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by

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ABSTRACT
THE WORD IS AN ANGEL OF THE MIND: ANGELIC AND TEMPLE IMAGERY
IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN MANSUR, THE DAMASCENE.

Elijah Nicolas Mueller

Marquette University, 2014

This dissertation looks at the scriptural images of angel and temple, as they occur in key works by John Damascene: *on the Heresies,* chapter 100 "On the Ishmaelites;" *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, and *on the Orthodox Faith*. Angelic and temple imagery forms an important core which holds together liturgy, ascesis, and theophany. These types of images constitute a consistent mode for understanding theology and anthropology. As part of revelation, they are important in the early Islamic context. Angel and temple imagery were used by John Damascene to push back against Islamic revelation claims and Islamic challenges to the centrality of these images from an older, more developed and ascetic way of dealing with the imagery of Jewish and Christian revelation. As such, John Damascene must argue in a way which reinforces both the biblical images and the sense of the hermeneutic propriety of worshipping Christ through images and other sacramental means. Christ himself as divine, and God expressed in his Will creating and provident, is defended by the claim for the Image within the Trinity.

In the context of both Islamic and Iconoclastic claims to a better understanding of Divine Law, either through Quran or Old Testament, John Damascene consistently tries to show Christian belief and practice as adhering to the Law as properly understood in Christ. In doing so, he ends up more powerfully affirming matter, sense (especially vision), and the body.

As regards the body, John Damascene consistently moves in the direction of asserting something bodily about God, definitely proclaiming angels as in some sense bodily and focusing on the theological import of Christ's incarnate enthronement and theophany. For John Damascene, both angel and temple work in tandem as icons, meeting places, and accompaniment of theophany for the Christian. These images help to emphasize human refinement and purification through ascesis and virtue, understood as movement to greater vision and participation in the place of God's appearance and human exaltation, in Christ.

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Elijah Nicolas Mueller

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INTRODUCTION

Returning His Name: John Damascene, "Mansur"

This dissertation looks at three works by John Damascene. Before entering into a discussion of these three works, I would like to the change the way we refer to this important figure known as "the Damascene," or more confusingly, "John."[1]   A number of other great figures of the 7th and 8th century from Damascus can be called by their first names, without confusion: Sophronius, Andrew of Crete, Peter of Damascus, and perhaps also Cosmas of Mayum. For ease of reference, we will call him by his pre-monastic, secular name, which also reminds us of a certain cultural remove from Constantinople: Mansur.   Another advantage of employing the name Mansur, rather than using John or Damascene, is that it helps us to distinguish him from other Johns that might arise in discussion.

The name Mansur was his family name, and was perhaps his original first name. The matins canon of Stephen the Sabaite indicates that the Mansur family was a noble, if not royal family.[2]   Two later patriarchs of Jerusalem, probably from his family, bore the same last name.[3] His family upheld a dyothelite[4] Chalcedonian orthodoxy and supported the cause of Maximus the Confessor and Sophronius of Jerusalem, who were at odds with

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[1] In hymns he is sometimes labeled as "of Jerusalem," or "the monk."

[2] Ibid., 992; "de souche royale."

[3] Le Coz, 48, n.6.

[4] A dyothelite is one who supports the understanding that Christ has two natural wills as opposed to the monothelites who argued that Christ had one divine will or a synthesized divine/human will.

the emperor and patriarch of 7th century Constantinople.   Why must we name someone of this status by a city designation?

The exact ethnicity of Mansur is ambiguous, but certain terms used of Mansur's family and the connection with a prominent early Arabic Christian poet, Akhtal, mentioned in Arabic histories, seem to point to a strong tie to Arabic culture and language within his family.[5] Yet, at times, the received tradition has tended to depict people who are outside the empire and outside the sphere of Constantinople or Rome with an ancient exoticism. This demonstrably happens when he receives, after a couple of centuries, an Arabic turban in the iconography, sometimes—but rather irregularly— applied to other exotic fathers, and not the normal monastic headgear he wore.[6]

This attempt to exoticise Mansur also underlines the fact that despite his extensive education in and fine use of Greek, he was something a little other than *only* Greek or Roman (Byzantine). His name (perhaps also ethnicity and political allegiance) was used as a slur against him at the iconoclastic council of Hiereia.[7] In the historical record of the surrender of the city of Damascus, his family seems to be among those not considered Roman.[8] This, too, may have factored in his family's switching allegiance to the invading Arabs, and thus the iconoclastic emperors' sense that he was traitorous and "Saracen-minded."[9]

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[5] Le Coz, 48—52.

[6] The *Sacra Parallela* ascribed to Mansur shows him wearing a turban. Kurt Weitzman, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus Graecus 923*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1979) 6—14.

[7] Le Coz, 44-56; Griffith "'Melkites,'" 19-20.

[8] Le Coz, 44-45

It is important to note the work of Sidney Griffith in revealing the complex new sphere of Christianity created in the Middle East by the advent and dominance of Islam. It created the conditions for a new kind of inter-religious challenge to Christianity and removed state-sponsorship of Christian orthodoxy. Jerusalem played a central role in this new context. Jerusalem developed into a new pole of Christian, particularly *Melkite* identity, distinct from political, religious, and social questions of Constantinople or Rome,[10] beginning with prominent Greek writers (like Mansur, Anastasius the Sinaite, and a multitude of hymnographers), but rapidly embracing Arabic.[11] Beyond what Griffith says, one might note that this then reinvigorates life within the Empire by the influx of important figures from Palestine, like the Graptoi brothers, Michael the Synkellos[12] and the adoption of Mansur's hymnography, if not as quickly his other works.[13]

Mansur's Biography in Recent Research

In the last few decades there have been solid works on John Damascene by Daniel Sahas[14], Raymond le Coz,[15] Andrew Louth,[16] and Vassa Kontouma Conticello.[17]

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[9] Mansi XIII, 356D.

[10] Le Coz, 37, claims that this shift is what allows Walid I to name a patriarch of Jerusalem, a see vacant since the death of Sophronius.

[11] Griffith, "John of Damascus," 119-129.

[12] *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, Text, tran*s.,* commentary Mary B. Cunningham *Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations* 1. Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises (1991).

[13] Louth, 250-282, makes very fine points about the prominence of Mansur as hymnographer in the Byzantine tradition. Louth also makes the point that Mansur's work in turn reinvigorates Byzantine monastic life and theology, 13-14.

[14] Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam, the "Heresy of the Ismaelites,"* Leiden: Brill (1972).

[15] Jean Damascene, *Ecrits sur l'Islam*. Ed., notes, commentary Raymond Le Coz. *Sources Chretiennes* 383; Paris: Cerf (1992).

Louth's work is by far the most comprehensive of all these, and certainly the most

comprehensive of all works to date. These works have been helped by the major, but still

incomplete, work started by Bonifatius Kotter to establish critical texts for Mansur's

works.[18] Certain important mentions of Mansur's work can be found in works on early

Christian interaction with Islam, but frequently without mention of scholarly treatments,

which are numerous in recent years.[19] In this same way he is frequently mined for

convenient quotes on the Byzantine icon controversy. Sahas and Le Coz have done the

most to show us the full extent of his knowledge and engagement with Islam, producing

monographs which have forced us to take stock of his place within an Islamic-governed

society. Sidney Griffith has helped greatly with a number of articles that explain

Palestinian and Syrian Christian engagement with both Islam and the Arabic language.[20]

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[16] Andrew Louth *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002).

[17] Vassa S. Conticello, " Jean Damascene," *Dictionnaire de Philosophes Antiques*, vol. 3, ed. Richard Goulet. Paris: CNRS Editions (2000) 988-1012. Recent recap by Kontouma-Conticello of the same info in Jean Damascene *La Foi Orthodoxe, 1-44*, intro, trans., notes P. Ledrux, with Vassa Kontouma Conticello & G. M. de Durand, *Sources Chretiennes*, vol. 535. Paris: Cerf (2010) 11-30. The commentary of Ledrux is also of some value. Kontouma-Conticello also freed the first few chapters of *Orthodox Faith* from a false attribution to *Pseudo-Cyril*, showing that this was in fact a later extract from John's works: Vassa S. Conticello, "Pseudo-Cyril's "De SS. Trinitate": A Compilation of Joseph the Philosopher," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* vol. 61 (1995) 117-129. This corrects a serious gap in the depiction of John Damascene's work, allowing him credit for work which was previously seen as derived from another source.

[18] *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damskos.* 1-5, Ed. P. Bonifatius Kotter, O.S.B. *Patristische Texte und Studien*, 7, 12, 17, 22, 29; Berlin: De Gruyter (1969, 1973, 1975, 1981, 1987) Vol. 6 with the text of Barlaam and Ioasaph, has appeared more recently, edited by Robert Volk.

[19] Primarily the work of Le Coz and Sahas, but also important points in Griffith (see works cited below) and also Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurrah, *Schriften zum Islam*, commentary and trans. Reinhold Glei & Adel Theodor Khoury, *Corpus Islamo-Christianum* 3. Wurzburg: Echter Verlag (1995).

[20] Most importantly, first, Sidney Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christologicl Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth Century Syria," in *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas. Leiden: Brill (2001) 9-55. More recently, "John of Damascus and the Church in Syria in the Umayyad Era: The Intellectual and Cultural Milieu of Orthodox Christians In the World of Islam," *Hugoye* 11 (2011) 207-237.   His many, many other articles relevant to the description of the first 3

In a couple of articles and one book he has brought this to bear on the question of

Mansur's place within a developing theological discourse located in the Islamic world.

He provides an important critique of Louth's sense that Mansur was Byzantine in his

convictions and loyalties.[21] Conticello has worked through the biography more

thoroughly than anyone else, supplementing and going well beyond what has best been

done prior to this by Le Coz.[22] Her work on the biography of Mansur is far more detailed

and sifts more carefully through sources than Louth's. In particular, she establishes with

most certainty that the earliest vitae of Mansur are preceded by the Menologion of

Methodius of Constantinople, ca.890 (*Parisinus gr. 1476*) and, more importantly, the

matins canon by the hymnographer Stephen the Sabaite (d. 807), which dates to the

generation following his death.[23]

The following sketch of Mansur's biography relies on the work of Le Coz and

Conticello. Most historians assume Mansur's death prior to the iconoclastic Council of

Hiereia in 754, because of the way that council speaks of him as "removed."[24] His life is

generally assumed to be nearly extensive with the Ummayad Caliphate (661—750). Most

historians assume that he would have left civil service with the eventual removal of

Christians from the jobs which many of them continued to occupy from pre-Islamic

times, most signally, Mansur's own family. As high functionaries they were involved in

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centuries of Christianity under Islam are summed up in Sidney Griffith, *Church in the Shadow of the Mosque,* Princeton: Princeton University Press (2008).

[21] Griffith, "John of Damascus," 228-230.

[22] Kontouma-Conticello, "Jean Damascene." Le Coz, "Jean Damascene," 22-65.

[23] Kontouma-Conticello, "Jean Damascene." 991-992.

[24] Mansi *Collectio* XIII, 356. Other scholars have followed S. Vailhe "Date de la mort de saint Jean Damascene," *Echos de l'Orient* (1906) 28-30.

the handing over of Damascus to the Muslim-led armies that marched victoriously over

the exhausted and war-weary Levant. This seems to be the non-doctrinal reason for

calling Mansur a "Mamzer," or "bastard," at the Council of Hiereia:[25] his family was

considered to be traitors.[26] On their side there is the sense that perhaps they were not

unwilling to switch sides, because of resentment over the management of the situation

following the reconquest of Damascus from the Persians, and the fact that they were

ardent anti-monothelites and supporters of Sophronius of Jerusalem: something which put

them at odds with the imperial policy of monothelitism. The whole family remained

among the highest officials of the Treasury of the Caliphate. During the reign of Walid

the 1st (705-715), Christians were removed from civil service as a part of the

Islamicization of the government, perhaps around 706;[27] though it is possible that they

(and Mansur among them) remained in civil service until the reign of Umar II (717-

720).[28]

Mansur seemed to have enjoyed an important role, most likely as a member of the

Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and as preacher and teacher for the Jerusalem

Patriarchate, with warm connections with Patriarch John V[29] and perhaps other bishops

such as Cosmas of Mayuma and Peter of Damascus.[30] There is very little early material to

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[25] Le Coz 56 n.5.

[26] Le Coz, 44-45; Griffith "John of Damascus," 229-230, n.83.

[27] Louth, 6. Louth really bases this less on the kind nuanced understanding of the social situation of
Christians, as we see with Le Coz, but rather the textual evidence of connection with John V of Jerusalem.

[28] Le Coz, 54. Griffith, "'Melkites,'" 26, unambiguously identifies his movement out of government and to
the monastery as occurring during Umar II's reign.

[29] Le Coz, 55. Kontouma-Conticello, 1002: characterizes him as close friend of John V of Jerusalem.
[30] Peter of Damascus, martyred for preaching against Islam, perhaps taught by Mansur himself: Le Coz, 57.

associate Mansur with Mar Saba, even if at the end of his life he may have spent time in

seclusion in the desert. Kontouma-Conticello even suggests that he may have been

associated with a specific church named after St. Barbara, (suggesting the only known

one in the Jerusalem Patriarchate, in Samaria 30km northeast of Jerusalem), with whom

he shares his liturgical commemoration, and for whom he wrote the canon and a

homily.[31] The canon for Mansur's feast day, written at Mar Saba, makes no mention of

his residence there, though one would expect it in such a hymn.[32] Kontouma-Conticello

sees indications in Mansur's work that he suffered disfavor and had to leave Jerusalem

following the death of Peter of Damascus (in 742), whom he may have influenced toward

the preaching that caused Peter's martyrdom, and after the death of his patriarchal

protector, John V (d.735). In addition to the critique of Islam as a reason for disfavor, she

sees his marginalization as equally a result of the very strong critique of Roman imperial

power and the Emperor's role in Church affairs, most strongly stated in the 3rd treatise of

Divine Images, which she considers to have been written last.[33]

Mansur's Argument in Social Context: Islam, Challenge for Christian Israel

We can perceive a kind of world-weariness in the *Divine Images* and *On

Heresies*, chapter 100. As a monastic viewing Muhammad and the Roman emperor from

a distance, as well as the unnamed, but certainly present, Caliph, Mansur seems to have

taken very seriously his monastic continuation of the role of the prophet. Perhaps he even

had a notion that he was a lawgiver of sorts: collecting, codifying, writing out and

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[31] Kontouma-Conticello, "Jean Damascene," 1003.

[32] Ibid., 991.

[33] Ibid., 1003. Thus the 3rd treatise is not as widely evidenced in the manuscript tradition, 1005.

justifying the reasons for aspects of Christian worship. Certainly, his poetic canon for the feast of the Transfiguration sets him on the synchronically conceived conflation of the mounts of theophany (Sinai, Horeb, and Tabor), and his canon for the Resurrection vigil shows him in the role of a prophetic herald of the new Jerusalem.[34] Most importantly, Mansur was preparing his Church community to live a life without imperial sponsorship and to come back to the basics of the faith, the core which can sustain the community outside of Christendom and the bright spotlight of state sponsorship and all its ideologies.[35] This new Church-state accomodation has its heart in the monastic community, as a tried and true refuge in the literal or figurative desert.

Mansur's concern in his context was not just to preserve as many traditions as possible, but to reinvigorate the Christian appropriation of scriptural symbols, symbols which validate the Christian Abrahamic claim versus the Quranic claim to Islam's greater validity as heirs of Abraham's monotheism. As we will see in chapter 2, freedom and the ability to evaluate and co-experience revelation is important to Mansur. This is counter to the sense of social restriction and the inability to publicly disagree with Islam, the Quran, and Muhammad, that he and the Christian community experienced. Arguing that Christianity is obedient to the Mosaic revelation as regards images, Mansur makes a powerful argument from revelation for the visual aspect affirmed by Christians. At this

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[34] Μηναῖον τοῦ Αὐγούστου, Athens: Apostolike Diakonia (1993) 89-99. Πεντηκοστάριον, Athens: Apostolike Diakonia (1990) 2-5.

[35] Louth makes this claim: "This Christian Orthodoxy was not the expression of human triumphalism, but something fashioned in the crucible of defeat," 14. But Louth also has the jarring and seemingly contradictory claim that "John is at pains to protest the loyalty that Christians owe to the Emperor in all proper matters…" Louth claims Mansur was a loyal Byzantine "subject in exile… a Byzantine Churchman, firm in his loyalty to the Byzantine Emperor, but clear about the privileges of the Church and its clergy," 205, again on 220.

point in the development of Islam, an argument from revelation would have been best,

given the early stages of any philosophical development; a development which was aided

by Christian translators and dialogue with Christianity and other religions within that

society. However, since both revelations are posed against each other (Old Testament and

New Testament vs. Quran) on the basis of greater or lesser truth, Mansur must develop

arguments, both directly within his polemic with Islam and in other works, for a truer

sense of who and what God and the human are, based on the way they interact with the

situations of revelation. The Islamic rejection of the full truth of the Jewish and Christian

Scriptures, means that Mansur must put extra labor into proving the correctness of

Christianity without making facile dismissals of the Old Testament. For Mansur, the Old

Testament attests to the greater antiquity and validity of Christ and the Christian message.

Unlike the situation of the first three centuries, where Romans could only conspire to

question Christian validity from outside Israelite identity, Islam questions it from within,

as a sister religion. Mansur must make a new exit plan for the Christian Church from the

complacency of Roman triumphalism, to a situation in which the ability of Christianity to

be an inheritor of the promises to Israel can be powerfully held up to new challenges,

from outside the Constantinian framework of Christendom. In this situation it is essential

for Mansur to make proof of Christ teaching which will hold up in controversy with those

who take Old Testament laws and their analogues—especially regarding idolatry and

monotheism—as central to approaching the God of Abraham. For this reason, our focus

here on the polemic with Islam and iconoclasm, requires a narrowed focus on the

requirements of the scriptural images he employs: angels of various sorts, the temple and

things pertaining to it. We will also examine these images from the perspective of their

centrality to the conceiving of vision in revelation, and the sacramental intersection between the limitless God and circumscribed places, events, and depictions. Besides the philosophical principles he maintains and, in some cases, the still burning Christological issues, Mansur must work to prove a Christian adherence to the ritual truth of the law, even if such truth is stretched beyond its literal sense in Christ.

Question of Angels, Icons, and Temple: Remarks on Recent Scholarship

While Andrew Louth has thankfully done an overview of Mansur's work and Vassa Kontouma Conticello has reconstructed his biography as thoroughly as we can hope for, no one as far as I know, has attempted a close exegesis of several of Mansur's works with this focus on angels and temple imagery. Other detailed work has been done on one or another of his works, in particular, "On the Ishmaelites." Even with this work, however, the modern scholarship has been most interested in it for the sake of what it says about early Islam, not how it works within Mansur's theology. I take my cue for this dissertation's concerns from questions which arise in very brief treatments within larger, broader works concerned with icons and the survey of iconophile thought. Glenn Peers, Moshe Barasch, and Jaroslav Pelikan have pointed out the interconnection of Mansur's angelology and his defense of icons, but I have decided to make this my focus, expanding it to include the heavenly and earthly temple architecture of theophany that is part of their appearances, and bringing in the important connections made in *On the Orthodox Faith*. I have also read these works with more attention to the specific context, anthropology, and theology of Mansur.

Here we will go over three works (by Glenn Peers,[36] Jaroslav Pelikan[37] and

Moshe Barasch[38]) which connect Mansur's understanding of angels and his concern for

images. No work as far as I am aware, has connected angels to his polemic and

systematic treatises, or dogmatic concerns outside of those relevant to the issues

surrounding the icon controversy. While these works do not fully seize on the import of

the connection between angels, temple, and image, they do direct us toward the concerns

of this dissertation. This connection can only be brought out by a closer analysis of

Mansur's use of Scripture and temple typology in his broader theological and

anthropological concerns. All these are very partial treatments, but help to show that at

least the question of connection between angel and image has been raised as a serious

topic to be worked on in Mansur's writings. In addition, moving from the issues these

authors raise, we will look at angels (and temple imagery) as a broader doctrinal concern

for Mansur.

Glenn Peers' *Subtle Bodies*

Peers' *Subtle Bodies* is a study of "the cultural conditions of seeing and

understanding: an epistemology for which angels are simply the most dangerous and

trying case."[39] He sees that angels are the special case which served to raise debate over

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[36] Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium*. Berkeley: University of California Press (2001), especially 104-116.

[37] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1990).

[38] Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*, New York: New York University Press (1995) 185-253.

[39] Peers, 11.

the "possibility of idolatry" which "incriminated material images."[40] This focus is very

helpful to us. Angels are very closely tied to the question of polytheism, and their images

raise that question powerfully. Peers treats the intersection between angels and images on

the basis of philosophical concerns, theological texts, and the evidence for iconographic

programs of sanctuaries dedicated to angels. He asks the question of the theological

difficulty posed by angels for representation and monotheism from a perspective prior to

Islam, which is posterior to his concerns, or outside of a focus on theological and

aesthetic theory. In addition, on the basis of the practices at the Chona shrine to the

Archangel Michael, he assumes that veneration of angels is a descendant of the Colossian

quasi-Jewish, quasi-pagan "syncretism."[41] This justifiably allows him to ask questions

more of philosophy and metaphysics. This allows him to depart quickly from a concern

for biblical imagery and how the depiction of angels related to a scriptural understanding

of monotheism.

In this area, there is a great deal more to explore. Peers does not take as his focus

the scriptural-interpretive question of the intersection between the liturgy of the Torah

and Christian liturgy. Further, we can also see that theology and Christology are closely

tied to angelology, on the basis of early, pre-Nicene image or typological language for

theology. Peers adroitly points out the contradictions in metaphysical and aesthetic terms

for the seeing of the spiritual. In his conclusions he does not see images of angels as

possessing "real likeness." However, his final emphasis on the "kindling of the heart"

that icons of angels evoke, points toward a greater sense of participation between angel

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[40] Peers, 11.

[41] Peers, 8-10.

and material icon, but in the end, reduces this to an affective response to an absence of the angel from the material image.[42] This may be a correct analysis of some of the texts he deals with, but Mansur cannot be used for supporting this position.

Where Peers leaves off we begin by examining issues of mediation and the broader theological and social context for Mansur's understanding of the angels—a context which is outside of Peers' focus. The problem with neglecting particular scriptural and image based logic for the use of angels, is that it leads Peers or any interpreter to leave aside that angels are part of a fairly coherent revelational system, which is not exactly the same as the metaphysical system of Greek terminology, yet impacts this system significantly in Mansur's work. In Mansur's case, this has a specific polemical context which differs from the situation prior to Islam. So the question for the understanding of the use of angels is not what kind of consistent philosophical system one can fit the angels (and icons) into, but rather what kind of revelational apparatus they require and how that may impact more systematic philosophical considerations. Peers tries to solve this general problem by designating angels as a "third body," [43] using Mansur's *Orthodox Faith*, chapter 17. He sees them as mediators for imperfect human perception.[44] While these may be correct points for some of the other authors he cites, for Mansur the situation is different, because of the need to defend a revelational system as a

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[42] Peers, 205-207.

[43] Peers, 109. The problem with the notion of a "third body" is that cannot in anyway be found in Mansur's writings. There is no sense there is any one type of angelic "body," but rather that they have bodily aspects relative to humans and to God. Peers is right that they are "in nature somewhere between God and humanity." The notion of a third body could be derived from Mansur, but is not the way Mansur describes their place. The angles' bodily aspects serve a very malleable interstice between God and the human. In the end, their service is toward God's body and the human body, one in Christ. Mansur nowhere seems concerned to specify a taxonomical place to them or give them a reified and carefully delineated status.

[44] Peers, 113.

revelation, on the grounds of the imagery of revelation. Specifically, God is revealed in the Torah and the Scriptures at the focal point of worship in the sanctuary with the iconography of cherubic throne. From this perspective, the point is not where to categorize them in a chain of being, but how they fold into the imaging of God in a way which affirms Trinitarian monotheism and a sacramental system that sees the continuity of Torah, Gospel, and practice of the Church. In Mansur's theology, Torah, Gospel, and angels (perhaps as witnesses to both!) stand together and reject those who would deny the icon which extends from Trinity (the Son as Image) all the way to the correct practice of sacramental life and the sanctification of the Christian worshipper and saint. Icon itself is thus co-extensive with the presence and appearance of God. The concept of "place" and icon diminishes the effectiveness of Peers' argument when applied to Mansur, because in a subtle way Mansur's understanding of these images, undercuts a thoroughgoing notion of divine bodilessness. In Mansur's *Orthodox Faith*, God is himself "place."[45] In this context the angels do work with what one might categorize as philosophical and physical scientific terms, but are more particularly suited to the particularly slippery mediational terms such as power, *energeia*, *logoi*, grace, glory; and most importantly for our focus: place and image or "icon." Thus it is not that they are "dissimulating,"[46] but rather, guiding through true participatory similitude and a vision which grows and expands. The dissimulating aspect does not match the fact that the *will of God is icon* for Mansur.[47] Peers, when briefly touching on Mansur's understanding of angel and image, overlooks

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[45] Peers, 110. See chapter4 below.

[46] Peers, 113. This is following the notion that for Dionysius the images (and angels) are dissimulating forms, p. 91.

[47] See chapter 3 below.

this and advances rather a position which undermines participation and true manifestations of the divine: "The first kind of image for John of Damascus is the natural image. The other images… are non-essential artificial images."[48] The second image is manifestly not artificial. It is the *will of God*. Peers' questions concern the anthropological and art historical significance of angels, therefore he does not take into consideration liturgical and scriptural themes and in several cases he passes up the opportunity to interpret theophanic and temple imagery and seems to treat them as insignificant.[49] So by neglecting the liturgical and scriptural context of angels, Peers overlooks the primary role of angels to surround, serve, and convey the Glory of God and the real presence of God. Therefore, while Peers' work is important for showing that the normal appeal to icons as justified by the incarnation of Christ misses the problematic of angelic depictions, I hope to further this insight by focusing more closely on Mansur's use of scriptural, particularly Torah imagery, that must not be neglected. Mansur appeals not just to the incarnation, but very powerfully, without fear of polytheism, appeals to icons of angels as—instead of troubling his case for icons as part of Christian monotheism—actually *proving* the case for icons within Jewish and Christian monotheism. Peers is quite right in seeing angels and their images as a troubling picture for Christian self-understanding vis-à-vis the Hellenistic context; however, they become justification when turned toward the Jewish roots.

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[48] Peers, 115.

[49] Peers, 79. 92, 99.

Moshe Barasch's *Icon*

Moshe Barasch has done more to highlight the difficulties and intricacies of
Mansur's understanding of image and its relationship to angels. Barasch is, in the end,
interested in the way that historical debates about art move toward more modern
conceptions. In terms of the image, he notes, "It is… form detached from substance…
that the image can 'show in itself.'"[50] Barasch picks up on valuable implications for the
modern art critic, and brings up a helpful bridge between the ancient and modern. What is
missing in his analysis is the theological terms to describe that form can be truly
communicative and participative across the differences between substances through the
mediating *perichoresis* performed by will, energy, logos, place, and image—an imaging
which is worked by angels, priests, monastics, and saints in slightly different ways.
"Similarity… is located in both icon and prototype… form shown in the image can be
detached from the substance into which it is impressed. To speak once more in modern
terms: form can be considered for itself."[51] Barasch's realization points beyond his
theological vocabulary: icon is part of the "form itself" in which God is present through
will, energy, and even as place. Barasch does not use the various technical terms which
connect different essences, God, and the human through mediating participation; but
Barasch understands well the very important role of the angel as well as that Mansur
appeals to theophanies as real events and evidence that God works to show himself in
form.

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[50] Barasch, 198.

[51] Barasch, 198.

Barasch recognizes that image bridges between the spiritual and material world and reveals what is hidden.[52] He notes that Mansur argues on the basis of Scripture's testimony to vision of God.[53] Barasch understands that being seen in form contradicts the "uncircumscribability" of God,[54] but that for Mansur, the vision of the prophets must be accepted and that *history* of such things must be acknowledged over philosophical consistency.[55] Mansur did not want to accept a psychological explanation, but rather one which acknowledges the artistic aspect of God's creation, as the leaving of artifacts of experience in the Scripture record. Barasch makes a comparison to the technical background for understanding shadow in the ancient practice of painting and drawing, seeing this as functioning Mansur's use of the terminology surrounding the use of "shadow."[56] The theological sense of shadow, however, is overlooked by Barasch. Shadow and overshadowing, for Mansur, is connected to the temple-based, liturgical, and even technical, theological understanding of shadow reflected in Scripture: "shadow of his wings," and its link with ark and Cherubim.[57] However, despite the potential miscue, Barasch reads Mansur closely and latches onto the content of this image: "the picture, in a sense, becomes, an extension of the being or figure portrayed…perhaps even of the divine."[58] Yet he does not recognize that this is an application and adaptation made

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[52] Barasch, 205

[53] Barasch, 206.

[54] Barasch, 207.

[55] Barasch, 208, 243.

[56] Barasch, 211-215.

[57] Psalms 17:8, 36:7, 57:1; 63:7, etc.; 1Kings 8:7 and parallels; Luke 1:35, Mark 9:7 and parallels; Hebrews 9:5

from scripturally commanded statuary to the two-dimensional icon, "While Scripture

does not suggest this link between the shadow cast by a figure and the painted icon, John

may have inherited the idea from ancient, "pagan" culture."[59] Barasch, however, returns

to the idea of a simultaneous concealing and revealing,[60] an idea that alerts us to the

scriptural depiction of God's Glory, and the dynamic seen around the tabernacle and

temple, such as clouds which reveal and conceal at once. Barasch then points directly to

Glory without highlighting it, quoting from *Divine Images* 3:12: "'Reverently we honor

his bodily form, and by contemplating his bodiless form, we form a notion, as far as is

possible for us, of the glory of his divinity.'"[61] Hence, although Barasch does not

explicitly comment on the scriptural connection between divine Glory and its role to

simultaneously conceal and reveal, this particular quote shows that Barasch understands

more than he has expressed or fully worked out.

Barasch contrasts Mansur's perspective on the image with that of Plato. For

Mansur, the image shows more than nature, while Plato's view is that the image shows

less than nature and less perfectly than nature. He points out that for Mansur, the image

functions in this way because it is central to revelatory overcoming of the limitations of

sight.[62] Barasch is interested in this from the standpoint of art, noting a rejection of

naturalistic mimesis.[63] This rejection of naturalistic mimesis directs him to Mansur's

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[58] Barasch, 212.

[59] Barasch, 213.

[60] Barasch 216-217.

[61] Barasch, 218; *Divine Images* 3.12.21-23; Kotter III, 123.

[62] Barasch, 219.

connection to hierarchic conceptions of cosmic order and hierarchy,[64] and leads Barasch to show that image connects God and the human via a bridging which happens *within* God, particularly in the Son being the image of the Father and the eternal images of all in God's plan.[65] Here he notes that the movement from the Platonic "idea" to the more concrete "image" shifts towards a greater validation of vision: "Looking—that is the visual experience taking place within God's mind—is a primary form of knowledge."[66]

Eventually this line of examination returns him to image as revelation, and to come back to the question of whether Mansur conceived that "seeing itself is a supernatural, a kind of mystical experience?"[67] From here, Barasch moves toward asking about angels.[68] He notes that, as before, the problem with seeing is a classic notion of mimesis in Mansur's thought.[69] He identifies the will of God as active in the vision of angels.[70] He notes that for Mansur the bodily and material do not necessarily limit what is visible.[71] Barasch finds that angels, souls, and demons constitute for Mansur empirical proof and "sanction of the spiritual image."[72] But here again, Barasch is thrown back to

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[63] Barasch, 220.

[64] Barasch, 220.

[65] Barasch 220-224.

[66] Barasch, 224.

[67] Barasch, 235.

[68] Barasch 236-243.

[69] Barasch, 237, 220.

[70] Barasch, 238, quoting *Divine Images* 3:25.

[71] Barasch, 238.

[72] Barasch, 241.

revelation, mystical vision of prophets, and *grace*.[73] He sees this in the end as a failure by

Mansur to overcome the chasm between the worlds, because he cannot explain "how the

image… can reaches[sic] the picture we see in the church or even in the home."[74]

While Barasch does not express the full value and inter-connections of the

scriptural and ritual images, he has read Mansur closely enough to point us in the

direction we are exploring, even if he has not followed that path to its conclusion. This is

partly because Barasch's inquiry is centered on art historical questions. He therefore falls

just shy of presenting a view that the scriptural imagery is a consistent ideology that

imposes, if not a philosophical system, at least a coherent cosmology that lays down

implicit theological and *sacramental* rules for its imagery. Thus, his work brings us

closer to this dissertation's question than Peers.

Jaroslav Pelikan's *Imago Dei*

Jaroslav Pelikan in his *Imago Dei*, also touches on very important points where

images, angels and worship imagery come together. His picture in this book is synthetic,

not purely focused on Mansur, and does not consider the difference in context between

Mansur and the other iconophiles. In many places in this book, he pulls together all the

image elements with which we are concerned. He notes that it is not enough to see the

hierarchical images as a neoplatonic chain of being.[75] Pelikan sees the chain as a chain of

icons and centered in liturgy. The icon "was lifted out of the sphere of tools and utensils

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[73] Barasch, 242.

[74] Barasch, 243.

[75] Pelikan, 170

(however sacred) and was given a status of its own in the divine order of the universe."[76]

He notes that for Mansur, who coins the term "microcosm," angels and humans have a

special divine role as cosmic links.[77] He frames the whole situation as being about liturgy

and temple:

> all these theologians themselves were the first to acknowledge, the central locus
> of expression for this Byzantine affirmation of the place of the angels in the
> cosmos was not in any theological treatise… but in the liturgy, in which angels,
> apostles, prophets, and martyrs all participated. In the well-known inaugural
> vision of the prophet Isaiah in the temple, he "saw the Lord seated on throne" as
> well as the "attendant seraphim," and heard the angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy is
> the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." By "the expansion of the
> temple into heaven, of the earth into the whole cosmos, of simple praise into
> perpetual praise," the Byzantine liturgy put a Christian and Trinitarian elaboration
> on this Old Testament vision of the Thrice Holy.[78]

Pelikan sees that this is a hermeneutical point. Mansur takes the scriptures first as

his source for doctrine, yet makes room for the "unwritten tradition,"[79] which leads to a

comprehensive view of the universe centered on God, the human, and angel as a

"cosmology of icons."[80] Pelikan notes that for the iconophiles, Moses was not a

forbidding iconoclast, but rather the "hierophant."[81] Therefore the typology of the

scriptures is seen as one which "pre-iconizes," or prefigures through images.[82]   Scripture

is so tied to image that letter itself is seen as the icon of the word. Hence writing is

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Pelikan, 170-173.

[78] Pelikan 173-174.

[79] Pelikan, 46.

[80] Pelikan, 175

[81] Pelikan, 52, quoting Theodore of Studion, PG 99:333.

[82] Pelikan, 180, from *Divine Images*, 3.22.

defined by the visual, the image: "'the letter iconizes the word.'"[83] Pelikan rightly

concludes that, "the Iconoclastic rejection of the icons was tantamount to a rejection not

only of one link but of the entire chain of images."[84] As Pelikan has followed Mansur in

his enumeration of images, we see that this is a chain which extends from within the

Trinitarian life to the smallest of physical tokens and memorials.

While Pelikan has analyzed the import of the icon and the grander cosmology of

images for the broader icon controversies of the 8th-9th centuries, and for their broader

theological and cultural import, we see that his brief use of Mansur points us toward the

scriptural-interpretive issues raised by icons and angels. What is their meaning, or what

do they depict about God, the human and the cosmos as place of their meeting and

interaction? However, since the conceptual areas needed for understanding the icon are

cosmology, liturgy, and revelation, we are lead to question how we should understand

these more broadly in his theology. In other words, how are these iconic overarching

concerns played out in other broader areas of his concern? Angel as identified by Pelikan,

Peers, and Barasch, are not a purely mental concept but an actual figural, textual and

historical icon that calls out for interpretation as a perhaps non-discursive, revelational

point of departure for any structure of cosmological and scriptural understanding of

theology and anthropology. But it is not just angels, but the structure of the whole

temple—a place that contains (in some paradoxical way) God and the human—that is at

work as a framework for a scriptural-liturgical project of his theology.

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[83] Pelikan, 181, quoting *Divine Images*, 3.23.

[84] Pelikan, 182

Works Treated: The Word is an Angel of the Mind

We look at the following three works: 1) the 100th chapter of *On Heresies*, "On the Ishmaelites," 2) *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, 3) *On the Orthodox Faith*. The purpose of the dissertation is to show an important stream of Mansur's thought which addresses both iconoclasm and Islam through reference to and a method of reasoning using imagery of revelation based especially in the Torah. In particular, we focus on the images of temple[85] and angel, and a broader concern for theophanies and liturgy. Because this dissertation is focused on particular images, and proceeds with a detailed analysis of the whole of these works, even a somewhat exegetical focus, many concepts and broader concerns radiate out from these images, without each being fully worked out. The choice of these three works by Mansur is made 1) for their richness in angel and temple imagery, 2) for their peculiar and continual apologetic focus on the Old Testament with a fervor which is the result of Mansur's accepting the challenge of proving Christianity *through* and *in* the Law of Israel, even jockeying for the title of Israel, 3) for the way they all circle around the defense of all things that could, by early Islam, be termed "association" with God: images, Trinity, saints, and all that seems to allow freedom of the will to share

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[85]I am using the term "temple" to include the tabernacle passages in scripture, and the synthetic sense of this imagery as construct which stands as an intertextual image between Torah, Historical books, Prophets and Psalms in particular. Even further, this image serves as the "shadow" which extends the heavenly realities. For a New Testament synthesis, see Crsipin Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest:Towards aHistorical and Theological Account of the Incarnation," in *Heaven On Earth*, ed.T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole. Carlisle: Paternoster (2004) 81-99. This is not unlike the Talmudic connections, interpretation and use of the tabernacle/ temple for later theological and practical application, see Gary Anderson, "Theology of the Tabernacle and its Furniture," in *Text, Thought and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity,* ed. Ruth Clements and Daniel Schwartz, *STDJ* 84. Leiden: Brill (2009) 161-194. For similar use of temple in patristic texts, see Alexander Golitzin, "Temple and Throne of the Divine Glory: Purity of Heart in the Macarian Homilies," in *Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature: Essays in Honor of Juana Raasch, O.S.B.*, ed. H. Luckman and L. Kunzler, Collegeville: Liturgical Press (1999) 107-129.

in the open revelation of the incarnate and resurrected Son of God, and 4) the consistently powerful validation of materiality and vision.

In "On the Ishmaelites," Mansur targets concerns with the manner of Muhammad's reception of his revelation ("in his sleep"), comparing it negatively to Moses' testified, public, ascetic, and liturgical reception of revelation. For him this is intimately tied to a unified concern with the will as image: Muhammad's will is impaired through both a literal and a figurative sleepy state of sensation, and God's will is impaired through cutting off God's senses by not "associating" Son and Spirit. He has a masterful, if quite sarcastic and dismissive, demonstration of the pro-aesthetic assumptions that tie liturgy, anthropology, and theology for his community. Moses and the reception of the Law is lifted up as a validation of the human senses purified through ascesis, directed through liturgy, and reflecting the will of God. The will of God, moreover, validates freedom or a common human dignity in testifying to revelation because it requires communal witness and discernment, worked out through the witness of the senses. This short chapter is essential for all study of Mansur's theology because: 1) it most directly speaks to his social context; 2) it brings up the question of what criteria does one bring to a new revelation or prophecy; 3) it is a theological response in defense of the interrelated objects of the accusation of "shirk," or "association"—sense, free will, anthropology, image and the persons of the Trinity; and 4) it shows the connections between ascetic principles—in distinction from Islam—and scriptural images. One of the most fundamental insights to draw here is that the polemic toward Islam helps to drive the Christian apologetic for the interrelated emphases on the will of God as image, and the sense that the Son and Word of God as Image, ties creation and the Creator into a

seeing within the Divine Life. In other words, something which is very difficult to understand as other than physical and material, is posited as an activity within God— *seeing*: the Father seeing the Son and Spirit.

In *Three Treatises on the Divine Images* we see the importance of the angel as icon commanded by the Law and the temple as a material locus of worship. The angel and temple (broadly construed) are iconic accompaniments or even focal points for theophany. As iconic, angelic imagery not only plays a role in early Christian attempts to describe the relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also returns to play an important role in the way Mansur describes the inner life of God and the way that providence connects to God's eternal will. The sacramental materiality of the Old Testament drives Mansur's interpretation of the angelic and incarnate Christ as the purpose or *scopos* of the reading of the Law. His interpretation of the Law is based in the requirements of the visual, both originally and as providentially as one with the Gospel fulfilment. Mansur seems to even be doing something similar to the oral Law of the rabbinic halakha, but in his case it may be said that he is basing his arguments on a "visual Torah"—an understanding of the visual content and proper interpretation of the Law.

In *On the Orthodox Faith*, Mansur is pushed at several critical points to wrestle with the implications of the incarnate enthronement of Jesus Christ as a theological problem which raises concerns about the providential economy of salvation into the divine life, theology proper, something which clearly transgresses the division between the two and even undercuts or paradoxically problematizes traditional assertions of God's bodilessness. To try to hold all this together, Mansur borrows a term which melds philosophical and liturgical traditions: *topos*, or place. Since this dissertation focuses on

the scriptural aspects of his images, we point out that this is an Old Testament circumlocution for the tabernacle/ Temple and mercy seat. This term is used by Mansur with a very close similarity to Philo's use of the term, the rabbinic use, or the original Hebrew term, *maqom*. This term derives from scriptures and is developed into a divine name (perhaps from Philonic influence) which describes God's omnipresence. Place is worked into a scheme, similar to that used for the term *eikon*, to bridge from God as "his own place," to all the more limited beings, places, and things that manifest and frame his appearance. In this way, the body of Christ is *associated*, by being in the central and framed place of God's theophany. Mansur's reasoning about the body of Christ surpasses and negates apophatic ways of speech to return the body that God has in Old Testament, in the social context where Christians are called to make an account of their legitimacy vis-à-vis the Torah and the Quranic analogues to its commands.

Scriptural Interpretation: the Image as the Shape of Meaning

Image shapes the meaning of the Scriptures in several ways that cause problems for a purely philosophical and metaphysical view of the theology of the Old and New Testament. The human is the image of God; God is imaged and materialized, even bodily, in many Old Testament passages; heavenly and earthly things are both represented and forbidden in the Israelite cult at the tabernacle and temple; God shows himself and his ministers; material, visible and formed things are conduits of divine revelation and human communication with the divine; and finally the Son of God is incarnate. The question is not just whether God can be represented, but rather, whether it is truer to God's nature and the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to truly show and reveal, or to draw us away from base materiality in a way which ultimately rejects the

senses in some way. Do the human senses play a permanent and central part in the image of God? If not, how is the image of God an image? If we focus on the systematic albeit philosophically troubling iconic elements of angels and temple, we see that though the language of the bodiless, immaterial and spiritual are fully part of the Greek philosophical and patristic tradition that he takes great and encyclopedic pains to affirm, Mansur ends up also affirming some radically counterbalancing aspects of the Scripture's anthropomorphic, bodily, sensory, and even material aspects of a Christian theology that takes very seriously not just the incarnation but also the Law which Christ comes to *fill*, not to supersede.

