

JOHN RUFUS: THE *LIVES* OF PETER THE  
IBERIAN, THEODOSIUS OF JERUSALEM, AND  
THE MONK ROMANUS



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JOHN RUFUS: THE *LIVES* OF PETER THE IBERIAN,  
THEODOSIUS OF JERUSALEM, AND THE MONK ROMANUS

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John Rufus: The *Lives* of Peter  
the Iberian, Theodosius of  
Jerusalem, and the Monk  
Romanus

Edited and Translated with an Introduction and Notes by

Cornelia B. Horn

and

Robert R. Phenix Jr.

Society of Biblical Literature  
Atlanta

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THEODOSIUS OF JERUSALEM, AND THE MONK ROMANUS

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# Preface

This book is the result of several years of labor in which there were many who had a share, those who kindly lent their time, knowledge, and sweat to help this work come into being, a work that spanned four cities and two continents. First, we graciously acknowledge the assistance of Sidney Griffith, David W. Johnson, and Monica Blanchard of the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Working with them on Oriental Christian texts first in Syriac and Coptic as well as the history of Christianity in the Near East set the framework for inspiring Cornelia's interest in early and late antique asceticism in the Holy Land. The *Life of Peter the Iberian* formed the basis for Cornelia's dissertation on the history of the anti-Chalcedonian church in fifth-century Palestine. A substantially revised and reworked version of that earlier work was published in 2006 as *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian* (Oxford University Press).

An initial draft of the English translation of the works presented here saw the light of day while Cornelia held a Lady Davis Fellowship to study and conduct research for her dissertation in Jerusalem during 1998–99. The peaceful, quiet, truly monastic atmosphere at Mary Magdala Convent on the Mount of Olives, the abundant resources offered at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, at the École Biblique et Archéologique, and at the Protestant Institute for Archaeology of the Holy Land, the stimulating contacts with scholars in Jerusalem such as Hanswulf Bloedhorn, Michael Stone, Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, Aryeh Kofsky, Leah Di Segni, Yitzhar Hirschfeld, and David Satran, but also the challenges of everyday life in a city coveted and fought over by so many factions provided the necessary setting to enter into the mindset of the zealous, controversialist, and nevertheless also spiritual writer and historian John Rufus.

Work on the edition of the Syriac texts, however, began only when Robert and Cornelia both realized their shared dedication to matters of the Christian Orient. Robert carried the bulk of the work of establishing the Syriac text in comparison with and correction of the preceding *editiones principes*. Both commentary and

introduction to the work reflect the great progress both Robert and Cornelia have made in becoming able to collaborate smoothly with one another.

We wish to record our thanks to Carl Griffin and Kristian Heal at Brigham Young University Press. They were the first to take an interest in publishing this work, when we still lived in St. Paul, Minnesota. Although in the end that collaboration was not meant to be, both of them provided valuable corrections to the typescript and other important assistance for which we are very grateful.

We express our gratitude to John Fitzgerald and Bob Buller of the Society of Biblical Literature, as well as to the members of the Editorial Board of the Writings from the Greco-Roman World series, for accepting this volume into their renowned series. Without their engagement, this volume would have remained in the dusty manuscript graveyard located on our hard drives. Given their support, however, we have good hopes of adding a companion volume of John Rufus's *Plerophoriae* to the present one, thus completing the presentation in Syriac and English of the *Opera Omnia* of what emerges to be the most influential anti-Chalcedonian historian of fifth- and early sixth-century Palestine.

Sebastian Brock graciously agreed to taking on the role of editor for the present volume. His well-known expertise in matters Syriac allowed him to provide many valuable corrections as well as welcome advice for improvement of the text and commentary. Our gratitude to him is profound. His contributions and the expert editorial and production work on the volume provided by Dr. Fitzgerald, Dr. Buller, and their staff allowed this volume to enter into the final stages of the collaboration history on this volume, finally achieved at the end of a long year of labor at our present location at Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. Our colleagues in the Department of Theological Studies here have made it a pleasant and fruitful one, with the reasonable expectation of many more to follow in the future. We are grateful to Aaron Overby for compiling the indices.

This work is dedicated in gratitude and with respect to our former teachers in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures at the Catholic University of America: †Dr. Michael P. O'Connor, Dr. Sidney H. Griffith, Dr. David W. Johnson, Dr. Douglas Gropp, Dr. Janet Timbie, and Dr. Monica



Blanchard. They introduced us to the languages, texts, methods, and ideas that make up the world of the ancient and early Christian Near East. Much of their inspiration has entered into this work and bears fruit in so much else of what we do.

Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr.  
Saint Louis, Missouri  
Feast of the Holy Cross, 14 September 2005



# Abbreviations

In order to make the footnotes more compact, full bibliographical citations for individual works have been reserved for the bibliography at the end of this book. Throughout the footnotes, the template for citations is AUTHOR (OR EDITOR), VOLUME:PAGE,LINE. Note that “VOLUME” and “LINE” are used only where applicable.

ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ACO	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> . Edited by Eduard Schwartz. 4 vols. in 17. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1914–.
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
<i>Amic.</i>	Cicero, <i>De amicitia</i>
<i>AnBoll</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969–73.
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–.
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
AOL	<i>Archives de l'Orient latin</i>
<i>Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Apologia</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBKL	<i>Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon</i> . Edited by Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz and Trautgott Bautz. Hamm: Bautz, 1975–.
BDEC	<i>The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity</i> . Edited by Ken Parry, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady, Sidney H. Griffith, and John F. Healey. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études
BELS	Bibliotheca Ephemerides liturgicae, Subsidia
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica Graeca</i> . Edited by François Halkin. 3rd ed. 3 vols. Subsidia Hagiographica 8a. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957.
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> . Subsidia Hagiographica 6. Brussels: Socii Bollandiani, 1898–1901.
BHO	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica Orientalis</i> . Edited by Paul Peeters. Subsidia Hagiographica 10. Brussels: Imprimerie Catholique, 1910.
<i>B.ŷ.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
<i>BjRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BM	British Museum
BNP	<i>Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World—Antiquity</i> . Edited by Hubert Cancik, Helmut Schneider, Christine F. Salazar, and David E. Orton. Leiden: Brill, 2002–.
Brockelmann	Carl Brockelmann, <i>Lexicon Syriacum</i> . 2nd ed. Halle: Niemeyer, 1928.
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients
<i>ByzF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>C. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>
CCR	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum, series apocryphorum
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, series latina
CE	<i>The Coptic Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by Aziz S. Atiya. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1991.
CH	<i>Church History</i>
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicle</i>
CMSBF	Collectio minor, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
<i>Const. ap.</i>	<i>Constitutiones apostolicae</i>
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium

CSCO/Copt	Scriptores Coptici
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSS	Cistercian Studies Series
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> . Edited by Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq. 15 vols. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907–51.
<i>Dav.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>De Davide et Saule</i>
<i>DEC</i>	<i>Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils</i> . Edited by Norman P. Tanner. 2 vols. London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990.
<i>DECL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Early Christian Literature</i> . Edited by Siegmund Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings. Translated by Matthew O'Connell. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i> . Edited by Roger Aubert. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912–.
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EECh</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of the Early Church</i> . Edited by Angelo di Berardino. Translated by Adrian Walford. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica; New York: Macmillan, 1971–72.
<i>EO</i>	<i>Echos d'Orient</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i> ; Seneca, <i>Epistulae morales</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
<i>Fin.</i>	Cicero, <i>De finibus</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
<i>Geogr.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geographica</i>
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni opera
<i>Gos. Heb.</i>	<i>Gospel of the Hebrews</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>Greg</i>	<i>Gregorianum</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
<i>Hist. Laus.</i>	Palladius, <i>Historia Lausiaca</i>

<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IKZ</i>	<i>Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Irén</i>	<i>Irénikon</i>
<i>J<i>A</i></i>	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
<i>J<i>AC</i></i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>J<i>ECS</i></i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>J<i>EastCS</i></i>	<i>Journal of Eastern Christian Studies</i>
<i>J<i>EH</i></i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JK</i>	Jaffé-Kaltenbrunner = <i>Regesta pontificum romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII</i> . Edited by Philippus Jaffé, Samuel Loewenfeld, F. Kaltenbrunner, and P. Ewald. 2 vols. Leipzig: Veit, 1885–88.
<i>J<i>JSJ</i></i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>J<i>TS</i></i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LCC</i>	Library of Christian Classics
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Leg.</i>	Athenagoras, <i>Legatio pro Christianis</i>
<i>LHR</i>	Lectures on the History of Religions
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
<i>LTK</i>	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> . 3rd ed. Edited by Walter Kasper et al. 11 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1993–2001.
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>Magn.</i>	Ignatius of Antioch, <i>To the Magnesians</i>
<i>Mart. Pal.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>De martyribus Palaestinae</i>
<i>MMAF</i>	Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire
<i>Mus</i>	<i>Muséon</i>
<i>NCE</i>	<i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> . 2nd ed. 15 vols. Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003.

<i>NEAHL</i>	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by Ephraim Stern et al. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> . Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 28 vols. in 2 series. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978–79.
NS	new series
<i>NTApoc</i>	<i>New Testament Apocrypha</i> . Edited by Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher. 2nd ed. Translated by R. McL. Wilson. 2 vols. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991.
OBC	Orientalia biblica et christiana
<i>Obit. Theod.</i>	<i>De obitu Theodosii</i>
OCA	Orientalia Christiana analecta
<i>ODB</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> . Edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan et al. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta
<i>Onom.</i>	<i>Onomasticon</i>
<i>Orat.</i>	Gregory Nazianzen. <i>Orationes</i>
<i>OrChr</i>	<i>Oriens christianus</i>
<i>OS</i>	<i>Ostkirchliche Studien</i>
<i>ParOr</i>	<i>Parole de l'Orient</i>
Payne Smith	Robert Payne Smith, <i>A Compendious Syriac Dictionary</i> . Edited by J. Payne Smith (Mrs. Margoliouth). Oxford: Clarendon, 1903. Repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 1994
PG	Patrologia graeca. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris: Migne: 1857–86.
<i>PGL</i>	<i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Edited by G. W. H. Lampe. Oxford: Clarendon, 1961.
<i>Phld.</i>	Ignatius of Antioch, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
PL	Patrologia latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris: Migne: 1844–64.
<i>Pler.</i>	<i>Plerophoriae</i>
PO	Patrologia orientalis
<i>POC</i>	<i>Proche Orient chrétien</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	Ignatius of Antioch, <i>To Polycarp</i>

PSBF	Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
PW	<i>Paulys Real-Encyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . New edition by Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kroll. 50 vols. in 84 parts. Stuttgart: Metzler and Druckenmüller, 1894–1980.
R or Raabe	Richard Raabe, ed. and trans., <i>Petrus der Iberer: Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts: Syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten griechischen Biographie</i> . Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895.
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . Edited by Theodor Klauser et al. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1941–.
SA	Studia anselmiana
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SEAug	Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum
StPatr	Studia patristica
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
<i>Symp.</i>	Plato, <i>Symposium</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by Horst Robert Balz, Gerhard Krause, and Gerhard Müller. 36 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2004.
TRSR	Testi e ricerche di Scienze religiose
TS	Text and Studies
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	Jerome, <i>De viris illustribus</i>
<i>Vit. Const.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Vita Constantini</i>
<i>Vit. Cyr.</i>	Cyril of Scythopolis, <i>Lives of the Monks of Palestine: Vita Cyriaci</i>



<i>Vit. Euth.</i>	Cyril of Scythopolis, <i>Lives of the Monks of Palestine: Vita Euthymii</i>
<i>Vit. Mel.</i>	Gerontius, <i>Vita S. Melaniae Junioris</i>
<i>Vit. Pet.</i>	<i>Vita Petri Iberi</i>
<i>Vit. Sab.</i>	Cyril of Scythopolis, <i>Lives of the Monks of Palestine: Vita Sabae</i>
<i>Vit. Sev.</i>	<i>Vita Severi</i>
<i>Vit. Theod.</i>	Cyril of Scythopolis, <i>Lives of the Monks of Palestine: Vita Theodosii</i>
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>



# Introduction

The work of John Rufus, displayed in this book with two of the three texts that come down to us from his pen from late antique times,<sup>1</sup> was geared toward supporting the network of anti-Chalcedonian Christians, ascetics as well as married laypeople, in fifth- and early sixth-century Palestine. Much of Rufus's work focused on his long-time friend and spiritual father, Peter the Iberian. It is the task of this introduction to provide readers with some of the historical, theological, and literary background that will facilitate their understanding of Rufus's portrayal of Peter the Iberian in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, exploits that extended from his childhood in ancient Georgia, through his teenage years in Constantinople, his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, his years as bishop of Maiuma, Gaza, his wanderings in Egypt, through Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia, and his final return to eternal rest in Maiuma, Gaza. Such a discussion of the relevant background and context will also allow readers better to appreciate Rufus's presentation in *On the Death of Theodosius* of Bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem, the challenger of Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem, as well as of the Monk Romanus, the "Father of the Monks."

## THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY OF GEORGIA FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SIXTH CENTURIES

The *Life of Peter the Iberian* begins with a Christian interpretation of the lives of Peter's parents and grandparents. This interpretation is set against the background of Georgian history in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. John Rufus wrote Peter the Iberian's *Life* for an audience that probably was ignorant of the political and religious history of Transcaucasia. The impact of the

<sup>1</sup> Next to the likely authorship of the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *De obitu Theodosii*, both presented in this volume, John Rufus also is to be regarded as the author of the so-called *Plerophoriae*. Of these three works, the *Plerophoriae* was composed last. An English translation of the *Plerophoriae* by Cornelia Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. is in progress.

*Life's* protagonist and the "moral" of his tale can easily be grasped without any knowledge of Iberia. The lives and Christ-centered exploits of Peter's ancestors is Rufus's interpretation, which invites the reader to accept that Peter's spiritual authority is based on a religious piety that Peter somehow inherited from his parents and grandparents and that is thus "in the family." Yet for the modern reader who has the benefit of decades of archaeological and literary research, it is tempting to make use of this opportunity to better situate the "interpretation" of the first quarter of Rufus's work in what is known about the history and culture of Georgia in the period to which Rufus alludes.

Constant war between the Sassanid Persian Empire and the Roman Empire penetrated every aspect of life in the Caucasus, including Iberia. In the hands of the two imperial powers, religion formed one fundamental element in their caustic diplomacy with Iberia, Armenia, and other kingdoms of Transcaucasia. The religion of the Georgians wavered between the Christianity of the Roman Empire and the Zoroastrianism of the Persians.<sup>2</sup> While Georgia had a steadily growing Christian presence since the early fourth century, Zoroastrianism was at times in the fourth and fifth centuries embraced or enforced in Iberia.

The kingdom of Iberia has its origins in the second half of the first millennium B.C.E.<sup>3</sup> The political and social structures of the country during the lifetime of Peter the Iberian were already in place before the arrival of the first Christian missions in the early fourth century.<sup>4</sup> By that time, the medieval kingdom of Iberia was centered on the city of Mc'xet'a, which would later be the first seat of the head of the Georgian church. The people of Iberia, the *k'art'li*, formed the core of a nation, which at times was dominated by and at times dominated the other Caucasian nations to

<sup>2</sup> Günter Lanczkowski, "Iranische Religionen," *TRE* 16:247–58. For a study of influence of Zoroastrianism on a neighboring Christian people, see James A. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Harvard Iranian Series 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the early history of the Iberians and other proto-Georgians, see Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1963), 48–86.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, 87. The Iberians had a system of dynastic monarchs already in place before the fall of the Achaemenid Empire in the late fourth century B.C.E.

its south, west, and east.<sup>5</sup> The *k'art'li* language became a vehicle of wider communication among Caucasian nations from the Middle Ages to the present, having been committed to writing sometime in the mid-fifth century.<sup>6</sup>

The other Georgian kingdoms were Albania and Colchis.<sup>7</sup> Albania emerged as an autonomous kingdom later than Iberia. Centered farther east and south from Iberia, it was subject to greater Iranian influence and enjoyed less autonomy than Iberia. After the third century, Albania was annexed at various times to either Persia or Iberia.

Colchis, later Lazica, along the Black Sea littoral, already had developed its social and political structures by the end of the second millennium B.C.E. but in the fourth century had been absorbed by the Roman Empire. Colchis had few natural barriers between itself and the encroaching Romans and was under greater Hellenistic influence than Iberia. Iberia (with or without Albania) is often called "Eastern Georgia" and Colchis, "Western Georgia."

Social development and political history in Iberia are better attested than for the other two kingdoms. Unfortunately, this evidence does not shed enough light on the fifth century to allow for a positive identification of Peter the Iberian with any onomastic evidence. There are only two works that provide a record of the early kings of Iberia, both attributed to the eighth-century Leontius, bishop of Ruisi (Mroveli): the first is the *History of the*

<sup>5</sup> For an explanation and discussion of the origins of the *k'art'li* and of *Mc'xet'a*, see *ibid.*, 88 n. 120. For a helpful presentation of the main features of the history of Iberia, see Otar Lordkipanidse and Heinzgerd Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," *RAC* 17:12–106, here 16–70.

<sup>6</sup> On the origin of the Georgian alphabet, see Dee Ann Holisky, "The Georgian Alphabet," in *The World's Writing Systems* (ed. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 364–69, especially 367–68; see also the bibliography there.

<sup>7</sup> The history of Colchis/Lazica is presented in Lordkipanidse and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 70–97.

*Kings of K'art'li*;<sup>8</sup> the second is a compilation called *The Conversion of K'art'li by Nino*,<sup>9</sup> which contains among its sources *The Primary History of K'art'li* and the *Royal Lists*.<sup>10</sup> The material and traditions that these works contain predates their relatively late attestation. Among other matters, these works demonstrate that the *K'art'li* dynasty became dominant at a relatively early date, claiming divine descent from the clan deity of the Iberians, *K'art'los*.<sup>11</sup> The autonomous kingdom of Iberia emerged first as a vassal of the Seleucid kingdom. The head of the Mc'xet'a dynasty bore the title "king of all Iberia," bestowed on Pharnabazus I after his liberation of Iberia from the Macedonian Empire in the late fourth century B.C.E.<sup>12</sup> Its autonomy waxed and waned with the shifting political and military dominance of the Caucasus between Parthian Persia and first the Seleucid and later the Roman Empires.

Iberia was not only subject to the expansionist policies of Rome and Persia. As an effect of the machinations of these two great powers, the borders of Iberia fluctuated depending on the relative strength of the Armenian dynasties to its south.<sup>13</sup> The weakening of the Arsacid dynasts of Armenia following the Sassanian victory in 363 C.E. was a period of Iberian expansion. The first Christian Iberian king, Mirian (Murabanes) III (284–361), was the head of one of the dynastic lines, the House of Mihrān, which was recognized by the Persian shah to be one of the Seven Great Houses of the Sassanid Empire. This implied that the House of Mihrān had married into the ruling Sassanid house of Irān. The head of another dynastic line from the same House of Mihrān, P'eroz, had in the meanwhile acquired control of Gogarene, a territory that vacillated between Iberian and Armenian

<sup>8</sup> For an English translation of both the Georgian and the Armenian version, see Robert W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles* (Oxford Oriental Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 2–84. See also Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> For an English translation, see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, 84–153.

<sup>10</sup> Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 87.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 89; Lordkipanidse and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 17.

<sup>13</sup> See Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 186.

control. P'eroz also accepted Christianity and so frustrated Iranian influence in the Iberian kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

Names from the dynasty that ruled Gogarene before the House of Mihrān bear close resemblance to the names in the genealogy of the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*. Many of these names reflect worship of the god Mithras. Rulers probably kept to names that were associated with their dynasty even after conversion to Christianity. The names that Rufus recounts in Peter the Iberian's genealogy have been found on monuments erected in Armazi, the center of pre-Christian religion in Iberia.<sup>15</sup> An inscription found in what is likely the oldest archaeologically preserved Georgian monastery in Palestine<sup>16</sup> contains the name "Buzmihr," which has been identified with the "Bosmarios (or Buzmirios)," Peter's father, in the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*.<sup>17</sup> This "Buzmihr" of the inscription was one of the *vitaxas* of Gogarene. The *vitaxa* was a feudal dynast whose control over a piece of land was guaranteed in part by a king. Gogarene was located between the core Iberian lands around Mc'xet'a to the north and the Armenian kingdom to the south. The *vitaxas* of Gogarene were part of the Armenian kingdom until Gogarene was incorporated into Iberia in the mid-fourth century. Buzmihr was not "king of the Iberians," contrary to how the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* styles him, but such confusion on the part of Rufus, who was no doubt unfamiliar with the dynastic/feudal system of K'art'li, is possible.<sup>18</sup> A Georgian inscription from the monastery

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>15</sup> For the genealogy of the *vitaxas* of Gogarene, see *ibid.*, 260–62.

<sup>16</sup> Recent discoveries in Umm Lisan (also transcribed at times as Umm Leison) point to likely contemporaneous archaeological evidence for Georgian monastic life in the environs of Jerusalem. For further references, see Cornelia B. Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 72, n. 111. See now also Tamila Mgaloblishvili, "An Unknown Georgian Monastery in the Holy Land," *ARAM* 18–19 (2006–2007): 527–539.

<sup>17</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §§6, 14, 23–24, 118 (R 5, 8–9, 15–16, 86). In references to the *Vita Petri Iberi*, the number following the § sign pertains to the paragraph number supplied in both Syriac text and English translation below. We also provide in brackets reference to the page numbers of Richard Raabe's earlier edition of the Syriac text. For reference to this edition, see below, p. lxxi, n. 185. For further information here, see also Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 260–61.

<sup>18</sup> So Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 261.

Birru-l Qutt, in the Judean Desert,<sup>19</sup> southeast of Jerusalem and northeast of Bethlehem, has been offered as proof that Peter was a descendant of the *vitaxas* of Gogarene. Some scholars read the abbreviation WRZN, which is found as part of the inscription, as the name “Buzmihr,” given that it appears with another name interpreted as “Maruan.” In the Georgian *Life of Peter the Iberian* Peter’s given name is indeed “Murvanos.”<sup>20</sup>

Peter’s paternal great-grandfather, Bakurios, was called the first Christian “king of the Iberians,” against the better attested evidence that the first Christian Iberian king was Mirian III.<sup>21</sup> Varaz-Bak’ar or Varaz-Bakur (Latin: Aspacures III, 380–394), is attested in Leontius Mroveli’s history. His second queen was the granddaughter of P’eroz *vitaxa* of Gogarene, the son-in-law of Mirian III.<sup>22</sup> If Varaz-Bak’ar or Varaz-Bakur is to be identified with the Bakurios of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, it is possible that Rufus confused Bakurios with Mirian.

<sup>19</sup> Michel Tarchnishvili, “Le iscrizioni musive del monastero di Bir el-Qutt,” in Virgilio Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam (Campo dei Pastori) e i monasteri dei dintorni* (Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 11; Jerusalem: Francescani, 1955), 135–39; see also Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 261.

<sup>20</sup> See Ivane Lolashvili, *არეოპაგიტული კრებული: დიონისე არეოპაგელი და ჰეტრე იბერიელი ქველქართულ მწერლობაში* [*Areopagite Chronicle: Dionysius and Peter the Iberian in Classical Georgian Hagiography*] (Tbilisi: Mec’niereba, 1983), sect. 2, p. 119, and elsewhere.

<sup>21</sup> It is possible that the names “Mirian” and “Murvanos” are alternative forms of the same name. As indicated above, according to the “Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian,” the name given to Peter was “Murvanos.”

<sup>22</sup> Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, 262.



CHRISTIANITY AND MONASTICISM IN GEORGIA  
IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

The eighth-century Georgian writer Ioane Sabanidze indicated that Georgia had been Christian for five centuries or even longer.<sup>23</sup> According to the *Life of St. Nino*, Georgia accepted the Christian faith in the fourth century.<sup>24</sup> Other traditions indicate that Christianity had appeared in Armenia and Colchis in the first century,<sup>25</sup> although the claim to apostolic succession from the evangelical work of the apostle Andrew as it attaches to the Colchis-traditions was not fully developed until the eleventh century,<sup>26</sup> when the separation of Georgia from the apostolic patriarchate of Antioch was required due to practical difficulties of communication imposed by the Crusades. Little is known about the history, spiritual or otherwise, of Western Georgia, in the first five centuries C.E.

The development of Christianity in Iberia is better illuminated in this period. In addition to the two hagiographic sources, that is, the *Martyrdom of Abo* and the *Life of St. Nino*, and paleographic evidence, hagiographic works attest, albeit indirectly, to the stages of Christianization in Georgia and its connection with the political flux of Persian and Roman hegemony. Two key

<sup>23</sup> The *Martyrdom of Abo* (see Karl Schultze, *Das Martyrium des heiligen Abo von Tiflis* [TU 28.4b; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905], 15) speaks of Georgian Christians in the eighth century whose ancestors had converted to the Christian faith already "five hundred years ago or even earlier." See also Alexandre Manvelichvili, *Histoire de Géorgie* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions de la Toison d'Or, 1951), 91; and Lordkipanidze and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 40.

<sup>24</sup> During the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great, if one follows Greco-Roman historiography, or under Emperor Constantius II (337–361), according to the native sources. See Lordkipanidze and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 42 and 50–51.

<sup>25</sup> Archaeological evidence of burial customs as well as findings of Christian jewelry in graves (a silver ring depicting an anchor between two fish) point to the relatively early spread of Christianity in Iberia. See Lordkipanidze and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 40; for Colchis, *ibid.*, 90.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, 90; see also Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 210 and 262–63.

hagiographical sources are the *Life of St. Nino*<sup>27</sup> and the *Martyrdom of the Children of Kola*.

It is to Nino that the credit for the conversion of King Mirian III of Iberia is given. Nearly all details about her and her mission to Iberia come from her hagiographic witness. Nino, a virgin presumably from Cappadocia, is claimed to be the apostle to the Iberians and is the patron saint of Georgian Christians.<sup>28</sup> Whether or not all that has accreted to the memory of her life can be reduced to fact, her conversion of Queen Nana and of King Mirian was only the beginning of a very long process of Christianization. In that process, Georgian Christians had an interest in strengthening ties to the church in Jerusalem, which is reflected in a connection established in the *Life of St. Nino* between the saint and the bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>

The *Martyrdom of the Nine Children of Kola* unfolds probably in the late fourth or early fifth century.<sup>30</sup> It recounts the story of pagan boys who decide to become Christians without parental permission, refuse to renounce their religion, and, in the end, receive martyrdom at the hands of their own parents.<sup>31</sup> The story,

<sup>27</sup> For an English translation of this text, see Margery Wardrop and James O. Wardrop, "Life of St. Nino," *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* 5 (1903): 1–88.

<sup>28</sup> On St. Nino's efforts at Christianizing the Georgians, see the studies by Fairy von Lilienfeld, "Amt und geistliche Vollmacht der heiligen Nino, 'Apostel und Evangelist' von Ostgeorgien, nach den ältesten georgischen Quellen," in *Horizonte der Christenheit: Festschrift für Friedrich Heyer zu seinem 85. Geburtstag* (ed. Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski; Oikonomia 34; Erlangen: Lehrstuhl für Geschichte und Theologie des Christlichen Ostens, 1994), 224–49; and Cornelia B. Horn, "St. Nino and the Christianization of Pagan Georgia," *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998): 242–64.

<sup>29</sup> There she is presented as the niece of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. See Wardrop and Wardrop, "Life of St. Nino," 7–10.

<sup>30</sup> For an English translation of the text, see David Marshall Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London: Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1956), 40–43.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the martyrdom of children in early Christian times, see Cornelia Horn, "'Fathers and Mothers Shall Rise Up against Their Children and Kill Them': Martyrdom and Children in the Early Church," paper presented at the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, November 2002. See also the discussion in Cornelia Horn, "The Lives and Literary Roles of Children in Advancing Conversion to Christianity: Hagiography from the Caucasus in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Church History* 76.2 (2007), 262–297.

independent of hagiographical details designed to help Christians resist the Persians, reveals that pre-Christian religion remained alive well into the establishment of churches in Georgia.

A third work, the *Martyrdom of Shushanik*, attests to the impact of Persian hegemony on Iberia in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>32</sup> Before 483 C.E.,<sup>33</sup> Shushanik, the Christian wife of a Christian king of Iberia, was murdered for the faith by her husband, who converted to Zoroastrianism in order to secure an alliance with the Persian king.<sup>34</sup> The religion of Zoroastrianism, like Christianity in the Roman Empire after Constantine, had become a means of statecraft. To understand the connection between Zoroastrianism and Persian governance, one must understand the history of this *modus operandi* of Persian administration. Even by the sixth century, the impact of Zoroastrianism and the relative strength of Christianity in Iberia were not unequally matched.

In 224 C.E., Ardashir, a prince from the Fars province in Persia, completed his revolution of the Parthian Empire. A key element of the Sassanian formula for strengthening Persia was to enforce a single Persian culture and religion on all its subjects. Zoroastrianism, or Mazdaism, was revived as a religion of state. For Christians in Persia, this policy had limited impact, so long as Christianity remained a *religio illicita*, or illegal association, in the Roman Empire. In the aftermath of the Edict of Milan, however, things changed.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For an English translation of the *Martyrdom of Shushanik*, see Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 44–56.

<sup>33</sup> Lang (ibid., 44) states that Jacob of Tsurav composed the *Martyrdom of Shushanik* between 476 and 483 C.E.

<sup>34</sup> On the role of gender in the Zoroastrian tradition, see the interesting study by Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Evil, Good and Gender: Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History* (Toronto Studies in Religion 28; New York: Lang, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> For discussion of the situation of Christians under the Sassanians, see Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia* (2 vols.; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 1:91–264; Sebastian P. Brock, “Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties,” in *Religion and National Identity. Papers Read at the Nineteenth Summer Meeting and the Twentieth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (ed. Stuart Mews; Studies in Church History 18; Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 1–19, repr. as ch. 6 in Sebastian P. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London: Variorum, 1984); and

Shah Yazdegerd II (438–457) undertook the complete subjugation of Armenia and Georgia.<sup>36</sup> Part of his policy was to assimilate their populations *in toto* to Zoroastrianism. Evidence for the effect of Yazdegerd's foreign policy comes from the *Martyrdom of Shushanik*. Varsken, prince of Georgia, embraced Zoroastrianism in the late fifth century. His wife, Shushanik, the daughter of the Armenian prince Vardan Mamikonean, refused to abjure Christ and was martyred for her conviction.<sup>37</sup> Yazdegerd was unable to subjugate either Armenia or Iberia. After Emperor Constantine I sanctioned Christian worship in 313, Persian shahs saw in their Christian subjects a liability. Christians in Persia were subject to intermittent persecutions and forced conversion to Zoroastrianism. For Aramean/Assyrian, Armenian, and Georgian Christians living in Persia, the decision of a shah to support (or at least not prevent) local persecution of Christians depended on political relations with Persia's archrival, Rome.<sup>38</sup>

The eastward creep of Roman hegemony since the third century was no better guarantor of freedom for its allies and vassals from its control than what the Persians offered. The Christian Armenian and Georgian kings attempted to extricate themselves from the Christian Roman Empire's influence. The independent kingdom of Lazica, formerly Colchis, had carved out a brief independence from its fellow Christian masters in the sixth century.<sup>39</sup>

A. V. Williams, "Zoroastrians and Christians in Sasanian Iran," *BJRL* 78 (1996): 37–53.

<sup>36</sup> See Wolfgang Hage, "Armenien I. Alte Kirche und Mittelalter," *TRE* 4:46; see also Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, 115; Lordkipanidse and Brakmann ("Iberia II [Georgien]," 36) speak of "close relations" between Yazdegerd II and Iberia.

<sup>37</sup> For other female martyrs under Persian domination, see, e.g., the stories of Martha, Tarbo, Thekla, Anahid, Candida, and other Christian women associated with them. See the English translation of their martyrdom accounts in Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 13; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), ch. 3. For Candida, see Sebastian P. Brock, "A Martyr at the Sasanid Court under Vahran II: Candida," *AnBoll* 96 (1978): 167–81, repr. as ch. 9 in Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*.

<sup>38</sup> For some study of the Christian persecution in the Sassanid Empire, see also Josef Rist, "Die Verfolgung der Christen im spätantiken Sasanidenreich: Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen," *OrChr* 80 (1996): 17–42; see also Brock, "Christians in the Sasanian Empire."

<sup>39</sup> Lordkipanidse and Brakmann, "Iberia II (Georgien)," 84–85.

Armenian as well as Georgian rulers attempted to secure local autonomy by playing the Romans off the Persians. After the Edict of Milan (313), the power of Georgian and Armenian vassal kings of the Sassanid Empire had gained some leverage in that the Romans had become their “co-religionists.”

The *Life of Peter the Iberian* gives evidence of this policy with an example of politically motivated temperance of religion. The example of Bakurios in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* reflects the leverage Iberian kings were able to wield against both Rome and Persia. Georgian kings were responsible for supplying troops for the Persian army, under the command of their king. This allowed the Georgians to play Rome off Persia in pursuit of the path of greatest independence. When Bakurios, Peter’s maternal grandfather and king of the Iberians, refused to worship the rising sun while on campaign with the Persian shah and his generals on the grounds that he worshiped the one who created the sun, we are told the shah was forced to temporize. “What can we do to him?” “It is Bakurios, and we are in need of him” (*Vit. Pet.* §13 [R 8]). The Persians could not take for granted the allegiance of Christian allies on their Roman frontier, yet neither could the Romans. Peter’s encounter with the court of Theodosius II was as a hostage, guaranteeing Georgia would not ally the strength of their arms or provide assistance to the Persians (§§24 [R 15–16] and 29 [R 20]).

Political alliance between Georgia and Persia is also evident in the relationship between the Georgian and Persian Churches. The Council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (410) assembled to provide a framework for the autonomy of the church in Persia.<sup>40</sup> The Sassanid kings had learned from their experience in the fourth century that persecution was a not entirely successful strategy for assimilating its Christian subjects to Zoroastrianism. Perhaps fearing that Christian martyrdom in Persia might have the effect of converting Persians to Christianity, as it did in the Roman Empire, the Sassanids attempted to allow the Christians to form a distinct Christian church in Persia that would be independent of patriarchal jurisdictions in Constantinople and Antioch. The activities

<sup>40</sup> Complementary to the following discussion, see also Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: Routledge, 2003), 7–41.

and allegiance of such a church reduced the uncertainty of the loyalty of its Christian subjects.<sup>41</sup>

Until 410 C.E., the Christian church of Persia was under the jurisdiction of the apostolic see of Antioch. Due to the incessant war between Persia and Rome, communication with Antioch was subject to disruption. Zoroastrian persecution in the fourth century had left the church in need of hierarchs, schools, and churches. The council of 410 was called in part to draft canons for the governance of the church in Persia without recourse to Antioch. To this council, which formed the canonical foundation of the church of the East, the church in Georgia sent at least one representative.<sup>42</sup> After the christological controversies of the fifth century, Georgia and Armenia accepted the decisions of the Council of Ephesus (431) and hence came to identify with the church in the Roman Empire. Those theologians and scholars in the Roman Empire who rejected the theological and disciplinary decisions of Ephesus were expelled from the Roman Empire on charges of heresy and sedition. Many of the most influential of these theologians were Syriac speakers, who were warmly received during the fifth and sixth centuries by the persecuted Syriac-speaking Christians of Persia. Whatever the claims of the orthodoxy of these scholars and bishops, their influence caused the Persian church never to accept the decisions of the Council of Ephesus, marking the emergence of the Assyrian Apostolic Church of the East as a distinct ecclesiastical entity. This break of the church in the Roman Empire was consistent with the Persian Empire's desire to isolate its Christian church from the church of its Roman enemy.

Unable to secure Iberia militarily, the Persians soon began a persecution of Christians. After the death of Aspacures III, the Iberian kings Pharsamanios and Bosmarios (ca. 395–416) appealed to Rome, and Rome was able to repel the Persians momentarily. Following this, as surety that the Iberian throne would not be swayed to the Persians, it is likely that the young prince Peter was given as a hostage to the court of Theodosius II (*Vit. Pet.* §24 [R 15–16]).

<sup>41</sup> See the problematic discussed in Brock, "Christians in the Sasanian Empire."

<sup>42</sup> See Julius Aßfalg and David Marshall Lang, "Georgien," *TRE* 12:391.

After Peter's arrival in Constantinople, the narrative of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* leaves the history of Georgia behind. The only allusion to Georgia is the mention of letters that Peter refused to write to or receive from any members of his family or from acquaintances back home for fear of losing his ascetic discipline (*Vit. Pet.* §19 [R 12]). Yet developments in Georgia took a decisive turn in the mid-fifth century. King Vaxt'ang Gorgasali (447–522) united Iberia and Lazica into a powerful kingdom.<sup>43</sup> While this kingdom did not survive him, Gorgasali's reforms of Georgian administration and of the organization of the Georgian church had far reaching effects, which would bear fruit in the powerful Christian kingdom of Georgia in the twelfth through fifteenth centuries.

Before Gorgasali's union of Eastern and Western Georgia, the Georgian church had been united under a single catholicos already in the fifth century. Gorgasali decided that so long as the Georgian catholicos was subordinate to bishops in the Roman Empire, Georgia could not be independent of Constantinople's influence. Byzantium's model of the state made the emperor God's instrument for the protection of the church. The Patriarch was the emperor's high priest. Gorgasali reasoned that his independence from Rome (and Persia) rested with an independent church, of which he, like the Roman emperor and the Persian shah, would be its God-mandated protector. Gorgasali moved the seat of the catholicos from the old see of Mc'xet'a to his capital, Tbilisi. A similar understanding of church independence as a necessary condition for national independence was also reached by the Armenians in the same period.<sup>44</sup>

Georgia, like Armenia, rejected the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.). For reasons that appear to be as much political as theological, after 583 Georgia changed its mind and accepted the theological and canonical decisions of Chalcedon. After the death of King Bakur III in 580, Iberia became a vassal of the Persian

<sup>43</sup> For the feats of King Vaxt'ang Gorgasali, see the account provided by Juansheri in his *Life of Vaxt'ang Gorgasali*. Ed. Alexandre Sardzveladze, Zurab Sardzveladze, and Tamar Xazomia, ცხოვრება ვახტანგ გორგასალისა [*Life of Vaxhtang Gorgasali*] (Tbilisi: Mecniereba, 1986). For an English translation of the Georgian and Armenian witnesses, see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, 153–251.

<sup>44</sup> See Hage, "Armenien I," 46.



shah. It was remarked that in the fifth century there was an intervening shift of Georgian alliance with the Romans, as Peter was given as a hostage to Theodosius II by his father Bosmarios, who “preferred the friendship of the Romans as Christians rather than the assistance of the impious Persians” (*Vit. Pet.* §24 [R 16]). Granted that this comment occurs in an anti-Chalcedonian text, yet even there it speaks to a pre-Chalcedonian situation, still unencumbered by the context of christological struggles. What was of interest were politically advantageous alliances. In the sixth century, Persian pressure continued to force Georgia to seek Roman protection, the price for which eventually was adoption of the Chalcedonian Christianity of the Roman emperor.<sup>45</sup> In 606 C.E., Catholicos Kyrion II formally embraced Chalcedon. The anti-Chalcedonian Armenian hierarchs excommunicated the Georgian hierarchy at the Synod of Dvin in 608. The Armenians had been able to maintain their independence from virtually every Christian church in a unique way. They were anti-Chalcedonian but accepted the formulation of a one-nature Christology proposed by Julian of Halicarnassus.<sup>46</sup> The rest of the anti-Chalcedonian world adopted the formulation of Julian’s one-time friend-turned-archrival, Severus of Antioch (512–518).<sup>47</sup> Armenia was able to sidestep Roman hegemony on the one hand and influence from its Georgian political rivals on the other.

<sup>45</sup> For some discussion that adherence to Chalcedon had become a matter of Byzantine patriotism and identity in Constantinople, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 172.

<sup>46</sup> Julian of Halicarnassus’s theology is characterized by his view that Christ’s body was incorruptible. See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 253–63; see also René Draguet, *Julien d’Halicarnasse et sa controverse avec Sévère d’Antioche sur l’incorruptibilité du corps du Christ: Étude d’histoire littéraire et doctrinale suivie des Fragments dogmatiques de Julien* (Leuven: Smeesters, 1924).

<sup>47</sup> Severus of Antioch refuted the theology of Julian of Halicarnassus explicitly. These works were edited by A. Sanda, *Severi Antiulianistica* (Beirut: Typographia Catholica, 1931). For a study of the controversy, see Draguet, *Julien d’Halicarnasse*. For a critique of Draguet’s study, see Martin Jugie, *Julien d’Halicarnasse et Sévère d’Antioche (controverse sur la passibilité du corps de Jésus-Christ): La doctrine du péché original chez les pères grecs* (Paris: Feron-Vrau, 1925). For more recent studies of the context of Julian’s theology, see, e.g., Katherine Adshead, “Justinian and Aphthartodocetism,” in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (ed. Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex; London: Duckworth; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 331–36.



PETER'S GENEALOGY IN THE *LIFE OF PETER THE IBERIAN*:  
HAGIOGRAPHIC ANCESTRY

The interpretation that the *Life of Peter the Iberian* offers with its detailed genealogy of Peter makes the claim that Peter's spiritual authority was based on the religion of his parents, grandparents, and relatives.<sup>48</sup> The genealogy presents Peter's resistance to Chalcedon as the spiritual heritage of his faithful parents and grandparents, who were believers before the controversies of Nestorius of Constantinople and Cyril of Alexandria. At the time that Rufus composed this work, the Roman emperor had become identified, at least by those in the East, with the Chalcedonian definition. Byzantine patriotism identified a Chalcedonian emperor and empire, perhaps out of proportion to the merits of the council's theological and canonical definitions, with peace and security against all that plagued the Byzantine consciousness, real or imagined. The story of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* favors neither the Persian nor the Roman emperors, but the inconsistent treatment of each is designed to create of Peter a character through whom Rufus inspires his readers to resist the pressure to enter into communion with the Chalcedonian establishment.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES  
AND THEIR CONTEXT IN PALESTINE  
FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SIXTH CENTURIES

After Peter's encounter with the piety of Emperor Theodosius II and Empress Eudocia at the imperial court in Constantinople,<sup>49</sup> it is the history of the christological controversy, especially on the stage of Palestine and to a lesser extent of Egypt, that forms the object of Rufus's attention in his portrait of Peter. Rufus's interpretation of the events before, during, and after Chalcedon in Palestine and Egypt offers the literary lens through which the reader views Peter. Through sketches of Peter's miracles

<sup>48</sup> See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 50–59.

<sup>49</sup> For a fuller discussion of Eudocia's support of Peter and his anti-Chalcedonian network, see Cornelia Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Love of a Foster-Mother in Fifth-Century Palestine," *ByzF* 28 (2004): 197–213.

and ascetic athleticism, Rufus recounts the events that in the end essentially extinguished anti-Chalcedonian Christianity from Palestine until it availed itself of the new political climate created by the Arab conquest of the region in the 630s.<sup>50</sup>

The controversies that led to the Council of Chalcedon had a permanent effect on Christianity. Christianity in the Eastern Roman Empire would be split, while new challenges in the governance of the church, of the authority and jurisdiction of patriarchal sees, would be entwined with the theological controversies and the increasingly different military and political experiences of Old and New Rome. The christological controversy that consumed Christians East and West in the fifth century was a continuation of the fourth-century controversies over the Christian concept of a Triune Godhead.<sup>51</sup> However, the political and ecclesiastical forces of the Roman Empire had rapidly changed in the intervening years between the Council of Constantinople I in 381 and that of Ephesus in 431. These changes were the result of the response of the empire to Christianity and of the church to a Christian Roman emperor. The christological controversies of the fifth century were not the product of political or ecclesiastical crises, but the chief players in the decades-long drama were not immune to these “temporal” realities either. The prerogatives and authority of ancient sees, the spiritual authority of monastics, and the tension of acquired authority of Constantinople as “New Rome” could not be disentangled from the motivations of the chief combatants and architects of these theological controversies. Moreover, language and ethnic identity played then, as it does

<sup>50</sup> Indispensable to this survey is Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, especially 6–49.

<sup>51</sup> The councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople I (381) sought to clarify the Christian understanding of the Trinity. For helpful discussions of the development of the Trinitarian doctrine in the early Church, see Franz Courth, *Trinität in der Schrift und Patristik* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte 2.1a; Freiburg: Herder, 1988). See also G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1952); R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988); and Basil Studer, *Gott und unsere Erlösung im Glauben der Alten Kirche* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1985). Comments in anti-Chalcedonian documents indicate that the opponents of Chalcedon feared the council had turned the Trinitarian concept of God de facto into a quaternian one. For comments, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 259, n. 156, with further references.

now, a secondary although critical role in the final stages of this conflict,<sup>52</sup> when the anti-Chalcedonian churches were organized around ancient patriarchates that also reflected quite naturally the linguistic and “ethnic” boundaries of Armenians, Georgians, Copts, Syro-Arameans, Nubians, and Ethiopians.

The opening volley of this controversy is typically dated to 428 C.E. Nestorius, archbishop of Constantinople (consecrated 28 April 428), was reported to have proclaimed from the pulpit that Mary did not give birth to God but to Christ.<sup>53</sup> Nestorius, in conflict with the imperial ladies like his distinguished and controversial predecessor John Chrysostom,<sup>54</sup> may have found the piety that was in vogue at the court, primarily with Empress Pulcheria, to smack of Origenism.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> A. H. M. Jones (“Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?” *JTS* 10 [1959]: 280–98) provoked a considerable amount of discussion of whether or not nationalistic tendencies were operative in theological controversies of the ancient Church.

<sup>53</sup> In *Pler.* 1 (Nau and Brière, 12), John Rufus reports that Nestorius proclaimed Mary had given birth “to an instrument of God.” For the brilliant reply, delivered by Proclus of Cyzicus, later to become bishop of Constantinople, see his homily “On the Holy Virgin Theotokos Delivered While Nestorius Was Seated in the Great Church of Constantinople” (Constas, 136–47). For a helpful discussion of the events during this controversy as well as the larger context, see ch. 2 of Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*.

<sup>54</sup> On the conflict between John Chrysostom and Empress Aelia Eudoxia, see Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 70–78. For Chrysostom’s involvement in the Origenist controversy, see the comments in Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 21–25 and 46–47.

<sup>55</sup> Pulcheria’s claims of having given birth to God appear to have been grounded in a spirituality that also is reflected in Origen’s writings. Hugo Rahner (“Die Gottesgeburt: Die Lehre der Kirchenväter von der Geburt Christi im Herzen der Gläubigen,” *ZKT* 59 [1935]: 333–418, here 351–58) provides ample documentation for Origen’s development of the theme of the birth of God in the human believer. The connections between the Origenist controversy and the christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries have not yet been subjected to a comprehensive investigation. More recently, Daniël Hombergen (*The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis’ Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism* [SA 132; Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2001]) has approached aspects of the question for a sixth-century, Palestinian setting.

The *Letter to Cosmas* recounts an incident between Nestorius and Empress Pulcheria, which if true sets this debate in some relief.<sup>56</sup> Pulcheria had claimed the right to receive communion in the sanctuary with the clergy. Nestorius attempted to forbid her from continuing her idiosyncratic practice.<sup>57</sup> When Pulcheria argued that she was entitled to receive communion in the sanctuary because she had given birth to God, Nestorius drove her away with the reply, “You? You have given birth to Satan!”<sup>58</sup> Had Nestorius been a more careful student of the fate of Chrysostom in that one’s battle with Pulcheria’s mother, Eudoxia, he might have found a more efficient diplomacy.

Nestorius had been educated by Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom’s friend and colleague.<sup>59</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) emphasized a careful appreciation of biblical texts on their own terms.<sup>60</sup> Origen’s students, far less capable than their teacher in formulating their master’s complex theology and

<sup>56</sup> *Letter to Cosmas* 8 (“Histoire de Nestorius d’après la lettre à Cosme et l’hymne de Sliba de Mansouriya. Part I. La Lettre à Cosme,” in François Nau, ed. and trans., *Documents pour servir à l’histoire de l’église nestorienne: Textes syriaques* [PO 13.2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1919], 278,12–279,12); see also Holum, *Theodosian Emperresses*, 153.

<sup>57</sup> Next to the clergy, only the emperor enjoyed the privilege of receiving communion in the sanctuary, a privilege that Pulcheria had extended to herself.

<sup>58</sup> *Letter to Cosmas* 8 (Nau, *Documents pour servir à l’histoire*, 279,9).

<sup>59</sup> In Antioch, both Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom had been students of Libanius, the pagan rhetor, and of Diodore of Tarsus. Nestorius received his theological education under Theodore. After his death, Theodore would be implicated by association and condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 553. For a well-balanced, recent study of Theodore’s christological thought, see Frederick G. McLeod, “Theodore of Mopsuestia Revisited,” *TS* 61 (2000): 447–480; and now also idem, *The Roles of Christ’s Humanity in Salvation: Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005). See also Peter Bruns, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden: Eine Studie zu den katechetischen Homilien des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (CSCO 549; Subsidia 89; Leuven: Peeters, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> See also Peter Bruns, “Zum Offenbarungsverständnis des Theodor von Mopsuestia im Zwölfprophetenkommentar,” in *Athanasius and His Opponents, Cappadocian Fathers, Other Greek writers after Nicaea* (vol. 4 of *Studia patristica: Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1995*; ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; StPatr 32; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 272–77; and John O’Keefe, “‘A Letter That Killeth’: Toward a Reassessment of Antiochene Exegesis, or Diodore, Theodore, and Theodoret on the Psalms,” *JECs* 8 (2000): 83–104.

approach to Scripture, seized on Origen's more speculative and allegorical methods of biblical interpretation.<sup>61</sup> In fact, the "literal" and the "allegorical" methods (as well as others) were prevalent in all schools of Christian theology, even if individual theologians showed a predilection for a certain method over others.

Nestorius brought irrevocably onto the stage of history what might have been dismissed as a petty sacristy squabble between a strong-headed Antiochene monk and a vain empress. Like Chrysostom, Nestorius depicted Mary in a manner that, taken out of context, would be deprecating, in order to drive home his argument against the misguided piety of the empress and her courtiers. To disabuse Pulcheria of the notion that she had somehow given birth to God within her, Nestorius argued that not even Mary could make that claim. Not even Mary was *theotokos*, that is, "birthgiver of God." It was perhaps too strong a rhetorical flourish for the context of a public assembly. One cannot be certain that Nestorius was attempting to use such a public occasion to make a profound theological statement. For his unwavering opposition to the empress, the former bishop John Chrysostom had been exiled. Yet whereas John was not called the "Golden-Mouthed" without good reason, Nestorius proved less diplomatic and less theologically astute. From the pulpit he declared that Mary was the birthgiver not of God but of Christ.

Nestorius's statement would not necessarily have had such great impact without a simmering theological problem arising from the formulation of the Christian faith at the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. The council had stipulated that the Son of God

<sup>61</sup> The most prominent student of Origen's work whose writings influenced the Origenist controversy was Evagrius of Pontus. For studies of aspects of Evagrius's reading of the scriptures, see, e.g., George C. Berthold, "History and Exegesis in Evagrius and Maximus," in *Origeniana Quarta* (ed. Robert J. Daley; Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1987), 390–404; Luke Dysinger, "The Significance of Psalmody in the Mystical Theology of Evagrius of Pontus," in *Biblica et Apocrypha, Ascetica, Liturgica* (vol. 2 of *Studia patristica: Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1995*; ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; StPatr 30; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 176–82; and idem, "The Logoi of Providence and Judgement in the Exegetical Writings of Evagrius Ponticus," in *Cappadocian Writers, Other Greek Writers* (vol. 4 of *Studia patristica: Papers Presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1999*; ed. M. F. Miles and E. J. Yarnold; StPatr 37; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 462–71.

was ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί, “consubstantial to (God) the Father.”<sup>62</sup> This was the reply to the claims of Arius, a priest in Alexandria, according to whom the Son of God could not have been consubstantial with the Father and at the same time have become incarnate in the flesh. For Arius, the Son of God was the first of all creatures but a creature nevertheless, created like all other matter.<sup>63</sup> The Council of Nicaea rejected this view in no uncertain terms,<sup>64</sup> stipulating that the Son is consubstantial (*homoousios*) and thus also co-eternal with the Father.

Yet this did not explain how the divinity of the second person of the Trinity could remain consubstantial to the Father during the incarnation in the flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Even Athanasius, the Alexandrian champion of the orthodoxy of Nicaea, was unable to resolve this difficulty.<sup>65</sup> His supporter, Apollinaris, the bishop of Laodicea,<sup>66</sup> resolved this problem by asserting that in Jesus of Nazareth the human rational soul was replaced by the second person of the Trinity. Jesus the Christ was a single nature, a single essence, or hypostasis, after the incarnation, “one nature made flesh.”<sup>67</sup> This phrase became the rallying

<sup>62</sup> *Ekthesis of the 318 Fathers of Nicaea* (DEC 1:5): πιστεύομεν . . . εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί.

<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., *Confession of the Arians, Addressed to Alexander of Alexandria* (Edward Rochie Hardy, ed., *Christology of the Later Fathers* [LCC 3; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954], 332–34, here especially 333).

<sup>64</sup> At the end of the Creed of Nicaea, the representatives of the church added the following anathemas: “And those who say ‘there once was when he was not,’ and ‘before he was begotten he was not,’ and that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis or substance, affirming that the Son of God is subject to change or alteration—those the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes” (DEC 1:5).

<sup>65</sup> See his *Letter to Bishop Epictetus of Corinth* from ca. 371. See also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Apollinaris (ca. 315–392), bishop of Laodicea, was initially on good terms with Athanasius of Alexandria. His theological construct of the unity of Christ as consisting of a human body in which the Logos held the place of the human soul was condemned at the First Council of Constantinople (381). See also Ekkehard Mühlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodicea* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969); and idem, “Apollinaris,” *TRE* 3:362–71.

<sup>67</sup> μία φύσις σεσαρκωμένη. See Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904), 206, 28 and 251, 1.

cry of Cyril and later of the anti-Chalcedonians such as Philoxenus of Mabbug and Severus of Antioch.<sup>68</sup>

Opposed to this view were certain influential theologians in the see of Antioch, notable among them being Theodore of Mopsuestia, but also Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore's teacher. The solution to the problem that Theodore and Diodore espoused was to claim that the human and divine natures were harmoniously united without change into a single person, or *prosōpon*.

In an attempt to resolve the central matter of defining the interaction of humanity and divinity in Christ, a question that the Council of Nicaea and subsequent theologians had been unable to address successfully, Emperor Theodosius I (379–395) summoned a second general council to gather in Constantinople in 381. It reiterated the condemnation of Arius and condemned the teachings of Apollinaris, including his followers in the list of heretics.<sup>69</sup> In effect, the doctrinal wrangling of the previous decades over the relationship of the Son to the Father had really only resolved that the Father, Son, and, in the end, also the Holy Spirit should be called “persons.” A second ecclesiastical canon of Constantinople I accorded the archbishop of Constantinople a rank second in honor only to Old Rome.<sup>70</sup> These two decisions were to become inextricable points of contention in various forms well into the seventh century and beyond. Nestorius's remark that Mary was not the birthgiver of God (*theotokos*), but the birthgiver of Christ (*Christotokos*) was the occasion for a confrontation between rival theological solutions to the Trinitarian controversy. It also provided the opportunity for the aggressive attempt by the bishop of Alexandria to secure for that see an undisputed primacy in the Christian world.

<sup>68</sup> Apollinaris's formulation underlies Cyril of Alexandria's phrase of the “one nature of the Logos made flesh,” the heart of Cyril's christological formulation. Cyril, however, did not realize that he had accepted Apollinaris's words; rather, he was falling prey to forgeries of Apollinaris's texts that were circulated under Athanasius's name. See also Paul Galtier, “Saint Cyril et Apollinaire,” *Greg* 37 (1956): 584–609. On the influence of the phrase on later authors, see also Mühlenberg, “Apollinaris,” 370.

<sup>69</sup> Canon 1 (*DEC* 1:31).

<sup>70</sup> Canon 3 (*DEC* 1:32).



The most violent reaction against Nestorius came from Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (412–444).<sup>71</sup> His complicity in the torture-murder of the pagan philosopher Hypatia in 415 demonstrated that he was unscrupulously zealous of his interests.<sup>72</sup> He was also a praeternaturally gifted theologian, a gift that he applied with vigor to prove Nestorius and his supporters were heretics in the same mold as the Arians. Cyril was as astute a politician as he was a theologian. Moreover, his rivalry with John Chrysostom was not well hidden. It was his predecessor and uncle, Theophilus of Alexandria (385–412),<sup>73</sup> who between 402 and 404 succeeded in having Chrysostom sent into exile.<sup>74</sup> Even if apocryphal, the report illustrates Cyril's defense of the prerogatives of his see against those of Constantinople.

Neither Rome nor Alexandria had been at all satisfied with canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople, which stated, "Because it is New Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honor after the bishop of Rome."<sup>75</sup> Byzantium had been a suffragan see of Heracleia<sup>76</sup> until Constantine established it as his capital on 8 November 324.<sup>77</sup> Alexandria claimed its apostolicity

<sup>71</sup> For a study of the christological controversy surrounding Nestorius's teaching and written from a perspective that focuses on Cyril of Alexandria, see John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (VCSup 23; Leiden: Brill, 1994).

<sup>72</sup> On Cyril's involvement, see Aziz S. Atiya, "Cyril I, Saint," *CE* 3:672.

<sup>73</sup> With vibrant and perhaps somewhat misguided energy, Theophilus turned first against pagans and pagan shrines, destroying at least large sections of the Serapeum and its library in 391 (but see below, *Vit. Pet.* §99 [R 72], which would evidence the continued existence of the Serapeum also during the later half of the fifth century; see also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 179), and in later years against the so-called Origenists by way of harrassing and persecuting a group of ascetics known as the Tall Brothers. His struggle against Constantinople and thus against John Chrysostom was ongoing. See also Tito Orlandi, "John Chrysostom, Saint," *CE* 5:1357; and Aziz S. Atiya, "Origenist Controversies," *CE* 6:1855–56.

<sup>74</sup> Donald B. Spanel, "Theophilus," *CE* 7:2250–51; see also above, p. xxxv, n. 54.

<sup>75</sup> Canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople I (*DEC* 1:32).

<sup>76</sup> See Timothy E. Gregory, "Heracleia," *ODB* 2:915.

<sup>77</sup> Although the city was dedicated only on 11 May 330. See Timothy E. Gregory and Anthony Cutler, "Constantine the Great," *ODB* 1:499.



from Saint Mark and indeed from Christ himself.<sup>78</sup> The church in Egypt was proud to be heir to the tradition and early veneration of the event of the flight of the Holy Family to Egyptian lands (Matt 2:13–21). In addition, Alexandria had been a center of Christian learning at least from the time of Pantaenus and Clement of Alexandria. Origen, whose disciples were not trusted in Antioch, had been perhaps its greatest headmaster.<sup>79</sup>

More than this, Christians in Egypt had suffered extensively during the Roman persecutions. As late as 344, persecution was vigorous in Egypt.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the Egyptian church so heavily identifies with its witness against the Roman emperor that year 1 of its church calendar corresponds to the first year of the reign of Diocletian (284–305), whose persecution of Christians was particularly pronounced in Egypt. The Coptic church reckons the years from this event A(nno) M(artyrum), “from the year of the martyrs.”<sup>81</sup> It was unthinkable that the prestige of a church with such witness should be usurped at the whim of a Roman emperor who was not even baptized. Old Rome was in a position simply to refuse to accept canon 3 as valid, as it claimed for itself the honor of the ancient Roman capital, where the Senate continued to meet.<sup>82</sup> Alexandria was in a more difficult position. Unlike Old Rome, it was more closely integrated into the economy of the eastern Mediterranean and was less remote physically and culturally from Constantinople and Antioch than Rome. Constantinople depended on the grain shipment from Alexandria. There was little that Rome could offer the East until the dominance of Germanic political powers gave Rome a bargaining chip against the Roman emperor. Episodes in the history of the christological controversy

<sup>78</sup> For a treatise on the priesthood of Christ and subsequently an account of Saint Mark as the first bishop of Alexandria, see Sawîrus (Severus) ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church* (Evetts, 1:120–34, 135–48). For the importance of Mark in the mind of John Rufus, see also *Vit. Pet.* §62 (R 44).

<sup>79</sup> For studies of the catechetical school of Alexandria, see Aziz S. Atiya, “Catechetical School of Alexandria,” *CE* 2:469–73, with bibliography.

<sup>80</sup> See Heinz Heinen, “Persecutions,” *CE* 6:1935–38, here 1937.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the eras in use in Alexandria and of the origin of the Coptic calendar, see Aelred Cody, “Calendar, Coptic,” *CE* 2:433–36, here 434.

