

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *HOMILIES ON  
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS*



*SBL*

Society of Biblical Literature



Writings from the Greco-Roman World

David Konstan and Johan C. Thom, General Editors

*Editorial Board*

Brian E. Daley  
Erich S. Gruen  
Wendy Mayer  
Margaret M. Mitchell  
Teresa Morgan  
Ilaria L. E. Ramelli  
Michael J. Roberts  
Karin Schlapbach  
James C. VanderKam

Number 16

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *HOMILIES ON  
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS*

Volume Editor  
Wendy Mayer

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *HOMILIES ON  
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS*

*Introduced, translated, and annotated by*  
Pauline Allen



Society of Biblical Literature  
Atlanta

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *HOMILIES ON  
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS*

Copyright © 2013 by the Society of Biblical Literature

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, Society of Biblical Literature, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

John Chrysostom, Saint, d. 407.

[Homilies on Philippians]

Homilies on Philippians / John Chrysostom ; translated with an introduction and notes by Pauline Allen.

p. cm. — (Society of Biblical Literature. Writings from the Greco-Roman world ; volume 36)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-58983-759-1 (paper binding : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58983-760-7 (electronic format) — ISBN 978-1-58983-778-2 (hardcover binding : alk. paper)

1. John Chrysostom, Saint, d. 407. Homilies on Philippians. I. Allen, Pauline, 1948– II. John Chrysostom, Saint, d. 407. Homilies on Philippians. English. 2013. III. John Chrysostom, Saint, d. 407. Homilies on Philippians. Greek. 2013. IV. Title. V. Series: Writings from the Greco-Roman world ; v. 36.

BR65.C45H6513 2013

227'.606—dc23

2013004636

Printed on acid-free, recycled paper conforming to  
ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) and ISO 9706:1994  
standards for paper permanence.



## CONTENTS

Preface.....	vii
Abbreviations.....	ix
Introduction.....	xi
Questions of Dating and Provenance.....	xi
Contents of John Chrysostom's <i>Homilies on Philippians</i> .....	xv
Other Ancient Commentaries on Philippians.....	xxvii
Translator's Notes.....	xxxii
Text, Translation, and Notes	
Homily 1.....	2
Homily 2.....	16
Homily 3.....	36
Homily 4.....	58
Homily 5.....	78
Homily 6.....	98
Homily 7.....	112
Homily 8.....	140
Homily 9.....	168
Homily 10.....	186
Homily 11.....	212
Homily 12.....	232
Homily 13.....	250
Homily 14.....	266
Homily 15.....	282
Homily 16.....	296
Bibliography.....	321
Texts and Translations.....	321
Secondary Works.....	324

Indices

Biblical Works.....	331
Ancient Works and Translations.....	338
General Index .....	341



## PREFACE

It is not only a duty but also a pleasure to express my gratitude here to many people who have helped in the production of the first volume in this series. Firstly, David Luckensmeyer, Research Associate in the Centre for Early Christian Studies at Australian Catholic University, keyed in the Field text with his customary expertise and exactitude, quietly playing down the onerous task that it was. He also provided detailed advice to the series editors about the advisability and cost-effectiveness of this method, as opposed to amending the digitized Migne text, with regard to the production of further volumes. My second debt, the greatest of all, is owed to my long-time and long-suffering collaborator, Wendy Mayer, Honorary Fellow in the Centre for Early Christian Studies, who unstintingly put at my disposal her enormous knowledge of John Chrysostom and made my translation of his homilies on Philippians more readable, more consistent, and more accurate. All remaining errors and infelicities in the translation are definitely my own, undoubtedly due to some occasional intransigence on my part. Thirdly, I thank Margaret Mitchell and Judith Kovacs for encouragement and comments on drafts and Bob Buller for his technical expertise in pairing the text and translation. In the fourth place, Dinah Joesoef, Administrative Officer in the Centre for Early Christian Studies, as always has come to my aid on innumerable occasions with her administrative and technical experience, for which after so many years I am now beholden to her to an embarrassing degree. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the much appreciated collegiality and friendship of the members and associates of the Centre for Early Christian Studies at Australian Catholic University, the staff of the Department of Ancient Languages at the University of Pretoria, and the members of the Asia-Pacific Early Christian Studies Society.

Pauline Allen, FAHA  
Australian Catholic University and University of Pretoria

۱۳۸۲

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
b.	born
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	Origen, <i>Commentary on Romans</i>
<i>Const. ap.</i>	<i>Constitutiones apostolorum</i>
CPG	<i>Clavis patrum graecorum</i> . Edited by M. Geerard. 5 vols. Brepols: Turnhout, 1974–87.
CPL	<i>Clavis patrum latinorum</i> . Edited by E. Dekkers. 3rd ed. Steenbrugis: Abbatia S. Petri, 1995.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
d.	died
ECS	Early Christian Studies
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
fl.	flourished
GCS	Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller
<i>Hist.</i>	Herodotus, <i>Historiae (Histories)</i>
<i>Hom. Act.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Acts</i>
<i>Hom. Col.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Colossians</i>
<i>Hom. 1 Cor.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on 1 Corinthians</i>
<i>Hom. Eph.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Ephesians</i>
<i>Hom. Heb.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Hebrews</i>
<i>Hom. Matt.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Matthew</i>
<i>Hom. Rom.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Romans</i>
<i>Hom. 1 Tim.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on 1 Timothy</i>
<i>Hom. Tit.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilies on Titus</i>
<i>In ep. ad Phil.</i>	Pelagius, <i>In epistulam ad Philippenses (On the Epistle to the Philippians)</i>
<i>In Phil.</i>	Theodoret, <i>In Philippenses (On Philippians)</i>
IRHT	Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>

<i>Laud. Paul.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>De laudibus sancti Pauli apostoli</i> ( <i>Homilies on the Praise of the Holy Apostle Paul</i> )
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
MS(s)	manuscript(s)
<i>Nat. an.</i>	Aelian, <i>De natura animalium</i> ( <i>Nature of Animals</i> )
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NPNF <sup>1</sup>	<i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> . Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978–79.
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth. 3d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
OCP	<i>Orientalia christiana periodica</i>
Or.	<i>Oratio</i>
OrChrAn	<i>Orientalia christiana analecta</i>
par.	parallel(s)
PG	<i>Patrologia graeca</i> . Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris: Migne: 1857–86.
PGL	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Edited by G. W. H. Lampe. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.
PL	<i>Patrologia latina</i> . Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris: Migne: 1844–64.
<i>Prof. evang.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homilia de profectu evangelii</i>
REAug	<i>Revue des études augustiniennes</i>
REByz	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World
SC	Sources chrétiennes
<i>Stat.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>De statuis</i>
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia patristica</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
suppl.	supplement
<i>s.v.</i>	<i>sub verbo, sub voce</i> , under the word
TCH	The Transformation of the Classical Heritage
ThH	Théologie Historique
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>Vit. Apoll.</i>	Philostratus, <i>Vita Apollonii</i> ( <i>Life of Apollonius</i> )

