarius made his second and final appearance at this time, and while dining with Thomas, the magistrate learned something remarkable. The Euthymians Cosmas and Chrysippus, during their respective tenures as Guardians of the Cross, had obtained pieces of said Cross for their home monastery. These pieces had been set by abbot Stephen in a pure gold cross adorned with precious stones. Caesarius expressed his desire to venerate this golden cross and to take a piece of the True Cross for his own. Thomas assented to both requests, and went to the monastery's safe to retrieve the golden cross.⁹⁴⁸

The massive donations of Stephen were housed in the same safe. When Thomas carelessly left the safe open and unattended, therefore, the monk Theodotus found the temptation too much to bear. He stole the six hundred solidi, departed the monastery, and hid the money near the monastery of Martyrius. After making preparations in Jerusalem, Theodotus returned for the money, only to be attacked and pursued by a “terrifying snake.” The same occurred upon his return the following day. Then, when Theodotus:

...came to the spot again on the third day, some bodiless power in the air assailed him, struck him as if with a cudgel and knocked him down the road half-dead. Some people of Lazarium, passing by this spot, found him lying there, carried him into the holy city, and took him into a hospital.⁹⁴⁹

It would not be long before the thief learned the source of his frustration:

When [Theodotus] had spent some time [in the hospital] with his pains only increasing, he saw in a dream someone of hallowed appearance, who said to him

⁹⁴⁷ Cyril, *VE*, 48 (66).

⁹⁴⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 48 (66).

⁹⁴⁹ Cyril, *VE*, 48 (67).

angrily, ‘It will be impossible for you to rise from this bed unless you return the stolen money to the monastery of Euthymius.’⁹⁵⁰

Thwarted, the thief confessed all. The money was returned, and Thomas allowed Theodotus to depart in peace.

Once again the saint had watched over his monastery. Euthymius functioned as a senior partner to the abbot, blessing and cursing by turns as the situation required.

Dexterity was a hallmark of the saint’s institutional *παρρησία*, as seen when he and Sabas materialized to cure Cyril of his writer’s block:

...when being at a loss for words and expressions I [Cyril] had already thought of abandoning my pages, except that I plied fervent petitionary prayer. One day I was sitting on my usual seat and holding my pages in my hands when, around the second hour of the day, I was overcome with sleep and there appeared to me the holy fathers Euthymius and Sabas in their customary sacred dress...⁹⁵¹

Saintly hierarchy established hereditary links. Cyril had sought the aid of his saints.

Now Sabas – Euthymius’ heir – interceded with his mentor on a Sabaite’s behalf. The archimandrite informed his master that despite Cyril’s diligent research the monk could not write unless Euthymius bestowed grace upon him. Thereupon,

The great Euthymius consented; taking from his bosom a silver ointment-jar with a probe, he dipped in the probe and three times ministered from the jar to my mouth. Of the substance inserted by the probe the texture was that of oil but the taste was sweeter than honey...⁹⁵²

The saint’s grace infused the monk with a rush of creative energy. The miracle further legitimized Cyril’s work, which now bore the stamp of saintly approval. It also brought

⁹⁵⁰ Cyril, *VE*, 48 (67).

⁹⁵¹ Cyril, *VE*, 60 (82).

⁹⁵² Cyril, *VE*, 60 (83).

Cyril himself into the story. Personal testimony was part of Cyril's research method, and following the second miracle he included himself on the roll of witnesses:

Whatever I [Cyril] have heard and learnt and my fathers told me of the inspired Euthymius I have not hidden from their children in another generation⁹⁵³ but have reported and recorded, so as to transmit it to subsequent generations. I think it necessary to commit also to writing the miracles that have issued in my time from his tomb and memorial, while both the recipients and the witnesses are still alive. The miracles that come forth from his tomb before the eyes of all are worthy not only to be admired but also to be recorded, for they will convince my readers to harbor no doubts about what I have already said of him.⁹⁵⁴

In the first two anecdotes Cyril had established the permanent connection of saint and institution. In this prologue to the remaining passages he tied the miracles firmly to the tomb. The miracles, moreover, are preemptively linked to reliable testimony, including Cyril's own. Such stories, he concluded, proved the narrative of the saint's *Life*. Another result was left unspoken: such miracles proved the powerful, ongoing, place-specific, accessible *παρησία* of this great saint.

Some miracles provided teachable moments, as when Euthymius bestowed his sharp instruction upon the monk Paul. Having become afflicted with a demon of lust after thieving from his monastery (of Martyrius), Paul repeatedly begged Euthymius' intercession at the tomb:

'Have pity on me, holy father Euthymius, and free me from the misfortune that oppresses me.' Immediately I [Paul] saw the saint...[who] said to me, 'Why are you bothering me? What do you want me to do for you?' I said in fear, 'I beg you to take pity on me.' He answered me harshly, 'Are you now convinced that nothing can escape God? Have you learnt from your sufferings how wicked it is to despise the service of Christ and to behave carelessly in a monastery? Are you

⁹⁵³ Cyril claims multiple audiences in the course of his works. Most frequent is the abbot George to whom the major *Lives* are ostensibly written, but brother monks, future generations, and others are sometimes mentioned as well.

⁹⁵⁴ Cyril, *VE*, 49 (68).

now fully aware that everything in monasteries is sacred [because]⁹⁵⁵ coming from offerings? [*Just as those donating to the monastery make offerings to God*]⁹⁵⁶ and receive reward from Him,⁹⁵⁷ so those who make an improper use of what has been given to God are wronging Him and receive an appropriate punishment from Him.⁹⁵⁸

Donations were sacred, and donors blessed. The saint was insistent on this point, and would consent to heal Paul only after the latter had thoroughly internalized it. Convinced and converted, Paul thereupon eschewed his former monastery to become a Euthymian monk.