<sup>82</sup> See Ralph W. Mathisen, “Senate,” in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (ed. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 689–90.

demonstrate that, without the support of the emperor, Rome's ability to wield any influence in ecclesiastical affairs in the East was practically nil.<sup>83</sup>

To make matters worse, there was a simmering feud between Antioch and Alexandria over the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Palestine. Until Constantine, Palestine and Jerusalem were not only ignored but also denigrated. For Christians, the true Jerusalem was the heavenly Jerusalem, the eschatological kingdom of God that Jesus had come to proclaim.<sup>84</sup> It was the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had crucified the Messiah of God. Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven were interpreted as signs that God had once and for all forsaken his city. Anti-Jewish sentiment was part of this anti-Jerusalem position. The slanderous opinion of much of the pre-Constantinian church was that only Jews who rejected the Messiah still worshiped in Jerusalem.

Constantine and his mother Helena inaugurated the settlement of Palestine by Christians and promoted a renewed veneration for the places associated with biblical persons and events, but none more important than the sites of the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>85</sup> The construction of churches and shrines became a way for the rich of the Roman Empire to secure their heavenly treasure by spending their earthly chattels to build "the city of God on earth." Many of the pilgrims stayed

<sup>83</sup> See the discussion of Pope Leo I's desperate and vain attempts to defend his theology and authority in the face of Dioscorus's usurpation of ecclesiastical privilege in Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 156.

<sup>84</sup> For a developed discussion of the place of the notion of a "Holy Land" in the early Christian mind, see Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); see also idem, "Heiliges Land," *TRE* 14:684-94.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussion of Helena's contribution to the Christianization of the landscape of the Holy Land, see Edward Yarnold, "Who Planned the Churches at the Christian Holy Places in the Holy Land?" in *Historica, theologica, gnostica, biblica* (vol. 1 of *Papers of the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies*, Oxford, 1983; ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; StPatr 18.1; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1985), 105-9. See also Kenneth G. Holum, "Hadrian and St Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (ed. Robert Ousterhout; Illinois Byzantine Studies; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 66-81.

on for life.<sup>86</sup> With the ascendancy of Christian asceticism, Palestine became a magnet for new monastic foundations under the patronage and protection of benefactors in Constantinople. The *Life of Peter the Iberian* indicates that Emperor Theodosius II had encouraged the settlement of Jerusalem and Palestine by granting ownership of any unclaimed real estate and that Peter and John took advantage of this policy to establish a *xenodocheion*, or inn, for pilgrims in Jerusalem (see *Vit. Pet.* §§64–67 [R 44–47]). Of course, “unclaimed” in this case meant “unclaimed by another Christian party.” Jews and Samaritans were not accorded much attention in this imperial policy. It is possible that the intermittent rebellions of Samaritans and Jews in Palestine were in part responses of the native landowners to this usurpation of their property.<sup>87</sup> These rebellions were always crushed by harsh Roman reprisals. As late as the time of the reign of Emperor Justinian (527–565), Samaritans were agitating against what in their eyes had become the simple elimination of non-Christians from Palestine.<sup>88</sup>

Cyril had composed three letters stating the problem with Nestorius’s statement. To the third letter he had appended twelve anathemas that had been ratified by the bishops of Egypt before they were sent to Nestorius.<sup>89</sup> Yet Cyril had also unwittingly made use of material that was taken from the writings of Apollinaris, who had been condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381.<sup>90</sup> John, bishop of Antioch,<sup>91</sup> recognized the source of Cyril’s

<sup>86</sup> Aryeh Kofsky (“Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine,” *Liber Annuus* 47 [1997], 209), has spoken of “one-way pilgrims.” See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 252.

<sup>87</sup> For evidence of bloody conflicts involving Samaritans, see also *Pler.* 10.

<sup>88</sup> Uprisings of the Samaritans occurred in 453 under Juvenal and again in the sixth century. See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 152; and Nathan Schur, *History of the Samaritans* (BEATAJ 18; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989), 82–91. For an uprising in 529–530 C.E., see also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 70 (Schwartz, 172; Price, 181–82).

<sup>89</sup> For the text of these anathemas, see *DEC* 1:59–61.

<sup>90</sup> See above, p. xxxviii with n. 66.

<sup>91</sup> John was bishop of Antioch from 428 to 442. A helpful and clear precis of his life and work is presented in S. Müller-Abels, “John of Antioch,” *DECL*, 326.

writings and condemned them as consistent with the Apollinarian heresy. At the Council of Ephesus, which was called in 431 to decide Nestorius's fate, John of Antioch condemned Cyril and his supporters. The imperial judge of the council sided with John. Cyril's response was to bribe the imperial court, and, with the support of Pulcheria, John's condemnation was rejected. In the end, the council condemned Nestorius, "the new Judas," and deposed him on 22 June 431.<sup>92</sup> A synodical letter also deposed John of Antioch together with about thirty other Eastern bishops.<sup>93</sup> Cyril had scored an everlasting triumph for the orthodoxy of his writings.

Two years after the council, John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria reached an agreement regarding the need to acknowledge the full humanity of Christ. The Formula of Reunion of 433 pushed Cyril to public confession of precisely that while it required of John an acknowledgment of potential dangers inherent in a divisive formulation of a Christology in two natures.<sup>94</sup> Yet while Cyril gained prestige through this compromise, which established peace between these two church leaders for a while, John's influence subsequently declined.

Cyril's thought would become the standard of orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. After a period of relative harmony between the competing theological and ecclesiastical interests of Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople, the balance of power was tipped in Rome's favor with the accession to the chair of Peter of one of the most able and energetic defenders of its claims to primacy, Leo I, in August 440.<sup>95</sup> In turn, Cyril's

<sup>92</sup> See *ACO* 1.1.2:54. See also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 18. John Rufus readily adopted the medium of references to Jesus' betrayer Judas as tool in his polemics against Nestorius and the adherents of Chalcedon, whom he saw as followers of Nestorius. See, e.g., *Vit. Pet.* §§47, 76, 83, 179 (R 32, 52, 58, 135); *Pler.* 16, 17, and 25. Rufus's polemic will be discussed in the introduction to the reedition and English translation of John Rufus's *Plerophoriae*, a work in progress by Horn and Phenix.

<sup>93</sup> See *DEC* 1:62–63.

<sup>94</sup> For the text of the Formula of Reunion, see *DEC* 1:70–74.

<sup>95</sup> On Leo I, see Trevor Jalland, *The Life and Times of Leo the Great* (London: SPCK, 1941); Leo J. McGovern, *The Ecclesiology of Saint Leo the Great* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1957); Basil Studer, "Leo der Grosse und der Primat des römischen Bischofs," in *Unterwegs zur Einheit: Festschrift für Heinrich Stirnimann* (ed. Johannes Brantschen and Pietro

successor in June 444 was his fearsome archdeacon Dioscorus.<sup>96</sup> In Antioch and Constantinople, the less able Domnus and Flavian assumed their respective patriarchal dignities.<sup>97</sup>

For the remainder of Theodosius's reign, the ascendancy of Dioscorus over the other patriarchal sees was virtually unchecked. Theodosius supported Dioscorus's decision to eliminate once and for all the vestiges of a two-nature Christology and to establish the primacy of Alexandria. By October 449, he had succeeded in accomplishing both.

Yet his triumph was short lived. Theodosius died unexpectedly on 28 July 450.<sup>98</sup> His sister Pulcheria, whose influence in the court had dramatically increased, acted immediately. Her motivations for opposing Dioscorus and his allies in Constantinople were not difficult to understand. As a result of the Council of Ephesus II (the "Robber Synod"),<sup>99</sup> Dioscorus had deposed the bishop Flavian of Constantinople on charges of misconduct in the handling of the trial of Eutyches. Anatolius, Dioscorus's *apocrisarius*, or personal representative to the emperor, was appointed bishop of Constantinople in his place.<sup>100</sup> At the end of the council, Theodosius had requested Dioscorus to make known the results of the synod to all the bishops of the empire in an encyclical letter.<sup>101</sup> Dioscorus had effectively usurped the prestige of Constantinople and become the only power remaining on the field.

Selvatico; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1980), 617–30; and Walter Ullmann, "Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *JTS* 11 (1960): 25–51.

<sup>96</sup> See Theopistus, *Vita Dioscori* (Nau, 5–108, 241–310); see also Martiniano P. Roncaglia, "Dioscorus I," *CE* 3:912–15.

<sup>97</sup> Domnus was bishop of Antioch from 441 to 449. Flavian held the see of Constantinople from 446 to 449.

<sup>98</sup> For comments on Theodosius's death, afterlife, as well as situations that almost killed him, see *Pler.* 27, 32, 36, and 35. See also Timothy E. Gregory and Anthony Cutler, "Theodosios II," *ODB* 3:2051–52.

<sup>99</sup> Pope Leo I labeled the Council of Ephesus II as *latrocinium*, or "Robber Synod," in a letter to Pulcheria from 20 July 451. See also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 44.

<sup>100</sup> See Martin Jugie, "9. Anatole," *DHGE* 2:1497–1500.

<sup>101</sup> See Johannes Paul Gotthilf Flemming, ed., *Akten der ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse NS 15; Göttingen: Weidmann, 1917), 151–55; and Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 43.

Pulcheria chose as her consort Marcian and at once began to purge the court of Theodosius's officials. Flavian's body, which had been buried in exile, was returned to Constantinople and his name rehabilitated. In 451 Marcian called for a general council that after some delay convened in Chalcedon on 8 October.<sup>102</sup> Dioscorus arrived early with his Egyptian bishops and excommunicated Pope Leo. Yet the other two main bishops, Juvenal of Jerusalem and Anatolius of Constantinople, did not support this excommunication.<sup>103</sup> At the "Robber Synod" Juvenal had sided with Dioscorus; now, despite his promises to his monks in Palestine,<sup>104</sup> Juvenal threw his allegiance with Anatolius. Chalcedon recognized the system of apostolic sees that was outlined in canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople in 381.<sup>105</sup> It codified the system of patriarchates,<sup>106</sup> primarily in order to resolve jurisdictional disputes between Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch.<sup>107</sup> The council's elevation of the see of Jerusalem to a patriarchate no doubt was the fulfillment of a promise made to elicit Juvenal's support.<sup>108</sup> Dioscorus was deposed from his see, although not condemned as a heretic. It was the end of the meteoric rise and chaotic villainy of Dioscorus. His successors did not wield the same power, and eventually Egypt preserved its primacy over its

<sup>102</sup> On the reasons for the delay and the plea of Pope Leo I that the council be postponed, see Leo the Great, *Letter* 26 (PL 54:747B). See also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 38.

<sup>103</sup> Up to the present, the normative study of Juvenal of Jerusalem remains the article by Ernest Honigsmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *DOP* 5 (1950): 211–79.

<sup>104</sup> Anti-Chalcedonian literature emphasizes Juvenal's promises to the monks of Palestine given before his departure to Chalcedon. See, e.g., *Pler.* 25.

<sup>105</sup> See above, p. xl–xli.

<sup>106</sup> Technically, the title "patriarch" was applied to the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem in the sixth century under Emperor Justinian I (*Novellae* 123.3; Rudolf Schöll and Wilhelm Kroll, eds., *Corpus Juris Civilis* [6th ed.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1954], 3:597–98). See also Aristeides Papadakis and Alexander Kazhdan, "Patriarchates," *ODB* 3:1599–1600.

<sup>107</sup> In particular, the conflicting claims of Alexandria and Constantinople over Nubia and Ethiopia. See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> On this tactic to win Juvenal's support, see also the critical comments in Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 3.3 (Brooks, 1:155–57; Hamilton and Brooks, 49–50); see also below, *Vit. Pet.* §76 (R 52). Until then Jerusalem had been a suffragan see of Caesarea Maritima.

own bishops at the expense of remaining in communion with Old and New Rome and with Jerusalem.

The heart of the matter was the statement of the relationship between Christ's human and divine natures. The council received the christological formulation advanced by the indefatigable Pope Leo. A letter addressed to Bishop Flavian of Constantinople and known to posterity as the *Tome of Leo* interpreted Cyril's Christology as implying that the two natures were inseparably joined in a single hypostasis, each nature retaining its own properties without change.<sup>109</sup> This difficult formula would be rejected outright by Dioscorus's supporters who defined orthodoxy as strict adherence to Cyril's formulation. Chalcedon in its turn held that Leo's formula indeed did express the teaching of Cyril and was rightfully included in the doctrinal definition of the council.<sup>110</sup>

Yet even those who were present and agreed with Leo's interpretations of Cyril disagreed over what Chalcedon had in fact achieved. For many of the Eastern bishops, the council was not a new statement of faith but an interpretation of Nicaea and Ephesus. For Leo, the council was a binding declaration that was not negotiable. In addition, later popes interpreted Chalcedon's acceptance of Leo's interpretation of Cyril's doctrine as an assent to the bishop of Rome's primacy of magisterium and primacy of place in the organization of the church.<sup>111</sup> These differences continued to widen in the subsequent centuries, exacerbated by the different political fortunes of east and west. The origins of the schism of 1054 are present already in the aftermath of Chalcedon. This primacy of Old Rome was bolstered by monasteries and bishops who, during the chaos of the Acacian schism (484–518), severed communion with Constantinople and Antioch. It is this event that perhaps served as precedent for the establishment

<sup>109</sup> For the *Tome of Leo*, see Leo, *Epistula* 28 (JK 423 = *Collectio Novariensis de re Eutychis* 5, *ACO* 2.2.1:24,15–33,2). See *Gestorum Chalcedonensium versio a Rustico edita*, act. II [III], 20, *ACO* 2.3.2:14,27–30 [273,27–30]). For an English translation, see Hardy, *Christology of the Later Fathers*, 360–70. See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 332.

<sup>110</sup> In the minds of the people, Leo's and Cyril's proclamations melted into one. Both leaders spoke of the same faith. See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 142.

<sup>111</sup> For an insightful discussion of Leo the Great's establishment of papal power, see Ullmann, "Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy."



of communion between the Maronite Antiochene patriarchate and Rome in the course of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries.<sup>112</sup>

In Palestine in the latter sixth century, the monks and Christian faithful were clearly on the side of Chalcedon and, more importantly, accepted Leo's interpretation of Chalcedon as universally binding. Yet in the fifth century, many of the monks at first had greeted the return of their bishop Juvenal from Chalcedon with hostility. According to anti-Chalcedonian sources from the ascetic milieu, the monks confronted Juvenal and accused him of breaking his solemn vow not to allow any novelties to be mixed with the pure faith of Nicaea. As Juvenal refused to take back his signature to the Chalcedonian tome, the monks elected one from among their midst, the monk Theodosius, as a rival bishop of Jerusalem. John Rufus's works are among our best sources on that schism. In the end, it was short-lived, since within a year Marcian had offered Juvenal the services of the Roman army. That intermezzo nevertheless was fundamental in establishing the beginnings of an anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy and ultimately an independent anti-Chalcedonian church.<sup>113</sup>

In Palestine, perhaps more than elsewhere, the acceptance of Chalcedon was guided by prestigious monastic foundations. They were both independent of local authority and distant enough from their Constantinopolitan patrons to come to a decision about the matter of the Council on its own terms.

#### MONASTICISM IN FIFTH-CENTURY PALESTINE

Christian life in Palestine was distinguished by two important areas of monastic settlement: the Judean Desert and the somewhat more densely populated Gaza region. In both instances, relative proximity to an urban center, Jerusalem and Gaza, defined the ascetic experience: in the case of the Judean Desert by way of the

<sup>112</sup> For an excellent study of the earlier history of the Maronites, see Harald Suermann, *Die Gründungsgeschichte der Maronitischen Kirche* (OBC 10; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998).

<sup>113</sup> See the brief discussion in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 86–88. For further work on the origins of the Syrian Orthodox Church more particularly, see now also the work by Volker Menze, "The Making of a Church: the Syrian Orthodox in the Shadow of Byzantium and the Papacy," Ph.D. thesis (Princeton University, 2004).



ascetic's relative distance to urban life: in the case of Gaza by way of greater proximity. The ascetic population of the Judean Desert cast their lot with the Chalcedonians, whereas the Gaza region, owing to the strong Egyptian influence of its monastic origins,<sup>114</sup> remained an island of supporters of the anti-Chalcedonian confession until sometime after the death of Peter the Iberian in 491, probably until the second decade of the sixth century.

Gaza and its littoral extending to the south were divided between the Roman provinces of Augustamnica and Palaestina. Augustamnica extended from Gaza to the Nile Delta and was considered a part of Egypt.<sup>115</sup> Eremitic monasticism in Gaza first appeared in the early fourth century. The first witness to monasticism in Gaza is Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*.<sup>116</sup> Jerome borrowed heavily from a Latin translation of the *Life of Anthony* in order to demonstrate that Hilarion had surpassed Anthony in every virtue.<sup>117</sup> It is difficult to sort out from Jerome's literary constructions the details of fourth-century Gazan monasticism. There is not even much agreement on the reliability of Jerome's textual witness. Also, it is known that Jerome never met Hilarion.<sup>118</sup>

One point of the development of ascetic lifestyles to which the *Life of Hilarion* attests is that Hilarion's first dwelling was eremitic. Only out of necessity did he become the abbot of a cenobitic establishment sometime during the reign of Constantius (337–361).<sup>119</sup> While this development seems to be the norm for other centers of monasticism and indeed is also attested in the *Life of Anthony*, Jerome's mention of Hilarion's monastic establishment during the mid-fourth century would be less a literary

<sup>114</sup> For a study of the Egyptian influence on Palestinian monasticism, see Samuel Rubenson, "The Egyptian Relations of Early Palestinian Monasticism," in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land* (ed. A. G. O'Mahony, G. Gunner, and K. Hintlian; London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 35–46.

<sup>115</sup> For a brief overview of individual monks in the region, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, "Gazan Monasticism in the Fourth-Sixth Centuries: From Anchoritic to Cenobitic," *POC* 50 (2000): 14–62.

<sup>116</sup> See Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* (PL 23:29–54; Ewald, 245–80).

<sup>117</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, "Gazan Monasticism," 20; see 19 for a long list of parallel motifs and claims shared between the *Life of Hilarion* and the *Life of Anthony*.

<sup>118</sup> For a discussion of Jerome's possible sources, see *ibid.*, 21.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

comparison to Anthony than one of the facts around which Jerome wove his edifying story.<sup>120</sup>

Other details from Sozomen's *Historia ecclesiastica* reveal that Maiuma, Peter the Iberian's see and final resting place, continued to be a center for cenobitic monasticism.<sup>121</sup> Many of Hilarion's disciples, known by name from Sozomen's historiography, continued the work of their elder.<sup>122</sup> Rufus explicitly connected Peter the Iberian with Hilarion by claiming Peter as the successor to the founder of ascetic life at Gaza.<sup>123</sup>

At the time Peter the Iberian arrived in Maiuma, monastic institutions had been founded that attracted learned monks from Egypt and Syria, who in turn contributed to establishing Gaza as a center of scholarship. Silvanus, some of whose sayings are recorded in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, founded a coenobium in Gaza at the end of the fourth century that has left evidence of the scholarship of its inhabitants.<sup>124</sup> In the fifth century, one of Silvanus's disciples, the hermit Zeno (d. 451), whom the *Life of Peter the Iberian* mentions,<sup>125</sup> is said to have had contact with the philosopher Aeneas of Gaza.<sup>126</sup> The *Life of Peter the Iberian* recounts that Peter and John sought Zeno's advice pertaining to the monastic life (*Vit. Pet.* §72 [R 49]). Not uncommonly for the Palestinian ascetic milieu that is characterized by a dominance of

<sup>120</sup> Jerome's *Life of Hilarion* may have been one of the sources for Sozomen's brief biography of Hilarion in his *Historia ecclesiastica* (book 3). See *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>121</sup> According to *Vit. Pet.* §75 (R 51), when Peter the Iberian arrived in the region he joined an already-existing monastic community under the leadership of Abba Irenion.

<sup>122</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, "Gazan Monasticism," 26–27.

<sup>123</sup> *Vit. Pet.* §137 (R 101). See also the discussion in Cornelia Horn, "Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism in Fifth- and Early Sixth-Century Gaza," *ARAM* 15 (2003): 113–15.

<sup>124</sup> For a study of Abba Silvanus and his followers, see M. Van Parys, "Abba Silvain et ses disciples, une famille monastique entre Scété et la Palestine à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> et dans la première moitié du V<sup>e</sup> siècles," *Irén* 61 (1988): 315–31 and 451–80. See also the comments in Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, "Gazan Monasticism," 28.

<sup>125</sup> *Vit. Pet.* §§68, 71–75 (R 47, 49–51); see also *Pler.* 8, 13, and 52.

<sup>126</sup> For discussion and references, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 156–157; and Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, "Gazan Monasticism," 29.

the master-disciple model, Zeno became their spiritual guide.<sup>127</sup>

Monasticism in Palestine after Chalcedon was not changed in substance by the decrees of the council *per se*. The administration and population of the monasteries and *lavrai*<sup>128</sup> had been in the hands of foreigners inspired to visit the Holy Land as pilgrims and then encouraged by Constantine and his successors to settle Palestine. The effect this had on the indigenous population, which into the sixth century were largely Jews and Samaritans, must have been perceived as something of an occupation or an enforced redistribution of landed property. The *Life of Peter the Iberian* refers to an edict of Theodosius II that permitted monks, but seemingly also any visitor to the Holy City, to claim any piece of land in Jerusalem for the purpose of constructing on it a building or religious institution (*Vit. Pet.* 64 [R 44–45]), provided that the land was not already owned. While such a law might sound considerate, it was hardly in the interest of protecting the local population, since “owner” would easily be construed as coextensive with “Christian.”

Monastic foundations had to rely for their well-being on imperial benevolence and rich benefactors, most of whom resided far from Palestine. The dependence of these and nearly all of the churches and shrines on benefactors and pilgrims was the same before and after Chalcedon. As acceptance of Chalcedon became a matter of national interest for many of the influential in Constantinople from the time of Justin I (518–527), it is natural that those institutions that depended on their largesse would sway with them.

<sup>127</sup> For a study of the relationships between ascetics in the Gaza area, see also Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, “Letters to the Great Old Man: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza” (Ph. D. diss., Princeton University, 2000), published as eadem, *Disciples of the Desert: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); and John Chryssavgis, “Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Aspects of Spiritual Direction,” in *Ascetica, Gnostica, Liturgica, Orientalia* (vol. 2 of *Studia patristica: Papers Presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1999*; ed. M. F. Miles and E. J. Yarnold; StPatr 35; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 30–40.

<sup>128</sup> *Lavrai* are an organizational form of ascetic life typical of Palestine. The individual cells of the monks are arranged around a central open space, allowing the ascetics to join eremitical and cenobitic forms of life.

Pilgrims were an important source of revenue and prestige for monastics and the maintenance of holy sites.<sup>129</sup> The centrality of pilgrims and pilgrimage in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* can hardly be overstated.<sup>130</sup> Peter and his followers, who undergo forced peripatetic exile rather than submit to communion with the Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, their multifaceted adventures on their pilgrimage, and their travel tours form the bulk of the narrative.

The spiritual interpretation of pilgrimage that Rufus presented in this text even turned Peter into a traveling holy site.<sup>131</sup> Anti-Chalcedonians felt they were barred from many of the churches, especially at places where Chalcedonians formed the majority of the worshipping community. Their monasteries were forced either to recognize Chalcedon and enter into communion with Juvenal and his Chalcedonian successors or to be disbanded. In order to be able to hold on to a rightful claim to “holy places,” Rufus provided a new interpretation of the events as well as of the definition of “holy place,” a definition that suited the actual circumstances of the anti-Chalcedonian experience in Palestine. According to that newly defined understanding, holy places were holy only if the bishop and the believers worshipping there were orthodox, that is, anti-Chalcedonian. In other words, it was faith, not possession of a building or even of relics, that conferred holiness and spiritual authority. Thus Rufus portrayed Peter as a holy man who was holy for defying Chalcedon, the bishops, and the emperor, and this holiness was manifest wherever he traveled.

<sup>129</sup> For a discussion of the economic situation of the Holy Land during the relevant time period, see Michael Avi-Yonah, “The Economics of Byzantine Palestine,” *IEJ* 8 (1958): 39–51.

<sup>130</sup> See Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 226–331. For a complementary discussion of Peter the Iberian as pilgrim, see also Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, “פטרס האיברי עולה לרגל” [The Pilgrim Peter the Iberian], *Cathedra* 91 (1999): 97–112; eadem, “*Imitatio Mosis* and Pilgrimage in the Life of Peter the Iberian,” in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 3; ed. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Arie Kofsky; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 108–31.

<sup>131</sup> For a discussion, see Cornelia Horn, “Transgressing Claims to Sacred Space: The Advantage of Portable Relics in the Christological Conflict in Fifth Century A.D. Syria-Palestine,” paper delivered at the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2003.

Consequently, Peter had to be shown as an associate of the great travelers of the Bible: Moses, Jesus, and Paul; thus he was manifested as the sole true heir to the biblical and apostolic tradition.

*On the Death of Theodosius*

The short piece appended to the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is a brief story of the death of the first (and last) anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, Theodosius (451–453). Included in this work is also a short notice on the monk Romanus, who figures prominently in the early life of Peter. Textual evidence suggests that *On the Death of Theodosius* was not composed as an afterthought or in response to an event subsequent to Rufus's work on the *Life of Peter the Iberian* but that the two texts were conceived as a single work in two parts. Rufus promises in the *Life* to recount the story of Theodosius "at the end, when it pleases God" (*Vit. Pet.* §88 [R 62]). At the beginning of his account of Theodosius's death, Rufus gives as reason for his writing that he "remember[ed] that [he] promised in the previous matters to relate the manner of the death of the blessed Theodosius."<sup>132</sup> The promise in the *Life* and the recollection of that promise at the beginning of the second work contain a similar Syriac expression translated "the manner of his death/his falling asleep."<sup>133</sup> Moreover, given the pressing position anti-Chalcedonians were in throughout the Roman Empire during the time Rufus was writing, it is more likely that Rufus penned the two works at the same time. In the two manuscripts containing the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, *On the Death of Theodosius* immediately follows the *Life*. As mentioned above, only after the complete collection did the scribe place the *finis* to the entire collection, suggesting that the texts were transmitted to his day as a two-part work.

Following Juvenal's return to office by imperial force in 453, Theodosius was sent into exile in Egypt. For reasons that are not certain, although plausibly either to mediate a dispute between two anti-Chalcedonians or to gain the support of the influential

<sup>132</sup> *Obit. Theod.* §1 (Brooks, 1:21; also edited and translated below, p. 282–283). References to the *De obitu Theodosii* indicate the paragraph number of the Syriac text and the English translation below, followed in brackets by a reference to the respective page numbers in Brooks's edition.

<sup>133</sup> *Vit. Pet.* §88 (R 62): ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ; *Obit. Theod.* §1 (B 21): ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.

Symeon Stylites, Theodosius traveled to Antioch. He was recognized at the city gates, arrested, and brought to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Marcian. When Marcian was unable to win him over, Theodosius was confined to the Chalcedonian monastery of St. Dios. Unyielding to the abbot's pressure to accept Chalcedon, Theodosius was imprisoned in a narrow, unheated cell during winter. Due to exposure, malnourishment, and other tortures, Theodosius became severely ill. At the death of Marcian, in 457 Emperor Leo remanded Theodosius into the custody of anti-Chalcedonians in the monastery of Sykai, on the other side of the Golden Horn, where he died after a few days. His body was spirited away to Cyprus to prevent it from falling into Chalcedonian hands.

This work concludes with a brief life of the monk Romanus. Under the empress Eudocia's patronage, Romanus had founded an anti-Chalcedonian monastery at Eleutheropolis. Even after Eudocia entered into communion with Juvenal as ransom for Constantinople's support in rescuing her family in Rome, she still protected Romanus and gave support to other anti-Chalcedonians until her death in 460.

#### THE ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN DEFEAT IN PALESTINE

Anti-Chalcedonian witness in Palestine was rapidly declining by the time Rufus composed the *Life of Peter the Iberian*. In contrast, there was almost no alternative to anti-Chalcedonian doctrine in Egypt, and the see of Antioch maintained a significant anti-Chalcedonian church down to and after the Arab invasion of the 630s. Frend gives three reasons for the success of the Chalcedonian definition in the institutions and piety of Christians in Palestine.<sup>134</sup> The first is that the status of Jerusalem as a patriarchate depended on the validity of the decrees and canons of the Council of Chalcedon. Before this council, Jerusalem had been a suffragan see of the metropolitan of Caesarea Maritima. Emperor Marcian granted the bishop of Jerusalem the title of patriarch to enlist his support at the council. Second, the religious churches and monastic foundations, as well as the infrastructure in support of the pilgrimage trade, depended on the support of the wealthy

<sup>134</sup> Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 151–54.

and the nobles in Constantinople. Constantine's decision to encourage Christian settlement in Jerusalem and its environs had attracted a large number of monks from every corner of the empire and beyond. Since a great many of the leaders of the monasteries were not from Palestine, their assessment of the Chalcedonian decision was different from the reception in culturally and ethnically homogenous Egypt. They could accept or reject its decree without betraying loyalty to a nation or clan. Finally, the rural population was in the majority Jews and Samaritans, who were opposed to Christian settlement on their land and were ready to rise in force against what they no doubt perceived as occupation. There was a Samaritan uprising against the opponents of Juvenal in 453,<sup>135</sup> and Samaritan rebellions under Zeno and Justinian are also recorded. At the same time, the monks of the *lavrai* were more isolated from these conflicts, were predominantly Greek-speaking, and more readily identified with the ecclesiastical establishment in Jerusalem as well as with the pro-Chalcedonian world outside of Palestine than with the locals. This was in large measure because they depended on Constantinople for monetary support and protection. In his *Life of Sabas*, Cyril of Scythopolis, a Chalcedonian, writes in the sixth century that Christians in Palestine are "reduced [in number] and preyed upon."<sup>136</sup> The tide seems to have turned against anti-Chalcedonians when with her death they lost the support of Empress Eudocia, who had been a strong force of the anti-Juvenal party.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> *Pler.* 10. See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 336.

<sup>136</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 72 (Schwartz, 175, 12–13; Price, 184, translation modified); see also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 153 n 2.

<sup>137</sup> See *Pler.* 20 and 25. On Empress Eudocia's patronage of the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine, see Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter." The Chalcedonian side also knew to employ Eudocia for their own purposes. According to a reconstruction that favors the Chalcedonian accounts, one might say that, when Eudocia's daughter and granddaughters in Rome were taken hostage by the Vandal king Gaiseric, Eudocia's family in Constantinople forced her to accept Juvenal in exchange for their help against Gaiseric. She immediately restored communion with Juvenal, and after her death in 460, Palestine accepted Marcian's council. That then would have been the motivation for Peter the Iberian to withdraw to Egypt.



As the *Life of Peter the Iberian* recounts, Peter eventually returned to Maiuma. Yet no longer was the impact of anti-Chalcedonians to be felt in Palestine. The *Life of Peter the Iberian* reports that Isaiah, the Egyptian monk who had settled in the Gaza region and who was to become the spiritual companion of Peter, had support in Constantinople.<sup>138</sup> The adoption of Zeno's *Henotikon* had held in Palestine,<sup>139</sup> and the patriarch of Jerusalem remained in communion with the capital. Yet the interpretation of the *Henotikon* in a strictly Chalcedonian manner was taking firmer root in the new *lavrai* founded in Jerusalem and Palestine.<sup>140</sup> In 494, the Chalcedonian defender Sabas, who founded the great *lavra* in the Wadi Kidron as well as many other smaller houses,<sup>141</sup> became archimandrite of all *lavrai* in Palestine at the appointment of Sallustius the patriarch of Jerusalem (486–494).<sup>142</sup> Peter's followers were increasingly isolated after Sabas's appointment. The decline and ultimate extinction of the number of anti-Chalcedonian holdouts in Palestine seems to have been unstoppable. Despite the embattled Emperor Zeno's earlier

<sup>138</sup> According to the anti-Chalcedonian tradition, both Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah resisted Zeno's *Henotikon*. The question of Abba Isaiah's precise theological adherence is relatively undecided, some claiming him as a Chalcedonian, others arguing in favor of him holding a one-nature Christology. Isaiah gained fame as spiritual advisor. For a recent English translation of the spiritual homilies of Abba Isaiah, see John Chryssavgis and Pachomios (Robert) Penkett, trans., *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses* (CSS 150; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 2002). For details on editions of the text of these homilies or discourses, see below, 202 n. 4.

<sup>139</sup> Zeno ruled the Byzantine Empire from 474 to 491. The *Henotikon*, which he issued, attempted to reconcile Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians on the basis of doctrinal formulations reached before Chalcedon. For the text of Zeno's *Henotikon*, see Evagrius Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 3.14 (Bidez and Parmentier, 111,1–114,5; Whitby, 147–49; see also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 362–66). For a discussion of the historical context, see Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, ch. 4.

<sup>140</sup> Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 189.

<sup>141</sup> For a study of the material witness to Sabas's ascetic and monastic endeavors, see Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 32; Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995).

<sup>142</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 30 (Schwartz, 115,15–25; Price, 124–25); see also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 189.



attempted patronage of Peter at the end of his *imperium*, Palestine was lost to the anti-Chalcedonians.

Peter's importance for the anti-Chalcedonians in the sees of Alexandria and especially Antioch was greater than in Palestine. Severus of Antioch saw in Peter a model to be imitated.<sup>143</sup> It appears to have been the resolve of Peter and John Rufus (among others) against Chalcedon that persuaded Severus to abandon his law studies, take up the monastic habit, and write in defense of the anti-Chalcedonian cause. Indeed, it is possible that Severus and Peter met in Beirut around 488 C.E., when Peter is dated to have visited there "on travels" (*Vit. Pet.* §§149–152 [R 112–14]). Beirut had a well-known school of law, and Peter made many recruits from among its students.<sup>144</sup>

After the exile of Patriarch Severus from Antioch in 518, the first signs of a final schism were apparent. When Emperor Anastasius (491–518) died the same year, there was a reaction against the *Henotikon*. Emperor Justin I ended any pretensions at compromise. Anti-Chalcedonian bishops in all parts of the empire except Egypt were forcibly removed, although in some instances the natural tenure of the anti-Chalcedonian bishop was allowed to end before replacing him with a Chalcedonian. Persecution of anti-Chalcedonians was rampant. Entire metropolitan provinces were purged of bishops. In 521 the persecution was put into force systematically in all the East except Egypt. Anti-Chalcedonians were grossly mistreated by the Chalcedonian bishops. Yet even after the appointment of the Chalcedonian Ephrem as patriarch of Antioch (527–545),<sup>145</sup> Severus in exile was as vigorous as during the time when he was still in possession of his see. The persecution of the anti-Chalcedonians resulted in a shortage of bishops. Severus

<sup>143</sup> See, e.g., Severus of Antioch, *Letters* 5.11 (Brooks, 1.2:370, 2.2:328).

<sup>144</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Horn, "Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism," 117–20.

<sup>145</sup> On Ephrem of Antioch's theology, see Theresia Hainthaler, "Ephraem von Antiochien und sein Neuchalcedonismus," in *Augustine and His Opponents, Jerome, Other Latin Fathers after Nicaea, Orientalia* (vol. 5 of *Studia patristica: Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1995*; ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; StPatr 33; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 524–29.

took steps toward consecrating a separate hierarchy for the anti-Chalcedonians by allowing John, bishop of Tella (519–538),<sup>146</sup> to ordain clergy for the dire need of the anti-Chalcedonian faithful of Syria, Armenia, and Arabia. Severus thus continued what had begun earlier already under Theodosius of Jerusalem.<sup>147</sup>

The controversy had been settled against Chalcedon in Egypt and in favor of Chalcedon in Palestine, Asia Minor, and Europe. Only southern Anatolia and Syria remained divided. The situation was unresolved at the time of the Arab conquest of Syria in the 630s, which removed these lands from the hands of the Byzantines. Over the next century, the last effects of Chalcedon were worked out in Syria. With the 'Abbasid establishment of Baghdād as their capital in 750 and the subordination of most Christians under the authority of the patriarch of the Church of the East, the matter of open conflict came to a close.

In Georgia, the effects of persecution as well as war with the Persians swayed the church to accept Chalcedon by 583. In 606 the Georgian Catholicos Kyrion II ratified this decision. The *Life of Peter* was rewritten for his fellow Georgians to cast him as a champion of the Chalcedonian cause in Palestine. Peter's work and influence as anti-Chalcedonian appear to have lived on in Egypt and throughout Syria, but from his native Georgia to Constantinople and to Palestine even his identity succumbed to Justinian's enforcement of Chalcedonian doctrine.

#### AUTHORSHIP

It is a reasonable assumption that the author of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, *On the Death of Theodosius*, and the *Plerophoriae* is John Rufus.<sup>148</sup> Establishing Rufus as the author of these works is difficult, since the manuscripts of the first two works do not ascribe

<sup>146</sup> On John of Tella, see the account by John of Ephesus, "Life of John of Tella," in *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Brooks, 2:524–25). For a *Life of John of Tella* written by one of his disciples, see also Elias, *Life of Bishop John of Tella* (Brooks, 1:29–95 [Syriac] and 2:21–60 [Latin]).

<sup>147</sup> See William H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 837–48; see also the comments in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 106–111.

<sup>148</sup> On John Rufus, see Eduard Schwartz, *Johannes Rufus, ein monophysitischer Schriftsteller* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der

these works to anyone. Likewise, Evagrius Scholasticus, whose *Historia ecclesiastica* mentions episodes that occur in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, does not name their source.

Despite the evidence from the *Life of Peter the Iberian* that the author must have known Peter intimately, alternative authors might be discussed. A potential candidate is a certain Theodore mentioned as a close acquaintance of Peter. This Theodore, however, is also identified as a close acquaintance of the narrator of the events and so cannot be the author. It is likely that this Theodore was one of Rufus's sources. Having left Rufus in Beirut and written to him from Maiuma, Theodore "urged him in letters to come and visit and gain profit from the saints in Palestine, especially from the great Peter [the Iberian], the living martyr" (*Vit. Pet.* §112 [R 82]). Raabe's textual emendation and complicated reconstruction of the text, which at times seems to confuse Theodore and the author of the text, in the end cannot overcome the natural conclusion from the text that Theodore was an acquaintance of both Peter and John Rufus.<sup>149</sup>

Zachariah Rhetor, who between 500 and 519 penned books 3–6 of what is now preserved in the eighth-century *Chronicle* that bears his name, might be posited as another alternative to Rufus.<sup>150</sup> In each of these four books Zachariah Rhetor narrates details about Peter the Iberian, some of which are unique to Zachariah's pen. Zachariah inserts notices concerning Peter in his other works, biographies of Severus of Antioch and of Abba Isaiah of Gaza.<sup>151</sup> Zachariah was probably a native of Gaza, and his father's house was located near Peter's Maiuma monastery.<sup>152</sup>

Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1912.16; Heidelberg: Winter, 1912); Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 4–12 *et passim*. J.-M. Sauget and T. Orlandi ("John of Maiuma [John Rufus]," *EECh*, 445–46) express hesitations and situate the author in the circle of Rufus's followers.

<sup>149</sup> See the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 33.

<sup>150</sup> For references to editions of Zachariah's works, see above, p. xlvii, n. 108.

<sup>151</sup> See Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* (Kugener, 7–115; an English translation by Jan-Eric Steppa is in preparation). For the *Life of Abba Isaiah*, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Vita Isaiae* (Brooks, 1:3–16 [Syriac], 2:3–10 [Latin]). An English translation is in progress.

<sup>152</sup> See Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 88 (Kugener, 88,9).

On the one hand, there is no evidence from other sources that Zachariah and Peter met. On the other hand, Zachariah expresses at the outset of his *Life of Isaiah* his admiration for Abba Isaiah, Abba Theodore, and “the blessed Peter,” probably Peter the Iberian, and advertises his written treatment of each of these men.<sup>153</sup> Did Zachariah Rhetor write a *Life* of Peter the Iberian? To the above evidence from Zachariah’s *opera*, scholars have added that the disposition of MS Sachau 321 implies that a second story of Peter the Iberian was copied after the first, but the three folios containing it are missing. Indeed, *On the Death of Theodosius* breaks off in mid-sentence, and it has been suggested that there are three folios missing. The manuscript resumes with a short fragment, followed by the scribe’s statement: “The account about Peter the Iberian is completed.”<sup>154</sup> The short fragment gives more evidence about Gregory Nazianzen than Peter the Iberian: “yet already also with vain praises, from which shameful passions tend to arise. And they took this bond of temporary silence in order to be cleansed by it and to learn, as Gregory [Nazianzen] says, ‘the measure of speech and silence.’”<sup>155</sup> Brooks argued that the fragment followed by the closing statement of the scribe implies that the fragment is the end of another *Life* of Peter, which he attributed to Zachariah. Others have then concluded that the fragment also ought to be connected with the “Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian.”<sup>156</sup> There is no material evidence for assigning this fragment to any author, and the final statement could just as easily have been a notice on the collection of texts about Peter the Iberian and his close associates. It is equally possible that the short missing text was a later *Life* of John Rufus.

In addition to the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*, there is extant a work in Georgian entitled *C’xovreba Petre Iverisa*.<sup>157</sup> The

<sup>153</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Vita Isaiae* 3–4 (Brooks, 1:3–4 [Syriac], 2:3 [Latin]).

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 1:18 (Syriac) and 2:12 (Latin).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 1:18 (Syriac) and 2:12 (Latin). See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, ch. 1.

<sup>156</sup> See the discussion in David Marshall Lang, “Peter the Iberian and His Biographers,” *JEH* 2 (1951): 158–68.

<sup>157</sup> See Lolashvili, *Areopagituli krebuli*. The Georgian text had been already edited and translated into Russian by Nikola(i) Y. Marr, ed. and trans., “*სწავლად პეტრე ივერისა [Life of Peter the Iberian]*,” *Pravoslavnyy Palestinskiy Sbornik*, 47 = 16.2 (1896): 1–78 (Georgian text), 81–115 (Russian translation).

monk Makarios wrote that he translated from the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* written by a certain Zachariah, “a disciple of Peter the Georgian.”<sup>158</sup> Under Makarios’s hand, Peter becomes a Chalcedonian saint, and the entire story is retold with a pro-Chalcedonian interpretation. The family names of Peter’s lineage are also altered. Most striking is that Peter’s name from birth in the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* was Nabarnugios, which Makarios alters to Murvanos.<sup>159</sup> Makarios’s work also contains an introduction and conclusion not found in the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*. The Syriac and Georgian texts are obviously more closely related than either one to the details unique to Zachariah’s *Chronicle*. Makarios’s attribution of the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* to Zachariah could be the result of confusion, the same manner of mistake that assigned to Zachariah Rhetor the books of the *Chronicle* other than those he contributed. The date of the *C’xovreba Petre Iverisa* is at least from the period following the acceptance of Chalcedon and the break with the Armenian church undertaken by the Georgian Catholicos Kyrion II in 606. This distance between the time of Peter and the completion of the *C’xovreba* and the complex circumstances in which it was written could account for the attribution to Zachariah, aided by Zachariah’s favorable inclination toward Chalcedon toward the end of his life. Given that the essential anti-Chalcedonian interpretation tying together the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* has been reversed in the Georgian *C’xovreba Petre Iverisa*, such a work would not have been attributed to an anti-Chalcedonian such as John Rufus. While Zachariah Rhetor displayed anti-Chalcedonian inclinations in his earlier work, he concluded his life as Chalcedonian bishop of Melitene, and thus Zachariah would have been a favorable choice for a Chalcedonian Georgian in search of a possible author. In the end, these data can neither rule out John Rufus as author of the text underlying the “Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian” nor suggest conclusively a more plausible option.

<sup>158</sup> Marr, “*სტავრობის ზეცრე ობეობის*,” 53. See also Marr’s introduction, 20.

<sup>159</sup> For a discussion of this name, see p. xxiv above.

### John Rufus

Almost the only sources of information about John Rufus are his own works. There is little mention of him elsewhere.<sup>160</sup> In the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, Rufus appears briefly in two passages. In the first, the author indicates that he was ordained in Antioch during the reign of Emperor Basiliscus, that is, before August 476, when the anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch Peter II, also known as Peter the Fuller (bishop, 468–488), had returned from exile to his see (*Vit. Pet.* §106 [R 79]). It is during his patriarchate that the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian parties in the see of Antioch permanently separated. The second passage recounts how the author of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* met the protagonist of his story (*Vit. Pet.* §§111–115 (R 81–83)). The author was living in Antioch during the patriarchate of the Chalcedonian Calendion (481–484). The *Plerophoriae* indicates that Rufus was a native of the Roman province of Arabia (*Pler.* 22), which extended east of the Jordan and whose capital was Bostra. The section of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* that narrates Peter’s travels in Arabia reveals a detailed knowledge of this region.<sup>161</sup> Rufus must have been one of Peter’s closest allies. Peter undertook this journey late in his life, time enough to have befriended Rufus, who could have acted as Peter’s guide.

There is little other information about John revealed in either the *Life of Peter the Iberian* or the *Plerophoriae*.<sup>162</sup> In part this was probably to protect himself from persecution during the reign of Emperor Justin I (517–523). Since the author was one of the few prominent ascetics in Palestine who rejected Chalcedon, it was assumed that audiences would have known their source without his name appearing on the document. Monastic piety is another plausible explanation, and indeed the work contains language that both

<sup>160</sup> Zachariah Rhetor drops a few comments about him in *Vita Severi*. The announcement of priestly ordination pertaining to John the Eunuch at *Pler.* 5 appears to be unrelated to immediate ordination events in John Rufus’s life.

<sup>161</sup> For a discussion of their activities in the region, see Cornelia Horn, “A Chapter in the Pre-history of the Christological Controversies in Arabic: Readings from the Works of John Rufus,” *ParOr* 30 (2005): 133–56.

<sup>162</sup> For a fuller discussion of John Rufus as the one who spoke the mind of the anti-Chalcedonian community on the world around them, see Jan-Eric Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Gorgias Dissertations: Ancient Christian Studies 1; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2002).

knows the rhetoric and reveals the author's humility. Very likely Rufus was well-known to anti-Chalcedonians in Syria and Palestine.

#### RHETORIC AND GENRE IN THE *LIFE OF PETER THE IBERIAN*

In arrangement, figures, themes, and style, the *Life of Peter the Iberian* reflects the rhetorical training of its author, John Rufus, who almost certainly composed this work to praise Peter on the occasion of the first anniversary of his death. In this respect, the *Sitz im Leben* of this work has parallels with the *Life of Rabbula of Edessa*, composed around 437 C.E. Furthermore, there are parallels of rhetorical influence in each of these two works. One important difference is that the audience of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* consisted of Greek-speaking monks, members of Peter's monastery or of monastic daughter foundations established by the first generation of spiritual children, and that this work is therefore probably a translation from Greek into Syriac. The *Life of Rabbula of Edessa*, on the other hand, is a genuine Syriac work. Although composed earlier than the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, it evinces a stage of development that is consistent with the increasing influence of Greek literature on all Syriac literary genres in the course of the fifth century.

That John Rufus had received training in law is suggested by the *Life of Peter the Iberian* itself. The episode of Peter's sudden departure from his itinerary for Tyre in response to a divine vision, in which God told Peter to fetch for him "market loaves," clearly points to the central importance of a circle of students of law within the community of Peter's disciples. The reference to "market loaves" is used as a metaphor for lawyers, called "market men," as Rufus explains (*Vit. Pet.* §150 [R 113]). At this time Rufus had already been a companion on Peter's journeys. His attention to the scene of recruitment of young lawyers, however, may very well imply that Rufus himself had a vital connection to this profession. That law-school students such as Severus of Antioch down the road associated with Peter's disciples also helps one to understand the relevance of the episode.



Rufus's likely association with the legal profession in some form or another, even if only by way of contact with fellow academic students in this branch of training, implies that before accepting the monastic habit Rufus also had a solid training in rhetoric, which was the instrument of courtroom procedure in antiquity. Greek rhetoric in the practice of law evolved with the establishment of jury courts and thus originated almost a millennium earlier than Rufus's lifetime, roughly during the early sixth century B.C.E. and in the context of Solon's legal reform.<sup>163</sup> Solon's judicial system became the model for the Romans, the Byzantines, and the West. Rhetoric remained at the heart of this institution in late antiquity.

Rhetorical theory in the Roman world appeared for the first time already full-grown in 90 B.C.E. and reached its apogee with Cicero (108–44 B.C.E.), after whom Roman rhetoric declined. The Roman emperors imposed an autocracy that drastically curtailed debate on substantial issues of policy. At the same time that restrictions on free debate pushed rhetoric into decline, it became the central discipline of Roman education.<sup>164</sup> The *Institutio oratoria* of Quintillian (ca. 35–84 C.E.) describes the system of rhetorical education in Rome that remained in place for the next five centuries. This combination of the decline of public debate and the rise of rhetoric to central importance in education contributed to the increasing influence of rhetoric in other literary forms, such as poetry, biography, and the novel.

<sup>163</sup> For an accessible overview of the history of rhetoric and its place in the establishment of the Athenian state, see James J. Murphy and Richard A. Katula, with Forbes I. Hill and Donovan J. Ochs, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric* (3rd ed.; Mahwah, N.J.: Hermagoras, 2003), 7–9, 26 *et passim*. Other works on the history of law and rhetoric include Kathleen Freeman, *The Murder of Herodes* (New York: Norton, 1963). Helpful general works on the history of rhetoric include George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); idem, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Traditions from Ancient to Modern Times* (2nd ed.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); idem, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

<sup>164</sup> Murphy and Katula, *Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, 202–3; see also Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 216 and 265.



John Rufus's rhetorical education would have encompassed not only the creation of speeches. Education in rhetoric required other exercises, such as creating descriptive narratives, which would serve a biographer or encomiast well. Augustine's Christian apology for the adoption of rhetoric "to argue for the good" was already passé for the Greek-speaking East. For example, New Testament authors incorporated rhetoric into their arguments and their depiction of the lives of Jesus and the apostles.<sup>165</sup> There were a number of centers of rhetoric in Syria, most notably Antioch, the home of John Chrysostom and his teacher, Libanius.<sup>166</sup> Apamea boasted a school whose curriculum may have left its mark on at least one fifth-century Syriac writer, John of Apamea.<sup>167</sup> In Palestine, the rhetorical schools in Gaza were esteemed in the fourth century. Suppressed by Porphyry, the bishop of Gaza, in the early fifth century for their support of classical religion, they

<sup>165</sup> For recent studies of rhetorical dimensions of the Gospels, see C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001); Amos N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999); and Richard A. Burridge, "The Gospels and Acts," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 BC–AD 400* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 507–53.

<sup>166</sup> The relationship between rhetoric and politics in the life and work of Libanius was subjected to investigation in Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, *Libanios und Julian: Studien zum Verhältnis von Rhetorik und Politik im vierten Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Vestigia 46; Munich: Beck, 1995). See also Craig A. Gibson, "The Agenda of Libanius' Hypotheses to Demosthenes," *GRBS* 40 (1999): 171–202. For the influence of Libanius on John Chrysostom, see, e.g., the studies by David G. Hunter, "Libanius and John Chrysostom: New Thoughts on an Old Problem," in *Cappadocian Fathers, Chrysostom and His Greek Contemporaries, Augustine, Donatism, and Pelagianism* (vol. 4 of *Papers Presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1987*; ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; StPatr 22; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 129–35; idem, "Preaching and Propaganda in Fourth Century Antioch: John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Statues," in *Preaching in the Patristic Age: Studies in Honour of Walter J. Burghardt* (ed. David G. Hunter; New York: Paulist, 1989), 119–38; idem, "Borrowings from Libanius in the *Comparatio Regis et monachi* of St. John Chrysostom," *JTS* NS 39 (1988): 525–31; as well as Julia Alissandratos, "The Structure of the Funeral Oration in John Chrysostom's 'Eulogy of Meletius,'" *Byzantine Studies* 7 (1980): 182–98.

<sup>167</sup> On John of Apamea, see Karl Pinggéra, "Johannes von Apamea," *BBKL* 23:737–41. Peter Bruns ("John of Apamea," *DECL*, 326) dates him to the sixth century.

returned to their former prominence in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>168</sup> It seems that the period in which the *Life of Peter the Iberian* unfolds was one of temporary decline for the school in Gaza. It cannot be determined whether Peter as bishop was in part responsible for this decline. Perhaps the upheaval in Gaza to which the *Life of Peter the Iberian* attests was a significant factor.

In form, the *Life of Peter the Iberian* shows many features of the encomium, a speech of praise that exercised a special influence on biography.<sup>169</sup> The encomium presented the virtues of its subject through elaboration of family, birth, education, and heroic deeds, called *topoi*. Rufus has greatly expanded the *topos* of the subject's origins, illustrating the nobility and virtue of both parental lines.<sup>170</sup> Although an audience might expect some elaboration of the subject's genealogy, Rufus's expansion on this theme seems to run beyond the accustomed length, so much so that Rufus felt the need to offer his audience an explanation for his lengthy stories about Peter's forbearers. There is quite little, if anything, mentioned about Peter's education, which is not surprising, given that he left Iberia as a hostage at the age of twelve.<sup>171</sup> Encomia often epitomize the subject's education with one line,<sup>172</sup> so this

<sup>168</sup> On the history of rhetoric in Gaza, see George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 169–77.

<sup>169</sup> Biography was not one of the subjects of the school curriculum. Along with history, encomium was one of the most important genres for the development of biography. See Richard A. Burridge, "Biography," in Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 371–91, here 374–78. Early Jewish and Christian literature features examples of biographies written in the style of encomia. See, e.g., Jerome H. Neyrey, "Josephus' Vita and the *Encomium*: A Native Model of Personality," *JSS* 25 (1994): 177–206; and Maged S. Mikhail and Tim Vivian, "Zacharias of Sakhâ: An *Encomium* on the Life of John the Little," *CCR* 18 (1997): 1–64.

<sup>170</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §§6–19 (R 5–12). Elaboration of genealogy was not unheard of in encomia and was standard in the biographies of political figures or military heroes.

<sup>171</sup> Note, however, that the later *Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian* is concerned with pointing to Peter's early schooling in Georgia. See Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, ch. 2.

<sup>172</sup> For an example of Syriac literature influenced by Greek rhetoric, see the *Life of Rabbula* (J. Josephus Overbeck, ed., *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1865], 160; our translation): "while growing up he was educated in the literature of the

brevity could be a matter of rhetorical form rather than of Rufus's limited knowledge of Peter's youth.

One characteristic of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is that it follows through with a chronological framework from the beginning to the end. Not an insignificant portion of that framework consists of miracles proving Peter's authority. This feature marks a difference from the *Life of Rabbula*: after Rabbula's consecration to the episcopacy, the author sets aside the chronological narrative in order to speak of the various areas of the bishop's activity arranged more or less topically. In the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, in contrast, the chronological element is set up as background. Many of the events narrated take place between Easter and Pentecost of subsequent years. In classical novels, chronology is a secondary matter.<sup>173</sup>

The importance of miracles as the seal of divine approval for the anti-Chalcedonian movement takes a literary shape that resembles the classical aretalogy, or tales of miracles demonstrating the power of the gods over humans. Aretalogy certainly is incorporated into the Gospel accounts but also is to be found in

Greeks as a member of the wealthy nobles of their city, Qenneshrin." Other examples from biographical arrangement are conveniently collected in Burridge, "Biography," 379–80; on the *topos* of the subject's education, see 383.

<sup>173</sup> The novel *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* or *History of Apollonius*, much read in Byzantium and Western Europe in the Middle Ages, disregards "external" chronology: an important character, Athenagoras, is presented to be at once a young man and nevertheless old enough to have a daughter the same age as his romantic interest, Tarsia. See Tomas Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 152.

the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.<sup>174</sup> While not a part of either classical biography or the novel per se, aretalogy, as well as rhetoric, had influence on them. Classical novels and romances were also fond of the *Reisefabulistik*, fantastic voyages, occasions for demonstrating the virtue and heroism of the travelers.<sup>175</sup> The (apocryphal) Acts of the Apostles contain numerous elements of the characteristic presentation of such a preference for stories of a hero's journeys.<sup>176</sup>

The tales of Peter's wanderings recount natural and divine wonders in the confines of the "Holy Land" while incorporating aretalogy. Rufus speaks of the sites (and sights) he "witnesses" with Peter as *ἑκπλησία*, *tedmārātā*, "wonders." While it is not the land of the Lotus eaters of Ulysses, Rufus projects the fascination with the strange and distant into the hagiographical landscape of the Palestinian "near abroad": a statue of Emperor Julian chasing Peter in Egypt (*Vit. Pet.* §100 [R 73]); the resting place of Moses revealed on Mount Pisgah (§118 [R 85]); the natural wonder of the well-tempered bath in the Syrian Desert (§123 [R 91]). In each place Peter manifests the power of God and the divine approval that this power bestows. To be sure, the narration of Israel in the wilderness in the Pentateuch and the conquest of the land in the

<sup>174</sup> On aretalogy in Christian literature, see, e.g., Francesco Corsaro, "Elementi romanzeschi e aretalogia negli Atti apocrifi di Paolo e Tecla: codici e strutture formali," in *La narrativa cristiana antica: codici narrativi, strutture formali, schemi retorici: XXIII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana*, Roma, 5-7 maggio 1994 (ed. Salvatore Pricoco, Paolo Siniscalco, and Gianna Dareggi; SEAug 50; Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1995), 77-90; and David R. Cartlidge, "Transfigurations of Metamorphosis Traditions in the Acts of John, Thomas, and Peter," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 53-66. For aretalogy in other early Christian literature, see, e.g., Wolfgang Fauth, "Pythagoras, Jesus von Nazareth und der Helios-Apollon des Julianus Apostata: zu Eigentümlichkeiten der spätantiken Pythagoras-Aretalogie," *ZNW* 78 (1987): 24-48. For a study that favors classification as *chreiae* over that of aretalogies of some of the relevant texts, see Phillip Sigal, "Manifestations of Hellenistic Historiography in Select Judaic Literature," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1984 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 23; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 161-85.

<sup>175</sup> Hägg, *Novel in Antiquity*, 117-18.

<sup>176</sup> For an overview of rhetoric in the Christian apocrypha generally, see Richard I. Pervo, "Rhetoric in the Christian Apocrypha," in Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 793-805, which focuses on the *Acts of Thomas*, *Acts of Paul*, *Acts of Peter*, *Acts of John*, and *Acts of Andrew*, with a brief bibliography on the topic.

book of Joshua or the tours and miracles of Jesus in Samaria and Judea might also have been *Vorbilder* for Rufus, yet such accounts do not exhaust the well from which he drew his inspiration.

If these genres hint at the classical literary motifs at work in Rufus's imagination, then rhetoric was the means Rufus employed to express them. A prominent rhetorical figure is the biblical citation, a commonplace of Christian hagiography borrowed from the Christian exegetical homily.<sup>177</sup> The *prooemion* of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* begins with a citation from Hebrews, and the narrator introduces his work as an imperfect attempt to obey this command, an exhortation through the example of the speaker. To emphasize the virtue of the subject, citations are often chained together in short, impetuous *cola*, reflecting the "Asiatic" rhetorical style, which in the original Greek might have had the features of consonance and rhythmic arrangement as well.<sup>178</sup>

The translator of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* reflects many fifth-century elements of Syriac literature.<sup>179</sup> Where original compositions in Syriac such as the *Life of Rabbula of Edessa*, composed even earlier than the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, render, for example, the Greek ξενοδοχεῖον by ܥܡܝܢܐܝܐ,<sup>180</sup> the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* renders the sense of the word by ܥܡܝܢܐܝܐ ܥܡܝܢܐܝܐ ܥܡܝܢܐܝܐ instead (*Vit. Pet.* §19 [R 12]). Quite frequently, however, one finds in the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* Greek words taken over almost in transcription into the Syriac.<sup>181</sup> While some

<sup>177</sup> On rhetoric in the Christian exegetical homily see Folker Siegert, "Homily and Panegyric Sermon," in Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 421–43.

<sup>178</sup> Asianism was a derogatory term first applied to orators such as Cicero by the proponents of Atticism. Asianism and Atticism both defined a spectrum of rhetorical style that persisted to the late Byzantine period. See "Asianism" in David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 65–66. For a study of the characterization of John Chrysostom's rhetorical style as Asiatic, see P. J. Ryan, "Chrysostom: A Derived Stylist?" *VC* 36 (1982): 5–14.

<sup>179</sup> One example from the lexicon that argues against a pre-sixth century translation into Syriac is the expression *ketābê kahanāyê*, meaning the Bible, but literally, the expression means "priestly books." See *Vit. Pet.* §21 (R 14). This expression is not attested in any dated manuscript before the sixth century.

<sup>180</sup> *Life of Rabbula* (Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri*, 182, 202, and 203).