## INTRODUCTION

### QUESTIONS OF DATING AND PROVENANCE

A native of Syrian Antioch, John received the standard education reserved at this time for young men of some status and probably frequented the lectures of the sophist Libanius before his baptism.<sup>1</sup> Although he was ordained lector by Bishop Meletius of Antioch in 371, John opted for the ascetic life on the outskirts of Antioch until ill health forced him to return to the city. He was ordained deacon in 381 and priest in 386 (an office he held for twelve years under the episcopate of Meletius's successor, Flavian). During this time John became known for his eloquent preaching (hence his sobriquet Chrysostom, or "Golden Mouth"), to the extent that he came to the attention of the imperial court and was chosen as bishop of Constantinople (being consecrated there on February 26, 398). In the capital John preached forcefully against social abuses and in favor of the proper observance of the Scriptures, an activity that earned him many powerful enemies. As a result, he was deposed by a synod (the so-called Synod of the Oak) in 403, but subsequently he was allowed to resume his post. However, after riots instigated by his enemies broke out in the following year, John was exiled to Cucusus in Armenia, where he remained for three years before the order came to transfer him to the east coast of the Black Sea. He died en route on September 14, 407. It was not until January 27, 438 that

---

1. Standard works on Chrysostom are: Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time* (trans. M. Gonzaga; 2 vols.; Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1959–60); trans. of *Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit* (2 vols.; Munich: Hueber, 1929–30); John N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995); Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2000). There is a comprehensive online bibliography prepared by Wendy Mayer available at <http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysos-tombibliography.htm>.

his remains were ceremoniously returned to Constantinople and buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Chrysostom was highly productive as a preacher and writer. Apart from his seventy-six homilies on Genesis, an incomplete set of the Psalms, and homilies on several Old Testament themes, we have ninety homilies on Matthew's Gospel, eighty-eight on John's, fifty-five on Acts, and treatments of Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. In addition there are catechetical homilies and homilies on feast days, martyrs' festivals, ethical issues, and occasional themes, as well as treatises on various themes. Over 240 letters survive from his years in exile. Chrysostom's admiration for the Apostle Paul is evident from the seven homilies he composed in Paul's honor.<sup>2</sup>

Chrysostom's exegesis of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is the most comprehensive treatment of the letter surviving from Christian antiquity.<sup>3</sup> In the form in which his exegesis has come down to us, it consists of a *hypothesis/argumentum*, which has traditionally been counted as the first homily on the text,<sup>4</sup> and another fifteen homilies. Following on from an article by Wendy Mayer and myself, in which we demonstrated that Chrysostom's twelve homilies *In epistulam ad Colossenses* (CPG 4433) contained both Antiochene and Constantinopolitan material and therefore could not be called a series *stricto sensu*,<sup>5</sup> we called into question also the integrity of the "series" on Philippians, concluding that there is insufficient evidence to assign each homily in this collection to either Antioch or Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

---

2. *Laud. Paul.* 1–7. Text in SC 300 (André Piédagnel, ed., *Panegyriques de saint Paul* [Paris: Cerf, 1982]); translated by Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 440–87.

3. To this corpus we can add Chrysostom's exegesis of Phil 1:18 in *Homilia de profectu evangelii* (CPG 4385; PG 51:311–20).

4. See Frederick Field, ed., *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum* (7 vols.; Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1854–62), 5:1–171 (text), 499–530 (notes). Hereafter referred to as Field.

5. Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, "Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A New Approach to the Twelve Homilies *In epistulam ad Colossenses* (CPG 4433)," *OCP* 60 (1994): 21–39.

6. Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, "Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A Re-examination of the Fifteen Homilies *In epistulam ad Philippenses* (CPG 4432)," *VC* 49 (1995): 270–89. It is important for what follows below to note that here I

We dealt at some length with a passage in *Homily 16*,<sup>7</sup> which scholars have taken as proof of either Antiochene or Constantinopolitan provenance,<sup>8</sup> although Jean-Paul Migne has observed that the contents were inconsistent with the historical record.<sup>9</sup> The passage is an exposé of the woes of the imperial household, presented in general rhetorical terms, and John's argument is that if emperors experience such troubles in times of peace, their troubles will be much worse during periods of war. The homilist undertakes to give his congregation some examples from living memory, but he mentions no names in doing so. The first case is ostensibly Constantine, who is said by the homilist to have had his wife exposed to wild animals in the mountains and to have done away with not only one son but also another and his children.<sup>10</sup> These tales are at variance with the historical evidence.<sup>11</sup> The remaining catalogue of emperors apparently includes Constans, whose wife is said to have died as a result of treatment for infertility,<sup>12</sup> another emperor who was poisoned and whose son was blinded,<sup>13</sup> and Valens, the suffering of whose widow is alluded to.<sup>14</sup> Chrysostom then mentions in vague and general terms the adversity experienced by the present incumbent of the throne, who has been taken by scholars as either Theodosius or his successor, Arcadius, whereas the description could be applied to either or both emperors (and many others besides).<sup>15</sup>

Our conclusion regarding the uncertain provenance of the sixteen homilies on Philippians means in turn that none of them can be dated with any certainty (facts that apply also to other so-called series and individual homilies in the Chrysostomic corpus).<sup>16</sup> In addition, we pointed out

---

am departing from our numeration in that article and counting the *argumentum* as the first homily in the collection, consistent with the text of Field. This approach renders a total of sixteen homilies on the Philippians text.

7. Field, 5:168D–169D; PG 62:294,48–295,46.

8. Allen and Mayer, “Re-examination,” 274–75.

9. PG 62:295 n. a.

10. PG 62:295,18–25.

11. On which, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 220–21.

12. PG 62:295,30–34.

13. PG 62:295,34–38.

14. PG 62:295,38–43.

15. For details, see Allen and Mayer, “Re-examination,” 275.

16. On the entire problem of provenance and dating, see Wendy Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom—Provenance: Reshaping the Foundations* (OrChrAn 273;

that while the sixteen homilies on Philippians do cover the whole of Paul's epistle, the exegesis does not always flow sequentially from one homily to the other: *Homilies* 3, 4 (Phil 1:18–24), and 5 (Phil 1:22–30) contain some degree of overlap, and there is an overlap between *Homilies* 7 and 8, where Philippians 2:6–7 appears twice. Finally, *Homilies* 11 and 12 overlap by one verse (Phil 3:7).<sup>17</sup> It should be acknowledged here that this deconstructionist approach to Chrysostom's exegesis has recently been challenged by Guillaume Bady on the grounds that the manuscript tradition needs to be respected.<sup>18</sup> Taking as an example the *Homilies on the Statues*, a group delivered by Chrysostom in Antioch in 387, which Bady terms a "série factice" because the homilies are out of chronological order,<sup>19</sup> he argues that the definition of a "series" involves three criteria in combination: (1) the witness of the manuscripts, which is an outcome of editorial activity and tradition; (2) the chronological context, comprising geography, history, and liturgy; and (3) the content, or the pastoral aim of the homilist. Suffice it to say that this reasoning lends more weight to the end product as a "series" than to the individual homilies as they were originally preached, which was our main focus in attempting to determine the place(s) in which Chrysostom delivered his homilies on Philippians.

However valid Bady's argument in favor of the manuscript tradition may be, apart from the fact that the *hypothesis/argumentum* is almost certainly a homily and that in the exegesis of the Philippians text there are lacunae and overlaps, there is little to suggest that these pieces were delivered sequentially or that they are a homogeneous whole. *Homilies* 6 and 7 are the only ones that can be said to have been delivered to the same congregation on successive occasions,<sup>20</sup> and *Homilies* 1 and 9 appear to have been preached to a congregation in the same location.<sup>21</sup> In addition to the lack of homogeneity, in places the language is raw, the quality of the

---

Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005), esp. 35–273 on previous scholarship on the topic.

