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Christology and Monasticism The case of Philoxenus of Mabbug

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Introduction

If Orthodoxy must be understood Orthopraxy; Orthodox Christology, then must be seen as Orthodox Anthropology. The anthropological model for the monastic life was always related to Christology and included the soteriological doctrine monks should follow. Inthis paper I would like to illustrate this discipline through an analysis of the thought and doctrine of one of the most important theologians of the West-Syrian Church, i.e. Philoxenus the bishop of Mabbug. In the past, A. de Halleux made a first approach to Philoxenus' spirituality and its relation to Christology, taking asa source, the Commentary of Philoxenus on the Prologue of the Gospel of John.¹ With my analysis, however, Iwill focus on Philoxenus' Christological doctrine expressed

¹ Cfr. **A.**DE **H**ALLEUX, «Monophysitismus und Spiritualität».

in his letters sent to monks and monastic communities. In these letters, Philoxenus explained his view of Orthodox Christology, i.e. Miaphysite Christology, and gave some spiritual advices based on this Christology in order that the monks can 1) have an Orthodox spiritual and monastic life and 2) enjoy the salvation in Christ. My aim, then, is to highlight the main points of Philoxenus' Christological doctrine and to explain how such Christology was a base of his spiritual and anthropological and soteriological doctrine.

To accomplish my aim, and after having presented some information regarding the life of Philoxenus and after considering his writings in this paper, I will analyze his spiritual advicesto monks in temptation. To understand, then, the relationship between thesespiritual advicesand hisMiaphysite Christology I will present briefly the main points of his Christological doctrine in order, afterward, to see how this doctrine offers the perfect anthropological and soteriological model, the monk should follow in his battle with Satan and in his ascetic life that has as its finality his own divinization and the vision of God face to face.

Philoxenus of Mabbug: some biographical remarks²

On the biographies written on Philoxenussee D. A. MICHELSON, «A Bibliographic»; A. Vööbus, «La biographie»; A. DE HALLEUX, «À la source». There are lot of references where one might find secondary information regarding the life of Philoxenus, see for example P. BETTIOLO, «Letteratura Siriaca»; A. DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 1-105; D. A. MICHELSON, «Philoxenos of Mabbug»; D. A. MICHELSON, Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug, Oxford 2014, 1-16; M. NIN, «La letteraaimonaci di Senun di Filosseno di Mabbug», 83-86.

He was born inapproximately 440 in the Persian province of Bet Garmaito a Persian family, and was named Xenaias. To get a Christian education, he went to Edessa, where, until that time, the school of Persianswas still active.³ In this school he receiveda diophysitechristological education based on Theodore of Mopsuestia's doctrine. However, after a short period of staying there, he started to react against this Christology that supported the Alexandrian school, that is, the doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria and his followers. Some medieval sources concerning his life recount that this change in his Christological vision was necessary for him in order to stay in some Miaphysite monasteries of the Mesopotamia and the Western Syria, where his name took a Greek form, i.e., Xenaias became Φιλόξενος (Philoxenus).

Some scholars, however, such as A. de Halleux,⁴ do not agree with such reasoning.In fact, the early sources on Philoxenus' life that we possess mentionfew details from this period of his life.It is also notable that not one of his works, written during his stay in these monasteries, has been passed down to us. We just know that during this stay and as a monk, from approximately 470, he began his anti-Calcedonian activity.

Then, he was ordained a priest by the Miaphysite patriarch of Antioch Peterthe Fuller. As a priest, he

³ On this school and its function see A. H. Becker, «Edessa, school of»; S. Brock, «The Rise of Christian Thought II – Theo Theological Schools of Antioch, Edessa and Nisibis», 151-154; see also A. H. Becker, *Fear of God*, 41-76.

⁴ Cfr.A. DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog,31-33.

continued his activity against the Calcedonian and Nestorian doctrines, participating in the mission of the same patriarch Peter against Calcedonians and Nestorians, especially supporting him in the dispute over the theopaschite addition in the Trisagion's hymnmade by Peter himself.⁵ When Peter was removed from the patriarchal throne of Antioch, Philoxenus, during the year 484, went to Constantinople in order to meet the emperor Zeno. There hedemonstrated his acceptance of the emperor's Henotikon,6 giving it a Miaphysite interpretation. He also succeeded in convincing Zeno to make Peter return to the patriarchal throne of Antioch. Peter, having returned to the throne of Antioch, on August 16, 485 ordained Philoxenusas bishop of the city and metropolitan see of Mabbug (the ancient Hierapolis, today Membij) in the province of Euphratensis.

Philoxenus, as a bishop and until the consecration of Severus as patriarch of Antioch, continued his anti-Calcedonian and anti-Nestorian action in the large area of Syria including Antioch, since its throne was occupied by a Calcedonian patriarch, namely Flavian. Philoxenus'

On Peter the Fuller and the addition in the Trisagion see A. Grillmeir - Th. Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/3, 290-293; E. Klum-Böhmer, Das Trishagion; B. Ebeid, «La chiesa giacobita», 532-534, 541; G. BARDAY, «Lotte cristologiche dopo il concilio di Calcedonia», 357-358.

Regarding the period of Zeno and his *Henotikon* and the consequences of the emperor' religious policy see A. Grillmeir - Th. Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/1, 247-317; B. EBEID, «La chiesa giacobita», 533-535. E. Dovere, «L'enotico di Zenone Isaurico»; P. MARVAL, «La ricezione di Calcedonia nell'impero d'Oriente», 128-

On Flavian see P. Marval, «La ricezione di Calcedonia nell'impero d'Oriente», 134-139; P. Gray, The Defense of Chalcedon in the East, 36-39.

activity was concentrated into making propaganda in favor of the *Henotikon* of Zeno. Since Philoxenus himself was behind electing Severus on the patriarchal seat of Antioch, this event is to be considered the culmination of Philoxenus' action against the Calcedonian Flavian. He, with other Miaphysite bishops,took place in the enthronement of Severus that occurred during 512, demonstrating in this way his satisfaction of Severus' election.⁸

The last period of his life, and before his exile, was dedicated to a missionary activity in Western and Eastern Syria, in Persia, and also in Najran, a kingdom in the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, where he ordained the first two bishops of the area. Probably he was also involved in the closure of the school of Persiansin Edessa.

Despite the fact that he had little success in converting the city of Mabbug to a Miaphysite Christology, but because of his activity in the general polemical field and because of his role in the anti-

⁸ On Severus of Antioch, his historical context and his Christology see S. Brock, «Severus of Antioch»; R. Chesnut, Three Monophysite Christologies, 9-56; A. Grillmeir - Th. Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/2, 20-180; I. R.Torrance, «A Theological Introduction»; I. R.Torrance, «Paradigm Change in Sixth-Century Christology»; I. R.Torrance, Christology after Chalcedon; L. Perrone, «Il "Dialogocontrogliaftartodoceti"»; P. Allen - C.T.R. Hayward, «Severus of Antioch as Theologian»; P. Allen, Severus of Antioch; R. Roux, «Sapereteologico e sapereprofano»; V. C. Samuel, «Further Studies in the Christology of Severus of Antioch»; V. C. Samuel, «The Christology of Severus of Antioch»; V. C. Samuel, «The Christology of Severus of Antioch»; V. C. Samuel, «Severus of Antioch».

Calcedonian and anti-Nestorian controversies, Philoxenus deserves his title as "pioneer of Syrian Miaphysitism".

In 518, when Justin I ascended to the imperial throne of Constantinople, Philoxenus refused to accept the emperor's religious policy.9 Thus in 519 he was exiled to Gangra and then to Thrace in Philippopolis, where he continued to write to monastic communities encouraging them in their ascetic life and advising them to follow Miaphysite Christology faithfully. He died in exile at a very advanced age on December 10th in 523.

Philoxenus, knowing Syriac and Greek, through his writing has made a synthesis between, on the one hand, the primitive Syriac tradition of Ephrem the Syrian and John of Apamea, and, on the another hand, the Greek and Alexandrian tradition of Athanasius, Cyril and Evagrius. Moreover, he Hellenized the Miaphysite Syriac theological language, 10 something that is notable in his works and writing that has been passed down to us.

Philoxenus' writings

Attributed to the name of Philoxenus, there are a huge number of works. The authenticity of some of these works is still dubious up until today. 11 The bishop

On Justinian's religious policy see P. MARVAL, «La politicareligiosa di Giustiniano»; P. GRAY, The Defense of Chalcedon in the East, 53-79.

¹⁰ In regards see D. A. MICHELSON, «'It is not the custom».