Institutional sacrosanctity, on the other hand, was impressed upon a “barbarous” Saracen who broke the door to the monastery’s cistern. Struck by demons, the offender was carried to Euthymius’ tomb for healing. The saint healed and catechized the man, who was soon baptized.⁹⁵⁹ Shortly thereafter the Saracen returned with his possessed niece. The latter was anointed with tomb oil for three days, whereupon she received a miraculous cure.⁹⁶⁰ Word spread among the tribe, and sometime later another possessed Saracen made successful pilgrimage to the tomb as well.⁹⁶¹

Tomb-oil is an important element in Cyril’s posthumous anecdotes. Repeatedly used in miraculous healings, the oil could be obtained only in the monastery. It need not, however, be used there. Thus a local female petitioner, not allowed access to the tomb,

⁹⁵⁵ Price has “as.”

⁹⁵⁶ “ὡςπερ τοίνυν καρποφοροῦντες [lit. “giving presents”] μοναστηρίῳ θεῶ προσφέρουσιν.” Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 73. Price has “Just as those who make offerings to a monastery are giving to God.”

⁹⁵⁷ Emphasis mine.

⁹⁵⁸ Cyril, *VE*, 50 (71).

⁹⁵⁹ Cyril, *VE*, 51 (72-73).

⁹⁶⁰ Cyril, *VE*, 52 (73).

⁹⁶¹ Cyril, *VE*, 53 (74).

sat before the gate for three days drinking the oil each night. “In consequence,” Cyril records,

she was freed from the demon by the saint appearing to her in the third night and saying, ‘See, you are well! Return to your home.’ From then on she returned in gratitude each year to the monastery to give thanks to God and to the saint; she would kiss the jambs of the main entrance and, as an expression of her thanks, provide a festal meal for the fathers of the monastery.⁹⁶²

Saints effected healing with oil not infrequently: Cyril himself had portrayed his lesser saints healing the afflicted using oil from the Holy Cross.⁹⁶³ Yet these stories are special.

Tomb-oil finds few analogues in Cyril’s bookshelves: only Theodore seems to provide precedent.⁹⁶⁴

The efficacy of the saint’s oil continues through the *Life*’s final anecdote, in which Euthymius cured Cyril’s writer’s block. The connection between saint, oil, and monastery; however, is reinforced in the *Life*’s penultimate episode. A foreign visitor to the monastery, it seems, attempted to abscond with the silver oil-dispensing crucible in the night. Yet his efforts availed him naught, for the saint prevented his departure. The

⁹⁶² Cyril, *VE*, 54 (74).

⁹⁶³ See above.

⁹⁶⁴ Neither the *Life of Antony*, *History of the Monks of Syria*, *Lausiac History*, nor the *Apophthegmata Patrum* contain any mentions of tomb-oil. Indeed, these works barely mention posthumous miracles at all. Theodoret issues two general statements but no specific instances. Palladius claims to have heard of a *martyrium* at which miracles occur, but even this anecdote is not found in the best manuscripts: *Palladius: The Lausiac History*, trans. Robert T. Meyer (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965), 47, n116.

Neither Athanasius nor the *Apophthegmata* list any such miracles whatsoever. Detailed donatives are likewise difficult to find in these works: the saints of the *Life of Antony*, *History of the Monks of Syria*, and *Apophthegmata* refuse money when offered. Only Palladius denotes donations and amounts, but does so to glorify his subjects (the givers), rather than the recipients. When Palladius’ monks give their money away, moreover, it is usually to the poor. Cyril’s ascetics donate to their monasteries. That particularity underscores a key difference: among these works only the Judean authors both possess their saints’ tomb-shrines and produce the hagiographies themselves.

See *Théodore de Cyr, Histoire des Moines de Syrie, Introduction, Texte, Traduction, et Notes* par Pierre Canivet et Alice Leroy-Molinghen (Sources Chrétiennes 234,257, Paris 1977, 1979), SC 257, 140; and *The Lausiac History of Palladius: A critical discussion together with notes on Early Egyptian Monasticism*, ed. Dom Cuthbert Butler, in *Texts and Studies* Vol. VI, No. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1908), 36.15-38.10; 134.10ff.

porter found the man the next morning: having walking thirty miles in the night, the man related, he had been unable to cross the monastery's border. Cyril wants us to know, however, that the visitor had been "hospitably received" and, even after his crime, was supplied for his journey and sent off in safety.⁹⁶⁵

The saint had interceded for his monastery once more, protecting it from grievous harm. The loss of the crucible certainly would have qualified: its worth far exceeded the value of the silver. From its orifice poured a portable reification of the saint's *παρρησία*. Here was a desideratum of pilgrim itinerary, a keepsake/phylactery from the Holy Land. Cyril's repeated emphasis on the oil was no accident; the fact that this trope arose in Judea no coincidence. The oil of the Cross was a miraculous staple of the region, an important takeaway in a land of pilgrimage. The oil of the saint likely benefited from its inspiration, tying another cultural and socio-economic thread from Jerusalem to Judea. In the sixth century the monasteries of the region were adapting to new economic realities based on Jerusalemite patterns; tomb-oil was a vital step in this evolution.

The remaining miracles run the gamut. One Procopius was healed at the tomb and elected to stay on as a monk.⁹⁶⁶ A certain foreigner came to the monastery to (successfully) receive exorcism at the tomb.⁹⁶⁷ Judgement and wrath were on display too: Euthymius had lost none of his vengeful might. When a man perjured an oath taken on the tomb, therefore, the enraged saint appeared to him the following night. Following pronouncements of guilt and condemnation, the angry Euthymius instructed young

⁹⁶⁵ Cyril, *VE*, 59 (80).

⁹⁶⁶ Cyril, *VE*, 55 (74-75).