17. Allen and Mayer, "Re-examination," 278–79.

18. See Guillaume Bady, "La Tradition des œuvres de Jean Chrysostome, entre transmission et transformation," *REByz* 68 (2010): 149–63, esp. 159–63.

19. As demonstrated by Frans van de Paverd, *St. John Chrysostom, the Homilies on the Statues: An Introduction* (OrChrAn 239; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1991); cf. Andrius Valevicius, "Les 24 homélies *De statu*s de Jean Chrysostome: Recherches nouvelles," *REAug* 46 (2000): 83–89.

20. See further Allen and Mayer, "Re-examination," 279–80.

21. *Ibid.*, 281–83.

preaching uneven, and the train of thought not always apparent. Sometimes, as in other homilies of our preacher, it is difficult to discern whether we are dealing with Chrysostom's ideas, those of Paul as transmitted by the homilist in paraphrase and extrapolation, or objections real or imaginary from the congregation and other groups (again, this kind of variation is not unique among John's homilies). Over against these difficulties, in the sixteen homilies there are some outstanding passages, such as the discourse on poverty and wealth in *Homily 4*, the heretics as charioteers in *Homily 7*, the parody of the proud in *Homily 8*, the debate on the number of Paul's tunics in *Homily 10*, the denunciations of ostentation in *Homilies 3* and *11*, and the disquisition on the tribulations of the imperial house (already mentioned) in *Homily 16*. The exegesis in general is lively and direct, because Chrysostom engages with the text and the apostle himself, apostrophizing Paul frequently and asking what he means.<sup>22</sup> This results in the apostle saying a great deal more than in fact he wrote.

In general, Chrysostom follows the Byzantine text-type<sup>23</sup> in his preaching on Philippians, with some minor variants demanded by the flow of his argument. Only occasionally is his quotation loose, and more often than not this happens when he is using texts other than that of Philippians, which in general he follows closely.<sup>24</sup>

#### CONTENTS OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S *HOMILIES ON PHILIPPIANS*

John's fifteen homilies on Paul's Letter to the Philippians are preceded by a piece entitled "account"/"record"<sup>25</sup> or "argument" that could itself be considered a short homily<sup>26</sup> and is described by Frederick Field as the first homily

22. Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, 32, remarks that this is "something no modern scholar would do."

23. On which, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), xx, xxx–xxxii.

24. See, for example, the citations of Phil 4:10 in *Homily 1* (Field, 5:4F); Matt 25:35 in *Homily 2* (Field, 5:16C); 1 Cor 10:24, 33 in *Homily 5* (Field, 5:40C), which is a conflation; and Rom 6:4–5 in *Homily 12* (Field, 5:27E), also a conflation. In addition to citations exact or loose, there are naturally paraphrases of biblical texts and allusions.

25. The word *hypothesis* here also encompasses all the following translations: "subject matter," "summary of contents," "plot summary," "purpose," "occasion."

26. As observed by Johannes Stilting, "De S. Joanne Chrysostomo, episcopo Constantinopolitano et ecclesiae doctore, prope Comana in Ponto, commentarius histori-

in the series.<sup>27</sup> Of the six *argumenta* preceding other series on the Pauline letters this one stands out, firstly because of its progression from introductory comments to specific ethical exhortations, and secondly because of certain Chrysostomic expressions that indicate it was delivered live before an audience. The fact that the piece concludes in homiletic style with a doxology is also unique<sup>28</sup> and raises queries at the outset about the origin, purpose, and editorial shaping of the collection of homilies before us.

The homilist begins by situating the people of Philippi on the basis of Acts 16–18: in Philippi in Macedonia “the proclamation of the gospel acquired a brilliant beginning,” he says, introducing the theme of Paul’s friendship with these people, which recurs in other homilies in the collection. Ranging over Paul’s imprisonments as related in Philippians 1 and 2, Chrysostom explains that when the apostle wrote to the people of Philippi, Timothy was with him. Again Chrysostom adduces evidence that the Philippians were very well disposed toward Paul, on the grounds that they had sent Epaphroditus to him with money (Phil 4:18). Also, because of their goodwill toward him, at the beginning of the letter Paul consoles them about the fact that he is in chains. In fact, says the homilist, “It’s clear that he loved them very much.” His congregation are urged to imitate models such as Paul and Epaphroditus not fleetingly but throughout their lives, just as a runner does not give up on a race, and to exhibit the virtues of mercy and pity. These virtues are presented as items of jewelry that are needed in this life but not in the next. The themes of pity and almsgiving, which recur in other homilies in the collection, then form the ethical exhortation with which the piece concludes.

*Homily 2* deals ostensibly with Philippians 1:1–2, where Paul and Timothy are described as servants of Jesus Christ writing to fellow bishops and deacons. Chrysostom maintains that Paul describes himself as a servant here, rather than a teacher or apostle, because he is writing to the Philip-

---

cus,” in *Acta sanctorum septembris* (Antwerp: Apud Ioannem Meursium, 1753), 4:495. For what follows regarding this piece see Allen and Mayer, “Re-examination,” 277–78.

27. Departing from the system used in Allen and Mayer, “Re-examination,” where the *argumentum* is counted as a separate piece, here I follow Field’s continuous numbering, which then gives us sixteen homilies in this collection. Cf. Bady, “Tradition,” 154–55, on judging the authenticity of an *argumentum*.

28. On the nexus between homily and doxology, see Alexandre Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua* (Biblioteca Herder: Sección de teología y filosofía 189; Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1991), 524–26.

prians, who are people of equal rank. Like other early commentators on the words “fellow bishops and deacons,” Chrysostom is keen to point out that such names were originally used interchangeably and bishops were called presbyters; “even to the present day,” he explains, “many bishops write to a ‘fellow presbyter’ and to a ‘fellow deacon.’” Here the exegesis moves on to Philippians 1:3 and 1:5. Once again the special place held by the Philippians in Paul’s heart is stressed, in comparison with Christians in other cities who turned away from him. Sharing in the gospel means sharing in the apostle’s triumphs, just as happens with leaders and followers in sports and warfare. This idea leads Chrysostom to encourage his congregation to share in the struggles of those who live “the angelic life,” surely a reflection of the proximity of monastics to the city of Antioch and the familiarity of his congregation with them.<sup>29</sup> Progressing in the Philippians text, Chrysostom reaches 1:6, where Paul expresses his confidence that “*the one who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ,*”<sup>30</sup> a statement interpreted by the homilist as renewed praise of the Philippians for the fact that they won over God’s grace to help them transcend human nature. The theme of friendship is developed further on the basis of Philippians 1:7, where Paul says he holds in his heart his people, who “*are all my partners in grace.*” The Philippians are said to have supported Paul in partnership when he was imprisoned because of the displeasure of Emperor Nero, and a similar partnership with the “saints”—that is, the monastics—is urged on the congregation, who conversely are instructed not to lavish alms on a church leader who wants for nothing and to discern the poor from the phony.