Cfr. D. A. MICHELSON, «A Bibliographic», 312-320.

of Mabbug wrote in different genres and on many theological topics. Besides the list of Philoxenus' writing offered by A. de Halleux,¹² D. A. Michelson published a *Clavis* of his works (both published and non-published), presenting also the then known manuscripts that contain these works and writings. In addition he mentions studies and research concerning Philoxenus, his context, his thought and doctrine and his writings.¹³ For this paper here I took into examination the following works¹⁴:

- 1. Letter to Abraham and Orestes.
- 2. Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan.
- 3. Letter to monks
- 4. Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection.
- 5. Letter to the monks of Senoun.
- 6. Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ (Teleda).
- 7. The first letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal.
- 8. The second letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal.
- 9. The spiritual discourses.

Christ as a helper to the monk in his battles

In the spiritual life, temptation has a major importance. According to Christian faith, and especially to monastic and spiritual writings, temptation's source

¹² Cfr. **A.** DE **H**ALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 109-116.

¹³ Cfr. D. A. MICHELSON, «A Bibliographic».

¹⁴ See the references at the bibliography of this paper.

is Satan himself. For Philoxenus, as M. Nin notes correctly, 15 Satan can tempt monks through two ways: 1) disturbing their spiritual battle creating in their monastic and spiritual life problems and difficulties for their body and soul; and 2) manipulating their faith by creating in their thoughts wrong doctrines or making them follow incorrect doctrines.¹⁶ Therefore, at the beginning of his Letter to the monks of Senoun, Philoxenus affirms that the battle the monk might have in his spiritual life is of two types: 1) a battle against passions; and 2) a battle against heretics:

After the humiliation of the body's sublimity and pride, now you must suffer the arrogance of the heretics...¹⁷

Yet, if a monk has an Orthodox doctrine, Satan, as Philoxenus affirms in his Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, might tempt his thought through fear:

> But perhaps, in your case, [Satan] having not been able to disturb your thought by these and similar [methods i.e. doctrinal], he [Satan] has afflicted you with a bodily pain to disturb your thought through fear. But it should befit you. O hero, do not be troubled for that. If it happens and you

¹⁵ Cfr. M. Nin, «La lettera ai monaci di Senun», 101.

¹⁶ You can see more details for the role of Satan in the Economy of God according to Philoxenus in D. A. MICHELSON, The Practical Christology,

^{17 «}pyyda, Li Laata dillodik telik anek ok paeu, רב אם אוליסוג אינים אוליסוג.», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to the monks of Senoun, 2-3; English translation is mine.

feel weak, call upon yourself the knowledge of Christ, so that it may be help for you, and also the memorials of bravemen [may] support your spirit. 18

> But your vigilant memory replaces for you all the stories [of brave men], since for you the memorial of Christ is the only story that is a source of benefit. In fact, all those just [men] have mediated in Him and from Him they drew their strength. There is no force,in the nature, in any of these stories that encourages the soul, such as the memorial of Christ. In the same way, in

[&]quot;

" שי ז, עשו אל ז בשטא, סזר, של שי שרביע אות בעסב שסביע. רלא בער אל בי אר אל בי אל אל ב

fact, that light, by its nature, illuminates, so also the memorial of Christ, naturally, fortifies...²⁰

If the memorials and stories of brave men, saints and martyrs, canbe helpful for the monk in his spiritual battle, the memorial of Christ (عمرية م مراه), that is, the whole event of God's Economy, should be the principle instrument of help and support, it is the only source of benefit. Philoxenus gives an analogy to explain how the memorial of Christ canbe helpful in the spiritual battle:aslight illuminates the world by its nature, the memorial of Christ naturally (and on ላ,ኤ (አል) fortifies the monk in his temptations coming from Satan. In this case, and taking into consideration this analogy, it could be maintained that for Philoxenus Christby His nature fortifies the monk in his temptations.

How exactly, could the memorials of brave men, and especially the memorial of Christ be helpful for a monk in temptation? In his Spiritual discourses, Philoxenus explains that the monk should clothe himself perfectly in the way of Christ. This might happen just after a real purification and repentance that would guide him to the knowledge of Christ (جريعمد عملاء):

> But when a person has completely taken off the world, then he clothes himself perfectly in the way of Christ. Until he takes off the dirty outer coat and

^{20 «} کس بر سری بکل میکسورد و کرد اور کرد اور کرد اور کار دور سال ۱۹ میل مع שרשת אלאת בת אבשת של זכ א זכ בע סב שחבשת שושלאה אלא Lughas sil so set they se such see the see the see of הת א בין, בואמן ביובאה זשבישה האחמה בען סיבאה מת ששעות, הם, المرير مر مع عمصير لا يمر علا سيكاله لا », Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

purifies himself through tears of repentance from the stains of evil things, he is not able to put on the purple garments of the knowledge of Christ.²¹

What does Philoxenus mean by "clothing according the way of Christ" (المعرية المعارية المعاري

²¹ Cfr. D. A. Michelson, «'Though He cannot be eaten, we consume Him'», 459.

the mysteries by those who practice them,24 but also it has a close relation to Christological and soteriological doctrine. In fact, and according to my understanding, by the use of the image of "clothing," Philoxenus alludes, on the one hand to the incarnation of God as putting on human nature,25 andon the other, to the putting on of the new Adam-Christ by the believer through his baptism (Gal 3:27) -which is the participation in the death and resurrection of Christhimself (Rm 6: 3-8; Col 2: 11-14)-. In fact, M. Nin notes that for Philoxenus, the monk to win the passions and to pass from a material to spiritual order must have an adhesion to the death and resurrection of Christ.²⁶ In the continuity of this analysis here the relation between incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ and baptism will be better clarified.

 $^{^{24}}$ « Ly i, y, ich Let 1 Let 24 ». Let 24 » Ly 24 ». שתבשת אלעובר שעלשת בו זב או בע פב שפבשע בו אלר אלר לעמולמס בת לעשול אונח שם אלבול ב סר עוב אב אר בי הר בול בים בר לעובול אינח re d si, Lody Lizza mesar must by o, shr. a opya, o, Lis, on the same of the ser while the Philosenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

[«] Ly i, we i set Lace out, only It rey i e el as שמבשמע דליא שמעשע של וב ד ז בא מב שמבשע שואלתי דלד Lughao er Lou e Lhen bro or NLenr , Luchao er Lie or re d si, Lody Lizza mesar must by o, shr. a opya, o, Lis, on the same of the ser while the Philosenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

ול, אונת בר בר בר של אמלבל ול, אול אב אם זיב מעלבו אב אמי ממם שם מומם אלע של מל עלשו זי, אמני מתר מהר מובסול The Line act where I supplied in the color made it אר, אבתו המלבו, אר », Philoxenus of Mabbug, The spiritual discourses, 18; English translation is from R. A. KITCHEN, tran., *The discourses of* Philoxenus of Mabbogh, 12.

We can maintain, then, that for our bishop, the monk can fight his passions through repentance and purification that guide him to "put on" Christ and then to gain knowledge of Him. All this is real and possible because of the reality of the incarnation of God, His death and His resurrection, the whole mystery of His Economy and its consequences into our nature. Philoxenus, in fact, in his second letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal, affirms that Christ, by His incarnation and His resurrection, perfected our nature and all its imperfections, its passions and its weaknesses:

For He does not refuse the (properties) towards which He came in His will, such that, having made them his own in an inexplicable union, he honors in His hypostasis those very ones which, separated from Him, appear despicable ... The birth of our nature was honored by the birth of the Word from the Virgin. And he loosened and abolished the pains and the sufferings which the judicial sanction had joined to us, in fact, He was born without pain, by a miracle; which is demonstrated by the fact that the virginity of the Virgin who gave birth to Him was not corrupted at [His] birth, the true seal of virginity proclaims that in [His] birth the passion of pain did not occur. Likewise in His growth He honored the growth of our size; in His doctrine He made our doctrine wise; in His baptism He gave us purification; His fast illustrated our fast; His fight paid off our debt, and His struggle put a crown on our heads; His passion dissolves our passions; His death effaced the mortality of our nature; in His resurrection He rectified our fall; in His ascension He exalted the humble; in the brilliance of His sitting at the right He honored our despised nature.27

God the Word, by His incarnation, perfected the human nature united to Him in His hypostasis(صهره). This union (שאס, is the reason that humanity washonored (אמ, איז), and as consequence, each one of its imperfection was perfected through the soteriological actions of the Word: His birth, fasting, passion, death, resurrection and ascension. Remembering, then, this sot eriological event called Christ, the incorporated Word of God, and the consequences of His incarnation into our human nature, functions as a support for any kind of temptation a monk might faceduring his spiritual battlewith Satan.In his Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection, Philoxenus affirms that the image of Christ stands at the right side of the spiritual man, from whence he obtains help and support in his battle with Satan whose image stands at the left side. The monk who aims to achieve the perfection, must lean over the right side to win his battle through Christ:

> Turn, therefore, always to the right side and behold! - Christ stands at your side as a present image. Likewise, the spiritual man ought all the time to draw before his face an image of Satan standing continuously at the left side, and Christ

عه لع برد مرعة ملك مركره مراره مارم لله تدي مو عدد مع שתבשת אלות בת אכבר של זכ א יו בל סב שתבשת בת אלר אלר Lughao er Lou e Lhen bro or NLenr , Luchao er Lie or re d si, Lody Lizza mesar must by o, shr. a opya, o, Lizza M. Ks same K ika zk wha K.», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

at the right. For behold, on this mighty side stands Christ, by whose power we ourselves in the natural disposition of [our] limbs always lean over toward the right side, because on this side stands our Helper, as David revealed to us through the word of Spirit that was in him: "He was at my right hand, so that I shall not be shaken".²⁸

For Philoxenus, however, to look at the image of Christ and to remember Him and His soteriological action means also to have an Orthodox doctrine regarding Him. From this point of view we shall understand the importance of Orthodox Christology for the bishop of Mabbug and why he always highlights such doctrine in his letters to monks and monastic communities. For this reason, for example, Philoxenus concludes his same Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection mentioning the Orthodox faithaccording to him:

And I adjure you by Jesus, the God whom you love, that whenever you pray remember my humble self and inquire after the welfare of everyone who confesses that Christ is God, one of the Trinity, and that He suffered and died for us. So that for his dispensation towards us glory and praise are due to Him and to His lather and to the Holy Spirit to the ages of ages. Amen.²⁹

²⁸ On the relation between Philoxenus and Evagrius see D. A. MICHELSON, *The Practical Christology*, 104-112.

²⁹ For the other sources of Philoxenus on 'knowledge' his use and critical reading of them see D. A. MICHELSON, *The Practical Christology*, 62-82.

Additionally, in his Letter to monks, Philoxenuscalls Orthodox monks "healthy members of the body of the truth of Christ God" (might whim איי, בעלו. They should be zealous and supporters of Orthodoxy;theymust not just declare it with words but also fight for it with confidence:

> To the holy, pure, and faithful convents, healthy members of the body of the truth of Christ God Who is over all; zealous supporters of orthodoxy, ye Who heal the breaches of error which false doctrines have made in the body of faith; [to] ye all whom I have seen in body and in spirit, holy monasteries ... And, to teach us that we must not only preach the truth in simple words to our friends, but that we must declare it also before enemies, with that confidence that fights with death, He said to us: "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul". And again, in the public confession before persecutors, He exhorts and urges us by His promises to declare the faith which He has delivered unto us, saying: "Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father Who is in heaven, and before His angel; but he that shall deny Me, I will also deny him before the Father and before the angels".30

For more details regarding "Knowledge" in Evagrius and his tradition, especially the Syriac one, see D. A. MICHELSON, The Practical Christology, 82-104. See also C. Stewart, «EvagriusPonticus and the Eastern Monastic Tradition»; J. Konstantinovsky, EvagriusPonticus: *The Making of a Gnostic.*

Christ is the truth, and he who tastes this truth rightly, that is, according to Orthodox doctrine, will be inflamed by it and must seek for it always.³¹ In real truth, that is, Orthodox Christology, there is no place for fear. Brave men are the Orthodox men who are perfect in love, since they have communion with the truth and with love in absolute, i.e. Christ.³² He who really tastes the truth and has true communion with Christ, affirms Philoxenus in his *First letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal*, should feel sorrow and suffer when he hears blasphemies against Christ or wrong doctrines regarding Him:

Now the disciple who knows Christ and delights in Him cannot fail to experience sorrow when he hears a blasphemy against Him. For as our body naturally suffers when a wound is inflicted upon it by iron, or a stone, or anything else, so also does the soul of the true disciple suffer when witnessing a blow and an insult against Christ. Is there a greater insult than that which the new Jews of our day utter, blaspheming Christ face to face, subtracting from the honor [due to] Him

³¹ On this topic see S. **Brock**, «Clothing metaphors»; Β. ΕβΕΙΟ, «Οσυμβολισμόςτου 'ενδύματος'».

³² Cfr. M. Nin, «La lettera ai monaci di Senun», 94.

reviling His glory, and saying to Him, "a Thou art a man, and Thou makest Thyself God?".33

To conclude, Christ should be the supporter of monks in their battles, doctrinal and spiritual. The memorial of Christ and of His salvific Economy is the way in which one might fight the temptation of Satan; the memorial of the Orthodox Christ and not any Christological model of any heretical doctrine. Monks, therefore, should fight another Satan's temptation, that is, the heretical doctrines regarding Christ. What is, however, the connection between the memorial of Christ and His salvific actiondescribed in the Scriptures with Orthodox doctrine?³⁴ In other words, why does the Miaphysite Christology, according to Philoxenus, allow the monk to have an Orthodox memorial of Christ?

ובב ועו במחלם אלא משיבים בו בים באאשם ויע באלאשם ויע אלא o, Look maso sac o, in ia, saseda nle odo, euc ale o, col מהלסמב בייניו מהלסע לינים וביומא ... ביושאע אוליב מ בע ובלו il L east school shew like hise sublode sar sublar מאגל, ד אהלבחלבה משל אהמשם ובל, ולא אולוסקגולב אלבע אלה מב אבה מב אלה i i pa hLoder hite it hade alloke ofendy ht arloge אקספו אונבוול שאר החליבוול בא אים אסט אך אר בחו אבת אורבונו בת, בישטע הדבבה אחה בישב בבלה, ה בבלהנבה אחה וב,ב mar. a gaza Lgaza sand mar. aby bazan washa sie mar. מת ביות משת שבי שר שת מחל משבת שבי ביות ממר. משמת malower mon , it shoed mharace mon iera , our mhoter אלים בייאר שינים שלו שבו שבו שבו אונשכם אום מיום איירישבר ים אם Philoxenus of Mabbug, The second letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal, 62-63; English translation is mine.

عه لع مار مار مارد للحر به الماره مارد للحر ادر ما مارد للحر المارد الم שתבשת אלעובר שעלשת בו זב או בע סב שתבשת שתאלת אלת Lughan se Line se sich sen sen sen Lie och Lie obase re d si, Lody Lizza mesar must by o, shr. a opya, o, Lis, on the same of the ser while it. », Philosenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

The answer should be in the expression-keywhich Philoxenus adds to the "memorial of Christ" in the first passage we read above. He in fact says that the memorial of Christ "naturally" fortifies the monkbeing tempted. Taking into consideration the analogy Philoxenus uses in that passage, it might be maintained, as mentioned above, that for our bishop, Christ through His nature fortifies the monk in temptations. In this case the question becomes as following: How can "the nature of Christ" fortify the monk being tempted?

To understand what our bishop intends tosay, we should remember and present the main points of his Christology. Such a presentation shall help answering the following two questions: 1) How was Philoxenus' Christology the basis of his spiritual doctrine? and 2) Why should the Christological model he supports be followed by monks as anthropological model for their salvation?

Chrsitology of Philoxenus

Much has been written concerning the Christology of Pheloxenus.³⁵ I do not aim, therefore, to

repeat what has been said and written. I will, however, present here a summary of Philoxenus' Christology in order to answer the two questions mentioned above.

The Christology of Pheloxenus is a Christology from above that has as center the verse of John 1:14 and therefore it must be considered the Christology of becoming. "The Word became flesh" is the starting point in the thought of the bishop of Mabbug. The Word, however, becoming man does not at all mean that His unchangeable nature was changed or transformed, but rather it means that the Word of God willed and took for Himself a flesh animated with a rational soul, that is, a perfect human body, and united Himself to it, making this bodyHis own. For Philoxenus just such a way could save the uniqueness of the subject of *incorporation*.

Philoxenusrejects any expression that alludes to dualism because dualism does not express a true union. Therefore, duality of natures, of persons, hypostases and of wills is rejected. In addition, he does not accept an application of the terms "conjunction" and "indwelling" to the union in Christ. For him, any distinction in Christ means division, that is, two subjects in Christ. To avoid this riskhe denies the fact that the human nature preexisted its union with the Word. Humanity was not formed separately and therefore it did not have its own hypostasis. For Philoxenus, the humanity of Christ was not a single nature separate from the Word, itwas created and united immediately to the Word Himself, in His hypostasis, forming one composed nature of divinity and humanity.

The incorporation of the Word, therefore, means that He took a single body, and not many bodies or a general human nature. This body was animated with a rational soul. The body and the soul were formed in the nature of the Word, and had as hypostasis that of the Word. Thus, in fact, the Word became incorporated, but remained one.