<sup>181</sup> For the presence of Greek vocabulary in Syriac, see also Sebastian P. Brock, "Greek Words in Syriac: Some General Features," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996), 251–262, repr. as ch. 15 in Sebastian Brock, *From Ephrem*

of these may have already passed into the Syriac language, there are many calques noted by Raabe that have been preserved in the notes to the present edition and translation. Overall, the Syriac translation has sought to preserve also the rhetorical style of the original Greek syntax, which as such is an important element of style. It is possible that the translator recognized these rhetorical forms and thus felt inspired or compelled to preserve them.<sup>182</sup> Again, the *Life of Rabbula* imitates Greek rhetorical style even in the features of its syntax. Preservation of such details in the *Life of Peter the Iberian* reflects the steadily increasing influence of classical rhetoric on Syriac prose in the fifth century.<sup>183</sup>

to Romanos: *Interactions between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

<sup>182</sup> Translation techniques from Greek into Syriac have been the subject of several studies. For a limited sample of examples, see Harald Suermann, "Die Übersetzung des Probus und eine Theorie zur Geschichte der syrischen Übersetzung griechischer Texte," *OrChr* 74 (1990): 103–14; Lionel R. Wickham, "Translation Techniques Greek/Syriac and Syriac/English," in *V. Symposium Syriacum*, 1988, *Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven*, 29–31 Août 1988 (ed. René Lavenant; OCA 236; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1988), 345–53; Sebastian P. Brock, "Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique," in *III. Symposium Syriacum*, 1980: *les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures*, Goslar 7–11 Septembre 1980 (ed. René Lavenant, OCA 221; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1983), 1–14, repr. as ch. 10 in Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, and Theology* (Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum, 1992); and idem, "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity," *GRBS* 20 (1979): 69–87, reprinted as ch. 3 in Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*. For a discussion of issues in the process of translating Scripture from Greek into Syriac, see the helpful contribution by Sebastian P. Brock, "Translating the New Testament into Syriac (Classical and Modern)," in *Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia* (ed. Joze Krasovec; JSOTSup 289; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 371–85.

<sup>183</sup> The field of study of the influence of Greek rhetoric on Syriac literature is still wide open. Pioneering studies have been contributed in the form of a Zürich *Habilitationsschrift* by Leo Haefeli, *Stilmittel bei Afrhat dem persischen Weisen* (Leipziger semitistische Studien NS 4; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932; repr., Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1968). Rhetorical analysis of the twelve Syriac hymns ascribed to Balai can be found in Robert R. Phenix Jr., "A Critical Investigation of Twelve Syriac Verse Homilies on Joseph (Genesis 37–50) Attributed to Balai (Fifth-Century A.D.)," (Ph. D. diss., Eberhard-Karls University, Tübingen, Germany, 2005), to appear in *Studien und Texte des antiken Christentums*, Mohr-Siebeck, 2008.

The literal character of the translation from Greek into Syriac of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* is reflected in several points on the level of the word. The translator did not attempt to change the biblical citations to reflect the Peshitta. All citations are slavish translations of the Greek. Many nouns are kept in their Greek forms. Finally, there also is some evidence of glossing, such as in the form of the Greek word *basternion*, which is preceded in the Syriac by a gloss explaining this to be the throne in which Eudocia traveled (*Vit. Pet.* §12 [R 7]).

## TEXT-CRITICAL OVERVIEW

There are two extant manuscripts for both the *Life of Peter the Iberian* and for *On the Death of Theodosius*, one kept in Berlin and one preserved in the British Museum in London. The basis for Richard Raabe's *editio princeps* and German translation of the *Life of Peter the Iberian* was a manuscript collected by Eduard Sachau and later acquired by the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz: Orientabteilung.<sup>184</sup> In 741 C.E. a scribe completed what is known to Western scholars as Sachau MS No. 321.<sup>185</sup> In this collection the *Life of Peter the Iberian* occupies folios 68 verso through 103 recto. From folio 103 recto, column b, to folio 104 verso one can find most of the text of *On the Death of Theodosius*.<sup>186</sup> The final section, amounting to a little more than a page of printed text in Brooks's *editio princeps* of the work, is missing. The bottom edges of this Sachau MS 321 suffered moisture damage, and on many pages the ink is faded.

In his comments accompanying his edition of the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*, Raabe rightly remarked that it was a felicitous accident that this work was preserved in another manuscript

<sup>184</sup> Richard Raabe, ed. and trans., *Petrus der Iberer: Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts; syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten griechischen Biographie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895).

<sup>185</sup> Referenced in the following as MS Sachau 321. It is also referred to as "MS 26 (Sachau 321)" in the catalogue. See Eduard Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften* (2 parts; vol. 23 of *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*; Berlin: Ascher, 1899), 1:94 and 96.

<sup>186</sup> Sachau (*Verzeichniss der syrischen handschriften*, 96) does not identify the existence of the *De obitu Theodosii* as a separate text but assumes the respective pages of the manuscript under the text of *Vita Petri Iberi*.



now property of the British Museum, MS BM Add. 12,174, folios 48 recto through 78 verso.<sup>187</sup> That same manuscript preserves the complete text of the *On the Death of Theodosius* on folios 141 recto to 142 verso.<sup>188</sup> According to William Wright's *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, MS BM Add. 12,174 is of later provenance; a notice dates its completion to 1197 in the monastery of Mar Barsauma in Melitene.<sup>189</sup>

Raabe used MS BM Add. 12,174 to supplement the damaged portions of MS Sachau 321. Where there are variant readings, MS Sachau 321, the older manuscript, generally preserves the better reading, although occasionally Raabe found it necessary to follow MS BM Add. 12,174. In Raabe's apparatus, MS Sachau 321 is labeled "A" and MS BM Add. 12,174 appears under the *siglum* "B."<sup>190</sup> It is worthwhile to convey Raabe's own general observations on these texts. Our own examination of these manuscripts against Raabe's printed edition and notes agrees with his careful work in many, nearly every instance. We have established our Syriac text on the basis of a comparison of microfilms of the original manuscripts with Raabe's printed edition. We have essentially adopted Raabe's edition, except for the few instances where we corrected some of his readings. Therefore we have not included in our own edition, except where appropriate, Raabe's apparatus. We have followed the same procedure in establishing our Syriac text of the *On the Death of Theodosius*, adopting Brooks's edition and correcting his reading where our own study of the manuscript evidence required us to do so.

It is necessary to remark that Raabe's analysis of the language of the two manuscripts that contain the *Life of Peter the Iberian* depends on his view that they are translations into Syriac, either from Greek or from Coptic. His reasons for this will be taken up below but include primarily the syntax of the documents and the relatively frequent occurrence of loanwords.

<sup>187</sup> See Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, vi.

<sup>188</sup> See also William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (3 vols.; London: British Museum, 1870-72), 1126.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 1123-24, 1137. On the monastery of Barsauma, see also Ernest Honigsmann, *Le couvent de Barsauma et le patriarcat Jacobite d'Antioche et de Syrie* (CSCO 146; Subsidia 7; Leuven: Durbecq, 1967).

<sup>190</sup> See Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, vi.



Manuscripts Sachau 321 and BM Add. 12,174 agree in all basic points and in most details. The differences between the two are primarily orthographic, but they also extend beyond the usual domain of variant spellings of proper nouns and the transcription of Greek loanwords. There are synonymic correspondences, as well as in MS Sachau 321 a difference in the usage of the conjunction ܐ (*wa*) and the relative pronoun ܐ (*da*). In those parts of the text attested only in MS BM Add. 12,174, there are sporadic syntactic differences. Raabe argues that these reflect different translation techniques and concludes that the differences MS BM Add. 12,174 exhibits suggest that it was a copy of a Syriac *Vorlage*. This *Vorlage* was in a relatively poor condition so that the copyist misread nearly every instance of its divergence from MS Sachau 321. Raabe conjectured that the synonyms were the result of substituting words in current Syriac usage to replace those that had fallen out of use. Syntactic differences also suggest that the copyist attempted to conform the highly graecized syntax of his *Vorlage* (which is represented more faithfully by MS Sachau 321) to the syntactic rules and style of Syriac prose.

There is evidence that the condition of MS BM Add. 12,174 has deteriorated in the time since Raabe. Primarily, the damage to the lower margins has been exacerbated, making less of the text legible.<sup>191</sup>

#### *Versions and Original Text*

In addition to the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*, which MS Sachau 321 and MS BM Add. 12,174 attest, there is extant only one other version of the story of the life of Peter the Iberian in Classical Georgian, which was treated above in the discussion on the authorship of the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian*. Fragments of what is sometimes identified as a Coptic *Life of Peter the Iberian* in fact belong to a *Life of Timothy Aelurus*.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Our investigation of both manuscripts was not firsthand but relied on microfilm copies, which are almost certainly not faithful to the ink-on-paper contrast of the originals. It is possible that MS BM Add. 12,174 is more legible than the photos on microfilm suggest.

<sup>192</sup> See the photographs and subtitle—"Codex showing the life of Peter the Iberian. Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York"—that accompany the articles "Codex" and "Codex Alexandrinus" in *CE* 2:567. See

The *Life of Peter the Iberian* preserved in Syriac translation is the oldest of the extant versions, a translation of a Greek original.<sup>193</sup> The Syriac *Life of Rabbula*, bishop of Edessa (411–438), likewise shows Greek influence in its syntax and rhetorical construction,<sup>194</sup> yet it is very unlikely that it is a translation from a Greek original. The influence of Greek letters on Syriac only increased over time, exerting force on Syriac writing well after the dominance of Arabic, which had its beginning in the eighth century. Thus, the character of the Syriac *Life of Peter the Iberian* reflecting Greek influence could either be the result of the text being a translation from Greek or could just as easily be ascribed to the Greek-Syriac diglossia of its author, who would have been a representative of the broader sociolinguistic situation in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia in the sixth century.

Raabe also assumed a Greek original but only reported in support of this claim that the *Life of Peter the Iberian* contains syntactic as well as onomastic evidence to that effect. Discussion of the first category of evidence would require a lengthy study. Thus this question is set aside here with the notice that, while there are constructions that arguably reflect the constraints of Greek prose, these could just as easily have been the result of the sociolinguistic parameters in which Syriac was being composed in much of Syria and Palestine. Syriac was written in the Christian milieu in many instances in an environment where Greek was also an important

the discussion of the text fragments in Hugh Gerard Evelyn-White, *New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius* (part 1 of *The Monasteries of the Wadi ʿn Natrûn*; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926), pl. VIII, English translation numbered XXXI on 164–67. See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 13 note 12.

<sup>193</sup> In light of *Hist. eccl.* 2.5, 8; 3.33 (Bidez and Parmentier, 56; Whitby, 85), Evagrius Scholasticus appears to have had access to the Greek text.

<sup>194</sup> For an edition of the *Life of Rabbula*, see Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri*, 159–209. An English translation by Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. is forthcoming in the SBLWGRW series (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature). For a study of the rhetorical form characterizing the introduction to the *Life of Rabbula*, see Robert R. Phenix Jr., “Kunstprosaische Elemente in der *Vita Rabbulae*: Ein Blick auf das Encomium an den Helden,” in *Die Suryoye und ihre Umwelt: Viertes deutsches Syrologen-Symposium in Trier 2004: Festgabe Wolfgang Hage zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Martin Tamcke and Andreas Heinz; Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 36; Münster: LIT, 2005), 281–93.

language.<sup>195</sup> After the rise of the Seleucid kingdom after Alexander's death (during the night from 10 to 11 June 323 B.C.E.), Greek was established as a language of cultural, economic, and political importance in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine, where Aramaic had been at least since the Neo-Babylonian Empire (618–536 B.C.E.) the dominant language of wider communication. Syriac, the dialect of Aramaic spoken originally in northern Mesopotamia around the cities of Edessa and Nisibis, was to become the dominant language in much of Southwest Asia already by the fourth century C.E. With the rise of Christianity and the spread of Syriac as its chief vehicle in Mesopotamia, Persia, and Syria, Christian theology in Greek gave that language a renewed prestige among Syriac authors. Fluent knowledge of Greek became essential for scholars in the Syriac world, and its prestige influenced as much the Syriac language as it did the thought of the authors who used Syriac to express themselves.

SYNOPSIS OF THE *VITA PETRI IBERI*  
AND THE *DE OBITU THEODOSII*

*Outline of the Vita Petri Iberi*

The *Life of Peter the Iberian* follows the classical arrangement of biography. The author begins by presenting the reason for which the *Life* is worthy to be written and heard (§§1–2). The author then presents Peter's nationality and the origin of his monastic name Peter in two short sections that stress the Christianity of the Iberians and Peter the Iberian's imitation of the apostle Peter, "the Rock" of the faith (§§3–5). Next the reader learns of Peter's family and lineage, the two key themes of which are his royalty and the Christian righteousness expressed via the ascetic piety of his parents, grandparents, and nurse (§§6–19). Peter is the "rose blossom that sprang up from such a holy root," a phrase that introduces a section of praise for Peter and his holy way of life (§20).<sup>196</sup> The

<sup>195</sup> See Sebastian P. Brock, "Syriac Culture, 337–425," in *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (vol. 13 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*; ed. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 708–19.

<sup>196</sup> A similar expression is used in the *Life of Rabbula* (Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri*, 160; our translation). After introducing the temperaments of

author follows this with a *captatio benevolentiae*, exhorting the audience to imitate Peter's ascetic virtues, which are presented in a series of quotations from the Pauline letters and Matthew (§21). The author concludes the introduction with a statement that Peter was chosen for the honor that he received before his birth (§22) and presents a story in which Peter's birth is announced to his father Bosmarios, here employing citations from the annunciation to Mary in Luke 1 (§23).

The author then confirms Peter's precocious asceticism and spiritual wisdom as a child and a diplomatic hostage at the court of Emperor Theodosius II of Constantinople with several stories of the miracles that Peter performed as a child as well as the devilish temptations that he overcame (§§24–30). Next Peter meets his life-long fellow ascetic, John, and the two of them devise a plan to run off to Jerusalem to dedicate their lives to God in ascetic holiness (§31). Peter and John escape at night from the royal court through the agency of the Persian martyrs whose relics Peter and John constantly venerated. Their destination: Jerusalem (§§32–33).

Peter and John carried the reliquary containing the bones of the martyrs through Asia Minor (§34), while the Holy Spirit made known their arrival in all the cities along their journey (§35). They were mistaken for runaway slaves and captured by a tax collector in one of the cities but were set free when the martyrs appeared to the tax collector in a dream (§§36–37). At last the youths arrived in Jerusalem in great joy and reverence (§38) and were received by Melania the Younger, her husband Pinianus, and her mother Albina, founders of monasteries for men and women whose story the author briefly recounts (§§39–41). Melania the Elder (§42) and Poemenia, the founder of the Church of the Ascension (§43), also receive brief mention.

The two saints became novices in the monastery for men on the Mount of Olives and received the monastic habit from Gerontius, the abbot of the monastery, whose holiness and ascetic miracles are recounted (§§44–48). The two saints are presented

Rabbula's parents, his strong-willed pagan father with connections to the emperor Julian and his equally resolute Christian mother, who strove constantly to convert her husband to Christianity, the author begins the narration of the events of Rabbula's life proper with the statement "From them was born the most heroic Rabbula, a zealot, a second Josiah, if this likeness by which we paint the honor of the saint is adequate."

as having had opportunity for contact with Cyril of Alexandria, who came to Jerusalem to perform the deposition of the relics of the Persian martyrs that were in Peter and John's possession (§49). From the author's perspective, Peter and John grew in spiritual athleticism in Jerusalem (§§50–51). Peter sought to imitate the blessed Passarion, the founder of a monastery for men distinguished by its unceasing services of prayer and hymnody (§52). Yet the devil afflicted Peter with a debilitating illness. After Peter rejected the devil's temptation, Christ showed him a vision in which monks were chanting psalms, and he promised Peter that he would establish a monastery through him (§53).

The author then begins to relate the story of how Peter moved from Jerusalem to Gaza (§54) but breaks off instead and retells the various miracles and signs that God worked through Peter and John, portents that foretold the coming events surrounding the Council of Chalcedon and its aftermath (§§55–62). Eventually the author returns to the subject of Peter's arrival in Gaza (§63).

Peter had built in Jerusalem a solitary monastery near the "Tower of David" (§64). When a dispute arose with the neighbor concerning the property line, words came to blows, and the neighbor punched John in his face. Yet John and Peter understood the beating as a share in Christ's own sufferings, and the next day God struck their bellicose neighbor (§65). Although without funds, Peter and John turned their monastery into a hostel and received pilgrims (§§66–67), but the abbot Zeno convinced them to return to the discipline of monastic life, and thus they entered a monastery (§§68–69). After proving themselves through asceticism and obedience, Zeno granted them permission to return to their own dwelling in Jerusalem (§70). Empress Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius II, whom Peter and John had known at the court, sought them out for spiritual guidance, yet at Zeno's advice Peter and John fled from her to avoid temptation, and they seem to have handed over their monastery to other monks (§71).

Finally the two arrived in a monastery in Gaza (§72). Peter's ordination to the priesthood is foretold (§73), after Juvenal of Jerusalem had tried to ordain him already in Jerusalem (§74). In the end, Paul, Juvenal's nephew and the bishop of Gaza, tricked Peter into ordination, yet Peter refrained from all ministry until his ordination to the episcopacy seven years later (§75).

Next the author sets the background to the events following the Council of Chalcedon. With Juvenal definitively accepting the decrees of the council, the anti-Chalcedonian bishops of Palestine, as well as Archbishop Dioscorus of Alexandria, went into exile (§§76–77). The inhabitants of Maiuma, Gaza, forcibly brought Peter to Theodosius, the anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, to be ordained as their bishop. Warned in a vision not to flee, Peter continued to resist serving at the altar until popular pressure won the day, and in the end a eucharistic service confirmed Peter's worthiness (§§78–80).

Peter remained in Gaza for six months, after which time the emperor issued a decree that all anti-Chalcedonian bishops were to agree to the decisions of Chalcedon or vacate their sees (§81). With the blessing of Theodosius of Jerusalem, Peter fled to Alexandria (§82). During the slaying of Dioscorus's partisans in the theater (§83), Peter saw a vision of the souls of these newly departed martyrs (§84). Proterius, the pro-Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria, in vain sent men to kill Peter (§85). Instead, Peter arrived in Oxyrhynchos in the Upper Thebaid (§§86–87), where through heavenly guidance he denounced all the errors contained in the decree of Chalcedon (§88). Meanwhile, Dioscorus died in exile (§89). Proterius continued the persecution of anti-Chalcedonian Christians in Egypt. After Emperor Marcian had died (§90), Peter returned to Alexandria. While the city rejoiced over Marcian's death, the monks there, headed by Longinus, arranged for Timothy Aelurus to be ordained bishop of Alexandria, an act performed by Peter the Iberian and Eusebius of Pelusium (§91). Proterius ratchetted up his persecution, plunging Alexandria into violent confusion (§§92–94). With Proterius murdered by one of his guards, the frenzied crowds treated his corpse with the utmost disrespect (§95). All the while Emperor Leo commanded that Timothy should be enthroned as Proterius's successor. After seven years, Timothy was forced into exile in Gangra (§97). Since another bishop Timothy (Salophaciolus), a pro-Chalcedonian, was appointed, Peter remained in Egypt to minister to the anti-Chalcedonian Christians (§98). During the remainder of his time there, Peter experienced several miracles that confirmed the truth of the anti-Chalcedonian position and Peter's sanctity (§§99–104).

Satisfied that the threat against the anti-Chalcedonian Christians had come to an end, Peter returned to Palestine and settled in the vicinity of Ashkelon. While there, he attracted many novices and traveled extensively throughout the region to minister to the anti-Chalcedonian Christians (§105). At the ascension to the throne of Emperor Basiliscus, anti-Chalcedonian bishops were restored to their sees, first among them Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria (§106). The author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* alludes to his own ordination to the priesthood and that he was living in Antioch (§107) when Emperor Zeno came to power and reversed Basiliscus's decrees (§108). Despite Timothy Aelurus urging him to come back to Egypt, Peter had declined, citing his spiritual needs and those of the Christians of Palestine as the reason (§109). Timothy died just before he was to go into exile (§110). Peter remained in Palestine to resist the Chalcedonian hierarchs (§111).

Theodore, a lawyer living in Antioch and an acquaintance of the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi*, had fled to Palestine to escape the pro-Chalcedonian bishop Calendion and to become one of Peter's disciples (§112). In elliptical speech, the author states that this Theodore had convinced him to join him in Palestine and likewise become part of the circle of Peter's disciples (§§113–115).

A lengthy account of Peter's first journey throughout Palestine follows (§§116–164), with miracles recounted at every stage. The author speaks of Peter's gastro-intestinal ailment for which he sought aid at several of the hot springs east of Jerusalem (§§116–117). Peter set out to bathe in the spring at Livias, in Arabia, near Madeba,<sup>197</sup> and then moved on to Ba'ar. En route he and his troupe passed by Mount Pisgah, where the Christians had erected a church to commemorate the tomb of Moses. Peter fondly recollected an earlier meeting with an ascetic on this mountain, at

<sup>197</sup> On Madeba and the famous Madeba Map, a mosaic kept in the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, Madeba, Jordan, which details many of the sites frequently visited by Christian pilgrims to the Middle East, see Herbert Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: An Introductory Guide* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992); and Michele Piccirillo, *Chiese e Mosaici di Madaba* (Collectio maior 34; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1989). For an attractive presentation of the Madeba mosaic map and discussion of recent excavations and archaeological surveys in the area, see Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, eds., *The Madaba Map Centenary 1897–1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period* (Collectio maior 40; Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1999).



which time the ascetic foretold the Council of Chalcedon and Peter's future episcopacy (§§118–119). The site provided the ideal setting to instruct the disciples with a story of the miraculous revelation of the tomb of Moses (§§120–121).

Having successfully prayed and ended a drought in Madeba shortly before Pentecost (§122), Peter arrived in Ba'ar with the magistrates and citizens of Madeba in tow. The stifling heat that normally prevented the citizens from using the baths was suddenly cooled (§123) and a fire that threatened to destroy their property was quickly extinguished through Peter's intercession (§124). The infestations of flies that normally surrounded the baths were nowhere to be seen while Peter was present (§125). In addition, the author recounts the "miracle" of the hot and cold running water that created a temperate bath there (§126).

After the Feast of the Ascension, Peter and company returned to Madeba, where Peter's prayers granted a sterile woman offspring (§127) and reconciled another couple also by promising them children (§128). A dreadful vision Peter received foreshadowed and warned of the events following the Council of Chalcedon (§129).

The group departed from Madeba after a few days and traveled to Batmin, where they celebrated Pentecost before returning to Jerusalem (§130). However, the tribune Elijah persuaded Peter to remain in the mountains on account of the heat (§131). The author conveys Elijah's story of how Peter had healed his ears (§132). Elijah himself conducted Peter to the village of Beth Tafsha, five miles north of Jerusalem, to spend the rest of the summer there; at that site also a small fish-pond miraculously returned sufficient food for the saint (§133).

Later Peter joined the rest of his disciples in the low country, having been seen beforehand by a monk who in a vision realized that Peter had been constantly visiting the holy sites of Jerusalem all over the summer, albeit at night (§§134–135). Peter then left his disciples in the plain and made further excursions (§136). Dionysios, a lawyer in Gaza, asked Peter to live with him in Magdal Tutha, near the church of Saint Hilarion south of the city. Peter blessed the lawyer's vineyards so that they bore a great abundance of good wine (§137). While Peter was in the area, Abba Isaiah the Egyptian was also dwelling nearby in Beth Daltha. The author recounts the spiritual bond that formed between Peter and Abba



Isaiah (§§138–139). At the time, Emperor Zeno summoned both Peter and Abba Isaiah to Constantinople, on account of the miracles that each had been performing. Distressed at the thought of meeting the pro-Chalcedonian Zeno, Peter sent off a petition to Zeno pretentiously pleading that on account of old age the two of them could not make the journey. He quickly decided to lay low in Phoenicia until his contacts in Constantinople had persuaded Zeno to rescind his summons (§140).

En route through Phoenicia, Peter arrived at the city of Arca, near Tripoli, and his disciples traveled from near Jerusalem to join him there. The magistrate Maximus welcomed Peter on order from Saint Andrew, but the pro-Chalcedonian bishop of the city forced them to leave (§140). Peter fled the city and caught up with his disciples, and they all went to Orthosias on the sea, where they spent the winter in a salt depot. Peter recruited numerous anti-Chalcedonian disciples in Arca and Orthosias (§141). At the time of their stay in the region, a gardener living close to the salt depot saw in a dream a revelation of the martyrs Lucas, Phocas, Romanus, and their companions and discovered their burial site (§§142–144). Guided by Peter, he told the local bishop, who came and had the relics unearthed; after the Feast of Pascha, the bishop deposited their relics in the *martyrion* of Sergius and Bacchus. Additional signs and wonders followed (§145).

After Pentecost, Peter and his disciples traveled to Tripoli, where they were guests on the estate of the *comes* Apringius, just outside the city. Here Peter received word from Zeno that he did not have to travel to Constantinople (§146), while one of the brethren witnessed a miracle at the *martyrion* of St. Leontius (§§147–148).

Peter grew anxious to return to Gaza, knowing that his death was close at hand. As he prepared to depart from Tripoli by ship, he suddenly changed his mind and decided instead to go to Beirut (§149). However, his disciples boarded the ship and sailed to Long Village, where they stayed with the family of Basilides, one of Peter's monks. In the meantime, the author recounts how a vision had induced Peter to abandon his plans and instead win souls among the law students in Beirut, a task at which he proved rather successful (§§150–152).

Eventually Peter caught up again with the rest of his disciples in Long Village and traveled on to Tyre (§153), where he

recruited the Jewish girl Eugenia into his circle of followers (§154). Magistrates from Beirut and Tyre came to receive his blessing, and Peter exhorted them to good works worthy of the faith (§155). In his instructions, Peter gave them three commandments that ensure salvation: until the end of their lives, they should adhere to the orthodox faith; they should always speak the truth; and they should remain far from all fornication and lasciviousness (§§156–157).

Next Peter came to Ptolemaïs, where he attracted a certain Aaron to the monastic life, and eventually he moved on to Caesarea, where the other brethren had been waiting for him (§§158–159). The author presents a digression on the abbot Gregory and the blessed Sabina, whose convent the aforementioned Eugenia of Tyre entered (§160). Abba Gregory received Peter and remained with him until they arrived in Caesarea (§161).

After celebrating Pascha and Pentecost in Caesarea, the group journeyed on to Ashdod, where they stayed in a poor and miserable dwelling on the shore (§162). All of Peter's acquaintances from Maiuma and Gaza as well as from Ashdod came out to meet him (§163). They attempted to persuade him to return to Gaza, but he rejected this entreaty, knowing that his death was near and desiring to die as a foreigner in a strange land (§164).

The last section of the *Vita Petri Iberi* recounts Peter's final days and the events following his death (§§165–193). After a brief introduction to this section (§165), the author tells that Peter fell ill and made out a will while still in Ashdod (§166). The announcement of the death of Abba Isaiah reached him there as well, and Peter expected that his own turn had come (§§167–168). Abba Isaiah's successor, Abba Peter the priest, visited Peter the Iberian's disciples and recounted the wondrous death of Abba Isaiah (§169).

Having moved from Ashdod to the fortress in Jamnia with Peter, Peter the Iberian's disciples witnessed many miracles and exorcisms, including the healing of a Jewish fisherman (§170). At the time of the commemoration of the death of John the Eunuch, Peter's companion, a shortage of fish was relieved by a miracle (§171). Peter's last walk to his deathbed is recounted in poignant detail (§172). First the imminent death of Peter the Iberian was revealed to one of his disciples, Abba Sana, who saw the heavenly council debating whether Peter should be released from his tribulations in this world or remain to strengthen the orthodox in their

time of need (§§173–174). Then Peter celebrated the commemoration of John (§175). The author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* recounts the contents of Peter's will and identifies the four heirs whom he appointed (§176).<sup>198</sup> Peter was to see one last vision, the contents of which are not divulged, and then he was ready to die (§177).

At the time of his death, with Peter were Abba John, his heir, and a few of his closest disciples, to whom Peter entrusted the authority of the monastery (§178). The author then states that Peter called the brethren together and gave them their final instructions before his death: they were to avoid all heresies, especially that of the Chalcedonians; they were to have faith and were to preserve their chastity (§179).<sup>199</sup> On the night of Peter's death, the priest Athanasius from Egypt saw a vision of the eulogy in heaven for Peter the Iberian, given by Peter of Alexandria (§180). The disciples fasted the whole day, and around dinnertime Peter gave the brethren his last blessing; the priest Abba Gregory closed Peter's eyes (§181).

Abba Gregory and a few disciples prepared Peter's body for burial, clothing it in his vestments and placing it in the church, where they spent the night keeping vigil (§182). After the eucharistic service offered on Peter's behalf, some of his disciples took his body secretly to Maiuma to be entombed in his old monastery (§§183–184). Other disciples remained in Jamnia. At dinner, Abba Maxos revealed to them visions that he had seen on two occasions while standing beside Peter as he performed the divine liturgy (§§185–187).

Before dawn, Abba Gregory deposited Peter's body in a sarcophagus under the altar in the church of his monastery in Maiuma, next to the bodies of John the Eunuch and Abraham of Athrib, whose connection with Peter the author recounts (§188). The people of Maiuma, learning of the death of Peter, ran to his tomb and, discovering that his body had already been buried, venerated his sarcophagus and prepared to perform vigils for the next seven days (§§189–190). Since the church was too small to accommodate all the pilgrims who had come, the brethren, led by Theodore, eventually undertook the renovation of the monastery, which was completed in time for the translation of Peter's relics

<sup>198</sup> This seems to be a different will from the one he made out in Ashdod.

<sup>199</sup> Much of §§165–193 is told out of sequence, with repetitions, as though it were a harmonization of different accounts.

to a place under the altar on the first anniversary of his death (§§191–192). The author concludes with the dates on which the memorials of Peter's death, translation, and burials are celebrated (§193).

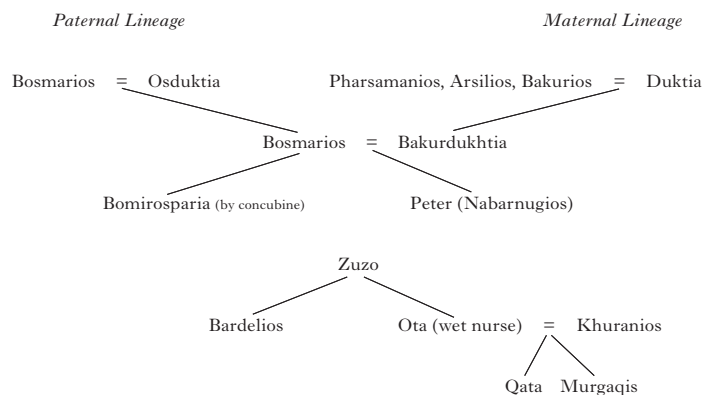
*Outline of the De obitu Theodosii*

Following the *Vita Petri Iberi*, the manuscript continues with the account of the deaths of Theodosius of Jerusalem and Abba Romanus. The author recalls the promise he had made in the *Vita Petri Iberi* to recount Theodosius's death (§1). Theodosius of Jerusalem had been driven out by Emperor Marcian and had gone into hiding in Egypt while Romanus was imprisoned in Antioch (§2). A conflict between Romanus and a certain Timothy, who is otherwise not mentioned by John Rufus, attracted the attention of Theodosius. He traveled to Antioch to attempt to mediate the dispute and to visit Simeon the Stylite (§3). However, Theodosius was caught near Antioch (§4), and Marcian commanded that he be taken to Constantinople. Failing to persuade Theodosius to abandon his opposition to Chalcedon, Marcian had him imprisoned in a cell filled with lime during the winter, without allowing any visitors (§5). After Marcian had died, Emperor Leo was informed that Theodosius was at his end, and he permitted Theodosius to be taken to Sykai, where he died shortly thereafter (§6). In a vision, Peter saw Theodosius being translated to heaven. In Sykai, the brethren quickly took Theodosius's body out of the city by ship and buried him in Cyprus, in an anti-Chalcedonian monastery; Theodosius is commemorated on the day after James, the first bishop of Jerusalem (§7).

Meanwhile, Romanus spent five years in exile, during which time his grace and eloquence converted many to oppose Chalcedon (§8). While Romanus was in exile, a famine gripped Palestine, and the inhabitants turned against Juvenal, the pro-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem. Juvenal petitioned Marcian through Empress Eudocia to permit Romanus to return from Antioch. Permission was granted, and he settled in Eleutheropolis because his monastery in Tekoa was under Juvenal's jurisdiction. He established a new monastery in the village of Kefar Turban, where he died (§9). He was buried under the altar of the church of the prophet Zachariah in a natural cave that miraculously opened from the solid rock (§10). The author concludes with the date of

the commemoration of Romanus and of Passarion, whose hostel had been the inspiration for Peter and John to build their own monastery in Jerusalem (§§11–13).

GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF THE FAMILIES  
OF PETER THE IBERIAN AND ZUZO



CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

284–361	reign of Mirian III, the first Christian king of Iberia
315–392	lifetime of Apollinaris of Laodicea
325	Council of Nicaea I (First Ecumenical Council)
379–395	reign of Emperor Theodosius I
380–394	reign of Aspacures III of Iberia
381	Council of Constantinople I (Second Ecumenical Council)
382	birth of Melania the Younger
385–412	episcopacy of Theophilus of Alexandria
ca. 395	birth of Abba Gerontius of Jerusalem
402–404	John Chrysostom of Constantinople sent into exile
407	death of John Chrysostom
410	Council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon; establishment of autonomous Christian church in Persia

412-444	episcopacy of Cyril of Alexandria
ca. 413/417	birth of Peter the Iberian (subsequent calculations are based on 417)
415	torture and murder of the philosopher Hypatia with the involvement of Cyril
417	arrival of Melania the Younger in Jerusalem
422-458	episcopacy of Juvenal of Jerusalem
428 (10 Apr.)-431	episcopacy of Nestorius of Constantinople
428	Passarion made <i>chorepiscopos</i> and archimandrite of the monks in Jerusalem; death of Theodore of Mopsuestia
428/29 or 429/30 (win.)	death of Passarion
429	at age twelve, Peter the Iberian sent as a hostage to the court of Theodosius II at Constantinople
430	Abba Isaiah heard of the anti-Chalcedonian prophetic announcement made by Abba Paul of Thebes
431	Council of Ephesus (Third Ecumenical Council)
431 (22 Jun.)	Nestorius deposed at first "Cyrillian" session of Council of Ephesus
437	upon Theodosius II's invitation, Melania the Younger visited Constantinople, where she may also have met Peter the Iberian
437 (Feb.)	Melania returned to Jerusalem from her visit to Constantinople
437	Peter the Iberian, now twenty, and John the Eunuch escaped from Constantinople and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; entered Melania's monastery on the Mount of Olives
438-457	reign of Yazdegerd II of Persia
438	First pilgrimage of Empress Eudocia to Jerusalem

- 438 (15 Mar.) Empress Eudocia invited Cyril of Alexandria to come to Jerusalem for the consecration of the Church of St. Stephen
- 438 (16 Mar.) at Eudocia's request, Cyril of Alexandria deposited the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (Armenia) and a relic of St. Stephen in a *martyrion* on the Mount of Olives; at that occasion, also the Persian martyrs' relics that Peter had brought from Constantinople were deposited
- 439 death of Melania the Younger
- 440–461 episcopacy of Pope Leo the Great
- 440–468 episcopacy of Basil of Seleucia
- 440–521 lifetime of Philoxenus of Mabbugh
- 441–442 Empress Eudocia settled at Jerusalem while Peter avoided visiting her
- 444 Peter left Jerusalem and settled in the Gaza area
- 445/446 Peter the Iberian's ordination to the priesthood by Paul of Maiuma
- 445/446 death of Theodotus, the outspoken anti-Nestorian bishop of Ancyra, who wrote a multivolume work against Nestorius
- 446 death of Proclus, bishop of Constantinople; displayed an anti-Nestorian theological mindset; coined the Theopaschite formula *unus e Trinitate passus*
- 446–449 episcopacy of Flavian of Constantinople
- 447–522 reign of Vakht'ang Gorgasali of Iberia and Lazica
- 448 Synod of Constantinople
- 449 (13 Jun.) Pope Leo the Great wrote *Tome* to Flavian of Constantinople
- 449 Second Council of Ephesus ("the Robber Council"), at which Juvenal of Jerusalem and twenty-one Palestinian bishops supported Dioscorus, Cyril of Alexandria's successor

450 (Apr.)	death of Bishop Flavian of Constantinople from beatings at the Robber Council of Ephesus; Anatolius becomes bishop of Constantinople
450 (16 Jul.)	<i>Tome of Leo</i> sent to Anatolius of Constantinople
450 (28 Jul.)	death of Emperor Theodosius II
450 (25 Aug.)–457	Emperor Marcian, husband of Pulcheria, ruler of Eastern Roman Empire
450 (21 Oct.)	Anatolius of Constantinople signed the <i>Tome of Leo</i>
451	Council of Chalcedon (Fourth Ecumenical Council), at which Jerusalem was granted the status of patriarchate; the Chalcedonian Martyrius fled from Egypt to the Judean Desert; rejection of Council of Chalcedon by some in the Holy Land against the position taken by Juvenal of Jerusalem; death of the hermit Zeno
ca. 451	death of Nestorius at the Great Oasis (Upper Egypt)
after 451	death of Hesychius of Jerusalem
451–453	Theodosius functioned as anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem
451–521	lifetime of Jacob of Sarug
452–453	Juvenal of Jerusalem cast out from his see; gathered forces in Constantinople; beginnings of anti-Chalcedonian church in Palestine
452/453	Peter the Iberian consecrated as bishop; began his priestly activities only after his reordination to the priesthood also at the hands of Theodosius of Jerusalem
452 (25 Nov.)	Letter 109 of Pope Leo to Bishop Julian of Cos concerning the rebellious monks in Palestine
453 (Jun.)	Letter 123 of Pope Leo to Empress Eudocia concerning the rebellious monks in Palestine



453 (Aug.)	Chalcedonian Bishop Juvenal returned to Jerusalem with army to crush the anti-Chalcedonian rebellion
453	Jerusalem briefly has two functioning bishops: the Chalcedonian Juvenal and the anti-Chalcedonian Theodosius
ca. 453–457	Theodosius of Jerusalem captured at Antioch; taken to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Marcian; imprisoned in Dios monastery; eventually died there
454 (4 Sep.)	Letter 139 of Pope Leo to Juvenal of Jerusalem concerning religious practices in holy places
455	Peter the Iberian left for Egypt
456	influx of monks from Asia Minor into Palestine, among them the famous monk Sabas
457–474	reign of Emperor Leo; champion of Chalcedon
457	anti-Chalcedonian Theodosius of Jerusalem left his exile in Egypt and headed to Antioch in order to solve a dispute there; later captured at Antioch and taken to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Leo
457–460, 475–477	episcopacy of Timothy Aelurus
459–478	Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem, a Chalcedonian; under influence of Emperor Basiliscus subscribed to <i>Encyclical</i> ; gained him repudiation under Emperor Zeno
460 (20 Oct.)	death of anti-Chalcedonian Empress Eudocia
465–538	lifetime of Severus of Antioch
468–470	Peter the Fuller's insertion of the words "who was crucified for us" into the Trisagion troparion
474–475, 476–491	reign of Emperor Zeno

- 475 (Jan.)–summer 476 reign of Emperor Flavius Basiliscus; at this time Peter the Fuller was archbishop of Antioch; Basiliscus supported anti-Chalcedonians; he reestablished Timothy Aelurus as anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria
- 475–476 Basiliscus issued *Encyclical*, which annulled the decisions of Chalcedon
- 475 Peter returned to the Holy Land near Ashkelon
- 475–before August 476 John Rufus ordained as a priest in Antioch
- 476 Zeno overthrew Basiliscus and annulled his *Encyclical*
- 476 Peter Fuller, anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, just returned from exile and, as a consequence of Zeno's actions, had to leave again
- 476 death of anti-Chalcedonian bishop Timothy Aelurus
- 477 second exile of Bishop Peter the Fuller under Emperor Zeno
- 478–486 episcopacy of Martyrius, Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, as the successor of Athanasius of Jerusalem
- 479–484 Calendion as bishop of Antioch, a Chalcedonian supporter
- 479 Martyrius, the new Patriarch of Jerusalem, achieved a union between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sides in Palestine; reconciled with some anti-Chalcedonians; was successful by way of compromise
- 480–485 death of Abba Gerontius
- 481 Zeno invited Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah to Constantinople in order to “convert” them; Peter fled to regions of *Palaestina, Arabia, Phoenicia*
- 482/484 (13 Dec.) martyrdom of Shushanik, Georgian princess

482	Zeno issued <i>Henotikon</i> as a document of reconciliation between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians
482–565	lifetime of Emperor Justinian I, supporter of Theopaschitism
484–518	Acacian schism
485	Peter the Fuller regained the Patriarchate of Antioch
485–488	Peter the Iberian lived in close proximity to Abba Isaiah's monastery in Beth Daltha in a village known as Magdal Tutha
486	Severus, monk and future anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, took up studies of law in Beirut
488	Severus of Antioch was baptized in <i>martyrion</i> of Leontius of Tripoli in Phoenicia; probable year of meeting between him and Peter the Iberian
ca. 490s	biography of Peter the Iberian composed by Zacharias Rhetor/Scholasticus
490–570s	lifetime of John Philoponos
490	Severus of Antioch visited Jerusalem; came under influence of Peter's ascetic heritage; founded an anti-Chalcedonian monastery near that of Peter's
491 (11 Aug.)	death of Abba Isaiah
491	death of Peter the Iberian in Jamnia
491–518	reign of Emperor Anastasius, who succeeded to the throne of Zeno and gave full freedom to the anti-Chalcedonians
492–494	new movement of Chalcedonian defenders championed their cause in the Holy Land
492	by a common vote the monks Sabas and Theodosius (both Chalcedonians) elected as archimandrites for the <i>lavrai</i> and <i>coenobia</i>
494–513	patriarchate of Elias of Jerusalem

495	foundation of a guest-house of Mar Sabas's <i>lavra</i> in Jerusalem
498–514	Pope Symmachus of Rome
ca. 500	John Rufus wrote the <i>Vita Petri Iberi</i>
512 (8 or 16 Nov.)–518	Severus served as anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch instead of the deposed Flavian
512–518	anti-Chalcedonian triumph in Palestine
519–538	episcopacy of John of Tella
521	persecution of anti-Chalcedonians, except in Egypt
527–565	reign of Emperor Justinian I
527–545	episcopacy of Ephrem of Antioch
553	Second Council of Constantinople (Fifth Ecumenical Council)
580	Iberia became a vassal of the Persian shah
608	Georgian church under Bishop Kyrion II reversed its position: accepted Chalcedon and separated from the Armenian church
741	date of MS Sachau 321, which includes the <i>Vita Petri Iberi</i>
787	Second Council of Nicaea (Seventh Ecumenical Council)
875	date of writing of MS BM Add. 14,650, which contains Syriac text of <i>Plerophoriae</i>
ninth–tenth centuries	time during which MS BM Add. 14,631, which preserves the <i>Plerophoriae</i> , was copied

*Account of the Way of Life of the Holy  
Peter the Iberian, Bishop, Approved  
Confessor, and Ascetic of Our Lord*  
Text and Translation

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*On the Memory of How the Blessed  
Theodosius, Bishop of Jerusalem,  
Departed to Our Lord*  
Text and Translation

<sup>4</sup> Heb 13:7: Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν. The Syriac version of the scriptural verse differs from the Greek version most importantly in the connotations its rendering of the Greek suggests for the phrase “outcome of the way of life,” ܠܬܝܒܐ ܠܚܠܐ. ܠܝܒܐ designates the art of ascetic practices that are unto salvation as well as a “way of life” in a cultural or philosophical context. For a Christian monastic audience, this word would

# Account of the Way of Life of the Holy Peter the Iberian, Bishop, Approved<sup>1</sup> Confessor, and Ascetic of Our Lord<sup>2</sup>

[R 3] (§1)<sup>3</sup> We are commanded by the divine Apostle Paul to remember our leaders when he says the following, “Remember your leaders, those who spoke with you the word of God. Just as you have observed the perfection of their way of life, imitate their faith!”<sup>4</sup>

(§2) So we are now repaying a just debt<sup>5</sup> and one that is well-pleasing to God,<sup>6</sup> while fulfilling the apostolic command.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, we are required to do this with care,<sup>8</sup> for truly the excellent way of life of those who led others toward God is a great path of salvation for those disciples who are zealous<sup>9</sup> for what is

have strong overtones of ascetic practice.  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$  can mean at once the end of a period of time, such as a lifetime, or the completion of something, but also consummation or perfection. For other instances of the use of Heb 13:7 in early Christian, ascetic, anti-Chalcedonian literature, see, e.g., Stephen of Heracleopolis, *Panegyric on Apollo*:  $\pi\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\tau\chi\omega\ \mu\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \chi\epsilon\alpha\rho\iota\tau\mu\epsilon\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\ \nu\eta\epsilon\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota\iota$  (Kuhn, 1:34,24); “For I did not write these things as though telling you his life, since I am not fit for this sort of undertaking, but I did this as though fulfilling the apostolic command of him who says: *Remember your great ones*. For he whom we honour is truly great in heaven and upon earth” (2:26,19).

<sup>5</sup> Allusion to Matt 6:12b.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess 2:4.

<sup>7</sup> Possibly an allusion to Col 3:20.

<sup>8</sup> Heb 3:12.

<sup>9</sup> It is instructive to note the frequency (more than 50 times) of occurrences of the words “zealous” or “zeal” throughout the text. Underlying this emphasis seems to be an interest on the part of the author to stress the dedication of anti-Chalcedonians to the cause of the true faith, manifested in proper practices as much as in right belief.

<sup>1</sup> Allusion to Tit 2:14.  
<sup>2</sup> Allusion to Ps 119:35.  
<sup>3</sup> John 10:11, 14; 1 Pet 5:4.  
<sup>4</sup> The Syriac ܠܒܐ ܕܡܝܐ may translate the Greek φιλόστοργος (Raabe, 13 n. 6).  
<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet 2:25.  
<sup>6</sup> 1 John 4:15; Rom 15:9, 14:11.  
<sup>7</sup> For the implied allusion to the crown of glory, see 1 Pet 5:4.



good<sup>1</sup> and who delight in imitating it.<sup>2</sup> Now placed before us is not only the memory of a leader but also of a good shepherd,<sup>3</sup> and the love of a compassionate<sup>4</sup> father; of a holy bishop,<sup>5</sup> of a confessor of the fear of God,<sup>6</sup> and of a martyr many times over,<sup>7</sup> one equally beloved by all, both speaker and hearers alike. As befitting great cheer, let us take up the word and the renowned report<sup>8</sup> concerning him, placing our trust in his holy prayers.<sup>9</sup> Although it is not as it deserves,<sup>10</sup> [R 4] we shall willingly repay the debt as far as we are able.<sup>11</sup>

(§3) We begin his story with the genealogical origin<sup>12</sup> of his family, because it has been fittingly said, “God is with the generation of the righteous,”<sup>13</sup> “the generation of the righteous is blessed,”<sup>14</sup> and, “they are a chosen race” and “a priestly kingdom.”<sup>15</sup>

(§4) Now, the country of the blessed Peter was the famous country of the Iberians, those northerners<sup>16</sup> set toward the rising

<sup>8</sup> Probably based on the Greek idiom *λόγον καὶ ἀκοήν*; see Heb 11:2, 11:39, 1 Tim 3:7.

<sup>9</sup> Phlm 1:22.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Eph 2:9; Gal 2:16.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Tim 5:4.

<sup>12</sup> Matt 1:1.

<sup>13</sup> Ps 14:5.

<sup>14</sup> Ps 112:2.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Pet 2:9, see Exod 19:6, 23:22 (LXX).

<sup>16</sup> The Syriac ܡܕܝܢܐ may translate the Greek *ἀρκτικοί* (Raabe, 14 n. 4).

<sup>1</sup> The land of the Iberians had as borders Colchis in the west, the Caucasus in the north, Albania in the east (not to be confused with modern-day Albania in southeastern Europe; for a description of the ancient Albanians and their land, see Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.4.1–8 [Jones, 5:222–31]), and Armenia in the south. In antiquity, the country of the Iberians was known as *Iberia secunda*, literally “the second Iberia”; the ancients referred to Hibernia (Spain) as *Iberia prima*, i.e., “the first Iberia.” For Strabo’s description of Iberia, see *Geogr.* 11.3.1–6 (Jones, 5:216–21). Today the country of the Iberians is called Georgia.

<sup>2</sup> For a good summary of the constant struggles and military alliances between Iberia, Byzantium, and Persia, see Lordkipanidse and Brakmann, “Iberia II (Georgien).”

<sup>3</sup> *Vit. Pet.* §48 (R 32) recounts that Abba Gerontios gave Nabarnugios this new name, Peter.

of the sun<sup>1</sup> who are constantly fighting against the Romans and the Persians, each of whom is anxious to make the country [of Iberia] its own through a friendly alliance.<sup>2</sup>

(§5) In the language of their country, he first had the name Nabarnugios. Yet when he was deemed worthy of the holy habit of the monks, then the name Peter was [given] to him instead, being the name of the chief of the apostles.<sup>3</sup> Those fathers who gave him the holy habit were doubtless moved by divine inspiration, I believe, because he was to become zealous in his way of life, in his practices, and in the boldness of his faith, which had been entrusted to him by God, on account of which our Lord aforetime also named Peter “the Rock.”<sup>4</sup> Upon this rock he founded the orthodox church, when he spoke to him saying, “You are ‘the Rock,’ and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Sheol shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you will bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you will loose on earth will [R 5] be loosened in heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

(§6) The father of our blessed father and bishop Peter was Bosmarios, king of the Iberians; his father’s father was also Bosmarios;<sup>6</sup> his mother, Bakurduktia; his mother’s mother, the holy Duktia. His maternal grandfather was the great Bakurios, the husband of Duktia [and] the first Christian king who ruled

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac text creates the impression that the apostle Peter and Peter the Iberian almost merge into one. It is not easy to differentiate which statements are to be ascribed to one and which to the other. Whether or not the underlying Greek also employed such ambiguity cannot be decided. As a feature of the Syriac text, however, the merging of different figures into one is reminiscent of what also happens in Syriac prose and poetic compositions with regard to the presentation of the different biblical Marys, who are seemingly confounded with one another.

<sup>5</sup> Matt 16:18–19.

<sup>6</sup> Raabe (15 n. 1) commented already that the manuscript witness for the name of Peter’s father is not stable. See, e.g., below, *Vit. Pet.* §118 (R 86), which has ܢܒܪܢܘܓܝܘܣ ܐܒ ܒܫܡܪܝܘܣ ܐܒ ܒܫܡܪܝܘܣ i.e., literally “Nabronugios the son of Bosmarios son of Bosromios.”

[illegible]

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac ܠܐܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ may translate the Greek τὰ πρῶτα φέρεσθαι or ἀποφέρεισθαι (see Raabe, 15 n. 2), for which Raabe also refers to related parallel expressions in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.*

that country,<sup>1</sup> having led that whole nation to the fear of God. Although each of them were kings and queens of the Iberians, they in turn also acquired through virtue the kingdom of heaven. His paternal grandmother, Bosmarios's wife, Osduktia, [was] the mother of his father Bosmarios. The brother of Osduktia, his paternal grandmother, was Pharsamanios,<sup>2</sup> the one who was held in glory at [the court of] Arcadius, emperor of the Romans,<sup>3</sup> having both the honor of a military leader and of the first honors.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, after Pharsamanios had fled from the injury of Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius,<sup>5</sup> and was able to hide himself, he hastily returned to his country. Once he became king over the Iberians and had brought along with him the White Huns who are the neighbors of the Iberians,<sup>6</sup> he was the cause of many evils for those who are subject to the Romans.

(§7) The great Bakurios, the maternal grandfather of the blessed Peter, had as a brother the holy Arsilios.<sup>7</sup> When this one had grown old with Bakurios and Bosmarios and had reached old age during the time of his rule of the Iberians,<sup>8</sup> [R 6] he completed his life in virginity and in great holiness.

(§8) Blessed Peter had no full siblings, but only a paternal sis-

7.32.23 and 8.14.2 (Schwartz and Mommsen, 2:726,24–25 [ἀπεφέρετο τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐπιστήμης] and 2:780,1–2 [τῶν τὰ πρῶτα τῆς Ῥωμαίων συγκλήτου βουλῆς ἀπενηγεγμένων]). Sebastian Brock also alerted us to the similar expression below at *Vit. Pet.* §39 (R 27) p. 53, n. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Rufus hoped his audience would also recall the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife at Gen 39. See also the comment by Schwartz, *Johannes Rufus*, 27.

<sup>6</sup> The White Huns (Hephtalites) were the northern neighbors of the Iberians. See Knud Hannestad, "Les relations de Byzance avec la Transcaucasie et l'Asie Centrale aux v<sup>e</sup> et vi<sup>e</sup> siècles," *Byzantion* 25–27 (1955–57): 435 n. 7, 436 with n. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Moses of Khoren (ca. 407–492), *History of the Armenians* 3.60 (Thomson, 333), mentions that at the time of Mesrop's sending out of pupils to Byzantium and Edessa as translators of Greek and Syriac literature into Armenian, "a certain Ardzil was king of Georgia." The *Georgian Chronicle* (Qauxč'išvili, 91) features a certain King Arčil (422–432 C.E.).

<sup>8</sup> According to Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.3.6 (Jones, 5:220), κατ' ἀγχιστεῖαν τε καὶ ἡλικίαν τὸν πρεσβύτατον. The Iberians accorded the kingship to men of highest age. See also Raabe, 15 n. 5.



ter from a concubine whose name [was] Bomirosparia.<sup>1</sup> In accord with his father's wish, she was considered [as holding] the rank of a full sister to him.

(§9) It was a holy and famous woman, whose name was Zuzo, who raised Peter. While he was still an infant he was hidden in her house, in order not to be given as a hostage to the Persians, who many times sent messengers for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> This woman's daughter was called Ota. She was the foster-mother of the blessed one and also gave him suck when he was a baby.<sup>3</sup> Her husband was Khuranios; her full brother [was] Bardelios. Their sons Qata and Murgaqis were foster-children and of the same age as the blessed one.

(§10) No one out of faintheartedness<sup>4</sup> should think that this reciting of names is wordiness, for we recorded these not without reason. This affectionately loving and God-loving<sup>5</sup> father, as he truly is, would join all these names together once a year on the Saturday in the middle week of the Fast<sup>6</sup> to celebrate their commemoration as their recompense for the quiet life that they had conferred upon him and that he had chosen for himself so as to cast off the world.<sup>7</sup> For this reason we insignificant ones also thought it right that we should not fail to commemorate those whom he

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac ܠܗܘܐ ܕܥܝܢܐܐܝܐ may translate the Greek μικροψυχία (Raabe, 16 n. 1).

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac ܠܗܘܐ ܕܥܝܢܐܐܝܐ ܠܗܘܐ ܕܥܝܢܐܐܝܐ may translate the Greek φιλόστοργός και φιλόθεος (see also Raabe, 16 nn. 2 and 3).

<sup>6</sup> Presumably in the middle of Great Lent, the period of fasting observed in preparation for Easter; probably on one of the Saturdays on which the departed faithful are commemorated by name at the Divine Liturgy. Thus one might conclude that this event probably took place on the third Saturday of Lent, on which commemorations of the dead still take place in Orthodox churches.

<sup>7</sup> Here the author comments on the ideal of ascetic withdrawal into a life of quietness that Peter chose for himself. In the course of the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus shows how Peter's responsibilities as bishop and leader of anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia repeatedly frustrated his longing for that ascetic ideal. See also below *Vit. Pet.* §138 (R 103).





thought worthy of a memorial<sup>2</sup> and from whom a flower such as him had sprouted forth.<sup>3</sup> It is certain that the lovers of virtue will gain enormously when they hear their story.<sup>4</sup>

(§11) The great Bakurios, [R 7] the first Christian king of the Iberians, and his wife Duktia attained such a height of the fear of God, of virtue, and of ascetic ways of life in Christ that, even though they were king and queen,<sup>5</sup> while still reigning they sought to live and did live lives of monasticism. For when the two together had reached a satisfactory mutual agreement,<sup>6</sup> they abandoned carnal intercourse, since the begetting of children,<sup>7</sup> which already had been granted to them, was sufficient for them.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the faithful Bakurios would give himself over to fasting, prayer, and the giving of alms, [even] sweeping the church of the city three times a week with his own hands. Because he was very lavish<sup>9</sup> in love of the poor, he did not consider it unfitting to have various cooked meals made in his palace, which he would carry in large baskets, bringing them at night to the house for the poor that had been built by him, and those who were lying there the king fed with his own hands.

(§12) The blessed Duktia, his wife and partner in his zeal, cast off from herself all royal ornament and clothed herself in sack-cloth.<sup>10</sup> She even sold her sedan chair,<sup>11</sup> called a “basternion,”<sup>12</sup> all [her] gold<sup>13</sup> and pearls, and distributed [the money] to the poor.

*Apol.* 29 (Wartelle, 136–37; Cyril R. Richardson, ed. and trans., *Early Christian Fathers* [LCC 1; New York: Westminster, 1953; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996], 260); Athenagoras, *Leg.* 33 (Pouderon, 197–99; Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, 303, 336–38); Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.18, 23 (Stählin, 2:160, 14–16 and 188, 26–27; Ferguson, 217 and 249); 6.12 (Stählin, 2:482, 7–8; *ANF* 2:503): ἀδελφὴ δὲ τούτῳ ἡ γυνὴ μετὰ τὴν παιδοποιίαν, ὥς καὶ ὁμοπατρίαι; *Const. ap.* 6.29 (Metzger, 2:386–89; *ANF* 7:463).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac may translate the Greek ὑπερβάλλων (Raabe, 17 n. 2).

<sup>10</sup> A biblical sign of repentance. See, e.g., Jonah 3:5–8.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek φορεῖον.

<sup>12</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek βαστέρνιον and βαστέρνον, “closed litter.” See LSJ, 310. The term is used for a covered vehicle used by women.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac may translate the Greek χρυσός (Raabe, 17 n. 4).



On many occasions when she prolonged [her periods of] fasting and prayers, she received from our Lord such grace that she would merely lay her hands on [someone] and accomplish healing.<sup>1</sup>

(§13) [Again,] concerning the great Bakurios, her husband, [R 8] it is appropriate that we would not pass over this story. For along with his other virtues, he once also wove the crown of confessorship, or rather, as he would have wanted, even of martyrdom.<sup>2</sup> Once he was going to war alongside the emperor of the Persians<sup>3</sup> as one who had made a covenant of peace with him and as his general. When he saw that as soon as the sun arose, the emperor and all his generals, consuls,<sup>4</sup> and satraps, as well as all the nobility,<sup>5</sup> suddenly leapt down<sup>6</sup> from their horses and worshiped the sun,<sup>7</sup> he himself remained sitting on his horse. When this was told to the emperor by the other satraps, Bakurios stood before him and was asked if what had been told about him was true. He who was truly a sharer in the zeal of Daniel and his three young friends<sup>8</sup> shouted out with confidence in front of the whole army, “I am a Christian, and it is not lawful for me that I should forsake the one who alone is the true God and Creator of all to worship his creature, created to give light for the service of myself and of all human beings.”<sup>9</sup> The emperor, even though he was very

<sup>3</sup> Presumably Shapur II (309–379).

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ὑπατοῦς. Observation made by Sidney H. Griffith in *marginalia* to the text, abbreviated as “Griffith, *marginalia*” in the following.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac may translate the Greek μεγαίστῳνες (Raabe, 17 n. 6).

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac has a syndetic hendiadys: “jumped up and got down.”

<sup>7</sup> Zoroastrianism/Mazdaism was the official religion of the Sassanian Empire and the traditional religion of Persia in ancient and late antique times. The Zoroastrian worldview is built around a god of light (Ohrmazd, Ahura Mazda) and a god of darkness (Ahriman, Angra Mainyu) who are in combat with one another, creating good and evil. The principle deities of the Zoroastrian pantheon enthroned among the Sassanians also included the sun-god Mithra and the fire-god Adhur. See Speros Vryonis and Alexander Kazhdan, “Zoroastrianism,” *ODB* 3:2230–31; idem, “Sasanians,” *ODB* 3:1845–46; Jarnshead K. Choksy, “Zoroaster” and “Zoroastrianism,” in Bowersock, Brown, and Grabar, *Late Antiquity*, 754–55 and 755–57; and Frank R. Trombley, “Mithraism,” *ODB* 2:1385–86.

<sup>8</sup> See Dan 3:16–18.

<sup>9</sup> See Gen 1:14.



amazed and dumbfounded by his boldness, turned around and secretly said to his own people, "It is Bakurios, and we are in need of him. What can we do to him?" These are [only] some of the heroic deeds of Bakurios.