In *Homily 3*, ranging in its exegesis from Philippians 1:8 to 1:18, Chrysostom again takes up the theme of Paul’s affection toward the Philippians found in *Homilies 1 and 2*, explaining Philippians 1:8–11 minutely. Paul’s imprisonment, claims the homilist, gave the people of Philippi more confidence. However, since while he was out of action many unbelievers were seeking to incite Nero by appearing to gain converts, the apostle had to explain to them that “*Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, while others preach from goodwill*” (Phil 1:15). Chrysostom denounces such

---

29. For the Antiochene probable provenance of this homily, see Allen and Mayer, “Re-examination,” 281–82.

30. Quotations in italics (and often within quotation marks after a verb of saying, either explicit or implicit) indicate the verbatim citing of a biblical text. See further the Translator’s Notes below.

false preaching as the work of the devil. Suddenly the discourse changes to an attack on heretics (probably Manichees), an encomium of chastity, and a denunciation of riches. In the discussion of wealth and poverty that follows we find ideas familiar from other passages in Chrysostom: the wealthy person has more to worry about and suffers from insomnia, not realizing that all goods are “indifferent.”<sup>31</sup> Also familiar is the argument used here that a rich person who shows pity will be saved, whereas one who is poor but greedy is not guaranteed the kingdom. Now well into his stride, Chrysostom delivers an anti-sumptuary tirade against those with a mob of household servants and with vessels and furniture made of silver: “Envy fixes on the rich, not leaving off until it has achieved what it wants and has poured out its poison.” The members of the congregation are urged to look neither to their poverty nor to their wealth, but to their disposition.

Paul’s words in Philippians 1:18—“*And in this I rejoice. Yes, and I shall rejoice*”—provide the homilist with the material for the encomium of the apostle’s humility and bravery that opens *Homily 4*. Paul’s refusal to be put to shame even when in chains and facing death gave courage to the people of Philippi, says Chrysostom. Paul’s statement in Philippians 1:21 (“*To live is Christ, to die is gain*”) is juxtaposed with Galatians 2:20 (“*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*”) to demonstrate to the congregation how the apostle did not live an ordinary life but refused to get mixed up in earthly affairs. Chrysostom uses the analogy of the rich man who has great wealth and uses none of it to prove that “it’s possible to use even the present life to advantage by not living it.” Using the familiar argument that life is made up of middling and indifferent things and it is up to us to use them properly, he praises Paul’s philosophy and way of life, reminding his listeners that death too belongs to the category of indifferent things. The remainder of the homily is devoted to the topic of appropriate mourning practices, among which are offering prayers and alms on behalf of the dead, just as Job did for his dead children. Fear of the Lord, the congregation is told, is the ultimate wealth.

*Homily 5* continues Chrysostom’s encomium on Paul, beginning with the words “*And what I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two*” (Phil 1:23) and echoing the argument in the previous homily concerning Paul’s ability to engage with present struggles while concentrating

---

31. See further Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, and Wendy Mayer, *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities* (Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 28; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), 85.

on the crowns to come. Paul is said to be more brilliant than the sun's rays and superior to the devil: "It's simply enough for Paul to speak and for the heavens to jump for joy and to be glad." The reason the apostle chose to stay on earth was to help the Philippians and others in their progress in the faith. Deploying an array of Pauline and other New Testament texts, the homilist leads into Philippians 1:28: "*And don't be frightened in anything by your opponents, which is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation.*" Paul, the Philippians, and others at that time stood firm, whereas Chrysostom berates his audience for having grown cold in their love for Christ, urging them on to virtue, especially the virtue of pity, which is the hallmark of true rulers. Peter and John the evangelist became great through pity, and Paul himself has a great deal to say on the topic. The members of the congregation are to take pity on those who owe them money, but also on those who have sinned against them.

Moving on to Philippians 2:1–4, where the apostle warns against selfishness and conceit and advocates humility, Chrysostom opens *Homily 6* with references to Paul's role as teacher of the people of Philippi and his encouragement of their progress in one spirit. It is not just humility that God requires but an increase in humility. Consequently, there is no use in being puffed up. The preacher continues with Old Testament *exempla* of humility, namely, Joseph (cf. Gen 40–41) and Daniel (cf. Dan 2:24–49). The apostles too exhibited humility, as recounted in Acts (cf. 3:12; 14:15), whereas Sheba (2 Kgdms 16:1–3), Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:31), and Ahithophel (2 Kgdms 17:1–4) indulged in the opposite of humility, that is, flattery, servility, and fawning. David, Paul, and John the Baptist were brave in their humility, while Shimei (2 Kgdms 16:7) and Elijah (1 Kgs 18:18) were guilty of hubris. The homily concludes with advice to discern between humility and bravery on the one hand and fawning and servility on the other.

In *Homily 7* Chrysostom arrives at the great christological passage in Philippians 2:5–8, where Christ's assuming the form of a slave continues the theme of humility that had been dealt with in the previous homily. Paul's words in this passage, through the grace of the Spirit, he maintains, cut through all heresies—those of Arius, Paul of Samosata, Marcellus of Ancyra, Sabellius, Marcion, Valentinus, Mani, Apollinaris, Photinus, and Sophronius. Chrysostom deals with all of them chronologically, imagining that the heresiarchs are charioteers who collide with the Spirit as they race. Arius receives the most attention, as the preacher asks derisively whether there is such a thing as a small God and a great God, the former not being able to grasp equality with the latter. Once again Chrysostom urges the

congregation on to humility and the pursuit of active charity rather than simple restraint from evil, at the same time ordering them to pay attention because the homily is becoming long. Subsequently the homily becomes discursive on the subject of humility and the inadequacy of avoiding evil, until the homilist reminds his audience that they are safe while in God's hands. There follows a long citation from Isaiah 5:1–7, which is intended to illustrate that, when God demolishes the fence and wall, human beings will become prey. From here it is but a small step to introduce the devil, and eventually Judas, and to stress that it is impossible for the servant of money to be an authentic servant of Christ. Toward the end of this long homily the preacher acknowledges that many do not like hearing what he is saying, but it is his obligation to use words like tools to get them into shape.

In terms of its exegetical content *Homily 8*, as mentioned above, has some overlap with *Homily 7* because it takes up again Philippians 2:5–8, before moving on to verses 9–11. There also seems to be a connection with the previous homily, because Chrysostom begins by saying: “I have stated the heretics’ views to you. Note that now it’s fitting to state our views as well.” Seizing on the Pauline statement that Christ did not count equality a thing to be grasped, the homilist gives examples of what happens when people seize power, as opposed to Christ’s situation, in which his power was natural. Chrysostom then takes issue with the followers of Marcion, who assert that Christ was not born as a human being but assumed the form of a servant when, for example, he washed the disciples’ feet. If his human nature was an illusion, retorts the homilist, how did he wash? The followers of Paul of Samosata and Arius also maintain that the Son was a creature. After explaining the meaning of the phrase “*born in the likeness of humans*,” John turns his attention to the Apollinarians and again to the Arians, warning against confusing the two natures in Christ or separating them. Christ’s death on the cross in his obedience to the Father did not mean that he was inferior—it was, on the contrary, an act of honor. If as a consequence God highly exalted him (Phil 2:9), this does not imply that Christ was given something extra and was therefore imperfect. This is an impious idea, for the Son is not inferior with regard to essence but equal, nor is he of another essence. Christ’s obedience to the end and his humility bring the homilist back to one of his favorite themes, that of humility, which is exemplified in the Lukan account of the tax-collector and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10–14). The opposite of humility is taking pride in matters of no worth. In a rhetorical *tour de force* Chrysostom shows his congregation that they are inferior to all members of the animal kingdom and

lower forms of human life. An imaginary interlocutor draws the conclusion that God made the animals superior to humans, only to be rebutted by the homilist on the grounds that humans, because they are endowed with reason, have the opportunity for piety and the life of virtue if they would but take it and become not just true humans but angels.