Philoxenus rejects dualism because it leads to an addition in the Trinity. The Trinity becomes Quaternity, that is, considering that the humanity of Christ as a separated hypostasis added to the Trinity means that a creature is worshiped along with the Creator, that is, paganism. On the other hand, Philoxenus always defends his doctrine from soteriological point of view. The Savior is God Himself and not a man to whom God entrusted the task of salvation. Thus there would not be two sons, one according to nature, (the Son and Word of the Father) and the other according to grace (the son of the Virgin).

Avoiding distinction in Christ also means attributing all works, activities, characteristics and properties to the one subject, to the incorporated Word. However, the Word, being incorporated, manifested the diversity of the natures, that is, the different natural properties, demonstrating in this way the fact that He is God and man. According to the same understanding, Philoxenusspoke of the "one of Trinity whowas crucified". Certainly, such theopaschism is interpreted soteriologically, however, our bishopalways highlights that suffering, death and all human weaknesses were

made by the single subject, the Word of God, but through His body, while His divine nature remained unchangeable and immortal.

To maintain the uniqueness of the subject, Philoxenusdoes not dare to call the union in Christ with ambiguous terms such as "mixture". For him, however, this term does not signify any confusion, because natures did not change and did not even transformthe one into the other, but it means true union without division and without confusion. It is the composition of the incorporated Word. Since, in addition, the beginning of the action of incorporation and its end is the same: the Word as nature and hypostasis, simple before the incarnation and composed afterit, it is much easier to identify Christ with the eternal Word.

Nature does not exist without hypostasis, and even hypostasis does not exist without nature. Neither hypostasis is inferior to its nature nor is nature inferior to its hypostasis. Hypostasis has its properties and nature has its own, in the case that nature and hypostasis are of the same species, then the properties are identical. All these philosophical rules were usedbyPhiloxenusin order that he might explain the uniqueness of the subject and its consequences for Christology and soteriology. The subject, therefore, is one, the Word, who remained one after His incorporation. The Word is a nature, and so is also a hypostasis. With His incarnation, the subject became the incarnate God, that is, anincorporated divine nature and anincorporated divine hypostasis. This subject had divine-embodied properties, that is,

He manifested both realities of the single subject.Inthis way we can understand that the subject is not only God,noronly man, but God and man together, that is, the incorporated Word.

The incarnation and the whole Economy of the Word, finally, is according to His will. God the Word willed and was incarnated, crucified and died to save humanity. It is the action of the Word's *kenosis* according of His will, and of His love. Just from this soteriological vision, one might affirm that God was born and crucified in flesh in order to save us.

After having presented his Christological doctrine we can now see how such doctrine could help us to answer the main two questions I made above. To realize this I will highlight some principle points of his Christology and its consequences in his anthropological and soteriological doctrine. Before starting, however, it should mentioned that Philoxenus developed his doctrines in a polemical context. In this paper here I shall not analyze this side of Philoxenus' Christology; that is, how he understood the doctrine of Nestorians and Chalcedonias and why he rejected them. What is important for us is to know that for Philoxenusboth Nestorianism and Chalcedonism were incorrect Christological doctrines based on dualism. Even if Nestorians and Chalcedonians themselves denied such accusations, Philoxenus, along with his tradition, considered these two Christologies as heresies because, for him, they taught a duality of persons, i.e. two sons and two christs, and, as a consequence, they added a fourth person to the Trinity making it become aQuaternity.

The Savior is God and not a simple man

As said above, for Philoxenus the savior is God and not a simple man. If the salvation of the world was accomplished by Christ, it is because He was the Incarnate Word and not a simple man who became God by grace. In his Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ Philoxenus argues the importance of affirming that God Himself, and not a man, willed to be crucified for us:

> What do you want to say, oh heretics? that a mortal has died and a passible has suffered? ... They say that a man is mortal according to nature. If it is as you say, that an immortal do not die, and that who died is mortal according to nature, then he did not die for us. In any case, he died for himself and the death of Christ was not for us, but He died for himself ... [Martyrs] according to their wisdom made [their natural death] voluntary ... they died when they willed and not when death willed, so, by this, their death would be similar to the death of their God, Who died according to His will, and not according to the necessity of the power of death, so according to their holy death, they preferred to change for themselves [the time of] death before its coming naturally. If [Christ] was a man, like one of us, and not God who by His grace willed and became a man, He would be mortal and would have not died for us. If one denies that God was crucified,

he must say that a man was crucified ... How could the death of a man bring life to the world, and how could a mortal conquer death, when he, according to his nature, is subjected to death?...³⁶

If we maintain that a man was crucified and not God, we mean that this man was a mortal (האלים, ב) and that he dead for himself and that his death was necessary (من المنابخ). Christ, however, died for all human beings and not just for one man and therefore He was God, and His death was voluntary (عرص ص).37 Philoxenus explains this point through a comparison between the voluntary and the necessary death relating it to the salvation occurred on the Cross of Christ. First of all, he affirms that the death of Christ on the Cross was voluntary: He willed to be crucified. Martyrs also, who, through their martyrdom try to imitate the death of Christ, by dying of their will. But if these Martyrs could avoid their martyrdom, then they, being mortals, would have to die of necessity of the power of death upon human nature. Christ, however, for Philoxenus, is not a mortal being, but He is the immortal God Who,

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of love, willed to be incorporated, crucified and to die for the salvation of humanity. Mortal being cannot save other mortals, because he belongs to a nature subjected to death (בבבת האסתב). Just God can save mortals; God, in addition, cannot die of necessity, and therefore His death was voluntary.38

As noted above, according to our bishop, since Christ is the incarnate Word, His birth of the Virgin, His crucifixion, His death occurred through His humanity, through His body, and not through His divinity. In his Letter to monksPhiloxenus highlights this doctrine saying:

> Be not troubled, therefore, O hearer, at this [statement] that God was crucified for us. For, if God was born of the Virgin, God was also suspended on the Cross. And if a heretic should say, "How can God die?", ask him in return, "How can God be born?". If then He was born of the Woman, although He is from the Father in His first generation, He also tasted death of His own will, although He is living in His nature. And as, when He became man, He remained God as He is, without change, so also, when He tasted death for us. He did not lose the life of His nature.

عه یام بر مرب المحمد میلام میلام کرد دور ادر اور میل » 38 שמבשמע דליא שארשר של זב ד. ז בל מב שפשע שלאדר. דלד Lughas sil so set they se such see the see the see of on, songe on the to be such monds in what, a payor, on, Lis, on re same of mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

For it is God Who became man for us, and it is the Living One Who tasted death for our sake.³⁹

The reality of the Incarnation is a condition to affirm the truth of death. If the Wordreally was born of the Virgin in flesh He truly died on the Cross.⁴⁰ Philoxenus, therefore, affirms in his *Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ* that «Not in in appearance, but, we confess that He [the Word] truly became a man, and therefore He truly tasted death».⁴¹ The whole Economy was

⁴⁰ Cfr. Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to monks, 129:«מר, ר ארוֹע בּ בשמשת אוֹאבּאָתר מַ מְשֵׁבְ בְּאַלְתְּ שֵׁלְאָלְתְּ אַבְּאָרְ אַלְתְּ אֲבְּאָרְ אַבְּאָרְ אַבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרְ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָבְיּאָר אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּבְּאָרָ אָבְּאָרָ אָבְיּאָרָ אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּבְּאָר אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּי אָבְיּיִי אָבְייִי בּיּיִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְייִייִי אָבְייִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְיּיִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבְייִי אָבּייְיי אָבּייְיי אָבּייי אָבּייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּייי אָבּייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְיי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבּיי אָבּייי אָבְייי אָבּיי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְייי אָבְ

accomplished by one and the same subject, Jesus Christ, the incorporated Word of God, with the aim to save the world. Even if God the Word is the subject of Economy and its actions, Philoxenus cannot accept real theopaschism. He always affirms that God was born, crucified and dead, not as "being", i.e. not according to His divinity, but as "becoming", that is, according to the flesh.42

Since the flesh is of the Word, and taking into consideration the argumentation concerning voluntary and the necessary death, one might ask the following: If the humanity in Christ had not died on the Cross, could it die of necessity? It is clear that for Philoxenus the non-distinction between the two realities in Christ is the reason to maintain the onenessof the subject of the Economy. Affirming that on the Cross God died voluntarily means that He could not die of necessity since He is God and the giver of life. Humanity in Christ could not die of necessity because it was not never separated from His divinity; it was the humanity of God the Word. Yes it was consubstantial with our humanity, something Philoxenusconsidered that very important condition for Orthodox Christological