(§14) Arsilios, his full brother, whom we mentioned above, governed in old age and in virginity the kingdom of the Iberians together with Bosmarios,<sup>2</sup> the father [R 9] of our Peter, who also [is named] Nabarnugios.<sup>3</sup> The ruling men of the country strongly urged him, entreating him to marry for the sake of begetting sons and the succession of the kingdom. When they brought to him a wife of royal descent, he remained a virgin toward her. He learned that she had done something shameful, although she denied [it] when she was gently accused by him. Finally he hunted down the unsuspecting criminal. Oh the humility and great gentleness of philosophy!<sup>4</sup> He said to him, "Behold, your pledge is your life and your blood. Now quickly leave with provisions and money for expenses. Do not abide in this country lest you die in an evil way and your blood be reckoned against me." When he had dismissed him in this way, he afterwards said to his wife, "Because you have done this, I will not dismiss you nor will I mock at your shame. Yet I have faith in the Son of God, whose law you have abused, that he will cause your genitals to breed<sup>5</sup> worms, and thus your flesh will be consumed." Immediately this chaste man's curse became deed. The area below her belly became putrid with worms, [and] her life and her flesh were miserably consumed, to such an extent that she was changed into dried bones and skin.<sup>6</sup> But the zeal of that just man again begat redemption from the curse. She was chastened by the divine scourge, came to recognition of the offense, was greatly repentant, and groaned bitterly. [R 10] She turned

<sup>3</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §5 (R 4).

<sup>4</sup> It is not uncommon in early Christian texts to find direct comparison and identification between the ideals of the philosophic and the ascetic life.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac ܒܕܕ may translate the Greek βρῦειν, "to swell, to be full to bursting" (see Raabe, 18 n. 2).

<sup>6</sup> Dried bones and skin can appear in ascetic texts as an outer sign of a perfected ascetic, e.g., *Vit. Pet.* §116 (R 83), describing Peter. At the present instance one gets the impression that through the curse an ascetic appearance was forced upon the woman.



herself to confession and came to repentance and to such wholehearted contrition that she publicly threw herself down in front of the door of the church, revealing her sin in front of everyone.<sup>2</sup> She begged everyone to trample on her, calling herself a despicable whore, an adulteress, an enemy of God, and the shame of humanity. By this she moved all to pity, tears, and compassion. Since everyone fasted together and the church earnestly interceded on her behalf with persistence, tears, and groans, she was healed from the affliction. Moreover, through a virtuous way of life and asceticism she became so holy following these [events] that she became for everyone a model and an example of the way of grace and salvation.<sup>3</sup>

(§15) The faithful Arsilios, on account of his virtuous way of life, found such grace and confidence toward God that he would work signs through his prayers, as our blessed father attested, affirming it without deception. During his reign over the Iberians he learned that the blessed Peter had separated from the world to dwell in the Holy City and was practicing there the way of life of monasticism—as the course of the narrative will make clear, with the help of God. He sent to him saying, “As it is written, ‘Blessed is he who has seed in Zion and sons of [his] house in Jerusalem.’<sup>4</sup> Even as we have you, I make petition to you, my son, to pray for me so that through [R 11] your prayers I may find mercy.” Although it is the custom of many of the great ones of the earth, [who are] pleasure-seekers and careless, to appoint for themselves male and female singers, those vanities of the world, to sing for pleasure<sup>5</sup> and corrupting delight,<sup>6</sup> he, like King David, appointed for

Benedicta Ward (*Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* [CSS 106; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1987], 28–29) also has a translation of the relevant passage. It is not unlikely that Rufus and the anti-Chalcedonian monks in Maiuma, Gaza, would have been familiar with Mary’s story and thus would have been able to compare Arsilios’s wife to her.

<sup>4</sup> Isa 31:9 (LXX).

<sup>5</sup> Raabe misread the Syriac ܠܗܝܠܐ (“pleasure”) and wrote ܬܡܝܬܐ (“tower”) instead.

<sup>6</sup> Possibly in reference to Exod 32:4, 6 (1 Cor 10:7) or 1 Sam 30:16.

<sup>2</sup> This could be counted as an instance of the so-called “Jesus Prayer” (“Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me [a sinner]”; see Irénée Hausherr, *The Name of Jesus* [trans. Charles Cummings; CSS 44; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1978], 266). On 99–100 Hausherr discusses passages in the *Vit. Pet.* §§38, 53, and 147 (R 27, 35–36, 110) that contain the key words “Jesus,” “Christ,” and “sinner,” sometimes in a prayer context, yet he does not notice the present instance, which is the clearest example of a person, and a layperson at that, actually praying a form of the “Jesus Prayer.”



himself singers of sacred things,<sup>1</sup> who were singing the holy words of God at meals and on every occasion, so that his palace was not at all different from a church.

(§16) Osduktia, the paternal grandmother of the blessed Peter, was so holy in every [respect] that after her death, when a guard post that was under construction was collapsing during an earthquake, it ceased collapsing immediately when her body was brought out and laid there like that of one of the saints.

(§17) The blessed Zuzo who reared the blessed one was so holy that when Peter was an infant, while he was sleeping at her side, she would often drench him with tears when she rose up at night and was saying the following words in the Iberian language: “Lord Jesus, my God and Giver of my life, have mercy on me!”<sup>2</sup> Once when there was an earthquake and everything was shaking, while the blessed one was running about in her house, which had eight apses,<sup>3</sup> she held on to each of the pillars<sup>4</sup> and cried out<sup>5</sup> with boldness,<sup>6</sup> “Lord, see how I have served you, and spare me and my children!” Her prayer did not allow her house to suffer any loss, although this earthquake ruined many at that time.

(§18) [Again,] there was [R 12] in that city a man from among the notables, [one who was] avaricious and who did wrong against many. Although he had been scolded by her many times, he did not turn away from his avarice. [At last,] when she prayed, fire at once descended from heaven and devoured all his fields, which

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “which was of eight apses.” The Syriac renders the Greek *κογχή*, “mussel,” “shelly marble,” or a “niche” or “apse.” See LSJ, 966. *PGL* (759) notes that Eusebius of Caesarea employed the word in reference to the “apse” of a church.

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac may translate the Greek *στῦλος*; Griffith, *marginalia*.

<sup>5</sup> For a scriptural context for the imagery of “earthquake” and “pillars,” see Ps 75:3; Job 9:6; 26:11.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *παρρησία*.



indeed were quite ready to be harvested.<sup>1</sup> Moreover [Zuzo]'s daughter, who was called Ota and who was the blessed one's nurse, spent all her days in holiness, in fasting, and in prayer.

(§19) Our holy father's mother Bakurduktia remained a widow after the death of her husband. She did not consent to become [a wife] to a second husband<sup>2</sup> but rather was persistent in fasting and prayer. No longer inclined to dwell in the city, but desiring [instead] to live a life of monasticism in her villages, she built in every place a guesthouse for strangers<sup>3</sup> and a house for the sick. When the blessed one heard that she was about to come and visit him, he fled to Kypros,<sup>4</sup> so that he would not see her face. When she learned this, she did not come again. He was never willing, ever since he received the monastic habit, to write to one of his own or to receive letters from anyone, and he had told us this many times.<sup>5</sup>

(§20) The blessed, holy Peter, the rose blossom that sprang up from such a holy root and from such holy forefathers<sup>6</sup> and that was brought up by such God-fearing foster-parents, became, righteously and in the manner of those who begat him and brought him up, a chosen vessel just as it is written, "honored, hallowed, and one who is useful for his Lord," and "one who is ready for every good work,"<sup>7</sup> to bear the name of Christ<sup>8</sup> and to hold in honor and preach the orthodox faith before all men,<sup>9</sup> from his youth until his last breath, himself remaining a disciple [R 13] and a faithful

the argument, see Cornelia Horn, "Peter the Iberian and Monastic Settlement of the Herodian Fortress of Kypros," work in progress.

<sup>5</sup> If Peter indeed displayed such an attitude, he served Rufus well as a model of a monk who practiced fully the ideal of completely cutting himself off from any ties to family and relatives and thus living as a stranger. The pursuit of *xeniteia*, the ideal of living as a stranger, was a formative force in early Christian ascetic life in the east. See, e.g., the discussion by Antoine Guillaumont, "Le dépaysement comme forme d'ascèse dans le monachisme ancien," *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses* 76 (1968–69): 31–58, repr. in idem, *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien: Pour une phénoménologie du monachisme* (Spiritualité Orientale 30; Paris: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1979), 89–116. Also see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 230 *et passim*.

<sup>6</sup> See Isa 11:1; 10; Rom 15:12. Also see above *Vit. Pet.* §10 (R 6).

<sup>7</sup> 2 Tim 2:21.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Tim 2:19.

<sup>9</sup> Matt 10:32; Luke 12:8.



imitator of the apostles,<sup>2</sup> always carrying the cross of Christ<sup>3</sup> and being full of the Holy Spirit. Through his grace and power he snatched many for obedience to Christ and the gospel,<sup>4</sup> himself giving an example of such goodness and of a virtuous way of life according to the apostolic exhortation: “in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity.”<sup>5</sup> [He was] a shining pillar<sup>6</sup> of the orthodox faith,<sup>7</sup> and for all civilization he was a fortress<sup>8</sup> through his holy prayers, in the likeness of Noah when the ark was rolling on the last deluge of chastisement.<sup>9</sup>

(§21) But it is not for the weakness and poverty of our words to dare to complete the task of describing at length his truly manifold and godly virtues and his evangelical way of life, manifested at every stage of his life in a special way and increasing within him by divine grace.<sup>10</sup> For I fear, lest when I walk on the endless and bottomless depth<sup>11</sup> of his right actions, since I am unexperienced and unable to swim, I will be shipwrecked and drowned by the floods of the waves of grace that are attached to him and because of my feebleness and weakness [such] excellence should suffer harm.<sup>12</sup> Each one of his customs and his gifts [were such] that they showed themselves by the grace of God at different times, [in different] ways<sup>13</sup> and deeds, in asceticism and in Naziriteship,<sup>14</sup> and, to

*Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (rev. ed.; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1984), 111.

<sup>8</sup> See Ps 18:2.

<sup>9</sup> See Gen 7. Here one may catch a glimpse of a layer of apocalyptic expectation that appears to have characterized the way in which anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine saw the world around them and their own role within it during the fifth and sixth centuries. Rufus's later text, the *Plerophoriae*, is even richer in imagery like this. For a discussion of the role of signs and revelations in that later part of Rufus's work, see Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision*, 113–41.

<sup>10</sup> Possibly allusions to Luke 2:53.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac ܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ may translate the Greek ἄβυσσος (Raabe, 21 n. 3).

<sup>12</sup> Allusions to Mark 14:28–31 (6:45–52; John 6:15–21).

<sup>13</sup> See Heb 1:1.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of this form of asceticism, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 194–96 *et passim*; idem, “Beyond Theology,” ch. 3. See also *Vit. Pet.* §28 (R 19).



speak in the manner of the Apostle,<sup>2</sup> “in afflictions, in necessities,<sup>3</sup> in sufferings, in persecutions, in labors, in fasts, in vigils, in struggles, in fights, in contests<sup>4</sup> unto blood, not only against sin”<sup>5</sup> and “not [only] against flesh and blood but against princes<sup>6</sup> and authorities,<sup>7</sup> [R 14] against the rulers<sup>8</sup> of this dark age, against the spirits of evil,”<sup>9</sup> “in many [expressions of] trust, in the power of signs and wonders and healings,”<sup>10</sup> “in the power of the Holy Spirit, with the weapons of righteousness, those of the right hand and of the left, in honor and in shame, in slander and in good reports.”<sup>11</sup> For he was “as one who is unknown and one who is known,”<sup>12</sup> but “he was known to his God alone,”<sup>13</sup> “as much as he ought to be known.”<sup>14</sup> He was as one dead to the flesh,<sup>15</sup> but was alive always and fervent in the spirit.<sup>16</sup> For though poor, he enriched many because he was nourishing souls and bodies with nourishment suited to each one of them. Although he had nothing, he possessed everything,<sup>17</sup> not only on earth but also in the storehouses that are in heaven.<sup>18</sup> For there he had treasures stored up, where at every moment were his heart, his mind, and his manner of life.<sup>19</sup> These [things] and all that are like them, that through the grace of Christ dwelling in him were sublimely directed by him toward the zeal and salvation of many,<sup>20</sup> I leave aside because I am not able to explain accurately and truthfully nor to write as in a story.<sup>21</sup> I refer their friends to the mouths of all those who from the beginning were [among the] saints, the ones who have heard

<sup>13</sup> See Gal 4:9.

<sup>14</sup> See 1 Cor 8:2–3.

<sup>15</sup> See Col 2:13.

<sup>16</sup> See Rom 8:10–12.

<sup>17</sup> See 2 Cor 6:10.

<sup>18</sup> See Matt 6:20. See also the incident below, *Vit. Pet.* §67 (R 46–47).

<sup>19</sup> See Matt 6:21.

<sup>20</sup> See 2 Tim 3:15.

<sup>21</sup> The meaning of the Syriac word ܐܬܪܝܢܐ ranges from “relation, narration, account” to “story, history, biography.” See Payne Smith, 623. The same word is also used in the title of the present work.





them many times.<sup>3</sup> I advise that we follow closely these [accounts] as though they were written in the holy books,<sup>4</sup> so that we might be filled with the knowledge and the benefit that is from them. For they are renowned in every place,<sup>5</sup> and without anyone's asking they are proclaimed by divine grace itself.<sup>6</sup> No one fails to believe these [things] that are said but rather holds that [the things] he hears are less than the truth. For what time or word would be sufficient<sup>7</sup> to relate [R 15] accurately these [deeds] that the grace of Christ performed through him and with him for the salvation and the boldness of those who desire to be zealous for the good, as I have said, than the many [deeds he worked] for the establishment and edification and confirmation of the orthodox faith and his catholic church,<sup>8</sup> of which [Grace] set him up as high priest<sup>9</sup> and shepherd?<sup>10</sup>

(§22) How [did this take place]? May no one, like those lovers of accusations,<sup>11</sup> say, "Of his own accord he took and seized such an honor." He was called by grace from on high, a calling at once divine and marvelous, which not even in haste I could pass over but rather I will recount it briefly, as far as possible, while taking the story a little further back to its beginning. For in the likeness of the patriarch Isaac, he too was conceived and born on account of a promise,<sup>12</sup> the manner [of which] we will relate briefly at an appropriate time.<sup>13</sup>

(§23) Once, when his father Bosmarios was returning from

"shepherd" with more of a New Testament ring, point toward Peter's later function as bishop of Maiuma and ultimately as anti-Chalcedonian bishop in Palestine. For his ordination as bishop, see below *Vit. Pet.* §§75, 78–79 (R 51, 53–55).

<sup>10</sup> See 1 Pet 2:25.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek φιλεγγλήμονες (Raabe, 23 n. 4).

<sup>12</sup> See Gen 15.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac ܠܝܬܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ translates the Greek ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ (Raabe, 23 n. 5). This reference seems to indicate a natural break in the flow of the text. It appears as if the narrator interrupted his account and continued the narrative with the following incident at another occasion, not immediately during the same session. Instances like this one (see, e.g., also *Vit. Pet.* §§114–115 [R 83]) support the assumption that the written form of the *Vita Petri Iberi* grew out of an originally oral account. See the comments in Horn, "Beyond Theology," 26.



one [of his] estate[s]<sup>1</sup> to come to town, he arrived at a torrent<sup>2</sup> that lay across [his route. The water had risen] to a high flood and prevented [him] from crossing<sup>3</sup> the path. While he was compelled to stop on its bank and was worried, he saw a man who said to him, “Bosmarios, behold, you can cross the river. Get up, cross,<sup>4</sup> enter into your house, and know your wife. She will conceive and bear you a son,<sup>5</sup> who will be honored before God and before men.”<sup>6</sup>

(§24) Having then been conceived, born, and reared in such divine grace, while [Peter] was but twelve years of age,<sup>7</sup> he was sent [as] a hostage [R 16] to the God-fearing and Christian Theodosius the Younger, emperor of the Romans.<sup>8</sup> Sending messengers, [Theodosius] had very much pressed the matter. Thus [Peter] was sent with great pomp and honor by his father Bosmarios, who was reigning at the time over the country of the Iberians, because [Bosmarios] preferred the friendship of the Romans as Christians rather than the assistance of the impious Persians.<sup>9</sup>

(§25) [Peter] came to the blessed Theodosius and was received by him affectionately and was raised and loved by him like

For a contemporary portrait of Theodosius II, see Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23–7.48 (PG 67:729–842; Hansen and Širinjan, 347–95; Zenos, 2:153–78).

<sup>9</sup> For discussion of the relationship between the Persians and the Byzantines at the time and the Georgians sandwiched in between them, see above, pp. xxii–xxiii; see also Charles Burney and David Marshall Lang, *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus* (History of Civilization; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971); Ivane A. Yavaḥišvili, *ქსოველთა ქობი აღმართი* [*History of the Georgian People*] (4 vols; Tbilisi: Stalinis saxelobis T‘bilis isaxelmcip‘o universitetis gamomc‘emloba, 1941–51); Ernest Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches: Von 363 bis 1071, nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen* (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 3; Brussels: Éditions de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire Orientales, 1935); Manvelichvili, *Histoire de Géorgie*; Gregor Paradze, “Probleme der ältesten Kirchengeschichte Georgiens,” *OrChr* 29 (1932): 153–71; Cyrill Toumanoff, “Christian Caucasia between Byzantium and Iran,” *Traditio: Studies in Ancient Medieval Thought and Religion* 10 (1954): 109–89; see also Aßfalg and Lang, “Georgien,” 12:389–396; and Lordkipanidse and Brakmann, “Iberia II (Georgien),” especially 16–37.

<sup>1</sup> Theodosius II had two girls with Eudocia. There is some dispute concerning his fathering a little boy who passed away at young age. See the discussion in R. Scharf, "Die 'Apfel-Affäre' oder gab es einen Kaiser Arcadius II?" *ByzZ* 83 (1990): 435–50. See also Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian."

<sup>3</sup> The author clearly portrays Eudocia in a positive light. For a discussion of her sustained support of the anti-Chalcedonian movement, see Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian."

a son.<sup>1</sup> He witnessed the diligence on account of the fear of God and the love of Christ of the emperor, of Eudocia,<sup>2</sup> the empress, his wife and the companion of his zeal,<sup>3</sup> of the men and women serving them, and especially of the eunuchs,<sup>4</sup> who are called *cubicularii*.<sup>5</sup> For they were all living in the palace as in a monastery,<sup>6</sup> with prayers, fasts, night services, and the other [exercises] that are pleasing to God, [and Peter] became inflamed with zeal. Having had at home from his parents the love of God like a spark of fire, he constantly stoked [these] sparks day by day, with diligence, through courses of asceticism<sup>7</sup> and self-denial, until the great flame and the fire of heavenly grace filled his soul. Underneath he was clothed with a hair shirt against his body, but on the outside he was clad in a splendid and shining garment to hide his virtue. His food was that which Daniel and his friends had,<sup>8</sup> and this in small measure, and he ate it once every three or four [R 17] days, occasionally only once a week. He loved discipline in order to subjugate the flesh and its disorderly joys. The earth was a bed for the young and tender king, and while he conducted himself so and was purified from every defilement of the flesh and of the spirit<sup>9</sup> and was growing in age, he became a temple of God and full of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> All of this was in such a way that through divine grace, while he was still a child, many healings and signs and

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek εὐνοῦχοι. Eunuchs, i.e., castrated male persons, were appointed to take charge of the women at court.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., chamberlains. The Syriac transliterates the Latin *cubicularii*. Chamberlains, often eunuchs, functioned as personal attendants at the court. Through their immediate access to persons of power, many of them were able to exert influence on ecclesiastical and state politics.

<sup>6</sup> See also Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 7.22.4–5 (PG 67:785; Hansen and Širinjan, 368), who knows about Theodosius that he rendered his “palace little different from a monastery [οὐκ ἀλλοιότερα δὲ ἀσκητηρίου κατέστησε τὰ βασίλεια].”

<sup>7</sup> Literally, “advancement.”

<sup>8</sup> See Dan 1:12.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor 7:1.

<sup>10</sup> See 1 Cor 3:16.

<sup>3</sup> Peter was in the possession of relics, i.e., bones, of martyrs, perhaps of the martyrs of Karkha d<sup>e</sup>Beth Š<sup>e</sup>lokh. According to a tradition preserved in Coptic, he had with him relics of Jacobus Intercissus, also known as St. James the Cut-Up, who suffered martyrdom in 421 in Beth Lāpat (modern Khorramabad, Iran) under Bahrām V. For an appendix to the Coptic *passio* of Jacobus Intercissus that details this tradition concerning Peter the Iberian, see Giuseppe Balestri and Henri Hyvernāt, eds., *Acta Martyrum* (4 vols.; CSCO 43–44, 86, 125; CSCO/Copt 3–4, 6, 13; Leuven: Durbecq, 1951–55), 2:50–61 (Coptic), 4:35–42 (Latin). For a fuller discussion of the role of relics in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, see Horn, “Transgressing Claims to Sacred Space”; idem, “Weaving the

even great miracles were accomplished in the palace through his hands.<sup>1</sup> In order not to detract the hearers entirely, omitting the rest I will put forward one of them, sufficient to confirm them all.

(§26) He possessed the bones of [some] holy martyrs, Persians by race, who in those times had truly borne witness<sup>2</sup> [and] whose names we still mention, whose memorial services we keep and [whose] martyrdoms we read according to the tradition and the custom of the blessed one.<sup>3</sup> These [bones] he placed with honor in a shrine<sup>4</sup> in the bed-chamber<sup>5</sup> where he was leading the ascetic life. There he would sleep in front of them on the ground<sup>6</sup> and perform the divine services with lights, incense, hymns of praise, and intercessions.<sup>7</sup> While offering honor and what is pleasing to them, many times he saw [R 18] them openly chanting [psalms], keeping vigil, and praying with him.

(§27) Now when the holy feast of Epiphany came, [a time] when custom requires all the senators<sup>8</sup> both to visit the emperor and to be visited by one another, he shut himself up in the bed-chamber of the martyrs. He completely decorated this house of prayer with his [own] hands, wiping clean the walls and the ceiling [and] even sweeping and washing the floor.<sup>9</sup> Then, after he had thus washed several lamps<sup>10</sup> and had polished [them] diligently, he hung [them] up. He sent for his storekeeper,<sup>11</sup> ordering [him] to bring him oil to light the lamps.<sup>12</sup> But [the storekeeper] was angry that [Peter] was not mindful of the things of the world, being anxious to see him [become] like the rest of the nobility.

Pilgrim's Crown." See also the comments in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 66–69 *et passim*.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., in a reliquary.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek κοιτών (Raabe, 25 n. 1).

<sup>6</sup> See 1 Sam 3:3.

<sup>7</sup> These special instructions for how to perform the divine service are still part of the Typikon for feasts of major saints.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek συγκαλητικός (Griffith, *marginalia*).

<sup>9</sup> Note how Peter is presented as imitating and surpassing the work of cleaning sacred space, modeled for him by his maternal grandfather, Bakurios. See above, *Vit. Pet.* §11 (R 7).

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἡ κανδήλα (PGL, 700) or κανδήλη (LSJ, 874). See also Raabe, 25 n. 2, who derives the word from the Latin *can-dela*.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek κελλαρίτης (Raabe, 25 n. 3).

<sup>12</sup> Literally, "for the flame of the lights."





Impelled by the devil,<sup>1</sup> [the storekeeper] turned in fury saying, “[Too] strong [are] the expectations that both his country and ours have for him, that although he was sent by them for honor and royal glory to the Romans, he should want to become a monk! He will make all of us who are counting on him miserable!” and he refused to send any oil. The holy boy-philosopher,<sup>2</sup> being aware of this instigation of the adversary, showed at such a [young] age an evangelical sincerity with serenity and long-suffering [that] he turned anger to prayer.<sup>3</sup> Fervent in faith and in the Spirit, he called upon the prayers of those saints.<sup>4</sup> When the evening of the vigil came, he [R 19] furnished all the lamps with water alone instead of oil [and] lit [them]. Once lit, they remained [burning] night and day without ceasing during the seven days of the holy feast.<sup>5</sup> When the emperor and all his [courtiers] and the Senate heard this, it was a marvel to them all, so that many came to desire to be moved with zeal by his way of life and by his asceticism.<sup>6</sup> It was no small number [that] gathered to him from among those who were so inclined to practice asceticism with him and [who] were equal to him in zeal.

(§28) One day while he was standing with them and was speaking with them [about] the [matter] of their salvation,<sup>7</sup> he

of Bishop Narcissus of Jerusalem and recounted by Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 6.9.3 (Schwartz and Mommsen, 2:538). Going beyond what is stated here in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, in Narcissus’s miracle, explicitly “the nature of the water was changed into that of oil [ἐξ ὕδατος εἰς ἐλαίου ποιόθητα τὴν φύσιν],” to be used for the lamps of the church. See the comment at Raabe, 26 n. 1. For an example of a further miracle related to the provision of oil in times of need, even if not in a liturgical context, yet still in an ascetic context in Palestine, see Antony of Choziba, *Vita Sancti Georgii Chozebitae* 37 (Houze, 136,11–13; Vivian, 97), where a “vat of oil” blessed by George of Choziba remained full for three weeks. See also Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 100.

<sup>6</sup> Note *Pler.* 37 (Nau and Brière, 86), as well as the ascetic influence of the deacon Basil on the young Peter in Constantinople; see *Pler.* 35 (Nau and Brière, 78).

<sup>7</sup> Notice the connection established here between the one who lives the ascetic life and the expertise he gains concerning the knowledge necessary for salvation.



suddenly saw our Lord among them in the habit of a Nazirite.<sup>2</sup> He fell down, worshiped him, [and] grasped his feet, although no one saw him but he alone. He cried out and said with weeping and tears, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>3</sup> Although he thought that those others could also see [him], they could not, and only he saw [our Lord], so that all who [were] with him [were] greatly amazed, afraid, and trembling. After they had learned of the divine vision that had appeared to him, they increased their divine zeal and their love. On account of this [event], a multitude of them renounced the world and took the habit after he had become a monk. He told us their names also: among them was the God-clad<sup>4</sup> monk Theodotus<sup>5</sup> and his brothers Proclus<sup>6</sup> and Sophronius,<sup>7</sup> of an illustrious office, [who were] architects [R 20] and stewards<sup>8</sup> of the royal estate.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, these are but a few of the many gifts of the blessed one while he had been a child and was living in the palace, [which] we have narrated in passing.

(§29) While he was growing up in age and in divine love<sup>10</sup> and was making ascents in his heart<sup>11</sup> according to the word of David, the singer of sacred [psalms], and was exchanging fire for fire, higher and clearer, he yearned to depart afar from the world and from its vanity<sup>12</sup> and to hasten to the first of virtues, which

to Theodosius II to report about the events at Ephesus. Proclus of Constantinople is known to have consecrated Theodotus's successor. See Josef Rist, "Theodotus von Ankyra," *BKKL* 11:997–99; Peter Bruns, "Theodotus of Ankyra," *DECL*, 570. We owe the pointer to Theodotus to Griffith, *marginalia*.

<sup>6</sup> This Proclus might be identical with Proclus, archbishop of Constantinople, 434–446.

<sup>7</sup> We have not been able to identify this Sophronius any further.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *ἐπιτροπος*, "procurator, steward." See also *Vit. Pet.* §166 (R 123) as well as Ignatius of Antioch, *Pol.* 8.2 (Camelot, 155; Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, 120), where "epitropus" could be a personal name or could be used as the title of the widow's husband.

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *οὐσία* here in the secondary meaning of "wealth, substance, estate, income." See Payne Smith, 7.

<sup>10</sup> See Luke 1:80, 2:40. MS B (BM 12,174) adds "... [and in] spiritual [love] and was adding continually every day to the grace of divine fire, and was placing. . ."

<sup>11</sup> Ps 84:5 (83:5 [LXX]). See also Pss 120–134 (119–133 [LXX]).

<sup>12</sup> See 2 Pet 2:20.

[illegible]

<sup>2</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ξενιτεία. MS Sachau 321 reads “foreign [fem. sing.]”; BM Add 12,174 has the better reading, which is translated above. On the centrality of the concept of pilgrimage in the ascetic spirituality of Peter the Iberian, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, ch. 4. For a study of the notion of *xeniteia*, or estrangement, in ascetic literature, see also Guillaumont, “Le dépaysement comme forme d’ascèse”; and Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 24–30.

is pilgrimage.<sup>2</sup> Although he often attempted to flee, he could not, since the devil and the demons were aware [of his attempts].<sup>3</sup> Men of his household, his slaves, I mean, the bodyguards<sup>4</sup> who escorted him, became so angered out of hatred for him that many times they secretly attempted to murder him. Had it not been for the Lord's protection [, which] alone hindered [them], they would have committed and accomplished their audacity. Moreover, the God-fearing Emperor Theodosius was anxious to keep [him] as a hostage, lest if [the child] were demanded back by his people and he [could] not present him as he had received him, he might make them foes and enemies instead of friends and allies. For this reason, [the emperor] summoned him and threatened him, and he was held in tight custody, so that he could not flee secretly.

(§30) However, there is nothing [R 21] mightier than the power of Christ and no[thing] more fervent than the love of those who love him purely. He who from his childhood had cherished him like Samuel and shepherded him like Israel and like Joseph<sup>5</sup> thus continued to lead and guard him like a sheep. He who brought his good desire for the monastic habit to fulfillment with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm,<sup>6</sup> through signs and wonders, as he once snatched Israel from the tyranny of the Egyptians and brought [them] into the Land of the Promise flowing with milk and honey,<sup>7</sup> raised up for him as helpers of his flight, as guides, as watchmen, and as companions those holy martyrs who were well served by him.<sup>8</sup> For as much as the desire for flight from the world inflamed him, demons and men, [who are] their

<sup>3</sup> The author either intends to characterize the following "men of his household, his slaves," as "demons" or to say that "the devil and the demons" perceived and made known Peter's attempts at flight to his servants, a thought more clearly expressed in the emendation adopted in MS BM Add 12,174, fol. 52 recto.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, "spear-bearers," for Greek *δορυφόροι* (Raabe, 27 n. 4).

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of these allusions to Old Testament figures, see Horn, "Beyond Theology," 247; and Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 180–181.

<sup>6</sup> See Deut 11:2; Ps 135:12.

<sup>7</sup> Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 13:27 *et alibi*.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5.



helpers,<sup>2</sup> were hindering him from this by watching vigilantly [and] with caution his coming in and his going out, his wishes and his thoughts.

(§31) [Peter had also] found the one who was given to him by God, the blessed John the Eunuch,<sup>3</sup> the sharer of his customs and his zeal, and one who was equal to him in desire for eternal life and a helper on the way that leads to it. He was by his race from the land of Lazica<sup>4</sup> [and] was adorned with all fear of God, dignity, chastity, faith, and humility.<sup>5</sup> [Peter] took him [along] with him and joined him to himself through the bond of love. As Paul [had done with] [R 22] Barnabas,<sup>6</sup> he treated him [as] an advisor and a companion in the flight of salvation. Since he knew that through the action of the demons their plans would not be hidden but would become known and be revealed by those [watching him], he took John with him to that shrine wherein the bones of the holy martyrs were deposited. While both of them leaned their heads over those bones, they talked there with one another. Once they had agreed on the time and manner of the flight, no one [else] knew nor made [it] known, neither demons nor men, until the plan came to fulfillment.

(§32) These holy martyrs took them in watches of the dead of night<sup>7</sup> through the royal city, which [was] completely [quiet].<sup>8</sup> They filled their hearts with great courage and strength, for [Peter and John] saw them as a cloud or a pillar of fire,<sup>9</sup> as I heard many times when the blessed one recounted [it] to his most in-

peoples of the Caucasus. This also seems to fit well with the author's emphasis on John the Eunuch being a "sharer of [Peter's] customs," just mentioned in the text, although this may also refer to Peter's ascetic habits.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim 6:11.

<sup>6</sup> For the close collaboration of Paul and Barnabas, see Acts 13 and 14. They finally parted ways (see Acts 15:36–41).

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac ܠܝܠܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ may translate the Greek phrase νύξ ἀκαιρος (Raabe, 28 n. 1). Raabe also referred to Zachariah's use of that expression at three instances. See Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vit. Sev.* 58 (fol. 121 recto col. 2), 71 (fol. 124 verso col. 1), and 84 (fol. 127 verso col. 1) (Kugener, 58,13, 71,12, and 84,12).

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "which [was] all of this and like this," possibly rendering a Greek expression τοσαύτη καὶ τοιαύτη (Raabe, 28 n. 2).

<sup>9</sup> See Exod 13:21.





timate friends, who also were able to profit from such accounts. They went [and] journeyed before them in the darkness to guide them. Oh the wonder! With a certain harmony<sup>1</sup> [and] in a voice that was fitting and sweet [the martyrs] were praising and singing this divine doxology,<sup>2</sup> the words of which I also [will] set down as follows: “Seek Christ, and behold the Light from Light,<sup>3</sup> the incomprehensible glory. For those who seek him, he is the rewarder of the wage.” The blessed one [always] remembered the melody of that doxology. [R 23] The holy martyrs were before them, walking ahead of them and guiding them, [and] they did not cease singing aloud<sup>4</sup> in this way until they reached the harbor.<sup>5</sup>

(§33) Knowing that they were now in watchful care, [Peter and John] confidently sought a ship. When again through the aid and the support of the martyrs they found [one], they boarded [it] immediately. They were [still] afraid they might be caught by [those] pursuing them or [that] they might be recognized in the place called “the Straits,”<sup>6</sup> because the gates and the harbors of the city were guarded for three days after their exit in search for them. So they put on other clothing that was poor and typical for slaves. By the protection of God who was going with them and guiding them, they were able not to be recognized by those [who were] sitting in “the Straits” and [who] were on the lookout for them.

(§34) From there they left the journey by sea and walked on foot.<sup>7</sup> They made their course through the mainland of Asia Minor,<sup>8</sup> the two of them alone with the holy martyrs who were their

short. For an instructive discussion of the neighborhoods of Constantinople that immediately benefited from a location at the seaside, see Paul Magdalino, “The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople: Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries,” *DOP* 54 (23): 209–26.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek Στενόν, a name used for the Straits of the Bosphorus, the waters between the harbor of Constantinople and the Black Sea. Raabe (29 n. 2) notes that the frequent limitation of this term to the European side of the Straits of the Bosphorus does not seem to have been part of Rufus’s conception.

<sup>7</sup> Peter and John seemed to have taken a night ferry over the Bosphorus.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac expression ܡܕܢܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܬܐ partially translates and partially transliterates the Greek γῆ ἡπειρος (Raabe, 29 n. 3), an expression referring to “the Continent,” understood as the mainland of Asia Minor.



guardians and companions. They carried their precious bones in a little gold reliquary,<sup>1</sup> [just] as the great<sup>2</sup> Moses [carried] the ark<sup>3</sup> of God with the cherubim.<sup>4</sup> Besides this, they carried only the little book of John the Evangelist, in which was fastened a part of the wood of the holy, precious, and saving cross, by which they were guarded. Our Lord showed many signs and not a few powerful deeds: by it he gave a quiet energy to reassure them and console them. This piece [R 24] of the cross let oil flow forth in abundance continually for a whole week on the journey, to such an extent that they would receive [it] in their hands and anoint their faces and their bodies and yet again more oil would gush forth. This is indeed what the prophet calls the “oil of gladness.”<sup>5</sup> It is the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who rejoices and exults in the power of the cross,<sup>6</sup> which these saints set out to carry. They cheerfully cleaved to the God who was crucified, while she [the Holy Spirit] increased their cheerfulness more and raised [it up] through such amazing [signs].<sup>7</sup>

(§35) She also made manifest their arrival [in towns along the way] through [the presence of] the holy martyrs. While traveling on [their] way and passing through regions, cities, and villages, completely unknown to the inhabitants of the regions and to those who traveled with them, they found in many places outside the gates and outside the entrances gatherings of children, of men, and of women with branches and torches who had come out to meet the martyrs. Sitting outside the [city] walls, [those waiting for them] asked people entering [the city], “Where are they, and who are they who bear the bones of the holy martyrs?” For they [also] said, “Yesterday some of their company arrived [to] announce and to command [us], ‘Go out to meet them!’” Thus, while they were

<sup>4</sup> Exod 25:10–22; 37:1–9

<sup>5</sup> Isa 61:3. The Syriac ܐܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ translates the Greek ἄλειμμα εὐφροσύνης (Raabe, 30 n. 2).

<sup>6</sup> See 1 Cor 1:18.

<sup>7</sup> Note that the Holy Spirit is conceived of as feminine here. The Greek original of the *Vita Petri Iberi* would have used πνεῦμα, the grammatical gender of which is neuter. For a discussion of early examples of the use of feminine language for the Holy Spirit in the Syriac tradition, see Sebastian P. Brock, “The Holy Spirit as Feminine in Early Syriac Literature,” in *After Eve: Women, Theology and the Christian Tradition* (ed. J. Martin Soskice; London: Marshall Pickering, 1990), 73–88.



greatly awestruck at the care of our Lord for them, the cheerfulness and steadfastness of their heart also increased. Easily and without trouble they traveled with courage [R 25] and joy, as people who were protected by such a hand.

(§36) A man from among those called tax-collectors,<sup>1</sup> who [was] well-known in the government, came upon them on the road. Thinking they were fugitive slaves, he sought to take them into his service and enslave [them].<sup>2</sup> Terrifying their thoughts with fear and threat, he commanded [them] to come with him. They followed him, led like foreign slaves and captives. What else could they do but to lift their eyes up to the Lord and cry out in their heart[s] and call upon their guardians, the holy martyrs? That very same night [the martyrs] attacked the [tax-collector] with many reproaches, threatening him and all his house with utter destruction if he would not let these young men go in peace as men of God who take refuge in him and hasten to him. When they had made him ready to let them go in honor, in fear and in trembling he apologized to them immediately at first dawn, falling down on his face before them. [He tried] hard [to] persuade them to stay on his land, promising to build them a monastery, to endow it with sufficient income, and to offer them every pleasure, for he was a wealthy man in that country. When they did not consent to [his suggestion], he who earlier on had been so ambitious to become their master dismissed them as though [they were his own] lords and benefactors with many honors and appeasements.<sup>3</sup>

(§37) When they were released with honor by this miracle, [R 26] they cultivated in themselves more and more the affection and love for our Lord and faith in the holy martyrs. On the whole journey in every place they were taking delight in such care and [acts of] protection and guidance from God that the word[s] of Moses applied to them, “Like the eagle who protects its nest and cherishes its nestlings, it spreads out its wings and takes them and carries them on the strength of its feathers.”<sup>4</sup> “The Lord alone led them, and there was no alien god with them.”<sup>5</sup> He encom-

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “enslave [them] to him.”

<sup>3</sup> See Exod 11:2–3; Ezra 1:6.

<sup>4</sup> Deut 32:11.

<sup>5</sup> Deut 32:12.



passed them and went before them and “guarded them like the apple of [his] eye.”<sup>1</sup> He made them sure<sup>2</sup> of their path and made them ascend to dwell in the stronghold of the Holy Land.<sup>3</sup> Rejoicing together and exulting as if it were a short trip, they made the journey from New Rome<sup>4</sup> to Jerusalem, hourly exchanging one foreign home for another and people who knew [them] not for people who knew [them] not. The love that was growing hot within them at all times [was] secretly consoling [them] in [their] weakness caused by the journey.

(§38) When they were in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, the holy city beloved to them, they saw from atop a hill about five stadia<sup>5</sup> away, like the flashing of the sunrise, the high roof of the holy and worshipful churches,<sup>6</sup> that of the saving and worshipful Cross, of the holy Anastasis,<sup>7</sup> and again of the worshipful Ascension, which [is] on the mountain opposite it.<sup>8</sup> They cried out aloud, fulfilling that prophetic word, “Behold, Zion, [R 27] the city of our salvation. Your eyes shall see Jerusalem.”<sup>9</sup> They sent up praise and thanksgiving as their strength allowed to Christ whom they loved, to him who called them, brought them out, guided them, and preserved them. They cast themselves upon their faces [and] did not cease worshiping from on that height. Crawling

either as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher or the Church of the Resurrection. The latter name appears to be more commonly known in Eastern Christian communities, while Western Christians tend to use the first.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., on the Mount of Olives. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.43 (Schwartz and Mommsen, 2:101–2; Richardson, 1:530–31), commented on how Constantine’s mother, Queen Helena, was responsible for the erection of the Church of the Ascension over a cave that was believed to be a site where Jesus taught his disciples. The pilgrim Egeria saw that building and is a witness to the name “Eleona Church” for it, nowadays known as the Church of the Pater Noster. See, e.g., Egeria, *Diary* 30.2; 35.4 (Franceschini and Weber, 77 and 79; Gingras, 104 and 108). The place from which the Lord ascended into heaven was marked by the so-called Imbomon or Inbomon, which was erected as a church before 378 c.e. by the wealthy Roman lady Poemenia (see *Vit. Pet.* §43 [R 30]). When Rufus speaks of the Church of the Ascension, he does not have in mind the building erected by Queen Helena that was ultimately destroyed by the Persians in 610, but rather Poemenia’s foundation.

<sup>9</sup> Isa 33:20.





on their knees, they greeted continuously with their lips and with their eyes this holy land with full assurance<sup>2</sup> of the love that was kindled in them until they were inside the holy walls and embraced the foot<sup>3</sup> of the venerable cross. (I am speaking of the holy Golgotha and the holy Anastasis.) They were rejoicing and weeping and confessing and praising and exulting, like people who already had received Jesus,<sup>4</sup> whom they loved, and who henceforth were dwelling with him in heaven.<sup>5</sup>

(§39) To cut [my] word[s] short, leaving out many [things], God, who guarded and preserved them because they were strangers and inexperienced in these holy places, led them to good hosts of pilgrims, to teachers, and to helpers of their holy desire. He prepared for them beforehand a good hostess. I refer to the blessed Melania,<sup>6</sup> that Roman [lady] who with Pinianus her husband and with Albina her mother held first rank in the Senate of Rome,<sup>7</sup> in family, wealth, glory, and all the rest of splendor, even so that they had a link to the imperial family. Since they loved Christ with true affection and valued him more than [R 28] anything, they also laid up for themselves the wealth that stays and always remains, instead of that which flows [away], is snatched away, is corrupted, and corrupts.<sup>8</sup> Despising all these [things], they adhered to him, stripping off the world completely. The greater part, indeed, of the things they had that were easy [to divide], they distributed [as alms] to the poor and needy everywhere in the empire of the Romans and

to Christ. Here their experience is compared to that of those entering paradise and thus constitutes a good example of realized eschatology.

<sup>5</sup> One catches a glimpse here of one of the possible interpretations of Jerusalem as a prefiguration of heaven.

<sup>6</sup> Melania was born around 382 C.E. The daughter of Publicola, Melania fled with her husband Pinianus from Italy before the Vandals invaded it in 410, and lived for several years in Thagaste, North Africa. From there she withdrew to Jerusalem in 417, where she died in 439. On Melania, see the biography by her protégé Abbot Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Junioris* (Gorce). For an English translation, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (New York: Mellen, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> See also Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 17 (fol. 111 recto col. 2; Kugener, 17,3).

<sup>8</sup> 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Tim 3:2; Matt 6:24; Luke 16:9–13; see also Heb 13:5.

<sup>1</sup> On the phenomenal wealth that Melania and her husband possessed, see Gerontius, *Vit. Mel.* 15–19 (Gorce, 156–66; Clark, 38–43); see also José M. Blazquez, “Las posesiones de Melania la Joven,” in *Historiam Pictura Refert: Miscellanea in onore di Padre Alejandro Recio Veganzones, OFM* (ed. Josep Martí-i-Aixala, Eugenio Alliata, and Fabrizio Bisconti; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Archeologia Cristiana, 1994), 67–80.

<sup>3</sup> An important reference documenting the existence of double monasteries in the early church. For a recent study of the development of such double monasteries, see Daniel F. Stramara, "Double Monasticism in the Greek East, Fourth through Eighth Centuries," *JECs* 6 (1998): 269–312.

in the holy churches and in the monasteries as well.<sup>1</sup> They left everything else behind and reckoned [it] as dung,<sup>2</sup> [and] girding themselves lovingly with the cross of our Lord, they came to the Holy City to adore it. When they had come and [since they] loved dwelling there, they established two large and populous [monastic] dwellings, one for men, one for women,<sup>3</sup> on the holy Mount of Olives by the side of the holy Ascension.<sup>4</sup> For both they set up an endowment for the glory<sup>5</sup> and praise of God and for the reception and salvation of the souls of those many who go there for their salvation.<sup>6</sup> Dwelling in them in quiet, they were fighting the good fight<sup>7</sup> in complete self-denial, quietness, Naziriteship,<sup>8</sup> and humility, making themselves poor in [their monastic] habit as well. For even their clothing was from crushed straw, humble and worthless. And keeping<sup>9</sup> the approved yoke of the crucifixion with Christ,<sup>10</sup> they were achieving daily from their hands' work the nourishment of the body's weakness: Pinianus would carry sticks on his shoulders from the far desert and would sell [them] in the

<sup>4</sup> The monasteries were located between Poemenia's Church of the Ascension and the Eleona Church. Melania the Elder already had built a monastery in Jerusalem in 379. See Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 46.5 (Butler, 2:135; Meyer, 124).

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac text uses ܐܒܝܕܐ as abbreviation for ܐܒܝܕܐܐܒܝܕܐ.

<sup>6</sup> Note how the monastic life is here understood as one of the significant ways of obtaining salvation.

<sup>7</sup> See 2 Tim 4:7.

<sup>8</sup> See also *Vit. Pet.* §§21, 28, 50, 69, 138 (R 13, 19, 33, 47, 102).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac ܐܝܬܐ may translate the Greek *φύλασσοντες* (Raabe, 33 n. 6).

<sup>10</sup> See Matt 11:29–30.



market without shame; the blessed [Melania] [R 29] labored in the work of wool<sup>1</sup> and from this supplied the humble need of her sustenance.<sup>2</sup> The rest she distributed to the needy.<sup>3</sup>

(§40) When [Melania] heard of the arrival of the holy youths Peter and John in Jerusalem—at that time they were [still] called Nabarnugios and Mithridatos<sup>4</sup> in the languages of their countries<sup>5</sup>—and learned who they were and from where [they came], she received them joyfully. She remembered that she once went to the royal city of Constantine [and] had seen the blessed Peter there,<sup>6</sup> when he was still a little boy, being brought up like a king. She loved him much, for she saw that the grace of Christ was upon him from his youth. For from his childhood he was, as I have said, dear to God.<sup>7</sup>

(§41) The occasion of the blessed Melania's coming to the royal city was as follows. To the God-fearing Emperor Theodosius came a man from the nobles of Rome who had been sent by Emperor Valentinian<sup>8</sup> to espouse to him the daughter of the blessed Theodosius.<sup>9</sup> [The man] was a family member of the holy Melania, and he had not yet taken part in the grace of the Chris-

of ascetics who avoided manual labor, see, e.g., Augustine, *De opere monachorum* (Zycha, 5.3:529–96; Muldowney, 323–94). See also the comments in Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 22–24, 117–20, and several other passages (see index “manual labor”). For a voice from the East, see Gregory of Nyssa, *De pauperibus amandis* (van Heck).

<sup>4</sup> The name is related to that of Mithra, the Persian god of light.

<sup>5</sup> See also *Vit. Pet.* §§5, 14 (R 4, 9).

<sup>6</sup> This took place in 424 or 437 C.E.

<sup>7</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §30 (R 21).

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Emperor Valentinian III (425–455). Born in 419 as the son of Constantius III and Galla Placidia, Valentinian became emperor in 425, yet for many years his mother effectively ran the affairs of the empire in his stead.

<sup>9</sup> The young princess's name was Licinia Eudocia. Some speculate that at the time of the visit of the Roman noble man she was just two years old, having been born in 422. Thus the visitor effectively only arranged for the engagement of the couple. It seems more reasonable, however, to assume that Melania visited Constantinople in the year in which the actual marriage took place. The wedding ceremony occurred on 29 October 437. Rufus may have conflated the two events: the visit for the purpose of converting Valentinian's messenger, and the visit at the occasion of the wedding. See also Gerontius, *Vit. Mel.* 50–56 (Gorce, 224–39; Clark, 64–69).



tians.<sup>2</sup> He yearned to see the blessed Melania and promised to become a Christian if he met her and heard from her the word of salvation. So the Christ-loving emperor sent [for her], as I have said. He persuaded the blessed [lady] to come to the royal **[R 30]** city for the sake of the salvation of a soul. When she had come and through the divine grace dwelling in her had made him a believer and a complete Christian,<sup>3</sup> she edified many others and enkindled [them] to the divine way of life similar to her own. Having further aroused the desire of the blessed Peter toward her zeal, she returned again to the Holy City, taking up her former way of life and her asceticism.

(§42) There was another Melania in Jerusalem, also from the nobles of the Romans, who also had renounced the world and taken the [monastic] habit. It should be known that this [Melania], indeed, was the earlier one,<sup>4</sup> while ours who received the saints [was] the latter.

(§43) Before these two was another [woman], famous by lineage and wealth, of great modesty and God-fearing, whose name [was] Poemenia,<sup>5</sup> who loved to dwell in the holy and worshipful places, so that by her ways of life and by her love those who were named [above] were made zealous.<sup>6</sup> It was she who built the Church of the Holy Ascension and surrounded [it with] build-

Through her close friendship with Rufinus of Aquileia, she eventually incurred Jerome's wrath in the course of the Origenist controversy.

<sup>5</sup> On Poemenia, see Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 35.14 (Butler, 2:106; Meyer, 103); Emile Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte Chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup>, V<sup>e</sup>, VI<sup>e</sup> et VII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (2 vols.; MMAF 4.1–2; Paris: Leroux, 1888–95), 2:650–65 (“Vie de Jean de Lycopolis”), here 664–65. Paul Devos (“La ‘Servante de Dieu’ Poemenia d’après Pallade, la tradition Copte et Jean Rufus,” *AnBoll* 87 [1969]: 189–208) established, among other things, that the Poemenia featured in the *Life of John of Lycopolis* is the same as the one in the works of John Rufus. See also E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 47, 76–78, 160–63; and J. R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2: *AD 395–527* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 894–95.

<sup>6</sup> According to Rufus, Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger desired to imitate the intensively ascetic and pilgrim way of life of Poemenia.





ings.<sup>1</sup> She demolished the idol<sup>2</sup> that was on the mountain called Gerizim,<sup>3</sup> in Samaria, which was still standing and until that time was worshiped by the inhabitants of that region.<sup>4</sup>

(§44) The later Melania,<sup>5</sup> the wife of Pinianus and the daughter of Albina,<sup>6</sup> was the one who received these saints with joy like beloved sons.<sup>7</sup> For having been received by her, there they were also conferred with honor through the examples of the ascetic ways of life in the men's monastery. At the same time they were esteemed worthy of the habit of the solitary life [R 31] from the holy hands of the holy and famous Gerontius, who was the priest and archimandrite<sup>8</sup> of the holy Mount of Olives.<sup>9</sup>

(§45) This Gerontius, who was famous in his reputation and by family a Jerusalemite, while still a child was accepted for the service of watchman by the holy Melania and her husband. When he had grown up with them in a manner holy and pleasing to God, he appeared to them worthy to partake of the sacred habit of monasticism, as one whose way of life and manner are suitable for it. The two of them alone took him to the Holy Sepulcher of our Savior and placed the garments of the [monastic] habit on the holy

installed, one as the archimandrite of the cenobitic monks, one as the archimandrite of the anchoritic monks. According to Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Euth.* 27 (Schwartz, 42,10–15; Price, 38) Gerontius and Elpidius, the successors of Passarion, were the archimandrites of the Palestinian monks at the time of Theodosius of Jerusalem. Eventually Gerontius was replaced as head of the cenobitic monks of the Holy City. See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Theod.* 4 (Schwartz, 239,4–6; Price, 265). See also David J. Melling, "Archimandrite," *BDEC*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> On the importance of Gerontius as the one who initiated Peter and John the Eunuch into the ascetic life, see below *Vit. Pet.* §48 (R 32); on his exemplary fasting, see *Pler.* 41. Gerontius was one of the few staunch anti-Chalcedonians who did not reconcile with Juvenal of Jerusalem when he violently reclaimed the bishop's throne of the Holy City from Theodosius in 452 C.E. For the Chalcedonian evaluation of Gerontius, see the following *vitae* by Cyril of Scythopolis: *Vit. Euth.* 27, 30, 43, 45 (Schwartz, 42,13–14, 49,8–10, 62,19–63.2, 67,14–17; Price, 38, 46, 59, and 64); *Vit. Sab.* 30, 38 (Schwartz, 115,2–3, 127,19; Price, 124, 136); *Vit. Theod.* 4 (Schwartz, 239,6; Price, 265). Some discussion of his role can be found in Lorenzo Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche: Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (TRSR 18; Brescia: Paideia, 1980), 112–13. Gerontius is also the likely author of the *Life of Melania the Younger*.



rock.<sup>2</sup> They clothed him as from the hands of our Lord, while they asked<sup>3</sup> that there would be bestowed upon him together with the sacred garment these three [gifts]: right faith, holiness, and tears.

(§46) He was esteemed worthy of these three, and especially of the grace of tears. When he had been appointed simultaneously as priest and as abbot of the holy Mount of Olives and of the monasteries on it, often he would celebrate three gatherings of the divine service in a single day, and especially on the holy Sunday: one on the holy mountain, and one in the monastery for men, and again one in the monastery for women. On the remaining days, he celebrated daily a gathering and a private service for the blessed Melania according to the custom of the Church of Rome.<sup>4</sup> In each liturgy, when he had begun [R 32] the holy service, he shed tears ceaselessly until the end with grief and anguish of heart such that no one of those assembled could control himself, while all [the members of] the congregation were in penitence and empassioned with gasping and groans<sup>5</sup> were shedding tears like him.<sup>6</sup>

(§47) Therefore it was fitting that having been deemed worthy of such a grace he should show a worthy end. For he came to be perfected<sup>7</sup> in the time of the rebellion, of the transgression<sup>8</sup> of the Council of Chalcedon, during which he showed martyr-like zeal,<sup>9</sup> having been placed in chains, imprisoned, and having stood before judges, thus weaving the crown of confessorship. Although he

<sup>6</sup> Tears are understood as a sign of repentance. The centrality of *penthos*, or “contrition” and “repentance,” in Eastern Christian spirituality and asceticism has been studied by Irénée Hausherr, *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East* (trans. Anselm Hufstader; CSS 53; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1982). See also Barbara Müller, “Die Tränen der Wüstenväter: Das Penthos in den *Apophthegmata Patrum*,” *OS* 46 (1997): 281–313; and Francis Leduc, “Penthos et larmes dans l’œuvre de saint Jean Chrysostome,” *POC* 41 (1991): 220–57.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., he completed his life.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac ܠܝܬܬܐܝܬܐ may translate the Greek παράβασις or παρανομία (Raabe, 36 n. 2).

<sup>9</sup> For the centrality of the image of “martyr” for anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine in their assessment of their situation, see Horn, “Weaving the Pilgrim’s Crown.”



often was urged by rulers and by many illustrious persons<sup>1</sup> to consent merely to speak with Juvenal the apostate<sup>2</sup> even if he would not communicate with him,<sup>3</sup> and [so] be relieved from [his] distress, he never once consented, but said, "The Lord forbid that I should see the face of Judas the betrayer!"<sup>4</sup>

(§48) [Gerontius's] hands gave the [monastic] habit to our fathers, Peter and John, and he gave them these names in exchange for the names which had been chosen for them by their [own] countries.<sup>5</sup>

(§49) Now [in the place] where they were dwelling in quiet, setting a pattern<sup>6</sup> of the utmost height of asceticism in that monastery for men, as I have said before, in which this Gerontius was abbot,<sup>7</sup> there they laid down the precious bones of these holy martyrs, their good guides and companions,<sup>8</sup> alongside the bones of the famous forty [R 33] martyrs of Sebaste,<sup>9</sup> while the holy and

<sup>4</sup> A reference to Judas Iscariot, the disciple of Jesus who betrayed him. See Matt 26:14–16, 21–25, 45–50; 27:3–10; Mark 14:10, 17–21, 43–46; Luke 22:3–6, 21–23, 47–48; John 13:2, 18, 21–30; 18:2–5; Acts 1:16–20, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Nabarnugios was named Peter and Mithridatos was named John, known as John the Eunuch. See above, *Vit. Pet.* §§5, 14, 40 (R 4, 9, 29). See also below, *Vit. Pet.* §118 (R 86).

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac may translate the Greek τυποῦν or ὑποτυποῦν (Raabe, 37 n. 1).

<sup>7</sup> See above *Vit. Pet.* §§39, 44 (R 28, 31).

<sup>8</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §§26–27, 30, 31, 32, 33 ("the holy martyrs who were their guardians and companions"), 35, 36 (R 17–19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25).

<sup>9</sup> See *BHO* 712–17; *BHG* 1201–8n. These martyrs are said to have been executed in Sebaste, Armenia, under Licinius (308–324 c.e.), co-emperor with Constantine and responsible for the eastern Roman Empire before his defeat. Brief accounts and eulogies are presented in Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 9.2 (PG 67:1597–1601; Bidez and Hansen, 392–94; Hartranft, *NPNF* 2/2:420–21); Basil of Caesarea, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses* (PG 31:508–25); and Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres* 1 and 2 (PG 46:749–88; Lendle, 137–42, 145–56, 159–69). See also the text and English translation of the so-called *Testament of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* in Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 354–61. See also Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, "Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia," *ODB* 2:799–800.

<sup>1</sup> Cyril was bishop of Alexandria from 412 to 444. One of the most influential theologians and ecclesiastical politicians of the early church, Cyril was instrumental in the condemnation of Nestorius of Constantinople at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The literature on Cyril is vast. See, e.g., McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*; and, more recently, Thomas G. Weinandy and Daniel A. Keating, eds., *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἐγκαινία (Raabe, 37 n. 4), describing a festival of dedication or consecration.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to the Church of St. Stephen's, located just outside the Old City of Jerusalem, to the north of the Damascus Gate, which until the fourteenth century was known as St. Stephen's Gate. See Klaus Bieberstein and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem: Grundzüge der Baugeschichte vom Chalkolithikum bis zur Frühzeit der osmanischen Herrschaft* (3 vols.; BTAVO B/100.1–3; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1994), 2:231–36, who also conveniently list relevant archaeological literature. According to tradition, the priest Lucian discovered the relics of St. Stephen in Kefar Gamala in 415. Subsequently, the

blessed Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria, served [the liturgy at] their deposition.<sup>1</sup> For when [Cyril] was persuaded by the believing and orthodox Empress Eudocia to come for the deposition of the precious bones of the glorious and all-praised Stephen, the first of the martyrs and the first of the deacons,<sup>2</sup> and to conduct the consecration<sup>3</sup> of the beautiful temple that she had built outside the northern gates of the Holy City,<sup>4</sup> he gladly accepted the invitation.<sup>5</sup> He came with a multitude of bishops from all of Egypt and magnificently conducted the deposition of the holy bones of the first of the martyrs on the fifteenth of the month of Iyor.<sup>6</sup> Immediately afterwards, on the sixteenth of that month, persuaded by the holy Melania, he also conducted the deposition of the holy Persian martyrs and of the forty martyrs with them on the Mount

precious find was transferred to the Church of Sion in Jerusalem. Eventually a Church of St. Stephen's was erected, to which relics of the saint were transferred. See now also Paul Devos, "L'année de la dédicace de Saint-Étienne à Jérusalem: 439," *AnBoll* 105 (1987): 265–79. Empress Eudocia herself was buried on the grounds of the Church of St. Stephen's. The original buildings sponsored by Eudocia were destroyed most likely in the course of the violence under Caliph Hārūn ar-Rašīd between 809 and 813 c.e. Today's church and monastery complex, used by the Dominican Fathers, also house the famous École Biblique Française.

<sup>5</sup> For a study of Cyril's direct contact with Palestine, see F. M. Abel, "Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie dans ses rapports avec la Palestine," in *Kyrrilliana: Spicilegia edita Sancti Cyrilli Alexandrini XV recurrente saeculo: Études variées à l'occasion du XV<sup>e</sup> centenaire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie (444–1944)* (Cairo: Editions du Scribe Egyptien S.A.E., 1947), 203–30.

<sup>6</sup> By the fifth century, Iyor corresponds exactly with the Julian calendar May. Thus the deposition took place on 15 May. Raabe (37 n. 5) discusses the seemingly conflicting events of both Eudocia's and Melania's presence in the Holy City at the same time for the events recounted. Also see the discussion in Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian."





of Olives in the venerable temple that was furnished splendidly by Empress Eudocia herself, as the inscription incised on the wall there declares.<sup>1</sup>

(§50) But let us return to what we set out to do.<sup>2</sup> Our common father had been deemed worthy of the holy [monastic] habit,<sup>3</sup> having already at that very time passed beyond the age of twenty years,<sup>4</sup> and with his fellow-soldier<sup>5</sup> John was henceforth dwelling there in quiet and displaying a way of life appropriate to his [monastic] habit. Carrying himself like a Nazirite in great asceticism,<sup>6</sup> he subdued and subjected to severity the bridle of the flesh, which has a tendency [to give] offense<sup>7</sup> and which stands against [R 34] the spirit,<sup>8</sup> and [also] his rebellious will, that enemy of God,<sup>9</sup> which also cannot subject itself to the law of God.<sup>10</sup> Through hunger and through thirst and through a bed on the ground and through vigil, and through these harsh ways of life, he extended all this [effort] toward asceticism until he inflicted severe pain to the commotion of the impulses of [his] youth and quenched the flame of the passions.<sup>11</sup> Then with ease he was devoting [himself] to be reconciled to the spirit,<sup>12</sup> to be engaged

through his impressive account of Gerontius's initiation into the monastic life, which, it is to be understood, carried on into the asceticism of the two young men.