Thesis: The Image is God and Human, Thus Also Where They Meet—Temple and Angel

It is the thesis of this dissertation, that Mansur is called to a re-reading of Scripture, especially as regards the concerns surrounding image, angel and the associated imagery of the temple. This involves a meditation on imagery that is liturgical in a way that connects the Scriptures of the Old Covenant and the Gospel. While he is writing from a place late in the development of conciliar orthodoxy, he is called back to an apologetic context vis-à-vis those who accept the same or deceptively similar Scriptural Laws. Mansur thus has to hark back to earlier, foundational Christian arguments for Christ as the center of the Torah and as the true meaning of humanity and the Image of God in whom we are created and as the only one in whom we can understand our place as *anthropos*, to define anthropology on the basis of a revelational text. These images are very much developed in implicit dialogue with a monastic understanding of anthropology that is tied with angelology as important for the understanding of both the ascent toward

deification and the complex inner-trinitarian imagery of divine outpouring, mediation and will which spiritual striving images. In other words "image" as term, and imaging as a movement presents at once the ineffable simplicity of inner divine life, yet also omnipresence and immanence. Imagery of the angels and the temple help us to discover this.

The Purpose(s)

We will read this great writer for his place as an interpreter of Scripture. In addition, we try here an experiment in bracketing out the conciliar, metaphysical language and concerns to see more clearly his mode of dealing with others (albeit second-hand, and perhaps within his own community) who would argue on the basis of a scriptural reasoning and language which claims validity vis-à-vis revelation connected with Israel or a retelling of a similar "Abrahamic" tradition (Islam).

Also of great importance, is to see how a person reasons in those places, arguably more important via their life of worship, where they set aside philosophical models and terms, for the direct word and image that is central to theophany, and the liturgical depiction and realization thereof. In other words, do we think of two natures or essences and one hypostasis as we kiss an iconic or eat the bread of angels? Which is higher? It must be reflected as a pinnacle of thought, not just as the condescension of higher, more abstracted thinker. Mansur did not just defend the icons as an "extra," but saw them as structuring life and thought. The iconic ministry to the will of God depicted by Mansur, reveals to the vision of the Image of God, a vision which extends from paint and wood into the relation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mansur ultimately achieves a philosophically disquieting reunion between body and soul, which rejects any notion of

the inferiority of the senses. He makes a movement towards a very strong aesthetic, scriptural, and ascetic visionary triumph over ancient philosophical disdain for the body and senses.

Plan

This dissertation will not cover all of Mansur's thought, as Louth has so admirably done. Rather, we choose important points that both highlight the interpretive context within a newly Islamic dominated society, and textual places where central questions of anthropology arise for Mansur. For this purpose, I have chosen the 100th chapter of Mansur's *on Heresies*, as showing the importance of image, witness, will and revelation in a context which juxtaposes an explicit anti-ascetic bias surrounding Muhammad, and an implicit asceticism of Moses and the Christian who, through ascesis, ascends toward witness of the same revelatory vision.

We will then look at *3 Treatises on the Divine Images*. Here we will see how the defense of images is based in the Old Testament imagery of angel, altar, throne and temple. The materiality of the Old Testament worship, its quite explicit and paradoxical command to make images, the iconic and liturgical role of the angels, and its clear textual and liturgical evidence for the (frequently bodily) vision of God provides Mansur with a hermeneutical key, or perhaps better, a throne on which to place the body of Christ, the Image of God. Here we will see that there is a political dynamics at work in his theology: the comparison between Emperor and angel, and the need to call the people of God with their liturgical identity, as Israel. Most important, here we see that all images are somehow within God through his will and providence. Christ as the image is all in all, through the eternal will of God. Evil is also connected to the same imagery, because

angels, and thus demons are also images—the demonic being behind both idol and iconoclastic emperors who idolatrously claim thrones and dethrone God!

In the final chapter we examine *on the Orthodox Faith*. Here we see the many ways angels and temple imagery interact with Mansur's understanding of the will as image. The visual experience of God centers on his ability to be in *place*. In other words, it is not just image, but the ability to frame appearances that mediates the experience of God to creation. Thus, God is not just imaged from Trinitarian life down to lowliest symbol, but is also received in the frame of place or τόπος, a term that connects God to temple and every similar framing, enthroning medium of his revelation. Place, as a theological term, like icon, reflects the liturgical, theophanic and sacramental images into divine life. Because of the liturgical impact of icon and the concern for the will, place becomes a theological mediating term like energy, power, or logos. Throughout the *Orthodox Faith* we see that the angel and human reflect a cosmological concern for liturgy, or the work of the heavenly and earthly temple. Mansur defends all manner of Christian doctrines in a book that finds all bracketed and punctuated by the liturgical and eschatological icon of Christ enthroned in scriptural imagery.

Implications of this Investigation

This study of these particular texts is a new approach to an author that is often discounted. It has exciting things to highlight in regard to the connection between senses, free will, and materiality. It presents the dizzying sense of Mansur's theological cosmology which integrates inner-trinitarian life and all of creation; revelation and providence. It points to intriguing avenues for research in understanding one of the histories of Christian survival without Christendom and the ability to distance Christian

life from imperial sponsorship. Finally, this exploration elevates what is so often taken as frivolous decoration or rhetorical extras, that is, angels and temples, and shows that they are living icons and part of the art of theology.

Why the Title: "The Word is an Angel of the Mind?"

Why is this quotation chosen for the title? Taken from *DI* 3:18:28-29, this quotation drives to heart of our interest here: the angel is directly equated with the εἰκών, through being used as a term or name to show the relation of Father and Son, and by extension, the Spirit. The extension of image to the Spirit in a context where εἰκών is already equated with angel, implies here a very important typological resonance, even a clear suggestion of the scriptural and liturgical image of the *kipporet* or ἱλαστήριον as cherubic throne. This a very bold statement on the part of Mansur, which demonstrates how he takes up both pre-Nicene use of angels in Christology and fuses ideas from Dionysius and Gregory Nazianzen. In addition, this is of great importance because it can easily be misread as *only* a use of platonic terms, when in fact it is a potent example of his synthesis of biblical hermeneutic and a biblical-liturgical cosmology. This quotation comes in the context of seeing all the good world God creates and redeems in his providence as comprised of and comprehended by image.

CHAPTER II. *On Heresies,* **chapter 100, "On the Ishmaelites."**

The Missing Icon of the Will: Mansur's Icon Theology and Ascetic Angelology in his Critique of Muhammad's Revelation

Here we set out to prove two particular aspects of Mansur's theology: 1) the concern for visual witness and communal confirmation; and 2) the requisite state of purity and the communal acknowledgement of the one receiving the vision. This means that the word of revelation must engage a full situation of witness. It is not enough that the word is strictly mental, aural, or written.

Seen as the Word, the Son of God, or his adumbration in the revelation to Moses, the Word itself is both the Witness to God and the Witness by God. Thus the Word must dignify human witness by community, in the community's theophanic and liturgical reception of revelation. The reception of the Word of God requires an angelic state of vigilance, discernment, and the community evaluation of the purity of the one receiving the revelation. The human, angel-like and deified, is an essential witness to the presence of the Glory of God in revelation. The seer himself becomes vision of God, and thus can be witness to the vision of God. Visual witness, moreover, is essential, because without it, one is asleep and the will is not allowed its visual, awake, and fully functioning state.[86]

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[86] Possible objections to Mansur's project: 1) Why should one tie sight and revelation? Isn't the paradigm that is taught in Biblical Studies (from literalist or even critical perspective) that of pure "words", either heard as revelation or socially constructed as religious rhetoric? 2) How is it that an ascetic could claim to judge a revelation? Is there not a difference between a revelation and a mystical vision of God, post-revelation?

This chapter will proceed by laying out Mansur's criteria for the proper preparation for and reception of a theophanic revelation from his standpoint within Christian tradition. From his point of view, the monastic traditions of ascetic preparation are essential in order to present before God a unified and discerning will that is purified together with the senses, both physical and spiritual. The purified senses allow the will to exercise itself with their testimony. This testimony of the senses and will also allows other persons to be involved as well in a revelation which is communal and liturgical. Once we have demonstrated that these elements are foundational for Mansur's understanding of interplay between will and anthropology, we can see that an argument on this basis would necessarily put him in opposition to what he sees in Islam. In this new religion, he sees a revelation which lacks the testimony of the ascetically purified senses, a dispassionate will, and a community sharing the liturgical vision of God. Lacking these elements, Mansur sees human dignity as being called into question because the human is not involved in a process of discernment, but is rather, required to accept a decree without the possibility of co-experiencing the revelation through liturgy and theophany granted though ascesis. In other words, when a revelation is given to a person who has not practiced ascesis and has not fixed within themselves the faculty of discernment, those who did not receive the revelation themselves are excluded from the experience because the common path through ascesis and liturgy has not been established.

Following on the demonstration of this chain of reasoning, we will show that he carefully ties these issues in with a discussion of the Trinity which makes the fairly shocking implication that God must have the Son and Spirit—like senses—in order to have proper will. For God to be alive to creation, he must interact on analogy with the

human. God must be Image to the image. The energy of God must be met in a way which recognizes and distinguishes it from other energy—human or demonic. In this interaction, image is realized in both God and human by the meeting and witnessing of freedom to freedom in communion both within divine life and in revelation to the human.

"On the Ishmaelites," the 100th chapter of *On Heresies* in its Literary Context

To see properly what is going on in the 100th chapter of Mansur's *On Heresies* we will have to look at connections between it and the *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, but also to touch on many important points of connection with *On the Orthodox Faith*. It now seems unlikely that *On Heresies* was originally part of the larger *Fount of Knowledge*, which originally included only the *Dialectica* and the *Orthodox Faith*.[87] Most scholars judge both the *On Heresies* and the other pair to be by Mansur, although there is little with which to make any fully convincing proof. [88] I believe that we can see a striking consistency of ideas between the 100th chapter of *On Heresies*, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, and *On the Orthodox Faith* if we push past the somewhat off-putting and exasperatedly disdainful tone Mansur takes in the 100th chapter of *On Heresies*. I will show a complex of concerns that tie the polemic in his treatment of Muhammad's revelation with anthropological and theological concerns centered on "images", in the complex way that Mansur understands them.

To begin with, we will set aside any questions over the *Disputation of a Saracen and a Christian*. The analysis which gives him most credit for the text has to admit that

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[87] Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002) 31-33, 55.

[88] Andrew Louth, op.cit. 26. Louth points out that the most distinctive and original work is in the homilies and hymnography.

though he may be behind the content, he is not responsible for the form.[89] Our treatment

here will also minimally evaluate the Quran or Muhammad.   In the 100th chapter of *On*

Heresies, Mansur's polemic is very condescending. However, the tone and context of the

writing (in a book of heresies) points to a Christian audience, perhaps of those who might

be tempted to convert to Islam, or of those who would preach to those who are tempted to

convert. What I will show is that, first and foremost, Mansur's central critique of Islam is

based on the role of will in revelation, and is tied to his concern for vision and icon.

Muhammad's reception of the Quran provides Mansur with an example of how not to

receive revelation. For Mansur, this is a question of the dignity of both God and the

human. For this reason, he finds his basis for critique self-evident enough in a common

nexus of Jewish and Christian tradition[90] that he would take on the derisive tone which

causes some scholars to dismiss his criticisms as mere snobbery and petulance.[91]

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[89] Kotter IV, 422; Raymond Le Coz, *Ecrits sur l'Islam*, volume 383 *Sources Chretiennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1992) 202. Andrew Louth *St. John Damascene*, 77, overstates the case a little: "the *Dispute* is based on John's oral teaching, rather than actually having been written down by him." The 'oral teaching' but as 'content;' how far removed from the speaking itself… it seems to me that Le Coz and Kotter see this as a little more distant from Mansur. In general we will not focus on works which cannot plausibly be written by him, though they might be connected to oral teaching. In the case of the 3rd of the *Treatises in Defense of the Icons*, which we will examine, there is firmer basis for accepting his authorship.

[90] Naomi Koltun-Fromm, *Hermeneutics of Holiness: Ancient Jewish and Christian Notions of Sexuality and Religious Community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2010). I would agree with Koltun-Fromm that this is more than just an interpretive take on things, but rather a tradition which Christians largely take up out of connection with Jewish forms of thought and in dialogue and dispute with Judaism from common assumptions, with divergent expressions and communal formations. The point is not final conclusions, but an underlying agreement which puts Jewish and Christian interpreters in dialogue, unlike the total rewrite (or more authentic text) and dismissal of textual and traditional basis for argument that Islam implies. Christians always traditionally argued from the Tanakh, even though this puts them at an identity and authenticity disadvantage.

[91] Eg., Sidney Griffiths earlier discounts *On Heresies* chapter 100 entirely. It is not our concern whether the critique of Islam is wrong; but the critique certainly reflects Mansur's interest in the will and vision. See Sidney Griffiths, "Melkites, Jacobites and the Christological Controversies" in *Syrian Christians Under Islam: the First Thousand Years* edited by David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 9-55, especially 22. Otherwise, his take on Mansur is very good and essential to understanding the overarching, driving reasons for his theological works. He later revises his estimation of the polemical works, accepting Mansur's authorship in *the Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*. Not as sensitive to Mansur is the admittedly more

I will not run through all Mansur's polemic, nor will I repeat Mansur's description of the Quran's view of Jesus. It is reported in a relatively straightforward way, as he himself understands it. I will, rather, consider Mansur's discussion of Islam's opposition to the Trinity as it relates to the issue of wakefulness, because this critique of Quranic theology has a strong basis in Christian, especially ascetic, elaboration of anthropology.

Prophet as Image of Ascesis

To begin with, we have to understand that Mansur bases his argument on a prophetic type that could be compared more easily with Muhammad, and which both he and a Muslim could accept as a prophet. This was not the case with different Christian and Muslim views of Jesus. Mansur recognizes that it would be difficult to compare Muhammad and Jesus since there is the Quranic contradiction of Christian beliefs in Jesus' divinity, and also since a divine Savior figure and a prophet (even an ultimate one) are different sorts of characters.

Next we must ask the two following questions of Mansur's polemic: 1) What makes asceticism essential to religion and human fulfillment? and 2) What particular ascetic traditions is Mansur drawing on?

Turning to Mansur's *On the Orthodox Faith,* chapter 97, [92] it is clear that questions were being raised about asceticism, even from within the Christian community. Not only Christian but also properly Palestinian and Jerusalemite Christian concerns were being raised. There is no other suitable explanation for Mansur's need to defend against

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inter-religious, dialogue-oriented treatment by Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns*. New York: SVS Press (2003) 104-5.
[92] KotterII, 227-230; Chase, 393-7.

the reinterpretation of LXX Isaiah 31:9 conflated with Deuteronomy 25:5-10 ("cursed be

everyone who raiseth not seed in Zion")[93] if Christians are not using or swayed by such a

saying. I surmise that this is a natural response, a procreative self-defense of a religious

community dominated by a different, moderately tolerant but expansionist, and *other*

kind of Abrahamic religious community. Perhaps it might be a response in sympathy with

rabbinic Judaism, at the point when Christians find themselves in the same position in

which the Jews (both rabbinic, Samaritan, or other) had been placed, vis-a-vis

Christianity, in the previous three centuries. In this chapter Mansur defends virginity

mostly on the grounds of the Old Testament: Noah and all abstain on the ark during the

flood;[94] Elijah the celibate prophet ascends to heaven[95] and Elisha the prophet receives a

double portion of the same spirit (of celibacy?);[96] the three youths and Daniel escape

danger through virginity;[97] God appears to the whole of the Israelite people during their

fast and the priests practice their liturgical ministry in abstemious purity.[98] All this shows

that the statement from Isaiah (and its conflation with Deuteronomy 25:5-10) is not to be

applied literally, but in a spiritual sense: "Christ himself is the glory [κλέος] of

virginity."[99] In conclusion, Mansur finds: "virginity is better, because it increases the

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[93] KotterII, 227:3-4; Chase, 393. His rhetorical interlocutors seem to be emphasizing procreation as a requirement of Scriptural religion, on the basis some sort of halakhic rereading of Deuteronomy 25:9 in curse form ("Cursed is he who does not raise seed in Israel"): It is interesting that there is also perhaps a sense of competition for validity as Israel.

[94] KotterII, 228:28-30; Chase, 394-395.

[95] KotterII, 228:33-36; Chase, 395.

[96] KotterII, 228-229:36-38; Chase, 395.

[97] KotterII, 229:38-41; Chase, 395.

[98] KotterII, 229:41-44; Chase, 395.

[99] KotterII, 229:61; Chase, 396.

fecundity [τεκνογονίαν: literally, childbearing] of the soul and offers prayers to God as seasonable fruit."[100] The ascetic, or practitioner of virginity, is in a prophetic mold.

From the biblical examples listed above, there are clearly other things at stake that are not fully spelled out in the defense of the fertility of Christian asceticism. At this point we turn to examine what we might call the photo-negative of the full picture of Mansur's monastic concerns by looking at *Heresies*, 100. Mansur does not defend monasticism per se here, but rather makes an attack on Islam which reflects his monastic spiritual training and its traditional assumptions, especially regarding the ascetic context for vision and receiving revelation.

Revelation as Vision and Icon, not Book

First I must digress and explain what I mean by ascetics and revelation? There is an assumption that Mansur shares with his tradition that most (if not all) of the saints who received divine revelations were in the mold of the ascetic receiving apocalypses of heavenly realities. As Christopher Rowland has shown, the more agile handling of apocalyptic is to see it as engaged in visionary quests for "heavenly secrets."[101] In this way, a very typically second-temple Jewish form of Near Eastern thought can be seen as similar to, but not dependent on Platonic views of forms and ideas (though it is often mistaken as entirely from this font). These heavenly secrets tend to be described by liturgical, temple-based imagery which included forms/images of angels. Clearly temple-based and worthy of note is the fact that someone like Irenaeus uses what in

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[100] Kotter II 230:71-72; Chase, 396-397.

[101] Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*, New York: Crossroad (1982) 9-135.

contemporary and later texts would be called the *Merkavah*, from the vision of Ezekiel to describe that typology which forever after is a standard Christian justification of the four Gospels as a presentation of the true picture of Jesus Christ.[102] How does the once and for all notion of revelation contained in a canon of four Gospels and other canonized books justify what I will show as Mansur's ongoing sense of revelation to the ascetic? It is not that the ascetic is revealing new things that require new books, but rather that ascetics are given inspired views of the same (perhaps now, within Christianity), very open secrets that lie behind the (torn) veil of the heavenly temple. The Gospel itself is an open experience of revelation, an icon. For Mansur (as is typical throughout the Eastern Christian ascetic traditions) the vision of God is not limited to a post-mortem beatific vision. The ascetic vision of God is more or less the same as that of any prior vision of the same God and the same Christ, and follows the same rules of preparation for the same doors of perception to open onto the same heavenly temple, liturgy, and celebrants. Only by purifying the senses through ascesis does one approach the heavenly Jerusalem.[103]

The Prophet as Icon: the Revelation Must be Witnessed

Now we return to what Mansur considers opposite to the Christian alliance between ascesis and vision. Aside from a generous sampling of satirized details singled out by Mansur for derision as γελωτός (laughable), there are two fundamental difficulties Mansur has with the story of the revelation Muhammad receives. First, he is disturbed by the lack of witnesses to Muhammad's revelation. Connected to the concern for witnesses

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[102] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.11.8.

[103] As is the case in Mansur's Paschal Canon, dependent on Gregory Nazianzen; for critical text, W. Christ and N. Paranikas *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* Leipzig: Teubner (1871) 218-221, especially Odes 1, 8 and 9.

is the need for God's attestation of the recipient's holiness. Attestation and witness must also be given by the recipients, who are dignified with access and participation in the same beatitude and vision, at least from outside the cloud and Glory. Second, Mansur singles out aspects of Muhammad's spirituality which, to him, show a lack of wakefulness and discernment. This means that the proper image of heavenly things could not have been perceived by Muhammad. But since Mansur is dealing with the specific forms or images—or perhaps non-images—that the Quran claims are revealed, Mansur cannot base his argument on what is specifically, one might say, behind the doors of heaven. Rather, he must speak in a way that is based on relatively common Mediterranean/Middle Eastern assumptions about how one by preparation and (ascetic) spiritual labor can be given access to the door of the heavenly mysteries. Mansur, however, must still make reference to figures accepted in common between the competing revealed texts, Bible and Quran.

At this point we must specify what ascetic sources Mansur could be using to base his judgments on or to ground his allusions. One source which is not listed in the critical apparatus of Kotter's editions is the *Ladder* (originally called the *Spiritual Tablet*, referring to those given to Moses) of John Climacus.[104] We might presume this was from the lack of a critical edition. A piece of evidence for Mansur's knowledge of the *Ladder* is found in his homily on the Transfiguration, where he says that "stillness [ἡσυχία] is the

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[104] On the *Ladder* as originally titled *Spiritual Tablet*, see Kallistos Ware "Introduction" in John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent* trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, *Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press (1982) 5-6. Also letter of John of Raithu in John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery (2001) xli. Ἰοάννης ὁ Σιναΐτος, *Κλῖμαξ*, ed. Archimandrite Ignatios, Oropos, Greece: Paraklete Monastery (1997) 2.

mother of prayer."[105] Even if not a direct use, this seems at the very least to be drawing

on a tradition held in common by two monks in a small geographical area, part of the

single Holy Land. Climacus says: "silence in knowledge is the mother of prayer."[106]

Climacus is merely one source, but since he gives such a comprehensive summary of

many earlier teachings, we will keep our focus primarily to the *Ladder*.[107] In addition,

Climacus manifests the same kind of labor of compilation which Mansur continues in

other fields of theology. We will return to Climacus later in this chapter

Beyond the idea that the original figure or recipient of revelation was an ascetic,

we have also the idea that what is revealed is not a mystery closed by the book, but rather

open to believers through sight. With the New Testament, this is clearly the case: Jesus

Christ, accessible to all in sacrament, prayer, martyrdom, and mystical vision is the same

Jesus Christ who is canonized by the "books." Such is certainly the case with the standard

typology/ iconography of the Evangelists as the four Ζῶα or *hayyot* of Ezekiel's vision.[108]

There are ascetic traditions which rightly place the saint above the book as place of

encounter—visual—with God.[109] In chapter 13 of the *Orthodox Faith*, Mansur does not

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[105] Kotter V, 448:16-17. Harold L. Weatherby, trans. and notes, "Homily on the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Saint John of Damascus," in *GOTR* 32 (1987) 13.

[106] " σιωπὴ εν γνώσει, μήτηρ προσευχῆς." Ἰοάννης ο Σιναῖτος, *Κλῆμαξ*,175; John Climacus *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, (trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell; New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 158.

[107] There are other common features: both works have a Mosaic interest and form part of the work of compilation that characterizes the 7th and 8th century in the Christian Levant.

[108] Irenaeus *Against Heresies,* 3.11.8.

[109] Witness the veneration of elders; the emphasis of ascesis over Scripture reading: for these two see Kallistos Ware, "The Spiritual Guide in Orthodox Christianity" in his *The Inner Kingdom*, New York: SVS Press (2000), 127-151. The idea of the mystic as book, see Symeon the New Theologian *The Practical and Theological Chapters & The Three Theological Discourses*, Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications (1982) 103.

even list the Bible or the Scriptures as "place" of encounter with God or theophany, although the list is not exhaustive. In the 90th chapter of the same work, which deals directly with Scripture, the emphasis is on Scriptures as testimony and spiritual edification which has as its purpose to lift us into the same paradisial, theophanic experience of the Trinity: "So let us knock at the beautiful paradise of the Scriptures… which lifts our mind onto the back of the sacred dove… who bears us with his most bright wings to the only begotten Son and heir of the Husbandman of the spiritual vineyard and through him on to the Father of lights."[110] So the Scriptures are theophanic, paradisial, and perhaps even themselves conveying the presence of the Spirit; but the point is to be conducted to the presence of Christ in theophany. This is the literal purpose of anagogy for Mansur: vision of God—Christ—in and through the heart and mind. This we see in his homily on the Transfiguration where he weds together the notion of leaving earth and body, "flying above the impeding darkness of the bodily cloud"[111] (as by climbing a mountain) with inner exploration, "being freed from the distraction of the external world, we enter within ourselves. Then we shall behold clearly the kingdom of God within ourselves."[112] One flies upward and inward toward God. So we see that for Mansur, Scripture is a vehicle to the vision, but not the vision itself, or at least not the center of the vision. Scripture is certainly not the aniconic replacement for vision.

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[110] Kotter II, 208-9; *OF*, 90:22-30; Chase, 374.

[111] Kotter V, 448:13; Harold L. Weatherby, trans. and notes, "Homily on the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Saint John of Damascus," in *GOTR* 32 (1987) 13.

[112] Kotter V, 448:18-19; Harold L. Weatherby, trans. and notes, "Homily on the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Saint John of Damascus," in *GOTR* 32 (1987) 14.

Thus we see that visual witnessing is central to Mansur's notion of the meaning of Scripture. One should be an ascetic, and thus have worked toward the inner ascent to see God. The Bible does not replace that vision, but must be a seal and a means for common vision of God and of holiness. I will further attempt to show that this cannot be for Mansur a completely solitary event, but must encompass the seer in a verifiable way, so that he causes others to witness.

Why the Contention over Revelation?

The gauntlet is thrown down by the Quran's claim that the New Testament was written, or altered, by transgressors who thought that Jesus was the "son of God and God."[113] Mansur has already mentioned, without comment, the inaccurate claim that Jesus' mother, Mary, was the sister of Moses and Aaron. In the accusation against the Christians, the Quran calls forth the relative validity of itself vis-a-vis the New Testament.[114] Mansur's response is, "Who is the one who witnesses that God gave him the scripture, or which prophet foretold that such a prophet would arise?"[115] Mansur contrasts this lack of witness to Muhammad with the witnessed manifestations on Sinai[116] and the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ.[117] Sensing more in common with the prophetic, Mosaic revelation, Mansur asks why Muhammad was not attested by God

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[113] *Heresies* 100:29; Kotter IV, 61; Chase 154.

[114] Quran 5:116-117.

[115] *Heresies* 100:34-35; Kotter IV, 61-62; Chase, 154.

[116] *Heresies* 100:35-38; Kotter IV, 62; Chase, 154.

[117] *Heresies* 100:35-38; Kotter IV, 62; Chase, 154.

through receiving the revelation in the presence of all the people.[118] Also implicit here is

the critique of the Quran that it can only claim the attestation of the prophets/figures

commonly claimed with Judaism and Christianity by fully rewriting episodes and

claiming that both Jews and Christians have falsified their books.[119] This is a very bold

circularity in authority claims that Mansur, understandably, finds troubling. In addition

Muhammad's reception of revelation clearly departs from a Christian notion that the

ascetic who sees the vision of God (the vision of God as an *apocalypsis*) is not beyond

evaluation by common biblical and apocalyptic criteria and imagery of sanctity, derived

from ancient Judaic sources in the Old Testament. Thus, mysticism, though ineffable,

conforms to certain standard iconography, namely that of mountain, tabernacle, and

temple. In other words, scriptural and Eastern Christian mysticism, tied to theophany, is

inextricably liturgical, with the implication of the simultaneously public and private,

concealed and revealed aspects. The inner individual experience is of one piece with the

whole structure of testimony in liturgy.[120]

The problem of witness and common ascetic experience is inextricably tied to

the question of wakefulness in Mansur's survey of Muhammad's prophecy. According to

Mansur, Muhammad received the Scripture in his sleep.[121] R. Le Coz regards this as

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[118] *Heresies* 100:42-45; Kotter IV, 62; Chase, 154-155.

[119] Raymond Le Coz, *Ecrits sur l'Islam*, volume 383 *Sources Chretiennes,* Paris: Cerf (1992) 105, 110.
[120] This is essentially a condensed version of the claims made by Bishop Alexander Golitzin, as in his introductory illustration of the ragged hermit not out of place in the splendor of the liturgy, see Alexander Goltizin, "Liturgy and Mysticism: the Experience of God in Eastern Orthodox Christianity," in *Pro Ecclesia* 8 (1999) 159-186, especially 159-160. See also the description in Basil Lourie, "The Theophaneia School: an Ekphrasis of the Heavenly Temple," *Scrinium* 3 (2007) xii-xvi.

[121] *Heresies* 100:47-48; Kotter IV, 62; Chase, 155.

hypocritical on Mansur's part, but Le Coz's example of Numbers 12:6[122] actually

supports Mansur, because, in its context, Numbers 12:6-8 contrasts the dreams of

prophets with the face-to-face converse of Moses with God—a sort of supersessionist

theme even within the Old Testament. How much more then would such converse

between Christ and his disciples and the monastics be so privileged in Christian thought.

Jesus Christ himself is the revelation, even so attested openly at the Transfiguration and

Baptism, and in sacraments and Church iconography. To receive something in dreams is

the ultimate in un-witnessed revelation; one cannot even be sure of one's own

perceptions, or more particularly, the one who is perceived in the dream. Mansur says

that, "He received the scripture and did not perceive [ἤσθετο]the operation [ἐνεργείας]"[123]

It is important to find out what Mansur means here by ἐνεργείας and why they need to be

perceived or sensed. According to *On the Orthodox Faith* 39:9-11,[124] a measure of

discernment is needed with the sensation of any interior movement or κίνησις. It is

important to know if the movement of the ὀρέκτικη, or appetitive faculty, is good or

evil. Deliberation is necessary to untangle what kind of ἐνέργεια one perceives.[125]

　　The ἐνέργεια can also be divine, referring to the unified divine movement.

Clearly here Mansur is concerned with ἐνέργεια as that which can be spiritually

recognized yet potentially transformative of the human. The connection between ἐνέργεια

and the defense of the Holy Spirit has been noted as a later element in Gregory of

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[122] LeCoz, 112, n.2.

[123] Kotter IV, 62:49-50.

[124] Kotter II, 88:9-11.

[125] Kotter II, 88:30-89:50.

Nyssa's defense of the Holy Spirit's divinity.[126] The defense is made on the basis of the

Holy Spirit's work on the human as the one who makes the human the image of Christ.

The ἐνέργεια as general quality or work of the Holy Spirit carries the image of Christ.

Mansur so powerful associates Spirit, ἐνέργεια, and icon that he can view the Holy Spirit

not only as icon of the Son, but even "ἀπαράλλακτος εἴκων," "undeviating image," and

elsewhere as analogous to Eve (mother, image/image-maker of son) in the Trinitarian

image of Father-Adam, Spirit-Eve, and Son-Abel.[127] So, in other words, Mansur is

depicting Muhammad as not awake to discern whether the image of the spirit he sees is

divine or demonic on the one hand, or, on the other, if it confers true human dignity as

image and divine likeness in virtue.

What I contend is that, according to Mansur, the will of God must be visually

evidenced in revelation in order for the will to be meaningful at all for the human. As

image of God, the human is necessarily tied to something which is more than a metaphor

of the visual. One of the identifications of the κάτ᾽ εἰκόνα for Mansur is the "τὸ νοερὸν…

καὶ ἐξουσία."[128] Our will, or ἐξουσία, is bound up with something which is more

than physical and aesthetic, yet is still somehow visual. Perhaps the difference is

between the mundane and profane visual experience and the extraordinary visionary

experience. The inner reality or allegory of visual experience is that it is the way humans

experience in themselves the saving reflection of divine authority and power. God is seen

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[126] Michel Barnes, *Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington: Catholic University of America (2001) 297.

[127] Kotter IV, 215:1-216:11. Treatise *On Two Wills in Christ.*

[128] OF, 26:19-21; Kotter II, 76; Chase, 235 ; cf. OF44:25. Elsewhere the κατ᾽ εἰκόνα is the *nous*, although in the context of emphasizing, contra monothelitism, Christ's assumption of the whole man (OF 62:20).

or makes himself seen; and humans, by choosing to accept God's purifying energy, grace, and glory in Christ through the Holy Spirit, can reflect this power of God which overflows his boundlessness into our circumscribed reality. The angels are an indicative accompaniment of God's imaging himself and the human's being raised to sight as image. According to Mansur, although the angels are incorporeal, they exist in a sort of ineffable state of sight (both seeing and being seen) which is submission to the will of God: "They are ever round about God for the very reason that in accordance with the divine will and command they are above us… They see God to such an extent as is possible for them, and this is their food."[129] Angels are a sign of the fulfilled and completed qualities of a human being deified, as well as an accompaniment or even manifestation (i.e., Angel of the Lord, Angel of Great Counsel, etc.) of the divine appearing before the human. Although Mansur does not mention Muhammad's reception of revelation through an angel, there is an implicit comparison of the qualities which the human should share with angels if the human is to see the angels who surround and reflect God's glory. There is also the implicit comparison with the monastic, angelic life.

God is known to the human in the Triune imaging of the Father in Son and Spirit. Through the Spirit which causes Christ to dwell in the human, the human experiences the will and power of God which causes the human to reflect God more perfectly in will and virtue.

If angels are essential as a mediating image of the movement of God and human toward each other, then true human life must be angelic. Christians have generally

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[129] OF, 17:56-62; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 207.

associated angelic life with monasticism. This association is something which is an inheritance of the ascetic requirements of priestly service in the Torah and in the apocalyptic and Rabbinic ascent traditions of Judaism. Mansur specifically makes reference to the abstinence of priests and Israelites as a prerequisite for vision in his defense of virginity in chapter 97 of *Orthodox Faith*.[130] He may specifically have been making his case as a rebuttal to Jewish, Judaized, Muslim or Islamicized (perhaps defensively conformist) attitudes to a total and permanent sexual renunciation or any renunciation of procreation. It is certainly the denial of procreation that Judaism would object to, not temporary or post-procreation renunciation of sex for the sake of visionary purposes.

We don't have room here to comment on the controversies regarding the origin of Islam and its earliest character. We can simply assume that at the time of John's writing, Islam is at least beginning to take on the form and to develop lines of thought recognizable to its modern practitioners. Our concern with Mansur's polemic is not what exactly John saw in Islam as objectively viewed, but what it subjectively evoked from his education in monastic traditions and spirituality.

Thus, from the perspective of Mansur's monastic tradition, Muhammad was not fit to see the Divine or to discern that which he saw. He did not control his sexual desires. He received his revelation in a state which could be considered sleepy or groggy. Mansur says, "since he received the writing while sleeping he did not perceive the energy [οὐκ

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[130] OF, 97:41-44; Kotter II, 229; Chase, 394.

ἠσθέτο τῆς ἐνεργείας]."[131] Mansur clearly presumes that ἐνέργεια is something that can

be visually perceived, on some level, when God makes himself known in a place of

theophany: "this place where God is said to be is there where his operation [ἐνέργεια] is

plainly visible."[132] But the most important aspect of his reception of revelation, is that he

receives a revelation in a state which is not proper seeing, nor does it provide proper sight

to those receiving the revelation. Not having proper sight is equivalent to not having

proper will or exercise of 1) discernment for Muhammad, the recipient of revelation; 2)

αὐτεξούσιον (free will) for the general humanity which is to receive the revelation; 3)

Will/ Son—divine attribute/ 2nd ὑπόστασις of the Trinity. Asceticism denied by

Muhammad is freedom and discernment denied to his followers and attributes,

ὑπόστασεις (persons), or mediating will denied to God. Of course, Mansur is only

speaking of the Son and Spirit as attributes in the context of a polemic, not in the

absolutely correct trinitarian terms he uses elsewhere.

What particular reason, aside from those which we might see ourselves, would

Mansur have for emphasizing a common witness and criteria? Let us remember that

Mansur is comparing Muhammad with the archetypal holy man, one who has ascended

into the cloud of God's Glory–Moses. Moses not only goes up into the Presence of God,

but the Presence is an acknowledged and attested fact in the Glory, seen by others both

outside and inside (Exodus 24:9-11). The Presence of God remains in the divine Glory

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[131] *On Heresies* 100:49-50; Kotter IV, 62; Chase, 155. See also Raymond Le Coz *Jean Damascene: Ecrits sur l'Islam*. Sources Cretiennes, 383. Paris: Cerf (1992) 111-112. Le Coz does not take any notice of the implication of solitary manifestation of revelation is the problem, as is the issue of *energeia*. Perceiving divine *energeia* implies the reception of direct divine communication—vision—which, when properly attested, is not open to the interposition of the wrong kind of angel, or the passionate dreams of a flawed human.

[132] *OF* 13:12-13 ;Kotter II, 38; Chase, 197.

that remains for a while upon Moses' shining face, as in 2 Corinthians 3:7 and in its

Exodus 34:29-35 source typology. This prophetic experience of glory and "shining" is

attested to throughout Christian ascetic literature.[133] But as with Moses there is an

emphasis on attestation and discernment of the community.[134] In addition the community

labors in asceticism and worships in community via the accepted and common Jewish

and Christian images revealed in Scripture, liturgy, and recurring visions.

Discipline in monastic communities was sometimes very harsh, but never blind.

Someone who began at the "bottom," through submission to not only the elder, but also

to the common authority of the community centered in the abbot and elder, could become

an attested saint, even to the point of being venerated by the elder.[135] No one jumped to

the status of elder or abbot without going through at least comparable discipline and

attestation of elders and community. Certainly, Mansur did not demand this rigor, in all

respects, of Muhammad. Even the solitary mediation of Muhammad is not made an

explicit issue. The problem, rather, is that people are denied the traditional, at least

ancient scriptural (Judaic) and Christian means to decide on and to communally

experience the quality of Muhammad's visions in such a way that validates any ascetic

purification of their own senses and will. Without the purified communal witness, there

is no decision for or against the Quran's validity and Muhammad's fitness as a holy

prophet or visionary. There is no common experience of the revelation as a salvation that

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[133] Alexander Golitzin, "Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Form: Controversy Over Divine Body and the Vision of Glory in some Late Fourth early Fifth Century Monastic Literature." *Scrinium* 3 (2007), 49-82.

[134] Ibid. 73-75.

[135] *Κλιμαξ,* 84-86. Ladder, 102-103.

dignifies them as fully human, especially in terms of will and use of senses. In other words, Muhammad's peering behind the doors of heaven seems to Mansur to shut out the same for others. The Quran seems to have closed off heaven as a common experience.

Moses vs. Muhammad: Where's the Glory?

If we take seriously the six types of images Mansur gives us in the third of his *Three Treatises on the Divine Images* (sketched more roughly in *Divine Images* I.9-13),[136] we see that the second and the fourth through the sixth categories are easily applied to much of the typologically significant imagery of the Old Testament. The second image is God himself, seen in the operation of his "pre-eternal will" which contains, "images and paradigms of what he is to bring about, which are also called by Saint Dionysius predeterminations. For in his will before they come to be there is shaped and imaged what he has predetermined and what will infallibly come to be."[137] We will deal more with all the images, as he defines them, in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Here we will focus on only the second.

This second "image"(God Himself), together with the latter three (which tend more toward created representation), showed that there are indispensable revelational images of God in the Old Testament. The clearest image of God's will in Exodus, where Moses receives his revelation, is in fact the pillar and the cloud. Let us first follow the logic of such an image as read with a simple, basic, literary, and non-historicist exegesis (one which reads across what might be considered contradictory sources or redactions).

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[136] *DI* 3:18-23; Kotter III, 126-130; Louth, 96-100.

[137] *DI*, 3:19:6-12; Kotter III, 127; Louth, 97.

Exodus presents the pillar of cloud and fire as a mark of God's presence with Israel, which at times seems indistinguishable from the glory: "'in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord'… behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."[138] Sometimes the pillar seems to be one with an angel as in Exodus 14:19-20 and perhaps 32:34. The Lord eventually claims that he himself will be "in a thick cloud."[139] God himself is visually evident as fire that seems to be veiled in smoke in Exodus 19:18: "And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire…." At several points in the Sinai account we see an emphasis on different levels of seeing in order to prevent destruction.[140] The elders see the God of Israel (or the "place" where he stood, in LXX) in Exodus 24:10 and Moses sees the glory of the Lord a little further on in Exodus 24:15-18 where he enters the cloud, and perhaps again or in a greater way in 33:17-34:8. The pillar of cloud is the context for God speaking to Moses face to face and for Israel rising to worship.[141] It also imparts a glory to Moses' face.[142] The book of Exodus ends with showing that the glory of the Lord provided direction and imparted the will of God regarding the movement of the Israelites.[143] Throughout, it is not just Moses, but God himself who is revealing his will to the people; they are still required to assent and make a covenant based on their own sight,[144] even if, for one reason or another, they are not

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[138] Exodus 16:7, 10.

[139] Exodus 19:9

[140] Exodus 19:21; 20:20, 22.

[141] Exodus 33:10-11.

[142] Exodus 34:29-34.

[143] Exodus 40:34-38.

[144] Cf. also Deuteronomy 5:24.

able to see exactly as Moses sees. They can still judge if Moses is seeing, because they are participating in the same sight on a lower level, through a veiling, or at a remove. God's will and energy provides icons within icons, literally a mountain with levels and a succession of veiled doorways and chambers wrapped in smoke and filled with light. The shape of the Israelite liturgy is the shape of the icon of God's will.

These are confirmations of Moses' reception of revelation. This is exactly what Mansur is referring to when he says that in that place the people of God was witness to God's giving the Law, and that this sort of revelation must be given in this way, so as to be in accordance with God's will:

> When we ask: 'and who is there to testify that God gave him the book? And which of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would rise up?' They are at a loss. And we remark that Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, with God appearing in the sight of all the people in the cloud, and fire, and darkness, and storm…Then when we say: 'how is it that this prophet of yours did not come in the same way, with others bearing witness to him? …so that you too might have certainty?' They answer that God does as he pleases.[145]

The prophet must see properly (in a purified and wakeful state of virtue and transcendence of passion), in a way that God can show to all humans in order that they might discern the ἐνέργεια which is the vision of God's will. Will, ἐνέργεια, and image are all of necessity tied together in his scripturally based thinking. What Mansur is emphasizing is a sort of covenant theology which requires faith, but not blindness, abject capitulation, absence of will, or a worthless human will. We have to remember that monothelitism is still an important issue for Mansur and thus provides him with a common theme in critiquing the loss of human will in both Islam and monothelite

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[145] *Heresies* 100:33-46; Kotter IV, 61-2; Chase 154-5.

theology. The icon of God's will is necessary for humans to will— God must have a will

if our freedom reflects God. In Exodus, this is the very visual apparatus of God's glory.

In a sense, what Mansur points to is the impossibility, in his thought, of a purely or

nakedly internally self-contained (closed to outside view) revelation of God to the

human. The internal is visual and also communal. Even the giving of the book of the

Law requires an inter-personal and thus visual, or face to face experience. God has

thought out and has in himself the eternal willing to do and express all that he has and

will do and express for the human. His immanence and even the created icons are

expressions of an internal and eternal iconicity and visual open-ness of God. The

immanence of God provides icons of the inner trinitarian love and life which is beyond

the circumscription of human experience, yet possible for the human to experience on a

level commensurate with human life in its potential for the reception of God. God's will

is a revelation which requires both liturgical and ascetic confirmation—iconic reflection.

<div align="center">**Will and Icon in Movement**</div>

So also at issue is the proper human quality as image. The free will, αὐτεξούσιον

θέλημα, is a very important aspect of the image to Mansur. This is a property of "rational

natures," natures which exercise governance and control over natural appetite, ″φυσικὴ

ὄρεξις:″ ″...ὑπὸ δε τοῦ λόγου ἀγόμενον τε καὶ ρυθμιζόμενην...″[146] Christ is to be

understood as submitting his human will, the αὐτεξούσιον, to the divine will. While the

terminological sophistication of his depiction of the human will may have started from a

background of philosophical psychology, for Mansur, defense of the human will has

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[146] "natural appetite… guided and controlled by reason." OF 62:66-67; Kotter II, 159; Chase, 320-321.
Also, see more general treatment in OF 36; Kotter II, 87-92; Chase 246-251.

become centered in revelational and iconic issues tied in with scriptural typology. In

other words, the ability to articulate even the details of Christ's human nature has become

an integrated and definitive conception of how God and human can communicate with

each other in freedom.

All this archaic philosophical and psychological terminology shows us that

reception of any perception from within or without requires well trained discernment.