משפ אובישם אב בואם אעיבעך מדיני דישע אביני דישע אניערץ אינים אינים אינים אבינים אינים אינ ולא שרב האלו, ובצב במבו אמובר באונ אלו זעו, האלו atar or very to Alier shough has no ite som rui, boins los my r wer are all since so sitis את במבוד אל,עום, הם את,אה מע,אבת לבד אל,עום, ם אלסעם מב אעו,בעל הפא לכם סל הפאו אללעמע א שמס, אמנע אונסח, שמו ביבו, מאסל ביובר ישומים ביובר ביובים א משבע השבע האסה», Philoxenus of Mabbug, The first letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal, 148-149; English translation is of the same reference, page 107.

doctrine,⁴³ however, it was a special humanity as he explains again in his *Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ*:

And if they say that being just he was saved from his death and since he was without sin he was not subject to death ... and if because of their sin, we say, that men must die ... Because death is mixed with their nature [through concupiscence], God, however, willed to become man from a Virgin ... He was not incorporated and born through concupiscence, according to the old law, but through His incorporation He was superior to death. Therefore it is right to say that the immortal died for us, -immortal according to His nature-, and not because of being just, as they say. Since, then, He was born immortal from His Father, and remained as so [i.e. immortal] in His incorporation, and since He was incorporated without concupiscence it is correct [to say] that the immortal was crucified for us...44

Mortal humans, because of the first sin, are judged of death. They, whether they sin or not, must die of necessity, because they are born as a result of

For the relation between the knowledge of Christ through Scriptures, the interpretation of Scriptures and Orthodox Christology in Philoxenus' thought expressed in his commentaries on the Gospels see D. A. MICHELSON, Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug, 113-143

The main studies regarding the Christology of Philoxenus are the following: A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog; R. CHESNUT, Three Monophysite Christologies, 57-132; A. GRILLMEIR - Th. HAINTHALER, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/3, 478-544; D. A. MICHELSON, Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug; D. I. VIEZURE, «Philoxenus of Mabbug and the Controversies over the 'Theopaschite' Trisagion . See also some other references given in the bibliography of this paper.

concupiscence (100 🗸 🦟). 45 The Word, however, was born of a Virgin, by a miracle and not through concupiscence. He was incorporated and therefore could not be subject to death.46 This explains why Philoxenus underlines that the immortal God died in flesh, not of necessity, -because His flesh was not subject to death-; nor for Himself, -because He was not mortal and had not in need of salvation-; but He died by His will and for us. The same idea is presented with some elaboration, as Mar Mathews Severos notes,⁴⁷ in his controversy with Habib, where Philoxenus compares the birth and death

משפעה אנת אוס, דע אדי הים לבית ואסישות שיש מחדים בת שב ... חת חת הלוג זשות בר מם הומאר עות האל. דת מעת ד non that woiely so moelu selu that It of mer by one elu nln nurear mhod modin on helu ol Lindo ... חב חב בשוק בחול ב בבין המסוב ב בחולם אשר בבין בר ווו המסוב ב בחולם אום ווים בבין בר וווים בבין בר וווים בבין מ של בושבו איר, לם שם סלם יולות משיבים ב חמו א שיאור בחמשלאה איניה בים של אין אוני אוני אוני אוני אוני בים מספלעד אים אבי ים אסתר שם שלים שונים שונים בישור שוני היים בו ור בער אב או וכ מל ובעו וי, באת בלע הות אל מלא בא אחת אהות בר שמש זורלשת ה בללש... סתימת ה שבתש שמאה זים הל בה זת שה בבשת אם היאת א ואת המת שהמשל הם זיאות ה שואה בבשם mar...», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ (*Teleda*), 461-462; English translation is mine.

⁴⁶ Such topics are frequent in Philoxenus' writing, see for example how he elaborates such topic in his controversy with Habib analyzed by Mar Severios Mathews, «The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Christ»; see also the analysis of Bou Mansour in regards in A. Grillmeir - Th. Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/3, 527-530; A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 473-474.

⁴⁷ To the same conclusion Philoxenus arrives in his controversy with Habib making comparison, however, between the death of Christ and that of Adam, cfr. Mar Severios Mathews, «The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Christ», 60.

of Christ with the one of the first Adam.⁴⁸ Humanity of the Word for Philoxenus, in fact, is a real humanity, consubstantial with us, but does not belong to the humanity under the original sin, and being united to the Word, it is called the new Adam, the new Creation.

Christ as new Adam and new creation

For Philoxenus, who follows the early Christian tradition, if with the sin of the first Adam corruptionwas added to our nature, with Christ, the new Adam, humanity was saved because it was totally renewed (אלגענא'):

Because Adam had fallen under the malediction and became corrupt, he [Adam] was completely renewed and assumed in God. The incorporated Lord delivered his body to death for all bodies, and his soul for the salvation of all souls; [thus] our wholenaturewasrecreated in Him[as] new man...⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See also **A.**DE **H**ALLEUX, *Philoxéne de Mabbog*, 470-473.

It is clear in this quotation from Philoxenus' *Letter* to the monks of Senoun that the humanity of the Word is perfect since it is composed by body and soul.⁵⁰ This humanity is of the Lord and it was offered as sacrifice for all men, for their salvation. We can see also how the bishop of Mabbug elaborates this ancient Christian doctrine concerning the new Adam in order to support his Christology. He, in fact, affirms that all of nature was recreated (מאבו, בה אב in the Lord as new man (בּוֹ אַ בֵּא שׁאַאה). As Bou Mansour notes, the expression "recreated in Him", iskey for understanding the soteriological vision of Philoxenus and its relation to his Miaphysite Christology.⁵¹ Saying, according to my opinion, that the whole humanity was recreated in the Lord, which in myviewPhiloxenusintends to say in His hypostasis, supports the doctrine according to which humanity was not separated from the Word, was not of a simple man, or in other words, did not have its own hypostasis. By adding, then, the expression that this humanity was recreated in Him as "new man,"Philoxenus wants to highlight the same fact. This new man was not a single human hypostasis, however, it was our humanity in its totality, that is, the new Adam, the humanity of the Lord:

[«] e for la sise on riser on riser on the ext of the אספת», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ (Teleda), 471; English translation is mine.

Cfr. Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ (Teleda), 470: « אראה בלסטי בא שמשמע אין אראק אראק אראק א אראה בל ארץ בל אוב אוניב. », «It is [correct] to be said regarding Him this, that death [occurred] not according to the nature of His "being" but according to the truth of His "becoming"». English translation is mine.

The body of the Word is therefore His own, and not of someone else. [He is not] a man, known in his own hypostasis, [who] was born of the Virgin and joined God ... But the Word, according to the flesh, was born of the Virgin and, in His flesh, He condemnedsin...⁵²

The rule of the Word's humanity in salvation is very important. Philoxenus does not limit himself just to describing this humanity as a sacrifice of new creation. Since the body is united to the Word, it became of Him, that is, it did not possessits own hypostasis through which it could be known, but through the hypostasis of the same Word, itbecame known to others. Therefore, sincethe divinity and the humanity were united without separation in one hypostasis forming the one nature of the incorporated Word, Philoxenus, as read in the above quotation from his *Second letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal*, was able to arrive at the affirmation that the Word condemned sin (""). This last affirmation demonstrates the

Just taking in consideration his Letter to Abraham and Orestes where he refutes the doctrine of Stephen bar Sudaili the edessene regarding the consubstantiality of humanity of Christ and ours with the one of God; and its consequences on soteriology -cfr. Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to Abraham and Orestes- one might understand how it is important for Philoxenus to underline the consubstantiality of Christ's humanity with our nature, except sin, and its ontological difference from the divine nature. See also A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 363-378; A. GRILLMEIR - Th. HAINTHALER, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2/3, 502-510.

important function of Christ's humanity in Philoxenus' soteriological vision.⁵³

Our humanity is honored in Christ

For Philoxenus, the real and true union between divinity and humanity and the oneness of its result as one nature and hypostasis have two consequences:

> And perhaps they say, "Has not our nature been honored?" Our nature has been honored in God, in His incorporation for us. Not that a man was set apart from our nature to become God by grace. If not, then, as I have said, we would recognize two gods, one of nature and the other of grace; and two sons: one of nature, born of the Father, and the other of grace, born of the Virgin.54

First of all, there are no two subjects in Economy, there are no two sons or two gods or two christs; just one Son and God, one Christ. Secondly, as is clearly underlined in the above passage from his Second letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal, because of the union,

אלית אדי דלעני ישונים של וויחוץ שונים בי ישונים בי ישונים אר דלעני היומן אינים איני ומא באתום בסתנתלע בלק באם ... אולים וליב בע וברדם אך אלסת אסת בנות אות אות בו בלבת ... בולסת בו מסת בנות ב אות אות אות אות בו בינות ב אות אות בו בינות ב אות בינות בינו מששאליי עו בשת ות מסת שו בת שת שלם שלה של ראו בש מחלם בש בולקב מב באו ואם, ולב אשמם בא בא משמם בא באלם מו בל ולול dea shord str to sidded Lena ilesso ... soon shod sa Lal بالم من مراح براه براه به ماهموردا مع مل المراج ملك مراحد المراج ماهم مراحد المراجع ا אה שב עם בה הלה אה אה אל אכא אבא בה בלב את אינה בל באם האה תם אז שם אול בב בולא אבות ומם אל המו אבוג בלב וולא מת בשל הא אלס, אלה א האלט בללים א Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ (Teleda), 463-466; English translation is mine.