⁹⁶⁷ Cyril, *VE*, 56 (75-76).

monks in his train to beat the man to death. The latter survived for a short time, long enough to relate the tale to his neighbors. They took the man – who seems to have lost speech and/or consciousness – to the monastery for healing at the tomb, but his seeping wounds and bowels did not permit entrance. The villagers took him home, where he died the following day.⁹⁶⁸

The Euthymian miracles tie the saint firmly to his institution. He is present in a real way, active in the administration and protection of his monastery. He is accessible to his monks. Yet here is a key difference between Cyril and his source material. Rufus' Peter had appeared to and discoursed with his monks. Theodore's Theodosius was both institutionally incarnate, and personally involved with his monks, to whom he promised heaven for obedience to the abbot. Cyril's Euthymius, on the other hand, is tied to the monastery itself. The monks are an extension thereof. More important than their connection to the saint is the bond between Euthymius, his institution, and its patrons. This monastery, and most especially the tomb, was holy ground. Here the saint was incarnate in the physical world, reified in sacred space and holy oil. In the *Life of Euthymius* Cyril has bettered Theodore's instruction, providing a leap forward in the construction of Judean hierotopic literature. In this regard the *Life* is an extension and advertisement of the work begun by Fidus. Commissioned by Euthymius and Sabas themselves – perhaps at abbot Conon's urging – this *Life* may well be historiographic hagiography, but must be equally understood as hierotopic hagiography. Rufus and

⁹⁶⁸ One wonders at the actual relationship between the man, his neighbors, and his demise.

Theodore are the two fathers of Cyril's major *Lives*. In his work, their influence finds balance.

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Not so the *Life of Sabas*. The needs of the moment constrained Cyril's work in this regard. Like the *Life of Euthymius*, this *Life* contains a posthumous miracle section that is both clearly demarcated and coherently structured. Requirements of Sabaite narrative, however, strip some of its potency. Sabas' miracles are sandwiched between the Justinianic embassy and rise of the Origenists. The former ends with the tax remissions obtained by the saint; the latter opens with Melitas' loss of Justinian's donation to Sabas. The *Life* returns to narrative without skipping a beat, and it is the Origenist conflict, not the miracles, that form the climax of the work. The posthumous miracles of Euthymius formed an organic conclusion and summation of the *Life's* themes. Those of Sabas, on the other hand, seemed artificially forced into the text. Ironically, their ill-fitting inclusion underscores their importance. Cyril injected them into the *Life* because they were in fact a major theme of the work, albeit obscured and partially shunted aside by the main theme.

There were physical and temporal constraints also. Euthymius had been dead almost a century by the time Cyril wrote his *Life*. His tomb was a well-established, magnificent part of the sacred landscape. Decades of supplicants had travelled to Fidus' achievement. Cyril's task was to compile, contextualize, and position their stories to the benefit of the monastery. Sabas, on the other hand, had died only twenty-five years before. Standing within living memory, Sabas remained a controversial figure of

disputed legacy. Cyril had more to do here: he needed to establish the saint's holiness and *παρρησία*, while also legitimizing the Sabaites' possession of his monastery and remains. Only the latter had been necessary with Euthymius.

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The funeral of Sabas was a grand event, befitting the archimandrite's stature and influence. Patriarch Peter was in attendance, together with bishops and leading men from the city. The saint's tomb was erected prominently in the courtyard between the Great Laura's two churches, in the place where once the saint had a vision.⁹⁶⁹ Unlike Euthymius, however, no miracles poured from the saint's remains. Nor does Cyril record a great crowd on hand to venerate the holy man and seek his wonders. Instead he glosses over these problems to concentrate on the idea that:

The saint did not die, however, but is asleep, having living an irreproachable life and been pleasing to God, as it is written, 'The souls of the just are in the hand of God and death shall never touch them.' Certainly this body has been kept sound and incorrupt to this day. This I witnessed with my own eyes in the recent tenth indiction.⁹⁷⁰

Cyril wastes no time in establishing this testimony, opening the first posthumous miracle within a frame of incorruption and *παρρησία*:

For when the precious tomb was opened in order to lay to rest the remains of blessed Cassianus,⁹⁷¹ I descended in order to venerate the body of the godly old man and found it to had remained sound and incorrupt. In my amazement I gave glory to God who had glorified his servant and honored him with incorruption before the general and universal resurrection. So much for the holy remains. As

⁹⁶⁹ Cyril, *VS*, 77 (192).

⁹⁷⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 77 (192).

⁹⁷¹ The Origenist-fighting abbot. See chapter four.

for his spirit, it has [deemed worthy of *παρρησία* to God],⁹⁷² the radiance of which I shall try to show with by a few examples.⁹⁷³

The posthumous miracles of Sabas begin with the establishment that the saint is saint.

With Euthymius this had been unnecessary, and so Cyril could begin with the institutional frame. With Sabas it was vital. Legitimizing possession of the saint's monasteries and remains would be the task of the main narrative, not the posthumous miracles.

Although Sabas made posthumous appearances to John and Abraamius, the saint did not directly appear in all of his own posthumous miracles. When the boy Auxentius was washed off the Laura's cliff by a flood, for example, his headlong rush was halted directly at the saint's tomb. Auxentius was unharmed despite a fall of fifty feet, and Cyril claimed himself among the witnesses to this wonder. Yet the saint's intervention must be inferred: Sabas himself made no appearance to the assembled onlookers.

More telling is the tale of Romulus, silversmith and archdeacon at Gethsemane. At the time of Sabas' death Romulus' shop was burgled, and a hundred pounds of silver lost. The disconsolate silversmith hurried to the *martyrium* of Theodore, where he donated the cost of five days' lighting and wept at the altar rail for all that time. At last Theodore appeared to Romulus and offered apologies for his absence:

'Believe me, I was not here, but I was ordered to hasten to meet the holy soul of Abba Sabas and guide it to the place of repose. But now, go to this place and you will find there the thieves and the money.'⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁷² “ἠξιώται τῆς πρὸς θεὸν παρρησίας.” Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 184. Price has “been privileged with great access to God.”

⁹⁷³ Cyril, *VS*, 78 (193).

⁹⁷⁴ Cyril, *VS*, 78 (193). Romulus later recounted this story to Cyril directly.