Paul's admonition to the Philippians to "*work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling ... without grumbling or questioning*" (Phil 2:12–16) forms the basis of the exegesis of *Homily 9*. Chrysostom explains that, if it is impossible to conduct our earthly business successfully without fear, it is much more so with heavenly affairs, but he adduces Psalm 2:11 ("*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling*") to temper his advice to the Philippians and to encourage their progress. Paul's assertion that God is at work in them does not remove free will but rather suggests that their will is being increased for the future. Grumbling and questioning, on the other hand, come from the devil. However, whereas these faults were already in evidence in the people of Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 3:3; 11:18), here Paul is admonishing the Philippians in advance against a fault that is close to blasphemy and indicative of ingratitude. The congregation is advised to think of Job, who in the midst of terrible illness, the loss of all his children, and the reproaches of his wife did not grumble (cf. Job 2:9–10)—and this all took place even before the promise of the resurrection. Chrysostom's audience, on the other hand, fortified by both the Old and New Testaments and secure in the knowledge of the resurrection, continue to be troubled. The homilist issues another reminder to do everything without grumbling and questioning, before moving on to Philippians 2:16–18 ("*holding fast to the word of life*" and "*be glad and rejoice with me*") to rail once again against inappropriate mourning practices, together with lamenting and grumbling.

The initial focus of *Homily 10* is on Timothy, whom Paul promises to send in Philippians 2:19–21. Chrysostom points out Paul's great affection for Macedonia and for the people of Philippi, about whom he seeks soon to have news through Timothy, "*who will be genuinely anxious for [their] welfare.*" In the meantime Paul sent Epaphroditus, explains Chrysostom, as his "*brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier*" (Phil 2:24), who had been seriously ill and had been kept by the apostle until he recovered. In his turn Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi to Rome with money for Paul's needs, which put him in a dangerous situation. For this reason, says Chrysostom, and because of the fact that Epaphroditus was acting as an ambassador of the people of Philippi, Paul called him venerable. This leads the homilist to

the theme of giving service to the saints, a service that many in his congregations are reluctant to perform—indeed they are stingier than the Jews.<sup>32</sup> Some who build houses and buy fields think they are badly off, whereas if they observe that a member of the clergy has decent clothing, food, and a servant, they put this down to wealth. Again, some donate to the clergy, only to complain afterward, while others maintain that the clergy has had the opportunity to enter other, more profitable professions. Such recalcitrants apparently cite Matthew 10:9 (“*Acquire no gold, nor silver, nor two tunics, no belts [and] no staff*”) as an indictment of clergy who have three or four garments and good bedding. “A bitter sigh has just come over me,” wails Chrysostom. “If I didn’t have to behave myself, I would’ve wept.” He continues by denouncing those who sit as examiners of the affairs of others, pointing out that even the apostles had belts, tunics, shoes, and more than one cloak. If Paul had had only one tunic, and it had to be washed, what would have become of him and his mission while he was waiting for it to dry? After all, the homilist continues, the apostles were not equipped with steel bodies, and God permitted them to be vulnerable so that the congregation could be saved, a consideration that should turn the audience away from making accusations and orient them toward good works.

*Homily 11* is dominated by Paul’s admonitions in Philippians 3:2: “*Look out for dogs; look out for the evil-workers; look out for mutilation.*” By dogs, Chrysostom says, Paul has in mind Jews (more properly speaking, Judaizers) who combine Judaism with Christianity. The argument against circumcision that follows is based on the view that the Sabbath was of less account than circumcision and at times was not observed—hence Paul’s denunciation of the latter as “mutilation” and his insistence that circumcision take place in the heart (cf. Deut 10:16). Paul’s pedigree as a Jew meant that he could condemn circumcision not through ignorance but through the greatest familiarity with it. This idea leads the homilist to expatiate on Paul’s background as both a “*Hebrew born of Hebrews*” and “*a Pharisee as to the law*” (Phil 3:5), a superior birth that he renounced in order to win Christ. From here it is but a short step to deal with riches and poverty, in particular the senselessness of layers of expensive clothing, gold ornamentation on the wives and horses of rich men, and luxurious houses. These are instances not of gain but of loss, maintains Chrysostom, and he repeats his dictum that “neither wealth procures heaven, nor poverty Gehenna.”

---

32. See further the translation below at n. 8.

In this spirit the congregation should use all they have, including all their body parts and the natural world, to do good works.

As mentioned above, *Homily 12* overlaps with *Homily 11* by one verse, *Philippians 3:7*: “*But whatever gain I had, I counted as a loss for the sake of Christ.*” From the outset Chrysostom sets himself against “heretics,” whose real or imaginary identity becomes clearer as his exegesis progresses: these are Christians who have no time for the Torah<sup>33</sup> and wish to capitalize on Paul’s assertion that he has suffered the loss of everything and regards the law as “rubbish.” Chrysostom’s refutation of this position involves him in close exegesis of the *Philippians* text, during which he describes the law as a ladder that was useful while it was needed. This is similar to the case of the poor man who, while he is starving, holds onto his silver, but when he finds gold throws the silver away. “You see,” says the homilist, “the rubbish comes from the grain, and the strength of the grain is the rubbish ... [the chaff that] was useful before this point.” Thus the righteousness of the law has been overtaken by the new righteousness, which is faith in Christ and his resurrection. At this stage the exegesis on the resurrection becomes discursive, but the central point is that if even Paul was not totally sure that he would attain the resurrection, where does that leave Chrysostom’s congregation? The homilist remarks that “just as we fled from God before the coming of Christ, so too do we flee now,” even though God has released us from sin and bestowed on us the gift of the Spirit at baptism. There follows a graphic depiction of humanity ulcerated and on a dung heap like Job (cf. *Job 2:7–8*), a complete picture of evil and sickness, but God was still not ready to abandon humankind. No, says Chrysostom, “he prepared very expensive medicines and tasted them himself first.” Like the prodigal son (cf. *Luke 15:11–32*) the congregation is told to stop standing aloof and return to the Father.

*Philippians 3:13–14* with its imagery of the runner pressing on for the prize sets the scene for the first part of *Homily 13*. Nothing is more inimical to the success of the athlete or of the Christian than complacency. Hence we should forget our successes and concentrate on how much further we have to go, and just like athletes we need a daily regimen and a good physique to acquire the prize. However, the prize is not a palm branch but the kingdom of heaven, and it is awarded not on earth but in heaven itself. Paul encour-

---

33. Probably John means the Marcionites, on whom see the translation below at n. 71.

aged those who were mature to think like this, but Chrysostom maintains that it is a characteristic of the mature person not to consider that they're mature. Reminding the congregation that in Philippians 3:17 the apostle told the people of Philippi to take him as their model, Chrysostom turns to the apostles' role as archetypes and models in admonishing and guiding through their actions. While Christ is the true Teacher, there are many examples of good teachers in the Old Testament too, and some who even in power made virtue their own. Others were lost in the state of marriage or virginity or wealth or poverty. The truth is, says the homilist, that nothing will be able to harm the wary person, and again he adduces scriptural examples. Being ready for all circumstances and standing firm like a rock are the characteristics of virtue, which death, poverty, sickness, dishonor, and the loss of children cannot shake. If the soul is well schooled in the knowledge of virtue, everything will be easy for it, and it will attain heaven.