⁵⁴ On the origin of death and passions according to Philoxenus see A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 462-466.

humanity has been honored (﴿مَرَهُ) in God.In his *First* letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal the bishop of Mabbug mentions the same idea but in a different way:

They [the heretics] try to show that His glory is not His own; that He received everything from the favor of another; that He is not God by His own nature, but was made God recently. For these devils [the heretics], without being ashamed, speak of Christ as one speaks of idols, because they are idols who are turned into gods when they are not such. It is not so, however, with Christ, O godless man, but by nature He is God. If then He became what He was not, as it is written of Him, it is not that from man He became God, but from God He became man and remained as He is, God. A body did not take Him, but He took [a body]. For He did not receive any glory from the body that He took, but by His embodiment He gave glory to our miserable nature. He did not come to a creature to be made God, but to be known as God.55

For Philoxenus, then, His incarnation honored our nature, giving it glory (אולעסבבער). Christ is not a man who received the honor to be God, which would bepaganism; Christ's humanity, although it is consubstantial with us, being, however, united with the divinity of the Word, in His hypostasis it received the honor and the glory of divinity. The main question one might have directly is how our nature was honored?

⁵⁵ See also in regards **A.DE HALLEUX**, *Philoxéne de Mabbog*, 494-498.

A. de Halleux notes,⁵⁶ that for Philoxenus, humanity in Christ was incorrupt and immortal, in it He truly died on the Cross, not by necessity but by will, for our salvation. Philoxenus, in addition, gives an answer to the same monks in his Second letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal where he declares the following:

> So all our imperfections have been improved in our God and our ignominies have been honored in our Creator. And [because] He became with us in His grace, we became with Him in His favor...⁵⁷

We already saw how he explained for the tempted lawyer that the imperfections of our humanity were removed in Christ's body: Mary gave birth to him without pain; he suffered upon the Cross transforming suffering into victory and death into life. In conclusion, it can be asserted that for our author, Christ, the embodied Word, manifested glorious humanity, the uncorrupted and immortal body, the real Adam, real and true image of God. He affirms also, in the above passage, that since God became with us by His grace and by His will, we became with him in His favor. How could, then, such doctrine be accomplished in us? In other words, how can we become 'new Adams'?

⁵⁶ Cfr. Mar Severios Mathews, «The Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Christ», 62-64.

⁵⁷ See also on this doctrine A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 408-412.

How can we benefit from the renovation of humanity in Christ?

To answer this question we shall read and analyze some anathemas which Philoxenus writes in his First *letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal.* In these anathemas one may clearly note the relationship between Orthodox Christology, which is for Philoxenus the Miaphysite Christiology, and salvation and redemption in Christ. It must be mentioned before, that, as R. Chesnut correctly notes, for Philoxenus there are three ways of life: 1) according to the Old Man; 2) according to the New Man for simple people, who are baptized but live in the world; and 3) according to new Man for those who aim to achieve perfection, i.e. the life of monks.⁵⁸ Becoming a new Adam can be achieved by baptism; it is the first step in the life of perfection. Then, as M. Nin notes, comes the battle that monks, those who flee the world to go to the desert, might face in their spiritual life. They must fight in order to achieve perfection, that is, to become real sons of God, or in other words, to achieve divinization.⁵⁹ To this topic, however, I will return after.

[&]quot;

" שמבים אלא יש ארב בא בי מדאר מזרא של ב מב שמבים בזשלאר. אלר שמבים אלא בי מדע של בי מדע שמבים בזשלאר. אלר שרא לא א מי אבאר בי מדע שאר איי ארב מב שמבים בזשלאר. אלר שרא לא בי א בי א באר בא שאר אויי אלא בי מרע א בי א בי א באר איי אלא בי א איי אר בי שאלא איי איי אר בי איי אלאר איי איי אר בי איי אלאר איי איי אר בי איי אלאר איי איי אר בי איי אר בי איי אר בי איי איי אר צר בי איי אלאר איי איי אר צרים אלאר איי איי אר בי אר בי איי אר בי אר בי איי אר בי אר בי אר בי איי אר בי אר בי

[&]quot;" מראת זות שם מלטו אואל ביש שלאר מראש מיד שת ר תמלשה האום ביש שלאר מראש ביש אואר מראשם ביש אואר מראשם ביש אואר מראשם ביש שלאר ביש אואר ביש אוא

For Philoxenus, then, just those who follow Orthodox Christology can enjoy the redemption through Christ, through His incarnation and especially by His Cross:

> He who attributes glory to the one and humiliation to another, openly confesses two sons and makes void the redemption which came to our nature.⁶⁰ He who says that the half of Christ is the Redeemer, and the other half is redeemed, and does not confess that He is wholly Redeemer, on account of which He was called Jesus, which is interpreted Savior, this one is cut off from the redemption which Christ wrought by His Cross.⁶¹

Salvation, then, is redemption; this redemption realized on the Cross. It was real because the body of Christ was true and real, was of our nature.For Philoxenus, this body, which is of God Himself, prepared for us life, that is, through the corporeity (and is, abre) of God the Word, man was saved:

> He who says that God refused to take a body of our nature as being defiled, and confesses that a body was formed for Him from another

⁶⁰ On this topic see R. Chesnut, *Three MonophysiteChristologies*, 70-78.

^{61 «} لم بر مرب بولم بالمحدد للمحرب ماير للا معرب الم عدر مع שחבשת הלות שתרשה של ז ה ז בל שב שפשטע שלאהר. הלה Lughan er Lya be sim of the property of Luch pich sing Luchan ית, א בו, באמע בתוב מחלבו אער שובתו מלבו,ל מולם ום אות מת מסומם וחו Lizze of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

place, shall be cut off from the life which the corporeity of God has prepared for us.⁶²

Philoxenus goes further. Christ's humanity, considered as thenew Adam and new creation, is true humanity. Who does not believe in Christ as the incarnate Word according to the Miaphysite doctrine cannot be redeemed and therefore cannot be considered man or counted among men (عمر المعالم), that is, cannot participate in the true humanity granted by Christ:

He who does not confess that He, Who is perfect God and the consubstantial Son of the Father, is also perfect man from the human nature, shall not be counted among men [for whom He became man].⁶³

He who says that the body of our Lord came down from heaven, has not been redeemed with the sons of men.⁶⁴

⁶² Cfr. A. Grillmeir - Th. Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2/3,530-531.

[&]quot;אלאר היים של אלאר היים אלאר היים ביל אלאר ביל אלאר ביל אלאר ביל אלאר ביל אלאר ביל אלאר ביליאר ביל אלאר ביל אלא

^{64 «} Ly i, yai ptl iaml, oir,y ol, lr reys i eloe waeay andlar rlr er i eloe waeay andlar rlr er i, ray raul, er iralr po oir died e or lie opdipul re d ei, lody lied in ine. I alwar ty o, shr. o opyo, o, o, lie, y re acon r ir er wild r.», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

Why do those who do not believe in Christ as the incarnate Word cannot be considered a man? Philoxenus gives the answer in the following anathemas:

> He who says that there are this and that nature] the or in yet put off the old not as

> He who does not confess that the Word became the seed of David and Abraham in the flesh, and took a body really and without change from the Virgin who brought Him forth, has not as yet changed from the old error.66

Who does not believe that the humanity of Christ is new Creation, cannot be redeemed by Christ, because redemption means putting off the old Adam (عد عند) אם, אב) and putting on the new man. The comparison between the "old" and "new" in Philoxenus' thought is a key for understanding his soteriological vision.⁶⁷ For him, then, true humanity is the new one and not the old,

عه لع برد مرعة ملك مركره مراره مارم لله تدي مو عدد مع Lughao er Lou e Lhen bro or NLenr , Luchao er Lie or re d si, Lody Lizza mesar must by o, shr. a opya, o, Lis, on the same of the ser while the Philosenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

See also A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 400-401.