This a different sort of testimony. Cyril had begun with the claim that he would demonstrate the *παρησία* held by Sabas' spirit. This first miracle, therefore, offered the witness of an established saint. Sabas himself makes no appearance in the opening of his own posthumous miracle section. Rather, the passages that reach from the saint's funeral to the tale of Romulus form a contextualizing introduction to the later appearances of Sabas, including those in the minor *Lives*.⁹⁷⁵ In the following three anecdotes Cyril returns to the formula offered in the *Life of Euthymius*. Although reduced in scale, the model is the same: petition→miracle→recompense.

The first such miracle concerned two brothers from a village on the plain.

Regular hosts to the Sabaite monks, the brothers were persons who “had faith in Saint Sabas.”⁹⁷⁶ When both became ill at harvest-time, therefore, it was upon Sabas they called:

Grieved at the loss of the harvest and remembering Abba Sabas, they called to their aid his intercession.⁹⁷⁷ And [Sabas] appeared to each of them on his own, and said, ‘See, I have prayed to God for your health, and he has granted my request. Therefore in the name of Jesus Christ the true God, rise and go to your work.’ They recovered their strength at once and went to their work, announcing the miracle to their household. Since then, on the anniversary of the miracle they celebrate a public festival for all on their estate.⁹⁷⁸

Although similar donations had occurred in the *Life of Euthymius*, the local festival seems somehow out of step with Cyril's model. Its inclusion makes more sense when we recall that here Cyril was laying initial foundations: Euthymius had a great backlog of miracles

⁹⁷⁵ Binns' effort to read all of Cyril's posthumous miracles through this one anecdote goes astray. Binns, *Ascetics*, 34-35.

⁹⁷⁶ Lit. “Sabas among the saints.” Cyril, *VS*, 79 (194).

⁹⁷⁷ “τὰς εὐχὰς αὐτοῦ ἐκάλουν εἰς βοήθειαν.” Schwartz, *Kyrillos*, 185.

⁹⁷⁸ Cyril, *VS*, 79 (194).

to choose from; Sabas less so. Still, the establishment of a “feast day” for the saint served its purpose: the saint’s intercession was publicized and met with reciprocal action.

The second miracle involved the pre-emptive protection of a donation. The patroness Genárous⁹⁷⁹ of Scythopolis had commissioned a number of weavers to make liturgical curtains for Sabaite monasteries. When the weavers broke their agreement, Sabas comforted the distressed Genárous in her sleep: “Send for the weavers in the morning,” he told her,

‘and they will come to carry out the work. Do not be upset, for your offering will not be hindered.’ He also appeared to the weavers likewise, annoyed at the delay in the work. Early next day they all come in joy and eagerness, relating to each other their visions. And so they carried out the work, giving thanks to God.⁹⁸⁰

The English section heading, “Appearance to Some Weavers,” misses the point. The story was not about the weavers, but about Genárous and her donation. As in the *Life of Euthymius*, offerings to the monasteries were sacred, and thus protected. The weavers were obstacles rather than agents, and so the target of the saint’s annoyance. To the patroness, on the other hand, the saint appeared with words of comfort and consolation. Rather than correction, this donor stood in need of aid to complete her donation. The saint obliged, and so the pattern held: donation followed miracle, albeit in a roundabout sort of way.

The brothers had been landowners on the plain. Romulus was a Damascan living in Jerusalem; Genárous a local from Scythopolis. These were patrons of the middle or upper-middle class, hailing from regions not far from Judea. They were devotees to a

⁹⁷⁹ Unfortunately the English wordplay doesn’t carry over to the Greek. If we allow for Latin influence, however, perhaps “generosa” might indicate standing in the community.

⁹⁸⁰ Cyril, *VS*, 80 (194-95).

fledgling saint; Caesarius and his ilk, on the other hand, attached themselves to the more established Euthymius and his beautiful tomb-shrine. While the recipients of miracles in *Life of Euthymius* ran the spectrum of socio-economic class, therefore, it was to the Caesarii of the empire that Cyril was writing. The pattern of petitioners travelling to Sabas' tomb, however, was not yet laid down. Here Cyril was not adorning a hierotopic endeavor, but helping to construct it.

In keeping with this blueprint, the third miracle centered on a caravan owner hired to deliver grain to the Great Laura. Upon arrival, however, one of the laden camels tumbled into the gorge, a fall of more than fifty feet. In panic,

The master of the camel, a Saracen, cried out, 'Abba Sabas, your prayers must help my camel.' And as the camel rolled down, he shouted, 'Abba Sabas, help!' And he saw an elder of sacred appearance sitting on the camel as it rolled. Descending by another path at a run and getting near the camel, he did not find the elder sitting on it but the camel safe and sound with its load. Raising the animal and leading it by a gentler path up to the [hostel],⁹⁸¹ he unloaded it. Out of wonder at the extraordinary character of the miracle, this barbarian comes to the laura each year to venerate the tomb of the old man and provide the steward of the time out of his own labor a small gold coin.⁹⁸²

The camel-master is representative of his fellow miracle-recipients: middle-class and grateful. This final miracle of the three is followed by one more: that of the aforementioned boy Auxentius. These two anecdotes represent the culmination of Cyril's efforts in this collection of posthumous miracles. Beginning with the establishment of Sabas' holiness and *παρησία*, Cyril had concluded with two anecdotes that drew the tomb into the miracle stories. Auxentius, after all, had miraculously been saved directly

⁹⁸¹ Here Price translates "ξενοδοχείον" as guest-house, as opposed to his usual "hospice." He does likewise earlier in the passage also, although the reason for the choice is not clear.

⁹⁸² Cyril, *VS*, 81 (195).

at the place of the tomb. In keeping with the general pattern, we also find that Mamas, the boy's father, was a plasterer from Bethlehem contracted to direct work on the Laura's reservoir.