The character of Mansur's *magnum opus* itself, as well as the introduction to the whole of

the *Fount of Knowledge*, placed at the beginning of the *Philosophical Chapters*, shows us

that conscious deliberation in the school of virtue is necessary if one is to have the

humility to be allowed to ascend to the vision of God:

> Those who happen upon this work have it as their purpose to bring their mind
> safely through to the final blessed end–which means to be guided by their sense
> perceptions up to that which is beyond all sense perception and comprehension,
> which is he who is the Author and Maker and Creator of all. [147]

He is clearly adhering to the model of ascetic wakefulness and watching, a

tradition that would clearly frown upon trust in things seen in sleep or any instance where

the person would be fitful and not fully in control of powers of discernment:

> With our whole soul and our whole understanding let us approach. And since it is
> impossible for the eye that is constantly shifting and turning about clearly to
> perceive the visible object, because for clear vision, the eye must be steadily
> focused, upon the object observed... and let us not be satisfied with arriving
> speedily at the gate, but let us knock hard... [148]

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[147] *Dialectica,* 1:70-77; Kotter I, 55; Chase, 9-10.

[148] *Dialectica* 1:30-37; Kotter I, 54; Chase, 8.

The purpose of these passages is to encourage his readers to use his book as a manual which reflects a certain submission to a process of learning. The manual itself is constructed out of a great community of sources, both non-Christian and Christian. All of these together form a communal monument of philosophy and theology with a strong ascetic leaning.

Dreams: Movements of Weakness, and the Demonic

Looking to the ascetic background of Mansur's use of this concept of ἐνέργεια relative to sleep and consciousness, we see that strict examination is required of images and perceptions, especially those in dreams. Let us turn to Climacus again. The novice who has detached from the world has further temptations when more fully removed to *exile,* or ξενιτεία. The third step of the *Ladder,* dedicated to exile, concludes with a section on "dreams of novices."[149] Here we find that the dream is a "stirring [κίνησις] of the mind during the body's rest [ἀκινησία]".[150] The dream is a special haven of the demonic (negative angels) for those who are testing their mettle through ascesis: "the devils of vainglory do their prophecies in dreams."[151] The temptation is to take the dream (and fallen angel) as revelational and prophetic. Belief in dreams cannot be attested to even by their predictive power, since this also can be a demonic trick: "because he is a spiritual being, he knows what is happening in the lower regions, that someone is dying, for instance, so by way of dreams he passes the information on to the more gullible."[152]

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[149] *Ladder*, 89-90; Κλίμαξ, 62-64.

[150] *Ladder* 89; Κλίμαξ, 63.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid.

There is the matter of a proverbial saying that Mansur refers to, without quoting, following his remark concerning perception of the energies; it could easily be any number of sayings from this or another section of the *Ladder*. Perhaps he had in mind: "to the credulous the devil is a prophet"[153] or "the man who believes in dreams shows his inexperience, while the man who distrusts every dream is sensible,"[154] or "the sleepy are easily robbed and those living close to the world are easily despoiled of virtue."[155]

If Mansur is insinuating an interpretation of Muhammad's revelation as demonically deceived (and thus the opposite of one accompanied by God's angels), there is another verbal link with the *Ladder*—the demon that may trouble one upon waking is called by Climacus, πρόδρομος (forerunner).[156] This is exactly the term that Mansur uses to describe the religion of the Ishmaelites— "forerunner of the antichrist."[157]

The saying and the πρόδρομος can probably, with as much plausibility, be explained other ways. However, the problem of wakefulness is not solely or perhaps even primarily tied to the sleeping or waking of Muhammad in the physical sense; but rather it is a trope for the moral imputation of a certain lack of ascetic care which can also be seen in Mansur's amazement at Muhammad's acceptance of a revelation that he should take

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[153] *Ladder*, 89, *Κλίμαξ*, 64.

[154] *Ladder*, 90; *Κλίμαξ*, 64.

[155] *Ladder*, 258; *Κλίμαξ*, 330.

[156] *Ladder*, 243; *Κλίμαξ*, 304.

[157] Kotter IV, 60:2; Chase, 153.

another man's wife.[158] As we have seen, Mansur is tremendously concerned about the αὐτεξούσιον of the human. It is, together with the intellect and reason, one of the things that is κατ᾽ εἰκόνα (according to the image). The αὐτεξούσιον is involved in discerning the ἐνέργεια and then evaluating and freely choosing whether or not to follow the God or an uncurbed appetite. Without the αὐτεξούσιον, we would not be human, but irrational and ὑπεξουσία, or "subject"—nearly the opposite of a functioning αὐτεξούσιον.[159] Lacking this faculty, even the image of God would be rendered useless for good and enslaved to demons.

As much as the concern of Climacus may be to submit the will, it is all in the service of gaining, at the very least, the ability to fight submission of the will to appetite. Mansur perceives the lack of αὐτεξούσιον in both the Islamic community's legal, authority-bound inability to make use of the opportunity to witness and attest to revelation. He also sees this faculty as lacking in the manner in which Muhammad receives revelation and his corresponding moral life enslaved to appetite. Not only does Mansur complain of his cutting off a human faculty in himself and for others, but also the "mutilation" of divine faculties by Islam's desire to rid God of any "association" of an eternal Word and Spirit. Not unlike a human who cannot properly exercise αἴσθησις, perception, or have a properly wakeful and vigilant αὐτεξούσιον which lets in the good angels and seeks God's help to expel the evil, God without Word and Spirit is brought to

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[158] Kotter IV, 64:95-65:113; Chase, 157.

[159] Kotter I, *Dialectica* 26:26.

the level of something ἀναίσθητον, without perception."[160] Mansur appears to be fully

aware of association as a defining polemic in Islam, a polemic which finds expression in

the Dome of the Rock's anti-Christian message.[161]

Topos: Placing God in Liturgy and Ascesis

The will of God expressed in a way that humans can respond to as willing

images of God, can also be seen as consistent with Mansur's interpretation of *place* or

τόπος as an iconic theological modality in his 13th chapter of the *Orthodox Faith*. God

who is uncircumscribed is not in a place, "he is his own place."***[162]*** Following this, Mansur

names places "where his operation [ἐνέργεια] is plainly visible."[163] Heaven, flesh of

Christ, Church, angel, "throne of Glory", our own sight, and the operations, ἐνέργειαι,

which we see by the Spirit making us in Christ an Icon of God. This list of places

extends even to the quasi typology, quasi psychological analogy of Νους, αγγελος, and

πνευμα, into divine life.[164] Fundamentally his discussion of place parallels in many

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[160] Kotter IV, 63:75-64:76.

[161] G. R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1999) 82-83, on the Dome, and idolatry and association, 67-87.

[162] Kotter II, 38 (13:10-11) Chase 197. This phrase and concern about "topos" are borrowed from Philo *de Somniis* 1:64 and also has connections with Philo's use of "topike" in *Questions on Exodus 2:45* to distinguish God's essence and glory. Another instance of the same expression, perhaps dependent on Philo, is in Theophilus of Antioch *Ad Autolycus* 2:10:2-3. ed. Miroslav Marcovich. Berlin: de Gruyter (1995) 53. The relative weight of Philo citations (compared to those of Theophilus; which seem less specific to Theophilus) in Mansur's works and his (or his "school's" or monastery's) preservation of otherwise unknown fragments Philo in the *Sacra Parallela* would weigh in favor of the quotation coming from Philo or perhaps as a common idea in Philo and another Alexandrian author.

[163] OF 13:12-13; Kotter II, 38; Chase, 197.

[164] Kotter II, 37-41 (13) Chase, 197-200

respects (though certainly not in sequence or order) his enumerations of images in *Divine Images* 3:18-23 or 1:7-13.

Mansur critiques Muslims for calling Christians "associators" or *mushrikun* in Arabic.[165] What is lost in not making theological association (*shirk*) with God by denying Logos and πνεῦμα is the "sense" of God, in terms of intellect and also ability to reach beyond self as one does through senses and expression that aims toward senses.

> Moreover, they call us Hetaeriasts, or Associators, because, they say we introduce an associate with God by declaring Christ to [be] the Son of God and God… why do you accuse us of being Hetaeriasts? For the Word and the Spirit is inseparable from that in which it naturally has existence. For if the Word of God is in God, then it is obvious that he is God. If, however, He is outside of God, then, according to you, God is without word and without spirit… It would be far better for you to say that He has an associate than to mutilate Him, as if you were dealing with a stone or a piece of wood or some other inanimate object.[166]

The ability to reach beyond self is paramount for humanity as both communal and willing individuals. God has this in Tri-iconicity—Trinitarian life which is the source of human individuality and community. The lack of proper human willing, reflects a conception of a deity lacking proper self-expression and ability to function outside of itself. This type of deity is inorganic or a stone like the Ka'ba. Mansur's implication is that the icon, worthy of such classification in Mansur's system, and certainly tied to icon as a part of a temple complex—represents both a mutilated sense of the divine and the

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[165] This "associators" is what is on vs.20 of the inscriptions on the eastern side of the outer octagonal arcade of the Dome of the Rock among many other inscriptions which <u>at best</u> call on Christians to admit the better revelation of Islam, and to deny that Jesus is the Son of God. See G. R. Hawting *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press (1999) on the Dome of the Rock see pages 82-83. Hawting has recently argued for re-evaluation of the foundational tradition connecting Muhammad and the Quran with a narrative that claims that "shirk"/ association was originally aimed at Arabian polytheists. Hawting tentatively points to an inter-monotheistic dialogue as the origin of the "shirk" accusation. Hawting even makes special mention of Mansur as evidence, pp.83-85.

[166] *On* Heresies 100:69-76; Kotter IV, 63-64; Chase 155-6.

human ascetic will. He claims the Ka'ba is tied to either Abraham's sex with Hagar or tying asses at the sacrifice of Isaac;[167] neither the best use of human will or prism for venerating a beneficent and powerful God.

Human and Divine Icon: Sight in Trinity

This denial of God's Word and Spirit stems from a denial of human witness and dignity. In other words, the human is a small and limited, but accurate measure of God. What we might be able to accept as revelation of the ultimate ineffable ideal of human life, is what God reveals, images of God's own life. As Mansur sees this, God must have something which is a paradoxical image of the human in his own trinitarian life. What it is that is like us, must then be some sort of powerful and even tri-hypostatic self-imagination. God's inner knowledge, the knowledge between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is connected to human knowledge and being, as Maximus also claims in his *Questions to Thalassios*, 60.[168] What Mansur adds to this knowledge must be understood in some ineffable way by the image of the image. The begetting of the Son and the proceeding of the Spirit are image-theology:

> The Son is the Father's image [εἰκών], natural and undeviating, in every respect like the Father, save for being unbegotten and possessing fatherhood; for the Father is the unbegotten begetter, and the Son is begotten, not the Father. And the Holy Spirit is the image [εἰκών] of the Son; for no one can say Jesus is the Lord save in the Holy Spirit; it is therefore because of the Holy Spirit that we know

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[167] *On* Heresies 100:78-94; Kotter IV, 64; Chase 156. He also goes on to link it to a head of "Aphrodite."

[168] PG90, 624BC; Lars Thunberg, *Man and Cosmos*, SVS Press, Crestwood, NY (1985) pp.40-41.

Christ, the Son of God and God, and in the Son we behold the Father, for by nature the Word is an Angel of the Mind and the Spirit discloses the Word. The Spirit is therefore the like and undeviating image [εἰκών] of the Son, being different only in proceeding; for the Son is begotten, but does not proceed, and of each father the son is a natural image [εἰκών].*169*

Summary of Mansur's Critique

In dealing with the revelation, and the messenger, Muhammad, Mansur has a consistent polemic which ties the gift of prophetic revelation with the iconic and visual affirmations of God's will expressed to Moses and the Israelites which is consented to by Moses and the Israelites via their affirmation and willing discernment of things seen. In contrast to this, Mansur presents Muhammad as not receiving or discerning proper visual ἐνέργεια. Mansur claims that Muhammad receives his revelation in a state of poor use of the will, in part because Mansur's expected iconography of prophetic revelation is not there (for Muhammad or for the recipients of the revelation), and also because he claims that Muhammad's will has not been exercised in the proper ascetic preparation for a revelation.

Taking this polemic even further, Mansur believes that this is part and parcel of the loss of eternal internal iconography of Word and Spirit *within* God, an unacceptable radical monotheism. He argues that this cuts off *sense* and *will* from God in such a way that is reflected in an anthropology which does not provide either the prophet or the faithful believer an iconography for use of will in receiving and assent to revelation.

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169 I have modified the translation of Louth (*Three Treatises*, 97) here especially at lines 28-29. That which expresses the message of the mind within the person is an angelic, spiritual aspect of the person which eventually dominate the coarser external forms. Likewise the expression of the mind (God, Father) through logos can be allegorized through biblical references to angels. Νοῦς here is also certainly not simply meaning: there is clear typological play and implications for the manner of the Father's granting vision of the Divine Logos. Kotter III, 127 (3:18:19-33).

Mansur contends that Muhammad fails to represent properly in his revelation the icon of a divine power expressed in an outgoing will. He also asserts that there is not a proper human power and dignity expressed as there should be in the reception of a common ascetic ascent to a divine revelation. Through discernment and ascesis the revelation should potentially be accessible to all humanity, even if only from a distance or through a veil—liturgical iconography seen at distance. Thus, for Mansur, a knowing and known God is lost by the aniconism or iconoclasm of both picture and will in Islam, and by implication, the iconoclasts.

Conclusion: Seeing the Word Integral to the Ascetic Prophet and his Liturgical Revelation

In conclusion, this polemic stands only on the basis of the iconic and temple aspects of the revelation in the Old Testament. The temple and its iconography which validates vision and witness to revelation as God's own presence in glory to all the people, is the center from which Mansur develops his polemical argument here. In addition, the figure of the angel is also assumed, because it is the prophet as messenger and angelic that is at question. What can an angelic life be? It can only be ascetic, in the priestly Jewish and Christian traditions. However, the strange thing, to modern eyes, is that this affirmation of the angelic character of revelation is part of the whole structure which affirms a common and covenantal witness: the witness which dignifies the will of every human, in liturgically ascending *sight*. Which kind of witness is most valued? An eye-witness. Who can mediate that kind of witness? Someone purified from self-interest and the obscurity of the passions—someone angelic and ascetic.

CHAPTER III. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images:* **A Theology of the Messiah of Israel in the Living Temple of Angels and Saints.**

Introduction to Chapter III

In Mansur's *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, angels and the temple are key images used in the defense of icons. Mansur appeals to the incarnation of Christ, but it is an appeal made to the Christ seen within the context of the Christian reading of the Old Testament. The temple's materiality and the anthropomorphism of angels depicted there as a sort of liturgical standard frame and apparatus of theophany are taken as pointing both to the incarnation and the icon.

In this chapter I will conduct a close reading of Mansur's work in which I will demonstrate the extensive use of angel and temple themes by Mansur. Much of this chapter may seem like a tedious rehearsal of the themes, but it is necessary to highlight the central importance of Scripture in order to 1) counter/compliment readings which highlight the philosophical aesthetics at the cost of neglecting the fundamental importance of Scripture for Mansur; and 2) extract Mansur from synthetic readings of iconophiles and examine Mansur on his own terms. From this analysis, we will see that for Mansur, angel and image can function as equivalent terms in anthropology and many realms of theological thought up to even Trinitarian theology. The imagery of temple surrounds these theological interactions between God, angel and human.

From this reframing of Mansur's work, we will see that Mansur is trying to redeem Judeo-Christian thought from an iconoclastic threat by showing that the icon is not just part of the incarnation, but that the icon is contained in the Mosaic Torah. By

demonstrating this centrality of image for Law, Mansur can claim that the Law legitimates Christian liturgy and that Christian liturgy affirms the Law.

What Mansur stands to gain from these claims is a legitimation of Christians in a context in which the worship of Christ and idolatry has been conflated by Islam. His defense of icons—of angels, Law, and temple—are all part of the whole structure of his defense of Christianity against the accusation of *shirk* (association).

To avoid too much literary flattening of the different treatises, and noting the difficulties surrounding treatise III, I will treat each treatise separately by an overview of their differences in argument, with some necessary repetition,[170] as well as presenting a synthesis of his use of the images of temple and angel. One of the problems in the academic literature that touches on Mansur's *Divine Images*, is that he is not treated on his own terms or given a sustained close reading to show the fullness of his unique contribution. His work is, rather, drawn on to support some broader de-contextualized and systematic point. This is the case when he is frequently brought in to speak about *Byzantine* icon theology, when it is clear that the properly Byzantine defense of icons made little use of his work, and certainly operated within a different socio-political world. As we noted above, Louth points to the fact that his work was most important for people living under Islam.

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[170] This is in response to the concerns raised by Kontouma-Conticello and Louth over the way Kotter flattens the text in the PTS critical Greek edition by presenting the treatises synoptically. See Vassa Kontouma-Conticello, "Jean Damascene," in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* 3, ed. Robert Goulet, Paris: Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (2000) 1005. Andrew Louth, *John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002) 199—200.

Before discussing the content of the Mansur's treatises, this chapter will first briefly connect to the Islamic contextual concerns from the previous chapter and will demonstrate the continuity between those concerns and his refutation of iconoclasm. This will be followed by a short preliminary discussion of the major concepts (angel, temple, icon, will, glory, incarnation) that will be highlighted in the analysis of the treatises and the types of arguments used by Mansur. The examination of the three treatises will focus on Mansur's exegetical strategies which are centered on angels and temple imagery. I will also seek to uncover links to both pre- and post-Nicene roots for the depiction of Christ as angel and ideas centered on the typological importance to the cherubim. Finally, I hope to demonstrate the important role image and angel play for Mansur in creating a seamless continuity between both theology proper, that is inner-Trinitarian relations, and cosmology, which includes creation, revelation, providence, incarnation, and sacraments.

We will move through the *DI* sequentially. Important points will thus be mixed in with less important, but supporting material, as it occurs. At points, the way material is juxtaposed or used in context is significant and yields insights; a point that can be missed when these texts are used of context to talk about icon theology as a generalized construct. Especially important to note will be Treatise I's emphasis on cherubim, overshadowing, temple, materiality and angelic host. Here the greater theological importance is placed on the interconnections between creation, providence and incarnation. In Treatise II, the most sustained defense is given of the icon as necessary proclamation of an implicit, unwritten, liturgical, and scriptural image of salvation history; thus, a magnet for demonic envy, embodied in the politics of iconoclastic

rulers. In Treatise III we will encounter the deeper development of the theological implications of the icon, focusing on important pre-Nicene precedents in Clement and Origen and important post-Nicene connections to Dionysius and Gregory Nazianzen. In this last treatise, we encounter a more explicit use of an angelic Christology inserted into a enumeration of types of images that first occurs in Treatise I. Because of this particular element, Christ as Angel, all other previous arguments are deepened and more fully systematized.

The Islamic Context and Mansur's Arguments Against Iconoclasm: Iconoclasm, Islam and the Need for an Old Testament-Based Theology

The iconoclasts were claiming Christ just as much as Mansur; the crux of the problem was how the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God meshes with the commands of the Torah. The surrounding society, Islamic in particular, but perhaps also Jewish groups or local iconoclasts, on the other hand, could claim better application of the commandments against images, thus invalidating the Christian claim to Abrahamic and ancient roots. For this reason, Mansur must show that the use of icons is essential for the perfection of the Scriptures, especially the perfection of Law that is completed in Christ. Moreover, he shows that Christ and Christian practice is central to the vision of the Law. He needs to demonstrate that the icon is a hermeneutic key necessary for the vision of Christ and the Law. For Mansur, Moses must have seen the image of Christ and the saints in figure at least. This figuration of the icon, or icons preparatory for the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation,"[171] presents not just an a fortiori argument, but an actual mystical perception of the

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[171] Col. 1:15 RSV.

incarnation as outcome of the understanding of divine nature, human being, sacramental materiality, the record of the visionary, and the depiction of the pattern of heavenly liturgy in the temple above and the temple(s) below. The temple, as material and transfigured place of God's presence, points to the significance of the body and senses (even if veiled, walled off and forbidden) in the pursuit of holiness.

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Overview of Major Concepts:
Angels as Architecture and Icon of Theophany

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Mansur seizes on the fact that angels are part of the very architecture of the temple. As such, because of their mobility, they also represent the freedom of the heavenly temple, and God, to be re-depicted in visions and in times and places of destruction and exile, even in and through the bodily appearance of angels, as typical accompaniment, apparatus, and frame of theophany.[172] The freedom of the temple to be re-constructed and be re-revealed makes of the angel a place that frames the desire of God to show his face, even appear as human, to comfort and point to the (Israelite) human person and community as place of worship, a worshipping social body. Mansur recognizes this aspect as the full implication of the body/temple imagery in St. Paul, and in the edificatory and angelic imagery of the rest of the New Testament. It is even an implication, in photo-negative, of demonology in the Gospels and its implied midrashic reading of earlier scriptural images. In contrast to angels, fallen angels provide an argument that iconoclasm and misanthropy are primordially linked, and opposed to both the good Creator and the incarnate Savior.

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[172] Ezekiel 1 has clear temple imagery, with angelic beings not merely as furniture or decoration, but reconstructing the temple.

In recognizing these inter-connections, Mansur is validating a biblical hermeneutic which re-liturgicizes images and ideas about God's operations or energies (ἐνεργείαι) and his most immediate theological predecessor Maximus the Confessor's theological and cosmic anthropology of λόγοι. In Mansur's work, this re-emphasizes the connection of the glory of God and body, and emphasizes the link between will and icon we have already treated in chapter 2. Icon is therefore the application of the implications of the biblical term *tselem* or εἴκων in its intertextual, midrashic significance, rather than simply a philosophical idea applied to the text. It is a close inner-biblical reading philosophized. In other words, he claims that icon theology is required by the Torah, especially if the Glory of God is incarnate. The liturgical theology which the Old Testament gives us is appropriately perceived as an image theology via the role of angels and the temple. It is this icon theology that makes sense of and validates biblical theophanies; they are not just ad hoc events, but written icons reflecting the appearance of God's own being in operation and will. The image is the visual inter-text, but not just a static property or object. The icon depicts an action that God does in revelation.

Moshe Barasch made some particularly astute observations in *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea.*[173] Barasch saw some of the complexity of Mansur's use of angels in his arguments. He points out that Mansur's defense of images is not primarily based in philosophy, but in history and the biblical record.

> In spite of his rhetoric in asking the questions, he does not answer them and
> does not show, on the level of philosophical reflection, how the invisible can be

[173] Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*. New York University Press, New York; 1992.

represented—in other words, how the problem of the icon can be solved. What he does instead is, first of all to claim that in reality the problem was indeed solved, that in history God, or the angels, did appear in visible form and were seen by people.[174]

Barasch is particularly struck by the way that Mansur seems, like a modern theorist, to affirm that the icon "shows in itself" what is represented, even in a seemingly autonomous way, and seems to allow for a concept of "form in itself" not dependent of the matter of its depiction.[175] He recognizes that this is not the modern aesthetic autonomous subject, but rather an "iconic sign," first spoken of so clearly in these terms. He is fascinated by the "partial identity" in resemblance, but not in substance. In this, I think we can find a missing theological element at work here, what we will conveniently call, with some justification within Mansur's work, ἐνεργείαι (energies), a term which as we have seen tied to will in chapter 2. However, energies are just one of several terms that depict the element missing in Barasch's analysis. What I think Barasch is highlighting, is the fact that Mansur's writing is based on a scriptural reading of the visual history of God and the angels. Barasch points us toward theophany when he concludes that Mansur bases his understanding of vision on the revelation of spiritual things to prophets.[176] He is right to see the basis in mystical sight.

We will see, however, that theophany is more than isolated and privileged seeing by prophets. There is something that has more consistency, theological weight,

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[174] Ibid., 207—208.

[175] Barasch, 196—198.

[176] Barasch, 243.

and anthropological import involved here. Mansur uses the scriptural connection of the image with glory, and thus also, ἐνέργεια, which signs both identity and difference in its presence in image. This is why he works through angels and temple imagery as precisely this sort of sacramental place for the identification with God by his will and activity or ἐνέργεια.

Types of Arguments Made by Mansur

Temple and angels are so ubiquitous in *Divine Images* that it is necessary to establish categories for their use in Mansur's arguments. The first category is the basic argument for the iconography of the temple which stands in what we now think of as redactional or inter-source tension with the aniconic or even iconoclastic statements of the Old Testament. In other words, he exploits inner-biblical disagreements, such as Exodus 20:4 and 26:31, as well as the more thorough disdain for images (and destruction of some) in Deuteronomy and in King Josiah's reforms. The second category is the theophanic argument that God is known through the vision of frequent angelic and temple-based (even if in *merkavah*) appearances of himself and his surrounding court. The third category is the argument that the angelic appearances point to (or even mystically contain) an even greater reality in the incarnation. Lastly, there is the argument that connects all the kinds of imaging: divine, anthropomorphic, connection between the image of the relationship within the Trinity, God's will to create, and to eventually save through his Icon, Christ, into which all creation, especially the human is likened and deified by the imaging Holy Spirit. This process is a sort of descending humanizing hierarchy of λόγοι/εἴκων, which the human responds to by ascending, deifying προσκύνησις, and λατρεία. Some of this argumentation is

made in allusion, rhetorically, prayerfully, and poetically spilling out into the seeming decoration of his argument.

Excursus: Third Apology, Textual Problems

The textual problems with the *Divine Images* have been laid out very well and succinctly by Vassa Kontouma-Conticello and Andrew Louth.[177] The authenticity of the third treatise of *Divine Images*, on the grounds of style and theological content, is borne out, especially by consistency of content between the treatises, as well as with the material on angels and anthropology in the *Orthodox Faith*. Louth also highlights the use of pieces from the third treatise in shorter versions, and the general lack of interest outside of Muslim dominated lands (where medieval Arabic and Georgian translations were made), and the small total number of manuscripts of Mansur's work. If it is not directly by Mansur himself, it easily manifests his theology, in a way that only a text from an associate or disciple who knew his theology well could have managed. It is very possible that the paucity of manuscripts may be evidence of the late career disfavor Mansur experienced, that Kontouma-Conticello highlights from a closer reading of the historical evidence concerning his life in his own texts. If the disfavor in fact stemmed, as Kontouma-Conticello affirms,[178] from his iconophile advocacy and his writings against Islam, it may well be that his contemporaries perceived the same linkage between defense of the image and a very strong critique of Islam.

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[177] Vassa Kontouma-Conticello, "Jean Damascene" *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, volume 3, ed. Richard Goulet, CNRS editions: Paris (2000) 989-1013. Andrew Louth *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press (2001) 199—200.

[178] Kontouma-Conticello, 1003.

Analysis of each of the *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*:
Treatise 1 of *Divine Images*

Mansur's concern with angels and temples particularly shapes the first treatise as a thematic overview of the iconography of the Old Testament. His treatment describes scriptural elements that point to the possibility of depiction of God through the incarnation. In this treatise, Mansur is in some respects moving toward a bit more systematization or perhaps something like an aesthetic theology. He outlines a cohesive system, but works primarily to find and highlight things which are heavily drawn from the Pentateuch which support the vision of Christ incarnate as the σκοπός,[179] (intention, hypothesis or goal)[180] of the Law. Mansur designates Christ as the σκοπός of the Law, without yet fully explaining what it is within divine life that requires this. So we can say that the first treatise is about how the incarnate οἰκονομία fits into the Torah. Mansur has to address the challenges posed by the anti-iconic elements of the Torah and their analogous development in Islam. He has to prove that the visualized, iconic implications of the incarnation affirm that Christ and the God of Abraham and Moses are one. This situation puts Mansur in a position reminiscent of the 2nd century in which Christians had to prove they were in continuity with the God of the Old Testament to distinguish themselves from Gnostics and validate themselves as inheritors of the promises of Israel. The Old Testament liturgy is essential to his claim that the Church is

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[179] *DI* 1.6:1; Kotter III, 79; Louth 23: Here Mansur points out that one can *see* the single σκοπός, not to worship anything but the Creator. The vision of the purpose of Scripture sees beyond the prohibition.

[180] As we can see in the Christocentric interpretation of Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa described by Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the history of Exegesis, Volume 1, the Greek Fathers*, Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications (1993) 119—123, 214—235. Also on Athanasius's use of scopos: Georges Florovsky, *Collected Works, Vol. I: Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View,* Belmont, MA: Nordland (1972) 81—82. And on Gregory of Nyssa: Paulos Mar Gregorios, *Cosmic Man: The Divine Presence*, New York: Paragon (1988) 1—23.

Israel. The appeal to temple and tabernacle liturgy is needed to show that the vision, expectation, and sacramental validation of matter which is shaped toward the incarnate Word are within the revealed Law of the One God of Israel. Angels and the temple are central to this project, because they are central to the Pentateuch as a revelation of cultic law which is tied to theophany. This is the reason why angels are thoroughly necessary to his argument, not a problem which causes inconsistency in an argument based on incarnation alone.[181]

We will see that the following images are central to the argument in Treatise I: cherubim, overshadowing, temple, and the angelic host. Materiality, creation, providence and incarnation are connected through the liturgical images of angels and the temple and its appurtenances. Cherubim as throne, angels, altar, *merkavah* and place of overshadowing are particularly important. Mansur has to answer in a consistent way, how the God Israel and the Christ of the church are one. The interplay of these images remains Mansur's leitmotif in all the chapters of Treatise I.

Cherubic Prayer: Ornament or Thematic Image?

Near the beginning of the first treatise, in a prefatory prayer, Mansur makes a prophetic call for help which is theophanic and visionary:

> Therefore I entreat first the Lord Almighty. . . to give me the words when I open my mouth and take up in his own hands the reins of my mind and to draw it to himself, making me to proceed in his presence on a straight path. . . together with the people of God, the holy nation, the royal priesthood, with the good

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[181] Counter to Peers' understanding of the Byzantine iconophiles' difficulty with angelic icons, Peers, 8-11.

shepherd of Christ's rational flock, who represents in himself the hierarchy of Christ. . . .[182]

He does not just want to speak about icons, but in defending them he aspires to bear the icon in himself. He is asking to be the chariot, the *merkavah*, and to ascend to the iconic vision of hierarchy. This is both a heavenly and earthly liturgical arrangement of reality which requires sight and the portrayal of God's presence in icon. Dionysius' hierarchies encircle and move in synch with the central descending and ascending icon of Christ the hierarch.[183] Mansur is unambiguously referencing Dionysius, as well as traditions that can be seen in the Macarian homilies and in Gregory Nazianzen,[184] regarding the *merkavah*. It is very significant that this theme arises from the beginning of the treatise, because it very much colors the argument and points to descending and ascending angelic character of all that surrounds and merges with the body of Christ in its exalted spiritual state of visible iconicity. Angels are icons of glorious theophany, and the human seeing all this and portraying it, even in argument, is to be like the cherubic throne-vehicle.[185] This clearly connects with mystical identifications in the hymns of Mansur, in the hymnographer's

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[182] *DI* 1.3:1-13; Kotter III, 67; Louth 20-1. It seems only possible that he is addressing his own Patriarch John 5th of Jerusalem. Thus the holy nation is a local, Palestinian one, though with the whole Church in mind.

[183] Alexander Golitzin, "Dionysius Areopagita: A Christian Mysticism?" *Pro Ecclesia* 12 (2003) 161—212, especially 180—193. Also one may note the dramatic imagery of the first of the 50 Macarian Homilies.

[184] Bogdan Bucur and Elijah Mueller, "Gregory Nazianzen's Reading of Habakkuk 3:2 and its Reception:A lesson from Byzantine Scripture Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia* 20 (2010) 86—103, especially 99—102.

[185] The monastic spiritual literature is usually overlooked when dealing with the very important scriptural type of the cherubim. See, Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium*, Berkeley: University of California (2001) 110—113. The point is not, as he represents it, dissimulating appearance as something else than what the cherubic/ angelic essence is; but rather, the chariot image itself conveying the divine, in a way that directly reflects the human experience of the vision of the union of human and God.

characterization of or even calling into presence the biblical event of theophany in a sort of simultaneity of theophanies.[186]

"Flesh Became Word:" Visual Interpretation of Law

Mansur recognizes the tension with Deuteronomy. He specifically quotes only from Deuteronomy: "I know the one who cannot lie said, 'The Lord your God is one Lord;'"[187] and refers to the book by name.[188] The naming of the 'second law' clearly is not without significance, and perhaps serves to sever God's rejection of polytheistic and idolatrous worship from a permanent prohibition on images. Mansur recognizes Deuteronomy as the most aniconic if not iconoclastic side in an intra-biblical argument over the temple and its imagery. Not only that, but he is compelled to appeal to the Torah first, rather than to the objections in the prophetic books. He is thus making a Christian halakhic argument. It is remarkable that ultimately his argument is not just from oral tradition or law, but visual practice. The icon in Christ is the basis of Mansur's visual Torah. It is the incarnation that makes this reversal, or even paradoxical meaning and purpose possible: "Flesh became the Word."[189] He is after all emphasizing the unity of Christ with the Old Testament God who commands the proscription.[190] The

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[186] "In a union without confusion, you showed us on Mount Tabor the coal of divinity, that consumes sins, but enlightens souls, and you caught up Moses and Elias and the chief of the disciples in ecstasy." Louth, *St. John Damascene,* 271; *Μηναῖον τοῦ Αυγοῦστου*, 93. For another mention of "overshadowing" see Ode 6, Troparion 3 *Μηναῖον τοῦ Αυγοῦστου*, 94.

[187] *DI* I.4:1-3; Kotter III, 75; Louth, 21.

[188] *DI* I.5:20-21; Kotter III, 79; Louth, 22.

[189] *DI* I.4:73-74; Kotter III, 77; Louth 22.

[190] Perhaps also very much keeping in mind not only the biblical text, but also the Islamic sense that any use of image is "association," and thus tainted with the sense of *polytheism,* see G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, Cambridge: Camridge University Press (1999) especially 1—110.

flesh does not make another god through an idol, but is "rather made equal to the Word hypostatically. . . God made visible in the flesh."[191] The one-ness of God becomes a hermeneutical principle which resolves conflicts, not through a philosophical abstraction but in Christ as personal Icon made fully material in the incarnation, and the resulting implication that the visual, even the flesh, becomes the λόγος. The reason in λόγος is pointed toward incarnate icon, and thus all λόγοι carry iconic purpose.

Mansur is perhaps here even playing on the idea that Deuteronomy is the consequence of the idolatry of Israel, or more of a piece with a divine hiding of that which the people are clearly not ready for. It is a clear recognition of the problem that Deuteronomy poses to iconography, but solves it with a loose allusion to the whole incident of the golden calf.[192]

Periodization of Revelation and God's Transcending Formlessness

While accepting the rejection of the limitation of God to form,[193] Mansur concedes the point about God's formlessness, but only so as to finally overturn the prohibition through the incarnation:

> When the invisible becomes visible in the flesh, then you may depict the likeness of something seen; when one who, by transcending his own nature . . .

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[191] *DI* I.4:73—74, 82—85; Kotter III: 77—778; Louth, 22.

[192] Especially at *DI* I.8; Kotter III, 80—81; Louth, 24. Contradictions within the Torah (Deuteronomy's greater aniconism or even iconoclasm compared to the command to make some of the very things prohibited elsewhere) lead to a kind of narrative logic, a logic which can be seen to be implied by Deuteronomy's placement (after recounting of idolatry by Israelites) of its homiletic in the larger narrative context within the canon of the Pentateuch.

[193] A distaste consonant with the slightly more nuanced and perhaps eschatologically open position of Deuteronomy (4:15): "You saw no form that day."

by this reduction to quantity and magnitude, puts on the characteristics of a body…set up to view the one who has accepted to be seen.[194]

But this transcendence of nature is actually an argument for voluntary self-limiting by God—transcending transcendence—revealing that his intention to be incarnate has always been part even of the plan to prohibit images for a time. The prohibition, because of its reason, "you did not see a form on that day," points to the possibility that there might be a form to be revealed on *another day*.

Architecture of Images: Theophany and Temple Iconography

From I.9 we see a skeleton of what is fleshed out more in the third treatise. Because of the first treatise's emphasis on the incarnation and the imagery of angel, temple, and liturgy, the more direct understanding of theology as inner-Trinitarian relations and the cosmic creative imagination of God's providential will as Creator is present, but not in the forefront of his discourse. Here, in Mansur's list of images from the begetting of the Son to memorial images, we see not just typological images, but image as the true expression of God's own being in Trinity, and his being as Creator and Savior. In this first iteration of, in this case five images,[195] we see a hint of temple imagery in the architectural blueprint form of a house as an example of God's will as image: "For in his will everything predetermined by him, that will unfailingly come to pass, is designated and depicted before it comes to be, just as, if one wants to build a house, its form is described and depicted in the mind."[196]

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[194] *DI* I.8:41—57; Kotter III, 82; Louth 24.

[195] As opposed to the six enumerated in Treatise III, covered below

[196] DI I.10:8-14; Kotter III, 84; Louth, 26.

The image of the architectural plan in the mind is more than just a philosophical commonplace. Consider the following mention of angelic appearances in 1.11: "For Scripture applies forms [τύπους] to God and the angels… because our analogies are not capable of raising us immediately to intellectual contemplation but need familiar [οἰκείαν] and natural [συμφύον] points of reference."[197] Even though Mansur points out the limitation of analogy alone, he still employs the typical Trinitarian analogies (sun, light, ray, etc.) a little further in the text. This reference, however, should not diminish   his appeal to actual divine and angelic appearances.

The typological images of the things which will come to be are headed, in 1.12, by the ark and the other iconic furnishings of the temple. The memorial images, most of which are associated with the temple in 1.13 include again the rod and the ark. It is notable that all the images here are fixed instances of God's intervening will and helpful indicators of God's plan. In other words, they are in the mental blueprint of God, and are icons in the greater icon of God's "images paradigms and predeterminations."[198] They are also signs that point both backward in remembrance and forward toward incarnation. However, here in the first treatise, Mansur does not extend the inner Trinitarian theology to the degree he does in the third treatise. His treatment in I.9 is much simpler than the more developed theology of III.18 and 26. Jaroslav Pelikan has noted that putting image in the place that idea would hold in

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[197] *DI* I:11:3-4, 8-10; Kotter III 84-85; Louth, 26

[198] *DI* I.10:5-6; Kotter III: 84; Louth, 25.

platonic thought brings us a different sort of "cosmology of icons."[199] The visual is

given a higher place; it is no longer just a shadow cast from afar representing an

absence of the one who casts the shadow. For Mansur, shadow is understood as a

descent of the presence as depicted in the Old and New Testaments. He has shifted

from the platonic idea to a positive and permanent icon which shows us that "icons as

images could therefore be said to have their foundation not in a mere "symbolism" of

some sort, but in a hierarchical metaphysical reality."[200]

Moshe Barasch sees the difference between the platonic ideas and Mansur's

images and expresses it in terms of knowledge:

> Now, John replaces the more abstract concepts by the more concrete "image,"
> εἴκων. Replacing one term by another, "idea" by "icon," is not merely a matter
> of terminology; it indicates an important shift in emphasis. What is suggested
> by this shift in terminology is that the divine knows the thing to be created in
> the future by looking at their images that dwell in its mind. Looking—that is,
> the visual experience taking place within God's mind—is a primary form of
> knowledge. These images in God's mind suggest that the bridging of the chasm
> between God's uncreated nature and the nature of the created world already
> takes place within the divine itself.[201]

Barasch's analysis of the images being known in the mind of God is insightful

and affirms the link we have made between the icon/image and the will in Mansur's

polemic with Islam. But Barasch does not explicitly speak of will and what follows

will demonstrate even more that God's knowledge of the images is tied to His will and

our will—will as both faculty and activity. Knowledge and will are intimately tied in

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[199] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1990) 175.

[200] Pelikan, 178.

[201] Barasch, 224.

God's goodness and engagement with his creation and creatures. God's will does not

prevent knowledge, because it carries with it the freedom of God himself, who does not

make automaton images that cannot share in will and knowledge. Freedom of will is

itself imaged in and *as* the human, and thus image plays an essential role in both

likeness and the distinction of persons in harmonious relationship.

What is important here is that the actual physical icon and the human being as

image are not directly referenced among the list of five images in the first treatise but is

rather assumed. This omission of the human and physical icon itself is addressed in the

other treatises. In the first treatise, the human is assumed in the discussion because of

the incarnation of the divine Word and Image as the human image, as well as the fact

that temple is tied to the human being and the human body as the τέλος of its existence.

And the picture-icons are justified as a lesser part of this whole. They are implicitly

defended in the defense of the visual in the *Old Testament* temple, and Christ's

incarnation as the Logos of that worship. So it is clear that Mansur is not just defending

instances of images, but the principle, which he does not fully work out here.

Proskynesis: Law and Pilgrimage to Place Where God's Feet Stand

He begins the discussion of veneration, προσκύνησις, with mention of both

bowing to angel and temple, in particular noting Psalm 131:7: "'Let us venerate the

place where his feet stood.'"[202] He is aware of the ancient Israelite pilgrimage circling

and bowing to the temple, "as they still do it now."[203] Thus the temple, even as present

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[202] *DI* I.14:8-9; Kotter III, 87; Louth, 28.

[203] *DI* I.14:12-13; Kotter III, 87; Louth, 28.

reality for Judaism sets the basis for his argument. Here we see the temple as the

"objective correlative of the paradoxical doctrine of God's otherness and

omnipresence," as Jon Levenson puts it.[204] The logic of the temple as an image of God,

is that it is a concrete place of theophany of the invisible and unapproachable God. The

acceptance of material places for God's self-revelation is a part of Mansur's

understanding of the human as temple and image:

> Veneration offered, on account of God who is naturally venerated, to his friends
> and servants… or to the places of God, as David said, "Let us venerate in the
> place, where his feet have stood"; or to the things sacred to Him, as Israel
> venerated the tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem standing in a circle around
> it, and then from everywhere bowing in veneration towards it. . . .[205]

Overshadowing: Glory, Not Absence

It is in going directly to the tensions over angelic iconography that Mansur

appeals to the witness of a single God: "Is God one God? Yes, you say, as it seems to

me one lawgiver;"[206] and here, innermost to the central shrine depicted in the Torah, is

the cherubim. The cherubim point to the "simultaneous otherness and omnipresence"

noted above. They are the action and place where creatures, and sanctified, handmade

material things are "overshadowed" by the "image of the divine mysteries."[207] The

cherubim evince the one who is enthroned, and thus by means of icons, the temple is

furnished with the expectation of the Image of God, Christ as fulfillment of the pattern

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[204] Jon Levenson, "The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience" in *Jewish Spirituality*, New York: Crossroad (1986) 39.

[205] *DI,* I.14:3—12; Kotter III. 87:4—112; Louth 27—8

[206] *DI,* I:15:1—2; Kotter III. 88; Louth, 28.

[207] *DI,* I:15:13; Kotter III, 88; Louth, 29

shown on the mountain. Mansur is employing the argument of Hebrews 8:5. The

temple is set up for the liturgical priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Image

of God:

> If then the law prohibits images, while being in itself a depiction of the image in advance, what shall we say? If the tabernacle is a shadow and the figure of a figure, how then can the law command that images be not drawn? But these things are not so, not at all. Rather, "there is a season for everything."[208]

The Law is fulfilled in the historical apocalypse of the incarnate God. Angelic

worship, therefore points to the coming in time of the "anthropomorphic God" of the

incarnation:

> Of old, God the incorporeal and formless was never depicted, but now God has been seen in the flesh and has associated with humankind . . . . I venerate the fashioner of matter who became matter for my sake . . . and through matter worked salvation for my sake.[209]

Barasch notes the technical artistic sense of shadow and the scriptural

references, but does not acknowledge that shadow *is* the presence of continuous divine

reality; its energy, grace, and will that can be extended to greater presence.[210]

Mansur in chapter 16 affirms that God, as the Creator of matter, also dwells in

and saves his material creation in the human. He very quickly jumps to extend the

salvation of the human material being to the salvation effected in material means,

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[208] *DI,* I:15:27—32; Kotter III, 88—89; Louth, 29.