<sup>4</sup> Rufus's emphasis on Peter's age suggests a concern for a minimum age for monastic initiation.

<sup>5</sup> For other instances of the use of the image of the soldier in descriptions of ascetics, see also *Life of Rabbula* (Overbeck, 159; Horn and Phenix, forthcoming in SBLWGRW).

<sup>6</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §39 (R 28), for other references to this form of asceticism within this text.

<sup>7</sup> Jas 3:2.

<sup>8</sup> Gal 5:17.

<sup>9</sup> Rom 8:7a.

<sup>10</sup> Rom 8:7b.

<sup>11</sup> See Eph 6:16; Prov 24:20. One of the most influential early Christian texts detailing the working of the passions and providing advice on how to fight them is Evagrius of Pontus, *Praktikos*.

<sup>12</sup> See 2 Cor 5:20.



in contemplation,<sup>1</sup> and to have dominion over the flesh. Yet he would rather bring the two of them [flesh and spirit] into one harmony, when he enclosed that great strength and the beauty of the body in dried-up skin and bones, so that he who before was very healthy and was very radiant in the majesty of [his] body would already be crookbacked [and] bowed down from the multitude of contemptible things [he endured] and from great asceticism.<sup>2</sup>

(§51) How many wrestling matches and how many contests and how many temptations he endured, ceaselessly fighting against the devil and against his demons,<sup>3</sup> the spirits of evil, by night and by day,<sup>4</sup> not only in dreams and in imagination<sup>5</sup> but, as it is said, hand to hand and personally,<sup>6</sup> continually moving [from one place to another until he finally] came to the desert of John the Forerunner,<sup>7</sup> who was the first chief and teacher of such an evangelical way of life<sup>8</sup>—I mean, however, that [desert] that extends<sup>9</sup> to the Jordan.<sup>10</sup> There he led his way of life, conversing with God alone<sup>11</sup> and manfully conducting the contest<sup>12</sup> [R 35] of virtue with [ever] greater diligence. Of what help and consolation from God he was deemed worthy lies neither with the weakness of

John the Baptist was seen as one of the ideal models of the ascetic life. See, e.g., for the Syriac ascetic tradition, Shafiq AbouZayd, *Ihidayutha: A Study of the Life of Singleness in the Syrian Orient: From Ignatius of Antioch to Chalcedon 451 A.D.* (Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1993), 126–27, as well as the depiction on the title page. A fuller study of John the Baptist as a model for ascetics in early Christianity is a *desideratum*.

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek διέτριβε (Raabe, 38 n. 5).

<sup>10</sup> The *Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian* lays greater emphasis on the time Peter spent in the Judean Desert. For references, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 203. For another occasion when Peter visited the Judean Desert, see *Vit. Pet.* §19 (R 12). When Peter went on his pilgrimage to Mount Nebo during his early years in Jerusalem as well as when he went to visit that site again, he probably also traveled through the Judean Desert. See *Vit. Pet.* §118 (R 85).

<sup>11</sup> Literally, “only with God alone.” Note the emphasis on solitude. Also at other instances Rufus portrays Peter as showing a preference for withdrawing from contact with fellow humans and enjoying the solitary life possible in asceticism. See, e.g., *Pler.* 2, 10, and 56.

<sup>12</sup> Note again the emphasis on the Pauline language of athletic competition.



our word to describe [it] nor [in] the measure of time [available to the audience to] receive it. Although I am therefore leaving aside many things, I think it is necessary to set down something especially worthy of remembrance and of narration that happened to him at the beginning when he received the [monastic] habit, as an example of what is omitted for the profit of those who are listening.<sup>1</sup>

(§52) The blessed Passarion,<sup>2</sup> that great lover of the poor and lover of strangers, besides his other godly virtues and righteous acts, built a house for the poor outside the eastern gates of the city for the rest and consolation of those whose bodies were wretchedly afflicted by weakness. He also erected inside the [city] walls of holy Zion a great and comely monastery<sup>3</sup> for the service and for the chanting [of psalms] of those who continuously without ceasing are praising the Lord.<sup>4</sup> When [Peter] saw this [foundation of Passarion's], he longed to become an imitator of this good thing. He made up his mind that with the help of the Lord he would build a house<sup>5</sup> and would there establish a certain number of holy monks to praise the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

(§53) However, before he could begin with the work he be-

<sup>4</sup> Such emphasis on uninterrupted praise and worship of God that even continues throughout the night is best known in connection with the monastery of the so-called Akoimetai, or "Sleepless Ones," in Constantinople. Yet Jerusalem had its own group of zealously dedicated worshipers, known as Spoudaioi, literally, "the Zealous Ones." According to Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Theod.* 1 (Schwartz, 236,13; Price, 262), already during the reign of Emperor Marcian the young Theodosius was able to join a group of Spoudaioi who had a monastery near the Tower of David. For further evidence and studies, see S. Pétridès, "Le Monastère des Spoudaei à Jérusalem et les Spoudaei de Constantinople," *EO* 4 (1900–1901): 225–31. For a discussion of the related group of the Philoponoï in Egypt and Beirut, see idem, "Spoudaei et Philopones," *EO* 7 (1904): 341–48; and Siméon Vailhé, "Les Philopones d'Oxyrhynque au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *EO* 14 (1911), 277–278.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., a church.

<sup>6</sup> This emphasis on a desire to "praise the Lord" suggests a connection between Peter's monastery and the spirituality practiced among the Spoudaioi, and even Philoponoï.



came weak, falling into an obstinate illness.<sup>1</sup> While he was lying severely [stricken], he saw the devil standing opposite him, [who] openly mocked and reviled [him] and said, “Behold, see what he has done to you, he whom you love! See where he has placed you, he to whom you were joined and for whose sake you have left everything!”<sup>2</sup> Speak any word against him right now and be free!”<sup>3</sup> But while [Peter] breathed<sup>4</sup> at him and was greatly agitated [R 36] as one who many times had experience of [the devil’s] shamelessness, he said to him, “You are speaking about my Jesus,<sup>5</sup> [you] defiled and shameless dog,<sup>6</sup> contending against God<sup>7</sup> and being a blasphemer! You advise me to do your work! May the power of Christ bring you to nought!” As soon as the Evil One heard the name of Christ, he was dissolved like smoke and disappeared.<sup>8</sup> After this Peter began to weep and with bitter tears and groans to call out to the Lord, who immediately appeared to him as it is written, “‘While you are still speaking,’ he is saying, ‘behold, I am near.’”<sup>9</sup> He said to him, “What is [wrong] with you? Why are you weary, [you] discouraged [one]? Do you not know that I have the power over life and death<sup>10</sup> and [that] it is in my hands whether you live or die? If you are grieved because I did not grant that you should fulfill your vow and the covenant that you promised, to build me a temple as you desired [to do] before, lift up your eyes and see!” He looked up as though to heaven [and] saw a church, beautiful and magnificent, full of light and glory. Standing in it as in a row, not openly in choirs, were men, about fifty in num-

name Jesus, Rufus here portrays Peter as a young man who has reached an intimate level of personal relationship with Christ.

<sup>6</sup> In Semitic cultural settings, dogs are customarily regarded as filthy and dirty animals.

<sup>7</sup> Here Peter realizes the essence of Satan as that of the one who does not obey God’s will but speaks out against God.

<sup>8</sup> Hausherr (*The Name of Jesus*, 99) quotes from this section of the *Vita Petri Iberi* as an instance of effective prayer addressed to Jesus Christ. See also *Pler.* 43, where Miqa likewise relies on the power of the name of Christ. See also *Vit. Pet.* §17 (R 11).

<sup>9</sup> See Isa 58:9. See also *Vit. Pet.* §124 (R 92), where the same verse is used again.

<sup>10</sup> With this comment Christ emphasizes his divine power.





ber, serving and chanting [psalms].<sup>1</sup> A voice [came] to him saying, “Here is the church that you promised to build me!”<sup>2</sup> Here are those who chant [psalms]! So then, do not be grieved!” When he had said these [things], the Lord departed from him. Worshiping and being joyous, he was again filled more and more with power, cheerfulness, and faith.<sup>3</sup> Since he was fully assured<sup>4</sup> by this vision, [R 37] he arranged that those brothers with him should stand and chant [psalms] in like manner, ordered in rows.<sup>5</sup> By his prayers this order<sup>6</sup> has remained and is kept by his brethren until today.<sup>7</sup>

(§54) Yet it is necessary to return to the rest of the story and, employing as few words as possible, to turn and take up again from where we left off.<sup>8</sup> For we recall that we promised by the help of God to teach how he moved [his] dwelling place from Jerusalem and came to live in the region of the city of Gaza, which is at

context Rufus effectively portrays Peter as featuring and thus modeling a type of spirituality that shares significant elements with forms of worship practiced in more modern Pentecostal and charismatic movements. That this does not have to turn into dissolute behavior is fittingly stressed by references to order.

<sup>4</sup> Note that the Syriac transliterates *πληροφορηθῆναι*. The frequent use of forms of *πληροφορία* and its derivatives in both the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae* could be a further indicator of the common authorship of the different works by John Rufus, a point that is not weakened by the fact that we have access to the works only in Syriac translation, no longer in the original Greek, since it is not unlikely that the Syriac continuously transliterates the Greek vocabulary in these instances.

<sup>5</sup> The second *ⲕⲓⲛⲟ* is attested in both manuscripts. The “row” may refer to the order in which the monks lined up in rows.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates here as in the previous sentence the Greek *τάξις* and forms thereof.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., the time of Rufus’s composition of the *Vita Petri Iberi*. The description is a good example of an aetiology.

<sup>8</sup> The author had not really indicated such intentions in writing further above. For similar comments that connect individual narrative portions of the text with one another, see also *Vit. Pet.* §50 (R 33).



the seashore,<sup>2</sup> how he was esteemed worthy of the priesthood and eventually of the high priesthood<sup>3</sup> by the election of divine grace.

(§55) Jerusalem, the Holy City, the city of the Great King, in which the mystery of the salvation of the whole earth was wrought by the manifestation<sup>4</sup> of our God and Savior, Christ, having of old been utterly destroyed by the Romans,<sup>5</sup> after the effrontery of the Jews against Christ, according to the predictions of all the prophets and according to the sentence of Christ himself,<sup>6</sup> was finally built up anew and was [re]inhabited more fully in the times of Constantine, the Christ-loving and believing emperor, the father and patriarch of all the Christian kings, who in truth was chosen [as a] new David and by his God-fearing mother the blessed Helena who was equal to him in zeal and [who was] indeed his true mother.<sup>7</sup>

(§56) This God-loving queen, confirmed in the fervent faith of the fear of God and in divine [R 38] zeal and having her son [as] helper and sharer in [her] zeal, did not neglect to come in person

stroyed in 132–135. Sources earlier than John Rufus, particularly Cassius Dio, do not state that the anti-Roman forces destroyed the city, which was under Roman control. Moreover, there is no archaeological or numismatic evidence to support this assertion. The Bar Kokhba letters do not provide clear evidence to resolve this ambiguity. The only unequivocal statements on the fate of Jerusalem come from Christian sources in late antiquity, during or after the reign of Constantine. The Christian polemic concerning the “Christian” settlement of Jerusalem, and therefore the exclusive right of Christians to colonize the city, sharply increased during and after the reign of Emperor Julian (361–363), who attempted to rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. John Rufus’s remarks in this passage are quite consistent with this post-Constantinian Christian understanding of the destruction of Jerusalem as an act of supersession, granting the right of habitation of the city to Christians exclusively. See Brian W. Jones, “Hadrian,” *ABD* 3:17–18.

<sup>6</sup> See Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21:5–6.

<sup>7</sup> Helena, probably a native of Drepanum, a town later renamed Helenopolis in her honor, was the concubine of Constantius Chlorus, who divorced her after becoming Caesar in 292 c.e., in order to marry, for political reasons, the step-daughter of Augustus Maximian, Theodora. The *Vita Petri Iberi* here reflects traces of an ancient discussion concerning Constantine’s legitimacy and Helena’s moral character.



to the holy places of Christ.<sup>1</sup> First she searched for and by divine help found the saving wood of the precious cross<sup>2</sup> and set it up for worship and for healing of soul and body for all the world,<sup>3</sup> for whose sake he had been nailed [to it]. She later erected great and God-befitting churches for our Lord<sup>4</sup> and beautiful shrines over the divine tomb of our Lord, at the holy place of the Skull, the worshipful Golgotha,<sup>5</sup> which is the true holy of holies and the true altar, from of old by a mystic symbol<sup>6</sup> announced and prefigured by the prophet Moses, constructed by nature from rocks, uncut and unhewn.<sup>7</sup> For what other [altar] is like this [one], except this altar alone?<sup>8</sup> It is truly the altar of the indivisible Christ, accepting neither cutting nor division, upon which the true Lamb of God was slain and offered up,<sup>9</sup> who bears the sin of the world.<sup>10</sup>

(§57) Because our account has come to this point and we have made mention of the worshipful cross, I think it is right that I place into the account and bring forward publicly a certain mystic symbol,<sup>11</sup> a great and awesome wonder that because of the blessed one's divine power occurred in his presence for the glory of God,

the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, at *Vit. Const.* 3.42 (Schwartz and Mommensen, 2:101; Richardson, 1:530) it becomes clear that Helena was at least equally involved in it, even giving the initial impetus for it.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac translator here has in mind the concept of ܡܝܣܬܪܝܐ, "mystery" or "symbol," which comprises the notions of both ܡܝܣܬܪܝܐ and ܫܡܝܠܝܐ. For discussion of the Syriac concept, see Edmund Beck, "Symbolum-Mysterium bei Aphrahat und Ephräm," *OrChr* 42 (1958): 19–40; Robert Murray, "The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology," *ParOr* 6 (1975): 1–20.

<sup>7</sup> See Exod 20:25; Deut 27:5–6.

<sup>8</sup> Not challenging the uniqueness of the present site, also note the text's emphasis on the altar consecrated by St. Mark at *Vit. Pet.* §61, 62 (R 43, 44).

<sup>9</sup> Early Christian biblical interpretation customarily sees Christ's sacrifice on the cross prefigured in the lamb whose slaughter was connected with the celebration of Passover. See Exod 12:3–13; John 1:36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19; and Rev 4:1–5:14; 7:14.

<sup>10</sup> On the relevance of this passage in the context of the Chalcedonian/anti-Chalcedonian struggle over the holy places, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 352–53 *et passim*.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac text again employs the concept of ܡܝܣܬܪܝܐ.



for the assurance of the hope of the Christians,<sup>1</sup> and for the support and the stability of our faith.<sup>2</sup> To this event the blessed one, this trustworthy son of truth, our father, [R 39] was a witness and [moreover] an eyewitness. He told [it] many times to many,<sup>3</sup> being obedient to the prophet who says, “Show forth among the peoples his great deeds and tell all his wonders and glory in his holy name: bring to remembrance his amazing deeds that he has done!”<sup>4</sup> When he was still a little boy being raised in the palace<sup>5</sup> of the blessed Emperor Theodosius,<sup>6</sup> he managed to receive a particle of the cross from the clergy who, according to custom, used to come from Jerusalem in the emperor’s honor to bring him “blessings.”<sup>7</sup> He covered it in a [little bit of] wax,<sup>8</sup> which he wrapped up in a clean cloth<sup>9</sup> to keep it secure and with honor, and placed it in a golden box.<sup>10</sup> Every Sunday, and especially on solemn feasts, he would take it out, and, having blessed himself with it and kissed it, he would return it again to its place.

(§58) Once on one of the days when he did this, when he had fallen on his face, had kissed it, and had blessed himself, he called a man from among those chamberlains<sup>11</sup> who were with him, one whom he thought more trustworthy and on more familiar [terms] than the rest [and] who at that time was alone with him. [Peter] urged him to worship [the particle of the cross] and be blessed [by it]. Yet when he approached and came to touch his lips to<sup>12</sup> the holy particle and be blessed, although as I said before, it was

Today they are accessible to the public *in situ* in the Mosaic Museum built above them.

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac seems to translate the Greek εὐλογία (Raabe, 41 n. 3), a term used for tokens pilgrims brought back from holy places. A token that had come into physical contact with the holy place was thought to convey the same grace and blessing attached to the original site.

<sup>8</sup> Syriac transliterates the Greek κηρός.

<sup>9</sup> Raabe translates ܠܚܝܬܐ as “cloth,” and we follow him here. According to Brockelmann (573), one might also translate the word as “pergamentum.”

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac ܠܚܝܬܐ transliterates the Greek κάμπτια. The variant reading in MS BM Add. 12,174 has ܠܚܝܬܐ, transliterating the Greek κοιμητήριον, i.e., “cemetery, burial-place” (see Raabe, 42 n. 2).

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Latin *cubicularius* via the Greek κουβικουλάριος (see also PGL, 772).

<sup>12</sup> Literally, “put his face upon.”





wrapped up in wax and cloth, it suddenly became a white dove,<sup>1</sup> and flying from the hands of the saint, it circled around<sup>2</sup> the house, [R 40] fluttering and seeking an exit. The blessed one was amazed and cried out when this happened. He jumped up and ran about the house trying to catch the dove, but it found for itself an exit through a window and vanished. Henceforth the particle with the wax and cloth was never seen again. The reason [for all this], as the blessed one understood the vision, was that the young [chamberlain] was not worthy, for it happened [to be] that he had been made impure by defilements.<sup>3</sup>

(§59) The blessed one also recounted a similar miracle concerning the power of the holy Golgotha and of the divine grace hidden in it. Once a severe eruption<sup>4</sup> broke out on the face of the blessed John the Eunuch and was consuming<sup>5</sup> his whole face, distressing both [of them]. It was very painful for them:<sup>6</sup> the blessed John [was] ashamed even to be seen by anyone.<sup>7</sup> As [their] anxiety gained strength and was consuming their hearts, the believing Peter, coming to himself<sup>8</sup> and being fervent in spirit and divine fervor, took the blessed John by night to the holy Anastasis.<sup>9</sup> When they had gone up to the place of the holy Golgotha on the northern side, a place quiet and hidden, they knelt down, beseeching our Lord with bitter tears and groans. When after completing [their] prayer they got up and approached the worshipful rock of the holy Golgotha for worship, the blessed John saw [R 41] [something] like a hand come out from there, approach

worm," or "lichen." John the Eunuch appears to have been affected with a kind of herpes.

<sup>5</sup> More literally even "feeding on."

<sup>6</sup> Peter and John the Eunuch are presented as the closest friends who suffered physically for one another.

<sup>7</sup> In biblical and early Christian times, disease was seen as the result of sin. Thus suffering from disease also caused feelings of shame in the sick person.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac seems to translate the Greek phrase παρ' ἐαυτῷ γενέσθαι (Raabe, 42 n. 3).

<sup>9</sup> I.e., to the Church of the Resurrection.



his face, and wipe his whole face clean.<sup>1</sup> At dawn, [his face] was found completely pure, without injury or defilement from the disease. Those [signs] surely [happened] for the demonstration of the divine power of the holy cross and for the assurance<sup>2</sup> of our hope.

(§60) Another miracle, like this one, I suppose, that happened to the same blessed John on other occasions I will attach to this account for the demonstration of their love for each other and of their faith in God and boldness<sup>3</sup> toward him. Once when the blessed John had fallen sick with a severe infirmity,<sup>4</sup> so that [all hope] concerning him was lost, Abba Peter was very despondent and did not cease making supplication to the Lord on behalf of his recovery. [Then] a voice came to him saying “Take heart! Behold, I shall grant him recovery because of your request: I am adding twelve more years to his life.” And so it happened. Following [this there occurred another] wonder. When he recovered his health and began to grow strong, his body began to husk off thick scales from his [toe-]nails to his neck. When they were all distressed that perhaps, if this scaling should continue, it would also spoil his face, again Abba Peter earnestly made supplication and prayed, [and] thus the [affliction] did not spread beyond his neck. When he was healed, his body and his flesh were like that of a newborn infant,<sup>5</sup> and his voice was so unintelligible that he could say nothing clear or intelligible.<sup>6</sup> When one of the solemn feasts arrived, [R 42] Abba Peter persuaded him, as if from divine assurance, to perform for them the holy oblation,<sup>7</sup> for both of them had been esteemed worthy of the honor of the priesthood

<sup>4</sup> From the presentation of John the Eunuch as having previously been affected by skin disease (*Vit. Pet.* §59 [R 40]) and as having fallen sick again at this instance, one might conclude that he suffered from ill health, affecting in particular his outer appearance. One might also see this presentation as being in support of Rufus’s characterization of John the Eunuch as a visionary, given that people of weak physical health not infrequently appear to be more in tune with the spiritual realm.

<sup>5</sup> See also 2 Kgs 5:14.

<sup>6</sup> John the Eunuch’s healing process is depicted as an experience of rebirth. His restored body and voice showed the signs of a merely babbling infant. That this state was brought about by Peter’s prayers would have signalled to the anti-Chalcedonian audience the effectiveness and initiatory quality of Peter’s intercession.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., the Eucharist.



[and] the blessed Peter also of the high priesthood.<sup>1</sup> [John] sensibly declined as incapable of speech and [thus] unable [to do it]. Yet Abba Peter persisted, persuading and urging [him], saying, “It is not necessary for you to speak aloud, but perform the prayers inside [your] heart, for even when we are silent, God hears.”<sup>2</sup> Being compelled, [John] consented. He stood in front of the holy altar and clearly and intelligibly said to the people, “Peace be with all of you!” and thus celebrated the entire holy oblation. Having received anew from God his former voice as if he had never fallen sick, he remained articulate for all the rest [of his life].

(§61) Once this blessed John beheld in a vision, for three whole days without talking to anyone at all, the fearful and glorious Second Coming of our Lord,<sup>3</sup> the heavens suddenly being opened<sup>4</sup> and the horns summoning,<sup>5</sup> the quakings of the earth,<sup>6</sup> the transformation of the elements,<sup>7</sup> that is, the transfiguration,<sup>8</sup> everything full of light and the perturbation of confusion and trembling and commotion, angels immediately preceding and the first orders<sup>9</sup> of the heavenly hosts, angels, archangels, powers,<sup>10</sup> dominions,<sup>11</sup> glories;<sup>12</sup> the orders<sup>13</sup> of the holy apostles, of the prophets, of the martyrs, of the righteous; cherubim, seraphim,<sup>14</sup> and after all of them the worshipful and **[R 43]** saving sign<sup>15</sup> of the cross of the Lord;<sup>16</sup> and the Lord himself, Savior and Christ, raised up and coming with the Father’s glory<sup>17</sup> and ineffable power. [He saw] the thrones prepared<sup>18</sup> and the divine and fearful tribunal, which from of old and many times through the holy prophets and by the Judge and Savior himself was announced to

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *τάξις*.

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac translates the Greek *ἐξουσίαι* (Raabe, 44 n. 5). See also Eph 3:10; 6:12.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac translates the Greek *κυριότητες* (Raabe, 44 n. 6). See Col 1:16.

<sup>12</sup> The Syriac translates the Greek *δόξαι* (Raabe, 44 n. 7). See Col 1:16.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *τάξις*.

<sup>14</sup> It is especially this moment of emphasis on heavenly order in the events that John the Eunuch sees in his vision that may lead one to note a parallel to the heavenly realm as described by Pseudo-Dionysius’s mystagogy.

<sup>15</sup> See Matt 24:30.

<sup>16</sup> Literally, “of the dominical cross.”

<sup>17</sup> Matt 24:30.

<sup>18</sup> See Rev 11:16; 20:4; see also Dan 7.



us beforehand as a testimony.<sup>1</sup> He saw only one altar, standing on the earth, in every [detail] like the one that still to this moment we keep,<sup>2</sup> at which both of them were serving, and a multitude of holy monks who were standing around it, each one of them holding his staff.<sup>3</sup> Behold, suddenly [there were] blasts of horns and commotions of the elements, and as it were clouds flew [down] and snatched away from that altar those saints who were standing by it [to take them away] to the meeting with our Lord.<sup>4</sup> When he had in this way completed three days in such a vision and had seen many other mysteries about which a human being may not speak, when he came to himself afterwards, he remained for about thirty days as one dazed, not wanting to say anything to anyone, or rather he was unable to [speak], for in his mind he was wholly there [at the scene of the vision], and he was supposing that he was no longer dwelling on earth. His face was like the face of an angel, and his whole appearance was different from that of a human being.<sup>5</sup> This vision indeed took place a long time later, at the end [of his life].<sup>6</sup>

(§62) Since I have mentioned the altar, I shall not hide the sign that took place on it when it was consecrated, as the blessed Peter related to us [R 44] many times.<sup>7</sup> When they departed later during the Chalcedonian rebellion<sup>8</sup> and were dwelling in Alexandria, there they made this holy altar. At its consecration the blessed one clearly saw St. Mark the Evangelist, who was standing [there to] consecrate it. On account of this, grace accomplished such wonders<sup>9</sup> and [so] many works of power and healings by

<sup>5</sup> Exod 34:29–35.

<sup>6</sup> Given that the miracle of healing that restored John the Eunuch to infant-like health occurred after 451 and that twelve years were added to his life, the vision appears to have taken place before, certainly not much later than, 463 C.E. John the Eunuch was buried in Peter the Iberian's monastery between Gaza and Maiuma. See *Vit. Pet.* §188 (R 142). Regular commemorations of him were celebrated in the monastery as well. See *Vit. Pet.* §171 (R 127).

<sup>7</sup> This comment supports the assumption that much of the material gathered in the present text, and presumably in other works by John Rufus, originates in an oral tradition initiated by Peter the Iberian.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac word could also be translated as “chastisement” or “persecution.”

<sup>9</sup> See Eph 3:7.





means of it that they cannot be counted,<sup>2</sup> and we have neither strength nor time to speak one by one about them.<sup>3</sup> This vision, as I have said, was revealed at the end, when they were dwelling in Alexandria and were being persecuted for orthodoxy.

(§63) Having fulfilled our promise, let us return to our account where we left off<sup>4</sup> to divulge the reason that brought them to the monastery between Gaza and Maiuma, [from] where, while dwelling [there], they were led away by force to come to the priesthood.<sup>5</sup>

(§64) When it was rebuilt by the Christian Emperor Constantine, the Holy City, Jerusalem, at first was still sparsely populated and had no [city] wall, since the first [city] wall had been destroyed by the Romans.<sup>6</sup> There were but a few houses and [few] inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> Thus, when the high priests and bishops, who later on were in Jerusalem,<sup>8</sup> desired that a multitude of inhabitants should dwell in the city and that a multitude of buildings should be built, they gave authority to anyone who wished and who was able to take any [R 45] spot he pleased without payment [and] without price in any part of the city in order to build thereon a dwelling. At that time the blessed Peter also chose for himself a place up toward the [Church of the] Holy Zion, in what is called the “Tower of David,” the prophet.<sup>9</sup> He built therein a monastery that still [stands] to this day,<sup>10</sup> called “the Monastery of the Iberians.”<sup>11</sup> It

See also p. 79, n. 5 above for a discussion of the evidence concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, “inhabitants in it.”

<sup>8</sup> Cyril, John, and Juvenal were the three most significant bishops of the Holy City during those years. Cyril became bishop of Jerusalem in 350. John occupied the episcopal throne of Jerusalem from 386 to 417. Juvenal was bishop of Jerusalem from 422 to 458.

<sup>9</sup> Although MS A clearly reads *ساعة*, we follow here the reading of MS B, *ساعة*.

<sup>10</sup> Literally, “hour” or “time.”

<sup>11</sup> Literally, “that of the Iberians.” This monastery is not to be confused with the Monastery of the Holy Cross, located just outside the Old City in the western part of Jerusalem. For a long time of its history, the Monastery of the Holy Cross was in the possession of the Iberians. Today it belongs to the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> The monastery built by Peter was located in the immediate vicinity of what today is known as the Anglican Christ Church, thus in the neighborhood of the “Tower of David.” For a fuller discussion of the archaeological evidence, see Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, 2:170–71; Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 285 *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Palestinian asceticism is characterized by pairs of monks living closely together and sharing their experience in a common life. Often, but not necessarily,

is located on the left, as one is coming to holy Zion from the second gate of the same tower.<sup>1</sup> There he dwelt in quiet together with John, the companion of his quiet [life].<sup>2</sup>

(§65) The sign that took place there as they were building [their monastic dwelling] place I will not omit. It was the [following]. A well-known man from among the clergy was their neighbor, who also had staked out a place and [erected] a building there. One day, as happens with neighbors, when a dispute about the boundary [occurred], Abba Peter was in quiet in [his] cell, while John the Eunuch happened to be outside with the laborers, [trying to] persuade this [man] gently and humbly, as was his custom, who in his humility was like Moses.<sup>3</sup> The wrongdoer, as though he had suffered grievances because he [John the Eunuch] at all contradicted him, struck the blessed one hard on his cheek, being like the servant of Caiaphas.<sup>4</sup> Although he was hit and in great pain, [John] made no reply at all, but leaving the laborers and this [man] full of anger, he went inside to Abba Peter, holding his cheek with his hand and crying for help, since this blow was painful. The two of them knelt down and praised our Lord with thanksgiving that he had deigned them worthy of participation in his beatings. He did not say anything to this [man], and those who were building went in from [R 46] their work and got ready to depart from that place. The next morning that headstrong [man] was dead and buried, although he [had suffered from] no

ily, a given ascetic pair constitutes a teacher-disciple relationship. The example of Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch fits in very well with this.

<sup>3</sup> Later anti-Chalcedonian literature continues this characterization of Moses as “meek.” See, e.g., Stephen of Heracleopolis, *Panegyric on Apollo* (Kuhn, 1:2,22–23 [Coptic], 2:2,14 [English]), who describes Archimandrite Apollo as exhibiting the “meekness and lack of vindictiveness of Moses and David.”

<sup>4</sup> See Matt 26:67.



illness<sup>1</sup> before this. [Thus] it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem that, because of the insult done to those saints, God the Judge who was always helping them had not been patient.<sup>2</sup>

(§66) Thus the two of them lived alone in that place and still had the money that remained<sup>3</sup> from what they had been able to take when they left [Constantinople]. Although they already had distributed the greater part of it in every place to holy monks and to the poor, with the rest they planned to conduct good business, receiving and refreshing the pilgrims and the poor who were coming from everywhere to worship in the holy places. While they were thus able to provide enough for [their] necessities, they received pilgrims<sup>4</sup> in Abrahamic manner,<sup>5</sup> they [who themselves were] pilgrims and foreigners<sup>6</sup> and who had no experience at all in such services. Many times it happened that they would have as many as ten tables [for serving] in one day, particularly on solemn feasts. They alone waited<sup>7</sup> on them, [even] though they were [also] observing the vigil [of night prayers], for the cheerfulness of soul and the love of Christ by whom they were strengthened and comforted in a wonderful way were victorious over the weakness of [their] nature.

(§67) Once when a multitude of pilgrims had come together at their place, they found themselves lacking in supplies. As time was pressing, they began crying out in their heart secretly to God, ashamed by the hardship<sup>8</sup> [with] which the pilgrims were wearing [them] out. When they entered the pantry<sup>9</sup> to search if perhaps anything needful had been forgotten and remained, [R 47] each of the vessels was found full with that kind [of food] that earlier had been stored in it.<sup>10</sup>

(§68) After they had been engaged in receiving pilgrims

<sup>7</sup> The underlying Greek might have been *μόνοι ὑπηρέτουν* (Raabe, 47 n. 4).

<sup>8</sup> The underlying Greek might have been *θλιψις* (Raabe, 47 n. 5).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *ἀποθήκη*, “granary,” “magazine,” or “storehouse.”

<sup>10</sup> Literally, “that had belonged to it from earlier on.” For comparable accounts of miraculous provisions of food, see also Besa, *Vita Sinuthii Archimandritae* 27–28, 139–143 (Leipoldt and Crum, 21, 61–63; Bell, 50–51, 81–82).



for quite some time, eventually the holy Zeno,<sup>1</sup> the hermit and prophet who was a disciple of the great Silvanus<sup>2</sup> and who was renowned everywhere, advised them to enter again a [cenobitic] monastery and to receive further training through obedience and humility, saying to them, “Now that you have become experienced in<sup>3</sup> the reception of pilgrims, come, labor [in] the monastic way of life, [and] be instructed in a [cenobitic] monastery, for this is more profitable for those who are still children in age.”<sup>4</sup>

(§69) Once they had entered one of the holy monasteries, they exercised themselves in all attentiveness, obedience, and Nazirite-ship,<sup>5</sup> so that the devil, since he could not bear the sincerity of their asceticism, acted cunningly to drag them down from the quality of their asceticism and of their good disposition,<sup>6</sup> by devising for them manifold temptations.<sup>7</sup> One day, when Abba Peter was standing in the choir and chanting with the brethren, [the devil] revealed to him a very beautiful naked woman in front of his eyes.<sup>8</sup> Although only<sup>9</sup> he [could] see the apparition,<sup>10</sup> he knew the vision was unchaste [and so] covered his face, turning hither and thither. The brethren were amazed and wondered what the cause of this [behavior] was. He cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Our Lord, Jesus,<sup>11</sup> remove this shameful and impure image and the abomination of this apparition from before my eyes and let me be by myself!” When the Evil One heard the name of our Savior, he immediately disappeared.

them while still a young boy. See *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Abba Poemen 180 (Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 222).

<sup>5</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §21 (R 13), with further references.

<sup>6</sup> Literally, “cheerfulness.”

<sup>7</sup> Note that, although Rufus refers to “manifold” temptations, he goes on merely to single out one type, that of sexual temptations.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “in front of him.”

<sup>9</sup> The underlying Greek might have been *μόνος*. See Raabe, 48 n. 2.

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *φαντασία*, for the rendering of which Payne Smith (450) suggests, among others, “display,” “ostentation,” “imagination,” or also “fancy,” “phantasm,” and “apparition.”

<sup>11</sup> Rufus presents Peter as entertaining a highly personalized relationship with Christ, given that Peter repeatedly addresses him as “Jesus.” See also *Vit. Pet.* §53 (R 36).





(§70) After they had spent time in the [cenobitic] monastery<sup>1</sup> following the advice of the holy Zeno, with his consent<sup>2</sup> they returned again [R 48] to their monastery and dwelt in quiet in the Holy City. Thenceforth they did not receive pilgrims in [their former] manner, as there was not enough money for it, since it had been well distributed. [Instead,] they wore themselves out in great asceticism and in harsh ways of life.

(§71) Yet it was not ordained that they should dwell<sup>3</sup> there for long. Empress Eudocia, who had been the wife of the believing Emperor Theodosius the Younger, having taken up the zeal of Melania, whom we mentioned earlier,<sup>4</sup> also yearned for quietude and to dwell in the Holy City, in order to be close to and to worship in person the saving passions of Christ, the King of Glory, [which he had suffered] for our sake. She made a journey carried about like a queen through all the cities<sup>5</sup> and came to the Holy City, for which she had a longing, and was esteemed worthy of worshipping [there].<sup>6</sup> When she learned that Abba Peter dwelt there, she anxiously sought to see him<sup>7</sup> as his foster-mother, because with loving affection<sup>8</sup> she had been a mother to him in the palace.<sup>9</sup> At first he asked to be allowed not to leave his cell, because he judged [it] a temptation.<sup>10</sup> She persisted, saying that if he did not wish to come to her, she by all means would come to him, being prepared to make [her] journey from where she stayed<sup>11</sup> to the holy [Church of] Zion. He [relented and] came out once and spoke with her because he feared the burdens and the envy of people. When

See *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Arsenius 28 (Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 13–14).

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac might render the Greek φιλοστοργία. See Raabe, 49 n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Given that other historical sources portray Pulcheria as having taken on the role of a mother for her imperial siblings (see, e.g., Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 9.1), Rufus's emphasis on Eudocia's maternal concerns might arise from an attempt to contrast the Chalcedonian supporter with Eudocia as a caregiver of the leader of the later anti-Chalcedonians. For fuller discussion, see Horn, "Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian."

<sup>10</sup> Note again that temptation is closely connected to fear of potential contact with a woman.

<sup>11</sup> Instead of "from where she stayed," a more literal translation would be "from there."



she noticed in him his great serenity, his humility, his modesty, and also his wisdom, he heard her say, "Blessed are you, my son, because you have chosen [R 49] the good [portion] for yourself.<sup>1</sup> Remember me in your holy prayers!" He replied, "What boldness [of speech]<sup>2</sup> does a sinner have to pray?" She said to him, "Your sins [be] upon my head, my son!" He then returned to his cell and remained in quiet.<sup>3</sup> On another occasion<sup>4</sup> she persisted, ardently desiring to come to him. Immediately he ran to the holy Zeno, the prophet, who was mentioned earlier.<sup>5</sup> As was his custom, he [Peter] revealed to him his thoughts, for he routinely discussed [matters] with him. He [Peter] heard from him [Zeno], "Rescue,<sup>6</sup> rescue your soul!" Thus obeying his advice, he left Jerusalem the Holy City and also handed over<sup>7</sup> his monastery to men who likewise had also cast off the world.

(§72) He came to dwell in the community that is between Gaza and the little town called Maiuma,<sup>8</sup> which at that time was full of many holy men, monks bearing their cross.<sup>9</sup> His migration to this place was guided by the divine care of God, the all-wise one and the guardian of our souls, who prepared in advance for this town, on the seashore and very Christian,<sup>10</sup> a high priest and bishop, one who was worthy of it [that is, of the episcopacy].<sup>11</sup> Especially in the time of the rebellion [this town] was in need of such

<sup>7</sup> Literally, "left."

<sup>8</sup> See also Theodosius, *De situ terrae sanctae* 3 (Geyer, 116,18–19): "Inter Ascalonam et Gazam civitates duas, id est Antedona et Maioma."

<sup>9</sup> See Matt 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 14:33. While the command to carry one's cross was addressed to all Christians who wanted to follow Christ, and while ascetics, independent of their precise doctrinal affiliation, understood their ascetic efforts as ways of "carrying the cross," the connection between asceticism and the cross became a significantly differentiating mark of anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine. See Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 350–51.

<sup>10</sup> The inhabitants of the port city of Maiuma adopted the Christian faith more readily and in larger numbers than their neighbors in Gaza. For the account of the Christianization of the region, including the resistance encountered in Gaza, see Mark the Deacon, *Vita Porphyrii Gazensis* (Grégoire and Kugener; Hill; for a recent abbreviated translation of important sections of the text into English, see Rapp, 53–75).

<sup>11</sup> Rufus's audience would likely have heard a comment like that at the same time also as polemic against Juvenal of Jerusalem.

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<sup>1</sup> One might also translate “messenger” or “envoy.” By describing Peter in both religious terms and the language of secular representation, Rufus’s depiction of him carries political overtones. Raabe (51 n. 1) sees a parallel to Heb 3:1, although 2 Cor 5:18–20 is perhaps also implied here.

<sup>2</sup> See Heb 4:16; 5:3.

<sup>3</sup> See Heb 4:15.

<sup>4</sup> See Heb 5:3.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, “village of barley.” For further references, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 165.

a man, [one who was] at once a helper of the fear of God, a preacher and guardian of the orthodox faith, and an ambassador<sup>1</sup> on behalf of our souls, [who] possessed boldness before our Lord to [gain] pardon for the sins of the people,<sup>2</sup> as it is written, one able to suffer for our weakness,<sup>3</sup> in that he always makes supplication for us.<sup>4</sup>

(§73) While dwelling in this community, he would frequently come [R 50] with his cell-companion John to the holy Zeno, who at that time was dwelling in the village of Kefar She‘artha,<sup>5</sup> about fifteen miles from Gaza, in order to discuss with him all his thoughts and to make straight [his] path of virtue in God [with] greater fervor.<sup>6</sup> [Peter] was much beloved by him [Zeno] and received [some] of his grace. The blessed one used to recount [to us],<sup>7</sup> “Once, when I came to him, the holy Zeno was standing for prayer. He turned to me and said to me, ‘Pray!’ When I remained silent, again he turned and said to me, ‘Pray!’ [He did this] three times in all. But I, amazed and worked up at this, said to him, ‘Forgive me, my lord, Abba, do you not know that I am a layman and a sinner?’ He said, ‘Yes, yes, forgive me!’ And when he had performed the prayer, he sat down.”<sup>8</sup> Seven days later his [Peter’s] own ordination<sup>9</sup> took place—and in what manner! It is fitting therefore that we should not pass this over in silence either.

(§74) When he [Peter] was still dwelling in the Holy City, Juvenal, who at that time was his bishop, many times attempted to ordain him and could not, since God was protecting him. [Juvenal tried] so hard [that] when a liturgy was being celebrated in the [Church of the] holy Zion, Juvenal dared to send select [men] to take him by force from his cell, which was nearby. When they

<sup>6</sup> Raabe (51 n. 6) suggests that the underlying Greek said κατεύθυνε θερμότερον τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁδόν.

<sup>7</sup> Rufus is recording what he had put to memory from Peter the Iberian’s accounts of events in his life. Note that Peter seemed customarily to have talked about what had happened to him in earlier years.

<sup>8</sup> For a similar scene, see below, *Vit. Pet.* §118 (R 86).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek χειροτονία. The genuine Syriac expression would have been ܠܝܬܝܢܐ ܡܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ. See Payne Smith, 213. Note that the Greek emphasizes the “stretching out” of the hand, while the Syriac has in view the “laying on” of the hand.



were about to arrive, an angel appeared to [Peter], saying “Behold, they are coming to take you for ordination: Get up and flee from here!”<sup>1</sup> [So Peter] fled and guarded himself [thenceforth] with [even] greater care.

(§75) While he was dwelling in the region of Maiuma, Paul, [R 51] the nephew of Juvenal, was bishop of that place. Not long after Peter had settled there, Paul sent [his] guarantee to the blessed Peter, who had asked him not to lay hand[s] on him.<sup>2</sup> Now, there occurred a synod of many bishops on the memorial [day] of Victor, the martyr of fair victory.<sup>3</sup> [There Paul] revealed [his] secret to one of them [i.e., one of those bishops present] and persuaded him to perform the ordination. That [bishop], however, took with him as helper the blessed Irenion, the abbot of the monastery, an intimate acquaintance and also a revered neighbor of these saints; using him he suddenly and unsuspectedly fell [upon them] and performed the ordination of both of them to priests with much force and resistance. When Peter later recalled [that event], he understood the foreknowledge and prophecy of the holy Zeno. Still, even though he had thus received the laying on of hand[s], for seven years he remained<sup>4</sup> unwilling to consider [himself as] in the priestly ministry, until he was also esteemed worthy of the honor of the episcopate in the time of the rebellion and transgression in Chalcedon.

(§76) When the rejection [of the faith] by the signature[s] of all those rebellious bishops, the ratification of the wicked *Tome*

shrine or church dedicated to St. Victor in the vicinity of Maiuma. For a discussion of the archaeological evidence and possible connection of that saint to the anti-Chalcedonian milieu, see Horn, “Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism,” 125–26; eadem, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 213, 215.

<sup>4</sup> This information allows one to conclude that Peter was ordained to the priesthood in 445/446, assuming that his elevation to the episcopacy under Theodosius took place in 452/453.





of Leo,<sup>1</sup> and the renewal of the wicked teachings of Nestorius<sup>2</sup> were proclaimed everywhere, [it happened] that Dioscorus,<sup>3</sup> head of the bishops of Egypt, being both a zealous [defender] of the truth and a fighter on behalf of the fear of God, was cast into exile<sup>4</sup> as long as he was unwilling to consent to the ungodliness.<sup>5</sup> Theodoret<sup>6</sup> and Ibas,<sup>7</sup> whose deposition<sup>8</sup> already had been brought about by these same men and [who] had been put under anathema because [their beliefs] revealed [Nestorius's] ungodliness, were accepted without trial.<sup>9</sup> [Even a]fter [his] death, they again took in Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, whose deposition [R 52] had taken place for this [same] reason. Juvenal, however, who was called<sup>10</sup> high priest of Jerusalem, having consented to

<sup>5</sup> On Rufus's portrayal of Dioscorus, see also *Vit. Pet.* §§83, 89, 97 (R 58, 62, 70); and *Pler.* 7, 14, 16, 21, 25, 59, 66, 68, and 69.

<sup>6</sup> Theodoret was bishop of Cyrrhus from 423 to 457/8 or 460 or 466. In the christological conflict between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria, he defended a two-nature Christology, in line with many other theologians from Antioch's area of influence. Deposed and exiled by Dioscorus and the Robber Council in 449, Theodoret was restored to his see in 451. Together with Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ibas of Edessa, Theodoret was the third of the *Three Chapters* who were anathematized in 553 under Emperor Justinian. Not all of Theodoret's writings were condemned, only works in which he opposed Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus. Much of his work on biblical commentary and asceticism has survived. See, e.g., Robert C. Hill, trans., *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on Daniel* (SBLWGRW 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Ibas was bishop of Edessa from 435 to 449 and again from 451 to 457. Based on the views he expressed in his famous letter to Mari, a bishop in Persia, Ibas was attacked for holding Nestorian convictions. The so-called Robber Council of 449 condemned him, whereas the Council of Chalcedon restored him to his office. Ibas's letter was finally condemned as one of the *Three Chapters* by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. Yet the position Ibas advanced appears to have been one of mediation between Nestorianism and the orthodoxy promoted by Chalcedon.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *καθάρσεις*, which Payne Smith (524) translates as "deposition, degradation from office."

<sup>9</sup> At the Council of Chalcedon.

<sup>10</sup> Note how the author here is challenging Juvenal's claim to the bishop's throne of the Holy City.



the transgression of the law and set [his] hand to it,<sup>2</sup> and preferring the portion of Judas the betrayer,<sup>3</sup> returned with much pomp, even though before going up to the council he had rejected what is called the *Tome of Leo*, scoffing at the ungodliness that is in it and testifying to all the clergy and monks in Palestine, saying, "It is Jewish," and, "In it is Simon the Magician's opinion,"<sup>4</sup> and, "He who consents to it deserves to be circumcised."<sup>5</sup>

(§77) When these things were heard by the clergy and the holy monks in Palestine, being agitated by divine zeal they first went out to confront Juvenal on the road.<sup>6</sup> They very earnestly entreated him to remember his words and to reject the ungodliness and to fight on behalf of the truth. When he was not persuaded,<sup>7</sup> they gathered together in the Holy City, having our Lord Jesus Christ in their midst,<sup>8</sup> who was denied by the godless ones but who helps his truth and his orthodox church, which he has redeemed by his blood.<sup>9</sup> Inspired by his grace and having with them both zealous orthodox bishops<sup>10</sup> and the holy Romanus, the father of the monks,<sup>11</sup> they chose the blessed Theodosius<sup>12</sup> from the holy rank,<sup>13</sup> a man who from his childhood pursued with diligence the ways of life of monasticism and [who] was adorned with all the gifts of the fear of the Lord. He already had proven himself in

<sup>6</sup> For a further description of that same event, see also *Pler.* 10, 56.

<sup>7</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 3.3 (Brooks, 1:157; Hamilton and Brooks, 50): "[Juvenal] showed himself like Pilate, saying, 'What I have written, I have written.'"

<sup>8</sup> See Matt 18:20.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Pet 1:18–19.

<sup>10</sup> These seem to have been bishops of Palestine who did not go with Juvenal to the Council of Chalcedon and who were later not replaced by anti-Chalcedonian bishops selected by Theodosius.

<sup>11</sup> On Romanus, see below, *Obit. Theod.* §§2, 8–12 (B 21, 25–27). See also *Pler.* 10, 25, 39, 87. Romanus shares the title "father of the monks" with Longinus (*Vit. Pet.* §91 [R 64–65]), Hilarion (§137 [R 101]), and Abba Isaiah (§§167–168 [R 124]).

<sup>12</sup> On Theodosius, see below, *Obit. Theod.* §§1–7 (B 21–25). See also *Pler.* 25, 29, 54, 56, 91. For Theodosius's ascension to the episcopal throne of Jerusalem and his tenure, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 85–92. For a discussion of Theodosius's career, see Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 89–103, 114–16.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *τάγμα*.



many contests on behalf of the orthodox faith,<sup>1</sup> including in the godless synod.<sup>2</sup> They appointed him high priest and shepherd of the Holy City, Jerusalem. Having received the priesthood from God,<sup>3</sup> he worked with all diligence, [R 53] attention, and care so that in the churches under his authority<sup>4</sup> the apostolic faith should be kept pure.<sup>5</sup> He chose from the rank of the holy and cross-bearing monks holy men who were especially confirmed in every evangelical way of life<sup>6</sup> and blameless in faith, [and] ordained them bishops<sup>7</sup> and martyrs.<sup>8</sup> After the people of each city themselves had cast a vote,<sup>9</sup> he sent to each city the one who was suitable for it and whom they [the people] had chosen,<sup>10</sup> [and] each was received with all joy and exultation. When he was performing the ordination, with a loud voice this patriarch<sup>11</sup> bore witness to those who were being ordained, saying, “I am ordaining you martyrs and preachers of the orthodox faith, for this time requires such bishops.”<sup>12</sup>

(§78) At that time then, the inhabitants of Maiuma, Gaza,<sup>13</sup> at once ran as a whole people to where the blessed Peter was dwelling in quiet, since they were moved by divine power and had known him [during] the long period while he was dwelling with

<sup>8</sup> I.e., witnesses for the faith. The Syriac translates the Greek for either *μάρτυρες* or *ὁμολογοί*, the former being the term more commonly rendered by the Syriac word.

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac seems to transliterate the Greek *ψήφισμα*. See Payne Smith, 452, according to which *ⲡⲏⲛⲁⲓⲙⲁ* can also be translated as “decree” or “act.”

<sup>10</sup> In the early church, the voice of the laity had greater weight in electing a new bishop.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *πατριάρχης*. That term came into usage in the Christian realm only after the Council of Chalcedon. Rufus here identifies Theodosius of Jerusalem with that title, although he uses it interchangeably with “archbishop” (see *Vit. Pet.* §79 [R 55]). Among the Jews, the title “patriarch” or *nasi* was used for the *ethnarchos* of the Jews until 425 C.E., when it was abolished by the Roman authorities.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the centrality of language of persecution and martyrdom in Rufus’s work, see Horn, “Weaving the Pilgrim’s Crown.”

<sup>13</sup> The Greek may have formulated *ὁ Μαξιμουῦς Γάζης*. See Raabe, 54 n. 5.



them and [was] manifesting every kind of virtue.<sup>1</sup> They took him by force, despite [the fact that] he struggled very much against them and shut and barred the doors when he saw that they were coming upon him like robbers.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, with great force and love this people carried him and put him on a litter,<sup>3</sup> while a multitude of the well-known officials, the clergy, and many people who imitated and followed [after] them, brought him to the Holy City so that there they would be counted worthy of their shepherd and bishop by the high priest of the priesthood.<sup>4</sup> While they were traveling on the road and evening was already approaching, they came to a village called Sokha.<sup>5</sup> [R 54] They took lodging in inns<sup>6</sup> nearby, but the saint they made lodge in the upper chamber of a house in the village itself, together with some who were able to guard him. In the middle of the night, tormented by his thoughts and eating up his heart because he had always fled from honor, as I have said before, and considering himself unworthy of the honor of the priesthood, he very much had in mind to die if necessary rather than to accept such a burden. In the dead of night,<sup>7</sup> while all of them were wearied from the hardship of the journey and were overcome by sleep, he asked those who were guarding him to allow him to go out on the balcony<sup>8</sup> in front of the upper chamber to relieve a bodily need. When they let [him go] and he had gone

σημείω, ἡ μὲν ἀνωτέρα, ἡ δὲ κατωτέρα, Σοκχῶθ χρηματίζουσιν. φυλῆς Ἰούδα: "Sokhō. There are two unwall'd villages, going out from Eleutheropolis toward Aelia [i.e., Jerusalem] at the ninth marker; one that is higher up and one that is below; [also] called Sokkheth. [Both are located within the territory of the] tribe of Judah." For further references, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 234; see also Pietro A. Kaswalder, *Onomastica Biblica: Fonti scritte e ricerca archeologica* (CMSBF 40; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2002), 283.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek πανδοκίον or πανδοχεῖον, which Payne Smith (440) suggests can refer to an "inn," "tavern," or "hostelry." See also *PGL*, 1001, 1002.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, "when the hour came, which [is] not the hour." The Syriac seems to translate the Greek ὥρα ἄωρος = ἄωρία, which has been understood as μεσονύκτιον. See Raabe, 55 n. 3. See also *Vit. Pet.* §32 (R 22).

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "to a place of the roof."





out alone, he ran to throw himself from the height [on]to a rocky place below,<sup>1</sup> expecting that one of two things would happen: either he would escape by all [possible] means, or, being maimed and [therefore] unfit,<sup>2</sup> he would be released from the coercion of [his captors], who were taking him [for ordination]. [Just] when he was about to [jump], a voice came to him saying, “Peter, Peter,<sup>3</sup> if you do this, you [will] have no part with me!”<sup>4</sup> Thus, being prevented from [his] attempt, he was taken to Jerusalem. There he stirred up many [charges], accused himself,<sup>5</sup> and called forth several objections by which he hoped to demonstrate that he was unworthy for the priesthood.<sup>6</sup> He even called to witness [against him] the one who was about to ordain him.

(§79) Nevertheless, although he received from divine grace itself the decree and ordination,<sup>7</sup> not even then did he wish to serve. Rather, he shut himself up in the priest’s residence.<sup>8</sup> From the first, he refused to accept [R 55] [the task of conducting] the [eucharistic] service, although everyone, even the patriarch<sup>9</sup> himself, was persuading and earnestly entreating [him], until he was again threatened and commanded by the divine voice. When the [eucharistic] service was celebrated in the holy church of what is

flects his idea that Peter did not accept the previous ordination at the hands of Juvenal’s nephew Paul, then bishop of Maiuma, and of Abba Irenion as valid. Only when Peter was ordained as bishop by Theodosius of Jerusalem did he also become validly ordained as priest.

<sup>7</sup> Note again how God’s power and grace are considered to be the ultimate source of authority.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “the priestly place.” Likely a reference to a separate house set aside for the use of the priest. That separate place was located in or in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. If Rufus intended to speak of the sacristy of a given church, he could have chosen a distinct word for that.

<sup>9</sup> The titles “patriarch” and “archbishop” are used interchangeably in this text, reflecting the still relatively novel introduction of the first title into the early Christian vocabulary used for members of the hierarchy. See also *Vit. Pet.* §78 (R 53) with p. 113, n. 11.



called Shiloah,<sup>1</sup> Peter<sup>2</sup> ran out, leaving everyone amazed and astounded. They were gathered with the archbishop and with the rest of the bishops when they all came out toward him in joy and exultation and with marvel, praising God. For they were seized in great distress and in anxiety that perhaps this refusal should be a cause of offense to many. Yet once he had arrived at the holy Church of Maiuma, being carried about by all, he sat on the throne on the seventh of the month of Ab,<sup>3</sup> when there took place a great, holy, and heavenly feast and life for the souls of each of them. The people hurried and everyone desired earnestly to partake of the saving mysteries<sup>4</sup> from his holy hands. [Yet] again out of great modesty he demurred from making the oblation himself. Even though he was giving assent to the bishops and the clergy to celebrate the holy services, he [himself] at first was not willing to stand before the holy altar and celebrate the holy Eucharist until the people became vexed and indignant and anticipated what was in fact true: that he was contemplating flight.<sup>5</sup> They ran [after him], threatening to set him and the church on fire if he would not celebrate the [eucharistic] service for them.<sup>6</sup> Being so compelled, he stood before the holy altar.

(§80) May he who has understanding understand [what follows] from here on.<sup>7</sup> May the greatness of God's care and his love for humanity and his power be preached with freedom [of speech] and be declared **[R 56]** everywhere for the conviction and confirmation of the believers and for the establishment of the orthodox faith! We cannot remain silent [about] those things that we have heard<sup>8</sup> and [about which] we were instructed by the utterance of the blessed one and by many of those who at that time were near [to him] and were serving as priests with him. Although he was

<sup>4</sup> I.e., receive the Eucharist consecrated by Peter. Reception of the consecrated eucharistic gifts from the hands of Peter became a unifying moment of the anti-Chalcedonian community in Palestine.

<sup>5</sup> Much of Peter's traveling can be characterized as a reaction in response to threat or as an attempt to escape an oppressing situation. Thus the motif of flight is significant throughout the *Vita Petri Iberi*.

<sup>6</sup> Here one catches a glimpse of the often and readily violent nature of human interactions in situations of conflict within the early Christian world.

<sup>7</sup> See Matt 19:12.

<sup>8</sup> See 1 John 1:1–3.



not yet reciting well the holy prayers and had not previously studied them, he was suddenly forced to stand in front of the altar and celebrate the holy service with great fear, terror, and trembling,<sup>1</sup> while some members of the clergy stood by him to remind [him] if he should leave out anything necessary.<sup>2</sup> When the moment arrived, he made the invocation of the Holy Spirit and completed the whole [prayer of the] Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> When he came to the fearful breaking of the bread, with all groaning and anguish of heart and many tears, as was his custom, so much blood burst forth when he broke [it], so that the holy table was sprinkled all over.<sup>4</sup> He was astounded and in trembling and drew back, no longer daring to apply himself to the breaking of the rest of the [loaves of] bread. He quickly turned and saw the Lord standing at his side, encouraging him and saying to him, "Bishop, break [it]! Do not be afraid! I did this for the sake of my glory and not for yours, so that everyone may learn where the truth is and who possesses the orthodox faith."<sup>5</sup> This miracle that took place at that time is [still] recounted by everyone's mouth to today.

(§81) [Peter] stayed in his holy church [R 57] for a time of about six months, while everyone was feasting and leaping for joy and calling the inhabitants of the city of Maiuma blessed because of the good pleasure of God and the protecting care of such a high priest. They were holding him up like an angel and were hanging on his compassion and on his love. [But] the devil, [who] fights against God and is envious,<sup>6</sup> that first rebel<sup>7</sup> and adviser and patron of rebels,<sup>8</sup> because he could not endure to see such great praise of God and the salvation of humans because he was afraid that perhaps there would be a reversal<sup>9</sup> [of the deed] that [his] diligence had contrived in writing at Chalcedon against the fear of

soteriology and the sacraments for the christological controversies of the early fifth century.

<sup>6</sup> The underlying Greek text may have formulated θεομάχος καὶ βόσκακος. See Raabe, 57 n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> The underlying Greek may have used the term ἀποστάτης. See Raabe, 57 n. 3. See also below the expression for "rebellious dragon," *Vit. Pet.* §88 (R 62).

<sup>8</sup> Here Rufus also implies that the Chalcedonians are to be regarded as disciples of Satan.

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac seems to translate the Greek μεταβολή. See Raabe, 58 n. 1.



God,<sup>1</sup> entered the emperor<sup>2</sup> who at that time was ruling and [who] readily listened to his commands. He made him [issue] an imperial decree to the holy and true high priests, [those] zealous for the fear of God who had been appointed by Theodosius,<sup>3</sup> the great and apostolic high priest, [that] they should be removed<sup>4</sup> from their thrones in all the cities of Palestine and if they were unwilling they would be expelled by force and be subject to punishment, whereas Theodosius, the head of the shepherds, where[ever] he be found, should suffer capital punishment,<sup>5</sup> since the emperor issued what is called a *forma*<sup>6</sup> against him.<sup>7</sup> At that time all [the bishops of the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine] relented and left [their sees], this being what the Patriarch Theodosius advised in that he judged it more pleasing to God that the preachers of the truth should be preserved and not [that] when they would die and be slain the orthodox faithful would be deprived of those who had edified them and sustained [R 58] them.

(§82) At that time, when the blessed Peter<sup>8</sup> departed for Egypt and by the will of God came to the city of Alexandria and was hiding there in the days of Proterius, that rebel,<sup>9</sup> he became a support and consolation for all the orthodox. And while no one from those who were holding on to the truth and lay in hiding

*emendationibus et variationibus usque ad Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II convocatum effectis necnon nova introductione aucta* [BELS 97, Instrumenta liturgica quarreriensia 7; Rome: C.L.V.-Edizioni Liturgiche, 1998], 44). On Leontius of Ashkelon, see *Pler.* 52. Theodosius selected several anti-Chalcedonian leaders of monasteries and bishoprics, including Abba Romanus (Monastery of Tekoa), Marcianus (a monastery near Bethlehem), Bishop Peter the Iberian (Maiuma, Gaza), Bishop Theodotus (Ioppe), and Bishop Timothy (see unknown; was abbot of the Monastery of Hypatios; see below, John Rufus, *Obit. Theod.* §2 [B 21]). See also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 93–94.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “driven away.”

<sup>5</sup> Literally, “the condemnation of his head.”

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Latin *forma*. A *forma* is an authoritative, sealed, official document, named after the seal attached to it. See also William Smith and Samuel Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (London: Murray, 1876), 682–83.