אמלאה ב אות לא ובעום אות הלוקה וכעם אל האום אות באלאהא וכעם» mon of sients of the pier of the come see there רשה שלאסר מדשה מדשה אות הות אלום השמח שלאסב, בי שם ולקולה ה מרשוב ה ולם בילות מלוני שב יור שו זיקות ה זהלאולו שם second letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal, 50; English translation is mine.

and this humanity is to be considered the true and real image of the Creator (הוֹבוּג אוֹמסקוּ). Such doctrine, as Philoxenus acknowledges in his Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection is apostolic:

For the apostle teaches us that one has to strip off completely the whole of the old man, together with all his habits, and to put on the new one, who is renewed after the image of His Creator.⁶⁸

Those who want to be considered men should clothe themselves in the new humanity, which can be achieved just through the Orthodox faith in Christ and by participating in His humanity united to his divinity. And this participation can be achieved only through Orthodox baptism, as the following anathema explains:

He who does not hold for certain that He Who was crucified was one of the Trinity, has not received the freedom and joy of baptism, and has not as yet been redeemed from the sentence of death and from the original curse.⁶⁹

Redemption is communication with Christ

Christ ordered His apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mth 28:19). For Philoxenus, Orthodox baptism, which grants for believer life, freedom, joy and redemption, must be in the name of the one Son of the Father, identified with Christ, that is, the Incarnate Word of God. 70 This is what we read in his Letter to the monks of Senoun:

> In whose name must we [believe] that we have been baptized, o foolish [man]! and Who is part of the Trinity? For Jesus did not tell His disciples to convert and to baptize in the name of two, but in the name of one [alone] Go to all peoples, convert them and baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Tell yourself then, for it is up to you to prove it: which of these two natures and which of these two sons, invented by you, is here quoted with the Father and the Spirit? and in whose name, besides theirs, are

^{69 «} کس بر مرب کل میده کیل میده کیلم اور کام مدر کلم مدر کام در میل ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹۵۰ و ۱۹ שחבשת אלים שתאשת של ול א זל בל סב שחבשת שושלאת אלא Lughdo si Lin Lash si our de de la la se ore Lise ore הל א בין שמשת ליודשעו שמשעני שומים על ביור על מידאער של מילים ישי اند, مر ها عمصتر لا تلار علا سالمار لا», Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

Cfr.A.de Halleux, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 479-483, 484-505.

we baptized? Is not this the Word, Who is the Son by nature? [But] then, this man, [invented] by you, is outside the Trinity, and he can not receive praise or worship, since it is forbidden to worship as God what is not of the Trinity!⁷¹

A name is established for us by faith because it has caused us to be born from error to the knowledge of God. On account of this, everyone who approaches Christ and becomes a disciple of His Gospel receives his name by faith and is called "a believer". Since faith is our mother and the one that gives birth to us, it is excellent that we should be named by the name of the One that gives birth to us. This is a wondrous thing that the greatness of faith has reached the point that people shall be named by [faith] just as by the name of God and of his Christ. For by the name of God we shall be called godly ones, and by the name of Christ we shall be named Christians, and by

[്] പ്രോ, ത്യൂപ് ചട്ടുൻപ് പ്രീൻ ചെയ്യ വെട്ടുൻ പ്രൂൻ ചായും വരു പ്രാര്യം വരു പ്രാര്യം വരു പ്രാര്യം പ്രാര്യം വരു പ്രാര്യം പ്രവര്യം പ

the name of faith we shall be named faithful. This is the name that distinguishes us from all [other] religions and makes us strangers to all teachings of error. No one is called faithful except one who has been born out of authentic faith, and [faith] is his mother and the one who has reared [him].⁷²

With Orthodox baptism which is according to an authentic faith (m, p, ohr zi,ihr) and Orthodox Christological doctrine, man becomes a member of the body of Christ, that is, the new Creation, throughwhich he gets freedom, joy and redemption from the One who give birth (גרם) to His followers; therefore the follower of Christ is called a true faithful and believer.⁷³

Being baptized, however, does not mean an automatic salvation. According to Philoxenus' Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection one may feel the new Man (שול אבר שול) that he puts on (אבבלג), so He can live really in him:

> You then strove well to feel the new man, Whom you have put on, and not like the others who buried him inside them, and their old man became a grave for the new man that they put on in the waters [of baptism]. And He does not live in them, does not feel, does not turn around, and does not care for anything that belongs to Him, as someone dead in the grave does not do any of these [activities].74

⁷² Cfr. R. Chesnut, Three Monophysite Christologies, 85-87.

⁷³ Cfr. M. Nin, «La lettera ai monaci di Senun», 98.

ול, אול א שומל בתונ בי אול בתוני בי אלתו בתוני אבת איים אום Philoxenus of Mabbug, The first letter to the pure Monks of Beth-Gaugal, 153; English translation is of the same reference, page 110.

I think that Philoxenus means here that one may have a true communion with the new Man he puts on. Such a communion is accomplished through grace and is manifested through joyful labor:

For each one of us, in fact, is by nature a person of silence. But those who were deemed worthy put on the new man in the baptism of spirit. And while we [all] put [him] on, there are those who feel it and those who do not. Because although our clothing of the new man comes through grace, to feel it [i.e, the grace] is [the result] of joyful labor.⁷⁵

אסיב ארבו זיים אוניבער מיני מוספר מיני מוספר מיני מאר מאבים אוניבער מיני מאר מאבים אוניבער אוניבער אוניבער אוניבער מיניבער אוניבער מיניבער אוניבער איינער איינער אוניבער אוני

ער אראו זראין אראין אראיין אראין אר

But when a person has completely taken off the world, then he clothes himself perfectly in the way of Christ. Until he takes off the dirty outer coat and purifies himself through tears of repentance from the stains of evil things, he is not able to put on the purple garments of the knowledge of Christ. For a person who is defiled by thoughts or by deeds of iniquity ought to heal his [own] bruises first, and cleanse the blemishes of his soul and of his body, and then come to the banquet hall of the divine mysteries, while putting on the spiritual outer garments [required for] this feast.⁷⁷

It is clear that for Philoxenus, as D. Michelson demonstrates, there is a clear and close relation between Orthodox Christology and Orthodox Liturgy; Liturgy, then, to use an expression of the same D. Michelson, is "the mirror of Christology".78 For this reason, in fact, Philoxenus affirms that the Eucharist would not be real if the mystery of incarnation was not real. Incorporation, in fact, as our bishop declares in his Letter to monks, is the way in which Godbecames eatable and drinkable in the Eucharist:

عه کرم یر سرعه کار میری میری میری کرد نور اور اور میر میر میر میر میر میر میر میر אלעוב ערביםע בס לב ל. ז, בל עב שראה אללעור אללעור ערביםע בס לב אי אל בל ב Lughan sit John sit best se ore Lie ore Luchan in, John Jizhon we monte monte of open of open of one Lis, on re same of mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

[&]quot;אב אל אנסס זר אססא וב א בלצב א המהל אוג ממה אוגם אל בע א בל איני ארבה ואינים אל איני אינים אל אונים אל אינים אל אינים אל אונים אל אינים مرام عافر عد کر مرام لا مرب مر در در عرب ر م عرب ر د اعر بر عد کاد באשנה), Philoxenus of Mabbug, The first letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal, 155; English translation is of the same reference, page 112.

Invisible, we see Him; not tangible, we handle Him; not capable of being eaten, we eat Him; not capable of being tasted, we drink Him; we embrace Him Who is all powerful; we kiss Him Who is infinite. Of Him, Who is immortal, we believe that He died for us; of Him, Who is impassable we confess that He suffered for us.⁷⁹

In order that the Eucharist grants real communication with God, it must be Orthodox. This means that for Philoxenus, only those who believe in the reality of the body of Christ, and that this body is of God the Word, united with His divinity in His hypostasis, can celebrate an Orthodox Eucharist, because, through this sacrament the believer receives the living body (a) in and the living and life-giving blood (a) in an ordinary body (a) in a mortal ordinary man:

This is why we confess to receive the living body of the living God, and not the ordinary body of any man, who would be mortal. And [it is] the living and life-giving blood [that] we receive every time [we] absorb it with a holy disposition, and it is not the ordinary blood of one of us, i.e. of a corruptible man, as we see in the imagination of the heretics.⁸⁰

What follows, then, is that Orthodox Christology celebrates an Orthodox Eucharist and that this Eucharist is really the body of the living God, who grants redemption, joy, and freedom of sin. With an Orthodox baptism, man becomes a member of the body of Christ, of this real humanity and new creation; with an Orthodox Eucharist, he receives the body of the living God.In this way he remains in communication and communion with thisnew creation, that is, he becomes a new Adam, a real man, as the humanity of Christ.