[209] *DI,* I.16:1—4; Kotter III, 89; Louth, 29.

[210] Barasch, 212—14. He does suggest the idea of something like a transmission of "subtle matter," 214.

through sacramental materials, and holy places.[211] His sacramental justification for the

abiding sanctification of places is the Word's permanent christening of bodily

materiality: "What gives anointing remains. . . . Therefore I reverence the rest of matter

and hold in respect that through which my salvation came, because it is filled with

divine energy and grace."[212] Barasch also notes that Mansur seems to indicate that

grace is involved with image, but only as if it were a thing limited to special

appearances, and only prophetic vision.[213] Mansur reaffirms Christ's materiality, and

then clearly treats the saints (and their icons) as thus appropriately extending the

sanction of temple-veneration in Christ, invoking temple themes of name[214] and

overshadowing:[215] "Submit to the tradition of the Church and allow the veneration of

images of God and friends of God, sanctified by name and therefore overshadowed by

the grace of the divine Spirit."[216] This is the holy place [*topos / Maqom*] logic of the

temple, the place where the name of the Lord God dwells.[217] A long description of the

blessing of Bezaleel and all the material things offered for the construction of the

tabernacle follows this. He contrasts this materiality of the Law with "Manichaean"

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[211] He particularly notes holy places of pilgrimages, something that could not be rejected as idolatry by Mansur's Jewish and Islamic neighbors.

[212] *DI,* I.16:15—17; Kotter, III, 89—90; Louth, 29.

[213] Barasch, 242—3.

[214] For interconnections in Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic sources between the name, Logos, angel and temple see Jarl Fossum, "In the Beginning was the Name: Onomanology as the Key to Johannine Christology," in *Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology*, NTOA 30, Freiburg: Universitatsverlag Freiburg (1995) 109—133.

[215] Pss 36:7, 57:1, 63:7, 91:1; all instances of God's wings causing the shadow, and linking the appearance of God in a temple context with an attribute associated with angels.

[216] *DI,* I.16:29—32; Kotter III, 90; Louth, 30.

[217] Exod 20:24; Deut 12; 14; 16; Isa 18:7; many other occurrences.

distaste for matter.[218] The Cherubim feature prominently here as representational art, in at least two media: metal and needlework.

Priest and Israel: Hierarch and Communal-Liturgical Iconography

A theme that Mansur's description only touches lightly on is the inclusion of the twelve tribes' names[219] into the symbolism of the precious stones which are the symbolic representational incorporation of the whole people into the vestments of the priest. This is a human community-icon incorporated into the human high-priestly mediatorial presence within the innermost place of the temple. Mansur implies the significance of the material representation of Israelites (as names in precious stones) in their material offering of precious stones, skins, fabric, oil and wood. He focuses more on connecting this with the high-priesthood of Christ, in a way very deeply influenced by his fondness for the epistle to the Hebrews. Mansur contrasts the communal vision of God in and through Christ to the adherence to laws in contradiction of the Law: "Israel of old did not see God, 'but we, with unveiled face, behold the glory of God.'"[220] Note here that the glory of God is treated as God. Israel only does not see "of old." There is a sense of continuity with the materiality of the temple and its veiling, unfolding; a continuity even of the material reality of Israel. It is not the Law as a whole that prevents vision. It is rather the acceptance of the commands to not make images at face value, not seeing the seemingly contradictory command to make images as driving the Law toward proper interpretation as an open-ness and desire for vision.

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[218] It is important to note that the Manichaean, or *Zindiq*, is also a figure of early Islamic heresiography.

[219] Exodus 39:14; LXX 36:21.

[220] *DI* I.16:1—4; Kotter III, 92; Louth, 31.

Mansur has just demonstrated that this is not the full sense and inner meaning of the Law and the tabernacle or temple which is central to it: "Look at the likeness of the cherubim. How therefore can you say that what the law orders to be made is prohibited by the law?"[221] So the previous notion of not-seeing-of-God is actually a hermeneutical and Christological point—one does not see God, unless one understands the prohibition as a providential preparation for, beginning of, and drive toward vision. The command reflects a representation of what is seen in a less fully or permanently humanized, yet still materially connected and visual form. The seeing of God is located in Christ for Mansur—Christ who is working towards incarnation in the vision-oriented words of the Law.

Materiality and Memory

The typological import of the temple-cult as memorial, relates to the sanctification of "the first of the senses (sight being the first of the senses), just as by words hearing is sanctified."[222] Memorial is for the sake of prefiguration: "The golden jar containing manna should be placed in it [the ark] as a memorial of what had happened and to prefigure what was to come."[223] Past and future meet in the event and its depiction. He goes on to say that the memorial image is "herald," or proclaimed proof of God's work: "They were not worshipping them, but being led by them to recall the wonders they were offering veneration to God who had worked marvels. For images were set up as memorials and were honored not as gods, but as leading to a

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[221] *DI* I.16:82—84; Kotter III. 92:82—84; Louth, 31.

[222] *DI* I.17:3—5; Kotter III, 93; Louth, 31.

[223] *DI* I.17:11—14; Kotter III, 93; Louth, 31.

recollection of divine activities (θείας ἐνεργείας)."[224] Notice Mansur's critique of the

Deuteronomistic opposition to certain memorial images,[225] which he makes on the very

grounds of the memorial material that Deuteronomy finds it necessary to accept—the

manna—which connects general material memorial with incarnation and eucharist.[226]

The memorial image, moreover, in Christ, returns to a Passover image which lifts from

memorials of historical events, Israel, and the earthly ark or throne to "Our whole

nature . . . restored to ancient blessedness, through which that nature has ascended from

the lowest parts of the earth beyond every principality and is seated on the very throne

of the Father."[227] The incarnation brings us to the resurrection and ascension: the fully

anthropomorphic and incarnate picture of the *merkavah*. Mansur takes the memorial to

a realm beyond history (through the ascension to heaven) and beyond materiality in

every way except that the body of Christ is there, and we in his body, and through us

the whole of materiality. Mansur thus takes image full circle from the Son as natural

Image of the Father back through will, providence, and material things back to the Son

as natural Image of the Father, holding all creation in himself, seated as incarnate, with

the Father. He takes the typical Seder question of the son to the father, "What does this

mean?"[228] and returns an answer that ascends to mystical vision of God enthroned.

Mansur is reapplying the Passover Seder question to the baptism of Christ in the Jordan

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[224] *DI* I.17:18—23; Kotter III, 93; Louth, 32.

[225] 2Kings 18:4

[226] Deuteronomy 8:3, 16. Deuteronomy definitely accepts the manna but almost seems to imply supersession in the Deuteronomistic History. See "produce of the land" in Joshua 5:12.

[227] *DI* I.18:11—14; Kotter III, 94; Louth, 34.

[228] *DI* I.18:8; Kotter III, 94; Louth, 34. cf. Ex. 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:20.

and the revelation of the Trinity. He is implying the greater Passover of Jesus/ Joshua

typologized in baptism, the passion, resurrection, and its memorial. The Seder question

becomes a hermeneutic tool which reaches for the incarnation and the final validation

and redemption of the body and materiality.

Saints as a Council of Gods and Kings: a Fleshly Heavenly Host

From the 19th chapter onward, Mansur turns his attention to the saints, feeling

that he has appropriately defended the "image of Christ and his Mother." This could be

taken to mean that he feels his iconoclast opponents (at least the Christian ones) accept

these depictions but not that of the saints. However, I believe that this is irrelevant.

Mansur's argument is about the New Testament temple and he is compelled to describe

the iconic quality of the temple in terms that are not just tied to the altar and the

worship of the one enthroned, but also the veneration of those who stand around the

throne, encompassed by and reflecting the glory of God. It is all of one piece to him. He

quotes from 1 Samuel (1st Kingdoms) 2:30: "For I live and I shall glorify those who

glorify me." This chapter points to the greater deification in the full presence of Christ:

"The presence of the whole one who anoints."[229] This section from chapter 19 connects

nicely with both previous assertions that the prohibition on images was because of

idolatry and a developed sense that now humans, in an ever-expanding way, through

the saints can be reverenced as gods by participation in Christ, appealing to Gregory

Nazianzen's Oration 40:6 and his interpretation of Psalm 81/82:1, "God among the

gods." This leads into the following chapters' meditation on the temple as reconceived

in incarnational terms: animals depicted and sacrificed versus humans depicted as

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[229] *DI* I.19:11—12, 25—26; Kotter III, 95; Louth, 33.

pleasing sacrifices; the saints as host, not just angels; the poly-sainted temple as

material image of God seen, God saving. Essentially he is saying that God establishes

that through salvation in Christ, the temple does what is promised to Israel and what we

might call a 'monolatrous polytheism'[230] of the "God among the gods"— God

worshipped by the gods. And so we turn from the idolatry of Israel and the consequent

prohibition of imagery (however inconsistently) to a situation which clarifies the

destiny of the human made fully and divinely visible. Mansur depicts a thorough

humanizing of all aspects of the temple: no longer animals but humans; no longer

angels only, but humans. The human enters all places of divine worship, and thus is

depicted in all places. The human becomes sacrifice and angel at once, perfect

reflection and place of worship of God. What is represented as both higher than the

human by angels and lower than human in depiction of animals and plants, meets, and

is now brought to a middle place in the host of divinized human beings in icon. The

reference to God among the gods taken from Gregory Nazianzen also has an interesting

connection to the idea of a movement from aniconic to iconic. Gregory also alludes to

Wisdom 3:7—8, which expands the reference to make explicit the connection of gods

and kings. Chapter 20 begins with saying that, "God ordered David to build him a

house through his own son Solomon."[231] This points to the christological expectation

and temporal lag between the command and full appearance and depiction of the temple

or icon: David had to wait for Solomon; the Temple waited for Christ. It also brings up

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[230] For the term "monolatrist" with "polytheistic," where it can be perceived as the background to Biblical imagery, see Benjamin J. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2009) 145—150.

[231] *DI* I.20:1—2; Kotter III, 95; Louth, 33.

kingship in a way which is not mediated by earthly kings (since the saint is the real king and "god"), and threatens kings and gods if they do not adhere to the heavenly king and supreme God.

The "house" is a two sided term: both son (and dynasty) as well as the building as "resting place" for God. While saying that Solomon did not depict God through animals and cherubim in the temple, Mansur also affirms that the very visual sacrificial animals were a type pointing toward the blood of Christ as well as the martyrs who are conformed to him as "living and rational temples for the dwelling place of the living God."[232] Chapter 21 continues this on a more angelic level: Christ is surrounded by his army, the free, fellow heirs, and friends. The sonship of the "friends and fellow heirs" reflects upon the dignity of the Son and heir who is the visible image of the invisible Father.

Vision and Material Consequences of the Resurrection

Redemption of humanity from death, as movement from pollution to the new birth, affirms the icon. The icon partakes in the resurrection's voiding of purity laws surrounding corpses; otherwise there can be no memorials of the dead and shrines for their remains. Therefore both memorial of saints and their image and form are exalted and made to partake in the sanctified, once-dead flesh of Christ. Instead of being polluted by being shaped toward death, they transmit the holiness of the body of Christ, risen in conquest of death:

> From the time when he descended to Hades. . . and having bound the strong
> one. . . . From the time when we were born of water and the Spirit we have been

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[232] *DI* I.20:24—27; Kotter III, 96; Louth, 34.

truly adopted as sons and become heirs of God. Henceforth Paul calls the faithful… we do not mourn for the saints, but we celebrate their death.[233]

This is part of the cosmological and theological mechanism which extends grace beyond the Barasch's conception of a limited prophetic grace. The grace, rather, extends through the vision not just of Christ, but of the others who participate in his resurrection.

Seeing and Salvation: From Soul to Body

The angelic motif in chapter 21 is integral to the movement from spiritual and immaterial sight to physical sight. The main scriptural focus of the chapter is Genesis 32:24—32; Jacob's wrestling with an angelomorphic figure described as a "man," which we later learn is God. But it is the careful reading of 32:31 that yields the movement from spiritual to physical sight:

> I have seen the human form of God "and my soul has been saved." For he saw an immaterial image proclaiming beforehand what was to come to the immaterial eyes of the intellect, while I have seen the image of the one seen in the flesh, that enkindles memory.[234]

What Jacob-Israel saw was immaterial and angelic, but the Christian vision is fully, materially, and finally human. But as we noted in Genesis 32:24, it is "a man." The point is that if it is God, (who else could change his name to Israel?) it has to be God appearing in angelic form. God needs to be anthropomorphic to directly give blessing to his promised eponymous patriarch and people, and this is tied to the goal of incarnation. This movement to materiality and "humanizing" is filled out with the saints

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[233] *DI,* I:21:64—75; Kotter III: 109—110; Louth, 35—36.

[234] *DI* I.22:4—9; Kotter III, 111; Louth, 36.

and all the material workings of miracles with visual shape (shadows) and physical relics ("handkerchiefs and aprons"). Mansur concludes this with something that seems like a mere appeal to tradition as a static and fixed thing, a boundary, quoting Proverbs 22:28: "Neither remove the ancient boundaries, set in place by your fathers." In the context of Israel's inheritance wrested from angel/God, however, I think the author is saying more than "don't change things."

Boundaries: Marking the Practices of Angels and Humans

Since Mansur would have frequently repeated in liturgical practice the *Odes* of the Old Testament, he would have associated ὅρια, "boundaries" with Deuteronomy 32:8: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God." And this would also have played on the associations of kings as 'sons of God', prone to fall via overstepping of bounds, as most explicit in Hosea 5:10: "The princes of Judah have become like those who remove the landmark; upon them I will pour out my wrath like water." But in both cases what we are looking at is not simple delineation of tribes and nations, but rather a sense of people, Church, and tradition as a paradisial place subject to the measure and order of divine worship, as with the occurrences of ὅρια in the eschatological temple architecture of the last chapters of Ezekiel.[235]

Unwritten Tradition: Visual Liturgical Practice

This temple connotation gives us a more specific understanding of what is meant by tradition when Mansur makes the appeal in chapter 23 to "unwritten traditions" more than vague appeal to oral tradition or an argument from

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[235] Ezekiel 43:12, 45:7—17, 48:28.

uncomprehending practice. His quote from Basil's *On the Holy Spirit* 27:66, that

"without noticing it we shall damage the Gospel,"[236] brings up a more important sense

that what is at stake is the comprehensive vision of Christ and breathing of the Holy

Spirit. More specifically, the revelation is only recorded in books and texts—the

primary content of revelation is heavenly things; things seen beyond the bounds of full

verbal expression or explanation: "What is the origin of the threefold [immersion in]

baptism? Whence praying facing the East? Whence the tradition of the mysteries?"[237]

The tradition is liturgical, and that is the foundation of the Scriptures' record; but as a

liturgical παράδοσις there is much that is passed on without record, comment, or

interpretation. The Bible and its proper interpretation is a liturgical and visual matter

within the temple (which is full of and assumes the worshipful use of icons). To remove

icons is to remove the visual context for the revelation enshrined in vision.

Demons and Kingdoms: Idols or Image of Cosmic Icon and Kingdom

 This proper worship-context of revelation connects us directly to the question of

which side we are on, and the puzzling topic of exorcism. In this way Mansur's

argument flows from "unwritten traditions" to the contrast between the gods of the

nations as demons (thus their images are idols) and the images of "God incarnate,

servants and friends of God."[238] And this picture of competing exorcistic claims

connects back to the constellation of images surrounding the ὅρια (boundaries) of

tradition: God has measured all humanity and the angels for his image, to be seeing and

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[236] *DI* I.23:28-30; Kotter III, 112; Louth, 37.

[237] *DI* I.23:45-50 ; Kotter III, 113; Louth, 37.

[238] *DI* I.24:26—29; Kotter III, 115; Louth, 38

seen as the liturgy which reclaims all for God. The boundaries of tradition are not revealed without a context, but they reveal the order and purpose of creation.[239] The church (people, practices, building) itself is thus the very context, the cosmic icon of the reclamation that happens in the Gospel; it is the place of scriptural proclamation. As such, it is not decoration, but the frame which is itself a part of the larger revelation, the way the revelation subsumes the whole universe. So, Mansur writes in chapter 25 that if Epiphanius' church is full of icons, it does not matter if his writings seem to speak against icons because his liturgical context conforms to the general practice of using images. He concludes by saying that it is a matter of the "whole Church which stretches from one end of the earth to the other" that is important, not just a single author or text.[240] Mansur, in chapter 26, briefly takes the argument back to the issue of veneration of the demonic through idols versus legitimate veneration of created things.

Fulfilling Moses and Aaron's Priesthood: Bowing to the Material Word

In chapter 27, Mansur concludes his own direct arguments, before moving to a more continuous format of florilegium and patristic commentary, with an affirmation of the revelation of the purpose and meaning of God enthroned in all the temples of the Scriptural record and the creation itself. After quoting from Psalm 98:5, Mansur depicts all creation bowing before God. All is wrapped into the high priestly work of Christ, following the logic of Hebrews 9. "Moses and Aaron, too, with all the people,

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[239] This is very easily seen in the frequently heard prayers of exorcism at baptism in the Byzantine tradition, where the point (most acutely heard when baptizing infants who have never 'sinned' and are by no means demoniacs) is that God reclaims his creation, and that there is no 'place' for the Devil and the demons, not even in pigs. Jaroslav Pelikan also points out that Mansur is actually the inventor of the term *microcosmos,* see n.77, above.

[240] *DI* I.25:36—40; Kotter III, 117; Louth, 39. Epiphanius was frequently appealed to by iconoclasts.

worshipped things made by hand."[241] The conclusion then is that actually Moses and

Aaron venerated material things in and through the temple for the sake of the God

worshipped in the heavenly temple, the purpose of which is only fully realized in the

coming of Christ in the flesh. So Moses and Aaron through materiality point to the

earthly and heavenly 'materialization' of God. Law and the Scriptures are revealed for

reception of God, king, and priest within the single liturgy.[242] Mansur sees the

veneration of the temple as assumed within the scriptural record and thus an undeniable

precedent for icons: "Thus, the former sanctuary and the tabernacle and everything in it,

was made with hands; and that it was venerated no one denies."[243] It is notable that

Christ's entry into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:4), extends the blessing on material

representation.

Florilegia: Glory in the Saints

In the florilegia that follow, it is important to note where Mansur quotes without

extensive commentary, and where he extends his commentary into a vehicle for new

insights. In Chapters 28-31, Mansur quotes from Dionysius (Letter to Titus and *Divine

Names*), with very light commentary on passages where Dionysius speaks of forms

being given by God as condescension to human need. This is, in fact a considerably

weaker argument for images than Mansur's. In chapter 32, quoting from *Ecclesiastical*

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[241] *DI*, I.27:8-9; Kotter III, 118; Louth, 39.

[242] An interesting aside (not necessary for my argument) is the use of the epithet "golden cicada" for St. Paul (when quoting from Hebrews): this refers in classical Greek tradition to pre-Solonic headdress denoting aboriginal, authentic Athenian citizenship. So Paul, not foreign to, but a true citizen of the heavenly city and true temple of Moses' vision, points us to that heavenly 'measurement' of the kingdom's presence. I can't be certain Mansur would know this classical trivia. For info on this image see, http://www.drbilllong.com/GrLaRoots/Tetrous.html .

[243] Kotter III, 118, Images 1:27; Louth, 39.

Hierarchy, and its commentary in chapter 33, Mansur takes what Dionysius says about hierarchy as a movement of ascent to deification as very basically being an icon[244] which calls out a recounting of the very bodily, incarnate situation of Christ's transference of his image to cloth for Abgar.[245] In other words, Mansur is taking the incarnation and its extension of blessedness to materiality and images as central to hierarchy and divinization. The icon is a complex form of interaction in hierarchy.

Analogy of Faith and the Measuring of Grace

In the following two quotations from Basil from a homily on a martyr and more especially from the treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, Mansur could be seen as simply taking a platonic notion of some sort of image-transference. However, there are very serious scriptural points that seem more important to his thinking. He does not even repeat the assertion by Basil that "the honor offered to image passes to the archetype." First Mansur rephrases this as that "the power is not divided nor the glory shared, but the glory of the image becomes that of the one depicted in the image."[246] In other words, God's power and glory resides in the saint and his or her image. This is tabernacle and Moses imagery and theology, as much as, or more than it is any reflection of philosophical language. This is reinforced even more strongly by the language of exorcism that is used in the following sentences. Icons are part of the divine overshadowing which drives out the demonic. As one familiar with the baptismal practice of exorcism would know, this ties the icon to exorcistic reclamation

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[244] *DI* I.33:6; Kotter III, 145; Louth, 41.

[245] *DI* I.33:7-16; Kotter III, 145-146; Louth, 41.

[246] *DI* I.36:2-4; Kotter III, 147; Louth, 42.

of creation, or re-creation, where the sacramental material image used is the cross-signing breath and hand or cross of the priest and application of oil. Mansur mentions the form of the cross. This image is continued further by his statement that "Divine grace is given to material things through the name borne by what is depicted."[247] With the exorcism, we see that Mansur is tying the icon to the very sense of being a Christian as one who receives and bears the name of Christ. The reference to name once again marks possession by the divine, the scriptural understanding of God's sacramental inseparability from his name, and the association of name with holy place and temple.[248] An interesting phrase appears here, which perhaps only seems striking because of later (and modern) theological uses of the term *analogy*: "So material things, on their own, are not worthy of veneration, but if the one depicted is full of grace, then they become participants in grace, on the analogy of faith."[249] This ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως ("analogy of faith") is in fact taken from Romans 12:6. In context, the Romans passage is about the diversity of gifts within the one body of Christ, and particularly the reception of the special charism of prophecy according to "proportion of faith". Elsewhere Mansur uses this in a baptismal context, in *Orthodox Faith* 82.[250] Here the "analogy of faith" is a sense of participation in the grace of God the Creator and healer who purifies. The baptismal context of the quote in *Orthodox Faith* matches the theological point of exorcism: God reclaiming his creation through the perceptible

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[247] *DI* 36:14—15; Kotter, 148; Louth, 43.

[248] For the scriptural difficulties and inter-source tension inherent in the name, *shem*, theology, and similarities to *kavod*, see Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2009) 59ff.

[249] *DI* I.36:20—22; Kotter III, 148; Louth, 43.

[250] *OF* 82:54; Kotter II, 184; Chase, 346.

means of purification. Wisdom of Solomon 13:5, perhaps the best antecedent for Paul's use, with its interpretation best seen in 14:3 (working of God's providence), gives a traditional sense of where analogy of faith finds material things by which to see God's grace. The use here of the term, however, that connects us with Romans 12, and perhaps Romans 1:19ff via Wisdom of Solomon 13—14 is not a reasoning toward God only through created things, but rather an emphasis that in created things God is in fact perceived in a direct way, not via an opaque sign. Mansur here is certainly affirming that grace is seen in the icon as the revealed presence of God himself. Elsewhere, in *Orthodox Faith* chapter 1 and *Dialectica* chapter 1, this nexus of Romans 1 and Wisdom 13 appear to be taken by Mansur as talking of a revelation of God himself, not an opaque sign, but rather an icon full and shining with grace.[251] Like the icon, creation and its correlate, providence of the creating God, require the "analogy of faith" or they become objectified things. Every material thing properly points to God and is worthy of veneration as revelation of God, but not as separate deity. The point is very much in line with St. Gregory Palamas' insistence that the vision does not separate body and soul/mind for the one who sees God, but rather the vision is seen for the one who looks at the icon as vision of the holy in and for the body as part of the whole human:

> You, perhaps, are exalted and immaterial and have come to transcend the body and as fleshless, so to speak, you spit with contempt on everything visible, but I, since I am a human being and wear a body, I long to have communion in a bodily way with what is holy and to see it.[252]

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[251] *Dialectica* 1:74—76; Kotter I, 55; Chase, 10. *OF* 1.15—17; Kotter II, 7; Chase, 166.

[252] *DI* I.36:26—30; Kotter III, 148; Louth, 43.

Holiness and Longing to See

In following quotations from St. Basil (*Homilies on Gordius* and *40 Martyrs of Sebaste*) and brief comments (37—45) Mansur emphasizes memory, witness, and the identical function of word and image. In chapter 47, Mansur seems to be speaking of the icons as a divine condescension for edification of the less advanced, but the quotation with which he finishes his commentary (from Basil's homily on the *40 Martyrs*) speaks otherwise. The martyrs are an open declaration of unity between heaven and earth and the single liturgy of angels and the saints of all ages: "The earth did not hide you, but heaven received you. The gates of paradise were opened to you, a sight worthy of the army of angels, worthy of patriarchs, of prophets, of the just."[253] It is not only a matter of human seeing, but humans being seen by the angels: "How should I not long to see what the angels long to see."[254] In other words, the revealed liturgy of heaven is not without sight, but a gift of greater sight.

After two quotations from Gregory of Nyssa, Mansur finally comments on the saying of Basil that "the honor offered to the image passes to the prototype," in such a way that he seems not to be speaking primarily of paintings but of the human being as image: "How is it that the image is not honored and venerated, not as God, but as God made flesh?"[255] Through the incarnation of Christ, the image seems to move into, or

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[253] *DI* I.47:27—29; Kotter III, 152; Louth, 47.

[254] *DI* I.48:1—2; Kotter III, 153; Louth, 47.

[255] *DI* I.51:; Kotter III:154 ; Louth 48.

reveal its place in the very life of the Trinity, between Father and Son. In other words, the icon is in all the relations that are iconic, full of God's imaging and incarnation-ward power, seen in the Son and through the Spirit. The point of the image, therefore, is the (prototype) Image in the flesh.

This is the same sense of union between heavenly and earthly images in the unified depiction of liturgy in Hebrews, and that seems to be required of Christian thought that recognizes the importance of the image of the temple. It is also significant that Mansur has just mentioned the comparison between emperor and his image, implicitly questioning worldly power by comparison with divine. The divine power and image is seen in the Son; and so it is that the next quotation (chapter 52) in the florilegium mentions the sacrifice of Isaac, a type of Christ. This is not just appeal to the affective power of a dramatic scene. It then leads into a meditation from John Chrysostom on Hebrews dealing with the surpassing vision of "new covenant" beyond the "shadow" of the old. The term "shadow" directly references techniques of art, but also ties in with the scriptural notion of overshadowing which is now surpassed by the permanence of the dwelling and the fleshing out of the of the Image in the incarnation. The element that can be taken as supersessionist here is really about the difference between permanent and occasional theophanic intersection of God with materiality and sight.

Overshadowing: Worshipper as Image of Worship

This is picked up again in chapter 56 with the quotation from Leontius of

Neapolis:[256]

> And if you overshadowed all these things by day and night, saying Glory to
> you, the only God who rules over all, who through all these things worked
> marvels in Israel . . . falling down you venerated God, you would see that
> veneration is offered to God through images.[257]

Just before this statement, Leontius talks about all the iconic material things

used liturgically in the temple. Louth, in his footnote proposes to emend the puzzling

use of κατεσκευάζου to "fashioned.[258] This, however, does not catch what Leontius (and

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[256] Louth (210—213) deals with Leontios and shows the relationship between his work and Mansur's.
Louth raises the issue of the continuity and discontinuity between Mansur's anti-Jewish iconophile
arguments and Leontius of Neapolis' arguments for images. He shows the continuity in their shared points,
"the difference between icons and idols, the evidence of the Old Testament for veneration of people and
places, the dignity of matter, the difference between veneration and worship." (210—211) The striking
difference is that "Leontius makes no mention of the Incarnation as introducing a new era marked by
making and veneration of images." This last point does not really do justice to two things in Mansur's
work: 1) Mansur does not make as sharp a delineation between Old and New, but rather, we have seen that
he is trying to more thoroughly show Christ within the Law—even when using a "supersessionist"
argument originating in the Old Testament; 2) Mansur is really less concerned with images than the
cosmology of images, which is a very powerful synthetic vision of liturgy and theology heavily based in
the Old Testament. As Peers has pointed out (17), angels trouble the idea that the incarnation can be the
only basis for sight and icon. This is where we have developed the Old Testament theme further than
Louth.

Louth claims that, despite the fact that Leontius (whose full text we don't have) is writing a
treatise against the Jews, that he has "not a trace of supersessionism," unlike Mansur. He finds the reason
for this in the presumption that Leontius is actually preaching to Jews, whereas John was trying to "tar
Christian iconoclasts with the reproach of being Judaizers." (211) There is some truth to these claims, but
within the context of our analysis in this chapter, we see that, though Mansur may not be directly arguing
with Jews or Muslims, he argues in favor of images for a community which is subject to the pressure from
the more radical monotheist social context to account for their adherence to the Old Testament Laws and
the one God of Abraham. Certainly, a very Jewish concern is at play, perhaps from within his own
community, in the last chapters of *Orthodox Faith*, which Louth depicts as thematically tied to showing
Christianity as a path of moderation (179). What we argue for here, is that there is a much larger and
perhaps deeper development of a hermeneutic of the Scriptures, which is spurred by the new social and
theological context of the Levantine Christian community.

[257] *DI*, I.56:50—56; Kotter III, 158 ; Louth 51—52.

[258] Louth, 51, n.128.

by extension Mansur) is saying. They are claiming that the ministers themselves are overshadowing and overshadowed as icons themselves,[259] and thus icons (worshippers) are worshipping through icons (sacramental objects), expecting the full icon of the flesh of Christ. The incarnation and use of icons is fulfillment of priestly iconicity. This is already an important image in Gregory Nazianzen's orations, and clearly goes back to earlier pre-Nicene spirituality in which the human being is spiritually imaged in the cherubim.[260] The quotation in context points toward the conflation of honor paid by the worshipper and honor paid through the worshipper. In other words, the one who worships God is the image of the worship of God. The poetic play here is that the images are seen less as objects than as subjects worshipping God and conducting worship to God. Mansur continues with another quote from Leontius which lists things belonging to the king that receive reverence and then turns toward speaking of Christ. Leontius follows this with the idea that the saint is an "open book" (clearly a liturgical notion with apocalyptic resonances), referential, even expressive of God; and concludes with speaking about the reverence of sender through the one sent. Following this claim, he even adds the paradoxical veneration in reverse order, where a parent is venerated because of her child, as in the case of the Mother of Christ. The point is that everyone reverences at least those above them in the hierarchy of worship; a worship that can only be known through human worshipping, through the use of the human form and

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[259] *DI* I.15:12-13; Kotter III. 88; Louth, 28.

[260] This is notable in the Byzantine liturgical entrance hymn, the "Cherubic Hymn," in several forms. See note 13 above.

example by the human. If one truly worships God then God is worshipped not only by that person, but through means of that person (even by another human).[261]

From Severian of Gabala, Mansur takes a selection from *Homily on the Serpent* to show that the apparatus of worship in the Old Testament is prefigurative. This is not, however, a crude supersessionist theme, but instead points to the fact that things used do not themselves save, but rather are the shadow of the invisible experienced as visible in the incarnation. Mansur in his short comment after this discussion, presents the *bildverbot* as an issue of the ancient temptation to idolatry, "to deter the people who were unstable and ready for idolatry."[262] As we have seen above, this is not an unreasonable reading of Exodus.

Icon as *Apocalypsis:* Saints and Divine Regime Change

The icon, the actual physical artifact itself, can be revelatory of events which are directed by God, as in the case of the icon of the Theotokos with St. Mercurius, who gives an *apokalypsis* of the death of Julian the Apostate to Basil the Great.[263] As Louth notes, this only appears in the story as a dream revelation. For Mansur, the icon and the dream are hierarchically or liturgically one, the movement through form of providence for humanity divinized and God made human. The following paragraphs, 61—63, serve only to underline the liminal and apocalyptic character of icons which stand between heaven and earth which allow for the revelation of the divinely mediating work of saints. Paragraphs 64—65 show that the icons form a positive defense against demons.

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[261] *DI* I.56; Kotter III, 158—9; Louth, 52.

[262] *DI* I.59:1—2; Kotter III, 161; Louth, 54.

[263] *DI* I.60; Kotter III,161; Louth, 54; see n.134.

More than just a mechanistic or crude defense, this points to the necessity for real

vision and veneration of God, not just mental attitude, emoting, or spiritual abstraction.

The political aspect of the apocalypse above with St. Mercurius is a veiled

threat to Leo the Isaurian, and perhaps nearer iconoclasts, or even Caliphs. Mansur

affirms the authority of synods over emperors in ecclesiastical affairs. He even calls

civil enforcement of religious changes as ληστρική, ("piratical.")[264] The authority lies

with vision, but not unchecked, because he refers to Galatians 1:8 in the same place.

The mention of angel underscores not just vision, but that vision must accord with the

gospel. All that we see in the appearances of the saints in chapters 61—63 and

elsewhere, bolsters the vision of the one gospel of Christ, the same vision of St. Paul.

The angel must be a liturgical servant, not a rebel, and so must the emperor be. The

icon of the gospel, which affirms the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, stands

above the emperor. This icon is more in accord with synods and apostolic authority.

Mansur has rejected any previous post-Constantinian tradition of imputing apostolic

authority to the emperor. Nevertheless, we can see that such a challenge is addressed by

making a council at Hiereia. Perhaps Mansur had some inkling that this could happen,

and so he mentions the Robber Synod of Ephesus as well.

<div align="center">**Icon as Victory Over Demons**</div>

In chapter 64, quoting the *Spiritual Meadow*, Mansur takes another tack: icons

are physical means of expressing worship that connect one to victory. The monk who is

asked not to venerate the icon of the Virgin Mary holding Christ is asked this so as to

conceal the victory of the incarnation by not worshipping it in a bodily way. This is

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[264] *DI* I.66:13; Kotter III,167; Louth, 55.

echoed in the penultimate chapter, 67, of this apology, by the recasting of the icons as a

sort of Seder prompt, "What is this . . . ." and call for the exodus narrative as we saw in

chapter 18 above. Here the Seder question to be answered is on the meaning of the

crucifixion and incarnation. The seeing of the icons is a Passover meal for the eyes, a

reminder of what nourishes us. This is one point where Louth's English edition ceases

to footnote the obvious biblical reference to Exodus 13:8—9, "a memorial between

your eyes," and hurries to footnote chapter 68's reference to Exodus 19:6 as a reference

to the people of the Byzantine Empire as opposed to a much broader conception of the

Christian Church as Israel which is closer in thought to the pre-Constantinian

identifications in Clement and Origen. Yet in contradistinction to these Alexandrians,

Mansur has made an extreme defense of materiality for that vision. It may be that

Mansur is even thinking of the allegorical interpretation of the name "Israel" as the

"man who sees God."[265] Mansur's location in Jerusalem may also inform his

identification of the church with Israel.

Summary of Treatise One of *Divine Images*

I believe I have shown that the first apology is concerned, throughout with the

Torah as gospel, Christ as the appearance of the God who gives the same command not

to make graven images as somehow consistent and seen in that same Law. For Mansur,

church is one with Mosaic revelation. To fulfill the name Israel is to engage in the

vision of the temple where the icon of the angel is fulfilled in human materiality

through the incarnation. Mansur justifies Christian worship by a Christian analogue to a

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[265] Cf. Philo *de Cong.* 1:51, Philonis Alexandrini *Opera quae supersunt,* III; ed. Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland, Berlin: Georgii Reimeri (1896-1930) 82; Origen *Commentary on John*, PG 14, 169A. One could even claim that much of Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* 7 meditates on this theme.

halakhic argument which emphasizes the visibility of the God of the Torah and His exalted worshippers and ministers. Jacob wrestles with the angelic vision of God which points to the presence of Christ in the very theophanic gift of Israel's name and blessing.

Further, this points to an ecclesiastical identification which actually frees the identity of the Christian citizens of the Caliphate from Byzantine, Roman, or Greek identity and locates them in the heavenly nation of Israel, under the true king, Christ. Eschatology is realized in worship alone, not in earthly kingship (or nation), which may just as easily be piratical. This re-identification renews the scriptural task of the pre-Constantinian church to claim itself as a valid Israelite community, even a form of Judaism (although, for urgent polemical reasons, Mansur would not have used that term this way) amongst others. For Mansur, this would be the most theologically and scripturally correct Abrahamic/Mosaic heir, especially when it comes to accepting Christ's transformation of vision into the permanence of the incarnation of God's overshadowing Glory. Mansur returns to this theme popular amongst the early Christians, but he lacks the temptation of early Christian literature to dismiss the eternal validity of matter and flesh.

Treatise Two: Satan's Jealousy of the Image

In this treatise we will see the most sustained defense of the icon as necessary proclamation of an implicit, unwritten, liturgical, and scriptural image of salvation history. Salvation history is written on humanity as worshipper and being or becoming worthy of veneration as God's image through divinization. For this reason the icon is

interpreted as a magnet for demonic envy, embodied in the politics of iconoclastic

rulers. The response of those who decree against icons and reject their theology is not

just slandered as demonic, but in fact resonates with a clear view of the fallen angels'

role in human fallen-ness.

The second treatise puts its focus even more on the work of the devil in trying to

bring down worship of God through cutting off human access through vision. This

extends the point of both the story from the *Leimonarion*, or *Spiritual Meadow*, which

returns in this treatise, as well as the same conclusion about the holy people of Israel.

The devil wars against the image.[266] He fights against salvation.[267] He is envious of

humanity, when he sees the likeness of God.[268] This may also make reference to

Wisdom 2:24, and perhaps the angelic theme of the fall of Satan in pseudepigraphic

literature[269] and in the Quran's following of these traditions in Sura 7:11—12. The

point of all this is to show that icons are not attached to an idolatry which worships

demons, but rather the icon restores the original cultic status of the human as the "idol"

of God. Mansur makes use of the claim that for icon-theology it is by misdirection of

the desire for deification that Adam is brought down by Satan: "For right at the

beginning he sowed in him the seeds of hope and desire for deification [ἐπιθυμίαν

θεώσεως] and through it brought him down to the death of animals."[270] This is part of

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[266] Kotter III, 69; Images, II.2; Louth, 60.

[267] Kotter III, 71; Images II.4; Louth, 61.

[268] Kotter III, 72; Images II.6; Louth, 62.

[269] Chapters 12—14. See: "Life of Adam and Eve," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* vol.2, ed. James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday (1985) 249-296.

[270] *DI* II.2:7—9; Kotter III, 69; Louth, 60.

the warring [πολεμεῖν] against the image of God.[271] The devil realizes that it is through

subversion of image, the icon, that the union between God and the human will be

sundered. Subverting the active imaging, subverts the icon, bringing it to the state of

non-image animals. This makes the human as poor an icon as an animal idol, or the idol

of passions. Mansur makes this connection with the passions, but leaves the implication

of animal idols implied in the same chapter.

<div align="center">

Icon as the Divine Enigma of Scripture

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Another theme which surfaces and resurfaces again and again, is that of

scriptural enigma. This is another way the icon is described which deftly straddles the

Law and the Gospel. Quoting 1 Corinthians 13:12, Mansur shows the scriptural,

allegoric depth of the icon (and vice-versa; the iconic depth of scriptural allegoresis):

"Image is a mirror and a puzzle, suitable to the density of the body. 'For the intellect

greatly tired is not able to pass beyond the bodily, as the divine Gregory says.'"[272] This

is more than condescension to the lowly physicality of the human. This statement is

directly tied to his way of reading the development of revelation, not as progressive

spiritualized shedding of archaic materialistic folly and blindness, but as the piercing to

the inner meaning. Even though Mansur seems to speak ill of the ancient Israelites, he

is actually forcing a greater sense of unity of message and a co-inherence of realities

despite the working out in time. He emphasizes the one-ness of the God of Old and

New Testament. It is actually mostly for this reason that he calls his opponents

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[271] *DI* II.2:5; Kotter III, 69; Louth, 60.

[272] *DI* II.5:13—14; Kotter III, 72; Louth, 62.

Manichees,[273] after carefully reading the purpose and exact parameters of the prohibition of images in the Old Testament in such a way that he can see the icon as already present and part of the plan of the same God of the Old Testament. It is the Gnostic rejection of that unity which is the most relevant to his reading, not just validation of matter.

Chapters 6—10 of the second treatise are his careful scriptural reading of why the forbidding of images was necessary as a temporary or youthful measure (ch.7) to prevent idolatry and conceal any form (ch.8) which yet allows mysterious, or enigmatic depictions like the cherubim (ch. 9). In the end, the gospel recapitulates all and shows us the destruction of the original iconoclastic idolater, the devil. So it is right to destroy idols as the sign of our defeat and deception by the enemy, but it is right to lift up the sign of the victory of the image of God (ch.10). This is bracketed by the quotation from John 5:39ff to "search the Scriptures;"[274] a passage rich in the allegorical sense that points to Jesus as the revelation of the name and vision of the Glory of God the Father. What Mansur is doing is showing that a spiritual reading is justified by finding and interpreting the plan of Scriptures unveiled in Christ. He appeals to the way the One God moves toward developing his worship while yet antithetically denying normal, visual aids of worship as being one of the "various ways" of speaking (Heb. 1:1-2) that need the synthesis of Christ. To "search the Scriptures" is to find Christ visible, the Icon, through puzzles or enigmas and mirrors. The other end of the bracket is in chapter

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[273] *DI* II,10:39—40; Kotter III, 99; Louth, 66.

[274] *DI* II,7:10; Kotter III, 73; Louth, 63.

10: "You know the purpose of the scripture is made clear to those who search intelligently."[275] After a litany of scriptural cosmological images, he tells us that:

> Everything said about them is true and the purpose is the glory of God and the saints glorified by him, and our salvation and the overthrow and the disgrace of the devil and his demons, all these we venerate and kiss with eyes and lips and cleave to in our hearts, likewise the whole of the Old and New Testaments. . .[276]

It is important to note that δόξα here applies to both Christ and the sharing of the power or energy of God in deification—righting and restoring the image. He has just shown us that the devil is part of the story of iconography and idolatry: an iconoclast of the good and right image, and a depicter of that which is inappropriate and maliciously misused. Image and visibility of God is the metanarrative or meta-symbol of creation and salvation. Because it includes a better sense of redemption of the material, physical, and the bodily, it is more complete than λόγος/λόγοι, or any other similar, more easily spiritualized and dis-incarnated notions. Icon, however, because it is at once the meaning and method of scriptural revelation, must be tied with anything that has to do with λόγος.

Exorcising the Iconoclast

Central to the imagery we follow in this research, however, is the opposition to salvation via the image posed by the anti-image fallen angel against the human image. This draws the supposed Israelite aniconism into a clear cosmological frame that allows us to have an overview that includes the whole of human worship; original and correct, fallen or redeemed. The angel stands in positive relation and guidance to the

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[275] *DI* II,10:33—35; Kotter III, 97; Louth, 66.

[276] *DI* II,10:20—37; Kotter III, 98; Louth, 66.

human in seeing the divine (as with the cherubim, Angel of the Lord, and other angelic enigmas). The fallen angel, however, also is involved in obscuring sight of the divine, away from the human as image or seeing and being, as well as from venerating the proper Image of God. As priest and monastic, Mansur adheres to the traditional and scriptural association of his rank with the angelic (thus properly speaking of things of worship), and the royal image of the pre-fallen angel. Mansur never explicitly makes the connection with Ezekiel 28 or Isaiah 14, but he definitely depicts the emperor as the wrong, and perhaps fallen, messenger of the Word: "It is not for Emperors to legislate for the Church…Emperors did not speak to us the word, but apostles and prophets, pastors and teachers."[277] The emperor, like David, is not the builder of the church, because he is a "'man of blood.'"[278] He characterizes transgression of this boundary as ληστρικη, "piratical," perhaps rendered more accurately, as "thieving." The emperor acts as Saul or Jezebel. The emperor does not realize that the image on the coin, as interpreted by Christ, implies a separation of church and state affairs. Interfering with this will "remove the ancient boundaries," and cause the destruction of the whole edifice of the church—a clearly anti-iconic event, and one which strikes at the body of Christ. [279]

Mansur acknowledges the superficial commonality of image-making, between idolatry of Greeks and Christian images, but points to the same issue with blood

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[277] *DI* II, 12:5—13; Kotter III, 102-3; Louth, 68.