Philippians 3:18–21, with its portrayal of enemies of the cross of Christ, people who have the belly as their god, and the coming of Christ, which will change earthly bodies into glorious ones, is the subject of *Homily 14*. The cross is part of our military calling, maintains Chrysostom, and through the cross everything is being accomplished—baptism, ordination, the struggle with the devil; hence, those who love a life of luxury and have their belly as god are enemies of the cross. The homilist expresses the hope that he does not know anybody who behaves like that and who glories in shame, but he is afraid that the apostle's admonitions are more applicable to people of the present day than to the Philippians. The belly is meant to be fed, not to become distended and act like a bossy mistress, the consequence being that those who serve it are worse than slaves, when they should be undergoing myriad hardships like Paul. Yet this body is the one that will become like God's. Moving to Philippians 4:1–2, Chrysostom discusses the women mentioned in Paul's account, dismissing the idea that one of them was Paul's wife. The point of the passage, he insists, is that women enjoyed great authority as the helpers of the apostle. Next, urging his listeners to avoid the Gehenna that will materialize for sinners at the *parousia*, he paints a picture for them of the *adventus* ceremony that accompanies the triumphal arrival of a ruler on earth, in which his enemies are not punished but are still excluded: how much more painful will be the fate of the devil and his best troops at the end of time? This idea is so painful that the preacher claims he is unable to bring the homily to a close. His advice to his listeners is to groan and pursue virtue in this life, to pray and be enthusiastic in order to attain rest in the next.

At the beginning of *Homily 15* Chrysostom juxtaposes Matthew 5:4 (“*Blessed are those who mourn*”) and Luke 6:25 (“*Woe to those who laugh*”) with Philippians 4:4 (“*Rejoice in the Lord always*”), explaining that it is possible to confess and mourn for one’s sins and to rejoice in Christ at the same time. The apostle’s advocacy of forbearance (Phil 4:5) suggests that while the Philippians had no truck with wicked people, they were prepared to consort with them with forbearance. Judgment is already imminent, warns the homilist, but in the meantime there is available a medicine that heals critical conditions, namely, praying and giving thanks in all situations. He continues by explaining that we should give thanks for everything, even for those things that seem to be painful, because everything is arranged for our advantage even if we do not realize it. This is because the peace of God, as the apostle says, “*is superior to all understanding*” because it compels us to make peace with enemies and wrongdoers. If this peace is superior, then what does this imply about God, the giver of peace? Chrysostom dwells on the meaning of the word “*finally*” in the statement “*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just*” (Phil 4:8), which he interprets as Paul saying that he has said all he can to the Philippians and that he himself is hurrying forward (cf. Phil 3:12), having nothing in common with things of the present. In all his teaching Paul presents himself as a model. Chrysostom extrapolates loosely from this that evil is our enemy and virtue our friend, citing greed as an example of evil, and justice as an example of a virtue that places the soul in safety. Claiming that “every battle has its origin in greed or envy or pretension,” the homilist instructs his listeners to do good to their enemies in order to do themselves a good turn and achieve the blessings to come.

John opens *Homily 16* by returning to one of his frequent topics, almsgiving, here in connection with the person(s) whom the Philippians sent to Paul with money, just as they had sent Epaphroditus. The fact that the people of Philippi had taken some time to minister to the apostle is glossed over, says the preacher, on the grounds that they had no opportunity. However, whether he received ministrations or not, Paul was just the same, both in abundance and in want (cf. Phil 4:12), and the fact that he had not heard from the Philippians for some time caused him grief on their behalf, not on his own. Chrysostom points out to his congregation that it was a sign of genuine spiritual friendship on Paul’s part that he first distanced himself from the inactivity of the Philippians and then joined ranks with them. All this shows the apostle’s humility and noble nature and his reluctance to be seen to be looking after his own interests. Once again the homilist

stresses that the Philippians were in partnership with Paul right from the beginning (cf. Phil 1:3), when no other community in Macedonia was. This partnership is a question of give and take, of buying and selling, that takes place on earth but is perfected in heaven, which is not to say that the kingdom can be bought with money. Not at all, says the homilist, and yet again he stresses the importance of one's intention when giving. The gifts sent by the Philippians to Paul through Epaphroditus were described as "*a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God*" (Phil 4:18), indeed a compliment. For his part, with regard to gifts Chrysostom assures his congregation that Paul prayed as do poor people, who find nothing strange in praying for self-sufficiency and abundance. When toward the end of the epistle the apostle mentions not only the brethren who are with him but also all the saints, "*especially those of Caesar's household*" (Phil 4:22), this is an indication that, if the imperial family has despised everything for the sake of the heavenly emperor, the Philippians should do so even more as they gladly endure sufferings and tribulations. And even a king or emperor has a life full of troubles; indeed the royal household is full of worries. In this vein Chrysostom continues with personal and political problems that have dogged the imperial house, some supposedly within living memory, but it is a catalogue of woes in which historical fact is combined with fiction and half-fiction. However, the homilist reminds his listeners, while all these tribulations are common knowledge from secular writings as well as from the Scriptures, we ourselves are despondent not about royal troubles but about things that in fact bring us gain, whereas we should believe that proper grief is a good thing, stronger than any earthly joy. We should put up with troubles and pain because we have the hope of things to come.

This overview of the contents of John's preaching on the Philippians text gives some indication of his direct and conversational style, which was mentioned above. In addition, the myriad topics he covers contribute to the edification and enjoyment of his congregation(s). Aside from the ethical injunctions to give to the poor and to clergy, to adopt lifestyle models from the Old and New Testaments, to live chastely, and to observe appropriate mourning and funeral rituals, there are vignettes from sport, particularly athletics and chariot racing, and warfare. The denunciations of the rich and the ostentatious would have delighted many of his listeners, as at the same time they infuriated others. The imperial family does not escape John's barbs any more than do those who hold other public offices. Children and the elderly figure into his examples from daily life, as do food, agriculture, seafaring, money, commerce, building, furniture, weather, ill-

ness, good health, and animals—a glance at the general index below will show an astonishing range of the last mentioned.

#### OTHER ANCIENT COMMENTARIES ON PHILIPPIANS

Before the overview of other ancient commentaries on Philippians, this is the place to deal briefly with the problematical relationship between commentary and homily. While indeed Chrysostom's "series" on this Pauline letter contains real homilies, the same cannot be said for all commentaries on Scripture, particularly when such works are transmitted in abbreviated or fragmentary form, as is the case with some of the "commentaries" in the list that follows. It is a particularly difficult task to distinguish between the homily that was prepared beforehand or delivered impromptu in a liturgical context on the one hand, and on the other hand the "desk homily," written in homiletic form but intended for private study or reading rather than public performance. This problem has been investigated for the homilies of Origen, leading to the conclusion that Origen as preacher was more restrained, his aim being to keep his entire congregation on the path to perfection, whereas in his commentaries and tractates, he leaves no stone unturned in his exegesis, probably written for the benefit of the few.<sup>34</sup> Another example of the live homily versus desk homily is Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, transmitting 205 homilies, of which it is estimated only 119 were in fact delivered, while the remaining 86 are supposed to have been dictated by Augustine to a scribe in homiletic form in order to fill in the gaps.<sup>35</sup>

Other ancient commentaries in Greek and Latin on Paul's Letter to the Philippians are shorter, survive only in fragments, or are contained in incidental treatments of the work.<sup>36</sup> This is perhaps surprising, given that the letter contains some passages of great christological significance. One

34. See Éric Junod, "Wodurch unterscheiden sich die Homilien des Origenes von seinen Kommentaren?" in *Predigt in der Alten Kirche* (ed. Ekkehard Mühlenberg and Johannes van Oort; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994), 50–81, esp. 77–81.