Salvation through Christ is divinization of humanity

As said above, for Philoxenussalvation means redemption of the first sin which had cut the relation between God and Man. Salvation can then be called reconciliation(אוֹבּיוּא), with God realized truly and perfectly in Christ, since He is God and man. In fact, in Philoxenus' Letter to the monks of Tell 'Addâ it is mentioned the following:

> We confess that He put in the hands of His Father His human life and offered it for all. Christ, in fact, became sacrifice for His Father and through this offer the reconciliation was done for all. With the Father He received the offer, and with Him He reconciled all, and since He became [man] He received and [at the same time] He offered ... With His Father He is the Word, with us He is a man, with the Father He is God and with us He is human ... It is not because He became a man that He showed natural communion with the Father,

but [by becoming a man], He showed communion with us. Human life, that are in His hypostasis, [the Son] put in the hands of His Father; the Father carried [it] with His pleasure and received it from the Son. And since without the pleasure of the Father human life was dropped as contaminated by wickedness and by sin, in the hypostasis of the Son it was purified and sanctified and justified.⁸¹

At the Cross, reconciliation was accomplished when God the Father received the sacrifice (1,50%) and offer (حامم) of His own Son. The Word of God offered our human nature as sacrifice for our salvation; this naturewas purified (~h,,o), sanctified (orho,zo) and justified (حمدده), since it was united with the Word and Son of the Father in His hypostasis (عمره عمد) אבר), then as suchit was offered on the Cross by the Son to the Father, Who received it with pleasure. This is, then, redemption: a purification of humanity from original sin and the sanctification of it. Participation in this humanity occurs through baptism. However, as mentioned above, baptized people for Philoxenus are divided into two categories: 1) those who live in the world and 2) the monks who live in desert and look for the life of perfection. In this paper, as it is already clear, I am interested into focusing on the second category.82

See in regards the comment of B. Bitton-Ashkelony – S. Minov, «"A *Person of Silence*"», 104-113.

Monks in fact, belong to the first categorybefore their monastic life. They are baptized, and through their baptism they startto participate in the new Adam's humanity. However, desiring to achieve another level, i.e. to assimilate more to the humanity of the Savor, they leave the world and go to the desert to fructify their desire.83 They, in other words, aim to be liberated from passions.⁸⁴ In the deserttheir battle against Satan starts, and who wins this battle reaches perfection in the end. For them, then, baptism and the Eucharist are a condition but not enough for perfection. They should lead a spiritual and ascetic life, taking as their model the anthropological and soteriological doctrine of Mipahysite Christology. Such a model does not have just a moral but also has an ontological dimension through which the monks become real sons of God the Father through their ontological participation in the humanity of the Son united with His divinity in His hypostasis.85 This constitutes real reconciliation with God. Philoxenus, in fact, in his First letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal, calls this action of reconciliation "the becoming sons of God". The Word became a man

ranks se sic office of which with the six ex short , «ח, ובו אוסקוב אועאקו אאוע בבל בים , מסף שבים בים אר אינים אר אינים אר אינים אונים אונים אונים אולים אונים אולים אונים אוני Philoxenus of Mabbug, Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection, 118; English translation is of the same reference, page 119.

 $^{^{84}}$ cm on tho, h, Lh $_{\sim}$ tut ind $_{\sim}$ tut on 8 משני וול שם סופולא ליימוד ארם אומינוסמדע שמו אומינום אומינום אלסבה האספג אלים אל Philoxenus of Mabbug, The first letter to the pure Monks of Bēth-Gaugal, 153; English translation is of the same reference, page 110.

For the relation between baptism and incarnation see A.DE HALLEUX, Philoxéne de Mabbog, 419-421.

and therefore men can become sons of God (mar ~1mx ~1mx):

The Living One then tasted death in order to vivify [our] mortal nature. God became man, that men might become the sons of God. For I do not deny that He vivified me, and I do not attribute to another the redemption which He wrought for me. If the death and the suffering were of another, the redemption and life which were merited for me would be of man, not of God. It is not another, therefore, who vivified me by one who died, but the very One Who died, vivified me by His own death. And if it is written "God was reconciled by Christ with the world" it is not that God the Word [was reconciled] by a man, as the wicked [heretics] interpret, but that God the Father [was reconciled] by His Beloved Son, as this Apostle again said, "God was reconciled with us by the death of His Son.86

The New Adam, new creation, which is the real humanity, for Philoxenus, is becoming sons of God. This adoption was a consequences of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Whoby His will and of His love became human to save men, that is, to make them become sons

of God (we mak sma, m see , k sk lmk), or in other words, to be divinized, i.e. to become gods by grace:

> It was not indeed a mortal or a man that died for us; for every mortal that dies, dies for himself; and every sufferer that suffers, suffers for himself; and everything that, not existing, comes into existence, comes into existence for itself. Herein then is a great mystery of profound love and of ineffable salvation, that He Who is became, not that He might be, since He is, but that we, through His becoming [incarnation], might become the sons of God. Everything that He became, He became, not for Himself, but for us. For He was not a sufferer by His nature, because, if He had suffered being a sufferer [by nature], He would have suffered for Himself. Nor did He become mortal in punishment for the transgression of the [original] precept, as is the case with us, but He is immortal because He is God...87

Conclusion

The monk in his spiritual and ascetical life has to follow an anthropological model. For Christians of the East, this anthropological model always was (and is) related to their Christological doctrine, since this model was based on the humanity of Jesus Christ. Philoxenus

عد مع الم عام الم مراه مراه مراه للم المر الم المر المر المر عدر مع שמבשמע הלאע שערשר של זב ה ז בל מב שמבשע שאלאה. הלה Lughas sil so set they se such see the see the see of re d si, Lody Lizzar muzzar mont Ly o, which of opyof on, Lis, on re same of mabbug, Letter to lawyer who become a monk, tempted by Satan, f 282ra; English translation is mine.

of Mabbug belonged to the group that held this worldview. He was a theologian and a spiritual leader for numerous Miaphysite monastic communities in Syria and Mesopotamia. In this paper I have attempted to understand why for him, Miaphysite Christology is the most correct Christological doctrine, in order to offer the believer, especially the monk, a perfect anthropological model. In other words, I have tried to illustrate the link between Christology, spirituality, anthropology and soteriology according to Philoxenus' doctrine expressed in some of his letters directed to monks and monastic communities.

The scope of the spiritual doctrine of Philoxenus, as advised to the monks, is to live the life of perfection, that is, to become sons of God. Such doctrine is based on his Miaphysite Christology, in which he developed an anthropological model, the ontology of the participation in the new Adam's humanity, the body of the same Word of God, i.e. the humanity united with the divinity of the Son and Word of God in His own hypostasis. Christ's humanity was perfect and uncorrupt, purified, sanctified, justified and honored through the glory of the Word's divinity, because it existed in the hypostasis of the Son. Because, in addition, of the union between divinity and humanity in the hypostasis of the Word, forming one nature and one hypostasis, a real communion between these two realities was able to be effected, and this humanity was divinized. According to Philoxenus, Miaphysite Christology alone expresses this truth since it is authentic and orthodox. He who follows an orthodox doctrine can arrive at the end to an

orthodox conclusion, and in our case, he who follows an orthodox anthropology, having Christ as model, will in the end become a son of God.

To participate, then, in the new humanity that the Word of God gave us by His incarnation, one must put off the old Adam and put on the new Man, Christ's humanity. Through Orthodox Baptism, themonk, and every Christian, can start to participate ontologically in this humanity; through Orthodox Eucharist, this participation becomes a continuous communion. Orthodox ascetic life, comes to perfect this reality. It is the perfect moral dimension of the monk's life. It is the action of purification of body and soul in order to achieve a freedom from passions, because, as the same Philoxenus underlines in his Letter to someone who left Judaism and came to the life of perfection, only through purity of body, soul and heart can man have a perfect knowledge of God, a true face-to-face vision of Him,88 or in other words, can be divinized, that is, become trulya "son of God" according to grace.

war war Lta was en l avorpan in Louis acon x prago co sho sa, o sa mas mhicol ralhhao su, sal מתב של ויפב ישלו בולסקה שלא נח אלה שלוחו וינג בלק אלקוחק אלם אתובו אמובו האומסו ב בים בימת לבת אובניאה ימו ללם בסחמולב ביותנים אתלאג אמב במג אולו במוחד באולו במוחד מולוכבו תם שם חם, תב בת. שם בשם בו וולשהר. הלשול שלום ווים שת ב סף . מת שבת אוניבת אניבתו מתב בתו מת ב בתח ad at sier nas it o me a ma o diena no a diena ndo, Let no solo, sombon se vin se viblus senton שת הוא שלו בי, ואר ים משל בי, ואר ים משל ים משל אר ים משל Mabbug, *The spiritual discourses*, 60-61; English translation is from R. A. KITCHEN, tran., The discourses of Philoxenus of Mabbogh, 46.