[278] 1 Chronicles 28:3.

[279] *DI* II, 12:21—26; Kotter III, 102—4; Louth, 68-9. On the novelty of his views, see Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100-1625* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1999) 212—213. The short treatment, while correctly asserting that there is not a legal sense of two opposing authorities, as with Gelasius' correspondence with Anastasius, misses that there is a sense of both conciliar and liturgical-hierarchical authority counter to worldly political authority.

sacrifice and exorcism. The great difference lies between the worship of gods and the exorcistic character of God's image and the images of his friends. Once again we are shown that the assisting host of saints are likened to angels.[280]

Torah: Mystery of Sacramental Materiality

In chapter 13, the content of which occurs only in this treatise, Mansur does accuse the emperor of Manicheeism over the rejection of matter; however, this dualism is opposed mainly on the basis of creation and the tabernacle, not on the basis of the incarnation. Mansur sees that if the New Testament is unmoored from the Old Testament, it can be used in an overly spiritualizing fashion. As he continues on in chapter 14, Mansur affirms the sanctity of matter through the Old Testament tabernacle because it points to the incarnation; the possibility of God indwelling matter:

> So it was venerated by the whole of Israel. What were the Cherubim? Were they not right in front of the people. . . . I do not venerate matter, venerate the fashioner of matter, who became matter for my sake, and in matter made his abode, and through matter worked my salvation. "For the word became flesh and dwelt among us."[281]

He ends this same chapter with what seems an ungracious ridiculing of the iconoclasts as returning to some of the commands of the Old Testament most signally ignored by Christians: keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, levirate marriage, and the celebration of Pascha in Jerusalem. In context, he is not ridiculing the keeping of these commands, but rather underscoring the allegoric inner meaning revealed in and beyond their materiality in the flesh of Christ. He prefaces this with using the Old Testament

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[280] *DI* II, 17:5-6, 20—29; Kotter III, 114—5; Louth, 74

[281] *DI* II,14:8—16; Kotter III, 105; Louth, 70.

image of overshadowing for the holy places of pilgrimage and the saints: "Either do away with reverence for all these or submit to the tradition of the Church and allow the veneration of images of god and friends of God, sanctified by name and therefore overshadowed by the grace of the divine Spirit."[282] The end reference about being justified by grace not law, is not for Mansur a turn to dematerialized spirituality, but rather about a greater and more concentrated divinization of materiality in Christ. This is revealed very pointedly, and in a politically menacing way (recalling the sword of Mercurius and the frequent demise of Byzantine emperors and dynasties), in chapter 15 (parallel in part to Treatise I.21) via an image which is strangely both angelic and fleshly. The saints are the "host" and the friends of God:

> We represent Christ the King without divesting him of his army. For the saints are the army of the Lord. Let the earthly Emperor divest himself of his army . . . let him do away with those who fight most bravely against the tyrant and triumph against the passions… heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ… friends of Christ.[283]

Is just the devil the tyrant here? The saints are living temples and more exalted sacrifices. So they are angels and temples which provide their own blood for the offering: "The temple that Solomon built was dedicated with the blood of animals and adorned with the images of animals… the Church of Christ is dedicated by the blood of Christ and his saints."[284] So we see that angel and tabernacle or temple are brought together in a way that does not dematerialize, but actually raises the material reality of

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[282] *DI* II, 14:31—35; Kotter III, 106; Louth, 71. He is perhaps ridiculing the emperor's inability to come to Jerusalem, where Mansur is located.

[283] *DI* II, 15:1—10; Kotter III, 107; Louth, 71.

[284] *DI* II, 15:16—17, 22; Kotter III, 107—108; Louth, 73.

the temple to the higher and inner sense that combines with the exaltation of the angels, in order to restore the human image to its proper place.

Unwritten Image and Holy of Holies

Mansur goes on to speak of unwritten traditions. This is not merely an appeal to oral tradition, because he speaks of physical relics and places (places of pilgrimage, baptismal immersions, praying to the east, veneration of the cross). The unwritten handing down is in fact found in the visual experience and practice that provides the context for all the written traditions. In fact he goes on to attribute to Emperor Leo, a sort of anti-image "writing" which can be characterized as a falsifying of traditions. He accuses Leo (most likely a conflation with his own Umayyads) of inventing a new revelation, a new gospel and of trying to constitute the church by imperial canons rather than by written and unwritten patristic traditions. The icons are parallel to gospel, along with saints and prayer practices (facing east). What he is pointing to is not just an oral Torah, but a visual Torah; the visual things transmitted in liturgy.[285] This importance of visual liturgical witness continues on in chapters 18 and 19 through the proof from St. Epiphanius' church in Cyprus, and the reverence of the cross and the relics of the crucifixion. In chapter 20, Mansur returns to the proper seeing of scripture's enigmas by quoting from Matthew 13:16—17: "Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. Amen I say to you, that many prophets and just people longed to see what you see and did not see, and hear what you hear but did not." He also re-quotes 1st Corinthians 13:12. He goes on to say:

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[285] Kotter III, 111—4; Treatise II,15; Louth, 73—74.

We are blessed in the image. God himself first made an image and showed us images, for he made humankind in accordance with the image of God. And Abraham and Moses and Isaias and all the prophets saw images of God and not the very being of God.[286]

The image of an image, such as the burning bush as icon of the Mother of God, and the bush's place itself is sanctified, "not only holy, but, dare I say it, also the holy of holies."[287] Here the issue of scriptural interpretation and the perceiving of temple interiority combine in the description of the heart's perception. It is central to the discernment of whether one is hard of heart. Mansur quotes from Matthew 19:7—8 about divorce.[288] He does this because it refers to a measure taken by Moses less than God's full intent or wish, for the sake of concealing an unacceptable or impracticable enigma in the Law. Once again Mansur has found a hermeneutical key which allows him to see the heart and the inner sanctum of the image that is veiled in enigma. He immediately then turns to Matthew 23:17—22:

> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold of the temple that has made gold sacred? And you say, "If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath." You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the altar swears by everything on it; and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

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[286] Kotter III, 119; Treatise II, 20; Louth, 75. I cannot understand why Louth here translates οὐσία as 'being.' It gives a very confused sense to the passage. Mansur is in the tradition of viewing the technical term οὐσία as denoting that which is unapproachable and un-seeable about God. Louth's translation causes it to transgress on the semantic domain of another term—here directly, icon—the term which shows God's condescension to perceptibility and presence within limits. Is Louth here shying away from an instance of something like the essence and energies distinction? Is he implying disdain for the prophets' true vision of God (as opposed to some created vision)?

[287] *DI* II, 20:25-26; Kotter III, 119; Louth, 76.

[288] *DI* II.20:27-31; Kotter III, 120; Louth, 76.

Swearing by the temple implies a word which passes to many levels of
interiority and ascension, to the very presence of the one enthroned.[289] He focuses on
the temple reference in the Gospel to provide an iconic model for the gaze which
pierces to the unveiled purpose, plan, and presence of God in the scriptural enigma. It is
just a short movement from this to chapter 22's extended meditation the theology of the
epistle to Hebrews (Hebrews 8—10) which shows Christ liturgically making this
scriptural interpretive point. What is done with the enigmatic image in the Scripture is
that the believer, in Christ, liturgically enters into the inner sanctum of what it has to
reveal: the incarnate and crucified one celebrating the liturgy of heaven.

It is after working out all these images of the temple Mansur then speaks of
the "immaterial Jerusalem." He can affirm that immateriality as pointed to by our
worship, because he has fully and unambiguously validated the reality of our
materiality and the materiality of Christ as central to the immaterial heavenly liturgy.
The heavenly immateriality, and its place as the final step in movement from shadow,
to image, to reality, is both above and interior to the human and the temple, not a
rejection or discarding of materiality.

Conclusion: the Ruling Image of Heavenly Kingdom

At this point Mansur repeats the florilegium of the first treatise with only an
insertion of seven short chapters of florilegia. These added quotations are significant in
that most of them deal with the image of the emperor. By reinforcing the imperial
relationship to image as a sign of loyalty and honor, Mansur is in part threatening

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[289] *DI* II.21:1—5; Kotter III, 120; Louth, 76.

(implying a golden icon rule: do unto others'—or God's—image what you have them do to yours) and reminding the emperor of his status vis-à-vis the type of exalted and perhaps angel-like imagery he portrays. In other words, Mansur is accusing the emperor of exalting his own image over the saving Image of common human salvation: Christ and the saints. His particularly strong words against imperial authority earlier in this second treatise, and the powerful emphasis on iconoclasm and idolatry of Satan and the demons continue here. These quotations and comments are inserted between the mention of St. Mary of Egypt's inability to enter the church (I.63) and the demon's opposition to the monk's veneration of the icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ. This would reinforce both the denial of the church and tradition on the one hand, and demonic opposition to uplifting the saving Image of God on the other; continuing with the same dramatic ending of the first treatise described above. So we see here that Mansur has depicted the struggle over images as going to the heart of the redemption of creation and involving the opposition between the exalted, restored Adamic glory in Christ and the demonic envy and concomitant iconoclasm and idolatry. And even more, he has made a probing critique of political power as prone to demonic pride.

Treatise III

In Treatise III Mansur deepens his development of the theological implications of the icon. Here we find very important pre-Nicene precedents in Clement and Origen and post-Nicene connections to Dionysius and Gregory Nazianzen. This treatise contains an explicit use of an angelic Christology inserted into and expanding the enumeration of types of images that we saw above in Treatise I. Christ the Word as Angel of the Mind, helps us to see how theology is deepened and more fully

systematized, yet with a shockingly necessary use of angel as icon. Icon and angel find their way into Mansur's Trinitarian theology because they help express that vision is necessary all the way from within the life of the Trinity down to the artifacts of the liturgy.

The third treatise begins with much of the material from the beginning of the second treatise, emphasizing the iconic rivalry between the devil and the human, and the question of proper reading of the Scriptures. Chapter 6 repeats I.4, with the significant addition of a brief statement of Trinitarian orthodoxy, and a clear rejection of any seeming tritheism.[290] This is in the context of a larger emphasis on the rejection of polytheism and idolatry and the real transformation of the flesh into "Logos." In this treatise Trinitarian theology takes more prominence, in an attempt to ward off some sort of accusation against Mansur's ability to maintain the unity (and prevent a fourth person!) of God if the Word takes flesh. Whereas in previous treatises there is a general meditation on the dynamic of God's revelation in the Old Testament and the presence of Christ in the enigma and mystery in the liturgy of the Law and as the Image central to creation and salvation, in the third treatise the icon takes on a more fully Trinitarian dimension. It is my suspicion that this is perhaps the result not just of some sort of iconoclastic theological challenge, but because of concerns to counter Islamic accusations of "shirk" or "association." This accusation is at once an accusation of disrespecting God's one-ness and of practicing idolatry. It is enough that it is a very prominent, central, and early feature of Islamic theology and is directly referred to by Mansur in his *On Heresies*, chapter 100. It is undeniable that this is a concern for

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[290] *DI* III, 4:45—55; Kotter III, 77; Louth, 86.

Mansur. In chapter 7 (repeating I.5—7 and II.8), Mansur takes up the Deuteronomic

challenge to icons which, in the second commandment (Deut.5:7—9), is largely what is

borrowed by Islam, or the closest thing within the authority of the Torah.

In chapter 8, Mansur repeats the assertion of the context of the Exodus

temptation toward idolatry, and the reversal in Christ of the conditions for the ban on

"form." One word is added here that is not in the other parallels: Mansur adds that

books, βιβλίοις, also are equivalents of colors and tablets.

Icon: Temple of Risen Life

Mansur takes the iconographic argument from the temple even further in

chapter 9 by adding something new which does not have a parallel in *Treatise* II.9:

> Therefore I did not make a likeness of God, nor of anything else as God or
> human (for the nature of humanity is enslaved to sin), nor do "I worship the
> creation instead of the Creator." I made the tabernacle a likeness of the whole
> creation "according to the pattern shown me on the mountain" and the cherubim
> overshadowing the mercy seat as standing before God. [291]

The mention of slavery is significant in context because it connects to chapter

8's insistence on Christ taking the "form of a slave" to dignify human lowliness. But

the affirmation of the tabernacle as the likeness of the whole creation is stating even

more strongly the iconic character of God's creating and the way that the tabernacle

itself is the beginning of the restoration of the creation to its original iconic status. The

strong mention of the cherubim here is very much a strategy to draw in Trinitarian

thinking, as we shall see below. The concern at this moment in the treatise, however, is

more to understand the reversal of the condemnation of death as creating the possibility

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[291] *DI* III, 9:21—32; KotterIII, 97; Louth, 90.

for a human sanctification which changes the elements of dead human beings as

through a "σωτήριον φάρμακον . . . πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν," "saving medicine . . . for

incorruption."[292] Temples can be raised (ἐγείρονται) for the dead; thus it is not only the

incarnation, but the resurrection that changes the human into the temple itself. His next

chapter (II.10) repeats II.11 which focuses on the icon as a triumph (θρίαμβος) which

shames the devil.[293]

Chapter 11 moves back to the unique focus of this treatise. Mansur can point

to the icon as no more unique than the terms which are cobbled together for Trinitarian

theology, such as ὁμοούσιον or ὑπόστασις. Images are in fact better based in the

commands of the Law. In a very puzzling move, he ends the chapter with mention of

the "render to Caesar" passage from Mt.22:15ff.[294] This seems to be more than a

statement for separation of church and imperial authority or a claim to the right of

making icons because the emperor makes them. It would seem that minting of coins

and coining of terms are compared as similar extensions of authority into clear

expression.

Icon: Longing for the Body

Continuing without direct parallel from previous treatises, Mansur combines

one thing seen previously and adds another, newer mode of argument. The thing seen

previously is the appeal to the unveiling of the enigma of Scripture. He does not

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[292] *DI* III.9:112, 118; Kotter III, 101; Louth, 91.

[293] *DI* III.10.25; Kotter III, 102; Louth, 92.

[294] *DI* III.11:10—19; Kotter III, 122—123; Louth, 92—93.

mention enigma, but rather points to the revelation of the reality that is hidden behind parables. He plays with the echo from Isaiah 6:9 by claiming that the iconoclasts are blind and deaf to the meaning of Scripture. Christ himself points out his role in making visible the longing of the prophets and kings (here reversed to emphasize the kings):

> The Lord blessed his disciples, saying, 'many kings and prophets longed to see what you see, and they did not see; hear what you hear and did not hear. Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.'…we also long to see and hear and be blessed.[295]

The new point here is the emphasis on the body as manifestation of power, in comparison with the king: "Beholding the bodily form we also understand the glory of his divinity as powerful."[296] Such a statement of body as manifestation of power is unusual, and goes against the more common denigrations of the body's weakness. The aim in the end is "spiritual contemplation." But he is classing the icon among such both bodily and spiritual things as baptism, communion, prayer, psalmody, light, and incense. The icon is sacramental and an essential expression through which God meets the longing of Israel and the longing of the church.[297] Chapter 13 repeats the story (already seen in longer form in I, 64 & II, 67) from the *Leimonarion* and comments:

> Behold, those who prevent the veneration of icons imitate this [demon], and are his tools; for the demon of fornication would prefer the elder not to venerate the icon of our Lady than to fall into the impurity of fornication, knowing that this is a greater sin than fornication.[298]

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[295] *DI* III.12:2-9; Kotter III, 123; Louth, 93.

[296] *DI* III.12:21-23; Kotter III, 123; Louth, 93.

[297] *DI* III, 12; Kotter III, 123-4; Louth, 93.

[298] Louth, 94. In the story an Abba Theodore is tested by the demon of fornication and the demon says he will no longer fight against him if Abba Theodore refuses to venerate an icon of the Mother of God.

It is significant that this story is moved toward the beginning of the treatise, rather than placed toward the end in the florilegium section as it is in the other treatises. It is clear in context of the previous chapter that Mansur is highlighting the abiding sacramentality of the icon. Like absolution, it is a renewable means of access. Therefore it remains and is above the short term fluctuation of minor successes or defeats over the passions. This is in contrast to an aniconic and faceless virtue or sin through fornication. The icon preserves the presence of the divine face, even when vice does not. As a sacramental thing, the icon has the power, one might say, of *enacted* typological, physical elements: the "seeing and hearing" of Christ which blesses eyes and ears by unveiling the fulfillment of prophecies and messianic hopes.

From Οἰκονομία to Higher Patterns

Here Mansur turns again to the well enumerated sequence detailing what icons are and the justification of their veneration.[299] This time Mansur makes the case a little more thoroughly theological. Mansur is going to lead us through an ordered movement or hierarchy in a way that ascends even to the icon as a theological term and cosmological bridging concept, (we will attempt to better characterize this further) proper to both Trinitarian theology and the οἰκονομία. He says that an image is a "likeness and pattern and impression," "ὁμοίωμα καὶ παράδειγμα καὶ ἐκτύπωμά".[300] Εκτύπωμα, or "impression" clearly resonates with the iconic use of the divine name on Aaron's crown in Ex 28:36 and Sir 45:12. With all the scriptural emphasis on the tabernacle or temple, παράδειγμα,"pattern," here must carry typological resonances of

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[299] *DI* III, 14—15; Kotter III, 125; Louth, 95.

[300] *DI* III, 16:1—2; Kotter III, 125:1—2; Louth, 95.

Exodus 25:9. He does not, however, make use of this immediately, but lays out, implicitly, a spectrum, or the two ends of the hierarchy of imaging. Icon always denotes some difference, whether it be difference of powers between a constructed image and a natural image as son to father:

> the image is certainly not like the archetype [*prototype*], that is, what is depicted, in every respect . . . certainly a difference is seen between them, since they are not identical . . . And a son, although the natural image of a father, has something different from him, for he is a son and not a father.[301]

Though he does not directly speak of the temple here, from what follows it seems clear that "image," like the pattern of the tabernacle, viewed liturgically. It is quite reasonable that from the image he moves to veneration.

Making the Bodiless Seen by its Clothing

The image is the content of hidden things, as with the soul in the body or knowledge of future things. The image is concealed within things "circumscribed by space [τόπος] and time." The "image makes manifest and demonstrates something hidden."[302] Notice that the image is essential to *demonstrating* the hidden. The image is not a thing discarded for another thing which is hidden. Mansur does not say exactly that the image is the hidden thing or that which conceals it. I think he is saying it is both and the unity of the relationship between the outer and inner, past and future, spatial and the unlimited. As he speaks of the body, he is assuming a sense of allegory which takes seriously the full and permanent validity of the manifestation, as opposed to the

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[301] *DI* III, 16:5—9, 12-14; Kotter III, 125; Louth, 95.

[302] Kotter III,126: 3—9 Treatise III, 17; Louth, 96.

possibility of discarding it as impermanent and obscuring. Image is a divinized

spiritually aesthetic process.

It is important to note that Louth translates the heading of chapter 17 as "the

purpose of the image;"[303] whereas the Greek says χάρις, "grace," not merely "purpose."

Louth also chooses to translate γυμνήν ("naked") with a less physical interpretation, as

"direct:"

> Every image makes manifest and demonstrates something hidden. For example, because human beings do not have direct [γυμνὴν] knowledge of what is invisible, since their souls are veiled by bodies… the image was devised [ἐπενοηθη] to guide us to knowledge and make manifest and open what is hidden. . . .[304]

From the context of previous and coming chapters, that chain stretching from

Trinitarian life to various material things, we recognize that we are not dealing with

devised created things and making indirect mediations; but rather, that Mansur is

talking about a body and soul mediation of God's presence extending in and through

God's own *epinoetic* symbolic working. God's clothing is his own majesty and glory.

Λόγος Ἄγγελος **and the Hierarchy of Images**

We will now work through Mansur's hierarchy of images of which the first is

most important because it is divine and directly relevant to the relations of the persons

of the Trinity. The second is equally important because it postulates the image of the

will which belongs within God, yet portrays creation in some apophatic way. The last

four images essentially elaborate the implications of the second image. After analyzing

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[303] *DI* III.17:1; Kotter III, 126; Louth, 96.

[304] *DI* III.17:2—5, 7—9; Kotter III, 126; Louth, 96.

each of Mansur's images we will see that image is both necessary to theology, that is, the understanding of the inner life of the Trinity and a complete cosmology which includes creation, providence, incarnation, anthropology, and scriptural and sacramental concerns.

The First Type of Image

The image is not just anthropology and Christology viewed on the level of οἰκονομία. Here we see an extension of the icon from a central christological and anthropological implication, or something worked out in God's creation and providence, or οἰκονομία, to a positive aspect of inner-Trinitarian life. The concept of icon extends into creation, divine providence, and the incarnation as an expression of the inner mystery of the Trinity, in as much as we can with John 1:18 and 6:46 that no one has seen God (the Father), but also (as in Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3) that the Son makes the Father seen and expressed, and that Christ is the vision of the Father (John 14:8-9). This is how Mansur understands the first image, which is the natural image. It is a fundamental aesthetic concept for understanding the personal relationship and essential sharing by the Father of all things with the Son. Icon or image is the means to understand the names Son and Father. Icon touches the roots of the notion of the μοναρχία of the Father's begetting of the Son: "The Son is the Father's image, natural, undeviating, in every respect like the Father, save for being unbegotten and possessing fatherhood. . . ."[305] Since this has become more properly a Trinitarian meditation, drawing out the implications of the term image for the divine end of the spectrum, Mansur moves to explain the relationship of the Spirit to the Image. Here he

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[305] *DI* III, 18:18-23; Kotter III, 127; Louth, 97.

has little explicit biblical support except for 1 Corinthians 12:3: ". . .No one can say

'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." Mansur, however, borrows Athanasius' idea

that the Spirit is the image of the Son, and uses the psychological analogy of νοῦς,

λόγος, and πνεῦμα for Father, Son, and Spirit that Louth correctly identifies, but Mansur

takes this Trinitarian imagery further by using scriptural image we have seen elsewhere.

Louth misses this and voids the translation of some of its theological content:

> It is therefore because of the Holy Spirit that we know Christ, the Son of God,
> and God, and in the Son we behold the Father; for by nature the word [*logos*] is
> a messenger of the mind [or meaning], and the spirit discloses the word.[306]

The brackets are Louth's, and perhaps reflects a discomfort with Mansur's use of angel

for a christological title. I would translate rather (or at least impose the potential for an

equivocal reading as): "For by nature the Logos is an Angel of the Mind and the Spirit

discloses the Word." Why angel? In Mansur's arguments we have already seen ample

illustrations of angelic appearances for the Son of God. We have also seen how

essential the temple and cherubim are for his halakhah-style argument from the

Torah.[307] If the Logos or Word is an angel here, then it helps us to better see the way

Mansur is clearly implying the resemblance between the Spirit and Word as analogous

to the temple reality of the two cherubim in complete likeness at the place of

overshadowing and the enthronement of the Lord: "The Holy Spirit is thus the like and

undeviating image of the Son."[308] The Spirit is the "like and undeviating image" of the

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[306] *DI* III.18:28—29; Kotter III, 127; Louth, footnote 59; 97.

[307] For biblical background see Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2009) 39-44.

[308] We can see this portrayal of Holy Spirit as corresponding to his role in the Scriptures; see Sommer, (2009) 133.

other Angel of the Mind. This matches also with Mansur's fairly essential appropriation

of Gregory Nazianzen's use of the Habakkuk 3:3 mention of cherubic ζῷα or living

creatures that is so widespread in pre- and post-iconoclastic iconography.[309] What is

very important here is that the λόγος as "Angel" is iconic, and avoids the spiritualizing,

anti-materiality, and abstraction of a purely auditory or mental way of seeing the Son's

expression of the Father or Νοῦς. And this angelic replacing of abstract λόγος with Icon

Λόγος is key to the way Mansur proceeds to take the tradition of logos theology and

substitute (or perhaps, with more probing scriptural hermeneutic, reassert) a more

aesthetic and bodily term like image. Is God primarily mediated through sound and

orality in the Torah? We often assume this; however, if we follow Mansur's reading of

the Torah, we see that God is very much concerned with visual expression as

represented in the concern about leather, cows, goats, brass and ancient Jerusalem

temple rubrics. This could be seen as a corrective on Maximus' logos theology, or

perhaps filling in of the visual and liturgical implications of his theology,[310] such as we

could point to in his *Mystagogy*. We know that Mansur's family was strongly anti-

monothelite and he himself wrote against monothelitism and knew the works of

Maximus. However, we are not here speaking of a direct use or correction of Maximus'

works, but a similar use of a mediational concept for what in various scriptural contexts

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[309] "Gregory Nazianzen's Reading of Habbakuk 3:2 and Its Reception: A Lesson from Byzantine Scripture Exegesis," Bogdan G. Bucur and Elijah N. Mueller. *Pro Ecclesia* 22:1 (2011) 86-103. As we shall see in further chapters angels are important for the more systematic evaluation of anthropology and eschatology as well as Scriptural interpretation and liturgical hermeneutics.

[310] See in particular Maximus *Ambigua* 7 PG 1077C-1080B; English translation Paul M Blowers and Louis Wilken *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ, selected Writing from St. Maximus the Confessor*, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (2003) 54-55. Note that here are angel and concern with creation/providence. He is even concerned with how "God… intelligently directs the soul's imagination… toward the intelligible model." Further in 1085A-B he also brings up Dionysius *predeterminations*. At 1088A (Blowers, 62-63) there is a mention of the Trinity as Mind, Logos and Spirit.

is called the name, presence (*shekinah*), or glory (*Kavod*) of God, which often is seen moving in concert with, or even identified with angels and angelic appearances. This means that in his defense of icons, Mansur is making an appeal to an ancient Christology that uses the image of the angel instead of the more metaphysical language of nature, essence, hypostasis, etc.

Short Excursus on the Λόγος Ἄγγελος: Pre-Nicene Motif used by Mansur

Louth, in the footnote to the sentence referring to the νοῦς, λόγος, and πνεῦμα re-translated above as "Angel of the Mind,"[311] draws our attention to other Greek patristic examples of this analogy in Gregory Nazianzen and Maximus. Moreover, in Kotter's edition, reference is given to Mansur's *On the Orthodox Faith* 35:10, where we are further referred to Anastasius of Sinai's *Hodegos*.[312] Both the passage in *On the Orthodox Faith* and the *Hodegos* speak very simply of the human faculties, borrowing from Nemesius a distinction of human logos ἐνδιάθετος (interior and unexpressed) and προφωρικός (expressed). They both differ from Nemesius, however, in calling the λογος προφωρικός, "ἄγγελος νοήματος". I do not think this usage exactly corresponds to what Mansur is saying in *Divine Images* 3:18. In 3:18, Mansur is clearly speaking of the λόγος as the expression of something higher: the faculty of the νοῦς, not a νόημα (a thought). If we agree with Louth's interpretation, perhaps Mansur is saying the same thing as in *Orthodox Faith* 35:10, using both the ἐνδιάθετος (which seems to correspond to νόημα) and προφωρικός together; thus he would be referring to the λόγος as the undivided natural faculty and movement to expression of the mind. I do not doubt this

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[311] Louth 97, n.61.

[312] PG 77 A 9.

is one meaning for what Mansur is saying in *Divine Images* 3:18. This psychological

analogy from nature and the angelic or angelomorphic Christology share a similar

central application to Christ's mediation in the giving of knowledge. But more weight

can be added to the christological use of angel. Verbal precedents in Clement of

Alexandria's *Paidagogos* can support Mansur's angelomorphic Christology:

> Who could educate us more philanthropically? For therefore, at first, on the one hand, for the elder people there was an older covenant and the law educated the people with fear and the Word was an angel [λόγος ἄγγελος ἦν], but on the other hand with the new and young people a new and young covenant is given and the Word has been born and fear has been changed to love and that mystical angel has been born.[313]

This obvious concern of Clement is to distinguish stages in God's revelation and

a movement from things hidden to things revealed. The figure of the angel allows for

revelation to select persons, but hides the face of the revealer from common view to

allow for a new stage of revelation without discarding the old. We have seen this

concern above from a passage that could easily have come from Clement:

> For just as a physician knows not always to give the same remedy to all but supplies to each one . . . a medicine appropriate to place and disease and time, that is season and condition and time of life. . . .[314]

This is not the full extent of the parallels. If we look at the surrounding passage in

which Clement makes this statement about the "Word" who "is an angel," we see many

classic themes of angelomorphic Christology which resonate in Mansur's work. I will

deal with only one of the most obvious. Reading Genesis 32:24ff, Jacob's

correspondence with the anthropomorphic or angelomorphic and divine wrestler is

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[313] PG 8, 369AB; *Paidagogos,* Book 1, 59:1:4 *SC* 214.

[314] *DI* III, 4:21—24; Kotter III, 74; Louth, 84.

dealt with by Clement, who interprets the giving of the name Israel as the Lord's

deflection of the giving of his own name until later revelation. The name enigmatically

memorializes Jacob's seeing of God.

This emphasis on Israel meaning "one who sees" is rife in the work of Philo:

If there be any as yet unfit to be called a Son of God, let him press to take his
place under God's First-Born, the Word, who holds the eldership among the
angels, their ruler as it were. And many names are his, for he is called, "the
beginning," [ἀρχὴ] and the Name of God, and his Word, and the Man after his
Image, and "he that sees," that is Israel.[315]

But this identification is also seen in the fragments of the Jewish text, the

Prayer of Joseph, and remains a theme in later Jewish mystical literature.[316] Mansur

takes this particular scriptural scene as the source for one his most passionate (quoted)

exclamations in *on the Divine Images:*

I have seen [εἶδον] the human form [εἶδος] of God, "and my soul has been
saved." I see the image of God as Jacob saw it, if in another way. For he saw an
immaterial image, proclaiming beforehand what was to come to the immaterial
eyes of the intellect [νόος], while I have seen the image of one seen in the flesh,
that enkindles the memory.[317]

This interpretation of Christ the "immaterial image," and perhaps, "angel" or

angel-like pre-incarnate form seen by Jacob is also very clearly expressed by Justin

Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho*:

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[315] Philo, *de Conf,* 146; LCL 4, Colson &Whitaker 4,88—91.

[316] Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*. Leiden, Brill (1988) 111—112, 137—142.

[317] *DI* I, 22:4—9; Kotter III, 111; Louth, 36. Quotes Gen 32:40.

Israel was his [Christ's] name from the beginning, to which he altered the name of the blessed Jacob when he blessed him with his own name, proclaiming thereby that all who through him have fled for refuge to the Father, constitute the blessed Israel.[318]

Again elsewhere: "The Scriptural passage . . . tells how he who is angel and God and Lord, and who appeared as a man to Abraham, and who wrestled in human form with Jacob, was seen by the same Jacob as he fled from his brother Esau."[319]

Origen's precedent for calling the Word an angel is also very interesting, and clearly the closest precedent for what Mansur is saying in *Divine Images* 3:18:

But the Son may also be called the Logos, because he reports the secret things of his Father who is intellect in the same way as the Son who is called the Word. For as with us the word is a messenger [λόγος ἄγγελὸς εστι] of those things which the mind perceives [ὕπο τοῦ νοῦ ὁρώμενον], so the Word of God, knowing the Father, since no created being can approach Him without a guide [ὡδεγόυ], reveals the Father whom he knows. For no one knows the Father save the Son. And he to whomsoever the Son reveals Him and inasmuch as he is the Word He is the Messenger of Great Counsel [μεγάλης ... βουλῆς ἄγγελος], who has the government upon his shoulders; for he entered on his kingdom by enduring the cross.[320]

The passage from Origen proves the possibility of, and provides a fairly exact precedent for combining the angelic scriptural Christology at the very same time as a psychological analogy is made for the relation of Father and Son. Once again, as with Mansur, the mediation of the Noῦς through the Λόγος parallels the Son's angelomorphic mediation of the Father in scriptural accounts.

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[318] *Dialogue with Trypho* 125:3; Gieschen, 139.

[319] *Dialogue with Trypho* 58:10; Halton, 91.

[320] PG 14, 100A. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John,* 1:42 ANF; A.E. Brooke 1:38, 52.

The general context of this passage is the first book of Origen's *Commentary on John.* Here Origen meditates on Israel's liturgical arrangement led by the priests as a type of the new Christian Israel (1.1), as described by the *Apocalypse of John*. This creates a book end with the passage quoted above (the end of book 1) which in the following passages, ties the Word to the (angelic) horseman on the white horse and goes on to conclude with the Word's presence and creative work as the highest of God's "powers" at the beginning of creation. The apocalyptic spirituality and angelomorphic typology for Christ places this commentary and our highlighted passage in the thought-world of apocalyptic theological concern for (angelic) mediatorial figures—some of the oldest material used by Christology. [321]

Return to Treatise III: Icon as Will, the Second Type of Image

The second type of image is the will. In accepting this temple logic of the angelic, and its means of asserting human iconicity in the very life of the Trinity, Mansur is able to assert also the historical icon of divine intervention into human events as of a piece with God's eternal imaging of himself in his will. This image through will is not limited, even though God allows it to be seen in the form of human events. As we have seen above, in the chapter on Islam, the will is itself iconic. The will is necessary for the human to witness, and the icon, as primary representative to and of vision, is necessary for the human will to have something to discern. The placing of this icon into God's eternity is based on the notion in Dionysius of "predeterminations" or προορισμόι, and that they are properly part of God's pre-eternal will (προαιώνιος αὐτοῦ

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[321] Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven.* New York, Crossroad (1982); Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels Christology and Soteriology.* Tubingen, Mohr (1997) 11—17; Gieschen, 16—25.

βούλησις). This means that at least certain events of history (and there is no sense here that this predestines all things) are icons of the mind of God. This is not that far from the idea that the incarnation and the saving work of Christ is in Christ from the beginning as icon within the Icon—John 1 redone with εἴκων. We might say that up until this point in the treatises, this was the assumed top level of icon, though more was implied. It is significant that these icons of God's will are infallible (ἀπαράβατος). The icon thus, in all its various visualizations is God's eternal will to be directly witnessed by his creation in his works which are his visible will itself. So, we might say that the icon of the crucifixion, for instance, is the very will, predetermination, glory or energy of God, seen in many layers of visibility and invisibility. This really covers, or at least directly impacts, all further iterations of icons, because they can all be seen as workings of God's will, or very strongly tied to God's will.[322]

Imitating the Will of God: the Third Type of Image

It is not surprising that the human being is thus the best example of the third kind of image, that which is "by imitation" (κάτα μίμησιν). Unfortunately Louth here loses some of the contrasting force of ἀλλα, by translating it as "save," thus making it seem that the human is to be the same nature as God: "For how will the creature be of the same nature as the uncreated save through imitation."[323] What follows, rather, is the showing that God can be one as illustrated by human one-ness in the psychological analogy: νοῦς, λόγος, and πνεῦμα. The will of God is iconic, or contains icons, perhaps this even follows from the interplay between νοῦς, λόγος, and πνεῦμα. The more

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[322] *DI* III, 19; Kotter III, 127; Louth, 97.

[323] *DI* III, 20:2-4; Kotter III, 128; Louth, 98.

important aspect of icon here is in the self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον) and sovereignty

(ἀρχικόν) as that which copies God in our imitative image. Even though he emphasizes

the "dominion" of Genesis 1:26-28,[324] Mansur has emphasized that the human is one

despite the multiple parts; it may very well be that he is thinking in the more allegorical

sense of dominion that we see exemplified by Basil's treatment of the theme.[325] This

connection would make the chapter flow better. This way, also, the inner Trinity of the

mind is united by a single common and sovereign will. This sense also matches

Mansur's emphasis on purity of witness and ascesis as a means to revelatory vision, as

we saw above, in chapter 2 on his treatment of Islam.[326] In other words, the human is

divine not by nature, but rather by the imitation which is demonstrated by the unifying

and ordering will. The imitation is iconic willing. In other words, the imitation is using

the iconic faculty, which is the will, to increase the likeness. Therefore, the action of

the will is iconic, not just the property of the will.

Analogies, Past and Future and Angels: the Fourth Type of Image

It is not remarkable at all, after a great deal of allegoric haranguing, that the

fourth kind of image is faint: scriptural shapes and forms of God and the angels. Here it

does not seem to be the events of Scripture, but rather the use of analogies to help us

ascend. Once again the end reflections point us back to Trinity, as analogized with sun,

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[324] *DI* III.20:8—13; Kotter III, 128; Louth, 20.

[325] "'And fill the earth;' but do not fill it by setting it all . . . but fill it by authority which God has given us to dominate the earth. . . .we fill the earth by our reason. . . . 'Let us make the human being according to our image and according to our likeness' [Gen 1.26]. By our creation we have first, and by our free choice we build the second." *On the Origin of Humanity*, discourse 1; in St. Basil the Great *On the Human Condition*. Trans. Nonna Verna Harrison. Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (2005) 42—48.

[326] *DI* III, 20; Kotter III, 128; Louth, 98.

its light, and its ray or once again νοῦς, λόγος, and πνεῦμα. Since angels are also imaged

this way, we see that the angel as an iconic mediation remains important for an

understanding of how God images himself toward the world and humanity. Angels

could be said to be co-extensive with analogies, as being similarly reflective means of

being led to God.[327]

The Fifth Type of Image: Prefiguration

The fifth image is prefigurative. Other than the dew on the fleece, it is

primarily interested with tabernacle or temple symbolism, angelophanies, or demons.

We also note that this carries forward the notion that scripture is an enigma if not read

as "προεικονίζον καὶ προδιαγράφουν τὰ μέλλοντα," "prefigures [pre-iconizes] and

portrays beforehand what is to come.".[328] Icon is central to the unfolding of the inner

and sacred meaning of time. These are some of the things which are figured in God's

will as in an iconic sanctum.[329]

Memory: the Sixth Type of Image

The sixth type of image seems only differentiated from the previous by its

place in time. It is memorial of past events and persons. Memorial images have a

referential character, derivative of, and pointing to other images, including some of

those that occurred in the fifth category. Prefigurations become memorials. He seems

to include scripture as this type of image, as well as icons, and symbolic sacramental

objects. By putting these in the last category, Mansur has shown us that physical,

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[327] *DI* III, 21; Kotter III, 128—129; Louth, 98—99.

[328] *DI* III.22:1—2; Kotter III, 129; Louth, 99.

[329] KotterIII, 129; TreatiseIII, 22; Louth, 99.

painted icon stands as the end product of undeniable iconography which cannot be destroyed.[330] The life of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is iconic, the incarnation and οἰκονομία of God's providence is iconic, the human being is iconic, theological reasoning is iconic, things touched by God are iconic, and so are Scripture and icons. If we remove Scripture and icons as memorials, we eliminate memory and thus we forget the whole stream of God's life and pouring himself into creation.

Λόγοι and Angels: Noetic Images

This is the direction in which Mansur continues to move his discourse. Angels and souls and demons can be:

> Given shape and bodily outline in accordance with their nature—for being intellectual, they are believed to be and act intellectually in intellectual places [νοητοῖς τόποις νοητῶς]—they are therefore depicted in bodily form, as Moses depicted the cherubim, and as they were beheld by those worthy, the bodily image disclosing a certain incorporeal and intellectual vision.[331]

In other words, the noetic limitation, which is in accord with the nature of angels, souls, and demons, allows for a vision which is not out of accord with their noetic nature. Since there is a widely accepted belief that there can be a revelation to noetic eyes, it is not incorrect to say that the worthy see bodiless spiritual beings. We can understand things that others have seen, that we have not, through λόγοι:

> For it is from words that we understand shapes, but from what we have seen that we also come to an understanding of these things, so it is also with each of the

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[330] *DI* III.25; Kotter III, 129-130; Louth, 99—100.

[331] *DI* III.24:6—20; Kotter III, 130-131; Louth 100.

senses, from what we smell or taste or touch, we come to understand these things through words.[332]

Here I am not sure once again if Louth's translation has done justice; I think something more iconic is at play than simply "word" when Mansur uses the term λόγοι. The thing transmitted is not mere word, but a visualized reason, perhaps word in a very visual and not mainly auditory sense.

But we discover that it is in God's πρόνοια ("providence") that bodiless beings are given figures and shapes to be seen. Πρόνοια is obviously connected to προορισμοί, "predeterminations," as can be seen from their connection in Dionysius' *Divine Names* 5:1. Mansur says that God is incorporeal and that the angels, souls, and demons are bodily in comparison to God. In other words, they can have "bestowed on them figures and shapes and images that bear some analogy with our nature, bodily shapes seen with the immaterial sight of the intellect. . . ."[333] The fact that this happens in the sight of the intellect, and that it bears analogy with our nature, would seem to mean that in a spiritual sense, something of their nature can be seen by us because of the shared half of our nature. He moves by steps and mentions at the end of the penultimate sentence that this is like the cherubim "depicted and given shapes," and then concludes briefly: "But Scripture has shapes and images of God, too."[334] The point here is that spiritually we are able to providentially touch the noetic existence of the angels, and thus depict what

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[332] *DI* III.24:23—28; Kotter III, 131; Louth 100—101.

[333] *DI* III, 25:14—17; Kotter III, 132; Louth, 101.

[334] *DI* III.25:18—20; Kotter III, 132; Louth, 101.

we see. Therefore our sight ascends to the throne angels, which leads us to the scriptural shapes and images of God.[335]

Prophetic Noetic Perception of Christ

That God can providentially be seen through the vision of Scripture and the noetic and angelic, returns us once again to God's inner life and whole creative purpose played out through images. God the Father begets the natural Image, the Word and Son, and then makes man in accordance with that image. Adam sees God in image in paradise ("and heard the sound of his feet"[336]), Jacob wrestles with God appearing as a human, Moses sees his back, Isaiah sees him enthroned as a man, Daniel sees the Son of Man and Ancient of Days. Mansur claims this is all as the "figure and image of one who was yet to come." The visions are, in other words, part of the whole providence of the incarnation. The Word unites to our nature, and thus provides the vision of God in the hypostatic union. Thus, we understand that which is "seen and greeted from afar" (Hebrews 11:13). Abraham did not see God by nature and Joshua did not see the angel by nature, but by image. The image is venerated, as the angel or saint is venerated, as something to God. The one is a servant, the other a friend, and they are images, even if venerated through images. But the special point of the human being here is the hypostatic union, which gives us that unique unity with God in the Image, who is Christ. In the end the movement is an exaltation over the appearance and representation of angels (commanded in Torah) because they are not:

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[335] *DI* III, 25; Kotter III, 131—2; Louth, 101.

[336] Bogdan Bucur, "The Feet that Eve Heard in Paradise and Was Afraid: Observations on the Christology of Byzantine Festal Hymns," *Philosophy and Theology* (2007): 3—26.

> Seated together with, or . . . partakers of the divine glory . . . [but] reign together . . . [are] glorified together . . . [and] sit at the father's table, but the saints are the sons of God . . . fellow-heirs with Christ . . . by divine grace, as the Lord said to the Father.[337]

The saints see God, sharing in the hypostatic union through the human nature; seeing, they are seen as "gods" or sons of God. For Mansur, the image is once again proclaimed as at once inner-Trinitarian life, purpose of creation, and plan of salvation, all played out in the vision of the image of God and man together, in the Son, Word, and Image.[338] The angels help to lead us to the incarnation as the dramatic image of a leap in our status of icon: both what we can see and how we ourselves can be seen. They are part of the providence of our being lead back to a most exalted divine status in the pre-eternal Image.

Worship and Veneration: God Resting in Saints and Sanctuaries

As Mansur moves to speak about προσκύνησις, we see that he has once again broadened the notion of bowing/veneration as something which covers all of human life (as does the "icon"). It is the sign of "submission… subordination and humility."[339] This boils down basically to all the ways to express honor. The first way to express honor is to serve or give worship (λατρεία) to God voluntarily or involuntarily (as the demons) as part of his creation. The second is the wonder and desire or glorification

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[337] *DI* III, 26:70—82; Kotter III 134—135; Louth 103.

[338] *DI* III, 26; Kotter III, 132-5; Louth, 101—3.