35. See further Olivar, *Predicación*, 933; Hildegund Müller and Michael Fiedrowicz, "Enarrationes in psalmos," in *Augustinus-Lexikon* (ed. Cornelius Mayer; 3 vols.; Basel: Schwabe, 1996–2002), 2:804–58.

36. Some of the latter are conveniently collected in Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1999), 8:207–76.

of these is Philippians 2:6–7, which the docetists relied on, claiming that the words *the form of a servant*, the *likeness* of human beings, and so on demonstrate that Paul did not categorically posit the humanity of Jesus.<sup>37</sup> The merit of Chrysostom's consideration of this passage is that it reveals what Wiles calls "a fully articulated two-nature exegesis."<sup>38</sup> Another crucial passage is Philippians 2:6–8 on Christ's being taken up into glory, the most important Pauline text to be seized on as having a potentially adoptionist or subordinationist character, and again dealt with by Chrysostom with recourse to a two-nature exegesis, albeit not consistently.<sup>39</sup> While there is also a conspicuous dearth of secondary literature devoted to John's commentary on Philippians,<sup>40</sup> the prominence of the theme of Paul's friendship with the people of Philippi, particularly in Philippians 4, has given rise to some comment.<sup>41</sup>

#### GREEK

1. From Severian of Gabbala (d. after 408) we have eight fragments that survive in Greek *catenae* (CPG 4219).<sup>42</sup>

2. A commentary on Paul's Letter to the Philippians (CPG 3845) by Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) survives in a Latin translation and Greek and Syriac fragments, the Latin version owing its existence to the fact that it was transmitted under the name of Ambrose rather than under the name

---

37. On the docetic interpretation of this passage and its refutation, see Maurice F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 82–83.

38. *Ibid.*, 82.

39. See *ibid.*, 86–88.

40. Among the very few exceptions are Traian Sevici, "Probleme de Învățăturași Viață Creștină în Comentarul Sfintului Ioan Gură de Aur la Scrisoarea Paulină către Filipeni," *Studii teologice* 12 (1960): 500–516; Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, 8:217–89.

41. See, e.g., John Reumann, "Philippians, Especially Chapter 4, as a 'Letter of Friendship': Observations on a Checkered History of Scholarship," in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; NovTSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 83–106, esp. 100–104 on "Patristic Witness to Friendship and to Philippians," where, however, Theodoret of Cyrrhus on 101 needs to read "Theodoret of Cyrus/Cyrrhus."

42. Karl Staab, ed., *Pauluskomentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (NTAbh 15; Münster i. W.: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933), 313–14.

of its real author, whose person was associated with Nestorius and subsequently involved in the Three Chapters controversy during the reign of Justinian.<sup>43</sup> Henry Swete assigns the authorship of the Latin translation of Theodore's commentary to a North African who wrote in the aftermath of the Three Chapters controversy, probably between 544 and 565.<sup>44</sup>

3. Theodoret of Cyrillus composed a commentary on Philippians as part of his elucidation of the twelve epistles of Paul (CPG 6209). It was edited by Jean-Paul Migne<sup>45</sup> and again by Charles Marriott<sup>46</sup> and has merited an English translation.<sup>47</sup> However, it has not been studied systematically, perhaps because of its very modest length and less-than-engaging contents.

4. From the sixth-century exegete Oecumenius, better known for his commentary on Revelation,<sup>48</sup> have survived seven fragments from a commentary on Philippians (CPG 7451).<sup>49</sup>

5. Maximus the Confessor composed a piece on Philippians 2:5, *In apostoli verbum: Semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens* (CPG 7707 [10]).<sup>50</sup> This is a christological piece that does not seem to be complete. Toward the end of the text Maximus refers to Chrysostom's interpretation

---

43. On this controversy, see Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt, eds., *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages 14; Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

44. Henry B. Swete, ed., *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas b. Pauli commentarii (The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments), Galatians–Colossians* (Cambridge: University Press, 1882), 1:lviii.

45. PG 82:559–92.

46. Charles Marriott, ed., *Commentarius in omnes b. Pauli epistolas* (Oxford: Jacobus Parker et soc., 1870), 2:45–67.

47. Robert C. Hill, trans., *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul* (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 2:64–83. There is little comment on Theodoret's exegesis of Philippians in Jean-Noël Guinot, *L'Exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr* (ThH 100; Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), though he does in general argue for more merit and creativity in Theodoret than earlier studies had done.

48. On which, see now *Greek Commentaries on Revelation: Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea* (ed. Thomas C. Oden; trans. William C. Weinrich; Ancient Christian Texts; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 1–107.

49. Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 452–53. These are erroneously ascribed to the tenth-century Thessalian bishop Oecumenius of Trikka (see below).

50. S. L. Epifanovič, ed., *Materialy k izučeniju žizni i tvorenij prep. Maksima Ispovednika* (Kiev: St Vladimir University Press, 1917), 29–33.

of Philippians 2:5, quoting from Chrysostom's *Homily 7*<sup>51</sup> and stating that their exegesis is different.

6. From John of Damascus we have excerpts from a commentary on Philippians from various sources (*CPG* 8079), predominantly Chrysostom.<sup>52</sup>

7. Pseudo-Oecumenius, a writer from the tenth century, composed a commentary on Paul's Letter to the Philippians (cf. *CPG* 7475).<sup>53</sup> In general this author follows Chrysostom's interpretations of the Pauline text.<sup>54</sup>

8. Theophylact, archbishop of Ochrid (b. ca. 1050, d. after 1126), an exegete and epistolographer, among other roles, commented on all of Paul's epistles.<sup>55</sup> Like Pseudo-Oecumenius he generally follows Chrysostom's exegesis.<sup>56</sup>

#### LATIN

1. Marius Victorinus, who died after 363, wrote a commentary on Paul's letters to the Galatians, Philippians, and Ephesians (*CPL* 98).<sup>57</sup> The commentary on Philippians has come down to us with a mutilated beginning, the exegesis of Philippians 1:16 and the start of 1:17 being missing.

2. Ambrosiaster, who flourished in Rome during the time of Pope Damasus (366–84), wrote a short commentary on Paul's Letter to the Philippians (*CPL* 184).<sup>58</sup>

51. Field, 5:76D–77B.

52. PG 95:855–84. See further Johannes M. Hoeck, "Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung," *OCP* 17 (1951): 5–60.

53. PG 118:1259–1326.

54. Swete provides the details in his commentary (*Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni*, passim). See further Marc De Groote, "Opera (Pseudo-) Oecumeniana: Das sonstige echte und vermeintliche Œuvre des Apokalypse-Exegeten Oecumenius," *ByzZ* 94 (2001): 20–28.