<sup>7</sup> See also below, *Obit. Theod.* §2 (B 21).

<sup>8</sup> See also John of Beth Aphthonia, *Vit. Sev.* (Kugener, 222–23).

<sup>9</sup> In 451 Proterius replaced Dioscorus as bishop of Alexandria. In 457 Proterius was brutally murdered. See also below, *Vit. Pet.* §§93–95 (R 68).





dared to show himself, neither cleric nor monk, [Peter] was both celebrating the divine services [in hiding] and was giving to all those who desired the food<sup>1</sup> of life. He did not allow them to become faint-hearted or to diminish in zeal and faith.<sup>2</sup>

(§83) He was also esteemed worthy to see this dreadful vision. When a show for all the people was being performed in the city's so-called "theater,"<sup>3</sup> the believing people, fervent in zeal, suddenly began to shout, since they were moved by a divine power, "Dioscorus to the city! The orthodox one to the city! The confessor to his throne! May the bones of Proterius be burnt! Drive Judas into exile!<sup>4</sup> Cast Judas out!" Other voices joined in, shouting "For Dioscorus, the helper of the fear of God!" demanding his return from his unjust exile and [that he] should take up his throne and that the wolf,<sup>5</sup> ravenous and contending against God, the new Caiaphas, should be cast out and utterly driven away from the holy churches.<sup>6</sup> The magistrates, anxious to be pleasing in every way to him who at that time was ruling,<sup>7</sup> and calculating in the interest of their own advantage, [R 59] commanded the greater part of the armed soldiers to come and surround the theater. Threatening to slay and kill, they alarmed all the people, so that as they were fleeing to the exit[s] they pushed one another down in the narrow entrances of the theater, [and] many died.<sup>8</sup>

(§84) During all this, the blessed Peter, being in hiding, as I have said, was celebrating the holy mysteries. Being in [a state of] amazement, he saw many souls being led by angels and taken

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἐξοπλα. Whereas above Juvenal was compared to Judas, here Proterius is cast in the role of the betrayer.

<sup>5</sup> Proterius is also compared to a wolf at *Vit. Pet.* §§90, 91 (R 63, 64) and at *Pler.* 66. Yet that identifier is not unique to Proterius. Calendion of Antioch is also compared to a wolf at *Vit. Pet.* §112 (R 81). For further anti-Chalcedonian polemic against Proterius, see *Pler.* 7, 34, 68–69, 76–77.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the manner of Proterius's death in the context of the present riot, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 31–32 n. 104.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., Marcian.

<sup>8</sup> For another account of these events, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 4.2 (Brooks, 1:171; Hamilton and Brooks, 66).



up to heaven.<sup>1</sup> When people from the city came and made known [to him] what had happened, those who had died in violence in this destruction and distress were found to be as many in number as the souls whom the blessed one had counted in that vision. In the likeness of that thief to whom the blessing was granted,<sup>2</sup> in that moment they also wove the same crown in one hour by [their] confession of the faith. For such a reward is kept for those who struggle and truly fight the fight for the orthodox faith, even if they show zeal [only] at the end of their life.

(§85) When the blessed Peter was no [longer] able to hide himself from the wicked Proterius, [who] hurried to inflict a mortal blow and had sent out some assassins at night to seize [Peter] and kill him, he was able to flee, since our Lord, his deliverer and his protector, revealed to him the secret plot. Those who were sent approached the door [of the place] where he was hidden inside the city and knocked, [R 60] pretending to be from the orthodox [faithful] and [claiming] to know [him]. They [were trying to] trick [him, saying],<sup>3</sup> “This little boy is [in] danger;<sup>4</sup> he should be baptized before he dies.”<sup>5</sup> [However,] a holy voice said to him, “Do not open [the door]. They are malevolent.” Then he said to the brethren who were with him, “No one shall open the door, but do what you see me do!” They had hastily bent the knee and got up [when] he and the brethren with him cried out with a loud voice, “Our Father [who art] in heaven!<sup>6</sup> Behold, thieves!<sup>7</sup> Help!” The

*the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O White* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross; JSNTSup 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 352–78; Kurt Aland, *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); Everett Ferguson, “Inscriptions and the Origin of Infant Baptism,” *JTS* NS 30 (1979): 37–46; David F. Wright, “The Origins of Infant Baptism—Child Believers’ Baptism?” *SJT* 40 (1987): 1–23; and Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, “*Let the Little Children Come to Me*”: *Childhood and Children in the Early Christian Community* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming), ch. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Matt 6:9. Peter and his friends had just begun to recite the “Our Father.” For the full text of that prayer, see Matt 6:9–13 (cf. Luke 11:2–4). The frequent recitation of that prayer, at least three times a day, was recommended by *Didache* 8.3 (Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, eds. and trans., *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres: Didachè* [SC 248; Paris: Cerf, 1978], 174; Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, 174).

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ληστές.



neighbors and those who were near heard [them] and [came] running, [and] the malevolent ones fled. Thus they were delivered from the snares of the hunters, as it is written,<sup>1</sup> [and] left that place and departed to the upper regions of the Thebaid.<sup>2</sup>

(§86) He came to the city of Oxyrhynchos<sup>3</sup> [and] stayed there, while he was received by one of the magistrates of the city whose name was Moses, a Christ-loving man and a lover of the saints. He was clothed with profits in faith and [good]will, about whom the blessed one used to say that, having an income of two thousand dinars<sup>4</sup> a year, he used to distribute half of it to the saints, to the poor, and to foreigners. The other half [he used] for his own necessities and for the public<sup>5</sup> debt tax.<sup>6</sup>

(§87) This Oxyrhynchos was a great and prosperous city of the Thebaid, throughout which the grace of Christ reigned, such that all of the [inhabitants] were [R 61] Christians, [and] the company of monks who were dwelling in the monasteries surrounding it [was] not less than ten thousand. It happened while [Peter] was there that the wicked and God-fighting Proterius crafted and composed in writing an anathema for the deception of the simple. He deceitfully and covertly recounted in it the evil of the Council of Chalcedon with the slyness of great evil and with hypocrisy, mixing poison with honey.<sup>7</sup> However, when this was read in front of the whole people and it could not shake anyone of those [who were]

*cial Study* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1968). We are grateful to Sebastian Brock for this reference.

<sup>4</sup> The value of the Roman silver denarius in the fifth century was between 7,200 denarii to one pound of gold (fourth century) and 6,6 to the pound (sixth century). See Alexander Mlasowski, "Denarius," *BNP* 4:301–2.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *δημόσιον*.

<sup>6</sup> The "debt tax" referred to might be identical with the *epikephalaion*, or "head-tax," which according to Roger S. Bagnall (*Egypt in Late Antiquity* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], 154) is attested in the papyri only for Oxyrhynchos for the years 297/298 to 319/320. For a helpful discussion of the taxation system in Egypt, see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 153–60. Bagnall also indicates that the taxation in Egypt, while a burden, was a bearable one.

<sup>7</sup> See also Prov 5:2–4. The Muratorian Canon warns about Marcionite innovations to the Christian canon of accepted scriptural books, that "it will not do to mix gall with honey" (*NTApoc* 1:36).



firmly established, he sent a copy of this to those bishops under him, who acceded to submit to his rebellion, while he ordered that it should be read before all the people of every city.

(§88) Now when the bishop of Oxyrhynchos received this and read it in front of all the people with the help of the devil, he was anxious to lead astray and to shake [the faith of] many of the orthodox. When [the words] threatened to scandalize many, since they were simple and not trained in such slyness and hypocrisy, the blessed Peter was persuaded by the magistrates of the city, by the zealous one who had received him, and by the holy monks to read it, confute the guile and the plot, and preach the truth openly in front of all the people.<sup>1</sup> Although he greatly demurred, claiming he was not trained in such confrontations and in [speaking with] freedom [of speech] in front of the people,<sup>2</sup> nevertheless, when he was compelled, he gave himself [R 62] to the testimony. When they lifted him up, they made him stand in a public place, which was high up on the base<sup>3</sup> of a column,<sup>4</sup> upon which stood the statue<sup>5</sup> of the emperor.<sup>6</sup> Bearing in his hands this snare of paper,<sup>7</sup> he was considering and debating [with himself] how he would rebuke the ambush hidden in it. Suddenly he saw the blessed Theodosius, bishop of Jerusalem, that new James,<sup>8</sup> the one who had ordained him,<sup>9</sup> the one who already had been perfected in confessorship and martyrdom in the royal city in the time of the God-hating emperor Marcian.<sup>10</sup> (The manner of his death we will tell at the end, when God permits.)<sup>11</sup> [Peter] saw this [man] standing on his right [hand, who] with his finger was pointing out and showing and rebuking the ungodliness that was hidden in every word. What he

<sup>6</sup> I.e., Emperor Leo I (457–471).

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *χάρτης*.

<sup>8</sup> The reference is to James, the so-called “brother of the Lord,” who, according to church tradition, was the first to hold the office of bishop of Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §78 (R 54).

<sup>10</sup> Marcian was emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire from 450 to 457.

<sup>11</sup> See below, *Obit. Theod.* §1 (B 21). The present comment is crucial in determining the identity between the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *De obitu Theodosii*. See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 29–30.





heard from him, he recited to the people, while our Lord was near and helping [him] and bestowing at the same time freedom [of speech] and grace.<sup>1</sup> Having thus persuaded the people and confirmed them all, and being seen and lauded by all of them like an angel, he snatched them from the net of error,<sup>2</sup> putting to shame the rebellious dragon<sup>3</sup> and his servants and his attendants.

(§89) At that time, the blessed Archbishop Dioscorus, having fought the good fight<sup>4</sup> of confession and having completed his course, and having kept the apostolic faith without transgression unto the end, was perfected while in exile in the city of Gangra, which is the metropolis of Paphlagonia. [R 63] Having been bishop for seven years and three months, he fell asleep on the seventh of Elul.<sup>5</sup> When the bitter and painful report thereof was announced to the cities of the Alexandrians, multitudes of orthodox people and holy monks and nuns were broken in soul out of dire suffering and sorrow, because now the hope of their salvation was cut off.

(§90) Yet this hard and bloodthirsty wolf Proterius was exulting and raving with great joy and cheerfulness as one who now had firm and undisturbed governship.<sup>6</sup> Henceforth he exhibited evil and harsh treatment to those laypeople and monks who were not willing to be in communion with him. He bought the magistrates and through them brought all kinds of insults and intolerable sorrows upon the orthodox, bringing into the city multitudes of wild barbarian soldiers.<sup>7</sup> He inflicted without pity unrepeatable evils, both full of a myriad of lamentations and against the laws of nature, until he extended his madness even to the holy virgins. Yet the just, powerful, and longsuffering Judge<sup>8</sup> was no longer willing to continue suffering such evils. He, the Lord, who strikes and

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim 6.12

<sup>5</sup> I.e., September.

<sup>6</sup> For another indication of the rivalry between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian bishops in Alexandria, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 4.10 (Brooks, 1:182–83; Hamilton and Brooks, 78), who tells of attempts by Timothy Salophaciolus to reconcile with the mother of a newly baptized child who had received the sacrament from the hands of the anti-Chalcedonians.

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *στρατιῶται*. Proterius found the support of the military of the Eastern Roman Empire.

<sup>8</sup> Note again the emphasis on God's judgment. See also *Vit. Pet.* §65 (R 46).



heals and chastises and cures,<sup>2</sup> was aroused like one from sleep,<sup>3</sup> who flashed his spear<sup>4</sup> and with it killed the winding dragon,<sup>5</sup>—I am speaking of Marcian, the new Assyrian.<sup>6</sup> An angel struck him on his neck [with] an incurable blow as with a sword, as those who saw [it] with their eyes and were assured [of it] bore witness.<sup>7</sup>

(§91) At that time [R 64] the blessed Peter left Oxyrhynchos [and] returned to Alexandria,<sup>8</sup> or rather, it was God who led him there for [the act of] divine providence about to take place for the consolation of the believing people and for the reformation and establishment of the orthodox faith. It so happened that when report of the death of Marcian, that chief, cause, and director of such evils, reached the city of the Alexandrians, those believing people who already had fallen into despair from the many calamities and persecutions that had come upon them, as has been said, and [whose] strength was weak,<sup>9</sup> having been granted time to breathe, were revived. They sent up praise of thanksgiving and doxology to Christ, our Savior, who had not been completely angry and [had not] surrendered them into the hands of that rapacious and bloodthirsty wolf.<sup>10</sup> They saw that the time was fitting and opportune for them. Multitudes of holy monks assembled, not only those in the city but also those near it, in the [monastery] called Enaton,<sup>11</sup> and in the Oktokaidekaton,<sup>12</sup> and in the Eikoston,<sup>13</sup> and in the rest of the holy monasteries, with all the believing and zealous people of the city of Alexandria. They had [as] their

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “[whose] hands were limp.”

<sup>10</sup> I.e., Proterius.

<sup>11</sup> Literally, “the ninth.” A marginal note, which is only in MS A, fol. 81r, col. 2, left margin, says, “These are places in which monks were dwelling: one nine miles remote from Alexandria, and one eighteen, and one twenty. And they are called on account of the number of miles that they are remote from the city.” Raabe (64 n. 7) alerts the reader to the fact that Thomas of Harkel composed his translation of the Bible in the Enaton monastery. See also Jean Gascou, “Enaton,” *CE* 3:954–58.

<sup>12</sup> Literally, “the eighteenth.” This was a monastery on the coastal strip separating the Mediterranean Sea from the western tip of Lake Mareotis, west of Alexandria. It is so named for its proximity to the eighteenth milestone from the city. See Jean Gascou, “Oktokaidekaton,” *CE* 6:1826–27.

<sup>13</sup> Literally, “the twentieth.” A monastery located near the twentieth milestone west of Alexandria. See Jean Gascou, “Eikoston,” *CE* 3:951.



head and chief the blessed ascetic and great prophet Longinus,<sup>1</sup> [R 65] the father of the monks,<sup>2</sup> [who was] inspired<sup>3</sup> and provided for them according to the will of God for this [purpose]. They all reached an agreement to send men who were suited for the task. By force [and] without his foreknowledge nor his being at all aware [of it] beforehand, they took from the desert the holy Timothy,<sup>4</sup> that famous confessor and true martyr,<sup>5</sup> who already had been honored with the dignity of the priesthood by the great Archbishop Cyril,<sup>6</sup> together with Anatolius,<sup>7</sup> his true brother and [one] equal to him in zeal, a man embellished with all effectiveness and apostolic grace, with special sincerity and fervent zeal for the orthodox faith. They brought him to the city, to the church called *Kaisarion*,<sup>8</sup> where the whole city was assembled as one, so to say, together with the women and the children. Together with the holy monks they made haste to perform his ordination and to raise him up as high priest, preacher, and fighter for the fear of God. Only one of the orthodox bishops was found, namely, Eusebius of Pelusium,<sup>9</sup> since others who had been persecuted and were hidden did not dare to let themselves be seen. When it was made known to the people by the will of God that our blessed Peter was there in hiding, the people ran and came at once to the place where the blessed one was dwelling. [R 66] Lifting him up by force and

18; Leuven: Departement Oriëntalistiek; Peeters, 1985), 115–66; and Rifaat T. Ebied and Lionel R. Wickham, “A Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus,” *JTS* NS 21 (1970): 321–69.

<sup>5</sup> Here Rufus lays stress on the significance of Timothy’s contribution to the anti-Chalcedonian church by emphasizing his suffering for the faith.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., Cyril of Alexandria (412–444). On Cyril, see also *Vit. Pet.* §49 (R 33).

<sup>7</sup> He seems to be not known otherwise.

<sup>8</sup> The *Kaisarion* or temple of Augustus was located about halfway down the Great Harbor. See Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 24; Michael Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (TTH 33; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 27), 85 n. 98.

<sup>9</sup> See also Evagrius Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 2.8 (Bidez and Parmentier, 56, 8–12; Whitby, 85). Eusebius of Pelusium is also known from the letters of Isidore of Pelusium. For further references, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 95–96.



carrying him on their shoulders, they brought him to the *Kaisarion*, where a crowd of people was [assembled], being determined<sup>2</sup> to act according to the ancient laws and customs during times of persecution.<sup>3</sup> The blessed one had been assured by God beforehand that this was his will, as he has secretly revealed many times to his beloved friends.<sup>4</sup> Together with the other bishop he performed the ordination of Archbishop Timothy,<sup>5</sup> while the grace of God was near at that time and was effecting everything. While all were exuberant because of the joy and exultation of such hope, the blessed Peter managed to get out of sight,<sup>6</sup> passing through the midst of the people.<sup>7</sup> He went and hid himself, [or rather] the Lord who had revealed him now concealed him. All along he had feared to commit an act such as this one. Just as the apostle Philip,<sup>8</sup> who after baptizing the eunuch<sup>9</sup> of Candace immediately disappeared,<sup>10</sup> the blessed one fled each time from the honor and the glory of people because it prevented him from the undistracted quiet that was dear to him and [from] undisturbed converse with God, even though his goal was not permitted to come to fulfillment as [was] his desire.<sup>11</sup> For at the ordination of the great high priest Timothy [R 67] by the decree and good will of God, through the election, diligence, and vote<sup>12</sup> of the people of the Alexandri-

[2007]: 284–96, esp. 285). On the pious as friends of God, see Jas 2:23. We are grateful to John Fitzgerald for these observations.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Aelurus was ordained in 457. This act was crucial in establishing an anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy in Egypt. Timothy Aelurus's first period of tenure as anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria lasted from 457 to 460.

<sup>6</sup> Again, Peter attempts to withdraw from the crowds, here successfully and with divine support.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 4:30.

<sup>8</sup> Being portrayed in parallel to the apostle Philip contributes to highlighting Peter's "apostolic" authority.

<sup>9</sup> Literally, "believer." For the translation "eunuch," see Payne Smith, 255.

<sup>10</sup> See Acts 8:26–40.

<sup>11</sup> See also *Vit. Pet.* §138 (R 103), where Rufus explains that Peter, burdened by the pastoral care for his flock, could not withdraw into a quiet life. Abba Isaiah as a monk, however, enjoyed that luxury.

<sup>12</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *ψήφισμα*. Note the active role played by the people in electing a new bishop for the city.





ans and of the holy and cross-bearing monks, unspeakable joy and exultation took hold of the souls of all of them, while the people kept a feast and were merry.

(§92) [Meanwhile,] that wicked Proterius,<sup>1</sup> defiled in every way, seeing that he himself was in danger, grew more fierce. He had bought the magistrates with much gold,<sup>2</sup> especially the so-called *stratelates*,<sup>3</sup> Dionysius by name,<sup>4</sup> a man [who was] a murderer and of violent rage. [Dionysius] stirred up such madness: with a gang of armed, cruel, and barbarian soldiers he ran to the holy church of God and mercilessly slayed many of the laypeople as well as monks and nuns. Many [others] he wounded with blows and left them half-dead. Finally, he did not refrain from rushing in against the divine baptistry, and from the holy Jordan, that is, from the font of the worshipful baptism, like a rebel he took by force the holy Timothy along with Anatolius, his brother, and they led him to Taposiris,<sup>5</sup> a desert fortress<sup>6</sup> thirty miles distant from the city. There they imprisoned him under guard by soldiers,<sup>7</sup> so that from then on that impious Proterius, finding a time that was opportune for his madness, again manifested many evils against those monks and laypeople who were unwilling to take part in his wickedness, especially against [R 68] those responsible for the ordination of the blessed Timothy.<sup>8</sup>

(§93) Unable to endure such things and desperate, having become sated with grief in their souls, the people were inflamed by a martyr's zeal. Every day they drew up in a line of battle against the soldiers and stirred up a civil war with [acts of] killing and bloodshed.

(§94) The city magistrates and the so-called *stratelates* were afraid lest a city of the emperor's such as this should perish, al-

<sup>4</sup> Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 2:364 ("Dionysius 7, comes Aegypti 457").

<sup>5</sup> Also known as Taposiris Magna, modern-day Abūšīr, a city on Lake Mareotis, near Alexandria. See also Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 4.1 (Brooks, 1:117,17; Hamilton and Brooks, 65); Peter Grossmann, "Abūšīr," *CE* 1:34–36.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Latin *castrum*. Taposiris was once a fortress and Roman military camp, built after 378.

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *στρατιώται*.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Aelurus was in exile from 460 to 475.



though the emperor had not yet learned [of the events] and [the magistrates] had not yet reported to him these events, lest he be furious with them. In addition, the establishment<sup>2</sup> and the appointment of the new emperor Leo<sup>3</sup> already had been announced everywhere, so they immediately planned to cast Proterius out of the city and bring him somewhere and guard him until they had informed the emperor [and] he had issued command[s] concerning each of them as it pleased him.

(§95) When Proterius departed with the soldiers, one of them became moved by zeal and killed him on the fourth of Nisan,<sup>4</sup> twenty days after the ordination of the blessed Timothy.<sup>5</sup> [Proterius] had been sitting on the throne for five years and six months.<sup>6</sup> When this happened all the laypeople and soldiers immediately fled, [and] he was left cast down on the street, like a pig or a dog,<sup>7</sup> those [animals] like which he had become in his manners and in his mad passion, when he had drawn destruction upon himself. The [events], indeed, that then took place [and] that are thoroughly inappropriate [R 69] for an audience of the God-fearing, we leave to others to tell and to write.<sup>8</sup> For even if he deserved what he suffered,<sup>9</sup> it is not proper for us to hear things of this sort or to repeat [them]. Nevertheless, we see that the divine Word was fulfilled concerning him, as it is written, “Evil shall hunt the unjust man to [his] destruction,”<sup>10</sup> and this [word], “You

<sup>8</sup> For other accounts of these and related events, see *Pler.* 66; Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 4.2 (Brooks, 1:171; Hamilton and Brooks, 66); Evagrius Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* 2.8 (Bidez and Parmentier, 56; Whitby, 85); *Life of Longinus* 29–37 (Orlandi, 78–88; Vivian, 24–29); Theodore Lector, *Hist. eccl.*, epitome 368 (Hansen, 103–4); Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5950 [457/458 C.E.] (de Boor, 1:110–11; Mango and Scott, 170). See also the discussion in Vivian, “Humility and Resistance,” 6–9.

<sup>9</sup> Note Rufus’s conflicting expression of satisfaction as well as his continued concern for purity of mind in this instance.

<sup>10</sup> Ps 140:11.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ps 89:10; see also Job 40:11; Ps 119:21.

<sup>2</sup> See Prov 16:25.

<sup>3</sup> Job 21:30.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy Aelurus was patriarch of Alexandria from 457 to 460, was deposed, sent into exile, restored under Emperor Basiliscus in 475, and died in 477.

<sup>5</sup> This may include both pagans and Chalcedonian Christians. In either case, the outcome was that the number of anti-Chalcedonians in the city increased.

humbled the boastful ones like the ones who have been slain,”<sup>1</sup> and, “The Lord makes war against the boastful ones,”<sup>2</sup> and, “The wicked one is kept for the day of his slaughter.”<sup>3</sup>

(§96) When [news of] these [events] reached Emperor Leo, he was moved with compassion at the adversities that all this time had beset the city of the Alexandrians. Sparing those who were left, he commanded that the blessed Timothy, who had received the laying on of hand[s] from God, should enter and take his throne, so that this city should find peace and that the people might take a respite from and find consolation for those evils that had occurred. Th[ese remedies] were accomplished through the return of the blessed Timothy.<sup>4</sup> For filling the city everywhere there was to be seen joy and exultation and leaping for joy. Many crowds of unbelievers<sup>5</sup> were running to be baptized. In short, the city of the Alexandrians became heaven in those days.

(§97) After the blessed Timothy had remained in the episcopate for seven years,<sup>6</sup> again an envious demon, not suffering to see the salvation of men, with anger stirred up bishops everywhere to evil and [R 70] envious zeal, especially the one in Constantinople<sup>7</sup> and the one in Rome.<sup>8</sup> The establishment and glory and way of life and freedom [of speech] of the blessed one were shame and reproach to them, since daily the wicked Council of Chalcedon was anathematized publicly<sup>9</sup> by him and by the bishops under him, by the clergy, by the monks, and by the laypeople. When they resorted in a great rush on all sides both to gifts and to the protection<sup>10</sup> of the wicked ones, since it happened that those who were ruling at that time were overcome by love of money, they did not cease any earlier from their machination[s] and their evildoing until, after many [incidents of] homicide and bloodshed, they had caused the blessed Timothy to be banished into exile and to [be

<sup>6</sup> Difficult to reconcile, because Timothy held the patriarchate twice, first for three and a half years and again for one and a half years.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., Gennadios, 458–471

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Leo, 440–461.

<sup>9</sup> I.e., in the context of the liturgy.

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *προστασία*.



made to] go away to the city of Gangra,<sup>1</sup> where the crown of confession had been completed for the victory-clad and high priest Dioscorus, his fellow confessor.<sup>2</sup>

(§98) For this reason the blessed Peter could not, as was his prayer and his desire, depart from among the people and enjoy the quiet that was dear to him. After Archbishop Timothy left and was delivered up to exile by imperial command and authority, another man from the priests took his place by imperial command, whose name was [also] Timothy but [whose] name was rather called Salophaciolus<sup>3</sup> and [who] likewise held the evil opinion of the Chalcedonians. When Peter, the servant of God and fellow in zeal of the great [R 71] Moses,<sup>4</sup> saw the toil of the believing brothers, left between [the experience of] death and the desolation of those who were building them up and supporting them, and [as they were] running the risk of being shaken from the truth of the faith, he took on divine zeal, straining himself to the point of death, thinking about and meditating upon those most famous words of the Apostle, “Who is sick and I am not sick? Who is offended, and I do not burn?”<sup>5</sup> When he left [behind] the stillness beloved to him because it was in[appropriate] at the time, he went again to the city of the Alexandrians and to the holy monasteries surrounding it and to many other cities and villages of Egypt, secretly going around everywhere.<sup>6</sup> He was building up and supporting the crowds of the orthodox and, being another Apostle Paul, he was “all [things] to everyone,”<sup>7</sup> giving in word and in deed his way of life and his demeanor [as] an example for teaching the ways of life of the fear of God and divine zeal.<sup>8</sup> Now, all the wonders and great signs he accomplished there by divine grace and by the power adjoined to him, and how many healings and how many works of power, it is not within our weakness to de-

a fuller discussion of this *imitatio Mosis*, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 306–09.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor 11:29.

<sup>6</sup> This comment points to the underground activity in which Peter was engaged in Egypt to help build up and strengthen the anti-Chalcedonian community.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor 9:22.

<sup>8</sup> Note the emphasis on “fear of God” and “zeal” for God’s work as two related key concerns of anti-Chalcedonian identity.

<sup>1</sup> Rufus is sufficiently familiar with the phraseology of rhetorical humility.

<sup>3</sup> The members of this family display the conflicting attraction, being drawn to the Christian religion, on the one hand, and to the traditional intellectual exercise of philosophical inquiry, accompanied by magical experiments, on the other. Thus they exemplify well the ongoing struggle in the early Christian community of the fifth century between commitments to faith and to culture, seen as opposing forces.

<sup>4</sup> The reference to activities of magical consecrations taking place at the Serapeum indicates that paganism had not been completely eradicated in Alexandria in the middle of the fifth century. For further comments, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 179.



scribe.<sup>1</sup> We mention one or two, leaving the rest for those who encountered [them] through [their own] experience and sight to recount.

(§99) The daughter of one of the city's notables was sick with a severe sickness. She was his only [child, moreover,] and he loved her like an only [child].<sup>2</sup> Her mother was a lover [R 72] of Christ and a believer, and she greatly rejoiced in the saints. The father was indeed a Christian, but he was very much seized by the error and friendship of pagan philosophers.<sup>3</sup> Hence, when he received promises from a certain leader of the magicians that, if [the magician] were to take the girl and bring her at night to the Serapeum<sup>4</sup> and there perform on her rites<sup>5</sup> and [other] abominations of the arts of magic, he could heal her, he gladly obeyed and prepared to give the girl over [to him]. When her mother learned these [things] from a slave who [had become] aware of [it], who was a Christian and a strong believer,<sup>6</sup> immediately she sent for the blessed Peter, informing him about the plan of the devil. She asked that he not disregard her and her husband and the girl, who were running the risk of falling into a real death through provoking the Lord to anger. The blessed one heard this and was inflamed with zeal, crying out with a loud voice, "Lord, shall the wicked live?"<sup>7</sup> Having said this, immediately he took some of those saints who were with him in the night, and they went to the girl's mother. He found her sitting with her daughter and tearing [herself] apart with weeping and lamentations and at the same time ensuring that the girl would not be delivered over by her husband to the wicked [magician]. Commanding that all those [who] were superfluous should

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac corresponds to the Greek *τελευτάι*. Given that the setting is one of a sanctuary of a mystery religion, "rites" seems to be an appropriate translation, all the more so since *τελέω* is used in a context dealing with initiation into a mystery religion, and *τελεῖν ἑργά* means "to perform sacred rites." More literally, one might translate *ܬܠܥܬܐ* as "(a casting of) lots," "perfections," or "consecrations." See Payne Smith, 566. The Pešitta uses the word to render "Thummim," part of the sacred lots "Urim and Thummim." See, e.g., Exod 28:30 (not at Ezra 2:63, which has in LXX [and Pešitta] "high priest").

<sup>6</sup> Note the precious example Rufus provides here of the interactions between an early Christian woman and a slave in her household.

<sup>7</sup> See Job 21:7.



go outside,<sup>1</sup> he took oil and anointed the girl. After he had given her the holy mysteries, had consoled her mother with many words of consolation, and had encouraged her to trust undoubtedly in Christ, the Lord [R 73] of life, he returned to where he was staying. The next day that girl was suddenly found healthy and free from her severe sickness. The philosopher, however, [who] had contended with God was laid to rest. In this way the judgment of the saint, which he cried out when he was enraged, saying, “Lord, shall this wicked one be alive?” proceeded swiftly to [its] fulfillment, so that in all the city this wonder would become known and everyone would praise God on account of his grace given to his saints, and they would run to the blessed one and cleave to [him], and they would be strengthened more and more in the orthodox faith.

(§100) This sign also took place at that time. With those who were joined to him he was going at night to the house of a rich man to visit someone who was ill.<sup>2</sup> As he passed by a place where a very large statue<sup>3</sup> of Julian the Rebel<sup>4</sup> was standing, a demon performed the following apparition: the statue came down from its height and ran after them.<sup>5</sup> Those who were walking with him became aware of the crashing and commotion and saw this apparition. They were alarmed and cried out, calling on the blessed one to help them. He, while he seemed not to be aware of [it], knew well [what was going on and] continued on his way, without turning his back. But they were afraid and were holding fast to his garments, so the blessed one turned and called the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He breathed on that apparition, [R 74] and immediately it was dissolved like smoke [and] disappeared.<sup>6</sup>

(§101) The blessed one also used to recount an event that happened in those days in Alexandria. “A certain one of [our] friends

authors for that. See, e.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Julianum* 2.10 *et passim* (Burguière and Évieux, 224–27). See also above, p. 283, n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> This event visualizes at the hands of Rufus that under Julian the Apos-tate pagan idols came back to life.

<sup>6</sup> The act of breathing against what was perceived to be an evil spirit or a demon was a common feature of the early Christian baptismal ritual. See, e.g., Hippolytus, *Traditio Apostolica* 20 (Botte, 78–81). Also note the same gesture at *Pler.* 9 and 89.



convinced certain ones of the saints to come to his house and to bless him and take part with him at the table.<sup>1</sup> The Alexandrians are very diligent and lovers of labor for this cause [of hospitality].<sup>2</sup> This man, however, was one of the respected and notable people, and he also persuaded them to take me along. Although those fathers knew that my poverty has difficulty with such invitations because of great weakness,<sup>3</sup> nevertheless they stood [firm and] pressed me hard, saying that, since the man was one of the zealous and diligent ones, it was not right for us to offend him. When we came and reclined at table and were eating, he began to give orders to the slaves who were serving and to rebuke them with improper words, according to the evil custom of the world, like one who had forgotten with whom he was reclining and eating.<sup>4</sup>

(§102) “When he was carrying on with such words, a voice spoke to me, saying, ‘Peter, Peter,<sup>5</sup> my name is being blasphemed, and you are sitting and keeping quiet!’ Since no one else heard the voice,” as he said, “except I alone, I was disquieted and wept copiously, waiting to be made certain. When that voice came three times, when I could not withhold [my] tears, I withdrew myself from the midst of those others as if I were in a hurry because of a need. Thus I went out and ran to [my] cell, moaning and mourning [R 75] all the way. I was thinking how nothing, not even of those [things] that are thought to be little, is disregarded by the eye that does not sleep,<sup>6</sup> neither deed nor word. This, then, is what the wise Solomon said: ‘The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole earth, and the one who possesses everything has knowledge

most likely reason in the light of Peter’s later travel to the spring of Moses at Livias in search for healing. See *Vit. Pet.* §116 (R 83).

<sup>4</sup> Here one catches a glimpse of Peter’s self-perception. He expected people to respect him as someone striving for moral and ascetic purity.

<sup>5</sup> Again, the name “Peter,” spoken by the Lord when addressing him, is repeated. See above, *Vit. Pet.* §78 (R 54). Here it is stated explicitly that Peter heard the voice calling him three times. Note also that Peter breaks out in tears afterwards. It is possible that Rufus modeled this scene in parallel to John 21:15–17.

<sup>6</sup> See Ps 121:3–4.



of her<sup>2</sup> voice. Therefore there is no one who speaks iniquity and is hidden: he shall not escape from the judgment of reproof, and the hearing of his words shall come to the Lord for the reproof of his wicked deeds, because the ear of zeal<sup>3</sup> hears everything.’<sup>4</sup> In the Gospel our Lord said that ‘for [every] vain word we shall give account on the day of judgment.’<sup>5</sup>” Nevertheless, the blessed one said that from this came the cause of salvation and change toward the good for the one who had invited them, for the Lord does not wish the death of the sinner<sup>6</sup> but rather that he may turn back and live.

(§103) We must not omit the fearful and frightening account that the blessed one also recounted [and] that occurred at this time. He said, “When I was about to offer the oblation outside the city in one of the holy monasteries, certain friends, having come before the liturgy,<sup>7</sup> were recounting something that happened in the city, in which there was no edification or profit for those who were listening. I, however, kept silent, not approving of those things that were being said, [R 76] and [yet] I did not stop [them], because I did not [want to] put them to shame, for they were from among the illustrious ones of the city.<sup>8</sup> Passing them over in silence, I entered to offer the oblation. When I stood in front of the holy altar, I saw an angel, fearful in his appearance and frightening, who came [toward me] with fury and grasped me at my waist,<sup>9</sup> wanting to throw me down out of the window. I, while weeping and wailing, asked what the reason for this was. He said, ‘Before you were about to enter to the service of God and to stand in front of the holy altar, why did you give heed to such words?’ I said, ‘You know, Lord, that I did not consent to them, not even in appearance and nothing at all of those things that were said entered my heart.’ He replied, ‘But why did you give heed to hear such vain words at all?’ Not

<sup>3</sup> A marginal note in MS A here says, “the ear of the zeal of God.”

<sup>4</sup> See Wis 1:7–10.

<sup>5</sup> See Matt 12:36.

<sup>6</sup> See Ezek 33:11.

<sup>7</sup> More specifically and literally, “before the consecration.”

<sup>8</sup> Here Peter showed regard for human rank.

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “at my middle part.”





one of those who were near heard these [words], and no [one] saw the vision of the angel but I alone; however, they did see that I was trembling and groaning and mourning in pain. Finally that angel said, ‘Behold, it is forgiven you this one time. Henceforth, be careful when you are about to stand in front of the altar and celebrate the mysteries that you may stand pure and clean, guarding yourself from every captivity and vanity of words!’<sup>1</sup> Having said this, the angel disappeared.” The blessed one kept this [admonition] diligently even to [his] last breath.

(§104) Now all these [things] and things like them and even greater [ones] [R 77] having been made known to the fathers in Palestine, to the brethren, and to the orthodox people, they stirred all of them up and inflamed [them] with love for their holy father and bishop. Many saints from Palestine came to him, [earnestly] entreating him also to visit his flock in Palestine, since it was rightfully his flock, and not to neglect it, which all this time was left widowed<sup>2</sup> of his superintendence and of his spiritual teaching.

(§105) When he had thus passed no little time in Alexandria and in the rest of Egypt and had sufficiently edified them and strengthened them, finally being persuaded, as I have said, or rather, [as] it was commanded to him by God, without whom he did nothing, he returned to the regions of Palestine.<sup>3</sup> He came to the city of Ashkelon<sup>4</sup> and was joyfully received by the fathers and brothers there. He stayed in a village called Palaea,<sup>5</sup> about ten stades from the city. While he dwelt there many were coming to him from every place; he strengthened some, and some he enlightened [and] added to the orthodox church. Others he incited to renounce the vanity of the world entirely, persuading [them] to run after perfection, to distribute their possessions to the poor,

at the same time expresses that the theology of the episcopacy sees the role of the bishop defined along gender lines and the office to be held by a male.

<sup>3</sup> Peter seems to have returned to Palestine around 475.

<sup>4</sup> For the location and references to relevant ancient literature on Ashkelon, see, e.g., Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 68–70. See also Lawrence E. Stager, “Ashkelon,” *NEAEHL* 1:103–12.

<sup>5</sup> Syriac ܩܠܥܐ in MS A and ܩܠܥܐ in MS B. On Palaea, see Charles Clermont-Ganneau, “Sur quelques localités de Palestine mentionnées dans la Vie de Pierre l’Ibère,” in idem, *Etudes d’archéologie orientale* (2 vols.; BEHE 44, 113; Paris: Bouillon, 1895–97), 2:2–9; and Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 200.



and taking up the cross of Christ to cleave to him alone. Among them [were] the blessed Procopius, who was chaste in everything and who in truth represented the man of God,<sup>1</sup> and Cyril,<sup>2</sup> that sheep [R 78] of Christ, [both of whom] he led out from the world and brought to the place of the angels, and Theodore,<sup>3</sup> a lawyer, who in the end was also the recipient of his evangelical way of life and of his zeal and of the governance of his monastery, together with Abba John,<sup>4</sup> the venerable old man, the one who was dear and beloved and who was adorned with every monastic virtue, especially with humility. He attracted to the army of Christ many others, not only men but also women.<sup>5</sup> He urged them to take up the sweet yoke of virginity, and he prepared for the Lord a people abundant and zealous for good works. For this end he frequently made trips from place to place. Sometimes, on the one hand, he headed off to the places that are at the shore of Gaza, called Maiuma,<sup>6</sup> sometimes, on the other hand, to those in the direction of Caesarea<sup>7</sup> and Jerusalem, as far as the regions of Arabia.<sup>8</sup> Wherever the Spirit<sup>9</sup> was calling and leading him, in every place he [the Spirit] also bestowed grace on him, not only to perform healings and to chase away evil spirits but also in word, in teaching, and by many signs and wonders, so that everywhere he might establish through his arrival flocks of believers, congregations of orthodox,

whose experience is discussed *Vit. Pet.* §§154 and 160 (R 115–116, 120) and who is the most prominent female recruit of Peter the Iberian, was a native of Tyre. Eventually she settled in a monastery south of Caesarea.

<sup>6</sup> Note that, when returning from Egypt, Peter did not immediately re-settle in his former monastic headquarters in Maiuma, likely because the base of support for anti-Chalcedonians in that location was not strong enough at the time.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., Caesarea Maritima. See Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 94–96.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of Peter's missionary activity, especially among the population east of the Jordan in the *provincia Arabia*, see Horn, "Chapter in the Pre-history of the Christological Controversies"; eadem, "Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown."

<sup>9</sup> Note that "Spirit" here is masculine, whereas earlier it is feminine.



monasteries, and churches. Since he had accepted the apostolic contest and race,<sup>1</sup> there was no place he went where he did not offer to the Lord the salvation of many souls.

(§106) At this time,<sup>2</sup> while he was dwelling near the city of Ashkelon, there occurred by the will of God [R 79] the recall and return from exile of the blessed confessor and archbishop Timothy, after Basiliscus<sup>3</sup> had come to the throne and by an imperial document [called] the *Encyclikon*<sup>4</sup> had anathematized all of the novelty of the decree that had been presumptuously confected at Chalcedon against the orthodox faith by the hypocritical bishops.<sup>5</sup> The light of the orthodox faith and the truth of the straight and apostolic teachings once again shone forth and became strong, and the professions [confirmed] in writing<sup>6</sup> were being proclaimed. It was a feast of exultation and of spiritual joy that took hold of the God-fearers' souls.

(§107) At this time the one [who is] useless to everyone,<sup>7</sup> having been called to the priesthood, was dwelling in the catholic church of God of the city of Antioch and hither to this time had been esteemed worthy to be guarded against being in communion with the heretical leaven,<sup>8</sup> whereas he had received [communion rather] from the fathers.

(§108) Yet after two years of adherence to the orthodox faith in this good state,<sup>9</sup> again the envy of the devil and his all-defiled evil called up wickedness, while taking as justification the many

also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 170–71 with n. 1. On the encyclical, see E. Dove, “L’*Εγκύκλιον Βασιλίσκου*: Un caso di normativa imperiale in Oriente su temi di dogmatica teologica,” *Studia et documenta historiae et juris* 51 (1985): 153–88. In promulgating the encyclical, Basiliscus set a model for Zeno’s *Henoticon*. On Basiliscus, see Timothy E. Gregory, “Basiliskos,” *ODB* 1:267.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, “by bishops who openly accepted it.”

<sup>6</sup> Literally, “the professions that are in writing,” probably the creedal statements of Nicaea or the conciliar *horoi*. Note also the emphasis on “written documents” above, at *Vit. Pet.* §21 (R 14). See also §§176, 180 (R 132–133, 135).

<sup>7</sup> It is very likely that the author is referring to himself here. For a fuller discussion of the relevance of the following section for identifying the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi*, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 31–38.

<sup>8</sup> See Matt 16:6–12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1.

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *κατάστασις*.



wicked deeds and transgressions of those who were wantonly living in the world. It brought it to pass that there would be another writing, the *Anti-Encyclikon*,<sup>1</sup> on the one hand to overturn the first *Encyclikon*, which was according to the straight [path], and on the other hand to establish and renew the evil faith [proclaimed] at Chalcedon.

(§109) During that time of tranquility the blessed Peter was urged by [R 80] Archbishop Timothy to come to him to Alexandria, and after a long time they [again] corresponded concerning [their] mutual welfare. [Yet Peter] was unwilling to do this, on the one hand because he conducted himself according to his custom of quietness and humility, and on the other hand, by letters<sup>2</sup> of friendship and through an embassy of many holy fathers of Palestine, having shown forth due honor to the archbishop, he excused himself [and] remained dwelling in the regions of Palestine.

(§110) When therefore the repeal of the *Encyclikon* arrived and the *Anti-Encyclikon* was substituted for it, Zeno, having cast out Basiliscus, again assumed the reign.<sup>3</sup> When the holy Timothy was already about to be sent again into exile a second [time] by imperial authority, God, the one who decides the contest of the saints and justly bestows crown[s] to those who fight on account of his name, saw that the high priest Timothy had finished his course<sup>4</sup>

as representative of an extreme position with regard to a two-nature Christology and Eutyches as representative of the extreme position with respect to a one-nature Christology, the document never addressed the problem inherent in the choice of “nature” terminology. The basis of the proposed union between the opposing parties were the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and Cyril of Alexandria’s Twelve Anathemas. It should be noted, however, that there was probably no “Creed” promulgated at Constantinople in the manner that the Council of Nicaea had done. See Luise Abramowski, “Was hat das Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum (C) mit dem Konzil von Konstantinopel (381) zu tun?” *Theologie und Philosophie* 67 (1992): 481–513. In any case, agreement with Chalcedon’s decrees was not required. On the anti-Chalcedonian side, the *Henotikon* was received by many, but not by the more radical, strongly committed anti-Chalcedonians. Rufus presents Peter the Iberian as one of the latter group. The lack of mention of the *Tome of Leo* also caused suspicion in Rome. Instead of leading to union, a schism arose between Rome and Constantinople, the so-called Acacian Schism from 482 to 519.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Tim 4:7.





and fought the good fight<sup>1</sup> and kept the apostolic faith to the end without transgression, in much patience, in calamities, in persecutions, in deprivations,<sup>2</sup> [and] in exiles,<sup>3</sup> persevering until death. He transferred him to the place of life reserved for him at a ripe old age, with glory and honor, on his throne with his flock, having lived only two years after [his] exile, having been bishop [for] twenty-two years, three before [his] exile and seventeen in exile and two after [his] exile. As soon as he had finished his life, at that [very] moment when through the *quaestor*<sup>4</sup> Martyrius<sup>5</sup> the command arrived [R 81] to go into exile, it brought everyone to amazement and glorification [of God], when they saw how [God] exerts great effort on account of those who love him, glorifying those who glorify him, and not allowing them to be tried more than what they are able to [bear].<sup>6</sup>

(§111) Now when thus the heretics' error of the two natures had yet again entered the holy churches of God and Peter, the archbishop of Antioch,<sup>7</sup> and Paul of Ephesus<sup>8</sup> were cast into exile, the blessed Peter, dwelling in Palestine, was a support for everyone. In the likeness of the light of the sun he was enlightening the souls of the orthodox, not only those in Palestine but also in Egypt and everywhere else, for he did not allow them to be weary and depressed by the dark fog of ungodliness.

(§112) [Meanwhile,] the church in Antioch had been delivered up to the foul name Calendion,<sup>9</sup> a man who was a hard and

<sup>5</sup> Martyrius was *quaestor* when Aelurus died. On him, see also Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 2:732 ("Martyrius 3").

<sup>6</sup> See 1 Cor 10:13.

<sup>7</sup> Also known as Peter the Fuller. In 470 he emerged as leader of the anti-Chalcedonians in Antioch. He occupied the throne of the See of Antioch from 475 to 477. Having signed Zeno's *Henotikon*, Peter the Fuller was patriarch of Antioch from 484 to his death in 489.

<sup>8</sup> On Paul of Ephesus, see Ernest Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (CSCO 127, Subsidia 2; Leuven: Durbecq, 1951), 3–4, 119.

<sup>9</sup> In 481, Acacius consecrated Calendion as pro-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch. Calendion held the throne of the church of Antioch until 484.



rapacious wolf,<sup>1</sup> who did not spare [his] flock, and [who was] a zealot<sup>2</sup> of the heresies that were [taught] in Chalcedon. At this time the useless servant who was mentioned before<sup>3</sup> separated himself from the harm[ful peril] and the fellowship of this [Calendion], who for a long time had had brotherly love and familiar acquaintance with Theodore, the ex-laywer who was mentioned [above], since [the days when they] dwelt together in Beirut.<sup>4</sup> [Theodore] had left the regions of Syria and hastened to the Promised Land,<sup>5</sup> I mean to Palestine, [R 82] [and this same] Theodore, [his] friend and brother, who was mentioned previously, many times urged him in letters to come and visit and benefit from the saints in Palestine, and especially from the great Peter [the Iberian], the living martyr.

(§113) So when he came to Palestine and through him [Theodore] was esteemed worthy to get to know and become acquainted with this saint, he found such grace with him by the mercies of the merciful God, who came to call the sinners to repentance,<sup>6</sup> that immediately he became for the saint a sharer in [his] communion and a companion of [his] ministry. He was so motivated toward faithfulness and love for him that he would think he was seeing Peter, the head of the apostles,<sup>7</sup> and [that he] was near him and conversing with him, enjoying the divine gifts that he possessed. He made supplication to God that he might be worthy of the protection of such [a man] and of adherence to [him] until the end, [something] that God, the friend of man,<sup>8</sup> who is ready to pardon and plentiful in mercies,<sup>9</sup> granted. He stirred the heart of the saint to such sympathy and love toward this useless

the contributions in Linda Jones Hall, ed., *Confrontation in Late Antiquity: Imperial Presentation and Regional Adaptation* (Cambridge: Orchard Academic Press, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> More literally, "the Land of Promise."

<sup>6</sup> Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32.

<sup>7</sup> Rufus takes considerable effort throughout his work to cast Peter the Iberian into clear parallel with the apostle Peter. For a discussion of the implications of that parallel for questions of leadership and church authority, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 180–181.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 138, note 4 for a discussion of God as friend.

<sup>9</sup> Ps 103:8.



one that he accepted him and made him [his] fellow-monk. He did everything to look after his salvation like a merciful father,<sup>2</sup> so that while removing him from the bonds of death and from his evil habits, he put him on the true way of repentance.<sup>3</sup> He presented to the Lord [this] lost sheep, like that Good Shepherd,<sup>4</sup> bearing him with joy on his shoulders and calling together his beloved friends and his neighbors to share [his] joy in finding him.<sup>5</sup>

(§114) On account of this, fear took [R 83] hold of him,<sup>6</sup> and unceasing grief was eating up his heart lest the knowledge of such a saint and dwelling with [someone like him] should become a greater condemnation or a severe cause for exacting punishment on him.<sup>7</sup> For, on the one hand, he was esteemed worthy to see and hear many things that can bring even hearts of stone to sensibility and to true repentance, while, on the other hand, he might persist in his blindness and his hardness of heart. His only hope for mercy is again the prayers of this saint, if he has not [already] been completely rejected.<sup>8</sup>

(§115) The kind[s] of things the writer was deemed worthy to see personally or to experience or that he heard from the mouth of that truth-loving and undeceitful saint I will put down carefully, [although but] a few out of many,<sup>9</sup> even if the word is full of fear and inadequate for the account.<sup>10</sup>

(§116) On one occasion it pleased the blessed one to go to the regions of Arabia to bathe in the hot spring<sup>11</sup> because of his infirmity. [This spring] is at Livias [and is] called “St. Moses’

exemplary Christian also demanded seriousness, responsibility, and accountability on the part of the people who interacted with him, including Rufus.

<sup>8</sup> This remark indicates that the author expected and intended to rely on the intercession of Peter the Iberian. It is likely that this comment was written after Peter’s death, when his body was deposited under the altar of the church of the Maiuma Monastery. See also *Vit. Pet.* §§124, 128, 147, 148, 152, 162–163, 191, and especially 192 (R 92–93, 95, 110–11, 114, 121, 144, 145).

<sup>9</sup> For another instance of an author highlighting the selectivity of his account, see John 20:30–31; 21:24–25.

<sup>10</sup> Rufus knows well where to insert self-deprecatory rhetorical phrases.

<sup>11</sup> Lit., “heat.”



[Spring].”<sup>2</sup> For already since his earliest age he treated his body with insolence and inflicted it with severe pain from many toils and various [kinds of] asceticism. That body having vanished, only skin was spread out over the dried-up bones, and this [skin] was very thin. In his old age now, he became so infirm that every day even the little morsel of food that he took he would immediately throw up in obstinate vomiting with blood and lacerations. All those who saw him taking part in the suffering had given up hope for the [re]establishment of his strength. One of the saints, [R 84] uneducated<sup>3</sup> in speech but wise in understanding, seeing that he was thus wounded from vomiting, said while everyone was listening, “As the soul of this saint has nothing in it from [what is] of this world, so his flesh also refuses [to] retain anything from [what is] of this world.”

(§117) Nevertheless, after such torment and torture, when he was ready to retire in the evening, having taken two or three eggs or a few morsels<sup>4</sup> [of bread], by the grace of God he slept, preserved by the power of God. [So that] we might see [the words] of the Apostle fulfilled in him: “I live, yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me,”<sup>5</sup> the next day his face<sup>6</sup> would be so shining like the light of the sun, with divine grace flashing in it.<sup>7</sup> So [then] he wanted to go to Livias, where there was a hot spring,<sup>8</sup> rather it was God who called his servant there to catch and save many souls.<sup>9</sup>

(§118) We came to Livias, and many ran there from the nearby region of Arabia, especially from among the first men and the magistrates of the city of Madeba<sup>10</sup> and from other places, for the news concerning him that had hurried ahead was summoning all of them, since they were anxious to be blessed and to enjoy his grace. When he had used the bath of that hot spring for one

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac seems to transliterate the Greek ψίχια, “crumb,” “morsel,” or “bit.”

<sup>5</sup> Gal 2:20.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek πρόσωπον.

<sup>7</sup> See Exod 34:30.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “a source of heat.”

<sup>9</sup> Thus the rationale behind Peter’s missionary and proselytizing efforts was seen as being grounded in a divine commissioning.

<sup>10</sup> For references to Madeba and the Madeba Map, see lxxviii n. 197.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the site, see Christa Clamer, "The Hot Springs of Kallirrhoe and Baarou," in Piccirillo and Alliata, *Madaba Map Centenary*, 221–25.

<sup>3</sup> See Deut 31:4. Note, however, that the quotation does not occur in the Scriptures as words spoken by God.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “encircling [it].” For several decades extensive excavations







day only, he excused himself thenceforth from entering it, saying that he had received not the slightest palpable benefit from it, because it was very cold. Some coming from Arabia were saying [R 85] that there is also another hot spring in their region that is very hot and beneficial, at the [place] called Ba'ar,<sup>1</sup> and they strongly persuaded him to use it. He readily obeyed because he knew why he had been called there by God. On the next day the journey led us to Madeba. Halfway there we arrived at the holy mountain of Moses, called Abarim, that is, Pisgah,<sup>2</sup> where God had said to him, "Ascend and die!"<sup>3</sup> On it is a worshipful temple, very large, in the name of the prophet and many monasteries built around it in a circle.<sup>4</sup> We were joyous to come together at the place with the Old Man<sup>5</sup> and offered prayers of thanksgiving to God, who had esteemed us worthy of the blessing and the veneration of such a prophet. When we were there, after prayer and veneration, the Old Man led us into a small cell that was five cubits wide and long and not very bright. He told [us], "I remember when I was a boy, and I recently had come from the Royal City.<sup>6</sup> I came to this mountain [to see such] a sight and to pray. When I heard that one of the great Scetian<sup>7</sup> saints was dwelling here in quiet who had departed from Scetis with all the monks who were there when the band of robbers of the Maziks fell upon the monaster-

have been carried out on and around Mount Nebo. For reports, see Hilary Schneider, *Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1950); Sylvester Saller and Bellarmino Bagatti, *The Town of Nebo (Khirbet el-Mekhayyat): With a Brief Survey of Other Ancient Christian Monuments in Transjordan* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1949); Sylvester Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo* (3 vols.; PSBF 1; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1941). For references to additional literature, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 181–184 *et passim*.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., Peter the Iberian. "Old" also carries the connotation of "spiritual" and "wise" with it.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., Constantinople.

<sup>7</sup> Or "Scetiote," i.e., monks from the desert of Scetis in Egypt. "Scetiote" would normally be , not  ("a Scythian"), yet the Syriac author or scribe at times replaces  with  in the transcription of Greek words. This could again be such an instance. See also 170 n. 3 above.



ies there,<sup>1</sup> I persuaded the sacristan<sup>2</sup> of the mountain to allow me the blessing and sight of him. It was in this cell that you are seeing where that blessed one dwelt for forty years, not going outside of the door nor crossing the threshold, an ascetic man, a prophet, and one full of divine grace. We were three: I, my blessed John,<sup>3</sup> and some other [R 86] monk, a Cappadocian by race, who was traveling with us.<sup>4</sup> Because he was a deacon<sup>5</sup> in his country, fleeing from the burden of the ministry, he came to Jerusalem and dwelt there in quiet. But we did not know each other and were unknown to those who were here. [They did not know] who we were and from where [we came]. But when the old man gave us permission to enter to him and saw that we had entered, he immediately said, 'You are welcome, Nabarnugios son of Bosmarios son of Bosmarios.'<sup>6</sup> I was very amazed at [his] utterance and was seized by much fear and trembling. The old man spoke again, saying to us, 'Recite the prayer!' We, being laymen, kept silence, but he continued saying the same. Since I was daring then [and] headstrong, I said, 'Forgive us, lord Abba, we are sinners and laymen.' He stretched out his hand toward the Cappadocian [and] said 'Deacon, recite the prayer! Do not hide the grace!' Once the prayer was [finished], for how could he not be willing to do [it] when such a saint commanded [him], he bade us to sit. After having given us by his

by appointment, not by ordination, but ordained clergy also held this position. See Paul Magdalino, "Prosmonarios," *ODB* 3:1739.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., John the Eunuch.

<sup>4</sup> That a Cappadocian monk was accompanying Peter and John on their short pilgrimage to Mount Nebo might indicate that Peter and John's long pilgrimage journey from Constantinople to Jerusalem also led them through Cappadocia. While possible, this is certainly not necessary. Their contact with that deacon, however, establishes a significant link to Cappadocian theology. Especially the ideas of Basil of Caesarea can be detected at several instances in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, most explicitly at §§150, 179 (R 113, 135). See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 157, 200 *et passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Pace Raabe, 83, who reads "slave." Schwartz (*Johannes Rufus*, 27) suggests "deacon," which we have accepted.

<sup>6</sup> For Peter's genealogy, see *Vit. Pet.* §6 (R 5).

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<sup>1</sup> So MS B. MS A has *ܠܥܡܠܐ* ("labor" or "work").

<sup>2</sup> Reading with MS A, one could perhaps translate "for they are [tired] from the labor."

<sup>3</sup> On the significance of this encounter between Peter the Iberian and the Scetian monk, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 181–82, 309.

<sup>4</sup> This vessel of oil and mercy may have had a function similar to that of sarcophagi of martyrs that exuded oil, which was mixed with dust, water, and

grace many divine and saving words and stories and consolations, finally after the table for the soul he said to [his] cell-mate, 'Take the brethren and refresh them, for they are from the world!'<sup>2</sup>

(§119) "The next day, however, when we entered to him to receive a blessing and to be dismissed with a prayer, he received [us] joyfully. Having again spoken to us a few words for [our] benefit, he prayed [and] dismissed us. As we were going out, he took [hold of] my coat and kept me [back]. Yet when I turned to him, he made signs to me with his hand that I should remain [behind]. He let [R 87] those others go out, while I remained. He commanded me to sit down on some small chair that was set there, and he said, 'This fire of his love that God has given you, hardly anyone was esteemed worthy to have it in this generation. Take heed, then, that you do not quench it but keep it securely! Do not dwell with any other man except with this brother who came with you!' indicating the blessed John the Eunuch. 'God is going to demand an answer from you if anyone should come to you, either bishop or clergyman or monk or layman, [and] you remain silent and do not teach him the judgments and the commandments of God.' He said those things because he foresaw in the Spirit and announced the gift of the priesthood of which I, one who was not at all worthy of it, was going to be esteemed worthy. I was troubled at [his] word and wept bitterly, saying, 'Who am I that your holiness is commanding these things to me, who have not yet not even begun to be a disciple?' He said to me, 'What you have heard, you have heard.' In this way, having held my head and kissed it, he finished the prayer and dismissed me."<sup>3</sup>

(§120) There at that time we learned from those who were dwelling on the mountain how those who built the temple had been fully assured that the body of the holy Moses was laid there, above which the temple was built, the table and the altar set up, and under the altar the vessel of oil and mercy,<sup>4</sup> even though the divine Scripture clearly says thus, "Moses, the servant of the

the relics of saints or at times with earth taken from the holy places to anoint the sick or impart blessings at other occasions. See Payne Smith, 149; Wilhelm Gessel, "Das Öl der Märtyrer: Zur Funktion und Interpretation der Ölsarkophage von Apamea in Syrien," *OrChr* 72 (1988): 183–202. Sebastian Brock kindly provided clarification of this point.



Lord, died in the land of Moab according to the word of the Lord, **[R 88]** and they buried him in the land on the side of Beth Pe'or, and no one knows of his end until this day."<sup>1</sup> They told us that a certain shepherd from the village of Nebo,<sup>2</sup> which is situated at the southern side<sup>3</sup> of the mountain, brought his flock up to this place while shepherding it. Coming toward it, he saw as in a vision a very great cave, full of much light and sweet odor and splendor. Being amazed—for nothing like this had ever been seen in this place—he was strengthened by divine strength [and] dared to go down [in]to this cave. He saw a venerable old man whose face was shining<sup>4</sup> and full of all grace, reclining as it were on a bed, bright and flashing with glory and grace. When he understood that this was the holy Moses, he immediately ran to the village with fear and great joy, hastening to make known the vision to those who were there. Since he had been made wise by God, he gathered small stones and raised up many cairns in the place where he had seen the vision, thinking that perhaps after he went away this place would again become unknown, and this is what happened.

**(§121)** When the [inhabitants] of the village heard [about it], all of them ran in a throng to the vision and were looking for this cave. The shepherd said, calling God as a witness, "In that place where these cairns are set I saw the vision, and I went down to this cave and saw the holy prophet. I therefore raised up these cairns so that even if the prophet would again be hidden at the command of God, nevertheless these cairns would make the place known." When thus they and many **[R 89]** other saints were convinced that the vision was true, all the inhabitants ran together and brought those things needed for a building. This temple was built in the name of the great prophet and law-giver, publicly and indubitably proclaiming to everyone his grace and his power through signs, wonders, and healings, which from that time have continually been performed in this place. For it is a house of healing of souls and of bodies for all people, and a place of refuge for all those who arrive here from every place and who are in sorrow within [their] soul and are seized by various sufferings.