[339] *DI* III, 27:1—3; Kotter III, 135; Louth, 104.

born of the desire for God's glory. The third is thanksgiving, the fourth from need, the fifth repentance and confession.[340]

Having explained these expressions which all seem appropriate to God and no one else, Mansur must prove that this can apply to the veneration of creatures. This seems less focused in the types of Scripture than the meditations on types of images. Yet even here, he does not direct his gaze at the icon as a painted or constructed thing. The underlying implication is perhaps the notion that all are like angels and a part of the fabric of the grand scriptural-liturgical construct of the temple. He begins by noting God's "resting" in the saints (Is 57:14);[341] a point which blurs temple and the holy person. The Virgin Mary provides a particularly clear conflation of the motif of resting in the saints with her Christological role, when he puts the Virgin Mary at the head of the saints. He speaks of indwelling and cooperation (ἐνοικήσις καὶ συνεργία); this continues temple terminology, as the New Testament use of the root "ἐνοικ-" is fraught with the sense of the indwelling of the Son and the Spirit. This comes out most clearly as a temple based image in 2nd Corinthians 6:16, which occurs as a quotation here together with, 1st Corinthians 3:16. But Mansur wishes to stress the divine character of sanctity and the monolatrous polytheistic, angelic image of God among the gods (Psalm 81:1). He also uses the fire image of divinization (iron in fire) and the image of servants of the king which both can be seen as the function of angelic depictions in the Scriptures. He does not directly reference this, but it is unnecessary after such strong

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[340] *DI* III, 28-32; Kotter III, 135—7; Louth, 104—6.

[341] Kotter III, 137; Treatise III, 33:5; Louth, 106.

use of Old Testament theophanies like those of Isaiah and Ezekiel which conflate the

image of the servants of the king with the carrying of fire (or coals).[342]

Ἐνέργεια: Glory Covering the Mountain

The second kind of way to "venerate creatures" is through the material relics

of the incarnation and places of pilgrimage:

> These I reverence and venerate and every holy temple of God and every place in which God is named, not because of their nature, but because they are receptacles of divine energy and in them God was pleased to work our salvation. And I reverence angels and human beings and all matter participating in divine energy and serving my salvation, and I venerate them because of the divine energy.[343]

This idea of the energy clearly is analogous with the scriptural notion of glory,

δόξα/ *kavod*. He follows the veneration of the energy with quotations from Psalm 25:8,

131:7 and 98:9—all unambiguous references to God's glory in the temple and on the

holy mountain.[344] When diverting his attention from veneration of what we could call

living icons, Mansur always draws us back to a living encounter with God and

principles of divine interaction with humanity, rather than an objectified thing. This is

once again true even when he looks directly and very briefly at the veneration of

liturgical objects (books, vessels, lamps, etc.). The main point is God's punishment on

the profaners of such sacramental objects, like Belshazzar.[345] Once again it is the direct

action of God in relationship, here with an analogue for the iconoclasts.

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[342] KotterIII, 137—9; TreatiseIII, 33; Louth106—7.

[343] *DI* III, 34:13—21; Kotter III, 139; Louth, 108.

[344] *DI* III, 34; Kotter III, 139—40; Louth, 107—8.

[345] *DI* III, 35; Kotter III, 140; Louth, 108—9.

Venerating the Cosmos in Remembrance of God's Works

The fourth kind of veneration is strikingly like the prefigurations of the fifth

image (III.22), but now treated as remembrances. Here it is that we find a rare

occurrence of the actual painted or artistically created image: "So we venerate the

precious image of the cross, and the likeness of the bodily form of God, and of her who

bore him in the flesh and his attendants." [346] Our veneration of icons is thus directly like

the prophets venerating prefigurative physical symbols: Aaron's rod, jar of manna,

table, head of the staff, and the tabernacle with cherubim as image of the whole

cosmos. The point of remembrance in this case, is that it takes the image of the cosmos

with God enthroned in sight, upon material things used for worship as a means to

remember his providence and creation of all.

Veneration and the True Power of God's Ἐνέργεια

Before heading into less sacred notions of veneration, Mansur points to the

general principle that humans are to be venerated "as having a portion of God," and as

"in the image of God."[347] Only following this making of veneration common to

humanity, Mansur mentions the veneration of those in authority (surely a presently sore

subject on several fronts), and the veneration of masters and benefactors. In the end

Mansur reckons that all are venerated "for the Lord's sake."[348] It may be implicit here

that the Lord is Christ, and that veneration is on the basis of the incarnation as well,

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[346] *DI* III,36:13—16; Kotter III, 140; Louth, 109.

[347] *DI* III, 37; Kotter III, 141; Louth,109.

[348] *DI* III, 40:4—5; Kotter III, 141; Louth, 110.

which certainly is the case with the saints, pilgrimage sites, etc.[349] But a point is also made by using figures, at best ambiguous, such as Esau and Pharaoh (Gen 33:3, 47:7ff).[350]

Spiritual Iconophile, Political Iconoclast

Mansur concludes the pre-florilegium content of the third treatise by once again challenging the veneration of the emperor. God's energy, however, is the representation of real sovereignty: "See, how much strength and what divine energy is given to those who with faith and pure conscience approach the images of the saints."[351] He then goes on to contrast the preeminence of the church, the Mother of God, the saints as friends of God and the apostolic statements of reverence for rulers: Titus 3:1, Romans 13:7 and the more terse statement of Christ about the things of Caesar in Matthew 22:21. The kings do not reign as the saints, "with authority over demons and diseases, and reign together with Christ with a kingship incorruptible and unbreakable. . . ."[352] Here we have the implicit sense of the spiritual world behind the empire, which harks back to an early Christian confessing church viewpoint that disparages the political world in light of its subservience to the demonic. Empire and emperor are cast in a much more pre-Constantinian worldview. After the comparison between saints and emperors as objects of veneration, Mansur speaks in terms which are very much those of the persecuted Church: the rough sea, quoting James 1:6,

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[349] *DI* III, 38—40; KotterIII, 141; Louth 110.

[350] *DI* III, 38:3—5; KotterIII, 141; Louth 110.

[351] *DI* III, 41:1—3; KotterIII, 141; Louth, 110.

[352] DI III.41:35—37; Kotter III, 142; Louth, 111.

perhaps also recalling the mention of the church near the head of the chapter as a "rock" of faith, as he ends with a praise of faith as the power of the image, known even in the shadow of the apostles, which casts out demons (Acts 5:15).[353] This points to a further dramatic quotation, ostensibly about the icon's antiquity, to bring back the story of the Martyr Mercurius slaying the Emperor Julian in a prophetic dream.[354] A similar threat can be found in orphaned quotation from a lost work of Basil, which speaks of the ability of a man, like the devil, to abuse the image of the Emperor, as a way of showing rage. This is at once a probing statement about demonic envy and a threat.[355] This may also reflect a particularly keen sense that any empire is subject to irretrievable loss; and this may have been very keenly felt in the loss of a protecting role for images, the same way such things were felt in post-1917 Soviet societies.

Saintly Accordance With the Form: Communion with God

As we move into the florilegium, we see immediately three particular ideas return. First, we see iconic hierarchy in Dionysius, which allows the viewer to ascend to deification through interacting with the manifestations of God and by means of analogy. Second, we encounter the unworldly warfare and victory of the martyrs over the demonic from the homilies of Basil. Third, we encounter a brief statement (seen previously in Treatise I.35 and II.31) from Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*, that provides precedent for Mansur's connection between the natural and the imitative image that has been expanded in Treatise III:

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[353] *DI* III, 41; KotterIII, 141—3; Louth, 110—2.

[354] *DI* III, 53; KotterIII, 155; Louth, 117.

[355] *DI* III, 56:1-5; KotterIII, 169; Louth, 118. Brief and unremarkable commentary and similar quotation in 57—8.

What the image is by imitation here below, there the Son is by nature. And just as with works of art the likeness is in accordance with the form, so with the divine and incomposite nature the union is in the communion of the divinity.[356]

Mansur comments more this time and takes this as saying that a rejection of the saints is a rejection of Christ, adding Matthew 10:40: "He who receives you receives me." The concern with the transfer of honor to the prototype prevails in most of the quotations and commentaries from this time forward. To point to this alone, however, would neglect the complexity of positive, negative, and nuanced relations through image to prototype. So we will not focus here on the term prototype because it can create the mistaken assumption that there is just some sort of formal reference, rather than, as we see here, the form itself is giving communion in divinity.

Chapters 50—52 in which Mansur quotes Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, and Severian of Gabala seem to focus more on the prefigurative images, moving in turn from a treatment of the emotional qualities of the depiction of the sacrifice of Isaac, then to the enigmatic and shadowy image of Melchizedek, and finally to the seeming contradiction of the prohibition of images in the episode of the serpent being lifted by Moses. It is a unified movement from a broad appeal to the power of icon, to its enigma, and finally to its clear purpose and fulfillment in Christ.[357]

Torah, Patriarchal, and Imperial Image-Making and Veneration

Treatise III.55—138 is almost entirely made up of new florilegia. To save time and space, we will work through these in broad strokes. Chapter 59 gives us a

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[356] *DI* III, 48:7—10; Kotter III, 147; Louth 114. The quotation from Basil is from *On the Holy Spirit* 18.45.

[357] *DI* III, 50-2; Kotter III, 154—5; Louth, 115—6.

quotation from Athanasius which very thoroughly assumes the Jewish veneration of objects, such as tablets of the Law and cherubim. But the overriding concern here and in chapters 60—66 is on the reverence to archetype through image. In 67, in a quotation from Eusebius of Caesarea, we move to a little different emphasis in Abraham's veneration of the angelic appearance of Christ at Mamre. Here we have the ancestor of monotheism not depicted as a denier of images, but as having "planted seeds of piety among human kind." This was shown to pilgrims by the picture which was venerated at the terebinth which portrayed the angelic theophany of Christ who Abraham himself venerated.[358] So it is a depiction, not just of Christ and the angels, but the scene of Abraham's veneration of the angelic appearance of Christ.

Another historical precedent for not seeing the acceptance of icons as an appropriate application of Old Testament law, comes from the a story in the *Chronicle of John Malalas* concerning the woman with the flow of blood, called Bernice in this account. Bernice petitions King Herod to erect a bronze statue of Christ as a memorial to her healing (68).[359] Herod grants her request. From Malalas' story, Mansur is juxtaposing the Jewish king's permission to erect the statue with the iconoclastic rulers' appeal to the Old Testament. The theme of pro-iconic royal decree is carried on in chapters 70—1 with reports of Constantine's image-making.

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[358] *DI* III, 67; Kotter III, 171; Louth, 121.

[359] *DI* III, 68—9; Kotter III, 171—3; Louth, 121—4.

Name and Word

The quotations from Stephen of Bostra are of particular interest in taking up the notion of the name: "for an icon is the name and likeness of what is depicted on it."[360] Mansur does not elaborate on this particular point, but to include the quotation adds a note of complexity to the understanding of angels and depictions of them. Prior to this reference, Stephen compares various types of angelic and human veneration associated with the temple, thus the angel and the icon function as priestly bearers of the name. Not directly referenced here, but perhaps an important subtext is John 17, which parallels the Word and Name in a christological-iconic movement of grace from Father to Son to Church. The quotation from Stephen of Bostra concludes with equating letters and figures in the Law and Gospels. So word and image are here both bearers of the power of name.

Empire and Image

Chapters 75 and 76 move the meditation on icons to highlight their inner impress on the soul analogous to inscriptions giving meaning in a colophon, or art capturing the posture of prayer. In 77, the piety of Constantine's mother, Helen, seems to be mirrored by its memorial in gold coins; a piety which is lifted to a golden state, like a spiritual alchemy.[361] Chapter 78 and 79 simply continue the quotations from Eusebius to show the imperial growth in piety as connected to the program of images over all the empire. The point of this is underlined and perhaps undermining the

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[360] *DI* III.73, 219—20; Kotter III, 174; Louth, 125—6.

[361] *DI* III, 75—7; Kotter III, 175; Louth, 126—7.

worldliness of Eusebius' depiction. By quoting from the commentary of Theodoret (actually from Apollinaris of Laodicea) Mansur emphasizes the cosmic kingship of God, which is analogous to that of kings, but superior (in keeping with Ezekiel's nascent apocalyptic concerns).

This is a deliberate move which explains the following use of strange prophetic imagery from Ezekiel 4:1 and the beautiful but slightly horrifying vision of St. Placide's stag which speaks with Christ's voice. This vision is a fairly explicit re-contextualization of the Damascus road vision of Paul in which the Christ-stag rebukes his service to demons.[362] In context with the Ezekiel depiction of Jerusalem on a brick , the conversion of Placide seems to pose an opposition between idolatry and proper veneration of the image of Christ which has a political aspect.

Icon and Event, Idol and Myth

Turning to Leontius of Neapolis, the quotation shows us the images as according to the Law, pointing very deliberately to the visionaries of the tabernacle and temple: Moses for the tabernacle, Solomon for the first temple, Ezekiel for the second; and highlights that they made what God commanded and what they saw.[363] Taking up what might seem an ad hominem attack at Jews, we see Leontius pointing to the necessary correlation between idolatry and polytheism by quoting Exodus 32:4 (the golden calf incident). There is, however, a rationale not mentioned by Mansur or Leontius. The Scripture most directly depicts a problem even without the idolatry by

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[362] *DI* III, 84; Kotter III, 177—8; Louth, 129—30.

[363] *DI* III, 84; Kotter III, 178; Louth, 130-1.

underlining an implicit need to draw nearer to God; an approach which the Israelites reject in Exodus 20:19: "[the people] said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die'. . . . And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was."[364] This narrative in Exodus implies that all of the Israelites were to see as much as Moses. The next quotation in chapter 86, implies a contrast between Christians drawing nearer to the material elements of the icon and the cross to receive the seal of God's presence on themselves and the Israelites standing at a distance. Leontius' emphasis on the dispensable material elements, the wood of the cross, is not in contradiction with Mansur's reverence for matter, but rather, showing that the piecing together of the elements makes the icon more than a sum of its parts.[365] The depiction of saints and the cult of the martyr here is key the non-idolatrous character of the icon. The saint and his image are the anti-idol, and thus the defeat of polytheism and its gods—demons.[366] The icons, as with the cross, are not about mythological veneration of nature, such as can be illustrated in the denunciation of the worship of groves and trees by Jeremiah (2:27), but instead to make memorial and record of real saving events and the lives and memories of the pious and victorious. In addition, it is not worldly and political veneration, which may involve honoring idolaters, but honoring right worshippers.[367]

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[364] The context of this theophany is the giving of the ten commandments.

[365] *DI* III, 86; Kotter III, 179; Louth, 132.

[366] *DI* III, 87—8; Kotter III, 179—81; Louth, 133—4.

[367] *DI* III.89; KotterIII, 181; Louth, 134—5.

In the next chapter one is tempted to see only farfetched stories taken from Theodore the Lector. Along the lines drawn here, though, we see that the stories do not depart from the concern for a heavenly court which involves not just angels and demons, but the souls of the saints acting in angelic roles, in this instance meting out punishment for heretical blasphemy in the first case and the suppression of images in the next.[368] Chapters 91 and 92 are in a similar vein, with 91 being remarkable for directly touching on the inter-relations of "Saracens" and icons.

Final Florilegia

The next four chapters, 93—96, again touch on the disrespect of imperial statues, drawing the same implications as earlier arguments from Mansur. A new direction is taken, however, in 97—103: icons can be cast down to manifest schism and diseased relations within the church, party against party.[369] In the short chapters of 104 and 105, the gaze shifts to abuse or destruction of humans who are divinely created icons.[370]

The quotations then (106—113) move to the theme of exemplars in spiritual education. Chapter 112 returns this image to an educative hierarchy in Clement's *Stromateis*: the Gnostic looks to patriarchs and prophets and the "humanly uncountable holy ones whom he reckons as angels, and above all the Lord who teaches that we can possess the life of the leaders and makes it possible."[371] Chapter 113 takes this a bit

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[368] *DI* III.90; KotterIII, 182—4; Louth, 135—8.

[369] *DI* III.97—103; KotterIII, 187—8; Louth, 141—3.

[370] *DI* III.104—105; KotterIII, 188; Louth, 143—4.

[371] *DI* III.112; KotterIII, 190; Louth, 146.

further to show the power of faith through the icon changing the relations between masters and social inferiors (in an individual case and for a whole town becoming an egalitarian custom). Through the mediation of image, even the sinful human is given greater mercy and the wronged receive justice through faith and not by violence or other human means.[372]

From here we turn once again to the basic theology and then anthropology, ending in the relationship between church and state: Father and Son's one-ness (114); unity of the Word with his flesh (116); the world's creation as good with the human as the rational image (117); the Spirit as pointing to Son as image (118); baptism remaking us in Christ through the Spirit (119); our participation in God despite the quality of the "material" of our image (120); our bodies are not dishonorable (121); the image honors the one depicted and creation itself (122); God is the real emperor, whom emperors and emperor's images imitate (123); and emperors sometimes need to venerate priests/ bishops (124). [373]

Mansur once again returns to quotations on ark and cherubim, with a quote from Jerome who notes that it is an unwritten command to venerate these things in Judaism, so it no less reasonable for Christians to venerate the cross without a written command. The remainder of the stories from chapters 128—138 can be understood to say that the saints are living. One last differing point that creeps in here in chapters 127 and 137, is that the Old Testament types are still venerated even though their images

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[372] *DI* III, 113; Kotter III, 190—1; Louth 146.

[373] *DI* TreatiseIII, 114—124; KotterIII, 191—4; Louth, 145—51.

have been surpassed or made clear in Christ. In as much as this is the case, the images of saints can be seen as venerable even if we see them, typologically, as substitutes for the presence of the one depicted. This does not really accord with the full extent of Mansur's theology, with its strong emphasis on the image's providential and predetermined participation in divinizing energy of God, but contributes to a sense of the importance of the handmade image itself, even when it is surpassed or completed in full vision. Finally, it is significant that he ends this treatise with mention of images "of angels, principalities and authorities . . . for his honor and glory."[374]

Filling out the Theology: Conclusion on Treatise III

Having worked through Treatise III, we see that it does not depart from the character of Mansur's previous argumentation. Rather, it develops both a more extended florilegium, with quite a few new quotations, and it more carefully enumerates images and types of veneration. In doing so, Mansur has taken what in the previous two treatises was a latent supposition of the real communication of Image from within the life of the Trinity down through all the cosmic elements used by worshipers. Image, for humans, is very much about accepting the sanctification of the material elements of the mystical and spiritual temple, which is formed of all the visionary messages, or better, messengers—angels—who exist in the Angel who is the Image of the Mind of God. The image, angel, and temple give vision to the bond of unity between heaven and earth in Christ and in the human.

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[374] *DI* III, 128—8; KotterIII, 195—200; Louth 152—8.

Conclusion to Chapter 3

In the end, we see that the angels and temple imagery are not the main point. The point is image, as a theologically mediating concept. Image is clearly related to will and energy as concepts of God's expressive inner property, expressed in providential aspects which reveal his plan. The will is inextricably tied to vision and aesthesis as a mystical inner expression within the life of the Trinity; as creating and saving expression; and as the responsive work of that image, both divine Word and human.

The temple and angels remain necessary at all points for scriptural and liturgical images of the human ascending and being transfigured, and of God as understood even within Trinitarian life. God is especially known through the revelation of our place within the hypostatic union of the Word and Image. The Word himself is a place which is temple and angel-shaped. For us, angels are provided as an exalted, hierarchical image that reveals God to us and conceals the revelation of our own highest place in Christ. Temple and angel are agents of the expression of creative and salvific will and work of God for the human being. They are the image of the power of the king; when kingship is revealed as within humanity, the human becomes the angel imaging forth the kingship most perfectly in the saints.

The temple provides an image of the materiality which works out the shape of reverence and the place of vision. Temple implies body, and thus works to center imagery in Christ, the Theotokos, the body of the church, and the saint as a complete offering; a part of the host, which cherub-like, carries the divine presence in its

transformational movement with the will and providence of God. Mansur's theology of images really boils down to: temple equals body—Christ's body. Thus, the image of the temple becomes the cosmic church.

CHAPTER IV:
Temple, Angel, Image, Place: the Incarnate Enthronement of Body in Mansur's
Orthodox Faith

In this chapter we will demonstrate how the images of temple and angel form a cohesive theological framework with significant importance for Mansur's whole theological worldview. Using the image of angel and temple we see that scriptural theophany and ongoing ascetic experience of deification shape anthropological and theological concerns. In particular, we will see that through concern for the vision, image, and the final resurrection, body takes on a stronger role in the whole of the picture of God's οἰκονομία and will for humanity. It is through inserting place, in a very bodily way into primary theology (speech about God), that the body follows the image of the enthroned one, and is enthroned as a much more serious challenge to the boundary of the material and spiritual. Body invades the spiritual realm to the point where angels also are bodily, visual, and "placed."

Although Mansur affirms all the traditional apophatic terms and careful delineation of the differences between God and his creation, the human in particular, he weaves in a powerful scriptural emphasis on vision and image. He lifts up the terms of the scriptural revelation in many places in *Orthodox Faith* where he works out how a seeming discontinuity with Judaism and a difference from rabbinic practice is still a valid continuity or development within the tradition of Israel. The body of Christ enthroned is a central proof for God's one-ness and Christ's divinity according to the renewed challenge of the unitarian, Jewish-like religion Islam. Mansur responds to the Islamic complex of challenges: rejection of image, denial of Trinitarian thought, and emphasis on Torah-like commands that are discontinued in Christianity. The Torah-like

commands of Islam which are paralleled to commands in Judaism are like sacaraments. Thus, Mansur has to provide a heavily Old Testament justification for the sacraments which take their place: baptism, eucharist, and monastic life. This scriptural lens allows us to see in more detail how Mansur's "collection of considerations or meditations… help Christians understand and articulate their religious identity over against those amongst whom they live, who maintain different doctrines and ways of devotion."[375]

How We Will Proceed

This chapter will proceed by highlighting the places where angels or temple imagery appear in *On the Orthodox Faith*. We accept the later division into 4 books for the sake of ease and discernible differences in emphasis in their sections of the originally unitary construction of *Orthodox Faith* in 100 chapters. In the beginning chapters (1—14 or 15), we show that the meditation on God is significantly ordered toward concern for *place* (τόπος) as a properly theological term which connects the unapproachable and transcendent divine essence to immanent appearances. In other words, Mansur is speaking of theophany and revelation. Angels are a part of this, as is the throne which is a temple image. Chapter 13 is both essential to our examination here, and is clearly one of the strangest chapters within its context. As we move to the next two books, (16—44, 45—73) we observe the interconnections, between angel, humans, and will. This follows and amplifies earlier discussions in the dissertation, highlighting ascetic and ethical striving as a path in virtue, which leads toward growth in vision. Purification of will is depicted as enabled and increasing vision, not moving

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[375] Andrew Louth *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002) 86.

away from it.

Finally, with book 4 we see what we have come to recognize as Mansur's peculiar apologetic emphasis on Jewish connections to sacrament and ascesis, ending with an eschatological inclusion to the meditation on place and throne. Throughout the whole of this chapter of the dissertation, we see that issue of body, particularly God's body, reasserts itself in ways that trouble the inheritance from previous centuries of the philosophical assertion of God's bodilessness. Central to this reassertion of the body is the eschatological enthronement of Christ, an image which prominently features the scriptural theophanies accompanied by angels.

Throughout the text, there is the clear presence of Mansur's community, for whom he writes, experiencing the challenge of the renewed power of Jewish, or quasi-Jewish ideas and impulses in their Islamic context. At a couple of points we look back to connections with Philo and parallels in later Jewish thought, especially for place, throne, and the typology of the vision of God. As the chapters before, this chapter shows image, enthronement, and theophany in a way which directly challenges the Islamic critique of "association," or *shirk*. Mansur keeps together Christology, sacramentality, and a high notion of the human will's deifying participation in the vision of God in a theological work with a cosmic scope. We can say that Mansur presents all the aspects of what could be called *association* as better understood as willing union with the enthroned Christ whose light feeds the Christian.

"Book 1:"Angels as Icons Placing God's Glory

In this work with much drier material, there are gems which pierce the monotony of the work with flashes of Mansur's poetic genius and sense for the visual. Some of these are things which Louth's introductory overview did not highlight, which are fortunately left to us to find and show their great importance. We begin with chapter 13, because it is a strange and puzzling chapter that Louth takes as merely, "a set of variations on the fundamental distinction between the uncreated and created… with a series of assertions about the Trinity…."[376] I agree with Louth that what is being said about Trinity is well and more fully expressed in normative, metaphysical language of the earlier six Ecumenical Councils elsewhere in Mansur's *Orthodox Faith*,[377] but if we focus on the angelic and theophanic images, we are given a relational, imagistic, non-metaphysical way of seamlessly integrating theology and spiritual experience. Both "place" and "icon" allow us to see the περιχώρησις, or interpenetration, of the hypostases of the Trinity and the union of God and the human in Christ as the fulfillment of all theophanies revealing his presence. Paradoxically, a similar expression can be used to describe the mode of relationship of God and humanity that incorporates the human "icon" not just into Christ, but into the way of perceiving the relations of the persons of the Trinity.

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[376] Andrew Louth *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002) 95.

[377] Ibid., also 112-113; especially important is Mansur's particular emphasis on the *perichoresis* of the persons of the Trinity; as noted above, no longer attributed to Pseudo-Cyril.

Louth's analysis, so useful in its technical details and overall picture, does not note a strong theological undercurrent in his taking the elements of Mansur's theology as original. There is no denying that there is an element of originality in his theology, most especially in the poetry, but the concept of originality, and using it as a beginning point for examination, is problematic in the first place. Authenticity of vision is the real point, and one best made in his hymnography or homilies, not elsewhere. Louth so skillfully points out this creative genius in Mansur. The difference between Mansur and the fathers of the earlier centuries is that he makes clear, in many cases, what his sources are because he quotes them and makes clear attribution in his florilegia. This heightened sense of need for attribution is something which did not start with him.[378] In other places, however, the sources are not always clear, particularly when there is a smaller quotation. It is here that we have found particularly revealing use of Pre-Nicene fathers, especially Clement, and Origen, and Philo. This furthers what Louth is saying about originality by specifying that the originality of Mansur comes in part via a revival of pre-Nicene images, no longer as a primitive background of theological controversy that later fathers must distance themselves from, but as Mansur's core images used in strengthening his disenfranchised community. Defense of icons, shoring up of ascetic life, protecting an anthropology that allowed sufficient scope for free will (against both Islam and Monothelitism), and providing concentrated hymnic distillations of patristic thought are what bring Mansur to the task of doing iconic reasoning for spiritual realities which are iconic. In Mansur's religious milieu, faced with his particular challenges vis-à-vis Islam, iconoclasm, and a pluralistic society with a decidedly

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[378] One need only refer to the scholia on Dionysius, the works of commentary by Maximus and the widespread use of Gregory Nazianzus's homilies.

Abrahamic background; the appeal to earlier Christian Trinitarian and christological development of metaphysical language was less important. He is indeed still concerned with the christological disputes of the prior three centuries (most particularly against Monothelitism), as the dissenting communities still exist in his milieu and are freed from the prior constraints and theological interference of a Christian state are now all on equal footing.[379]

He is still interested in shoring up the metaphysical language of essence, hypostasis, nature, will, and ἐνέργεια which were so important to recent christological controversies. Louth points out that Mansur is perhaps better understood as he is remembered in the Orthodox tradition as a writer of liturgical hymns with a decidedly mystical interest.[380] But the images of temple, throne, and angel, and the understanding of deification that we see in applying angelic images and qualities to the human are his most potent and vivid means for showing theology in hymns. What may seem to be simply embellishment in a systematic treatise on dogma is central to Mansur's theological work and struggle. Even Trinitarian theology is affected by angelic and temple iconography, not just in hymns, but even in the *Orthodox Faith* and *Divine Images*. Both icon and angel (and throne and τόπος) then provide common mobile terms which can be both inner-Trinitarian and a bridge between God and human. The encyclopedic, prosaic, and often dull discursive theology of Mansur has a central

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[379] For the dynamics of this, see Sidney Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites,'and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in the Third/Ninth Century Syria," in *Syrian Christians Under Islam: the First Thousand Years,* ed. By David Thomas, Leiden: Brill (2001) 9—55.

[380] Andrew Louth, *John Damascene*, 252-282. In particular the canons on Pascha and the Transfiguration. For critical text of the Paschal Canon, W. Christ and Paranikas *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* Leipzig: Teubner (1871) 218—221; the uncritical text of the Transfiguration Canon is in the August Menaion, *Μεναίον τοῦ Ἀυγούστου,* Athens: Apostolic Diakonia, (1993) 89—99.

hymnographic, poetic, and visual quality. It is possible, and perhaps preferable, to see

even this more discursive *Orthodox Faith* from a more poetic perspective rather than

the opposite movement of justifying hymnography or poetry and the visual by

demonstrating its dogmatic, systematic, discursive theological worth.[381] This is also the

scriptural and interpretive heart of the theology, which closes each of the later divisions

of four "Books" of *On the Orthodox Faith* with themes of the eschaton and

divinization, a point which Louth passes over.[382] The later editors probably took this as

their cue for the divisions, rightly noting this feature in the book.[383] The eschaton is

generally something that is not best understood through metaphysical terms, but rather

by liturgical and apocalyptic images which draw us forward through likenesses and

mystery.

It is Mansur's scriptural interpretation that provides the originality of his

interpretation. His acceptance of a more consistent re-reading of the implications of the

incarnation into the very anthropomorphic, visually and liturgically rich text of the Old

Testament, brings him to an affirmation of the body which encompasses the angels.

This fits very well with the emphases we have seen above on the will of both God and

human as carrying visual import, and the chain of images which begin within

Trinitarian life.

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[381] For a discussion of this problem see Teresa Berger *Theology in Hymns*. Nashville: Kingswood, (1995).

[382] Chapter 14: God pervades all without destroying the world; Chapter 44: the human falls from the proper position of mediator between the spiritual and material and yet God provides for him; Chapter 73: the resurrection of Christ; Chapter 100: the final resurrection.

[383] For the history of the editing into four books, done in the West, see Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002) 80—82.

Context for Chapter 13: Chapters 1—14

Despite the partition into four books being a later editorial arrangement, not by Mansur himself, it seems to reflect well the organization of material into books which roughly cover, in order, 1) theology, 2) cosmology and anthropology, 3) οἰκονομία, and 4) sacraments and the last things. Louth points out that it is also possible to see here a creedal structure in the over-all lay out.[384]

In the chapters surrounding chapter 13, there is a very strong emphasis on both the will and the understanding of the interplay between anthropomorphic concepts and the immeasurable, apophatic inconceivability of the divine nature. With typical emphasis on revelation and tradition in the first chapter, he introduces the broader concerns and the differentiation of theology and οἰκονομία in chapter 2 and 3. In chapter 4 we see a turn to a concern with God's bodiless nature; God has no body so he thus can permeate all things: "It is impossible for one body to permeate others without dividing and being divided, without being blended and contrasted, just as when a number of liquids are mixed together and blended."[385] In terms of the "unmoved mover,"[386] Mansur asks: "How can that which is not locally [ἐν τόπῳ περίγραπτον] contained be moved?"[387] This leads inevitably to the conclusion that God is bodiless. He makes a surprising turn, however, which deconstructs this negation with an

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[384] Louth, 88-89; P. LeDrux, "Introduction," Jean Damascene, *La Foi Orthodoxe:* 1—44. Intro, Trans., Notes P. LeDrux with Vassa Kontouma-Conticello and Guy de Durand, *Sources Chretiennes,* 535. Paris: Cerf (2010) 35—38.

[385] *OF* 4:11—13; Kotter II, 12; Chase, 171.

[386] LeDrux notes Aristotle's texts borrowed here by Mansur. LeDrux, 150—151, n.3.

[387] *OF* 4:19—20; Kotter II, 12; Chase, 171.

apophatic denial: "One can only answer that divinity is without body. All this, however, is by no means indicative of his essence… these do not show what He is but rather what He is not."[388] This sets up a dynamic which Mansur has called on, out of a need for a new synthesis to address a reinvigorated debate over depiction, experience, and theology of God's one-ness yet multiplicity of witness-able appearance. In other words, divine *aisthesis*, creative art, and *association*. And it also leaves the paradoxical opening for some sort of non-bodily, body-like apophatic and/or incarnational understanding of God—such as can be accessed through use of the terms εἴκων or τόπος.

Here he turns to the problem of the one-ness of God in chapter 5, and emphasizes the same concern that we saw in *Heresies 100* and the images from *Divine Images* 3:18 : for God the (Father) Mind is revealed by the Word, and the Word is expressed in and through the Spirit. Mansur, taking up Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Oration*, chapter 2, connects the Spirit very strongly with "operation of the Word," and makes use of the idea of the Spirit as a "substantial power" (δυνάμην οὐσιαδή).[389] At the end of this chapter, great emphasis is placed on refuting an anti-Trinitarian Jewish interlocutor, following the lead of Gregory, but most likely reapplied here for application with Islam or Islam-influenced Christians.

Chapter 8 brings in a very significant link between will and the difficulty of God's permeation of limited creation(s): God is

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[388] *OF* 4:22, 24—25; Kotter II, 13; Chase, 171.

[389] *OF* 7:13—19; Kotter II, 16; Chase, 175.

Power which no measure can give any idea of but which is measured only by His own will, for He can do all things whatsoever He pleases; maker of all things visible and invisible, holding together all things and conserving them, provider for all… filling all things, contained by nothing.[390]

God is his own measure because he creates, provides, and saves through measured movement, operation, and event. He moves to climax in the full expression in the Word who is living (ζῶσα) Image of the invisible God.[391] He goes on to say that God wills creation but does not need to think and plan beforehand, but that the creation from nothing is "a mere act of His will [Θελήσας μόνον]."[392] Thus it is specifically in will that image is most powerful, and in God's image that God's will is *seen* measured. The one-ness of God in will is seen in the distinction in image which reflects the one-ness. Thus, in referencing the περιχώρησις of the persons of the Trinity, he says that the "Godhead is undivided in things divided [ἀμέριστος γάρ ἐν μεμερισμένοις]."[393] Image and will, as theology played out in sync with the scriptural revelation, ground a radical need for *seeing and making seen* as central to a proper understanding of the being of God and creation. Certainly, God's measuring himself by his will means that his will is that which guides his self-depiction. It implies freely accepted limits, an iconic comparison or even conforming to the body, place, or something similar.

We return to the issue of the bodily depiction of God in chapter 11. Bodily things are said of God "symbolically." This is not just a literary inscription of an absent

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[390] *OF* 8:6-9, 11—12; Kotter II, 18 ; Chase, 176—177.

[391] *OF* 8:40—42; Kotter II, 20; Chase, 178.

[392] *OF* 8:77—78; Kotter II, 21; Chase, 179.

[393] *OF* 8: 263, 265; Kotter II, 29; Chase 187.

referent, but "We are unable to think or speak of the divine, lofty and immaterial

operations [ἐνεργείας] of the Godhead unless we have recourse to images, types

[τύποις], and symbols that correspond" to us.[394] We see the senses of God as

representing his power to interact with creation:

> By the eyes and eyelids and sight of God let us understand His power of
> penetrating all things and his unescapable knowledge, by analogy [ἐννοήσομεν]
> with our own acquisition of more complete knowledge and certainty
> [πληροφορίαν] through this particular sense [αἰσθήσεως].[395]

It is noteworthy that this symbolizing seems to consist of the finding of the best

correspondence between the human body and the experienced, rather than a merely

conceived or postulated, presence of God. Will [βούλησις], is seen in "mouth and

speech" "food and drink" [θέλημα], and "swearing" [βούλης].[396] Chapter 12 adds to this

that God can even take to himself the names of opposites in a way which leads to

apophatic understanding. We follow these named opposites to their reasons and causes

in Him as the cause of all:

> He is the cause [αἴτιος] of all things and possesses beforehand in Himself the
> reasons [λόγους] and causes [αἴτιας]of all, so that He can be named after all
> things—even after things which are opposites… so that we may know that he is
> not these things in essence… since He is the cause of all beings, He is named
> after all beings that are caused.[397]

The causing seems to imply the operation or ἐνέργεια of God which leaves its

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[394] *OF* 11:4—6; Kotter II, 32; Chase, 191. He is borrowing from Dionysius *Divine Names* 3.

[395] *OF* 11:8—12; Kotter II, 33; Chase 191.

[396] *OF* 11:15, 17, 32; Kotter II, 34; Chase 191.

[397] *OF* 12b:10—14; Kotter II, 35-36; Chase, 194.

mark, not just as meaning, but as likeness. More specifically, this likeness is beyond image and imaging as the latter are bound to circumscription, yet more like the way the iconographic inverse perspective works,[398] where light and darkness, water and fire, meet in mystical expansion into their divine reason and cause. Thus they are like God in unopposed opposition; both are like, though opposite.

Chapter 14 collects us back from the multiple "places" (which we will examine below) of God's appearing to the ἐνέργεια of God as

> Simple and undivided… while it is apparently diversely manifested in divisible things, dispensing to all of them the components of their proper nature, it remains simple. Indivisibly, it is multiplied in divisible things, and gathering them together, it reverts them to its own simplicity.[399]

God pervades all "without himself being contaminated." He is "Seeing with his divine, all-seeing, and immaterial eye, all things at once, both present and past and future, before they come to pass… all things that he wills he can do."[400] Thus following the discussion of place we are brought back to the ability of God to gather all things together in the image of sight which is analogous to the active willing of a creative, providential, and saving God; a sight and will as an image of the God who reaches out of limitless eternity.

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[398] By means of a vanishing point in the viewer and infinite expansion into the distance.

[399] Kotter II, 42; *Orthodox Faith* 14:19—20; *Chase*, 202.

[400] Kotter II, 43; *Orthodox Faith* 14:28-34; Chase, 202.

Chapters 13 and 14

Chapter 13 is entitled "Concerning the Place of God and that Only God is Uncircumscribed." What we find in this chapter, however, actually belies the impression that the title gives. As the chapter unfolds we see that it is not primarily concerned with God's transcendence of τόπος or circumscription, but rather with his ability to "take place" in manifestations of his glory, his omnipresence, the attendants of his glory, and, in the way that τόπος serves as a psychological/cognitive analogy for God and a concern to tie these together in Christ's human body as the visible place of theophany.[401]

Mansur's take on τόπος is not to be understood as motivated only by philosophical concerns, though it clearly makes use of earlier adaptations of platonic and aristotelian thought. Mansur is actually using not only a quotation from Philo, or derived from Philo (as yet unnoticed by any commentators), but his treatment is informed by the need to deal with scriptural typology that is also found in the larger passage from Philo's *On Dreams* (*de Somniis*). Both the treatment of place by Philo, and even more so the treatment of Mansur, are motivated by a biblical and liturgical

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[401] Mention should be made here of connections with the idea of a spiritual place of God in Evagrius. Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus," *JECS* 9 (2001) 173—204. It must be noted that according to Stewart, for Evagrius, the one who is purified does see, but the vision comes out of *anaisthesia*, p.192, and the place of God is "unimaged," p.197. However the basis of the image of "place" is still Exodus, Mt. Sinai, temple imagery of sapphire and throne, p.198-200. See also the concern with "place" more broadly in Eastern Christian spiritual literature, see Alexander Golitzin, "Demons Suggest an Illusion of God's Glory in a Form: Controversy Over Divine Body and the Vision of Glory in some Late Fourth early Fifth Century Monastic Literature." *Scrinium* 3 (2007), 49—82 throughout, but especially 76—82. Also Alexander Golitzin, "The Place of the Presence of God: Aphrahat of Persia's Portrait of the Christian Holy Man," *Συναξίς Εὐχαριστίας: Studies in Honor of Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonos Petras, Mount Athos,* Athens: Indiktos (2003) 391—447.

theology centered on the typology of temple and vision of God.[402]

Place and Throne: Seeing the One Enthroned

One of the central statements of chapter 13, which serves no philosophical purpose, unveils Mansur's scriptural and iconic motivation for this treatment of place and shows that the chapter has an apocalyptic focus. Based on John 5:22, "Neither does the Father judge any man: but he has given all judgment to the Son," Mansur shows that his central concern is Jesus' incarnate circumscription in the body, on the *throne of glory*: "But, as man, the Son himself will come down in his body and sit upon the throne of glory–for both the coming down and the sitting will be of his circumscribed body–and he will judge the world with equity."[403] A strongly incarnational Christology is found in the circumscribed measure of the body in which and around which the vision takes place. And this has implications for the seer, who is not apart from God by

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[402] I will not be able to get into the issue here of whether Philo is more exegete or more philosopher. No one has adequately taken up yet the challenge posed in C. Rowland's *Open Heaven* to work out how Philo may be apocalyptic in the mystical, sapiential, and esoteric sense that he gives in that book. I will merely look at Philo as taken and used by Mansur as an important (Jewish) interpreter of Scriptures and aid in understanding the *heavenly iconography* which accompanies and helps to manifest the Glory: angels, throne, and place.

A. Louth has argued vis-a-vis Mansur's florilegia that sometimes "new answers to new problems had to be cloaked in the thoughts of earlier writers so as to appear old and tried answers inherited within the tradition...." (The Appeal to the Cappadocian Fathers and the Dionysius the Areopagite in the iconoclast controversy" in *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections,* edited Jorstein Bortnes and Tomas Hägg, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press 2006, 271—281; esp. 272) This is perhaps too much modern apologia for Mansur's originality. Mansur has not invented the answer; he has found it in pre-Nicene and philonic materials that were previously neglected for possible heretical implications that were deemphasized by post-Nicene fathers (or perhaps only to our reading of them) because they didn't lead the pre-Nicene tradition on the way to Nicene Orthodoxy. Louth provides a helpful point, in the article above, when speaking of a positive valuation of "phantasia" by Mansur; but this is also just in line with biblical and later Jewish and Christian visionary traditions. A neglected element in Mansur's very real and positive unoriginality is his insistence that the biblical tradition *requires* cultic iconography as reflective of (transfigurable by?) the heavenly apparatus (temple, throne, angels, etc.) of visionary theophanies. Perhaps Mansur's originality was more of an originality in research and ressourcement, not just clothing new ideas in others' words. Certainly the use of scriptural motifs were not new, as evidenced by the quotations from Leontius of Neapolis in *Divine Images* I.54—57, and Severian of Gabala in I.58—60 and parallels.

[403] *OF* 13:54—7; Kotter II, 39; Chase, 199.

nature:

> He sees God who always longs for [ἐπιθυμὸν] Him, for all things are dependent on Him who is, so that it is impossible for anything to be, unless it have its being in Him who is. Indeed in so far as he sustains their nature, God is mixed in [ἐγκέκραται] with all things. God the Word however was united to his sacred body [sic: σαρκὶ] hypostatically and was combined with our nature without being mingled with it. No one sees [ὁρᾷ] the Father except the Son and the Spirit.[404]

We see that the spiritual life, anchored in the incarnation of the Word and the revelation of both Son and Spirit, is central to this issue of God's place. This central concern for God's throne is already indicated close to the beginning of the chapter. Mansur moves from looking at heaven as a throne to the throne on earth of the incarnate Word in the parousia. The throne is surrounded by ἐνέργεια and grace as what is "plainly visible" in his "place;" ἐνέργεια is functioning as synonym for Glory,[405] while place seems to be the platform for the appearance of Glory–both as general and manifest attribute of God known to mind or sight and in the specific incarnation of the Word:

> God is said to be in a place; and this place where God is said to be is there where his operation [ἐνέργεια] is plainly visible. Now he does pervade all things without becoming mixed with them, and to all things he communicates his operation in accordance with the fitness and receptivity of each. . . . Thus the place where God is said to be is that which experiences his operation and grace to a greater extent. For this reason, heaven is his throne, because it is in heaven that the angels are who do his will and glorify him unceasingly. For heaven is

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[404] *OF* 13:62—7; Kotter II, 40; Chase, 199—200.