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Cyril's *Lives* were devotional works, meant to glorify the saints and encourage others to do likewise. At the same time, however, they were also products of the environment and needs of the Sabaites. These texts are artifacts of the Christian Holy Land, a place of sanctity embedded in religious economy. This land of sacred space had been endorsed by saints and promoted by travelers, enlarged by emperors and adorned by empresses. Travelogues describing its glorious edifices and marvelous liturgies circulated throughout the empire, yet somehow the sacred spaces of Sabaite monasteries did not appear in such presentations. Cyril undertook the correction of this oversight.

Authors write with purpose, directing details toward their larger theme. The search for Cyril's theme has long been a subject of scholarly endeavor. Some have sought to explain his oddities through theological or cultural frames, others have accused him of promoting chauvinistic rivalry or base instigation of ostensibly theological conflict. None of these approaches, however, ultimately give the Sabaite his due. Cyril's defining characteristics were loyalty and devotion. He wrote for the glory of his heroes, for the good of his peers, at the direction of his superiors. That he was clever or adroit should not obscure his faithfulness and obedience. Cyril was not selling a false bill of goods to turn an institutional profit. He was performing useful labor for the monasteries he loved.

The form of his labor was culturally conditioned. The socio-economic environment of Cyril's institutions was unique; perhaps non-repeatable. The Holy Land ingrained a consciousness of sacred space, of the incarnation of holiness in place. The attendant religious economy created a milieu in which Christian patronage attuned to holy sites was the expected means of institutional survival. In this regard the tombs of Euthymius and Sabas were the Sabaites' greatest assets.

Any distasteful overtones of that statement are a modern reaction: a dichotomy between spiritual and material would be foreign to a late antique mind. The saint had been their patron on earth; he was now their patron in heaven. The monastery was the special locus of his sanctity, the centrality from which his *παρρησία* strengthened and protected the institution in which he was incarnate. Properly enabling this process was Cyril's task.

His labor was prodigious. Cyril had borrowed from Rufus to contextualize his saints and faction against all comers. He had likewise borrowed from Theodore to literarily achieve the hierotopic adaptation sought by the Judean monasteries of his time. He had done both for the good of his monasteries. Thereby, he could hope, the institutions would flourish, the monks find salvation, and the laity receive physical and spiritual healing. Surely the saints would approve.

EPILOGUE

The religious economy of the Holy Land found stability in the regular influx of pilgrims and mid-level patrons, together with the industries such persons carried on their backs. Growth and prosperity, however, came from the greater patrons of the imperial court. The benefactions of Constantine, Eudokia, and Justinian provided great boons to the region, which grew in wealth and influence under their attention and generosity. Among the local beneficiaries were the region's ecclesiastics and ascetics, whose fortunes rose with the stature of the Holy Land.

The great Euthymian explosion took place in this way. The saint's support for Juvenal and attachment to Eudokia resulted in a wave of promotions for his disciples. In time they rose to patriarchal power, enabling them to eject their competitors while patronizing their own younger generation. As the anti-Chalcedonian remnant was pushed to the margins, the bond between Sabas and the patriarchs slowly transformed the Euthymian interpersonal network into its institutional Sabaite successor. As they ascended the heights, the Sabaites' erstwhile adversaries were left to attempt a literary contextualization of their own fall from grace.

Their efforts gave birth to a new genre. Writing factional history in the form of hagiography, John Rufus provided a new framework for anti-Chalcedonian self-image and survival. While unable to avert the Chalcedonian coup de grace, Rufus had nevertheless crafted a vision that sustained his extra-Palestinian comrades for centuries to come. The Sabaites, meanwhile, were being thrust onto a larger stage. Victory over Severus brought renown, and soon the Sabaites were imperial advisors and members of the ecclesiastical elite.

Newfound status granted the Sabaites a measure of protection against the wave of change sweeping over the Judean desert. Built on patronage, many of the monasteries were forced to watch their patronage streams dry up in the wake of their founders' passing. The promotion of wealthy abbots provided a short-term solution to these troubles, but a permanent answer required something more. In time the Sabaite civil war forced its survivors to join their neighbors' search for a new basis of stability.

Architecture and hagiography bear witness to their efforts. Prominent among these was the hierotopic solution which sought to reconnect the monastery with its spiritual father. This was the formal recognition of a bond not severed by death, for the monasteries had come to realize that the patron-founder was now the patron saint. For such monasteries, adaptation meant the construction and advertisement of newfound sacred space.

Pioneered by Fidus at the tomb of Euthymius, Judean hierotopy took an innovative leap at the direction of Sophronius fifty years later. Under his guidance a textual thread was added to the hierotopic tapestry. Often impugned as facile and crude, Theodore's work was in fact a milestone in Judean history, the first hagiography directed

at contemporary institutional benefit. Widely read in his own lifetime, Theodore found lasting success in the prosperity of his monastery and the imitation of others who sought to duplicate it.

Cyril was the greatest of these. Appropriating the innovations of Rufus and Theodore, Cyril crafted works of factional victory culminating in hierotopic endeavor. His genius lay in the synthesis of two genres into a new corpus; his legacy in the snapshot of successful adaptation. Not all Judean monasteries survived the sixth-century transition. Cyril's did, and his literary achievements deserve part of the credit.

Unfortunately this new stability was short-lived. In 614 the Persians stormed into the Holy Land, killing its inhabitants, damaging its sacred landscape, and carrying off the True Cross.⁹⁸³ Physical damage and depleted income dealt many monasteries a fatal blow. Others stood on the brink, and when the Byzantine reconquest of 629 offered a respite, they attempted to rebuild on the now-established hierotopic model. Reeling from the desecration of its holy tomb and attendant extinction of the holy oil, the monastery quickly provided a hagiographic endorsement of its newest saint, George. A second Chozibite work chronicled the repeated visitations of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who had granted many miracles to pilgrims and supplicants at Choziba. The presence of the Virgin made the monastery specially blessed, and at her order Choziba became the first Judean monastery open to female visitors.⁹⁸⁴

⁹⁸³ An account of the sack of Jerusalem, together with estimates of the attendant loss of life and physical damage, was compiled by a contemporary Sabaite monk. The work survives in Arabic and Georgian, but a Latin translation can be found at: Antiochus Strategius, *La Prise de Jerusalem par les Perses en 614*, trans. G. Garitte in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scr. Iberici* 12 (Louvain: Catholic University Press, 1952).