**(§122)** After we prayed there and had been graced with the

<sup>3</sup> Accepting the reading of MS B.

<sup>4</sup> See Exod 34:30, 35.





prayers of the great prophet, we arrived at the aforementioned town,<sup>1</sup> while the Lord was leading and protecting us and was glorifying his name and his servant through signs and wonders that he performs [now] and also performed then. That region was afflicted by a great lack of rain, so that not only the plants and seeds were in danger but also the inhabitants themselves, since they were being tormented by a great drought. There was not one comfort for them from the drought, neither for them nor for their animals. Especially for this reason those who came were anxious that the saint should go to this region. Their hope did not fail them. As we journeyed on the way and were approaching the boundaries of the town, the sky itself suddenly covered over [with] clouds and thunder sounded and [flashes of] lightning went forth. Such an abundance of rain, [R 90] or rather, a blessing of God, came down and watered that whole region so that we, indeed, were in danger of being drowned on the way. All the water reservoirs,<sup>2</sup> those of each [individual] and those of the public, were filled from the blessing. They restored the crops to life in one short moment. All of them being amazed, they went out together to meet with the saint with fear and trembling and joy and eulogies, kissing and embracing him. And they were calling him a second Elijah and Moses, the former, on the one hand, as one who at the time of lack of rain opened the heaven[s] after three years,<sup>3</sup> the latter, on the other hand, as one who brought forth water from solid rock for those who were in danger from thirst.<sup>4</sup> It was also the season that magnified the wonder, for it was a few days before Pentecost. Therefore they ran to him in this way with love and faith and were listening to his God-inspired teachings, so that many from among them would cheerfully obey the preaching of the orthodox faith with their children and their wives and would become our associates and fellow brethren in the faith and zealous for the perfection of the church.

(§123) After these [things] we went down to that [place] called Ba'ar,<sup>5</sup> where the hot spring is. There went down together with

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Kgs 18.

<sup>4</sup> See Exod 17; Egeria, *Diary* 11.2 (Franceschini and Weber, 51; Gingras, 67).

<sup>5</sup> See Clamer, "The Hot Springs," 222–23, 224–25.



us, for the honor and pleasure of the saint, both their magistrates and a great multitude, not only from the city but also from those soldiers stationed there,<sup>1</sup> and many others. With this they were anxious [R 91] that also on his account they would use the bath there [so] easily. Because of the desolation of that place and fear, rarely was anyone coming there before this. When we came there, we all saw wonders. For this place is a deep valley and enclosed on all sides by high mountains. Boiling streams of hot water are poured out not only from below the ground but also from above from the mountains, thus making that whole valley so hot that those surrounding mountains turn black with the dense smoke [cloud]s that are continually in them like a chimney receiving smoke. On account of the sweltering heat of the air, in the wintertime [and] only under difficulty do inhabitants from the region who seek to go down and refresh themselves in the hot spring assemble in a crowd to do this, and immediately return to their homes, since they cannot endure the severity of the heat. Nevertheless, all those days the blessed one was there the temperature of the air and breathing space [were] so pleasant that when a gentle wind blew it would seem that a dewy wind blew, as was the furnace of the Chaldaeans for those three children.<sup>2</sup> Those who had gone down with us, being amazed, would say, "Never have we seen wonders as these!"

(§124) There was another wonder on account of which they would believe more and would become strengthened. It is this: Those who used to go down there in the winter, as we said before, [R 92] because there were no houses there and it is not possible that a hostelry be built in that valley because of the heat of the air, when they gathered reeds from the torrent that flowed in the middle of the valley, which is called Arnon,<sup>3</sup> they made for themselves many booths, fastened to each other. When they departed

tirely Christian village, around the city of Madeba of Arabia [which is also] called Karaiatha; from the tenth marker of the Madebean area to the west along Bara." A Roman-period legion was stationed at "Castrum Arnonensia," primarily to guard the road from Elath to Bozrah, where it crossed the Arnon Valley. See "Arnon," *EncJud* 3:487; Kaswalder, *Onomastica Biblica*, 49, 277.

<sup>2</sup> See Dan 3:50 (LXX), πνεῦμα δρόσου.

<sup>3</sup> River in Transjordan, second largest river after the Jordan in the Dead Sea drainage basin (see "Arnon," *EncJud* 3:486–87).

<sup>1</sup> Exod 17:11–12.  
<sup>2</sup> See also Exod 17:1–7.  
<sup>3</sup> The same phrase from Isa 58:9 was already used; see *Vit. Pet.* §53 (R).

then and the time of the summer arrived and no one came there, those very booths, truly worn out and deserted, became dried up by the heat and parched. Those who went down with us, when they found them prepared, lodged in them. [The booths] were many, and they were joined to each other. When someone kindled a fire as one does for one's need, a spark leapt out and laid hold of the reeds. When these reeds blazed up immediately like stubble into which fire is blown, they transmitted [the fire] also to the adjoining booths. Therefore in a short instant all of them were crumbled together and turned into ashes. The fire rose up to such a height that there were wailings and laments and groans as if they had lost all those [things] that were found in the booths. At that time the blessed one, while he was weeping and in fear as the one for whose sake they all had gone down, stood in front of all of them and stretched out his hands to heaven.<sup>1</sup> And while his mouth was silent, in his heart only he was crying out to God like Moses.<sup>2</sup> O the ineffable power and compassion for humanity of God, who said to those who are worthy of him, "While you are still speaking, I say, 'Behold, I am near!'"<sup>3</sup> For while no one was able or [R 93] dared to quench with water the conflagration of all those booths, all of them immediately became dust and ashes, for they were reeds, and [moreover] dried reeds. Nevertheless, not one of the men, nor an animal, nor a vessel, nor an [outer] garment was found burnt and perished, except for only a pack-saddle of one donkey, so that it would become known to everyone that the prayer and the intercession<sup>4</sup> of the saint alone stopped the violence of the fire and provided such a deliverance.

(§125) There happened there another wonder. For although those who had experience of that place made known to us that such swarms of flies pestered and tormented those who would go down there, not only covering earth and air but also biting their bodies so that they would [want to] give up their life, nevertheless on those few days the blessed one was there, hardly any fly was seen in those places.<sup>5</sup>

(§126) There is in that place another sight worthy of wonder. There is a cave there, and from one wall of the cave two holes about

<sup>4</sup> See also above, *Vit. Pet.* §115 (R 83).

<sup>5</sup> Exod 8:31.

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<sup>1</sup> For dimensions of ancient cisterns, see Patrich, *Sabas*, 81 fig. 25, 83 fig. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Clamer, "The Hot Springs," 222–23; Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 241–43, 252–53.

<sup>3</sup> Peter, his followers, and people from the local area thus stayed at the hot spring of Ba'ar only for a few days, probably only for the celebrations of the Feast of the Ascension, right before Pentecost. Note the reference to Pentecost earlier, at §122 (R 90). A number of reasons may have motivated Peter and his followers to celebrate such a significant feast in the relative seclusion and wilderness of a small site east of the Dead Sea. One might have been Peter's desire to withdraw from the crowds, albeit unsuccessfully here. The spirituality of the feast that commemorates Christ's final withdrawal from this world into the heavenly realm also lent itself to being celebrated in a more remote

the measure of a cubit apart from each other issue forth water, one very cold, the other very hot, and to such an extent that no one can touch it. There is, however, in the middle of the cave [a depth that is] in breadth and height and depth like the measure of a cistern.<sup>1</sup> The hot [water] together with the cold [water] flows and comes down from both holes, perfecting a well-tempered, **[R 94]** natural bath that those going down to [the water] use, enjoying profit from [the water].<sup>2</sup>

(§127) After we had thus celebrated there the holy Feast of the Ascension of our Lord,<sup>3</sup> we returned again to Madeba. Not only the people of the town but also [those] of the villages and of the farms on the way were going out with joy and faith to meet [the saint] and were running to him and were receiving a blessing, especially because they had heard [of] those wonders that had happened in the valley. While we were entering the town, however, someone of note among the soldiers whose name was Qaiuma,<sup>4</sup> who was sterile or had a barren wife,<sup>5</sup> because of which he did not have children, approached us, asking us [earnestly] to entreat the blessed<sup>6</sup> one to pray for them<sup>7</sup> that they might have children. We said to him, “We cannot do this, but it is for you to take Moses, the magistrate”—a believing and orthodox man, a wise [man], who also received us to lodge with him<sup>8</sup>—“and he will fall down in front of the saint and beseech him, for we do not dare

space, withdrawn from the world. Another reason may have been that, as an anti-Chalcedonian, Peter felt he could not or did not want to celebrate such a significant feast in a larger city that was not in anti-Chalcedonian hands. That Peter did not celebrate Pentecost in Madeba but in the little village of Batmin (see *Vit. Pet.* §130 [R 96]) might also point in that direction. Since Rufus, however, does not specify a reason, no final clarity can be reached.

<sup>4</sup> The name is of Aramaic origin.

<sup>5</sup> Rufus’s comment here helpfully reflects a way of thinking that did not lay blame for barrenness exclusively on the shoulders of the wife. For contemporary knowledge concerning women’s health and fertility, see Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity*, 63–93.

<sup>6</sup> One catches here another glimpse at the practice of obtaining favors through a go-between intercessor.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, “to pray over them.” The prayer may have included the laying of hands on the one who received the prayerful blessing.

<sup>8</sup> A further glimpse at the anti-Chalcedonian support network. Again support is provided by members of the local establishment.





to have such freedom [of speech]<sup>1</sup> toward him, because we know his humility and his dislike [of] praise.” He consented, and when he approached him and bowed himself, before he would ask anything, the saint preempted [him] and said to him, “Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your seed.”<sup>2</sup> The [soldier] was amazed, together with the magistrate, and received the word in faith. He received such fruit from the blessing that eventually he became the father of many children. And this [happened] not only to him but also to others in those regions [R 95] and in many places. [For] what[ever] they asked, the gift was granted through the prayers of the saint.

(§128) Another man, for the same reason hated his wife and had chased her away, having decided that from that time [on] he would not see her [again]. The father of this [woman],<sup>3</sup> when he approached the saint, informed him [of] the deed and urged [him] that through his admonitions he should persuade the man to be reconciled to his wife, while he also related the reason of the hatred and of the rejection of [her] presence. [The saint] called the young man [and] admonished him like a father and persuaded [him]. When he wept and said that he could not do this, the blessed one said to him, “If you decided thus because you desire children, obey me, my son, and reverence my white hair! Accept instruction and take your wife! I trust in the Lord that he will fulfill your desire to the full[est].” Obeying the saint and believing, he was reconciled to his wife. Afterwards he had such a multitude of children that he became the father of nine children, seven male and two female.<sup>4</sup>

(§129) Again, while we were in Madeba, one day after we had eaten, when we had arisen from the table, we began to say the doxology of thanksgiving. Suddenly the blessed one was carried off and was in amazement. He persisted [in it] for about an hour and a half, while his eyes were ceaselessly gazing [at something] in

than men. By the fifth century, it is likely that public and Christian ecclesiastical opinion and canons were more of a deterrent than the civil law, as evidenced in this story. See also Judith Evans Grubbs, “Divorce,” in Bowersock, Brown, and Grabar, *Late Antiquity*, 414.

<sup>4</sup> The survival of aged parents depended in many cases on their having produced offspring who would care for them in their old age. For a discussion of miracles related to barrenness and childbirth in Rufus’s work, see Horn, “Chapter in the Pre-history of the Christological Controversies.”



heaven.<sup>1</sup> But while we were standing in silence and were wet with tears, when he finally [came back] to himself, he cried out with a loud [R 96] voice, weeping. Speaking to no one and without reciting the prayer, he leapt upon the couch<sup>2</sup> where he had made his bed.<sup>3</sup> After he had shut the door, he remained [there] mourning and sighing until evening. But of what kind those [things] he had seen were, no one from among us dared afterwards to ask nor did he speak [about them]. However, from those adversities, which at present occur daily,<sup>4</sup> we surmise that these evils that were about to come upon the habitable earth were revealed to the saint in this vision, as it says in the prophecy of Amos the prophet, “Because the Lord will not perform a deed without revealing his [plan of] chastisement to his servants, the prophets.”<sup>5</sup> The blessed one endured many more [things] than those; wherefore, being held captive in the vehemence of pain,<sup>6</sup> before the next day he could not receive anyone from among the citizens for conversation when they came as was [their] custom to honor and reverence him.<sup>7</sup>

(§130) After remaining thus in the town for a few days and having edified them and strengthened them, he hastened to return. When he departed from there he was persuaded to come to a village called Batmin.<sup>8</sup> When he had spent the Feast of Holy Pen-

Nephalius. See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chron.* 6.1 (Brooks, 2:4,5–7; Hamilton and Brooks, 134). See also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 201; Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Amos 3:7 [LXX, against Pešitta].

<sup>6</sup> This comment seems to point toward a certain level of pain and suffering that Peter’s visionary insights caused for him.

<sup>7</sup> Peter is shown as receiving honor and recognition from people who were not from the lowest classes of society.

<sup>8</sup> See Eusebius, *Onom.* 151 (Klostermann, 48,11–12; Freeman-Grenville, Chapman, and Taylor, 33): Βοτνία ἢ καὶ Ποτεῖν. πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, πόλις φυλῆς Γάδ. καὶ εἰς ἔτι νῦν ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς τόποις χρηματίζει (listed under “Botnia/Bothnim”): “Botnia or Poteein, along the bank of the Jordan, a city of the tribe of Gad, that even up to the present also lends its name to the surrounding area.”



tecost there,<sup>1</sup> had completed the [service of the] gathering,<sup>2</sup> and blessed the place and its inhabitants, he returned to Jerusalem,<sup>3</sup> being anxious to come to his brethren and to his house of quiet.<sup>4</sup>

(§131) Now a certain man, a lover of Christ and a lover of the saints, a lover of the poor and a lover of strangers, fervent in faith and a zealous orthodox, whose name was Elijah, [earnestly] entreated and urged him very much to stay in the mountain[s] until the heat had passed, because it was summer [R 97] and the heat was great in the plain, for this was the time after Pentecost. He was in his rank a tribune<sup>5</sup> who was dwelling in Jerusalem and had a position of authority in the household of the believing and orthodox Empress Eudocia,<sup>6</sup> who already had had become acquainted with the saint and experienced his grace, for though he had been deaf in his ears, he was esteemed worthy of healing at his hands.

(§132) This tribune told us the manner in which his ears had been healed,<sup>7</sup> saying, “When the blessed one was staying in the region of Ashkelon, I had business [for] which I [had to] come to the city. And when I heard that the blessed one was in the neighborhood, while I did not yet have freedom of converse<sup>8</sup> and familiarity with him, I earnestly desired to be esteemed worthy of a blessing from him. Yet I had been deaf in my ears for a long time. When he was told about me, he received me gladly. I was about to fall down at his feet and reverence him when he took me by my head and raised me up. He placed both of his hands on my ears, so as to prevent me from falling down before him, [and] he kissed me on my head. Immediately in that very moment my hear-

its powers was veto over the Senate’s legislation, in order to provide a check against the patrician class. After Constantine, this position became restricted to the maintenance of roads, buildings, and monuments in the city of Constantinople.

<sup>6</sup> Literally, “was taskmaster and steward of the believing and orthodox Empress Eudocia.” See Horn, “Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian.”

<sup>7</sup> The following episode happened at a previous point in time. Thus Elijah had been aware of and in contact with Peter and his friends for a while. That he invited Peter to spend the summer months in a mountain resort ought to be read as an attempt on Elijah’s part to demonstrate his gratitude to Peter.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek *παρρησία* (Raabe, 93 n. 1).

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>1</sup> Peter is shown as foreknowing what Elijah's need for healing was.

<sup>2</sup> This reflects the high level of authority that Peter enjoyed among his followers and supporters.

ing was opened.”<sup>1</sup> Because of this he had henceforth such faith and full trust in the blessed one as if in one of the apostles<sup>2</sup> and was constantly coming to him. It was [only] with difficulty that he would abstain from converse with him, so that he would be esteemed worthy also to be found [present] at the time of the death of the blessed one [R 98] and to share in the blessing from it. Yet we shall return to what was set down first.

(§133) When he had thus taken the blessed one to his village called Beth Tafsha,<sup>3</sup> about five miles to the north of the Holy City, on the slope of the mountain, the air of which is very pleasing and well-tempered, he held him there all summer: there is a deep spring that at the same [time] is also a fish pond<sup>4</sup> that breeds a few small fish. When one of our brethren who knew [how] to fish went there, he was catching only two a day, as [if enough] for the comfort of the old man’s weakness, and nothing more, to everyone’s amazement. [It happened that] one among the friends in the city became sick and did not take pleasure in other foods.<sup>5</sup> When the saint learned [about it], he ordered a few little fish to be caught for him from the spring and to be sent to him. When the one who was fishing had labored thus for three days from early morning until evening, he could not catch more than these [usual] two. As if that spring had been ordered to give these two for the use of the old man, it was not willing to give any more, so that the blessed one was compelled to send to the sick one those two that were for his supply.

(§134) After these [things], when the time after summer arrived, the blessed one returned to the brethren in the plain. When he went, some were indignant in their soul and said, “How, when he abode all these days beside Jerusalem, did the blessed one not desire greatly to enter the Holy City, even if by night, and venerate the worshipful [R 99] places, and especially the holy Golgotha and the life-giving tomb?” The day after his departure, one of the brethren who was very simple and innocent came and said to them, “I saw a fearful vision this night. For it seemed to me that I was seeing Abba Peter the bishop, who was saying to me, ‘Can

<sup>3</sup> See Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 86.

<sup>4</sup> See L. Delekat, “Ein frühbyzantinischer Fischteich bei Jerusalem,” *ZDPV* 84 (1968): 185–86.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, “did not have those other foods gladly.”





you give me a hand, brother?’ When he alone took me in this vision to the Holy City, in the same night in which he was about to depart, he first entered the *martyrion* of the holy Stephen,<sup>1</sup> upon which he happened [to come] first. And when he went down to the cave, he venerated his sarcophagus.<sup>2</sup> And when he went out from there, he ran to the holy Golgotha and the holy Tomb. And from there he went down to the church that is called [that] of Pilate and from there to that of the Paralytic.<sup>3</sup> And after this, to Gethsemane. When he had gone around also in the holy places that [are in] its surroundings, after this he went up to the Upper Room of the disciples, and afterwards to the holy Ascension, and from there to the house of Lazarus. Next he came onto the road bringing [him] from there until he arrived at the holy Bethlehem. When he had prayed there, he turned [back] toward Rachel’s Tomb.<sup>4</sup> And when he had prayed there and in the rest of the temples and houses of prayer on the road, he went down to [the Church of] Shiloah. From there, after he had gone up to holy Zion and had completed a holy course<sup>5</sup> and had worshiped the Lord in every place, finally he returned to the village of Beth Tafsha, while I, indeed, in every place was supporting him. On the very next day, [after the one on] which I had seen that vision, the Abba returned to his journey.” This, however, was [done] so that those who were indignant might be instructed that the blessed one was offering in every holy place

of three connected sarcophagi for his own burial and that of two of his ascetic companions.

<sup>3</sup> The Church of the Paralytic is also known as the Church of the Probatike. For extensive references to ancient and modern literature, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 250, n. 111.

<sup>4</sup> This marks a site holy to both Jews and Christians. The location of Rachel’s Tomb in Benjamin is rejected by many modern scholars, who prefer a location in Bethlehem. See Lamontte M. Luker, “Rachel’s Tomb,” *ABD* 5:608–9.

<sup>5</sup> Peter’s visit to the different holy places constitutes a typical pilgrimage route. For detailed references to the individual sites, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 245–54.



[R 100] every day, undoubtedly also at every hour, worship to the Lord in [his] spirit.<sup>1</sup> For it is written, “The spiritual one judges everything. He himself, however, is not judged by anyone.”<sup>2</sup>

(§135) When that brother had told these [things], those [brethren] fell down upon their faces and worshiped the Lord. They glorified his unspeakable compassion for humanity and his grace, how he did not leave the doubt that was in them without instruction, not even for a short time, and how those saints, being clad with Christ and living with him and in him, in every place are near [to him] in spirit and are offering to him everywhere rational service<sup>3</sup> and worship, even if they seem to be far away in body. Making this known, Paul said, “For I, being yet far away in body, but being near in spirit, have already pronounced judgment as [though] I were near, while you and my spirit are gathered together in the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”<sup>4</sup> And again, “For even if I am far away in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, rejoicing and rejoicing together [with you] because I am seeing your [good] order.”<sup>5</sup>

(§136) The blessed one, having come to the plain and greeted the brethren, departed from there. He came to another place and from there to another, to where[ver] the Spirit, who was guiding [him], was calling him for the salvation of many souls and for the aid of those dwelling [there].

(§137) In the city of Gaza was a lawyer,<sup>6</sup> an orthodox man whose name [was] Dionysius. He had an orthodox mother and grandmother and [R 101] brothers, a chosen and blessed family.<sup>7</sup> He was fervent in faith and in the love for the saint. When he was esteemed worthy to see many signs, mighty deeds, and healings that happened at his hands, since he was anxious to inherit a blessing from him, he persuaded him to stay in his village, which is

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor 5:3–4.

<sup>5</sup> Col 2:5. See also Phil 2:17 for the expression of joy.

<sup>6</sup> Members of the legal profession constituted a significant number of Peter the Iberian’s recruits. See also *Vit. Pet.* §§150–151 (R 113–14).

<sup>7</sup> This is one of the few instances of evidence in Rufus’s works that whole families joined the anti-Chalcedonian cause. In some cases, e.g., *Pler.* 38, the conflict over Chalcedon even led to divisions between married couples.



called Magdal Tutha,<sup>1</sup> south of Gaza, by the side of the temple of the holy Hilarion,<sup>2</sup> the great ascetic and prophet and father of the monks. He built houses that were fitting, so to say, for the rest of the blessed one, at abundant expense, and thus kept the saint there for three years. While he was offering him every comfort, he also was esteemed worthy of the blessing that was [going out] from him and [of] salvation. That Christ-loving man then was telling us, "When I had spent three hundred darics<sup>3</sup> on the building and the preparation of that place, after a few days I recovered these three hundred darics from where I never would have expected nor [from where] it would have come to my mind." Surrounding that village are vineyards that used to produce low-quality wine in meager quantities because the soil was sandy and shallow. When he took the saint and brought him to each one of the vineyards, he asked him to make a prayer and to bless the place. Thereafter [each vineyard] began to produce wine many times double [the quantity] and [wine that] stored well, something that no one from among the workers of that soil [could] remember ever happening. These vineyards continued to give such a yield of fruit throughout the lifetime of the blessed one.<sup>4</sup>

(§138) Also at that time the blessed Isaiah the Egyptian,<sup>5</sup> the great ascetic and prophet, [R 102] who was called a second Isaiah by everyone because he had the grace and the wisdom and the power of that great prophet, was dwelling in quiet in the sur-

previously only humble wine in low quantity could be harvested. Gaza and Ashkelon were famous throughout the Mediterranean for the wine produced and traded there. On ancient wine production in the Gaza area and references to relevant early Christian and monastic literature, see the articles by Philip Mayerson in *Monks, Martyrs, Soldiers and Saracens: Papers on the Near East in Late Antiquity (1962–1993)* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society in association with New York University, 1994), particularly "The Wine and Vineyards of Gaza in the Byzantine Period," originally published in *BASOR* 257 (1985): 75–80.

<sup>5</sup> Ancient sources that provide information about Abba Isaiah include the *Vita Isaiae* (202 n. 4 below) and the *Sayings* ascribed to him in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. For the latter, see Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 69–70. On Abba Isaiah, see Derwas Chitty, "Abba Isaiah," *JTS* 22 (1971): 47–72. On the relationship between Abba Isaiah and Peter the Iberian, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 152–70.



roundings<sup>1</sup> of the village called Beth Daltha,<sup>2</sup> about four miles from Abba Peter. His evangelical way of life and the wealth of his gifts, which were from childhood until his old age, are not for our weakness to tell,<sup>3</sup> for this would require many books, just as the conviction of those who received the experience of his gifts and [as] the discourses<sup>4</sup> and accounts concerning him<sup>5</sup> bear witness. He too was torturing his body in Naziriteship<sup>6</sup> so much that, his belly having become like a stone, his spleen [and] his liver adhered to each other from the swelling and cleaved to [each other]. In his old age he used to eat alone, taking a little food every day. He did not take this idly, however, but [only] if first he had repaid three cubits of netting, the work of his hands.<sup>7</sup> Although he had shut himself up [in] his house of quiet,<sup>8</sup> he would respond<sup>9</sup> to those who came to him by means of Abba Peter,<sup>10</sup> the priest, his cell-mate, a man who had grace that was equal to his own, and serenity and humility and power. It was God who arranged this proximity of these two luminous ones—I am speaking, however, of Abba Peter the bishop and of Abba Isaiah—for the sake of those who were coming to be benefited by one [of them], so that it was possible for them also to gain from the proximity of the other. Thus edified and strengthened [R 103] in their minds, they would return to their houses. However, the blessed Isaiah [kept] himself abstinent from converse with women up to the end and kept this precept without transgression,<sup>11</sup> as an ascetic and [as one] who did not have the

<sup>7</sup> Note the emphasis laid here on the need for physical labor also for the ascetic.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek ἡσυχαστήριον (Raabe, 97 n. 4). For the same expression, see also *Vit. Pet.* §130 (R 96).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἀπόκρισις.

<sup>10</sup> Abba Peter, the disciple of Abba Isaiah, was the immediate recipient of one instruction of his teacher. See Isaiah of Gaza, *Asceticon*, discourse 25 (Chryssavgis and Penkett, 183–209). Discourse 26 (Chryssavgis and Penkett, 211–18) was taken down by Abba Peter, who likely wrote down several if not all of the other discourses of Abba Isaiah. See also W. Enßlin, “Petrus (95),” *PW* 19.2:1330.

<sup>11</sup> See also the comments in Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, discourses 3, 9, and 16 (Chryssavgis and Penkett, 52, 95, and 126). For a fuller discussion of this passage, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 164–65.





same duty<sup>1</sup> that the blessed Peter had, being a bishop and father of everyone and [who] beyond nature and age was commanded by God to be a watchman and a benefactor.

(§139) The faith and love that these same saints were showing to each other is worth our wonder. For every day the blessed Peter used to send food to Abba Isaiah appropriate for an old man and ascetic and one who was weak in body: one loaf of bread of the finest wheat flour from Gaza, from those that he [himself] was eating, and a bunch of parsley<sup>2</sup> and of leeks, cleaned and washed, and two little fish. And that one [Abba Isaiah] used to send in return three round cakes, while all the time they were together with each other in the spirit, enjoying together an evangelical and heavenly banquet.

(§140) While they were [engaged] in these [things], Emperor Zeno became informed about the grace and power of those saints.<sup>3</sup> When he had conceived a desire to become worthy of a blessing from them, he sent Cosmas the Eunuch,<sup>4</sup> who was one of his chief and favorite chamberlains, with letters so as to persuade them by all means to take the trouble upon themselves [to come to him], urging [them] and promising that he would let them go [back] quickly and would consent to all those things [R 104] that they might advise him for his benefit. When the blessed Peter came to know this, he was very distressed.<sup>5</sup> Weeping and with unceasing mourning and groaning before the holy altar, he fell upon his face before the Lord, saying, “Lord, deliver me from the slander of men! What do men want from me? What are the slanderers seeking from me, when they are saying that I have something that I do not have and [that] I should do that which I cannot?” He was saying this because those who had informed the emperor about them had said that both of them were prophets and were working signs and wonders.<sup>6</sup> Considering thus his great weakness and that he had once promised to God not again to return to Egypt

<sup>5</sup> It is most likely that Peter’s weariness is to be explained as him fearing that Emperor Zeno intended to force him to sign the *Henotikon*.

<sup>6</sup> With the signatures of such famous holy men, Zeno’s attempt at reconciliation via the *Henotikon* would have gained greater publicity and acceptance among the anti-Chalcedonians.



from where he had left,<sup>1</sup> he judged that such a journey was [both] difficult and at the same time impossible. Because of this, guided by the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, he thought to depart rather to the regions of Phoenicia to hide himself there<sup>2</sup> until through his friends, who were many in Constantinople,<sup>3</sup> he had written a petition and informed the emperor of his manifold infirmity and was enabled by the hand of our Lord to persuade him to spare him such a toil. This also came to pass, since our Lord was supportive of the saint's petition.

(§141) As he was departing for Phoenicia, he came to a town called Arca,<sup>4</sup> about twelve miles away from the sea and about fifteen from Tripoli. A man whose name was Maximus,<sup>5</sup> a magistrate of this town, a chaste, quiet, [R 105] and rich man, received us on his suburban estate<sup>6</sup> on account of a revelation of the holy apostle Andrew,<sup>7</sup> who is laid there and is greatly honored by everyone, and especially by the inhabitants of that region because of the many mighty deeds and the healings that happen through him.<sup>8</sup> Before we reached those places, this apostle appeared at night three times to the *paramonarius*<sup>9</sup> of this place [and] said to him, "Go to Maximus the magistrate and say to him, 'Behold, God is sending to you a great support,<sup>10</sup> one whom you have never expected. Receive him, then, with all love and assurance,<sup>11</sup> and he will be for you at all time[s] a support and a protector against

e il suo rapporto con la tradizione manoscritta dell'originale Greco," *Mus* 111 (1998): 139–56.

<sup>8</sup> The claim that Andrew was especially highly venerated in that region seems to depend on the present witness. The particular function of the apostle Andrew in this context at least to some extent might have resulted from a relatively strong emphasis that Georgian Christians placed on him, believing that Andrew was the one who preached Christianity to them and converted them to the faith. Peter the Iberian, as a native Georgian, could also have held and expressed a special veneration for Andrew. For attempts to locate Andrew also archaeologically in Georgia, see, e.g., Vakhtang Licheli, "St Andrew in Samtskhe—Archaeological Proof?" in *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus* (ed. Tamila Mgaloblishvili; Iberica Caucasica 1; Surrey, U.K.: Curzon, 1998), 25–37.

<sup>9</sup> I.e., the sacristan of the church. The Syriac transliterates the Latin *paramonarius* and the Greek παραμονάριος.

<sup>10</sup> This could also be translated by "manager," "superintendent," "patron," or "protector."

<sup>11</sup> MS B substitutes "and faith."



all tribulations.’” When thus we had been lovingly received by him and were esteemed worthy of every comfort, he who is called bishop of that town, who was a wretched, daring, and totally defiled<sup>1</sup> man, not enduring the proximity of the saint, which was to his reproof and reproach because he had the devil [as] the one advising him and [as] his father,<sup>2</sup> sent to the blessed one, saying, “Either be in communion with us or depart, for a town cannot have two bishops.”<sup>3</sup> When the blessed one heard these [things], he immediately departed and left this town,<sup>4</sup> not willing to stay for even that day in the place of Maximus, our good host. Although he was very distressed about this persecution that had taken place, he increased his love [all the] more. For when he had reached us, he immediately ran to Orthosias,<sup>5</sup> [R 106] a town on the seashore. He asked its bishop, a man [who was] his friend,<sup>6</sup> who had a hospitable character<sup>7</sup> and more love than these others who were occupying the churches, to arrange for us to pass the winter<sup>8</sup> in a salt depot<sup>9</sup> near there, for there was no other suitable place in the town, because it was small and [had only] a few people. Although we were dwelling in such a prison, so to speak, we were dwelling as if in a palace, having every comfort. In this way we celebrated there the

church; (2) it might simply have been a reaction that attempted to avoid conflict and controversy; (3) it might have grown out of a dislike of having to deal with Chalcedonian official personnel, unless they had become personal friends of his.

<sup>5</sup> This town was located south of the mouth of the Eleutheros River, about twelve miles away from Tripoli. For further comments on the bishopric of Orthosias, see Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> The local bishop of Orthosias was a Chalcedonian. Nevertheless, despite their religious disagreements, Peter the Iberian was able and willing to entertain a friendly converse, even a friendship with him.

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *κατάστασις*.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek *διαχειμάζειν* (Raabe, 100 n. 3).

<sup>9</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *ὥριον* or *ὠρεῖον* (“depot,” “magazine”) (Raabe, 100 n. 2). See also Anthony Rich, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Romaines et Grecques* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1873; repr., Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1995), 322. Rev. Dr. Abdo Badwi (Director of the School of Sacred Art, Holy Spirit University, Kaslik, Lebanon) kindly discussed this question of the physical circumstances that allow for this identification between the Greek and Syriac terms.



day[s] of holy Epiphany and of holy Pascha, until holy Pentecost,<sup>1</sup> while the bishop of this city showed great goodwill<sup>2</sup> and honor and reverence to the blessed Peter. Nevertheless, he could not persuade him to come to converse in person [with him], because he was in communion with these other bishops. Yet it was God who was calling his saint to Arca and to Orthosias and [who] was glorifying [him] on account of the salvation of those who were to be saved in these places also. For from the town of Arca and from Orthosias he led away captives,<sup>3</sup> offering [them] to the Lord until he had turned even the keeper of the salt depot<sup>4</sup> and his brother to the orthodox faith and to a virtuous way of life.

(§142) Yet there also happened a revelation of the bones of holy martyrs that were laid there,<sup>5</sup> of Lucas, Phocas,<sup>6</sup> Romanus,<sup>7</sup> and their companions. It happened this way. There was a garden near [R 107] the [salt] depot from which we obtained our daily supply. Now, this town is well-irrigated and is flooded by much water, which comes down from above, from Mount Lebanon.<sup>8</sup> Now the gardener of the place, since he was a quiet man and very simple and pure and unmarried, saw at night that the holy martyrs revealed themselves to him and were saying to him, “Do you know who we are?” But when he said that he did not know, they were saying to him, “We are your neighbors, those who are dwelling with you and are lodging with you. We are guarding you and your garden.” He again said, “And who are you?” Those martyrs

His cult is attested by Asterius of Amaseia, *Homily* 9 (PG 40:299–314; Datema, 114–27). His feastday is 22 September or 22 July. Phocas, the martyred bishop of Sinope, is probably identical with the gardener. See *BHG* 2:206–7, entries 1535y–1540b. See also Charles van de Vorst and Paulus Peeters, “Saint Phocas,” *AnBoll* 30 (1911): 252–95; Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, “Phokas,” *ODB* 3:1666–67. For further discussion and references, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 266, 269.

<sup>7</sup> Romanus might be identifiable with the martyr Romanus of Caesarea, who suffered in Antioch. See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Mart. Pal.* 2 (Cureton, ١٧ [Syriac], 6–8 [English]; see also the Greek witness, Schwartz, 909). For further references, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 266.

<sup>8</sup> Mount Lebanon is part of the mountain chain that runs parallel to the Mediterranean on the west of the Orontes River. The name “Lebanon” is derived from *lbn*, “white,” possibly referring to the snow covering its peak year-round.





said to him, “Lucas, Phocas, and Romanus; and these [are] our brethren”—for a great company had appeared—“and we ought to be uncovered immediately. When you find us, call Abba Peter the bishop, who is here on travels<sup>1</sup> [and] hand us over to him.”

(§143) Thus when he woke up, he immediately ran to our brother Paul the steward,<sup>2</sup> making the vision known to him. [Paul], however, led him to the blessed Peter, who in truth [is] a lover of the martyrs. When he had told him these<sup>3</sup> [words] of the vision, the blessed one said to him. “Go, ask them to appear to you again and to show you the place where their bones are laid.” And so he did.

(§144) One day, then, when he was working in the garden, he saw them clearly, flying above the hedges and thorns, [and they] entered and stood near him. Since he was in amazement, he fell on his face and revered [them], knowing that they were those whom [R 108] he had seen in the vision. They said to him, “Since you are seeking to learn where our bones are laid, behold, they are laid in this place. Take Abba Peter the bishop and bring him here. When he makes the prayer and when you dig and find us, hand us over to him.” When the blessed one learned these [things], he began to weep and to cry out with groaning and to say, “Who am I, I the unworthy and the first of sinners that the saints should show such love to me? Or how can I receive them and carry them around with me, when I am a stranger and a foreigner and do not have a single place in which I could lay them and honor them as they deserve?”<sup>4</sup> When he then was fully assured<sup>5</sup> by our Lord, he said to the gardener, “Do not be afraid! Do what I tell you, for I am doing all these [things] for the honor of the saints. Since I am a stranger, as you see, and am moving about from place to place, I

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the conflict between the need to worship relics of saints in a fixed space and the anti-Chalcedonian experience of constantly having to be on the move either on flight or on self-imposed wandering, see Horn, “Transgressing Claims to Sacred Space.”

<sup>5</sup> The underlying verb is derived directly from the word *πληροφορία*.



cannot bear them and carry them around to the saints.<sup>1</sup> But go, make these [things] known to the bishop of the town! For he is a pure [man],<sup>2</sup> and he knows how to honor them as they deserve and [how to] perform their deposition.”

(§145) This is what happened. The bishop heard [this] and in great joy took those from among the clergymen who were pure<sup>3</sup> and came to this place. The gardener showed them [the spot, and] they dug about a man’s height and found an urn of lead. And when they opened it, they saw a multitude of burnt bones laid in it. And so, when they raised them up with a [ritual] service, they brought [them] and laid them [in] the [R 109] *diakonikon*<sup>4</sup> of the church. The news about them went out into all the region. After the worshipful feast of holy Pascha had passed, when many people from the surrounding towns and villages gathered together on the third of the month of Iyor,<sup>5</sup> their deposition took place with a great [and] solemn procession. They were laid with their brethren in the *martyrion*, I mean [that] of Saints Sergius and Bacchus,<sup>6</sup> who are venerated and honored there, since those holy martyrs asked through a revelation that they would be laid in this place together with the companions of their martyrdom. We unworthy ones were esteemed worthy, together with the saint, our father, to be blessed both from that holy vessel in which they were laid and from the holy soil [of the place] where their bones were found. The blessed Peter had such faith and full assurance in them that until the end of

vessels were kept. It was the place where the prosphora and chalice were prepared for the eucharistic liturgy. The deacons carried these elements from the *διακονικόν* to the adjacent church and brought them to the celebrating priest. This is remembered in the Great Entrance of the eastern liturgies and has been introduced into the Roman Catholic *Novus Ordo*, with volunteers from the laity walking with the bread and wine from the back of the church to the priest awaiting them in front of the sanctuary. Related terms are *σκευοφυλάκιον* and *παστοφορία*. See Robert F. Taft, William Loerke, and Mark J. Johnson, “Pastophoria,” *ODB* 3:1594, with further literature.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., May.

<sup>6</sup> Sergius and Bacchus were imperial *notarii* who are said to have suffered martyrdom under Maximian in Rasapha (Augusta Euphratesia) in 290 C.E. See Raabe, 102 n. 3. See also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 268; Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Ševčenko, “Sergius and Bakchos,” *ODB* 3:1879; and Elizabeth Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 28; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).



his life he continually made mention of them in the celebration of the holy mysteries and in his prayers. But there also happened in these places through the grace of God many signs, mighty deeds, and healings through the prayers of the saints, about which it is not [possible for us] at this hour to speak one by one.<sup>1</sup>

(§146) After the day of the holy Pentecost we came to the region of Tripoli,<sup>2</sup> to which Apringius,<sup>3</sup> a *comes*<sup>4</sup> from among the magistrates of the city,<sup>5</sup> had urged him [to come]. While we were abiding there on one suburban estate<sup>6</sup> of his, which is called Gišra [the “Bridge”], about two miles from the city, we received an answer<sup>7</sup> of joy and good [news] from the imperial [R 110] city that, since the emperor had been persuaded, he allowed that these saints should not take the trouble to go up to him.

(§147) While staying there, when our agent entered the city in order to buy for us what we needed, he delayed coming [back]. While we were sitting with the old man and were reading the Scriptures—for this was his custom that between the times of the third hour and of the sixth and of the ninth he would hold readings<sup>8</sup>—the old man began to say with joy and tears, “Who can be amazed at the goodness and power of the holy martyr Leontius?<sup>9</sup> For this night someone<sup>10</sup> saw him, [and Leontius] said to him, ‘My fellow-traveler, make a prayer for this child that he may be healed!’ And he said to him, ‘I am beseeching you, martyr of the

that Rufus takes care to indicate that Peter was not neglecting the hours of the daily office.

<sup>9</sup> Leontius was a general in the army who converted two soldiers, Hypatios and Theodoulos. These two suffered martyrdom, and, shortly thereafter, Leontius did also. Greek tradition places this martyrdom under Emperor Vespasian (*BHG*, 986–87); for sources on his martyrdom in Oriental Christian traditions see the Syriac witnesses (*BHO* 563). Leontius’s feast day is observed on 18 June. See F. Halkin, “Passions et miracle posthume de St. Léonce martyr à Tripoli en Phénicie,” *AnBoll* 82 (1964): 319–40; G. Garitte, “Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à Saint Léonce de Tripoli,” *Mus* 78 (1965): 313–48; 79 (1966): 335–86; and 81 (1968): 415–40.

<sup>10</sup> Here Peter the Iberian is referring to himself in the third-person singular. See *Vit. Pet.* §148 (R 111).



Lord, yours is this righteous action, because you have boldness [of speech] with Jesus,<sup>1</sup> for I am a sinner.’ ” When he had said this, he was silent.

(§148) While we were doubting in ourselves what the vision of the saint wanted [to indicate] and did not dare to ask him, our agent, having delayed in the city beyond what was usual, returned only just before the seventh hour.<sup>2</sup> But when he was reprimanded, he cast himself down and made a prostration<sup>3</sup> and was relating the sign that had happened in the temple of the holy Leontius.<sup>4</sup> “To a certain soldier,”<sup>5</sup> he was saying, “[one] from among these who are staying in Alexandria, who had a son who was possessed by a demon, it was revealed that ‘The child will otherwise not be healed except that you take him and bring him to Tripoli to the holy martyr Leontius, and he will heal him.’ Taking up the child, that same hour [R 111] he arrived in Tripoli. When he arrived at the *martyrion* of the holy Leontius, the demon was tearing [at] that child all day and all night, throwing him down to such an extent that he almost choked him and left him for dead. Toward dawn, when this saint and martyr appeared, he rebuked the impure spirit and set the child free. At present the child, being healthy, is standing in the *martyrion* with his father, [both] proclaiming the wonders of God. But when the whole city ran together to see the miracle, also I,” our agent was saying, “ran to see what had happened. I saw the child who had been set free sweeping with his own hands that holy *martyrion*,<sup>6</sup> while everyone was weeping and glorifying God and his holy martyr because of the sign that had happened.” Thus we understood that it was this that the blessed Peter had related in a veiled manner, hinting [at the fact] that he had been with the holy martyr, who was effecting the healing of the one who had been possessed.

(§149) After these days, after we had received the reply from

<sup>4</sup> The *martyrion* of Leontius was located in Tripoli. For a discussion of the location of the sanctuary, see Jean Maurice Fiey, “Un grand sanctuaire perdu? Le martyrion de St. Léonce à Tripoli,” *Mus* 95 (1982): 77–78; see also Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 269–70.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek *στρατιώτης*.

<sup>6</sup> Compare *Vit. Pet.* §11 (R 7), where Bakurios is presented as regularly sweeping the local church as a sign of his humility.





the imperial city, we persuaded the saint that we should return now to our place, something about which he also was anxious, since he already was foreseeing that his end and his departure to our Lord were near. Therefore he sent one of the brethren who were with us ahead to Tripoli together with people who knew us [and] arranged that a ship should be made ready, one suitable for us [on which] to embark. When that honorable one and friend of strangers, our [R 112] host, the magistrate Maximus<sup>1</sup> heard [of this], he took his wife and his children and came from Arca to Tripoli to say goodbye<sup>2</sup> to the saint and to be esteemed worthy of a blessing from him. We went down [to the sea] in the evening and were lodging in a spot in a depot<sup>3</sup> on the seashore. We had brought our luggage and the things we needed into the ship, expecting that we would take the saint [on board] that night and embark. Since a fitting breeze blew, the sailors were hurrying us to go on board the ship. But the blessed one, since God had changed his will,<sup>4</sup> said, "I cannot sail. Those who are wishing to sail may go on board the ship! For me it is right that, when I move forward, I should make a journey to Beirut." The brethren were amazed and were saying, "Why, then, did he not say this before? An animal would have been made ready for him, and these [things that are necessary] for the journey!" and the sailors were offended and vexed and were hurrying us. Maximus the magistrate replied, saying, "May no one vex the old man! Those who are wishing to sail shall sail, for I shall bring a litter for the old man and prepare what [is necessary] for his journey."

(§150) When this was settled, we indeed went on board the ship. We traveled straight on and arrived at Long Village.<sup>5</sup> One of our brethren whose name was Basilides, who was sailing together with us, was from [this village]. We disembarked there and lodged at the house of his family<sup>6</sup> while awaiting the arrival of our father. But as we were assured subsequently, when the old man had seen a vision, he had changed his mind that he would not sail then but pass by to Beirut so that there too he could light the lamp of orthodoxy. He caught [R 113] many souls and offered

<sup>6</sup> While on travel, Peter and his friends appear to have enjoyed repeatedly the support of a network of relatives and close friends.



[them] to God. This vision, however, was such: He was thinking that he was seeing himself about to offer the holy oblation and was placing the bread [upon the altar], as was his custom. For he was not used to having [breads] brought like [those that were] coming from the market and offer [them], but he would send someone suitable to where they were making bread and have [loaves of] bread prepared there, which were beautiful, white, and worthy for the oblation of God [and] yet very small in size. He [had] many like these made and dried [them] up and kept [them] in a clean vessel, [so that] where[ver] he went, he offered the holy oblation from these.<sup>1</sup> But then, in this vision, a voice came to him, saying, “I want you to offer to me market [loaves of] bread and to celebrate the Eucharist from them. For with these I am pleased.” Since he was strengthened and made wise by God, he understood the interpretation of the vision, that God wanted that there should be offered to him also from [among] the lawyers rational<sup>2</sup> sacrifices and whole burnt offerings,<sup>3</sup> able to carry his cross and follow him, like Basil<sup>4</sup> and Gregory<sup>5</sup> and John<sup>6</sup> and Arsenius,<sup>7</sup> and those who are like them in zeal. For those who [are lawyers] by custom are called market men,<sup>8</sup> as also the book of Acts relates, saying thus: “If, then, Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint<sup>9</sup> against anyone, they should bring market men; as for the proconsuls—may they accuse each other!”<sup>10</sup>

(§151) After [R 114] having said goodbye then in Tripoli to the good host of strangers, Maximus, the magistrate of Arca, and having blessed him and his children and having entrusted him to the Lord and having left him [in] the protection and great provision of his holy prayers, after that one [Maximus] had prepared

Honorius. Yet in 394 Arsenius left the palace for the life of an anchorite in the desert of Egypt. He gained a reputation for his learning, austerity, and strict practice of silence. For forty-four sayings preserved by him in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* collection, see Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 9–19.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac might render the Greek ἀγοράται, lit. “those who frequent the market [ἀγορά],” “public speakers, orators, lawyers.” Raabe (106 n. 5) also refers to Dio Cassius, frag. 114: ἀνὴρ ἀγοραῖος καὶ ἐκ δικαστηρίων τὸν βίον ποιούμενος: “An orator, or one who makes his livelihood from the law courts.”

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “word.”

<sup>10</sup> See Acts 19:38.



the litter and all the rest of these [things that are necessary] for the journey, he [Peter] then cheerfully went on his way, while the Lord was traveling with him and was making his way straight.<sup>2</sup>

(§152) When he came to Beirut, he was recognized immediately by the young lawyers, his acquaintances from Palestine and from Alexandria, who had made the saint famous to the rest<sup>3</sup> and drew all of them to love him<sup>4</sup> and who were anxious to be in converse with him and be captivated by him<sup>5</sup> and enjoy his saving teaching. Since the Lord granted his grace, his word worked to such a degree that he caught many souls from there and offered [them] to the Lord. Some of them while he was still alive and some after his departure would reject the vanity of the world and run to him and after his death<sup>6</sup> to his disciples and his heirs.<sup>7</sup> They would choose the way of life of solitude,<sup>8</sup> and with them they would carry the sweet yoke<sup>9</sup> of the Lord. The first of these was Elisha,<sup>10</sup> who by his race indeed [was] a Lycian,<sup>11</sup> quiet and humble; because of these [characteristics], he was named by all of them “the Lord’s sheep.”<sup>12</sup>

(§153) After this he departed from there [and] caught up with us in what is called Long Village,<sup>13</sup> where he [had] sown seeds of divine grace.<sup>14</sup> After this, in the metropolis of Tyre,<sup>15</sup> he lit such a divine [R 115] lamp<sup>16</sup> in the souls of those who were listening that

<sup>11</sup> I.e., from the southern coast of Asia Minor, southwest of Pamphylia.

<sup>12</sup> Anti-Chalcedonian sources related to the circle of Peter’s followers and subsequent generations contain several instances where expressive cognomina for individual members are preserved; see, e.g., *Vit. Pet.* §105 (R 77–78; Cyril, that sheep of Christ); Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 87, fol. 128a (Kugener, 87,2–3; John called Lazarus, Theodore the Just). One might interpret this phenomenon as an indicator of the rather tightly knit structure and the close, brotherly relationship in which members of the community found themselves.

<sup>13</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §150 (R 112).

<sup>14</sup> I.e., he preached the gospel and instructed the people. See also Matt 13:18–30; Mark 4:3–20; Luke 8:4–15.

<sup>15</sup> A port city in southern Lebanon. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.70 (Thackeray, 190–91), witnesses to the existence of a Jewish community at Tyre, yet the inhabitants of Tyre were bitter enemies of the Jews. Eventually Tyre developed into the wealthiest town of the eastern provinces. See Eliyahu Ashtor, “Tyre,” *EncJud* 15:1488–90.

<sup>16</sup> See also Mark 4:21–23; Luke 8:16–18.



he caught a great catch<sup>1</sup> from there also, and they ran both to adhere to him and to dwell with his disciples. Not only did these take the habit with his disciples, but also others in other monasteries of the orthodox fathers he made at the same time bearers of the cross and friends of God and members of [his] household, not only men but also women.<sup>2</sup>

(§154) Among these he caught one girl,<sup>3</sup> a virgin from a well-known family [and] from a great lineage of the metropolis of Tyre, who, on the one hand, was orphaned of [her] father and, on the other hand, had a Jewish mother.<sup>4</sup> When she was in converse with him through the care of chaste and holy and God-loving brethren, he instructed her and enlightened her mind. He dragged her away from heathen error<sup>5</sup> in which she formerly had been held [and] brought her near to the light of the fear of God,<sup>6</sup> betrothing her to Christ [as] a pure virgin.<sup>7</sup> Having inflamed her heart with divine love, so that at the same time she became a believer and an orthodox,<sup>8</sup> she also trod underfoot all high-standing, opulence, glory, splendor of race, and the beauty of [her] body,<sup>9</sup> shaking them off like dust. She committed herself entirely, in soul and body, to Christ, a spotless bride,<sup>10</sup> a bearer of the cross and an ascetic, and one of the number of those five wise virgins.<sup>11</sup> Henceforth di-

(1991): 54–66; Cornelia Horn, “Anti-Jewish Polemic and Conversion of Jews to Anti-Chalcedonian Asceticism in the Holy Land: The Case of Eugenia of Tyre,” *ARAM* 18 (2006): 33–48; and eadem, “Eugenia, a Fifth-Century Jewish Convert to Anti-Chalcedonian Asceticism in Palestine” (paper presented at the Upper Midwest Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> The girl’s religious affiliation as a Jew was defined by her birth from a Jewish mother.

<sup>5</sup> The author of this text identifies the Jewish faith as a form of heathenism.

<sup>6</sup> By which the author refers to anti-Chalcedonianism.

<sup>7</sup> An allusion to 2 Cor 12:2.

<sup>8</sup> For an exploration of the significance of that double-conversion, see Horn, “Anti-Jewish Polemic and Conversion of Jews.”

<sup>9</sup> For the image of treading upon the enemy, see also Luke 10:19. Note also the related expression in *Vit. Pet.* §50 (R 34), where Peter is described as despising the beauty of his body.

<sup>10</sup> See also Eph 5:29.

<sup>11</sup> See Matt 25:1–13.





vine grace, since it dwelt in her abundantly, appointed her mother, nurse, and head of a monastery of holy virgins.<sup>1</sup> It bestowed upon her such wealth of divine wisdom and of understanding [R 116] and of holiness that she would gather daily a congregation of many for Christ,<sup>2</sup> like those about whom it is written, “Virgins shall follow her to the king; these with her shall go to you. They will go with joy and with exultation,”<sup>3</sup> and it should be added, “and with holiness and with chastity.”<sup>4</sup> Since she hated and abhorred the evil whispers of the corrupter<sup>5</sup> [and] she loved the beauty of the family<sup>6</sup> of Christ,<sup>7</sup> her name was rightly changed [to] Eugenia. Both in manner and in way of life and in zeal she emulated and conducted herself at the same time both in the asceticism and in the pilgrimage of Eugenia, the martyr [of] fair victory.<sup>8</sup>

(§155) Some from among the magistrates of these cities<sup>9</sup> came also to the saint,<sup>10</sup> desiring to receive a blessing and to enjoy his teaching. And when they were saying about themselves that they were sinners and needed him to pray on their behalf, he said, “We have a house of healing<sup>11</sup> prepared by God that is continuously open for repentance. Let us therefore cease from our ancient customs and take pains [to do] good deeds, and let us fight against sin as it is right; and the Lord, who came to call sinners to repentance,<sup>12</sup> is ready to save and justify [us] and make us worthy of

typical behavior of transvestite saints) and entered a monastery, of which she eventually became abbot, named Eugenios. Accused of fathering a child, her true identity as a woman was revealed in front of the judgment seat of her own father, who converted to Christianity and suffered martyrdom. Eugenia herself traveled to Rome, where also she suffered martyrdom, possibly under Emperor Valerian in 258. She was known to Avitus of Vienne and Venantius Fortunatus. See *BHL*, 2666–70; *BHG*, 607w–608b; and *BHO*, 281–84. See also Agnes Lewis Smith, *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest, as Written above the Old Syriac Gospels by John the Stylite, of Beth-Mari-Qanun in A.D. 778* (Studia Sinaitica 9–10; London: Clay, 1900), ١٠٠ (Syriac), 1–35 (English).

<sup>9</sup> I.e., of Tyre and Beirut.

<sup>10</sup> Note again how highly placed citizens paid Peter a visit.

<sup>11</sup> The unusual expression “house of healing” highlights the salvific function of repentance.

<sup>12</sup> Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; and Luke 5:32.



his kingdom, only if he finds us until the end holding on to this good work.<sup>1</sup> For there are two ways of righteousness toward God. There is the man who is fighting so mightily and without ceasing against the passions that he is esteemed wholly worthy to escape and be set free from their slavery before his end. Then there is another one who, on the one hand, is working courageously with all his strength and hates the passions and is anxiously laboring in everything [R 117] to be esteemed worthy of the same freedom. Although he has not yet completely corrected [his ways], he falls asleep, holding [on] to the same cheerfulness. On the day of judgment the just Judge<sup>2</sup> will hold this one in the same rank with the first and will esteem [him] worthy of equal rewards.”<sup>3</sup>

(§156) Again, the blessed one explained also the following to each of them with freedom [of speech], with condescension for the advance of hope and of trust in God, while saying, “All the commandments of the Lord were given to every person, to pagans and to barbarians, to men and to women, to slaves and to the freeborn, to monks and to laypeople.<sup>4</sup> Our Lord made this known when he sent out the disciples for preaching, commanding and saying to them, ‘Go, make disciples [of] all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to keep all these [things] that I have commanded you,’<sup>5</sup> not that they should keep some and not others, but ‘all these [things] that I have commanded you.’ For the only difference between monks and laypeople is the promise of virginity and of self-control.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, because our generation has slid into great weakness and negligence,<sup>7</sup> I have faith in the Lord that every Christian, if he is careful to keep these three commandments and does [them] rightly in cheerfulness, will not be rejected from the mercies of our Lord nor from eternal good [things].<sup>8</sup> Those

<sup>7</sup> The following paragraph and a half is also found in a slightly modified form in nineteenth-century manuscripts. See MS Mingana 4, fols. 107v-108r (A. Mingana, *Syriac and Garshūni Manuscripts* [vol. 1 of *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*; Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1933], 14) and MS Harvard Syriac 99, fols. 154r-155r.

<sup>8</sup> Despite a seemingly radical outlook and judgment of the situation in which he found himself, Peter ultimately proposed a moderate view, one of trust in God’s mercy, at this instance.



three commandments are these: First, that he has the orthodox faith, for this is the foundation of our life and of our salvation. For, 'Without faith it is not possible that we should please God,'<sup>1</sup> as it is written. **[R 118]** Second, that he should speak the truth from [his] heart and from [his] tongue, for it is written, 'You will destroy all these who are speaking a lie,'<sup>2</sup> and, 'The lie is from the devil,'<sup>3</sup> and again, 'Speak the truth, every one to his neighbor.'<sup>4</sup> The third, however, is that he should keep the body spotless and pure from the filth of fornication and lasciviousness. For it is written, on the one hand, in the Old Testament, 'Be holy, because I am holy,'<sup>5</sup> [and], on the other hand, in the New [Testament] [is written] by the hand of the apostles,<sup>6</sup> 'Pursue peace with everyone and holiness, without which no one is seeing God,'<sup>7</sup> and again, 'For this is the will of God, your holiness. Separate from fornication, and let everyone among you know [how] to possess his vessel in holiness and in honor, and not in shameful passions, like these peoples who do not know God.'<sup>8</sup> I am saying these [things] not that every Christian by all means should become a monk. For not everyone comprehends this word, as also our Lord himself said.<sup>9</sup> But let the one who cannot restrain himself<sup>10</sup> take a wife according to the law of God, for 'marriage is honorable in everything, and the [marriage] bed is pure,'<sup>11</sup> and again, 'Because of fornication, every man shall hold to his [own] wife, and every [woman] shall hold to her husband,'<sup>12</sup> while you keep yourselves from all other unlawful intercourse. But 'fornicators and adulterers, God will judge.'<sup>13</sup>

**(§157)** "These are the three commandments that I instruct every Christian to keep diligently. The one who keeps them, I **[R 119]** guarantee his salvation, taking into account the boundless depth of the mercies of God. If someone should say, 'And what shall I do, [I] who fell [into sin] in my youth and wallowed in the

<sup>8</sup> 1 Thess 4:3–5. "Holiness (Syriac ܐܘܠܝܬܐ)" is here employed in its technical, ascetic sense of marital continence.

<sup>9</sup> Matt 19:11.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor 7:9.

<sup>11</sup> Heb 13:4.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor 7:2.

<sup>13</sup> Heb 13:4.



mud of defilement?’ From this moment<sup>2</sup> he shall make a [new] beginning and no longer wallow in these same [things]. I stand as a guarantee for that one’s salvation, if he shows this good work until the end. For it is written, ‘He who endures until the end<sup>3</sup> will be saved,’<sup>4</sup> and ‘As you presented your limbs [as] servants to defilement and to iniquity to work iniquity, so at this hour present your limbs [as] servants of righteousness for holiness.’<sup>5</sup> Behold, this is repentance, and this is the work of repentance.”

(§158) When he had spoken these and [words] like these to the brethren and had consoled them and aroused them to the work of repentance and had exhorted them to the way of eternal life, he passed from there and came to Ptolemais.<sup>6</sup> When he was received there by Aaron, a believing orthodox man and a lover of the saints who was the superintendent of the salt-pan there, he blessed him and his house. [Having] inflamed his heart with divine love, he passed on to Caesarea. This believing Aaron was so pricked by the love of Christ<sup>7</sup> that after a while he cast [off] the possessions and the business of this world and left [his] children and [his] dwelling [place] and everything he had,<sup>8</sup> and taking up the cross of Christ he ran to a monastery of some holy men and was found worthy of their habit. He journeyed with them on the blessed way that leads to heaven.

(§159) When we came to Caesarea, [R 120] we found all the brethren, our fellow-believers, expecting our arrival. When these had received us full of joy and exultation, they celebrated a great feast at the coming of the saint, rising early every day and coming

λόγων: “struck and bitten by philosophical discourses.” However, the underlying Greek verb, δάκνω, is typically used to refer to snake bites, as the passage cited from the *Symposium* illustrates. Figuratively it has a negative connotation, as in Gal 5:15. A more likely term for “prick” underlying the Syriac might be *κατανύσσομαι*. This verb renders the “pricked heart” of Ps 108:16 and Acts 2:37; note also the use of the word “heart” in the preceding line. We gratefully acknowledge this contribution from John Fitzgerald.

<sup>8</sup> Rabbula of Edessa displays the same behavior. See *Life of Rabbula* (Overbeck, 166).