[405] This is clear also by the context of the passages from the Gospel of John 5, such as 5:19, 5:30; 8:28 and the connections with statements about the Glory of God later in the gospel, 17:5, 17:22-24. In John 17, Glory and the coinherence of Father and Son are associated with the "name" which Jesus transfers to his disciples, 17:6, 26. Name and place are already significantly connected together around the temple as in the "Place of my name," cf., (among other places) Deuteronomy 12, 14, 16; 1 Kings 8.

his resting place and the earth his footstool, because on earth He conversed in the flesh with men. And the sacred flesh of God has been called his foot.[406]

He is speaking here of one experience of one God. All places are placed within the place of God's one-ness, which is omnipresent and opens to experiences which navigate through human and earthly limitations while still connecting to higher heavenly and divine experience.

Philo and Place

It is important to note that Mansur's library at least (that is, if it is not his own work), as represented in the *Sacra Parallela,* is the only place where certain pieces of the original Greek of Philo are preserved for posterity, namely the *Questions on Genesis* and the *Questions on Exodus*.[407]

Immediately before this segment, Mansur says that though God is in no place, "God is his own place." (ἑαυτοῦ τόπος ἐστίν) This is possibly a direct quotation from Philo's *On Dreams* 1:64: "But the Deity [θεῖου], being surrounded by nothing, is

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[406] *OF* 13:12-22; Kotter II, 38; Chase, 197. The scriptural reference is to Is.66:1, with its New Testament counterpart in Acts 7:48-50. Most accurately, the image of footstool is the ark as throne: cf., Ralph W. Klein, *World Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel*, Waco: Word Book (1983) 41, 42. "According to some OT traditions the ark was a box containing the decalogue (Exod 25:32; Deut 10:3); hence the name "ark of the covenant" (cf. Josh 3:6; MT in 1 Sam 4:3—5 and 2 Sam15:24). Elsewhere it is a cherub throne (v 4) or footstool for Yahweh (cf. Pss 99:5; 132:7; 1 Chr 28:2). Yahweh's invisible dwelling on the cherubim is mentioned for the first time with the Shiloh sanctuary (v4; 2 Sam 6:2), and this kind of iconography was perpetuated in Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:19-29; cf. 2 Kgs 19:15=Isa 37:16)....Late traditions assign great importance to the lid of the ark (kapporeth or mercy seat; cf. Exod 25:17-22; Lev 16:2, 13; Num 7:89), which may have served as a substitute for the ark in post-exilic times." Note also scriptural polemic over the ark as iconic, cf.: Tryggve N.D. Mettinger *The dethronement of Sabaoth : studies in the Shem and Kabod theologies,* trans. Frederick H. Cryer, Lund : CWK Gleerup (1982) 48—52.

[407] Philo only ranks behind Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen in the quotations in this work, with *92*. Cf. Karl Holl *Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damascenus,* Leipzig: J. C. Hinrrich'sche Buchhandlung (1896) 183-184. Even the illuminated text of the *Parallels* dates to the period of iconoclasm, and a Palestinian milieu—reflected in, among many other more weighty factors, the lack of later, anachronistic turban on his head in the iconography. Cf. Kurt Weitzman, *Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus Graecus 923*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1979) 6—25.

necessarily itself its own place [αὐτὸ τόπος ἑαυτοῦ]."[408] Philo's *Allegorical Laws* 1:44

provides another possible source. The passage from *On Dreams*, however, is a much

closer parallel in terms of content and context. In the passage from *On Dreams* I, 62—

64, we see Philo giving three definitions of place. The first is mundane "space filled by

a material form." The second is the "θεῖος λόγος" which Philo associates with the

theophany of Exodus 24:10 and the sacrifices of Deuteronomy 12:5 and Exodus 20:24.

The last definition is God himself: "By reason of his containing things and being

contained by nothing whatever, and being a space to flee unto because He Himself is

the space which holds Him."[409] Mansur is also likewise concerned with God's

containing all things: "For He who fills all things and is over all things and Himself

encompasses all things, is His own place."[410] Wolfson identifies the issue of τόπος for

Philo as being one of correcting Plato via Aristotle's interpretation of Plato's ideas as in

the mind, but which for Philo are in the mind or Logos of God.[411] I am not certain that

Wolfson or anyone else has really hit upon the issue for Philo in the passage from *On

Dreams*. I believe Philo's locating ideas in the Logos of God allows for them to be both

omnipresent and transcendent, yet also expressed in human (especially scriptural and

typological) experience.[412] Also, very simply, Philo connects place with the

ministry of assistance in virtue through *word and angel* in the following passage,

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[408] "τὸ δὲ θεῖον ὑπ' οὐδενὸς περιεχόμενον ἀναγκαίως ἐστὶν αὐτὸ τόπος ἑαυτοῦ."

[409] F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker *Philo* LCL V, 328—9.

[410] *OF* 13:11—12; Kotter II, 38; Chase, 197.

[411] H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, vol.1, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947, 239—246.

[412] Thus we return to the temple as iconic: "objective correlative of the paradoxical doctrine of God's otherness and omnipresence," Jon Levenson, "The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience" in *Jewish Spirituality*, New York: Crossroad (1986) 39.

On Dreams 1:69. Thus, we see via the image of angels, temple/throne is central to the idea of place for both Philo and Mansur.

Whatever the exact situation for Philo, the concern for Mansur follows the thrust of the argument from Philo: justifying the accessibility and somehow visible energy/glory of the omnipresent God, without losing transcendence, and angels as part of that. It roughly corresponds to the importance he gives to the enumerations for εἴκων in *Divine Images*. Yet Mansur makes this both easier and more complex via the incarnation—Christ's body circumscribes neatly the presence of God, yet also causes us to ask: how is this reflective of God's natural (bodiless) existence? The same way that glory can be either a general property of God or the person of the Son and Word, so also *place* can be the Word or a general, natural characteristic of God. God is not just manifest boundlessly, but always provides a platform or frame for his appearance: a throne. So it is not just Glory or ἐνέργεια that is necessary for theophany, but also throne and place. In order to reveal himself, God needs to be more than boundless; he needs to show himself *seated and placed* in the finite and formed. Place is best described as the deified platform or frame for divine manifestation.

Τοπική or "Localized" Manifestation in Theophany, Excursus to Chapter 75

The difficulty of affirming the real bodily incarnation of the Word while at the same time using anthropomorphic, theophanic language, which must be accepted but tempered by a certain spiritual reading, is illustrated by chapter 75 of *Orthodox Faith*. When speaking of the ascension, Mansur has to associate bodily enthronement, the *placing* of Christ "sitting at the right hand of the Father" (Acts 2:33, Odes 14:23) with a spiritual interpretation of the Father's "hand": "What we call the right hand of the

Father is the glory and honor of the Godhead in which the Son existed as God. . . ."[413]

Mansur follows this with an anti-spiritualizing emphasis through a quotation from

Athanasius, which emphasizes that throne and place serve to hold together both, on the

one hand, God's spiritual omnipotent divine nature and, on the other, the omnipresence

of God expressed in a real single presence in circumscribed flesh: "He and his flesh are

adored together with one adoration by all creation."[414] The way that Mansur dismisses

the anthropomorphic implication of the Father's hand is to substitute the place of God's

Glory in which Christ really sits instead of a simplistic notion of a physical hand of the

Father. The difference between the τοπική, or localized, and the abstracted meaning of

"hand" as the eternal ὁμοούσιος (consubstantial) Glory of the Son is that the latter

expresses the inner Trinitarian life versus the former as God's simultaneous

omnipresence and manifestation to us. It is interesting to note that this use of τοπική

can also be found in Philo.[415] In three occurrences it has to do with interpretation of the

rivers of Paradise as the flow of the single, non τοπική or non-localized (we might say

"manifest") divine Wisdom and virtue through multiple, manifest and thus τοπική

(four) virtues.[416] Even more interesting is Philo's use of this word in *Question on*

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[413] *OF* 75:5—6; Kotter II, 173; Chase, 336.

[414] *OF* 75:7—8; Kotter II, 173; Chase, 336.

[415] While Mansur also has many patristic precedents for the use of this word, I think Philo's discussion of issues around the theophanies of Exodus are very much parallel to what Mansur is concerned with in chapter 75 and also other points where he deals with place. And Mansur knew this material from Philo. There may also be some connection with and perhaps distinction drawn to the material in Evagrius, cf. note 24.

[416] *On Dreams* 2:243; LCL V. 550-551 and in *Allegorical Laws* 1:63, 67; LCL I, 188—191.

Exodus, 2:45.[417] Philo is here concerned to guard against those who hold the notion that God's essence "moves" into places when he appears: "οἰομένους τοπικὰς καὶ μεταβατικὰς κινήσεις εἶναι περὶ τὸ θεῖον." ("that there are movements of place or of change in the deity"). For Philo, this refers rather to God's "glory": "ἰδου γὰρ ἐμφανῶς οὐ τὸν οὐσιώδη θεόν . . . ἀλλὰ τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ." ("for behold, what is said to come down is clearly not the essence of God. . . but his glory."). It is very important that, once again, Philo has used a term, in this case, δόξα, with particular and express consciousness of its ambiguity and status as a mediating concept which blurs, or mixes, the place of God and other natures, the angels and the human mind. It is no surprise that Mansur himself is attributed with the preservation of the last sentence of this chapter in the *Sacra Parallela*. It would not be much of a stretch to believe that Mansur had more of the surrounding text of *Questions on Exodus* in front of him than the *Sacra Parallela* testifies to, even if it is not directly from his hand, especially if it is from his or a nearby Palestinian monastery. One very important parallel to the material from *On Dreams* that we mentioned above, is the passage dealing with "place" of God in Exodus 24:10, which is reinterpreted as the place of the Logos and emphasizes that the place is one of a standing, not moving, figure.[418] Here the apologetic really seems to be aimed more toward affirming the reality of the vision of God as much as correcting the imagery of those who might think that God moves about. Philo attempts to show that even if we accept the reasonable assumption that God does not need to move, God can still make himself manifest. Here, with Mansur, the fear seems to be that one might alienate those

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[417] LCL Suppplement II, 89—90; 250—251.

[418] Ibid., 78—80, from the extant Armenian translation.

who could truly claim to have experience of God's omnipresence shown to them in their human limitedness. In Mansur's case, this emphasis on experience is in concert with a re-emphasis on the incarnation.

Rabbinic Analogy: *Maqom* and Temple

Place functions in later rabbinic theology with strong parallels to what Mansur is saying. It is not germane to the present argument whether this came in dialogue with contemporary rabbis or dissenting Jewish groups, though it is far from impossible in his religious-pluralistic atmosphere where Christians and Jews had to function on the same level as people who had no state sponsorship, and perhaps within the same government offices. We can leave to others the re-creation of the environment of late 7th and early 8th century Damascus and Palestine. But surely there is some common element that can be found in Philo, despite the linguistic and canonical divide (eg.,the loss of Philo in the later rabbinic tradition, as far as we know). There is debate among modern rabbinic scholars whether the concept there also comes from Philo.[419] We will show, however, that the problem of God as "place" is part of a large concatenation of interconnected temple typological figures.[420] Urbach, in *Sages,* takes note of this. He tells us that place

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[419] Ephraim E. Urbach *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs,* trans. Israel Abraham*s*, vol.1, Jerusalem : Magnes Press (1975) 73—75. Urbach decides against this, but unfortunately his argument is based on seeing τόπος in Philo as only identified with the Logos. Clearly, the very passage he reads this from, the one mentioned above from *on Sleep*, 62-66, allows for three identifications for τόπος. Urbach is wrongly taking a polyvalent term as univalent, perhaps as a result of synthesizing other passages in Philo with this one or perhaps from relying on Wolfson's strongly synthetic view of Philo, see Wolfson, 200—294.

[420] For an understanding of the generalizing tendencies which gather many images into *maqom* or τόπος, cf. James A. Montgomery, "'The Place' as an Appellation of Deity," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 24, (1905), 17—26; and "τοπος" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Trans and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, volume 8 (1976) 187—208. It is interesting that conceptual idea of mediation, or simply a meeting, between the physical and spiritual was not obvious to Montgomery: something that would have been obvious from a sacramental perspective. For place as denoting the temple and its theophoric, overshadowing characteristics, cf. David Vanderhooft, "Dwelling Beneath the Sacred Place: A Proposal for Reading 2 Samuel 7:10," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999) 625—633.

or *maqom* means God's omnipresence.[421] Urbach claims that this is, for the rabbis, a metonymy from the temple.[422] Urbach shies away from tying this to the necessity of an implication of theophany with throne or *merkabah* characteristics. But surely via *merkabah* and its Christian form in the Last Judgment/ Second Coming scene, the iconography of experience can be seen to have much continuity between temple and post-temple times. It might be objected that the Last Judgment scenario removes the experience to a distant eschaton, but that is surely and explicitly not the case with Mansur's interest in the throne of God in chapter 13 or 75 of the *Orthodox Faith*. The connection is also clear between throne and ark.[423]

Following in this train of thought, we must take seriously the importance of the temple in the biblical tradition as stressed in Jon D. Levenson's article, "The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience."[424] In this article, Levenson points to the temple itself as the ongoing revelatory availability of the presence of God, through place and rites. The oft-repeated idea of this article is that "the temple is the objective correlative of the paradoxical doctrine of God's simultaneous otherness and omnipotence."[425] The temple as "objective correlative" is the apparatus of God's "otherness" by presenting both an exterior which conceals (to the impure) and reveals "omnipotence" in glorious appearance. The iconography of

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[421] *Sages*, Vol. 1, 66—79.

[422] *Sages*, Vol. 1, 77.

[423] Cf. n.392, above.

[424] Jon D. Levenson, "The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience," in *Jewish Spirituality*. New York: Crossroad Publishing (1986) 32—61.

[425] 37, see 47.

temple is able to present the creation as the place in which God acts and shows himself through acting.[426] Levenson is even able to consider it possible that the Psalms refer to an actual icon of God, because the temple is the locus in which God himself is to be seen, and this vision was the "apogee of the spiritual experience of the visitor to the Temple."[427] From Levenson's treatment, we can see that the temple as place and symbol itself has a deeply iconic function which mediates the transcendent God's immanence. Thus when a metonymy like "place" is used for the temple or similar, related cultic sites and theophanies, it can stand for the visual and iconic aspect of God's "omnipresence". It is even a mystical incarnation of Glory.

Angel, Place and Ἐνέργεια

But as we saw above, the final concern of Mansur, in writing about place, is vision of God: "ὁ ἐπιθυμῶν ἀεὶ τοῦ θεοῦ οὗτος ὁρᾷ αὐτόν." ("He sees God who always longs for him.").[428] In other words, perpetual longing produces sight. The notion of perpetual desire for God leads him to a discussion of Son as image of the Father and Spirit as image of the Son so that he might explain the κατ᾽εἰκόνα (that which is according to the image) that dwells in (ἐνοικόν) man. The final meditation in chapter 13 moves on to the psychological analogy: Father/Νοῦς, Word/Λόγος, and Spirit/Πνεῦμα. Here he mentions that the "λόγος ἐστιν ὁ ἄγγελος νοήματος." ("word is the messenger/angel of the mind [or thought]") [429] While Mansur is here using ἄγγελος in a

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[426] This includes the veil, and really the whole of the temple, Levenson 51 and 46—53.

[427] Levenson, 43.

[428] *OF* 13:62; Kotter II, 40; Chase, 199.

[429] Kotter II, 41; *OF* 13:96; Chase, 201.

way that might be misconstrued as purely "messenger," it is clear that he is also thinking of it as connoting the ontological category of "angel," but used in an iconic, mediating, relational sense. For Mansur λόγος and πνεῦμα are angelic, in a similar multivalent sense which sets a hierarchy of likenesses. He makes this clear when delineating the different ways that spirit can be understood: Holy Spirit, powers of the Spirit, good angel, demon, soul, mind, and air.[430] In other words, there is something necessary about the icon connotations of Spirit and Word. They can both be *iconized* as angels, as indeed, we shall see below, humans also can be iconized as angels.

Place involves angels, as beings that are circumscribed, not omnipresent. When they are in a place, they are circumscribed by the location, even though as spiritual beings they are beyond matter. However, they are *in* limited spiritual places. This implies that vision of them is even more possible than vision of God. Angels are thus not definitive of place, but rather dependent on the omnipotence and omnipresence of God whose glorious manifestation appears in and messages are delivered to places they serve, and of whose place they are an iconic part. So we see that for Mansur, God's omnipresence is via ἐνέργεια (Glory), represented by manifestation, instantiated in place: the throne, the temple, the icon, the angel or human. The ἐνέργειαι of God working through angels, distinguish them as limited, yet also characterize them as spiritually swift and powerful, as well as implying that they have a lesser glory which may accompany the greater Glory or ἐνέργεια in and around God's place (throne). Thus it is that they are an issue in chapter 13. The philosophical issue of circumscription is made to work for the scriptural, revelational, experiential, and iconic issue of who is on

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[430] Kotter II, 41; *OF* 13:99—102; Chase, 201.

the throne and how. The vision of the throne and the incarnation require a satisfactory

expression which is rooted in scriptural imagery.[431]

In chapter 13, Mansur states that the Son is the image of Father and the Spirit

is the image of the Son. Image, place, and throne all help to hold together the paradox

of both unity and differentiation via "image" and images which convey the reality of

relation as a mobile label that combines both a sense of "what" is shared and how it is

shared. Περιχώρησις (co-inherence) also paradoxically expresses both absolute unity

and distinction.[432] Mansur is the first to apply this term to the Persons of the Trinity.[433]

Father, Son-Image, Spirit-Image, angels-image, humans-image: image is central in the

context of this discussion of place. For Mansur, the concern is not merely for

transcendence and creation, but also to bridge both, by allowing for a relationship of

co-inherence of place by the three divine ὑπόστασεις (three identical images, or one

image) within the essence, as well the co-inherence of God and man in the incarnation

and enthroned theophanies of the Logos. Thus we see that place, similar to image,

perhaps as a necessary corollary to image, is the expression of a foundational way of

bridging the divine and creation, especially the divine and human.

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[431] Here we note that Peers (p.17—19) is right in seeing some challenge to reasoning from the incarnation, but angels are instances not of natural characteristics of visibility, but of graced visibility in the Glory/energy of God. Thus the question is less of the nature of angels, but of their history, as Barasch notes, (p. 208).

[432] *OF* 14:13; Kotter II, 42; Chase,

[433] A. Louth. *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002: 104.

Book II, Chapters 17 and 25—Angels as Image: Dionysius

Mansur believes the angels are also "according to the image": "κατ᾽ οἰκείαν εἰκόνα κτίσας αὐτοὺς φύσιν ἀσώματον."[434] This is specifically linked at once via LXX Psalm 103:3 to the comparison of their essence to fire and the fact that they are "ministers." The quality of their essence matches their proximity to God in ministry. Mansur is more concerned with the message-bearing, bridging function of angels than a specificity of essence. The characteristics of their essence are not what makes Mansur's statement significant; rather, it is that he links their ministry to their status as image of God. In this case, Kotter is clearly inaccurate in his apparatus in claiming that this treatment comes only from Gregory Nazianzus. While Mansur certainly does have in mind, and makes use of Nazianzus' treatment of the angels in his *Orations*,[435] he has taken the connection between angel, energy, and icon from Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*.

Shortly after quoting Ps. 103:4,[436] Dionysius ventures to say that they "might be said (εἰποῖ δ᾽ἄν) to be deiform (θεοειδές) because they have the image and impression (εἰκόνα καὶ τύπον) of the thearchic operation (ἐνεργείας)."[437] Immediately following this statement, Dionysius tells us that it is their lifegiving (ζωογόνον) and mobile (κινητικὸν) nature as well as the secrecy of their movement and of their beginning and end that makes this so. Dionysius concludes this section with a quotation from John 3:8

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[434] "According to the image He created them as a bodiless nature," *OF* 17:3—4; Kotter II, 45; Chase, 205.

[435] 28:31, 38:9, 45:2&5—7.

[436] Dionysius, CH 15:6, 333C.

[437] Dionysius, CH 15:6, 336A.

about the Holy Spirit and those born of the Spirit. Bracketing this section of Dionysius,

we also see some concern for issues which could be tied to the will of God. Before this

passage we have "θεοκρισιῶν," or divine judgments, which the angels signify[438] and

after we have a treatment of the cloud (of Glory), "νεφέλη," which signifies their dutiful

transmission of light to those below. The judgments of God certainly show God's will,

but also the cloud carries the scriptural resonance of a vehicle of God's will and

radiance, as one can see most clearly in Exodus 40:34—38.

Angels and the Ministry of the Will

In *On the Orthodox Faith*, Mansur more unequivocally calls angels "εἴκων"

because of the emphasis on the ministry to the will of God. Their form matches the

command of God; they are vigorous and prompt to appear wherever the divine will

commands. According to "το θεῖον θέλημα τε καὶ πρόσταγμα" they are always "ὑπὲρ

ἡμᾶς ὄντες ἀεί τε περὶ θεὸν ὑπάρχοντες."[439] A little further on, this is reiterated:

> They take whatever form [μετασχηματίζονται] the Lord may command, and thus
> they appear to men and reveal the divine mysteries to them. They live in heaven
> and have as their one work to sing the praises of God and minister to his sacred
> will.[440]

It may seem trite to emphasize this connection to the will of God, but it is not

simply a matter of absolute obedience, but rather of iconography. We must remember

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[438] Dionysius, CH 15:5:27—8.

[439] "They are ever round about God, for the reason that that in accordance with the divine will and command they are above us." *OF* 17:56—7; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 207.

[440] *OF* 17:64—5; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 208.

that elsewhere Mansur claims that the will of God itself is one form of icon.[441] It may even be that this direct meditation on the angels helps us to fill a gap in Mansur's enumeration of images in *Divine Images*. There appears to be no direct indication about the nature of angels as image. They work for the will of God, and can also be analogized through images, as God also can be, as Mansur indicates in *Divine Images* 3:21. We see a very important connection with the understanding we have reached concerning place above: the angels are both over all parts of the earth to help and steward and are yet "ever round about God for the very reason that in accordance with the divine will and command they are above us."[442] Angels are then heavenly created means for the placing of God's glory, without actually circumscribing God. They work for the will of God as a bodiless, spiritual, subtly visual image and we might say they are placed to all the earth in a partitioned and individualized way which yet connects the multiplicity of humanity and creation with the single, will, throne, and place of God. Seeing God in a more glory-filled way than us, they are able to paradoxically bring a sense of one-ness through the seeming partitioning or seeming division of God's communion to a lower material creature's even more fragmented sense of existence and perception.

Will and image combine in them, since their finer, spiritual status makes their will more firm. Mansur both admits that angels can be, with difficulty, moved toward

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[441] *DI*, 3:19; Kotter III, 127; Louth, 97.

[442] *OF* 17:56—57; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 207.

evil, and retracts it: "However they cannot be moved toward evil—not because of their nature, but by grace and diligent pursuit of the only Good [του μόνου ἀγαθοῦ προσεδρείᾳ]."[443]

Angels, Vision and Food

Meditation on the role of angels then leads him to affirm a radically synesthetic tradition about the life of heaven: "They see [ὁρῶντες] God to such an extent as is possible for them, and this is their food [τροφὴν]."[444] Doing the will of God is what allows their watchfulness (προσεδρεία), and what also nourishes them. They live on grace and obedience, yet a grace and obedience that is very direct, not blind. The idea of will is not one of auditory commands issued out of an invisible utopia, but one of icon to icon in gradations of reflection in and through places. The angel exists to see and be seen, at all times in the will of God, even though the angel's place is not as unlimited as God's, but rather the angel is a place by which God appears through his will or by their acting as frame or even furniture and architecture, when God is upon his throne. What is higher about their communion is that it is visual and not cut into limited times and even consumed morsels, but in their unfailing beholding and gaze, a greater vista of experience.

This vision of God as food is a common theme in rabbinic mysticism, and is based on the strange depiction of the covenant meal before God where the elders

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[443] *OF* 17:58—9; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 207.

[444] *OF*, 17:64—5; Kotter II, 47; Chase, 207.

"beheld God, and ate and drank" in Exodus 24:10 (and 11 in LXX).[445] Here we see that

a mystical perception of human ascent to God inextricably ties human and angel

together in an iconic cultic relationship. No angels are mentioned in this Exodus

passage, but the association and perhaps common assumptions between the

iconography of ascent and theophany in this and other comparable scriptural passages

necessarily causes the following inheritors of the tradition (later scriptural writers,

Philo, rabbis and church fathers like Mansur) to conceive of, or perceive, angels as

resembling ascended humans and then to reapply that typological and iconographic

understanding to humans as angelic.

St. Gregory Nazianzus: Humans as an Angelic Rank

The two points in chapter 17 where Mansur does most truly follow Gregory

the Theologian are in relation to the creation of the angels: that they are "created by the

Word and perfected by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost"[446] and that they were

created first (before us) since they are spiritual.[447] Both Dionysius and Gregory

Nazianzen emphasize the relation of angels to humans and the analogy of human and

angelic divinization. The angel is tied to both the appearance of God and the

transformation of the human. The angel accompanies deifying energies or glory and is

part of the iconic element of the platform, throne, or place of God's appearing and of

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[445] I. Cernus *Rabbinic Mysticism* Berlin: De Gruyter (1982) 74-87. While this may also carry a recollection of Tobit 12:19, I am certain Chase is incorrect (p.207, n.6) in only bringing up this reference to Tobit and not noting Exodus 24:10. In Tobit, the angel does not specify the eating of anything and emphasizes that the humans are simply seeing a vision (of him eating?). See on Philo—though based more on the manna typology—Peder Borgen *Bread from Heaven,* Leiden: Brill (1967) 15, 36, 114, 118.

[446] OF, 17:28—9; Kotter II, 46; Chase, 206.

[447] OF, 17:76-7; Kotter II, 48; Chase, 208. Gregory Nazianzus, Or. 38 & 45; PG36 320C:6—8, 629A:7—9.

human transformation.

Chapter 25 Περὶ Παραδείσου and 26 περὶ ἀνθρώπου

It is this concern for humans as angelic that connects chapter 17 to chapter 25 and 26. Here Mansur takes up Gregory Nazianzen's very popular Homily 38 and 45. Nazianzen, in 38.12 and 45.8, repeats the notion of the human being as cherub-like, in a way that alludes to the LXX of Habbakuk 3:2.[448] This quotation from Gregory Nazianzen emphasizes the correspondence between humans and angels as a meditative movement toward a higher, divinized state of being. Mansur prefaces the larger quotation by giving the purpose of human life as, "One task, that of the angels, which is unceasingly and unremittingly to sing the praises of the Creator and to rejoice in contemplating Him."[449]

This is in the context of a description of Eden as a place of delight experienced through obedience and ascetic maintenance of a life which is ideally poor, but in the fallen cares and vain wealth of this world. Here he quotes Luke 10:41, the rebuke of Martha's busy-ness; Adam and Eve's unashamed nakedness (Genesis 2:25); the economic heedlessness of Matthew 6:25, 33; and the absolute, uninsured trust in God of Psalm 54:23: "Cast your care upon the Lord and he will sustain you." He is still concerned to affirm that Paradise existed: "As man was created, both sensitive and intellectual, so did this most sacred domain[450] of his have the twofold aspect of being

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[448] Bogdan Bucur and Elijah Mueller, "Gregory Nazianzen's Reading of Habakkuk 3:2 and its Reception: A Lesson from Byzantine Scripture Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia* 20 (2010) 86—103, especially 99—102.

[449] *OF* 25: 32—34, Kotter II, 72; Chase 231.

[450] Τέμενος. LeDrux (290, n.3) notes the homeric resonance here, in its regal or lordly sense, but neglects what LSJ (1774) notes as the primary sense of sanctified place, or temple precincts.

perceptible both to the sense and to the mind."[451] The concern for the holiness of paradise as a place immediately drives Mansur to the angelic and temple imagery:

> While in his body he dwelt in this most sacred and superbly beautiful place…
> spiritually he resided in a loftier and far more beautiful place (τόπος). There he
> had the indwelling (ἐνοίκον) God as a dwelling place (οἶκος) and wore Him as a
> glorious garment. He was wrapped about with his grace, and like some one of
> the angels, he rejoiced in the enjoyment of that one most sweet fruit which is the
> contemplation (θεωρία) of God, and by this he was nourished (τρεφόμενος).[452]

He is stressing the purified character of the senses that go with mystagogical, sacramental, and transformative understanding of them. Mansur's view of the senses is one which accords well with both priestly things and monastic life. He is informed by a sense that paradise is to be read as liturgical-ascetical allegory. The rest of the chapter is a long meditation on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a good power of discernment through multiple vision, which is only inappropriate for the young with untamed appetites. This is not only a philosophical meditation, but also remains very much concerned with the biblical imagery of theophany. Mansur ends the chapter with a contrast between normal, physical eating, which is all voided in death and corruption,[453] and the higher and life-giving, mystical nourishment that he has already described in these temple and angelic terms, and which he further reinforces just before with a statement that all the trees lead up to the one fruit, God.

The later redacted supplement which LeDrux plausibly ascribes to Mansur and fully integrates into the Greek text and French translation, does not add much

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[451] *OF* 25:42—44; Kotter II, 72;Chase, 232.

[452] *OF* 25:44—49; Kotter II,73; Chase, 232.

[453] *OF* 25:82—87; Kotter II, 74; Chase, 234.

except to, like the second *Apology* of the *Divine Images*, add in the Devil (ὁ πονηρός)[454]

as the one who steps in to separate the human from vision (here ἔκστασις)and

deification.[455] This small addition is significant. We have seen earlier that this

movement to denounce the demonic parallels his understanding that there is in the

demonic, and its heretical counterparts, a removal of a central visual element in

deification. Here, it is the same; based on the close connection of angel and human, we

can see that this negative reflection has to do with the fundamental anthropological and

iconic linking of humans with angels. Mansur's defense of the ascetical aspect of

paradisial life is no longer just based out of an intrinsically anti-material sense of

human origins and destiny (such as tradition associates with Origenism), but rather he

is walking the fine line between affirming material images and practices (icons and

monastic life) that are challenged within his social context and yet placing the spiritual

in the higher position. Thus, materiality and vision are the ground for spiritual work, the

work of the free will, oriented toward the divine. All are together in vision and image.

Mansur continues in chapter 26 to emphasize this complicated mediation, and

here again makes prominent use of Gregory Nazianzen. The human is "a sort of bond

between the visible and invisible natures."[456] Mansur adds the Creator's intention to

Gregory's statement: "The statement 'it was necessary,' I say implies the intention of

the Creator."[457] Here again God as Creator and providence is depicted as showing in the

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[454] *OF* 25b:15; Kotter II, 75; LeDrux 296:120; not in Chase.

[455] *OF* 25b:20—24; Kotter II, 75; LeDrux 296:127—129; not in Chase. For some reason LeDrux plays down ἔκστασις, translating it as "attirance."

[456] Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 38:11; OF 26:11—12; Kotter II, 75; Chase 234.

[457] *OF* 26:12—13; Kotter II, 75;Chase 234.

very act of creation and the image itself, "the intellect and free will." The movement

towards visibility, for the whole of creation, is the revelation of the image of God which

implies that, the human, as the image of God's free will represents this bond between

God and creation through freely uniting all to the vision of God.   Here he makes the

long quotation from Gregory:

> And so God made man… ornamented with every virtue, and adorned with all good qualities. He made him a sort of miniature world within the larger one, another adoring angel, a compound, an eyewitness of the visible creation, an initiate of the invisible creation, lord of the things of earth, lorded over from on high, earthly and heavenly, passing and immortal, visible and spiritual, halfway between greatness and lowliness, at once spirit and flesh—spirit by grace and flesh by pride, the first that he might endure and give glory to his Benefactor, and the second that he might suffer, and by suffering be reminded and instructed not to glory in his greatness. He made him a living being [ζῶον] to be governed here according to this present life, and then to be removed elsewhere, that is, to the world to come, and so to complete the mystery by becoming divine through reversion to God—this, however, not by being transformed into the divine substance, but by participation in the divine illumination. [458]

This statement occurs verbatim in Gregory twice. It is an important complex

of images which draws directly on Habakkuk 3:2, Ezekiel 1, and probably also plays

off of Ezekiel 28:12ff. This same passage from Habakkuk features also in Mansur's

paschal hymn, the canon, ode 4: "Let the prophet Habakuk, inspired by God, keep the

divine watch with us, and show forth the radiant [φαεσφόρον] angel, who with

resounding voice declares, 'Today is salvation for the world, for Christ is risen as

almighty.'"[459] The mystery of human destiny is tied in with angelic theophany, even as

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[458] Gregory Nazianzen Oration 38:11, 45:7; PG 36:323A and 632AB. *OF* 26:24-36; Kotter II,76; Chase 235.

[459] W. Christ and Paranikas, 218—9. Uses the beginning of Gregory's Oration 45:1.

it reveals redemption of the body through the resurrection.

If we note that the acquisition of virtue in chapter 26 is tied to the proper reading of the trees of paradise, we can understand that the use of freedom in the material realm is tied to ascetic tending of the interiorized and human-oriented shape of God's will. The human in response to God's will through virtue, becomes angelic, or, even more specifically, cherubic—the image of the altar, across which two angels gaze at each other to see the appearance of God in their midst; on their altar and in their place. This process is that which make the invisible visible. Like the invisible angel, the invisible soul: "is a living substance (οὐσία ζῶσα) simple and incorporeal of its own nature invisible to the bodily eye."[460]The invisible soul and angel are seen in the movement and vision of heavenly liturgical reality reflected within. The νοῦς is the eye of the soul: "It is free, endowed with will and power to act, and subject to change."[461] This sensory faculty is active and fundamental to the will, and is the place of the human interaction with theophany. But it also has the ability to change, and thus takes all that is changeable, especially materiality, and makes that essential to virtuous use of the will in its fundamentally visual quest for God.

The ability to see the invisible angel colors our view of his statement that angels are bodiless and invisible by comparison with the grossness (παχύτητα) of matter.[462] Things that are incorporeal, invisible, and without shape we conceive in two

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[460] *OF* 26:44—45; Kotter II, 77; Chase236.

[461] *OF* 26: 49—50; Kotter II, 77; Chase 236.

[462] *OF* 26:55—56; Kotter II, 77; Chase 236.

ways:

> Some are so by essence and some are so by grace; some are so by nature and some by comparison with the grossness of matter. Thus God is said to be incorporeal by nature, but the angels, evil spirits, and souls are said to be so by grace and by comparison with the grossness of matter.[463]

To say that angels, souls, and demons are incorporeal by grace and in a relative way, show that vision is not limited by bodily status, but related to a state of grace. Grace here is mobile, like the status of the corporeality, extending from God to draw beings into his place of vision. This place of God is a place where the grossly material or fat meets the fine or thin spiritual things, in the extension of God's own visibility and image-making, beyond God's invisible and unapproachable nature or essence.

The soul, like the angels, has a kind of change, τρέπτη;[464] the body alone is subject to ῥεῦσις and μεταβολή.[465] But the change of the body is related to the change of the soul in virtue, and corresponds to modes of visibility.[466] Thus we can say that virtue is iconic, it shapes to higher modes of which are only relative invisibility, which through grace come to visibility and vision. Virtue graces one with an invisible status that expresses the visibility of God's theophanic outpouring. "All the faculties (δυνάμεις)… are called acts (ἐνεργείαι)."[467] While passion (an unnatural ἐνέργεια)[468]

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[463] *OF* 26:53—57; Kotter II, 77; Chase 236.

[464] *OF* 26:49; Kotter II, 77; Chase 236.

[465] *OF* 26: 86—87 ; Kotter II, 79; Chase 237.

[466] OF 26:91—93; Kotter II, 79; Chase 238.

[467] *OF* 37:1-2; Kotter II, 93; Chase 252

[468] *OF* 36:18; Kotter II, 88; Chase 247

can be produced by sensation (αἴσθησις), "will (θέλημα) is a rational and vital appetite attached solely to natural things."[469] The will is the "ἐνέσπαρται φυσικῶς δυνάμις ὀρεκτικὴ" ("innate force appetitive of what is natural to the soul")[470] which embraces all mental movement. It is a "ἁπλὴ δύναμις" ("simple faculty").[471] The proper use of human ενεργέιαι, especially uniting in the power of will according to nature, is an exalted spiritually-sensory movement which corresponds to the bodily symbols of God's interaction with the world that we saw in the treatment of chapter 11 above. Energies uniting in the δύναμις of the purified will achieve the finer sense of sight and ontological state of visibility. This idea is immediately understood through the less discursive, more direct image of the angel and the angelic. These are mobile images of the transformation of human visibility which bridge spirit and matter. While he clearly values the discursive, philosophical terms, and concepts he gathers here, Mansur is also deeply concerned with the conjunction between will and senses, particularly vision. The understanding of spiritual faculties travels the path of the angel between God and the human.

Book Three, Chapters 44-73

Not surprisingly, for Mansur, paradise is "Both of the mind and of the senses. Thus, while in the body he lived on earth in the world of sense, in his spirit he dwelt among the angels, cultivating thoughts of God and being nurtured on these."[472] Mansur

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[469] *OF* 36:56—57; Kotter II 89-90;Chase 248.

[470] *OF* 36:51; Kotter II 89; Chase 248.

[471] *OF* 36:58; Kotter II 90; Chase 248.

[472] *OF* 44:34—36; Kotter II, 104; Chase 265.

repeats here again the idea borrowed from Gregory Nazianzen that the human is a

connection or bond between God and matter, as the conclusion of a discussion of

whether to subordinate body to soul or vice versa. This leads to consideration of the

devil as enemy of true vision, the one who envies the divine destiny of man, and thus

casts down the balance of body and soul. As we have seen in previous chapters, this is

an inherently anti-iconoclastic theme: the human taken from both being and seeing the

image of God and losing the sight-refining likening to God in virtue and re-collection

of natural powers in purified will.[473] For this reason, ascesis and the angelic are at play

in this very important articulation of how humanity mirrors the divine by essence,

power, and actions. Mansur identifies the drive for reproduction to sustain life as a

compromise out of weakened faith in God's life-giving power. He also identifies the

fallen transferal of the object of anger from the devil to fellow man (which we can see

as always bearing iconoclastic connotations for Mansur) as a further sliding into the

depths of human corruption.[474]

Out of the combination of questions of human composition, a sacral term for

place (χωρίον) and the question concerning the body, posed by enthronement,

especially vis-à-vis the Ascension of Christ, we are brought back to a consideration of

place under different terms:

> the mind became the seat (χωρίον) of the Divinity which had become
> hypostatically united to it, just as, of course, the flesh did—but not an
> associate… when we say our nature rose from the dead and ascended and sat at
> the right hand of the Father, we do not imply that all human persons arose.. but

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[473] OF 44: ; Kotter II ; Chase 265-266.

[474] OF 44: 57-74; Kotter II 105-106; Chase 266.

that our entire nature did so in the Person of Christ. Certainly the Apostle says: 'He hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in Christ.'[475]

The word used here, χωρίον, is only used by Mansur in chapter 25:11 of the *Orthodox Faith*, referring to paradise, described as, "a divine place and a worthy habitation for God in his image."[476] The few occurrences of the word in the Scriptures seem to imply a country place, not inappropriate to Paradise (as well as Gethsemane in Mark 14:32 and the Matthean parallel, and the field of blood in Acts 1:18-19). We see, however, that χωρίον stands in as synonym for τόπος—place as a meeting point for the limitless divine presence and for the finite beings who can by grace, power, will, and action of God be made to see him in sovereign condescension and incarnate ascension.

It is no accident that angels (singing and seen as ministering through song in worship) form the main defense of the Chalcedonian Orthodox insistence on the Trisagion without the christological addition, through use of a hagiographic story of vision which supports the particular form of the Trisagion used by the Chalcedonians.[477] The importance of angels and humans acting as angels in the flesh, in worship, explains the vigor with which this issue was debated by both sides. Right worship as a theophanic and visionary prerequisite is at stake: "The absurd conceit of the Fuller—as if he were greater than the Seraphim!"[478]

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[475] OF 50: 44—54; Kotter II 121—122; Chase 280—1.

[476] *OF* 25:11—12; Kotter II 71; Chase 230.

[477] *OF* 54:39—43; Kotter II 130; Chase 288. Trisagion: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us." The christological addition, placed after "immortal," is: "who was crucified for us." This is an expansion of angelic/ seraphic song in Isaiah 6 and parallels which, through divergent liturgical texts, became emblematic of Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian positions.

[478] *OF* 54:50—52; Kotter II 130—131; Chase 289. Peter the Fuller, anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch (471-488 CE), is credited with the christological interpolation in the Trisagion.

Father and Spirit participate in incarnation through will.[479] Thus the image of

the divine nature (all three persons) as seen through the incarnation, must be the

visualization of will. Christ has to be divine for this, not just human. Mansur finds it

necessary that Christ is not God "come to inhabit a previously formed man, as a

prophet."[480] Certainly this touches on the immediate Islamic milieu of Mansur,[481] while

also simultaneously working against the rejection of incarnation and image. Once again

the meeting of many elements of Christian theology uniting to rebuff the Islamic

accusation of *association* leveled against Christ. Here it is the affirmation that the will

and nature can be one, yet one Person of the Trinity can be incarnate. Christ does not

need to be only a prophet to safeguard God's one-ness.

The shared will between the persons of the Trinity is of a piece with identity

of nature and operation.[482] Will, sight, and operation are all analogous in the potential

for difference (διάφοραν, here technical) in how (πῶς) they are used: as natural or

against nature.[483] Thus, there is by implication some conceptual overlap between them.

Understanding the will of God is seeing its operation. Thus it is that the divine image

and αὐτεξούσιον (free will) go together.[484] When applied to God and creatures, there is,

however, something equivocal, because the αὐτεξούσιον is an imaged reality:

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[479] *OF* 55:63—66; Kotter II 133; Chase 292.

[480] *OF* 56:31—32; Kotter II 134—135; Chase 293.

[481] See above, chapter 2.

[482] *OF* 58:13—15; Kotter II, 137; Chase, 296.

[483] *OF* 58: 30—42; Kotter II, 138—139; Chase, 297.

[484] *OF* 58:70—74; Kotter II, 140; Chase, 299.

The term of freedom of will is used equivocally—sometimes being referred to God, sometimes to the angels and sometimes to men. Thus with God it is supersubstantial, but with the angels the execution coincides with the inclination without admitting of any interval of time… he has neither the opposition from a body nor has he anyone to interfere with him… with men, however, …the inclination precedes the execution in point of time.[485]

Here, once again, we return to the angels as mirrors of human willing. On the one hand, the good angels have αὐτεξούσιον which draws immediately close to God, while humans have the bodily and fallen angelic, demonic interference: "Though man is free and has this freedom of will naturally, he also has the interference of the devil to contend with and the motion of the body."[486] The will was the first thing to suffer Adam's fall, and thus has to be taken on, assumed, and healed.[487] Once again, the will in natural state possesses inherent virtue:

The Lord brought us back from what is against nature to what is according to it—for this last is what is meant by 'according to the image and likeness.' Now asceticism and labors connected with it were not intended for the acquisition of virtue as of something to be introduced from the outside, but for the expulsion of evil, which has been introduced and is against nature.[488]

This assertion shows us that imitation of angelic, unimpeded willing, in accord with nature, requires ascesis—angelic life and virtue, a closer likeness through proper αὐτεξούσιον to the image of God. The rest of the third book details the full humanity of Christ, with a particularly anti-Nestorian and anti-Monothelite slant.

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[485] *OF* 58:122—128; Kotter II, 142; Chase, 301.

[486] *OF* 58:128—130; Kotter II, 142; Chase, 301.

[487] *OF* 58:133—141; Kotter II, 142; Chase, 301.

[488] *OF* 58:171—175; Kotter II, 144; Chase, 303.