⁹⁸⁴ *The Life of Saint George of Choziba and the Miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God at Choziba by Antony of Choziba*. Trans. by Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis (London: International

Yet the Byzantine restoration was not to last. The Muslim Conquests of 637 created a new environment, and the monasteries were forced to adapt once more. Christian pilgrimage and imperial patronage slowed to a trickle under the lasting Muslim occupation. Paradoxically, however, past hierotopic endeavors enabled the survival of a fortunate few. Monasteries that were centrally located or along a road were still accessible to pilgrims, and for these hierotopic hagiography had provided permanent advertisement. As the physical form of these monasteries came to resemble fortresses, their literary endeavors shifted from hierotopy to liturgy and theology. Cyril soon gave way to John of Damascus. Yet his monasteries had survived, and the works of Cyril and his confederates were a major reason why. The hagiographic form of their works allowed for centuries of circulation. Cyril's *Lives*, moreover, benefitted from their historiographic value. In time new hagiographies would issue from these monasteries, but urgency did not underlie their composition, for the sixth-century authors had done their work.

Such authors had enabled their saints to provide both the means of institutional survival and the reason for it. Their hagiographies had formed a lasting bond between saint, monastery, and monks that shaped the latter's identity and action. Out of networks and socio-economic conditions, Cyril and his confreres had crafted new holy lands, each embedded in a monastery watched over by a patron, incarnate saint. Relationship with that reality, formulated through hagiographic text, inspired monks and patrons alike.

Scholars Publications, 1994). See also David Olster, "The Construction of a Byzantine Saint: George of Choziba, Holiness, and the Pilgrimage Trade in Seventh-Century Palestine" in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol. 38 (1993) 309-323.

Participants in a developmental process, these hagiographers had discovered solid ground amid the shifting sands, and placed their monasteries firmly upon it.

What, then, was Cyril doing? The answer is found by peeling back layers of context to expose the hagiographer's underlying conditions. Discovering those conditions has been the purpose of this dissertation. Cyril stood at a specific moment in the history of an evolving ascetic network. He was embedded in a unique environment, part of a dialogue more than a century old. Absent the effect of Holy Land, sacred space, and religious economy on Sabaite identity, Cyril's *Lives* would look very different. Unique network battles and ecclesiastical conflicts had shaped his view of history. The works of neighboring traditions, themselves shaped by similar influences, shaped his methods.

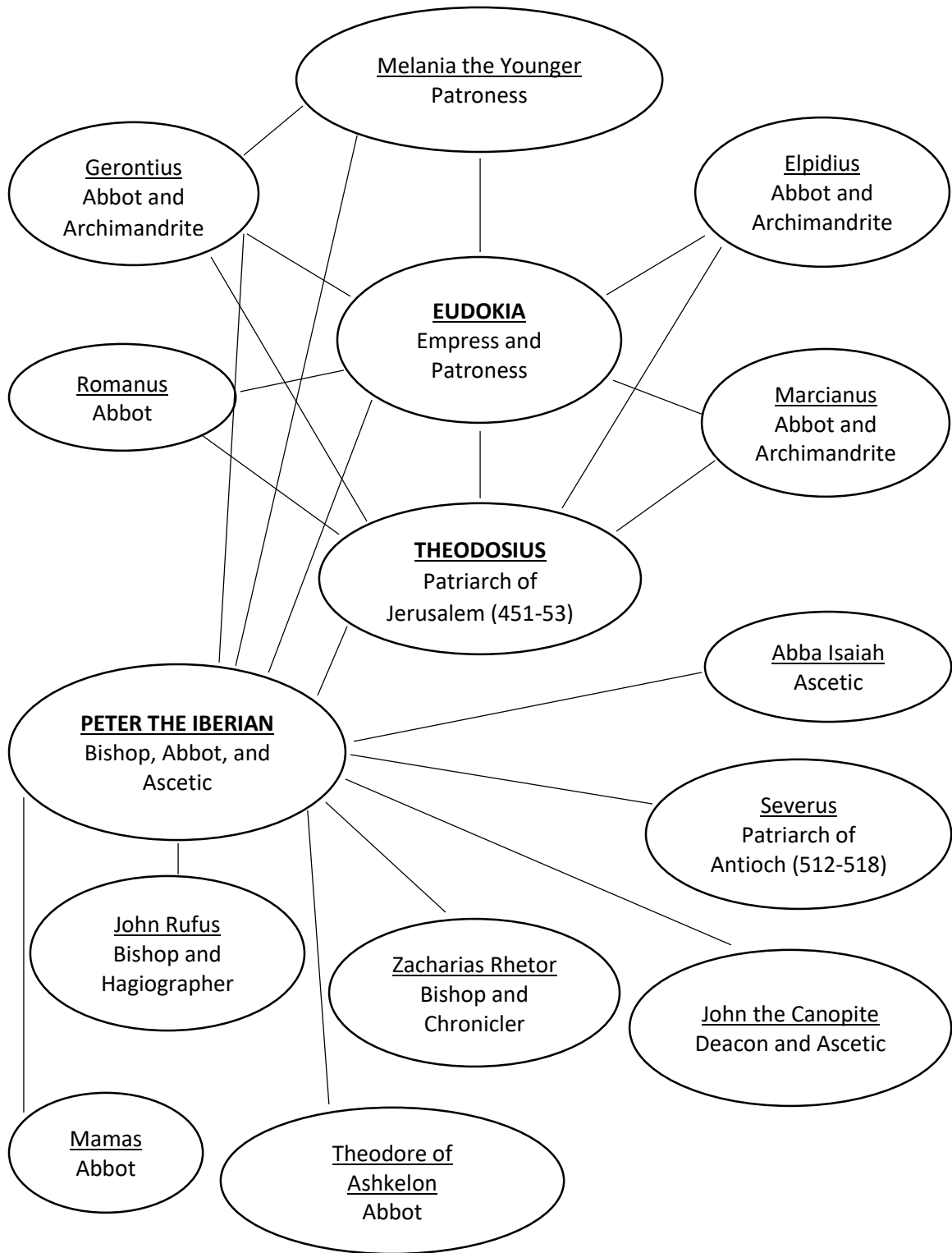
Uncovering these forces has required a cross-disciplinary approach. Context is complex, and a wide variety of data is needed to understand its scope. The conditions that shaped Sabaite thought are found in fields ranging from economics to hierotopy, in evidence that spans archaeological reports, epistolary, multiple hagiographic and historiographic traditions, and much more. Only through the alignment of so many elements can we uncover the past influences – and present needs – of Cyril and his associates.