55. For his commentary on Philippians, see PG 124:1139–1204.

56. Swete (*Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni*) notes these congruences in his footnotes.

57. Franco Gori, ed., *Marii Victorini: Opera exegetica* (CSEL 83/2; Vienna: der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1971–86), 174–229.

58. Henricus I. Vogels, ed., *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas* (3 vols.; CSEL 81; Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Temsky, 1969), 3:127–63.

3. Pelagius (d. 423–29) wrote commentaries on all twelve epistles of Paul (CPL 728), including a short one on Philippians.<sup>59</sup>

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

The text of Chrysostom's homilies on Philippians established by Bernard de Montfaucon in his monumental edition of all Chrysostom's works<sup>60</sup> rested on three manuscripts, one of them partial. It was Montfaucon's edition that was taken over by Jean-Paul Migne in PG 62:177–298. Montfaucon states that he collated a Coislin and a Colbert manuscript, plus another defective witness, which he designates as "Regius."<sup>61</sup> Following the policy established for this and future volumes presenting Chrysostom's commentaries on the New Testament, Frederick Field's text of 1855 has been used for the translation below of Philippians, with the exception of some paragraphing and punctuation. Field's text itself is based on an edition published in 1529 in Verona, which he was satisfied was the correct text. Until new text editions are made of Chrysostom's works employing modern scientific principles, Field must remain the guiding light, although many questions of a textual nature, especially with regard to the homilies on the Pauline epistles, have to be considered tentative.<sup>62</sup> Apart from the Verona edition, Field consulted four manuscripts for his text of Philippians, all different from those used by Montfaucon and listed by him as follows:<sup>63</sup>

---

59. Alexander Souter, ed., *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul* (2 vols.; Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 9/1–2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922–26; repr. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint Limited, 1967), 387–416.

60. Bernard de Montfaucon, ed., *Sancti patris nostri Ioannis Chrysostomi archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opera omnia quae extant, uel quae eius nomine circumferentur* (13 vols.; Paris: Gaume Fratres Bibliopolas, 1718–38).

61. See PG 62:177 n. (a). Cf. Field's Monitum to his Philippians edition, 5:ix–x, on the manuscripts used by Montfaucon, noting that the Coislin ("quisquis fuerit") seems to be connected with the recension in Field's own manuscripts C and G, while Montfaucon rarely uses the Colbert.

62. On this point, see Blake Goodall, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Letters of St. Paul to Titus and Philemon: Prolegomena to an Edition* (University of California Publications in Classical Studies 20; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 1–5.

63. In the Monitum of his edition (Field, 5:x).

- C “Codex Musei Britannici, Burney 48.” Field says he will describe it at another time, but, as far as I can ascertain, this did not happen. Fortunately, we have a modern catalogue that can help. This manuscript is in fact Burney 48A, dating from the beginning of the twelfth century, and the Philippians text appears on folios 104v–158.<sup>64</sup>
- E “Vindobonensis, Lambec. CXL,” which Field says he has mentioned in the introduction to his text of Galatians, but the reference there is vague. Again, we have a modern catalogue, in which this manuscript appears as *theologicus graecus* 111 (*olim* 140), dating from after the middle of the fourteenth century. The Philippians text appears on folios 86v–127v, and folios 86v–88 were used by Sir Henry Savile.<sup>65</sup>
- F “Mosquensis, Bibliothecae SS. Synodi Num. CVI. Membranae, saeculi, ut videtur, XI.”
- G “Mosquensis, eiusdem Bibliothecae num. CVIII, descriptus in Monito ad Ephesios” (again a not very helpful description).

Having recourse now to the PINAKES search engine of the IRHT/CNRS, we can establish that the Moscow manuscripts used by Field have been renumbered in the meantime, such that F is catalogued as SS. Synodi graecus 105 (Vladimir 105), dating from the tenth century, with the Philippians text on folios 1–113, and G is SS. Synodi graecus 107 (Vladimir 107), dating from the eleventh century, with the Philippians text on folios 112–82. The same search engine records no fewer than forty manuscripts containing our text, in various states of completeness, among which the following older manuscripts, at least, would need to be taken into consideration by anyone attempting to update Field’s edition of the complete text of Chrysostom’s *Homilies on Philippians*:

Meteora, Monê Metamorphôseôs 564 (tenth century)

64. Michel Aubineau, *Codices Chrysostomici graeci* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1968), 1:45–46.

65. Wolfgang Lackner, *Codices Chrysostomici graeci* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981), 4:42–43. On Savile, see below.

Mitylene, Monê tou Leimonos 32 (eleventh century)

Oxford, Oxford Bodleian Library Auctarium T 3.15 (Misc. 232)  
(tenth century)

Paris, Coislin 75 (eleventh century)

Paris graecus 1017 (tenth century)

Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana graecus (collection 375)  
(mid-tenth century)

There is considerable discrepancy between the text of Montfaucon and that of Field, the edition of the latter being in general better but terser, sometimes to the point of incomprehensibility. Further investigation is needed to establish whether we are dealing here with different versions, perhaps “rough” and “smooth,” as is indeed the case in other works of Chrysostom.<sup>66</sup>

Bolded numbers in square brackets in the following English translation of Chrysostom’s homilies on Philippians refer to the page numbers in Field’s text. I have made grateful use of William Cotton’s translation of 1843, based on the seventeenth-century edition at Eton by Sir Henry Savile, with some consultation by Savile of Montfaucon’s edition and the so-called new Paris edition of 1834–39. Cotton’s translation was revised by John Broadus in 1889 on the basis of Field’s edition.<sup>67</sup> The need to update these translations by a modern, idiomatic, twentieth-century rendering of Chrysostom’s work is obvious. There exists a nineteenth-century French translation, based on the text of Montfaucon, which in its time was

---

66. See further Bady, “Tradition,” 155, and the literature cited there.

67. William C. Cotton, trans., in *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 1–179. Revised by John A. Broadus under the same title and published in *NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 13:173–255. See Broadus (*NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 13:vi–vii) on the worth of earlier editions and on Field’s *modus operandi*. See Cotton (*Homilies of S. John Chrysostom*, iv, on the description of the editor (signed as “C.M.”) regarding the text used by the translator: “Savile’s text, with some comparison of others was used for the Homilies on the Philippians, and that of the new Paris Edition, with Savile always at hand, for the rest. Collations of one Ms. in British Museum (Burney 48, here marked B.) were also in hand, but those of Mss. at Venice and Florence came too late for part of the work. The want of them is not however very material.”

crowned by the Académie française,<sup>68</sup> and a twentieth-century German translation, based on the Oxford text.<sup>69</sup>

Verbatim biblical citations in this volume are reproduced in italics (often within quotation marks) to distinguish them from Chrysostom's many paraphrases of the text of Scripture. Citations from the Old Testament are generally to the LXX. In order to capture Chrysostom's conversational and sometimes even careless style, in the translations I have regularly employed contractions such as "don't."

---

68. Abbé J. Bareille, trans., *Œuvres complètes de Saint Jean Chrysostome: Traduction nouvelle* (20 vols.; Paris: Louis Vivès, 1872), 18:435–597 and 19:1–23.

69. Wenzel Stoderl, trans., *Des hl. Kirchenlehrers Johannes Chrysostomus, Erzbischofs von Konstantinopel, Kommentar zu den Briefen des hl. Paulus an die Philipper und Kolosser* (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter 45; Munich: Kösel & Pustet, 1924), 5–231.