The one last detail of interest to us is a piece of imagery that seems to make a split within the two natures of Christ and those are the Gospel depictions of Jesus praying. The explanation for why the Word would need to pray while: "prayer is an ascent of the mind to God,"[489]ends up emphasizing the image-impressing aspect and body-mind unity of prayer. Christ appropriates our "πρόσωπον [face] and impressed (τυπῶν) what was ours upon himself."[490]

He becomes a model (ὑπογραμμὸς): "Through his sacred mind He opened the way for us to ascend to God."[491] The context for this ascent is the endurance and victory over passions.[492] Thus the visible sign of ascent works into the visible place of struggle with passions and forms an iconic path for will, "to instruct us to put the divine will before our own."[493] This even applies to sharing our forsakenness, from the perspective of our πρόσωπον, by crying, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"[494] The point is that Christ takes on a visual human face which speaks for us and guides us. The mind here is not disembodied in any way, but the ascent of the mind in prayer fully united to senses and the face of the human. Prayer works with the will and mind in a way that is impressed upon the flesh of the human. The reality of the incarnation could somehow be seen as less, and the human nature of Christ not full,

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[489] *OF* 68:2; Kotter II, 167; Chase, 328.

[490] *OF* 68:7; Kotter II, 167; Chase, 329.

[491] *OF* 68:9 Kotter II, 167; Chase, 329.

[492] *OF* 68:10—13; Kotter II, 167; Chase, 329.

[493] *OF* 68:26—27; Kotter II, 168; Chase, 329.

[494] *OF* 68:31—36; Kotter II, 168; Chase, 330.

without prayer as a sacramentalized union of the physical and the mind in ascent. Christ

has to pray prayers that we need with our human face. Here we have implied the same

way of thinking that was evident in the theology of place, and once again realize the

full image-laden character of the will.

Book Four

Immediately in chapter 74, the question of the circumscribed body is confronted

in the rather mind boggling idea of the ascension of Christ bodily into heaven. Louth

rightly notes that the fourth part of the *Orthodox Faith* seems heavily concerned with a

"middle way."[495] It seems, however. just as important to note that this section begins

and ends with Christ enthroned. Louth notes that toward the end of the section, in

chapters 96—98, there is some anti-Jewish polemic, which Louth then attributes to the

particularly inconsistent way that the *DI* (and thus also here Mansur) has "shrill

supersessionism," while at once noting that, "there is less evidence of anti-Jewish

polemic than one might have expected, given that the latter half of the seventh century

witnessed the revival of Jewish-Christian polemic."[496] Once again, I believe this

polemic, which is not really about Judaism per se (as we have seen in previous

chapters), plays a more direct role in the purpose of this and Mansur's other works.

Thus, as Griffith points out, Mansur is working within the Islamic milieu toward

questions that are relevant and perhaps even part of the shaping of discourse in that

context.[497] As we have seen above in dealing with *Divine Images*, Mansur is not

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[495] Louth, *St. John Damascene*, 179—180.

[496] Louth, *St. John Damascene*, 187—188.

[497] Griffith, "'Melkites,' 'Jacobites'" 24—26.

supersessionist, but rather arguing for the Christian scriptural identification as Israel.

This last section deals directly at many points with the contrast between Jewish and

Christian practice. Mansur tries to show what he sees as a scriptural and Israelite reason

for a difference of practice; something that might make more sense to an audience

which is feeling a renewed pressure to discard early Christian and in many cases,

Jewish-Christian reasons behind the change from second temple practice to the

practices which are still informed and shaped by the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. To

defend against this, Mansur has to invigorate and emphasize anew pre-Nicene

understandings for a post-Christendom readership. These practices have to be justified

on the basis of their correctness in terms of the Law and Christ. It is for this reason that

the body of Christ is justified as "royal vestment," among other images of

deification.[498]

Old problems seem new again. Pre-Nicene issues return in his context, as with

the raising of the question of "How are all three persons of the Trinity not incarnate?"[499]

This is combined with very particular affirmations of the redemption of the image as

the cause of the fall of the demons[500] as well as pointed words exalting the martyr and

anti-violent means of Christianity's spread:

> It was not by force that He led sinners to virtue, not by having them swallowed
> up by the earth, nor having them burned up by fire, nor by ordering them stoned
> to death; it was with gentleness and forbearance that he persuaded men to
> pursue virtue and for virtue's sake to undergo sufferings with rejoicing. Sinners

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[498] OF 76:9—13; Kotter II, 174; Chase 336.

[499] OF 77: passim; Kotter II, 174—176; Chase 337—339.

[500] OF 77: 22—32; Kotter II, 175;Chase 338.

were formerly tormented, yet clung to their sin, and sin was accounted a god by them; but now, for piety and virtue's sake, they choose torments, tortures, and death.[501]

This narrative of the spread of Christianity points to a difference of opinion about legitimate ways to spread the religion as well as a fundamental disagreement over the role of image in the redemption of the human from demons and false gods and their idols. These both are current issues for Mansur, in dispute with Islam. It also emphasizes that salvation cannot be tyranny, but rather that sin and idolatry are despotic and violent, and conversion should happen through attraction to a sovereign, peaceful, free spreading of virtue. The question is also one of a comparison of the false worship of a created angel and the true worship by the human as the image of God, moving in virtue away from violence and oppression. This is something that matches the critiques of political authority that we found in the *DI*.

Perhaps another way of furthering Louth's insight regarding the representation of Chalcedonian and Dyothelite Christianity as the middle way, is to synthesize this with Griffith's take on Mansur's work. Thus we would say that he is trying to represent the bridging of the human and divine in a way that uses scriptural justification. In doing so, apology for the practice of Christianity is made through the lens of a readership which is particularly subject to Islamic and/or Jewish or Judaized or Islamicized challenges.

The unification of Jew and Gentile is necessary for Mansur's resolution of the question of how we see God and the unity, yet fullness of the two natures in Christ. But

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[501] *OF* 77:46—52; Kotter II, 176; Chase 339.

he is pushed to defend that in terms of scriptural type and image. In chapter 78, he turns

to deal with the composite character of God the Word in the incarnation, specifically

because of his interest in the union between the visible and the invisible: "The same one

person [ὑπόστασις] is at once uncreated in its divinity and created in its humanity, both

visible and invisible."[502]

Another old question which resurfaces, ostensibly because of Origen, but

perhaps more importantly, because of the larger Jewish and Islamic milieu, is the

opinion that the Word was pre-existent mind prior to taking flesh.[503] Christ's anointing

is affirmed, following Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril, and Athanasius, as being one with his

body and his taking the name Christ. It is seen as anointing with the "oil of gladness,"

following the typological connection between Ps. 44:8 and Heb.1:9.[504] The transition

from invisible to visible once again is at issue and even is hinted at when dealing with

scriptural statements of future in the past tense. When dealing with Ps.44:8, as spoken

in the past tense, his riposte is that when Bar. 3:38 says, "Afterwards, he was seen upon

earth and conversed with men," this is also the same type of statement of providential

movement to a vision fulfilled.[505] Once again, we see here a concern to limit the

damage that one might have in classing Christ with the angels, among pre-existent

minds or other created beings, but also to affirm the real visual experience of God in the

flesh which is anointed in a mystery which lifts up the image. Similar to this is chapter

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[502] *OF* 78:7—8; Kotter II, 177; Chase, 339.

[503] Directly stated to be because of Origenism, or maybe better understood as a potential for the combination of all three, OF 79:2—4; Kotter II, 177;Chase, 340.

[504] *OF* 79:10—12; Kotter II, 177; Chase 340.

[505] *OF* 79:22—30; Kotter II, 178; Chase 341.

81's insistence that Christ is first-born and only begotten, to conclude with the emphasis of John 20:17, on a special relationship with the Father that Christ shares with us, while still distinguishing his relationship from ours; the Son by nature sharing with those who are sons of God by grace. Here there is the resonance of the term "firstborn" being applied to angels, as well as the term "sons of God."[506]

The most notable thing for our purposes about Mansur's treatment of baptism, is his emphasis on water being used in accordance with Law for purification as one of the "things which are perceptible to the eye… symbols of those which are perceptible to the mind."[507] The sense of continuity, even justification of continuity with the Law is striking throughout.[508] Baptism is particularly connected to a new Israelite identity for the Christian via its typological connection with circumcision: "By baptism we are circumcised of the entire covering which we have borne from birth, sin that is, and become spiritual Israelites and a people of God."[509] There may be a change from circumcision to baptism, but it must still make one an Israelite.

Similarly, the sacramental power and veneration of the cross is also heavily justified on the basis of Old Testament imagery. The cross is even likened to circumcision as a special sign:

> This we have been given as a sign on our forehead, just as Israel was given the circumcision, for by it we faithful are set apart from the infidels and recognized.

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[506] *OF* 81; Kotter II, 180; Chase 342—343.

[507] *OF* 82:48—52 ; Kotter II, 183; Chase 345.

[508] See especially *OF* 82:68—92; Kotter II, 184—185; Chase 346—347.

[509] *OF* 83:13—15; Kotter II, 186; Chase, 348—349.

It is a shield and armor and a trophy against the Devil. It is a seal that the Destroyer may not strike us as the Scripture says.[510]

Once again the sense of a direct concern with Israel strikes toward the end of this chapter:

The great Moses calling out: "You will see your life hanging before your eyes on a tree"; and Isaias: "I have spread forth my hands all day to an unbelieving and contradictory people." May we who adore this attain to the portion of Christ the crucified.[511]

This significance of identification, vis-à-vis the other Abrahamic religions is very much at play in the seemingly petty issue of the orientation of places of worship. What is the holy place, the *omphalos*[512] of the Christian worldview? It is not Jerusalem or some other 'Mecca,' and it is not simply heaven, but the meeting place between the two, the spiritual and material paradise, a sort of posture and placement of the human rather than a geographic location. He defends the literal "orientation" toward the material image of the spiritual light, the sunrise. Mansur marshals an impressive typology of the east, from typological names for Christ, to solar imagery in the Scriptures, to the depiction of Paradise: "When we worship God we long for our ancient fatherland and gaze toward it."[513] He takes particular note of the arrangement of the temple and the encampments around the tabernacle. The seal of it all is the unwritten traditions about the orientation of the cross, ascension, and the apocalyptic

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[510] *OF* 84:40—43; Kotter II, 188; Chase, 350. It is possible Mansur also have Ezekiel 9:4—8 in mind, where Jerusalemites are saved by the "mark," σημεῖον in Greek, the letter "Tau" in Hebrew, in the older Hebrew script a cross-shaped "t." He does not however use σημεῖον here.

[511] *OF* 84:86—89; Kotter II, 190; Chase, 352.

[512] The navel, the cosmic center.

[513] *OF* 85:16—17; Kotter II, 190; Chase, 353.

words of Christ in Matt. 24:7. It is all sealed here with the statement about unwritten

traditions. In this case something that is an appeal, in context, to Jewish authority and

direct connection not just to Christ but also the second temple and the places of

Christian pilgrimage:[514]

> As a matter of fact when the Lord was crucified, He looked toward the west,
> and so we worship gazing toward Him. And when He was taken up, He
> ascended toward the east and thus the Apostles worshiped Him and thus He
> shall come in the same way as they had seen Him going into heaven, as the Lord
> Himself said: 'As the lightning cometh out the east and appeareth even into the
> west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' And thus while we are
> awaiting Him, we worship toward the east. This is moreover, the unwritten
> tradition of the Apostles, for they have handed many things down to us
> unwritten.[515]

Unwritten they are, but not without depiction. These things are unwritten,

because they are part of a memory that belongs to a place associated with worship and

pilgrimage, but also because of both physical and spiritual senses of the meaning and

purpose of liturgical practice as a mystery of God's self-revelation. These traditions live

in visual practice and the material iconography of the church because they are

considered a worthwhile and significant meeting of spiritual purpose and embodied

practice.

In the chapter on the "Holy Mysteries," or communion, Mansur displays the

common constellation of things connected with temple and angelic imagery: the

αὐτεξούσιον;[516] the interaction between God's binding all things together; the human as

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[514] OF 85:28—229; Kotter II, 191; Chase 353—354.

[515] OF 85:21—29; Kotter II, 190—191;Chase 353-354.

[516] OF 86:16; Kotter II, 191; Chase 354.

binding together the spirit and matter; and the renewal of both in "new birth" (with

"new food"); the composite spiritual and material character of the sacramental things;

and the effective power of the Word and Spirit. What is specifically angelic here is the

emphasis on Christ as the bread of life from heaven, which is not directly connected

here with the phrase "bread of angels." This is perhaps because of the idea that there is

a difference between what the angels (as noted above and will be touched on again with

chapter 97) and the eschatological humanity will be nourished by and the present

communion:

> They are called antitypes of the things to come, not because they are not really
> the body and blood of Christ, but because it is through them that we participate
> in the divinity of Christ now, while then it will be through the intellect and by
> vision alone.[517]

This goes along with the idea that the material realities conduct us to a human

sensory perception which is higher: "He joined His divinity to these and made them His

body and blood, so that by the ordinary natural things we might be raised to those

which surpass the order of nature."[518] We have noted above, in treatment of the text of

DI (especially as touched on 1.15 and 3:18), overshadowing is an image which is

cherubic as well as being the term used at the Annunciation, which is more central to

the argument here by Mansur. As angelic and cherubic, it is very particularly important

to Mansur as such: here it is associated with the epiclesis and the transformation of the

eucharistic gifts, an association which would have been ready at hand from the not

uncommon Jerusalem experience of the liturgy of St. James, where there is an ancient

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[517] *OF* 86:180—182 ; Kotter II, 198; Chase, 361.

[518] *OF* 86:91—93; Kotter II, 194;Chase, 357.

dialogue between priest and people, where they ask for the Holy Spirit to overshadow the priest.[519] It is an image which brings together the associations of the sacrificial offerings and theophanies of the Old Covenant and temple and the reconfiguration of temple and sacrificial images in Christianity. His reconfiguration depends heavily on the typological associations canonized by the Epistle to the Hebrews: Melchizedek and the mystical heavenly altar at which only bread and wine are offered.[520] The emphasis on bread and wine is peculiar and seems to bespeak an apology for not sacrificing and changing the type of offering from animals to more humble food: "Not a plain bread, but bread joined to the Godhead."[521] Mansur has a potential interlocutor who feels able to challenge Christianity on its perceived lack of adherence to the Torah: "It was with bread and wine that Melchisedech, the priest of the most high God, received Abraham… That altar prefigured [προεικόνιζε] this mystical altar."[522] Temple, angels, and theophany provide the image elements for change of direct, material adherence to laws of sacrifice. However, it is noteworthy that he does not seem to be challenged about the consumption of blood, but rather whether the change can be real, the elements are worthy, and whether this is proper to the imagery of a scripturally legitimate altar, according to the narrative of the Pentateuch.

Mansur addresses veneration of the saints in chapter 88 and so continues the

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[519] St. James Liturgy, see Ephrem Lash, anastasis.org.uk . Also in the dialogue of the Byzantine liturgies of Basil and John Chrysostom, as dialogue quietly between priest and deacon. *OF* 86:74—84; Kotter II, 194;Chase, 357.

[520] *OF* 86:135—152; Kotter II, 196; Chase, 359.

[521] OF 86:84—93; Kotter II,194; Chase 359.

[522] OF 86:135—137, Kotter II, 196; Chase 359.

concern for temple. The saints are temples:

> Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?"; 'Now the Lord is the Spirit'; and again: 'If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' How then shall they not be honored, who are the living temples of God, the living tabernacles of God? These in life openly took their stand with God.[523]

Sandwiched between the identification of the saint with temple in the first three paragraphs and the assertion of a change in law over corpse contamination (in the last long paragraph) because of the resurrection, we have the assertion that God's will works wonders through relics. The assertion of the will of God here serves to emphasize the movement from laws which proscribe contact with the dead, to a cultus that makes of the dead bodies of the saint a new kind of temple. This is not in discontinuity with the law, but rather revealing the intent and goal of the lawgiver, who uses less exalted things to give water: "For if by the will of God water poured out of the precipitous living rock in the desert, and for the thirsty Samson from the jawbone of an ass, is it unbelievable that fragrant ointment should flow from the relics of the martyrs?"[524] The point is not that the Christian rejects the scriptural temple, but rather transfers it to the body of Christ and of the saints as they reveal the providential and salvific will of God. The post-resurrection redundancy of laws regarding corpse contamination is a case in point. Salvation comes through the crucified and risen body of Christ; therefore, what prevented entry to the temple, an impure dead body and contact with it, now becomes central to worship and even the pure temple itself: "These are become repositories and pure dwelling places of God, for 'I will dwell in them and

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[523] OF 88:31—35; Kotter II, 204; Chase 368.

[524] *OF* 88:38—40; Kotter II, 204; Chase 368.

walk among them."[525] This is an undoing of a commandment related to the temple, for the sake the divine provision of a salvific deepening of the human connection to or even identification with the temple. All of which expresses God's will, worked out over time.

Surrounding these central themes and the incarnational and resurrectional dynamic around the image of the temple, Mansur also replays the themes we have so often seen in tandem with angelic imagery: the saints are "friends of Christ," "sons of God," and "gods lords and kings."[526] In addition, there is once again the idea of the visibility of virtue in the image, made alive: "Let us set up monuments to them, and visible images and let us ourselves by the imitation of their virtues become their living monuments and images."[527]

In dealing with icons briefly in chapter 89, there is nothing new. The fact that the chapter is short, however, serves to highlight the central points: image of God, temple, rejection of idolatry, incarnation, a sense of the community of worshippers past and present, and the importance of unwritten traditions. Once again, we see that much repeated quotation from Basil's *On the Holy Spirit* 18:45: "The honor paid to the image redounds to the original."[528] Here the "original" is not just God. This assertion is placed between the human's being made to God's own (οἰκείαν) image and the tabernacle as "image and pattern" (εἰκόνα καὶ τύπον) of the heavenly things. So the shape of the

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[525] *OF* 88:22—23 Kotter II, 203; Chase, 367.

[526] *OF* 88:1—10; Kotter II, 202-203; Chase, 367.

[527] *OF* 88:61—62; Kotter II, 205; Chase, 369.

[528] *OF* 89:7—8; Kotter II, 206; Chase, 370—371.

original is not just God, but God as mediated through the human form and the liturgical

form of the temple. One might also put it this way: the form and image are revealed by

God, who puts himself into the created originals, the human, the temple, and all of

creation[529] with all its revealed iconography.

Mansur emphasizes slightly more clearly the connection between sacrifice and

icon: the "graven things," if depicting pagan gods, are condemnable. However "Jews

also used to sacrifice;"[530] thus, the difference of referent is the important factor, not the

absolute difference in practice. And since the sacrifice is part of the heavenly icon of

the temple, thus it is not offered to demons. Then it follows, we can make images which

are shown to us as part of that heavenly revelation of the original image, since the

sacrifices themselves were validated by that image and type. Sacrifices are justified by

their iconic relation to the true original. Vision is the basis of law. Mansur is arguing

for a visual Torah, the original shown to Moses the "God-seer:"[531] "God had said to

Moses, 'See (ὅρα) that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown

(δειχθέντα) you on the mount.'"[532] This is followed immediately by the cherubim:

specific things/ beings seen, which themselves form an apparatus for the vision of the

enthroned God, in particular, in the state of being overshadowed. Mansur is reading the

visual language at face value. The Law comes through what Moses sees and must make

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[529] *OF* 89:11; Kotter II, 206; Chase, 371. Neither Kotter or Chase agree on to what this is referring because it is not easy to find a simple affirmation of this in any one place in the Scriptures, though this part of the work of this dissertation: to show that this is a belief which Mansur holds, that founded on a complex of assumptions concerning the temple.

[530] *OF* 89:17—18; Kotter II, 206; Chase, 371.

[531] Traditional epithet for Moses in eastern hymnography and in iconography.

[532] *OF* 89:11—12; Kotter II, 206; Chase 371.

seen.

It is perhaps because of the preceding mountain imagery that in the next
chapter Scripture is likened to a paradise to which one takes wing: "Lifts our mind onto
the back of the sacred dove, gleaming with gold and most brilliant."[533] Scripture is seen
as the means to growth and ascent, which is perfected by virtue as a reward for
persistence in reading and meditating on it. All the images find their place among the
constellation of temple imagery, and with all the references to wings, we are once again
reminded of theophanic angelic themes, such as overshadowing.

Chapter 91 brings us what at first appearance seems to be a tedious series of
enumerated distinctions between several ways of speaking about Christ before, during,
and after his incarnate ministry and resurrection. Of particular interest, on closer
inspection, within the six things that are said of him before the incarnation, is the
second, on statements which "show the perfection [τὰ δὲ τὸ τέλειον] of the hypostasis
as 'Son of God'; 'figure of the substance' [χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως]; 'Angel of great
counsel, Wonderful, Counsellor," and the like."[534] So the identification of Christ with
an angelic title is directly parallel to the Son as complete and perfect Image of the
Father. The third also mentions "the substantial Word springing … from the mind (ἐν
τῷ νῷ)."[535] This particular way of speaking pertains to the περιχώρησις of the
hypostases. Therefore, what was expressed by image—the Word as angel of the

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[533] OF 90:27—28; Kotter II, 209—210; Chase 374.

[534] OF 91:8—11; Kotter II, 212; Chase 376.

[535] OF 91:13—14; Kotter II, 212; Chase 377.

Mind—here is taken in two parts to express both hypostatic perfection and mutual indwelling. Mansur's description of the things that could be said of Christ before the incarnation supplies more detail or another lens on the area covered by *DI*'s way of speaking of the natural image in the first four kinds he enumerates.[536] The image of the will or providence are important to the last two.[537] However the most important point to note here is that issues around the hypostasis of the Word parallel the way that the image was spoken of. This overlap between person and image also is remarkable in the things said of the one Person in both natures, things which are particularly sacramental (John 6:58), theopaschite (1 Corinthians 2:8), and relative to the ascension (John 16:10, 3:13).[538] All of these things involve the iconic paradox of visibility in a higher, paradoxical sense: the body, not just the image, transgressing the boundary between the material and spiritual, even the created and uncreated. An interesting final note, is that what is natural to the body is conceived of as defined by, rather than changed by the resurrection; as in the case of entering through closed doors and passing easily from place to place. The body is thus seen as naturally more angelic, and capable of rising to a higher, finer level.[539]

The next four chapters once again remind us of early Christian problems over will and the potential for dualism: calling God's permission 'action;' the idea of two opposing powers of good and evil; the question of whether God makes a being evil by

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[536] OF 91:5—26; Kotter II, 212—213; Chase 376—377.

[537] OF 91:26—41; Kotter II, 213; Chase 377—378.

[538] OF 91:123—128; Kotter II, 216; Chase 382.

[539] OF91:138—141; Kotter II, 217; Chase 382.

predetermination; and St. Paul's statement, "law of sin."[540] This is of note, although it brings us little in terms of temple or angel concern, because it shows what perhaps might have been a concern for theodicy in contemporary Christian society faced with Islamic debates over determinism and a new revelation supposed to be taken with strong literalism. It is a correlate to Mansur's concern to shore up understanding of the αὐτεξούσιον. It is notable that evil is a matter of distance from God in will, but not in place: "From him every good has its goodness, and in proportion as one is removed from Him in will (γνώμη)—not of course in place (τόπος)—one becomes evil."[541]

The Ascetic and the Mystical Fulfilment of Law, chapters 96—98

The next chapter, on the Sabbath, is interesting for the way it turns Mansur's focus on the practice of 'rest' to issues of ascesis. There seems to be some current question for him of fasting on the Sabbath,[542] which he finds necessary to defend by noting Moses' and Elijah's forty day fasts, as well by pointing to the centrality of prayer and worship to the Sabbath. In the end, like circumcision, the Sabbath is about a total dedication of all of life:

> When the Law prescribed that bodily things be refrained from on the seventh day and time devoted to the spiritual, it intimated to the true Israel, the Israel that has a mind that sees God, that it should devote itself to God at all times and rise up above the things of the body.[543]

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[540] Rom 7:25

[541] OF 93:39—41; Kotter II, 221; Chase 387.

[542] This would seem to differentiate him from slightly later Byzantine polemics, such as in Photius' and later critiques of Latin practice.

[543] OF 96:85-89; Kotter II, 227; Chase 393.

Rising above σωματικά, or bodily things, however, seems to still focus on the real, incarnate, and visible body of Christ. The ascension and enthronement of Christ also raises differences between the spiritual and the Law of Moses. Mansur, along the line of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is claiming that Christ has ascended above certain aspects of the mosaic law, because he is enthroned above, bodily with the Father. Chase translates ὑπέρτεροι as superior—those who are "superior to the Law of Moses"—when clearly it most commonly means above in place.[544] That could still mean superior, but the literally vertical is definitely at play here. The assertion is followed by the resurrection and the dramatic assertion that Christ, "With the gates of heaven opened to Him, sat down corporeally at the right hand of the Father, where they also shall enter who keep the law of the Spirit."[545] He describes this as the "την τέλειαν κατάπαυσιν," (the perfect or final rest of human nature), a thing which causes feasting.[546] The human nature of Christ is still bodily, yet it is now above the former temple, celebrating the perfection of humanity, enthroned.

We turn once again to the emphasis on virginity toward the end of *Orthodox Faith*. As discussed above, there is the strange fusion of the LXX of Isaiah 31:9: "τάδε λέγει κύριος μακάριος ὃς ἔχει ἐν Σιών σπέρμα καὶ οἰκείους ἐν Ιερουσαλημ,"[547] with what all the interpreters take to be the levirate commands around Deuteronomy 25:9.[548]

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[544] *OF* 96:61; Kotter II, 226; Chase, 392. See LSJ 1869, entry I, ὑπέρτερος.

[545] *OF* 96:71—72; Kotter II, 226; Chase, 392.

[546] *OF* 96:66—67; Kotter II, 226; Chase, 392.

[547] "Blessed is he that has seed in Zion, and household friends in Jerusalem."

[548] Beyond the scope of this dissertation, but of interest for further examination, would be a search for potential parallels in Syriac literature, targumim, or rabbinic literature. I suspect something might turn up,

The verbal correspondences are not there for Deuteronomy, but for the Isaiah passage, though the content makes sense: absolute need to procreate even if via some creative fiction of heredity for the sake of perpetuating a man's name. It clearly follows the concern of the previous chapter to make apology for a practice which seems to violate the letter of the Torah. Here once again, ample scriptural examples are given which contradict the Law's insistence on procreation, albeit sometimes stretched a bit: Noah and those in the ark, Elijah, Elisha, three youths in Babylon, Daniel, all of Israel at Sinai, and priestly abstinence with temple service.[549] For him, like so many before,[550] this matches the ideal of paradisial virginity, the most natural state of humanity, which only falls into the providential use of procreative powers.[551] The contrast between descent and ascent are strong here: virginity is "from above;"[552] virginity belongs to the creation of Adam and Eve; the virtuous and exalted state of the angels; and to begetting and state of life of Christ.[553] It belongs not to a contrast between good and bad states, but to a spectrum of virtue, which sees bodily transformation as a goal, from something more earthly to the more angelic, paradisial, and fit for the heavenly liturgy in Christ:

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and that this is not just an anomalous LXX conflation. The point here is that such a reading is a question for him, and that would denote a very new, or renewed, critique of monastic life that would have new urgency in the Islamic milieu.

If one takes the fictive aspects of levirate marriage, it is also a sort of spiritual adoption which transgresses the boundary between the dead and living. It could be used as part of an analogical justification for monastic celibacy and spiritual reproduction. The dead man physically fails to procreate, but the law provides a "resurrected" name and progeny. This would make Jesus' interpretation of the law to be not a flat contradiction, but a perception of a significant train of reasoning which leads to his "halakhah." And it is notable that Jesus is shown as silencing his critics.

[549] *OF* 97:26—44; Kotter II, 228-229; Chase 394—5.

[550] Here, specifically, Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 17.

[551] *OF* 97:7—15; Kotter II, 227—228; Chase 394.

[552] *OF* 97:5; Kotter II, 227; Chase 393.

[553] *OF* 97:52—67; Kotter II, 229—230; Chase 396.

Virginity is better than good. For with the virtues, as well as with the vices, there are greater and lesser degrees… Celibacy, however, is an imitation of the angels… So, virginity is as much more honorable than marriage as the angel is superior [ὑπέρτερος –again: "above"] to man. But what am I saying—an angel? Christ Himself is the glory [κλέος] of virginity.[554]

Chapter 98 continues the apology toward Jewish practices with a direct treatment of circumcision. Mansur repeats what was said in chapter 82: circumcision is surpassed by the removal not just of a piece, but all of sin and ἐπιθυμία (desire). The cross is the baptismal mark: "Holy baptism gives us the sign of the venerable cross upon our forehead but does not set us apart from the Gentiles, for all the Gentiles have attained baptism and have been sealed with the sign of the cross."[555] Here Mansur does not identify as Gentile, or, it seems, as even from the Gentiles. Perhaps he is reflecting the assumption we have seen above several times that Christians are not Gentiles, but taken from them. Mansur is here summing up not just the treatment of circumcision, but also of Sabbath:

[Christ] kept the Law in all things and observed the Sabbath that he might fulfill the Law and make it stand [στήσῃ τὸν νόμον]… but from the time that when he was baptized and men saw the Holy Ghost coming down on Him in the form of a dove, from that time on the spiritual worship (λατρεία) and polity and the kingdom of heaven have been proclaimed.[556]

The theophany of the baptism in the Jordan reveals in Christ the ascent of the Law, its "standing" up (from its reclining in the Sabbath) into its heavenly liturgical promise, an ascent to the height of ascetic and angelic perfection of virtue in Christ.

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[554] *OF* 97:55—61; Kotter II 229; Chase, 396.

[555] *OF* 98:29—32; Kotter II, 231; Chase, 398.

[556] *OF* 98:36—40; Kotter II, 231-232; Chase, 398.

Final Temple: Antichrist, Resurrection & Judgment in Chapters 99 and 100

The chief issue in the discussion of the coming of the antichrist, is what we see in 2nd Thessalonians 2:4: "ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός."[557] The antichrist bases his reign out of calling himself God and enthroning himself in the temple, the "former one." Part of the point is that "he will not come to us, but to the Jews—not for the sake of Christ and Christ's, for which reason, also, he is called Antichrist." This has resonance for Mansur, in that he has already identified Islam as "forerunner of the Antichrist,"[558] and there is, in complete accord with the eschatological picture, an ostensibly "judaizing" religion which has rebuilt the Dome of the Rock on the temple mount, replete with anti-Christian verses from the Quran, denying Jesus' divinity.[559] Once again the ascension, in reverse (as stated in Acts 1:11) is of paramount importance, as Christ who is fully God and human returns again from heaven.

The last chapter, 100, on the resurrection, goes to great lengths to defend the resurrection of the body. It is hard to see who the interlocutor is here. Perhaps there is some sort of Origenism latent in the community? There is still the potential for that to be an accusation. Mansur has proven that the iconoclasts have denigrated the body, and perhaps are not seeing the abiding validity of it. The comparison of glorified human

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[557] "He takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4 RSV).

[558] *OF* 100:2; Kotter IV, 60; Chase, 153.

[559] Surah Maryam 19:34—37; see Oleg Grabar *Formation of Islamic Art* New Haven: Yale University Press (1973) 48—67. Here Mansur connects in a small way to what David Olster presents as Judaism's stand-in role for tension over Islam: David Olster, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response, and the Literary Construction of the Jew,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (1994).

state and that of the angels may also be the problem. It is in this comparison that the danger to the permanence of the body resides; because of this danger of heavenly proximity to "bodiless" beings, Mansur affirms the continuity of human corporeality and the angelic state. The human and the angel will stand in the same place of judgment and glorification: "before the terrible judgment seat of Christ."[560] This resurrection takes place in the corporeality which Christ himself refers to as "this temple; and in three days I will raise it up."[561] The corporeality of angels is again affirmed by Mansur, in a context which, because of the scriptural reference (Phil. 3:20—21), conflates glory and body:

"It shall rise a spiritual body." Such was the body of the Lord after the resurrection, the same which he entered through the closed doors without difficulty and which needed neither food, nor sleep, nor drink. "For they shall be,' says the Lord, 'like the angels of God," and there shall no longer be marriage or begetting of children. Indeed, the divine Apostle says: 'but our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, unto its being made like to the body of his glory, not meaning a transformation into another form—far be it!—but rather a change from corruption to incorruption.'[562]

The concern is to show that being spiritual and being like an angel need not be a completely bodiless state, because we will be part of the "body of his glory." Angels and the saved are part of that placement of Christ's body of glory, the enlightened throng around the throne, bearing bodies in constellation around the heavenly and earthly raised body of Christ: "Those who have done good will shine like the sun together with the angels unto eternal life with our Lord Jesus, ever seeing Him and

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[560] *OF* 100:124-125; Kotter II, 238; Chase, 406.

[561] *OF* 100:84-85; Kotter II, 237; Chase, 404.

[562] *OF* 100:96—106; Kotter II, 237—238; Chase, 405.

being seen, enjoying the unending bliss which is from Him…."[563] The end is the vision of God and God's vision of the human, all in glorious place and body.

Conclusion to Chapter 4: God's Body Returns Enthroned

While trying his best not to be original, Mansur is pushed by the contours of his situation, specifically the need to re-scripturalize, to make a bold inconsistency: body is affirmed via place, and the reflection between angel and the transformed human. Though God and angel are bodiless, God is not bodiless in Christ who represents the providential and salvific will of God shaped toward humanity and in human flesh. God is bodily not just in the incarnation, but forever, ascended and coming to judge. The angel is not bodiless compared to God, and has limitation by place, even if it is an intellectual place; thus the angel is bodily because of the angel's presence within the experience of the theophany. In the theophany, God allows himself to be uncontainably placed, and the angel is, even more so, placed and contained, and thus, in some indescribable sense, the angel is bodily. The human also is still bodily and imaged, even at the height of transformation. Virtue changes the human state to one that is angelic; but even Christ himself, enthroned, remains in the body, and the angels minister to him. Place, angel, and image are connected, because they tied to Mansur's image-logic of theophany and temple. Angels are iconic because they are part of the pattern of the heavenly temple or tabernacle, and they are seen because they appear within the intellectual place, a place where the will of God is seen centered in and radiating from the Word, Jesus Christ. All this does not deny the apophatic sense of the

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[563] OF 100:128—1131; Kotter II, 239; Chase, 406. Close to Byzantine funeral hymns attributed to Mansur.

unapproachable God on the one hand, but rather, Mansur takes the tradition to a much fuller materiality and expresses the radical aspects of the permanence of the enthroned, eternal, and visible body of the Word of God, God's body enthroned on the Cherubim and the saints.

Amongst the other tasks Mansur accomplishes in *On the Orthodox Faith*, he remains committed to developing: a scriptural reasoning for Christian belief in Trinity; an image-affirming sense of the human will; and the way that Christianity maintains and justifies the validity of its sacramental shift from certain Jewish practices to the sacraments. In an Islamic context, where Christians are vulnerable, especially to a claim of inconsistency within their Scriptures, Mansur develops a complex and sustained argument for the continuity of the God of Israel and Jesus Christ and his followers, a continuity which stretches from the inner-Trinitarian life to the second coming.

CONCLUSION:
Islamic Context and the Positive Defense of Deeper Knowledge and Vision

In Mansur's context, a new society governed by the new religion of Islam, Christians needed a defense of the whole of their life and belief. Islam, as a religion of the book which had not yet developed sophisticated philosophical arguments, required of Christians a defense of their beliefs and practices which highlighted not just the physical use of icons as objects, but the defense of the iconic and visual character of revelation itself. Although Islam is important to this, it is precisely the Christian reaction, a reaction constructed out of the Old Testament in great part, that forces Mansur to return to Scripture for the basis of understanding the Image and its iconography, in all of its theological, angelological, and anthropological implications. It is no mistake that Mansur ties the image of God and the visual experience of God in liturgy and ascetic or mystical striving to a very high valuation of the human, especially human will. Islam, or its Christian reflection as Mansur sees it, lacks the quality of witness to revelation that is necessary for the will, and thus also the human, to be dignified. For Mansur, the revelation of God is God placing himself before the eyes of and within the human in a way that is accessible to all. Scripture serves the will of God which is reflected in the human. Scripture is a smaller place within the larger place of worship where God is seen; or a helpful conveyance to that place.

Mansur was at once addressing both his society and religious-political context, and the outside erosion of these principles from the iconoclastic emperors or locals sympathetic or conformable to both. He prepared his church with the encyclopedic defense and use of images in his works. He provides a deep understanding of how

images mediate the presence of God, both in artifacts and more importantly, through the much larger theological and cosmological vision. This defense was not constructed primarily on metaphysical language, though such terms and concepts were very important to the overall work of *Orthodox Faith* in particular; but rather, Mansur makes compelling use of the ancient Christian common ground with Judaism in the Scriptures. What Mansur perceives in Islam (and Christian iconoclasm as well), is an incorrect appropriation of the Old Testament, where proper account is not taken of the scriptural typology of ascetic life, engagement of the human will in discernment, and the very iconography (both artifacts and cosmological imagery) which is proper to the Law. For Mansur, the Law given to Moses is the iconography in which Christ is seated on the throne, in the temple, surrounded by angels and showing an exalted body of God, Christ. The Law is the iconographic, cosmological context of Christ who makes explicit a further bodily, human elaboration, and revelation within that cosmos. Icons of God structure the whole of Christian movement to God, from memorials all the way to the intra-Trinitarian image between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Old Testament liturgical, temple icons of the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies, at the *Place*, are essential to understanding the inner life of the Trinity—not through concepts, but by icon. We might even go so far as to say that Mansur see angels and temple as forming the visual Torah, the non-discursive symbolic entrance to the mysteries through sight.

Beyond the preservation of discourse in text, Mansur has always been seen in the Christian East as a mystagogue through icons, poetry, and song. Not just an apologist for, but a practitioner of the art of the liturgical, and angelic approach toward the vision of God. What we have seen here is that this is true even within polemical,

encyclopedic, systematic and discursive works. The immediate sense of the vision of God exalting the whole of the human person and nature—moving the human toward greater likeness to God—is a central liturgical, ascetic, and mystical point in Mansur's theology.

Recap of Insights

We have seen, from *Heresies* chapter 100, that ascesis, discernment or will exercised through sense, vision of God and even the relation between persons of the Trinity are necessary to receive revelation. Revelation must be something which allows for a common witness that exalts all humanity: a theophanic, even liturgical event like Sinai. The ἐνέργεια that Mansur claims that Muhammad does not properly perceive is reflective of a properly used will, one which makes use of the senses and is the image of the God whose inner-Trinitarian life is closer to and is more like the senses than an absolutely solitary God whose lack of persons, results in an imageless *anaesthesis*. This implies that whatever angel is involved in revelation must be the image of a shared witness, not a mediation which hides its source, or does not allow discernment. The angel has to be the image of a will which is reflected in the human recipient of the message, because of both the angel's and the human's association with, or participation in, the activity or energy of God.

Our examination of *Divine Images* shows that the defense of the images is about the protection of a whole way of experiencing and understanding the divine presence. This extends from memorials to the inner-Trinitarian life. Mansur employs a radically Old Testament-based argument in the defense of icons: they are part of the Law which is shaped toward Christ. Temple and angel are the frame and even the direct icon of

Christ. Mansur defends icons and the whole theology of images, because the future generations of the Church demand an answer, in order to understand what it is to be the Israel which has received the Law: "When your son asks you in the time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?'"[564] And his answer in *Divine Images*, is that it is the theological revelation of the message or Messenger of the Mind of the Father, the Image and Word of God working the will of God in his salvific providence. The angel and temple as images are a non-discursive, liturgical theology. They are for Mansur, the basic material from which to talk about theology. Thus for him, these images impact the elements of theology as construed through Greek philosophical terminology.

In *Orthodox Faith* we are pointed toward a particular impact of image-reasoning. The term τόπος or place supplements ἐνεργεία and icon, as a mode of conceptualizing God's power that is to be present within circumscription or form without being confined. The temple basis of his use of τόπος is reinforced by the recurring concern with the incarnate enthronement of Christ, and the use of theophanic and angelic imagery in his treatment of the sacraments. Angelic imagery, and the need to specify how angels can appear in a place, factors into Mansur's anthropology and theology. The concerns of Mansur's icon theology and polemic around Islam are not explicit in *Orthodox Faith*, but are implicit in the continued validation of human will as ascending through progressive growth of vision—never a departure or a rejection of sense perception. While Mansur never goes back on the notion that God is bodiless, the impact of Christ's body and the Word as the image of God has a continuing impact: effectively Old Testament aspects of the bodily character of God are re-emphasized.

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[564] Exodus 13:14.

Things Left Out and Over: A Call for More Work in Mansur

While we have worked carefully over the material chosen for this dissertation, much was left untouched. Mansur has many important works, and much that would even be valuable for the present insights. However, we have to economically lay out a very important trajectory in his thought, drawing on a very clear line of connection between concern with the Islamic context, defense of icons, and encyclopedic concerns for preservation of theology and liturgical practice and understanding. But this leaves open, or reveals many lines for inquiry.

A great deal of work must still be done to read Mansur's work in greater detail. The polemical works need to be read in light of the connections we have seen here between the critique of Islam and Mansur's concern for re-excavating the scriptural basis of Orthodox belief and practice, with particular emphasis on image and will, and the strong use of angel and temple imagery. So also it would be very helpful to analyze the recurrence of these images in his *Against the Monothelites*, *On the Trisagion* for christological issues and *Against the Manicheens* as oblique reference to Islam as well as the *Dialogue of a Christian with a Saracen* (whether by him or out of his tradition).

Using the insights acquired here, further work could profitably go back to the use of philosophical and metaphysical language and lay out in greater detail the impact of scriptural imagery on the philosophical system, particularly how this may influence or mesh with particulars of Mansur's work in the *Dialectica*. A particular pressing issue from the perspective of scriptural interpretation is the examination of the *Sacra Parallela*. We need to determine what level of connection Mansur has with that work.

If it should turn out that he is the author/compiler, this could be a very fruitful place to expand on the analysis that we have made here. In particular it would highlight the ascetic element in his work, if it should prove to be by him. It would be valuable to examine it as part of his Palestinian Christian legacy, even if it is not by him.

Further, the hymns of Mansur also need more thorough critical editing and research into his borrowings from earlier fathers, as well as analysis of the creative way they are combined, and his own poetic additions. In particular, the hymns manifest a mystical sense of vision and a communal, experiential context for use, which can only be seen as an allusive, rich, and complex exhortation to vision which complements the Psalms and the Old Testament Odes on which they are based. They also argue strongly for a different lens on theology, which should not be reduced to prose discourse, or mined for meaning, but are worthy of careful critical attention.

Much could be revealed also by close examination of Mansur's homilies, which have received very little attention, apart from collections around a certain feast, as with the *Dormition Homilies*. As with so many references to Mansur's works, they are mined for what they add to their subject matter, rather than their place in his oeuvre.

In terms of the theological weight of his work, his use of angels, temple imagery, and his defense of icons all calls for an overview of his ecclesiology, or the consequences of his thought for that area of systematic theology. Politics is interconnected with this as a matter of some importance that his works touch on, and perhaps have greater impact than we have pointed to. They certainly contain subversive anti-imperial polemic pieces and there may be yet more to uncover. The insights could

also be used for a political theology.

A great deal of work needs to be done yet on this great figure who stands at the crossroads between great religions, great civilizations, between one world and another. Mansur had an impact in both collecting and receiving the inspiration to understand the connection between ritual practice, textual traditions, and the creative use and defense thereof. This is the intersection between monk, priest, academic, poet, and visionary. As he himself believed, this is not adding anything new, but making the old new. The work that he did in this regard has made him a potent opponent forever of those who cannot see the divine value in freedom, human perception, and the very real artistry of God the Iconographer and Icon of His own free will to create and save.

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