Like hagiographies, “monasticisms” are syntheses of a universal idea with local thought, culture, and conditions. Although bound by similarities to equivalents in Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere, therefore, the Judean variant is revealed to be as unique as the Holy Land itself. Socio-economic conditions had led to a high degree of institutional activity and awareness. Ascetic and ecclesiastical conflict had made it clannish and political.

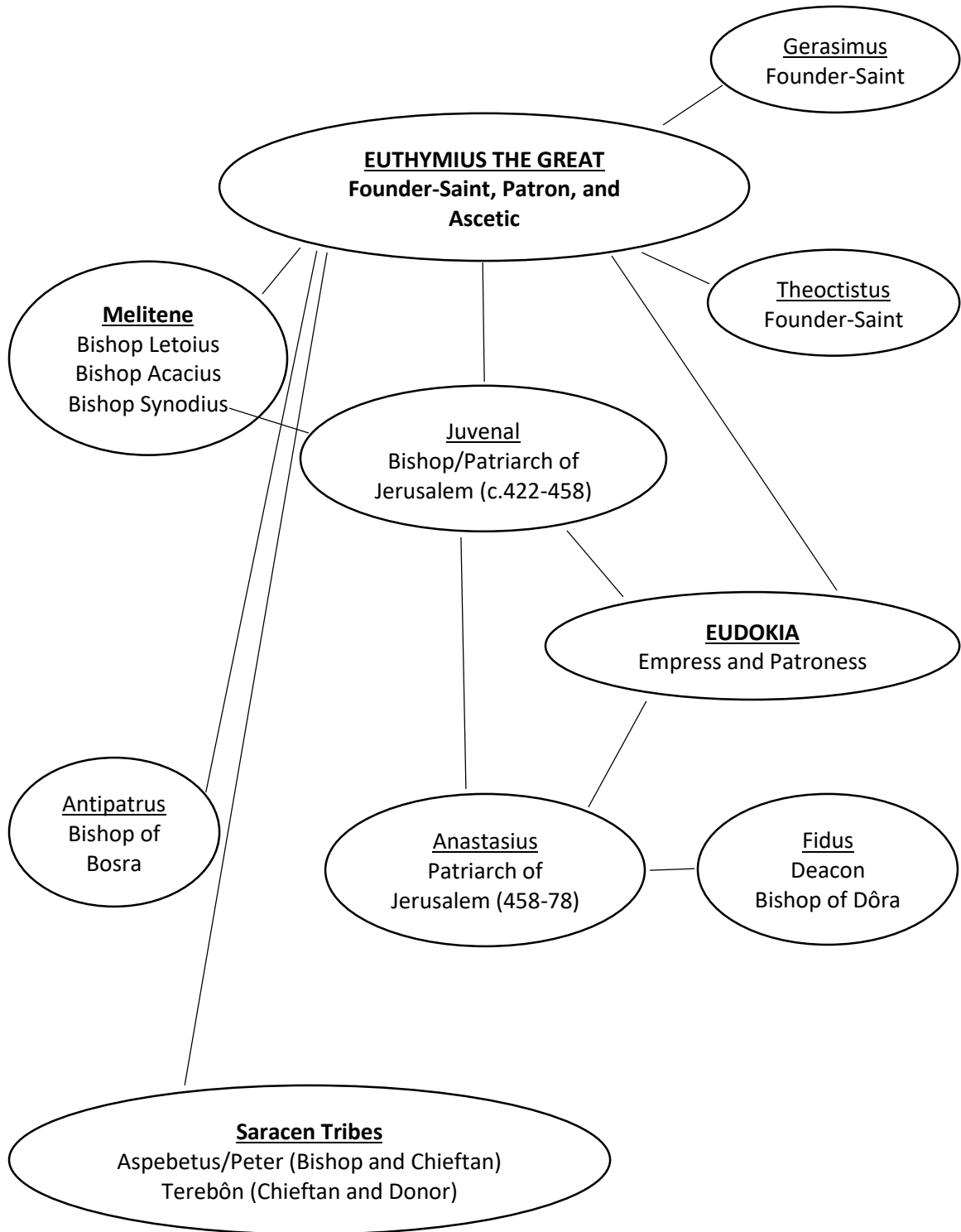
Individuals were subsumed by such conditions. In a land of saints and sacred space, moreover, monks came to share their monasteries with the dead. Although glorified, the latter were as present as ever they had been, and so re-entered the roll of unique, formative conditions upon the Judean monasteries.

Revealing the institutional context, needs, and motives of Judean hagiographers has been the aim of this dissertation. Ideally, its contribution has been to open a window on Theodore, Cyril, and others of their ilk. While looking back to the glories of saints and factions, such writers were equally bound by the needs of their present. Their works can be separated from neither. By addressing both, Cyril and others were securing the future for the traditions they cherished. They cannot be understood apart from those traditions, which run the risk of being obscured through decontextualization. The reconstruction of that context allows us to peer backwards through the many titles given to Cyril by generations of scholars, and restore the one applied in his own work: Sabaite. That term, together with its layers of attendant meaning, is the key to understanding Judean monasticism.

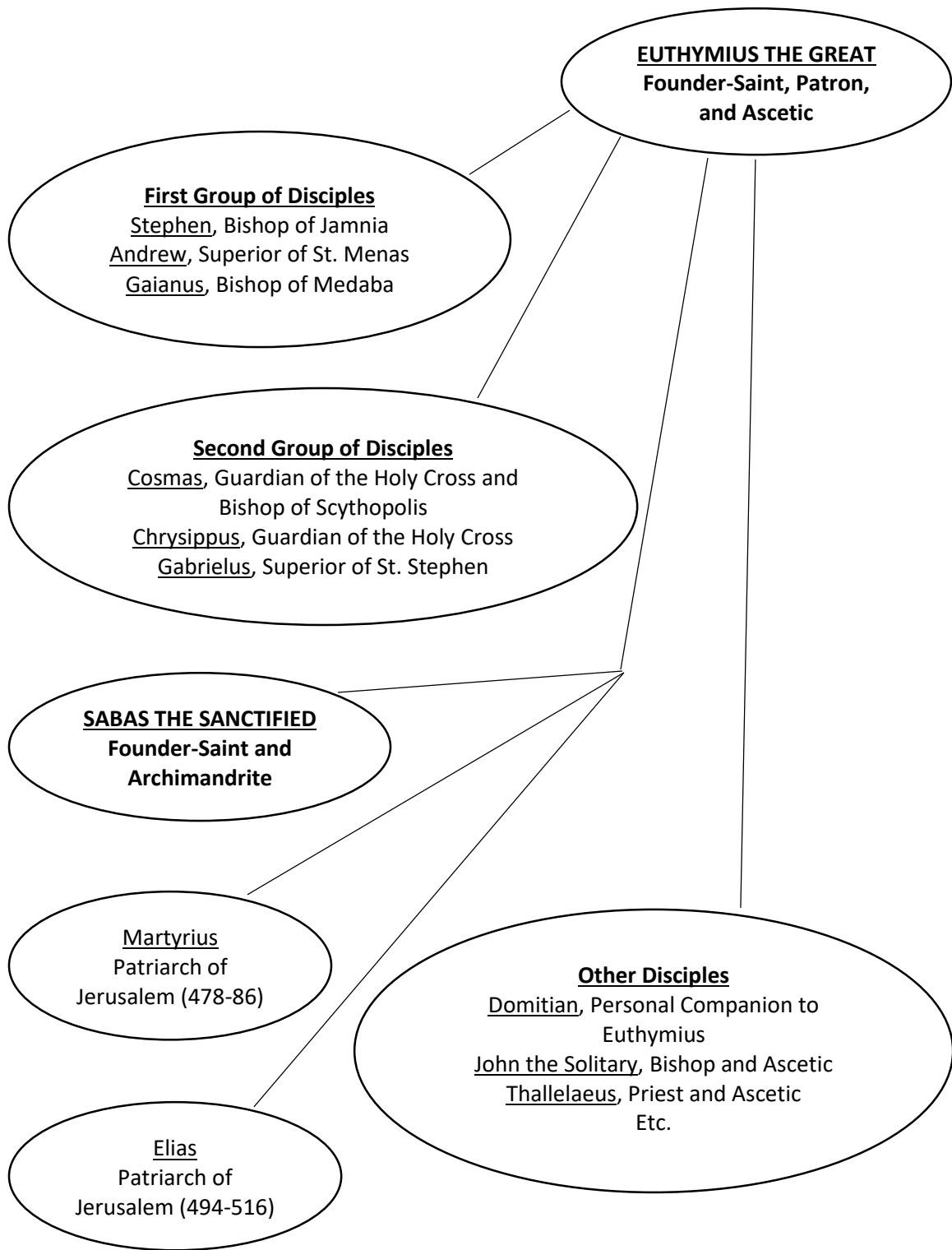
THE ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN NETWORK IN PALESTINE



GREAT EUTHYMIAN NETWORK PART I



GREAT EUTHYMIAN NETWORK PART II (DISCIPLES OF NOTE)



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- Member, Phi Alpha Theta (Historical Honors Society), May 2005.
- Graduated Summa Cum Laude from Burlington County College, August 2003.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

- Project Assistant, Anatolian Churches Project, Fall 2005 – Spring 2006.
- Research Assistant, Fictional Rome Project, Fall 2005.
- Research Assistant, North American Conference on British Studies, Fall 2005.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

- “What is Late Antique Monasticism?” Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture Conference (Georgetown University, Wash. D.C.), March 2013.
- “Regional Christian Identities in Late Antique Palestine,” Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture Conference, October 2011.
- “Literary Tropes and Patronage in the Hagiographies of the Late Antique Judean Wilderness,” American Philological Association Conference, January 2010.
- “Augustine, Monasticism, and the Donatists,” Ohio Valley History Conference, October 2009.
- “Treasure in Heaven: The Socio-Economic Conditions of Judean Desert Monasteries in Late Antiquity,” North American Patristics Conference, May 2008.
- “Competition in the Monasteries of the Late Antique Judean Wilderness,” Ohio Valley History Conference, October 2007.

PUBLICATIONS:

- “Discovering *Laudato Si*: A Small Group Study Guide (Catholic Diocese of Lexington, 2016).
- “Discovering *The Joy of the Gospel*: A Small Group Study Guide (Catholic Diocese of Lexington, 2015).

WORK EXPERIENCE:

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| <u>Catholic Diocese of Lexington</u> Director of Catechesis and Faith Formation | Lexington, KY 5/11 - Present |
| <u>St. Catharine College</u> Adjunct Professor | St. Catharine, KY 8/11 – 5/12 |
| <u>Christ the King Cathedral</u> Director of Religious Education | Lexington, KY 7/08 – 4/11 |
| <u>Holy Family Co-op</u> Middle and High School Teacher | Lexington, KY 9/09 – 5/16 |