<sup>3</sup> See Clermont-Ganneau, "Sur quelques localités de Palestine," 18–20.



together in his [presence],<sup>1</sup> listening and being strengthened by his burning words, [and] being esteemed worthy of a blessing from him and of communion [with him].<sup>2</sup>

(§160) There is a village called Aphthoria,<sup>3</sup> about twelve miles south of the city. In it are two monasteries of the orthodox, one of men, the other of women. The abbot [of] the men's [monastery] had the name Gregory, a holy, ascetic, and humble old man and one who from his boyhood loved virginity. He had been esteemed worthy of the rank of the priesthood from early on and was a very faithful friend of Abba Peter the bishop and beloved [by him]. The head of the women's [monastery] was the blessed Sabina, who was the daughter of the sister of Gregory,<sup>4</sup> the abbot of the men's monastery, at whose [place]<sup>5</sup> also the aforementioned Eugenia from Tyre, when she had taken refuge and had been received [there], was tonsured and received the holy habit. After the departure [from this world] of the blessed Sabina, she was esteemed worthy of the honor and the leadership [of the monastery].

(§161) While we were still in Ptolemaïs, Abba Gregory learned that the blessed one had returned, so he came there and received him. He then remained attached to us until we came to Caesarea. When he had earnestly entreated him with many [supplications] and had persuaded him, he took the saint and brought him to his monastery, being both glad and exulting. They were [R 121] so pleased with each other's converse that he kept us there for four months.

(§162) When we had thus celebrated at his [place] the great and saving feast of holy Pascha and of holy Pentecost,<sup>6</sup> we went out and came to Ashdod<sup>7</sup> at the seashore, because the guiding Spirit was also calling the saint there for the deliverance and salvation of souls and for the benefit of those who were dwelling in this

<sup>4</sup> For other instances of promotion of anti-Chalcedonian structures and life via family connections, see *Vit. Pet.* §137 (R 100–101).

<sup>5</sup> The referent is Sabina and her monastery.

<sup>6</sup> Note how both Pascha and Pentecost are recurring themes in the *Vita*, functioning as markers of time.

<sup>7</sup> See Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 72. For a fortress located immediately at the seashore, see Jacob Kaplan, "Ashdod-Yam," *NEAEHL* 1:102–3.



city. There the old man, although he was asked by many to dwell inside the city, since he was not [so] persuaded lodged in a depot set up at the seashore, a narrow and despicable place and without any bodily comfort. For in lodgings like these the blessed one rejoiced, as [one who is] a stranger and a foreigner.<sup>1</sup>

(§163) Now when all his acquaintances, those in Ashkelon and in Gaza and in Maiuma and [those] of the surrounding regions, learned [about this], they gathered together and came to the saint, hastening to receive their father, both the light and the lamp of the fear of God, and to be saturated and filled for a long time from his teaching and his blessing and his communion. When so many people ran together and were assembled, we were dwelling in such a narrow and despicable place as if it were a royal palace, so joyfully and gladly were we receiving all of them, not finding ourselves constricted in any way, because the divine word was fulfilled also with us through the prayers of the saint, “In narrow places you gave space to me.”<sup>2</sup>

(§164) When they were all urging and persuading [him] to return to the region of Gaza and to the places [R 122] in which he was formerly accustomed to dwell in peace, he cut [them] off and entirely rejected that we should importune him any longer about this that he already had foreseen in the Spirit: that the day of his departure [from this world] was near. He painstakingly did all these [things] so that he would be perfected in a foreign land<sup>3</sup> and also at the end [of his life] weave the crown of a good pilgrimage,<sup>4</sup> loving contempt so much as to become like our Lord<sup>5</sup> and despising glory and honor from men.

(§165) Now from here on, time calls us to turn the discourse to [his] blessed demise and its narration, so that in this we may learn how even at the end God glorifies those who glorify him, although we mentioned very briefly [only] a few matters<sup>6</sup> concerning his demise in what has been already said. For that we would

the Pilgrim’s Crown”; eadem, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 271–73.

<sup>5</sup> Here the author employs the motif of the imitation of Christ as a driving force for the saint’s behavior.

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek *ὀλίγα καὶ μικρά* (Raabe, 114 n. 1).



dare to write down all of them would be like someone wanting to proceed to walk on the great depths of the sea or to count the waves, as we said at the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

(§166) While we were then in that [afore]mentioned depot of the city of Ashdod beside the sea, it happened that the blessed one fell into a bodily sickness, so that he made [out] a will.<sup>2</sup> When Elijah, the tribune whom we mentioned,<sup>3</sup> who was dwelling in Jerusalem and who was a trusted member of the household of Empress Eudocia,<sup>4</sup> [came to] know this, he was anxious to go down to [visit] him. For he had previously been eagerly awaiting his return. Finding him recovered from sickness, he entreated him very earnestly and persuaded him to change this lodging because it was [R 123] utterly unfitting and despicable, disordered and confining, and [given] the harshness of the weather it was rough during the winter. For it was already the time of the autumn months,<sup>5</sup> after the feast of the Encaenia<sup>6</sup> of the worshipful cross had passed by.<sup>7</sup> When he took him, he transferred him to what is called the fortress<sup>8</sup> of the city of Jamnia,<sup>9</sup> which is near the sea and in a peaceful place and very fitting for the saint's infirmity. This he did as one who had freedom [of speech]<sup>10</sup> and a relationship to the imperial procurators,<sup>11</sup> and authority over this lodging [place], because it was [part] of the imperial property and once had been a dwelling place of Empress Eudocia. For since she was frequently weighed down by bodily diseases, the physicians advised her to seek such a place in which, with the change of air,

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἐγκαίνια (Raabe, 114 n. 4). The term is used for a festival of dedication or of consecration.

<sup>7</sup> Egeria's account of her pilgrimage to Jerusalem furnishes us with the earliest extant description of the Feast of the Cross, celebrated on 14 September. While the emphasis of the feast first focused on the *inventio*, i.e., the finding of the cross, in the course of the sixth century a shift to a rite of elevation and exaltation of the cross occurred.

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac word ܩܠܥܝܬܐ is used to describe a little, fortified town. It may render the Greek πολίχνιον (Raabe, 114 n. 5).

<sup>9</sup> See Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 149–50.

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek παρρησία.

<sup>11</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἐπίτροποι. Again one gains a glance at the strong network of high-placed officials and nobility to which Peter and his followers had access.



she would receive a condition of regained strength,<sup>1</sup> [and] for this reason she built this place. Since all the inhabitants of this village were Samaritans,<sup>2</sup> she built in it a large temple in the name of and because of the deposition [of the relics] of Stephen, the head of the martyrs and of the apostle Thomas and of many [other] holy martyrs.<sup>3</sup> She appointed to it those who would rightly serve God therein, and she stipulated sufficient income [for them]. For her [own] use she had constructed it [as] a modest lodging [place], to which the Christ-loving tribune Elijah brought the blessed one. Thenceforth he [Elijah] dwelt there together with him for the most part, while he separated [himself] from him [only] a little so as to visit his household. [Elijah] would return again to him there and [stay] with him so that he would be esteemed worthy **[R 124]** to be found [present] at the departure [from this world] of the saint and to receive his blessing.

(§167) While we were there [the news] was announced to us of the departure, that is to say, the release<sup>4</sup> of him who belonged to the saints,<sup>5</sup> the father of the monks, Abba Isaiah, the great ascetic and prophet,<sup>6</sup> who took [his] rest on the eleventh of the month of Ab.<sup>7</sup> It happened, however, that the one who brought these tidings arrived at the moment at which we were sitting at table and were eating, while the blessed Old Man<sup>8</sup> was seated alone near us and was taking [only] a little nourishment. In order to alarm neither him nor these who were eating, those chief brethren, the attendants of the Old Man who were the first to receive the report, delayed for the moment announcing the departure [from this

and William Scott Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period 450 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 546–48; and Robert T. Anderson, “Samaritans,” *ABD* 5:940–47.

<sup>3</sup> Empress Eudocia here displays major efforts at trying to convert the Samaritan population to the Christian faith by introducing different holy sites as competing sanctuaries. See also *Vit. Pet.* §43 (R 30), referring to Poemenia’s efforts at Christianizing the Samaritans.

<sup>4</sup> See Luke 2:29. Also note below, *Vit. Pet.* §173 (R 131).

<sup>5</sup> See also Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 107, fol. 133a (Kugener, 107,1).

<sup>6</sup> The author compares Abba Isaiah with the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., August. Isaiah died on 11 August 491.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Peter the Iberian.

[illegible]

<sup>2</sup> This comment reflects the high rank that Peter assigned to his friend Isaiah.



world] of the blessed Isaiah until the meal came to an end, thinking that his passing had escaped the notice of the Old Man and he had not known it beforehand in the spirit.

(§168) When we had satisfied our need and were about to get up, one of the brethren, whose name was Zachariah, said to him, “My lord Abba, great sorrow has come upon the orthodox. Abba Isaiah has fallen asleep.” He, however, as if he heard nothing strange<sup>1</sup> but [rather something] that was then already known to him beforehand, answered quietly and at the same time without commotion, “So what if Isaiah died? Did not the patriarchs and the prophets and all the saints die?<sup>2</sup> What great [thing is it] if also Isaiah has gone the same road, so that all of us should be amazed about these [things]?” Nevertheless, when he had said this, he immediately got up and entered [his] cell, where he remained. [R 125] He wept much by himself and said only this, when we were hearing him, “Now it is my [turn].”<sup>3</sup>

(§169) After a few days there came to him the God-fearing priest, Abba Peter, the cell-companion and attendant and heir of Abba Isaiah, to whom it was commanded by the blessed Isaiah that he should come after his departure [from this world] to Abba Peter the bishop and receive the prayer from him as well and conduct the holy oblation for the brethren. For while he was alive this Peter never wanted to offer the oblation. When he came, he recounted to us the wonder of the blessed one’s end. “When he became weak,” he said, “and the moment of his death was already near, when I entered to visit him and to comfort him, I found him as if he were talking to someone with all joy and cheerfulness.<sup>4</sup> When I had moved off a little and he ceased from talking and from this vision, I entered. Excusing myself for being tardy, I said, ‘I had come already a long time before, but when I found your holiness talking with someone, I refrained from entering.’ Falling upon my face, I asked him to say to whom he was talking and what these [things] were [about] which he was talking with him. He an-

<sup>3</sup> I.e., Peter is presented as having foreknowledge of the approach of his own death.

<sup>4</sup> Zachariah Rhetor’s *Life of Isaiah* does not recount this episode and only presents a relatively brief reference to the end of Isaiah’s life. It does refer to his disciple Peter, however.



swered, saying that it was John the Baptist who had come to take him [away].” For so it is the custom with God to take [away] his saints by those who are like-minded and equal in zeal and [R 126] in way of life,<sup>1</sup> as also [happened] to our blessed father and bishop Peter, as we shall make known in its time.<sup>2</sup> “Yet Abba Isaiah,” he was saying, “was asking the Baptist what these locusts were that he used to eat in the desert.”<sup>3</sup> He answered that these had been the heads of roots from the desert. Since I found mercy,” Peter was saying, “I asked the old man Abba Isaiah to ask God to let him be with us for a time, because the rest of the orthodox were in much need of him.”<sup>4</sup> He, however, while he was strongly moved, said to me, ‘If you knew the evils that are about to come,’<sup>5</sup> doubtless you would be praying to God and be anxious to be taken away before me!’ Again, when I asked that he inform me who he thought should take care of me after his departure and would be able to perform the holy oblation for the brethren, because I was inexperienced and not worthy of such a service, he said to me, ‘You shall not find anyone such as you are seeking, but go to the reverend bishop, our father Abba Peter, and receive from him prayer and help, and perform the work of God. For unto me and unto you are the [affairs] of this place.’”<sup>6</sup>

(§170) When the blessed Peter the priest now returned to his monastery, we were in the fortress of the city of Jamnia with our holy father the bishop. But there also God worked many wonders and healings and [acts of] casting out demons by his hands, not only on believers and Christians but [R 127] also on Jews and

104–27; and idem, *The Diet of John the Baptist: “Locusts and Wild Honey” in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation* (WUNT 176; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For a similar argument formulated in reference to Peter the Iberian see *Vit. Pet.* §173 (R 131).

<sup>5</sup> This comment does not specify any adversities that afflicted anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine. It is possible that it refers more generally to Sabas’s efforts and growing influence on behalf of Chalcedon in Palestine and the events after Justin I’s accession in 518, which definitively turned the tables against the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine.

<sup>6</sup> The author seems to stress a sense of responsibility for the affairs of his monastery, which Isaiah passed on to his disciple Peter.



Samaritans,<sup>1</sup> and especially on the inhabitants of the village and of the city of Jamnia and its surroundings. If we should want to narrate these one by one, we should need many words and writings. Nevertheless, when those believers had seen these wonders and were enjoying his help, they called him a second Moses.<sup>2</sup> A certain Jew, however, a fisherman, when he fell into the sickness of dropsy,<sup>3</sup> his kindred carried him and brought him to the blessed one.<sup>4</sup> Seeing him, he wept and said to him, "If you believe in Christ, he can heal you, for I am a sinner." That one, however, wept, and the old man also wept together with him. Having also said this, he made the sign [of the cross]<sup>5</sup> [on] his belly. And he said to these who had brought him, "Go, prepare some bandage, and put it on his belly." After three days he came, being healthy and praising God, and brought us a multitude of fish from those he had caught.<sup>6</sup>

(§171) There came, however, at this time as usual, the commemoration of the priest Abba John the Eunuch, who had been the cell-mate of Abba Peter, about whom we have also made mention above,<sup>7</sup> who was perfected on the fourth of First Teshrin.<sup>8</sup> When the blessed one, as was his custom, invited many and especially those who were in the nearby mountains, since he was anxious to provide comfort for them, he commanded [us] to buy many fish from the sea that was nearby. It so happened that suddenly there was so great a winter [storm] and [so] much rain came down [R 128] that fishing from the sea ceased completely, and there was no catch. When therefore we were sad because we could not refresh the fathers, as had been the saint's command, want turned

Jewish man as a fisherman in this section. While the passage could be read in a straightforward historical sense, it also allowed Rufus to signal to his anti-Chalcedonian audience how Peter not only turned Chalcedonians, who were understood to hold the same faith as the Jews, into true believers but also how he managed to transform them into effective workers for the anti-Chalcedonian cause. For a fuller treatment of this issue, see Horn, "Eugenia."

<sup>7</sup> For the last few references to John the Eunuch, see *Vit. Pet.* §§73, 105, 118–119 (R 50, 78, 85–87),.

<sup>8</sup> The First Teshrin is the month of October. See also Schwartz, *Johannes Rufus*, 20, correcting Raabe's translation of "December" for "October" here.



into abundance. For because much rain came down that night, the river that was in our neighborhood, being so greatly replenished from the mountains, came down [so] swiftly that it overflowed and flooded the surrounding areas and the vineyards. The next day, after the waters had receded, they found a multitude of fish. Those [fish] were *coraces*,<sup>1</sup> so that the inhabitants of the region would say that they did not remember that there ever was a miracle like this in their days. Consequently, we were not enough for the multitude of fish that were coming to the saint's commemoration,<sup>2</sup> so that also concerning him would be fulfilled what is said, "Your commemoration is blessed!"<sup>3</sup>

(§172) While we were [involved] in these [things], the calling and the repose of the blessed one came near, that he should depart to Jesus, whom he loved. While for us it was unknown and unexpected, for him it had been foreknown and foretold for a long time,<sup>4</sup> and for us [it was an event] of pain and of loss, but for him, longed for and awaited, [an event] toward which he was always running, "rushing toward the goal, for the crown of the higher calling of God."<sup>5</sup> Since he had the habit of going to the sea with the brethren and walking and making [spiritual] disputation there<sup>6</sup> [R 129] and accepting questions from all of them, and replying to each one of them as was helpful and unto salvation, one day, when he returned to the lodging [place]—the one on whom he was leaning,<sup>7</sup> who was a simple and guileless and innocent man, told us [this] after his departure—when he reached the door, the old man stood and, while he considered in [his] mind, said to himself, "Now, shall I be entering again by this door?" He replied to himself, "I do not think [so]." He went up the staircase [and] again said the same, "Now, shall I again be going up this staircase?" He said, "No." He entered by the upper door [and] again said the same to himself, "Now, shall I be entering again by this door?" He

<sup>4</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §§168–169 (R 125).

<sup>5</sup> See Phil 3:14.

<sup>6</sup> See *Pler.* 2.

<sup>7</sup> By now Peter seems to have been old and weak, so that when walking he needed to rely on the help and stabilizing support of another person's physical assistance.

[illegible]

<sup>4</sup> This concern for perfection is telling of what appears to have been a driving force among many of the anti-Chalcedonians. Throughout the text one notices phrases and expressions that bespeak a desire and strong striving for the



replied, saying, "I do not think [so]." After this, little by little, he became weak, first in his feet and afterwards in the rest of his body. Nevertheless, he forced himself to celebrate the usual services and [the service] of the oblation with his own hands. Every day he was saying this unceasingly, even when lying down on his bed: "Send out your light and your truth,<sup>1</sup> and it shall comfort [me] and [I shall] live."<sup>2</sup>

(§173) Athanasius, a certain Egyptian priest, a monk and a chaste [man] who had been the disciple of the famous old man [and] hermit called Abba Sana,<sup>3</sup> when he came after Sana's death to the blessed Abba Peter the bishop and saw the strictness of his evangelical way of life,<sup>4</sup> he earnestly yearned to dwell with the old man. After he had asked much, he had it according to his wish that he would dwell with us in a very beautiful manner<sup>5</sup> and in chastity. [R 130] We two, he and I, had the habit of standing beside each other during the service of the night and of the day. When the blessed old man had become weak about ten days before his departure, during one of the nights, while he and I were standing side by side, he wept very bitterly and was groaning without ceasing, so that I was amazed. Shortly after the end of the night service, I followed him and asked him to tell me the reason for these groans and for such great weeping. Being anxious to hide [it], as the saints have the custom [to do], he offered other reasons. When I persisted and asked him, he said, "On this account especially<sup>6</sup> am I weeping and mourning, because our father is leaving us and is going away to the Lord. For," he was saying, "while I was seized with great sadness and in mournfulness because of his weakness, so that I could not even sleep, suddenly I saw my Abba Sana, standing [there] and saying to me, 'Why are you mourning and weeping so bitterly and torturing yourself with sighs?' Yet I said to him, 'Why is it not right for me to mourn and groan, that after the departure of your holiness, God bestowed on me that I would be esteemed

preservation of purity and the precise fulfillment of liturgical and other requirements. Underlying such a concern may be a sense that exact compliance with God's laws assists one on the way toward righteousness.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek εὐσχημοσύνη (Raabe, 120 n. 2).

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac may render a phrase ὅτι μάλιστα καταλείπει (see Raabe, 120 n. 3).



worthy to dwell with an old man like this, and now I am about to be deprived also of him because of my sins?’ He said, ‘Yes, but do not lose heart, for the sentence and the call is from God. At this hour an assembly has come together in heaven [R 131] on account of this, the Lord seated first and all his saints and angels and archangels standing on [his] right and on [his] left.<sup>1</sup> There was much deliberation about the weakness of the old man, Abba Peter. Some, on the one hand, were making petition for him and [were] saying, “My Lord, he has [endured] many struggles and labors, and he is very old and weak. It is time now that he should be released<sup>2</sup> and find rest from such asceticism and afflictions and persecutions, which [he endures] for the glory of your holy name.” Others were saying, “Your church, my Lord, and the people of the orthodox are in need of him, because all of them depend on him, and he is for them a support and consolation.”<sup>3</sup> He rather adopted the counsel that he should be released. Because of this, Peter the martyr and archbishop of Alexandria<sup>4</sup> was sent that he himself would take him away.’” His memorial was to take place in seven days.<sup>5</sup> Behold, this is what we said above earlier, that God has the custom of taking away his saints through those who are like-minded to them and who are equal to them in way of life and in zeal.<sup>6</sup>

(§174) When I heard this, my heart was broken. For I was seized with the same sadness and mournfulness, and [even] greater. Nevertheless, when we said, “God’s will be done,”<sup>7</sup> we were waiting to see the outcome of the vision. This was also known to the blessed one. He was saying continually, while lying down, “Saint Peter,<sup>8</sup> do not delay!” For he always had such affection and faith and his love for the high priest [R 132] and martyr that every year when his memorial was being celebrated he recited in person

<sup>4</sup> Succeeding Bishop Theonas, Peter of Alexandria (300–311) was the seventeenth bishop of the See of St. Mark. Venerated as the last and “seal” of the martyrs by Christians in Egypt, Peter was a man of moderation marked by a spirit of reconciliation and charity. See Donald B. Spanel and Tim Vivian, “Peter I,” *CE* 6:1943–47; Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Given that Peter of Alexandria’s martyrdom took place on 25 November 311, the present event appears to have taken place around 18 November 491.

<sup>6</sup> See *Vit. Pet.* §169 (R 125–26).

<sup>7</sup> See Acts 21:14.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Peter of Alexandria.



the account of his martyrdom<sup>1</sup> and was offering the holy oblation diligently with all his exultation, so that he would see him standing and serving as a priest with him.<sup>2</sup>

(§175) Therefore, at the time when the consecration of the mysteries on his<sup>3</sup> memorial was about to take place, the blessed one<sup>4</sup> entered to arrange the altar; it was his custom to do this always with his own hands and to allow no one else [to do it]. As he was bringing out one of the coverings that are placed, he wanted to spread it out on the holy altar. But while there was standing beside him one of those who were serving with him, he thought to himself, "Now why did the father not rather spread out this covering, but that?" He, however, since he saw these things that were in his heart, said to him, "Be silent! He whose memorial it is, he stood by me and said to me that I should spread out this one." Since he was afraid, he was silent, so that from then on and until this hour we retain the custom that, on the memorial of the glorious martyr and archbishop Peter, we take out exactly this cover and deck and adorn with it the holy table.<sup>5</sup>

(§176) Knowing that the time of his calling from above was near, he made a will, appointing four heirs.<sup>6</sup> The first was Abba John the deacon, whom he loved much,<sup>7</sup> the one called the Canopite because he was from the village of Canopis,<sup>8</sup> situated about two miles south of Gaza. He was a monk from his childhood and a disciple of the blessed [R 133] Stephen<sup>9</sup> who was archdeacon of the Holy City. Because of [his] zeal for the orthodox faith, in order not to be in communion with the transgression of the Council of Chalcedon, when he left the clergy of Jerusalem he went out wandering in exile and was perfected on the road. On account of his apostolic and excellent way of life, a special written narration

were observed in the anti-Chalcedonian community surrounding Peter the Iberian. For some discussion of this concern for strict observance, see Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 208.

<sup>6</sup> See also Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 86 (Kugener, 86).

<sup>7</sup> Or, "who loved him much."

<sup>8</sup> See Clermont-Ganneau, "Sur quelques localités de Palestine," 14–15; see also Zachariah Rhetor, *Vit. Sev.* 86, fol. 127b (Kugener, 86,9).

<sup>9</sup> See also *Pler.* 8 and 79. It might be that the priest Stephen, referenced at *Pler.* 58, is also identical with the present blessed Stephen.

[illegible]

අනුබන්ධ : අසාදන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ස්ථාන ( § 179 )  
 අසාදන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ස්ථාන : අසාදන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ස්ථාන  
 අසාදන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ස්ථාන : අසාදන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ස්ථාන

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to 2 Cor 12:4. We owe this reference to John T. Fitzgerald.

telling about him is needed. Therefore, leaving all other [things aside], we recount only this [anecdote] to demonstrate how much he pleased God.

(§177) Just before he departed to go on the journey to Jesus and was lying in great weakness and immobility, he saw a vision. Meanwhile, some of the saints came to visit him, and, finding him in a vision, they stood [there], waiting to see the end. When he returned from the vision, the archdeacon of Maiuma,<sup>2</sup> whose name was Nestabus, a man well-known for fear of God and wise, said to him, “Where have you been, father? We waited a long time for you.” He, however, said, “Where there are words unutterable, which it is not lawful for a man to speak.”<sup>3</sup> When the hour of the departure of the blessed Stephen drew near, having been immobile for the days prior in this manner, suddenly he leapt from [his] bed and straightened himself, when he saw the saints, those who had come to take him, and with them the Lord. Having adored him with joy and cheerfulness, he reclined again and immediately gave up his spirit. His memorial is celebrated on the fourth of First Kanon [December],<sup>4</sup> three [R 134] days after the memorial of Abba Peter, our bishop.

(§178) His beloved disciple was Abba John, whom he [Peter] appointed [his] heir,<sup>5</sup> and with him Zachariah and Andrew, his cell-mates,<sup>6</sup> and with them Theodore of Ashkelon the ex-lawyer,<sup>7</sup> who remained with him at the end, together with the old man John. [To these he bequeathed] his whole monastery and the administration<sup>8</sup> and leadership of the brethren, those who alone were sufficient and able to take up this guardianship and guidance that is from God.

(§179) When the blessed one had called all the brethren together, he admonished them [with his] last exhortation, witnessing to them these [things] that [are essential] for salvation. First,

<sup>4</sup> December is named “First Kanon,” while January is commonly called “Other Kanon” or “Second Kanon.” See Payne Smith, 218.

<sup>5</sup> After the digression about Stephen, the author now finishes his account of Peter the Iberian’s will (see Raabe, 123 n. 1).

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek σύγγελλοι (Raabe, 123 n. 2).

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek ἀποσχολαστικός (Raabe, 123 n. 3).

<sup>8</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek κατάστασις.





indeed, they should keep the orthodox faith accurately and without change until death and reject and curse all heresies,<sup>1</sup> expressly the Council of Chalcedon, and reject and curse the wicked *Tome of Leo*, “as many times,” he said, “I have witnessed to you and to all men, when I was saying that if you ever see me, the same who, as you are saying, is a saint for you, having changed and saying to you that there is nothing evil in the Council of Chalcedon, may you be under a curse<sup>2</sup> from the Father and from the Son and from the Holy Spirit, if you do not curse me to my face and flee from me as [R 135] from a heathen and [as from one] who has part with Judas the betrayer.<sup>3</sup> After faith, however, be anxious to gain and to keep accurately the sanctity of the soul and of the body, without which no one sees the Lord, as well as love toward each other and equanimity [that comes] from the heart and from a good conscience and from a faith that is not hypocritical,<sup>4</sup> as it is written.<sup>5</sup> Be on your guard not to obtain freedom [of speech],<sup>6</sup> not only toward foreigners but also toward each other. For freedom [of speech] is the kindler and begetter of all the passions. Meditate, however, and read always in the book on asceticism, the *Questions of the Brethren* of the blessed Basil the bishop.<sup>7</sup> Straighten out your ways of life

could lead to numerous problems in actual practice is illustrated, for example, in a treatise on the topic from the pen of the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara. See, e.g., Philodemus of Gadara, *On Frank Criticism* frgs 52–73. See also Clarence E. Glad, “Frank Speech, Flattery, and Friendship in Philodemus,” in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; NovTSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 21–59; and L. Michael White, “A Measure of Frank Speech: The State of the Manuscript of PHerc. 1471,” in *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Dirk Obbink, and Glenn S. Holland; NovTSup 111; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 103–30. Abraham J. Malherbe (*Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 84–86) offers a helpful discussion of the treatise in the light of pastoral concerns. We are grateful to John Fitzgerald for bringing Philodemus’s treatise to our attention.

<sup>7</sup> Basil’s works were read and appreciated in the sixth-century Palestinian monastic milieu. Zosimus, Barsanuphius, and Dorotheus of Gaza all refer to his *Rules*. Lucien Regnault (“Les Apophthegmes des Pères en Palestine aux v<sup>e</sup>-vi<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Irén* 54 [1981]: 328) comments that Dorotheus is the only ancient witness who guarantees the antiquity of the *apophthegma* attributed to Basil in the *Alphabeticon*. See Dorotheus of Gaza, *Instructions* 24 (Regnault and Préville, 182–85).



and your manners according to his holy ordinances and his legislation. For as the God-inspired Scriptures<sup>1</sup> were written down by the Holy Spirit, so also was this writing [written] by divine grace and the Holy Spirit for an accurate way of life, right action, and the salvation of monasteries everywhere.”<sup>2</sup>

(§180) When he had commanded and instructed us [in] many other things along with these that are fitting for benefit, [for] admonition, and [for] salvation, he blessed all of us one last time and entrusted us to the Lord [and] likewise dismissed us. Since he was about to surrender his spirit in this very night, Athanasius, the Egyptian priest of whom we made mention above,<sup>3</sup> saw a vision like this: a great church, full of light and much glory; and an assembly of many saints; and the body of the blessed one laid out in [its] midst; the martyr Peter, [R 136] archbishop of Alexandria standing on a high *bema*<sup>4</sup> and wearing, indeed, some white and splendidly shining vestment<sup>5</sup> and in a loud voice delivering a homily of eulogies about the blessed Peter, while all those saints together were listening and were praising him together in great joy and in exultation. From this we understood that the end of the blessed one would be taking place on that same day, which occurred on the third day of the memorial of the archbishop and martyr Peter,<sup>6</sup> according to the custom that one adopted in Alexandria, that his memorial was [to be celebrated] for three days.

(§181) Therefore we fasted the whole day, remaining until the evening in mournfulness and grave sadness and in suffering, while the blessed one henceforth prepared for his departure, speaking with our Lord. At that time Abba Gregory from Aphthoria, whom we have mentioned,<sup>7</sup> was near, since until his last breath he

40.46 (Moreschini and Gallay, 308,2–4 [Greek] and 309 [French]). See A. M. Schneider, “Bema,” *RAC* 2:129–30; Mark J. Johnson, “Bema,” *ODB* 1:281.

<sup>5</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek *στολή*. For a reference to the white vestment of the bishop of Jerusalem, see also below, *Obit. Theod.* §7 (B 24). For a discussion, see Paul Devos, “Cyrille de Scythopolis: Influences littéraires—Vêtement de l’évêque de Jérusalem—Passarion et Pierre l’Ibère,” *AnBoll* 98 (1980): 25–38.

<sup>6</sup> Peter of Alexandria was martyred on 25 November 311, but his three-day memorial is observed 8–10 December. See 264 n. 2 below.

<sup>7</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §160 (R 120).



kept pure [his] love and conscience toward the blessed one. When the evening drew near and Abba Gregory and these other old men urged and compelled the brethren, we sat down with them at table to take food. Halfway through the time of the meal, Euphrosius,<sup>1</sup> who was standing in front of the saint and was serving him, a pure monk and much beloved by the saint, cried out, "The father is departing! Come, receive a blessing!" Leaping up and getting up from the table, with tears and groans and wailings we ran to his bed. [R 137] In order not to importune the blessed one who was in his last breathings, Euphrosius, of whom we have made mention, holding the saint's right hand, was stretching [it] out for everyone to kiss it and receive a blessing. And to many the blessed one gave also in this hour a sense of the faith and of the love he had toward them. When the blessed one had surrendered his spirit in great cheerfulness and quietly into the hands of God who was near to him even at that hour and received him, Abba Gregory, the priest, was esteemed worthy to lay his hands [on his eyes] and close them.

(§182) It was then late evening, [near] dawn on Friday.<sup>2</sup> When we had washed his holy body and had wrapped around it the holy vestment in which he used to offer the holy mysteries, in the correct manner, we laid him out purely and honorably. We lit many lights and candles [and] spent the whole night, keeping vigil in [singing] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,<sup>3</sup> while it was known that all of the saints and the holy martyr and archbishop Peter were near us and glorifying with us the saint's memorial according to the vision of the priest Athanasius.<sup>4</sup> There was to be seen and heard much weeping and wailing of the inhabitants of the village,<sup>5</sup> all of them weeping at their being deprived of him, because they were remembering the many wonders and signs and healings that God showed them through him, and especially the great acts of relief and almsgiving that the blessed one performed

<sup>4</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §§173 (R 130–31).

<sup>5</sup> While Peter and his friends as anti-Chalcedonians may have had a broad basis of support among the villagers, it is also possible, and likely, that the inhabitants, independent of their taking a stance with regard to Chalcedon, were at that moment in grief and sadness over having lost a holy man and benefactor. See also *Vit. Pet.* §184 (R 138).



for them. **[R 138]** When it was early morning, having wrapped and bound the saint's body according to custom, we laid it in front of the holy altar so that, while it was set [there], the holy oblation would be offered on his behalf. There were some of the brethren who had not yet taken the holy habit. They brought garments for them, and by the hands of the holy body these were blessed, and thus they clothed them with joy.<sup>1</sup>

**(§183)** When the holy mysteries were offered and completed on his behalf, his heirs applied much care and hastened to take his body and lay it in his old monastery, located in the congregation beside Maiuma of Gaza, before the news of his death was heard by the inhabitants of the city of Gaza and Maiuma. For they were afraid that, if the inhabitants of the city would hear [about it] ahead of time, they would come at a run and take his holy body by force and lay it in one of the temples in these cities because of the great faith and love they had for him. For even all those who were not in communion with us<sup>2</sup> esteemed him like an angel and like a prophet.

**(§184)** Now, hastily taking up his holy coffin<sup>3</sup> upon [our] shoulders, we set out on the road, while not only his own [people] were accompanying him but also those inhabitants of this place for

in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land: First-Fifteenth Centuries CE* (ed. Ariele Kofsky and Guy G. Stroumsa; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1998), 19–30.

<sup>3</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek γλωσσόκομον. See also *Vit. Pet.* §34 (R 23). When describing the container into which Peter's body was laid, the author chooses the same term previously used for the golden reliquary box in which the bones of the Persian martyrs were transported. Thus the connection between Peter and the martyrs is again highlighted.





a long distance, and these although they were Samaritans,<sup>1</sup> which was also a miracle.

(§185) When they had gone out and were [R 139] moving along on the road, we and these old men remained in the fortress with the rest of the brethren, since those heirs of the blessed one had [devised] this plan. [We stayed behind], both to guard the vessels and because the numerous company should not be a hindrance to the journey. While we had thus fasted the whole day in sadness, when evening came we were about to take food. Two senior priests were staying with us, Abba Athanasius the Egyptian, who was mentioned, and Abba Maxos,<sup>2</sup> a simple man and truly without guile, who from his childhood until his old age kept the way of life of asceticism in holiness, humility, and virginity, being gentle and humble and full of spiritual grace, whom the blessed one used to have stand with him at the holy altar, carrying the holy fans,<sup>3</sup> because of the full assurance he had in him. Before we would sit down to eat, this one suddenly cried out, saying, "Listen to me! Listen to me! By him [God] who took his soul and glorified his saint in this world and is about to glorify him more in the eternal life! With all truth [I am telling you], hear these things that are being said by me and [that] until this hour were hidden because of his command. For you recall that, although I am not worthy, he brought me with him many times, and I used to stand with him to serve at the holy altar while he was celebrating the holy mysteries. While I was standing then with him, during one of these last holy [services] of his, I saw as it were a cloud that was like a purple<sup>4</sup> [robe] [R 140] and from it the palm of a hand<sup>5</sup> stretched out over the altar. Since I was afraid and in amazement,

the latter, meaning "six-winged," is also the customary epithet for the seraphim. See also Marlia M. Mango, "Rhipidion," *ODB* 3:1790–91; and H. Leclercq, "Flabellum," *DACL* 5:1610–25.

<sup>4</sup> Syriac ܬܠܝܬܐ. "[T]he violet or hyacinthine hue obtained from the Tyrian murex, purple" (Payne Smith, 27).

<sup>5</sup> The presence of God the Father, more difficult to depict than that of Christ, was often represented in the form of a hand in early Christian visual art. See also a few lines below, where the arm of God, up to the elbow, is spoken of as becoming visible.



I was seized by great fear, and I stood [there] trembling, whereas the saint was looking and observing [it] but said nothing, because he knew the cause. When the holy service was finished, I thought it over and decided that henceforth I would not dare to stand before such dreadful mysteries.”

(§186) “During another holy [service] the day after that last one that the blessed one performed, again he commanded me to stand with him. Being unable and not daring to object, I entered and served with him. Again I saw, no longer only the palm of the hand, but all of the hand up to the elbow stretched out from the cloud over the altar, so that now I almost died from fear. When the holy [service] was finished, since I could no longer stand [with him], I also entered the cell of the blessed one, where he took off and laid down his holy vestment. I threw myself upon the earth and was asking him, saying, ‘Forgive me!’ But he, since it was well known [to him] and [when] he had commanded those who were attending him to go outside, said to me, ‘What do you have, old man? Why are you troubled?’ While he gave me [his] hand, he made me stand up, while I was quivering and weeping. But when I was about to speak and tell the vision, as he cut off my word, he said to me, ‘Keep silence! You will have to give answer to the Son of God on the day of judgment if you let this word go out from your mouth during my life[time].’<sup>1</sup> While I have kept his command [R 141] until now, since now the time has come, I have revealed to you and I proclaim to everyone with what kind of a saint we were esteemed worthy to dwell together and from what kind of a father and shepherd and bishop and servant of God and firm supporter of our souls<sup>2</sup> we have become bodily<sup>3</sup> separated.”

(§187) When the old man was telling these [things] with many tears [and] groans, we all, while we were in amazement and in compunction, shed streams of tears.<sup>4</sup> [We brought up] unspeakable groans<sup>5</sup> from the depth of the heart, as those who are capable

description of Peter the Iberian that he has presented in similar terms and by listing titles and appellations for Peter already at the beginning. See *Vit. Pet.* §§2, 189 (R 3,143).

<sup>3</sup> Implied is, “but not spiritually.”

<sup>4</sup> Literally, “springs of tears.”

<sup>5</sup> An allusion to Rom 8:23, 26. We owe this reference to John Fitzgerald.

<sup>7</sup> This place is located thirty miles north of Cairo. See Randall Stew-

of expounding and explaining such things have explained and elucidated,<sup>1</sup> making known the vision of the hand [as] his calling from above, as if God stretched out [his] hand to him and called him to himself, as it is written, “The right hand of the Lord worked a mighty deed; the right hand of the Lord lifted me up. And I shall not die, but live, and recount the works of the Lord.”<sup>2</sup> And again, “You have seized my right hand, and according to your will you have guided me. And you have taken me to you with glory.”<sup>3</sup>

(§188) So it happened.<sup>4</sup> His heirs, while they carried the body of the blessed one and Abba Gregory the priest was traveling with them, toward evening, when they arrived at Ashkelon, they lodged there outside of the [city] wall in a temple belonging to the orthodox.<sup>5</sup> And when they got up in haste, they journeyed swiftly the whole night. And before [day]light they arrived at the saint’s old monastery, before the report was made known to the people of Gaza and Maiuma. The blessed one, when he was still alive and was dwelling there in quiet, had constructed three sarcophagi,<sup>6</sup> which were joined to each other. [R 142] They laid his holy body in the middle one, while these [other] two also had in them the bones of saints: in the one on the right, the holy body of Abba John the Eunuch; and in the one on the left, [the body] of Abba Abraham, a holy and ascetic old man of Athrīb<sup>7</sup> to whom, after he had straightforwardly led the way of life of solitude in these regions with all sincerity and holiness, finally appeared such a revelation that commanded him, because his end was near, to go the regions of Palestine to Bishop Peter the Iberian, so that he, laying his hands on his eyes,<sup>8</sup> would send him to the Lord. On hearing [this], he ran to the blessed one. When he revealed to him these [things] from the revelation, after he was only acquainted with him for thirty days, he was perfected according to the manner of the vi-

art, “Athrīb,” *CE* 1:307. The reference to Abraham of Athrīb establishes a further clear connection between Egyptian and Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians. See also the discussion in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 209, where further references are provided. The connection between Egyptian and Palestinian asceticism is featured prominently in Rubenson, “Egyptian Relations”; see also Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision*, ch. 1.

<sup>8</sup> In order to close his eyes permanently.

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>2</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek ὀρφανοὶ ἐγένοντο τοιούτου πατρὸς (Raabe, 130 n. 1).

sion that had been shown to him, and the blessed Peter closed his [eyes] and wrapped him up and laid him with his own hands in this sarcophagus that was joined on the left.

(§189) When it was morning and [the news of] the departure of the blessed one and the burial of his body was heard by the inhabitants of Maiuma and of Gaza, all of them together with their wives and their children ran to the monastery, anxious to take his holy body by force, and if they were not allowed to do this, at least to tear asunder and distribute the long outer garment that was lying upon him, [so that] this should be for them a guardian of [their] souls and bodies and a great blessing.<sup>1</sup> But when they found they had buried him, they fell down and [performed acts of] veneration at his holy sarcophagus. With lamentations [R 143] they kissed and embraced [it], prostrating themselves, while weeping with sighs and with shouts and with supplications, like beloved children who were orphaned of such a father,<sup>2</sup> and not only a father but also a foster-father and a shepherd and a bishop.<sup>3</sup>

(§190) The next seven days, while they were all assembled together with great joy and eulogies, they performed over him gatherings and vigils, with praises and services and spiritual songs, while they kept and celebrated [feasts] to the glory of God and to the honor of the blessed one, and especially for the consolation of their sadness and their sorrow, which they all had because of the bodily departure of the blessed Peter, their father, the good shepherd and bishop. Before the fortieth day, however, his hosts and heirs sent and called the brethren and us from that fortress of Jamnia. They gathered us with themselves in that old monastery in which the body of the blessed one was laid, so that we also would be esteemed worthy to celebrate with them the memorial of the fortieth day of the saint, with all splendor and the assembly of all the people.<sup>4</sup>

(§191) But when those heirs of the blessed one saw that the place was small and not sufficient for a dwelling place of many brethren, for the cells were few and [such] that they had been ne-

<sup>3</sup> See also *Vit. Pet.* §2 (R 3) and §186 (R 141) with 270–71 n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> It was, and continues to be, the practice in Eastern Christian churches to celebrate the memorial of a recently deceased person on the fortieth day after the person's death. This service also is known as the Trisagion for the Dead.

<sup>1</sup> The Syriac may render the Greek ἐν αἷς ἡμελημένον ἦν (Raabe, 131 n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> For comments on Peter's recruitment of disciples, see Horn, "Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism," 117–20.

<sup>5</sup> See also *Vit. Pet.* §§66–67 (R 46–47), when Peter spent his money on the poor and the pilgrims to Jerusalem.



glected,<sup>1</sup> they prepared to renovate the place.<sup>2</sup> There was want of many supplies, and the blessed one had left [behind] little, hardly **[R 144]** sufficient for a few days' nourishment of the brethren, who were about thirty in number.<sup>3</sup> For the blessed one had left only twenty-four dinars<sup>4</sup> for expenses, because he used to distribute the greater part [of his money] to the poor;<sup>5</sup> moreover, there was also not one [source] of income,<sup>6</sup> neither from the produce of the soil nor from the work of the hands of the brethren, because they had been occupied only with the reception and refreshment of these saints and strangers who were continually coming there during the life[time] of the blessed one.<sup>7</sup> If anyone offered anything, most of it, as I have said, he immediately distributed to the poor. Nevertheless, while those heirs relied upon the wealth of God's kindness and were strengthened by the prayers of the saint, they began the construction of the building. Theodore the ex-lawyer [was] especially diligent;<sup>8</sup> accepting the work, he began building with much cheerfulness and faith and hope. Since God was helping and invisibly gave strength and cheerfulness and supplies, in a few days he built the tower and the church in it and a house of prayer in the church.<sup>9</sup> He built also the wall of the monastery and made [it] surround [it]. He constructed many cells, both lower and upper [chambers]. He led a wall around the porticos,<sup>10</sup> the pillars,<sup>11</sup> and the courtyard and dug a well. He arranged gardens and took care of the rest of what was necessary for the building of the monastery and for the work of the hands of the brethren, relying only on the grace and care and help of the Lord. When he had finished the construction of the building and they had decorated **[R 145]**

<sup>6</sup> The Syriac transliterates the Greek *τόπος*, "means," "way," and "resource."

<sup>7</sup> For crowds of visitors to Peter, see also, e.g., *Vit. Pet.* §163 (R 121).

<sup>8</sup> On Theodore, who took on a central position of leadership within the community, see also *Vit. Pet.* §§105, 112–113, §178 (R 78, 81–82, 134); possibly *Pler.* 38; Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 3–4 (Brooks, 1:3–4 [Syriac], 2:3 [Latin]), and *Vit. Sev.* 78, 86–87, 100, 107, 109, 111 (Kugener, 78,10–11, 86,11–87,3, 100,8, 107,1, 109,1–13, 111,9–10).

<sup>9</sup> I.e., a chapel or the sanctuary.

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek *στοά*.

<sup>11</sup> Again, the Syriac renders the Greek *στῦλος*, which in turn may be of Persian origin.

[illegible]

<sup>4</sup> Ps 143:10. See also Ps 5:8; Isa 40:3; Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; Heb 12:13

the house of prayer, they dug a place of reverence under the altar and transferred to there the body of the saint during the following year,<sup>1</sup> one day before [the anniversary] of his departure.

(§192) Although the blessed one had his body laid here, he had [a] dwelling in the heavenly mansions, standing in the spirit before the Lord and serving him with all the saints. There he was offering petitions and prayers and supplications for us with much freedom [of speech], frequently visiting the brotherhood and protecting and inspiring and guiding [them] and for the most part was singing together with them.<sup>2</sup> To some he appeared personally,<sup>3</sup> both healing the sick and comforting and strengthening those who in sincerity of faith and in purity of [their] ways of life went on the straight [path]<sup>4</sup> and were esteemed worthy to be in such converse with the saints.

(§193) The blessed one, our father and bishop Peter, was perfected on the first [day] in the First Kanon,<sup>5</sup> when Sunday was dawning, on the third day of the memorial of Peter, the great martyr and archbishop of the city of Alexandria,<sup>6</sup> according to the vision that appeared to Athanasius the priest, and five months after the departure of our holy father Abba Isaiah the ascetic, as the blessed one foretold to us, when the departure of the old man [Isaiah] was announced to us. In the second year, one day before the memorial of Abba Peter, we transferred and laid down his bones inside the house of prayer, under the altar. The whole time of his life on earth was about eighty years.<sup>7</sup> [R 146] Now, the departure of our father was on the first of First Kanon. His first deposition in the ground in the earth was on the second of the same month. His *translatio*, however, and his deposition under the altar [was] on the thirtieth of Second Teshrin.<sup>8</sup> The time of his life, however, [was] about eighty years; because of this we celebrate his memorial [on] three [separate] days. On the first day, we keep the feast of his *translatio*, which was to [the place] under the altar; on the

<sup>5</sup> I.e., December.

<sup>6</sup> This description conflicts with the dating of the commemoration of Peter of Alexandria indicated above at *Vit. Pet.* §182 (R 137).

<sup>7</sup> Thus, if Peter died in 491, his year of birth is to be dated to around 410.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., November.

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<sup>1</sup> On the day of his death, which also was acknowledged publicly through people's reverencing him.

second [day], [we keep the commemoration of the event] when all the people were coming [together];<sup>1</sup> on the third [day, the feast] of his deposition in the earth.<sup>2</sup> In Christ Jesus, our Lord, God, who [is] over all, to whom be glory and honor and power unto the ages of ages! Amen.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., his original burial.

བྱ་མཁན་གྱི་ཕྱི་ཕྱོད་ཀྱི་འཕྲིན་ལྟར་  
 རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་མཐོ་སྒྲིལ་གྱི་ཕྱོད་  
 རྒྱ་གར་གྱི་

[illegible]

<sup>1</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §88 (R 62).

<sup>2</sup> I.e., Emperor Marcian. See above, comments on *Vit. Pet.* §81 (R 57), 121 n. 9, and §90 (R 63). See also Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5945 [452/3 C.E.] (de Boor, 1:106–7; Mango and Scott, 164–65).

<sup>3</sup> On Abba Romanus, see *Vit. Pet.* §77 (R 52) and 111 n. 11 with references there to sections of the *Plerophoriae* that feature him and comments on the occurrence of the title “father of the monks” throughout Rufus’s works.

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac ܚܚܝܬܐ has a range of meanings from “infidel,” “unbeliever” to “heathen” and “pagan” or also “apostate” (Payne Smith, 222). Rufus’s choice of the epithet “the Apostate” for Juvenal immediately would have reminded the early Christian audience of Emperor Julian (361–363), who had been raised a Christian but who through his attempts at oppressing Christianity and reviving

## On the Memory of How the Blessed Theodosius, Bishop of Jerusalem, Departed to Our Lord

(§1) Remembering that I promised in the previous matters<sup>1</sup> to relate the manner of the death of the blessed Theodosius, bishop of Jerusalem, confessor, and martyr, it is necessary that I repay back the debt here in a few [words].

(§2) When according to the command of Marcian<sup>2</sup> [Theodosius] was driven away and had departed from Jerusalem, he dwelt in Egypt, hiding himself and remaining unknown. At that time also Abba Romanus, the father of the monks,<sup>3</sup> having been captured according to Juvenal the Apostate's<sup>4</sup> malice and plan, was ordered to remain under guard in Antioch.<sup>5</sup> Together with him, Timothy was seized,<sup>6</sup> who was archimandrite<sup>7</sup> of the monastery of Hypatios, about seven miles from the Holy City,<sup>8</sup> because he was a bishop, [having been appointed] by the blessed Theodosius in one of the cities under his [jurisdiction].<sup>9</sup> During their exile,<sup>10</sup> there were uncertainty and disputes between them concerning the

pagan cults infuriated early Christians so much that they would commonly speak of him as "Julian the Apostate." See also comments above, *Vit. Pet.* §47 (R 32), 64 n. 2; below, *Obit. Theod.* §8 (B 25).

<sup>5</sup> See below, *Obit. Theod.* §9 (B 25).

<sup>6</sup> This Timothy and the Timothy who was a monk in the monastery of Abba Romanus (see *Pler.* 87) do not seem to be the same.

<sup>7</sup> An archimandrite is a term equivalent to the Syriac ܐܪܚܡܢܕܪܝܬܐ or "head of the monastery," "abbot," often of an important monastery of a city or diocese. See George Nedungatt, "Archimandrit," *LTK* 1:948.

<sup>8</sup> Attempts at further identifying the monastery of Hypatios have not been successful.

<sup>9</sup> See above, *Vit. Pet.* §81 (R 57).

<sup>10</sup> The Syriac renders the Greek ἐξορία.





orthodox doctrines and concerning the faith. For it was said that Timothy was in communion with the heresy of the Eutychians and avoided saying the [words] “consubstantial with us.”<sup>1</sup>

(§3) When Archbishop Theodosius heard [of] their conflicts,<sup>2</sup> although he was residing in Egypt, fearing that many would be scandalized because [the two] had been rulers [B 22]<sup>3</sup> of the orthodox,<sup>4</sup> he forced himself and was anxious to come secretly to Syria, to the city of Antioch, and to bring them concord and peace. Yet some claim that the good shepherd<sup>5</sup> made haste to come this way especially because he desired to visit the holy Simeon, who in those regions was standing on a pillar and was praised by many for [his] temperance.<sup>6</sup> [His purpose] was not to allow [Symeon] to be led down the wrong path by Theodoret<sup>7</sup> and by other heretics and to follow their apostasy, as though he were someone simple, ignorant, entirely unlearned, and untrained in the accuracy of the orthodox doctrines of the church, because this would be a stumbling-block for many.

also that immediately afterwards at 10:19–21, a scene of division and dispute is recounted. See also *Pler.* 25, where Theodosius is called “shepherd.”

<sup>6</sup> The reference here is to St. Simeon Stylites the Elder (ca. 390–459). For convenient access to the literary treatment of Simeon’s adventures, see the English translation of the hagio-biographical tradition in Robert Doran, trans, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (CSS 112; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1992). Both parties, Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, in their respective literatures enlisted Simeon’s support for their causes. Note the anti-Chalcedonian attempt in the present instance. For Chalcedonian claims on Simeon, see, e.g., *The Syriac Life of Saint Simeon Stylites* 128 (Doran, *Lives of Simeon*, 194), and Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Euth.* 30 (Schwartz, 47,21–48,6; Price, 44). On Simeon Stylites, see also André Jean Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie* (BEFAR 194; Paris: de Boccard, 1959), 388–401; and Susan A. Harvey, “The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder,” *VC* 42 (1988): 376–94.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., Theodoret of Cyrrhus (born ca. 393, d. 466). Early on, Theodoret was a supporter of Nestorius and refuted Cyril of Alexandria’s Twelve Anathemas in writing. Having been deposed from his episcopal see by the Robber Council in 449, Theodoret was reinstated as bishop of Cyrrhus two years later. For the rest of his life he led a rather quiet and withdrawn existence. Theodosius’s visit with Simeon Stylites appears to have taken place before Theodoret’s death.



(§4) But Satan, that thorn of Israel<sup>1</sup> who was lying in ambush for him before he could converse with the old man,<sup>2</sup> obstructed his cheerfulness, effecting his capture in chains,<sup>3</sup> carrying him off and making him stand before Pharaoh.<sup>4</sup> For after having already journeyed the whole way in anxiety from Egypt to Syria, when he was in front of the gates of the city of Antioch, he met upon Gaianos,<sup>5</sup> the chorbishop<sup>6</sup> of the church there, while he was borne [about] by many [people]. One of those walking in front of [Gaianos] recognized him<sup>7</sup> to be an inhabitant of the area,<sup>8</sup> [who was dwelling] in what is called the monastery of Bēth Mār Bazai,<sup>9</sup> and made [this] known to the chorbishop. [Theodosius] was seized immediately as a great catch, who previously had been tracked down everywhere.

(§5) After he was delivered up to the magistrates of the city, he was placed by them under guard, [and] they immediately informed the emperor. When Marcian learned from them [about] the capture of the archbishop,<sup>10</sup> he commanded [B 23] that he should be taken up<sup>11</sup> to Constantinople under escort from city

gradually replaced the chorbishop in both East and West. In the West following the Carolingian reforms, the chorbishop enjoyed a brief revival in the course of the eleventh to twelfth centuries. See Theodor Gottlob, *Der abendländische Chorepiskopat* (Bonn: Schroeder, 1928; repr., Amsterdam: Schippers, 1968), 136–40; Vinzenz Fuchs, *Der Ordinationstitel von seiner Entstehung bis auf Innozenz III. Eine Untersuchung zur kirchlichen Rechtsgeschichte, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung auf Anschauungen Rudolph Sohms* (Bonn: Schroeder, 1930; repr., Amsterdam: Schippers, 1963), 211–36.

<sup>7</sup> I.e., Theodosius.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “in those regions.”

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “the house of my lord Baz(ai).” According to Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle* 3.9 (Brooks, 1:162,5; Hamilton and Brooks, 55), Theodosius was arrested at Sidon. Honigmann (*Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, 179 and n. 1) locates a monastery of Bēth Mār Bizī in Seleucia I and identifies a certain Bishop George Ourṭāyā as possibly having been a resident at, and Zenobius as archimandrite of, the monastery in the sixth century (235–36 and n. 8).

<sup>10</sup> Note that the author continues to refer to Theodosius as archbishop, understood of Jerusalem. However, in the meantime Juvenal of Jerusalem had already returned and repossessed the See of the Holy City. This passage may also be considered a pointer to a growing awareness among anti-Chalcedonians of being members of a church of their own. See also the comments in Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy*, 86–88.

<sup>11</sup> Literally, “be sent and go up.”



to city by officials of the magistrate.<sup>1</sup> Once [Theodosius] had arrived,<sup>2</sup> indeed, [the emperor] was first of all anxious to weaken his zeal through allurements and to persuade him to adhere to the wicked council of Chalcedon, promising Theodosius his friendship,<sup>3</sup> favor, and many benefits.<sup>4</sup> But when he saw that he was not to be persuaded, inflexible, and unchangeable and that he was prepared for every hardship and endurance,<sup>5</sup> he handed him over to the archimandrite of the monastery that is called “that of Dios,”<sup>6</sup> a man [who was] a zealot<sup>7</sup> of the evil doctrine<sup>8</sup> of Nestorius and a combatant on account of the Council of Chalcedon. He promised the emperor to make [Theodosius] agree to the impious opinion.<sup>9</sup> Or, if he was unwilling [to do this], by every shame and perversity he would get rid of him through torture. In the beginning, when he received him, indeed he held him in honor and with much luxury, [trying to] coax him to obey the emperor and be in communion with the wicked council, soothing [him] and promising many [things],<sup>10</sup> but [also] threatening [him] much. Yet when he

(Ph.D. diss., Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America, 1994), 24 n. 71, as well as idem, ed. and trans., *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (VCSup 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 27 n. 71. On the monastery of Dios, see Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5980 [AD 487/8 c.E.] (de Boor, 1:132,27–30; Mango and Scott, 204); and Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, 81 and n. 2. Eliseus of Sardis, who participated in the struggle against the tritheists, was imprisoned in the Monastery of Dios in 571 (Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, 230 with n. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Note that, whereas “zealous” is often used in a very positive meaning in describing activities of anti-Chalcedonians throughout Rufus’s work, it may also, as in the present case, be used as a negative characterization of Chalcedonians.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “of the evil of the doctrine.”

<sup>9</sup> I.e., of Nestorius and of the Council of Chalcedon, understood to have promoted the continuation of Nestorius’s ideas.

<sup>10</sup> The archimandrite thus displayed the same behavior that already characterized Emperor Marcian above. The author may have wished to imply that too close of an association with the secular powers can and will lead to corruption of ascetics.



had fallen short of his hope and the blessed Theodosius held on to the divine zeal and the orthodox faith like a martyr,<sup>1</sup> he imprisoned him during the winter<sup>2</sup> in a narrow cell that was full of [quick]lime.<sup>3</sup> He beat him so much with affliction and torture that he fell sick [in] his whole body, [in] his feet, and in his stomach.<sup>4</sup> Oppressed by bitter pain,<sup>5</sup> he was seized by hunger, thirst, and frost, while no one from among his acquaintances<sup>6</sup> was allowed to visit him.<sup>7</sup>

(§6) At this time it happened that Marcian died, since the Lord [B 24] struck him.<sup>8</sup> When those<sup>9</sup> who kept him [imprisoned] saw that the confessor,<sup>10</sup> Bishop Theodosius, was at [his] last breath and was about to die, they made his condition known to Leo, who at that time had come to the throne.<sup>11</sup> Granting permission, [Leo] allowed those who were his own to take him away, [and] they took him and brought him to Sykai.<sup>12</sup> After he had lived for [only] a few [more] days, a grave illness laid hold of him. In this way he was perfected,<sup>13</sup> weaving the crown of confessorship and of martyrdom.<sup>14</sup>

(§7) [At the time] when [Theodosius] was perfected, the blessed Peter, our father, was in Alexandria. In that night he saw him in a vision,<sup>15</sup> being borne by a multitude of angels and clothed

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “these.”

<sup>10</sup> Rufus uses the full range of martyr-related language, here the title “confessor” for Theodosius.

<sup>11</sup> When ascending the throne of the Eastern Roman Empire, Leo I (457–474 c.e.) was immediately confronted with having to decide whether Timothy Aelurus rightfully held the patriarchal throne of Alexandria. Agreeing with the poll he had taken among the bishops (the so-called *Codex Encyclicus* preserves the documents), Leo I banned Timothy from his see in 460. Leo I also was instrumental in getting the anti-Chalcedonian Peter the Fuller removed from the See of Antioch. From the comments immediately following, however, one gets the impression that Leo I may at least initially have had some sympathies for individual anti-Chalcedonians.

<sup>12</sup> Also known as Galata and Pera in later times, the settlement of Sykai was located to the north of the Golden Horn, facing Constantinople. See Cyril Mango, “Galata,” *ODB* 2:815–16.

<sup>13</sup> I.e., he passed away.

<sup>14</sup> For a study of the central importance of these motives in Rufus’s works, see Horn, “Weaving the Pilgrim’s Crown.”

<sup>15</sup> For an additional account of that vision, see *Pler.* 54.





in a white vestment,<sup>1</sup> the one that the archbishop of Jerusalem used to wear when he baptized; in this manner, he was carried up to heaven. Yet when those brothers who had been with him heard that those [of] the two natures<sup>2</sup> intended to take his body by force, deposit it in one of their temples, and spread a rumor that he had joined them already and was in communion with their wickedness, they devised [a plan] with all diligence.<sup>3</sup> They quickly took his holy body, stowed<sup>4</sup> [it] on a ship, and immediately set sail. When they came to Cyprus, they buried the high priest, confessor, and martyr in a monastery that orthodox monks held at that time and in which they dwelt.<sup>5</sup> His commemoration is on the thirtieth of First Kanon,<sup>6</sup> immediately after the day of the commemoration of James,<sup>7</sup> who is called the “just one”<sup>8</sup> and the brother of our Lord,<sup>9</sup> the one who also was the first<sup>10</sup> of the bishops of

420–21. There was also a feast of David and James the brother of the Lord on 26 December (Garitte, *Le Calendrier Palestino-Géorgien*, 418).

<sup>8</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 2.1.2; 2.23.4; 4.22.4 (the latter two based on Hegesippus) (Schwartz and Mommsen, 1:104,1, 166,10, 370,9; Williamson, 36, 59, 129). James is also referred to as the “just one” or “righteous one” in apocryphal texts such as the *Gos. Heb.* 7, which was known to Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 2.13 (Richardson, 8; Halton, 8).

<sup>9</sup> James is called the brother of the Lord at Gal 1:19. He is mentioned first in the list of Jesus’s brothers at Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55. See also Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.22 (Schwartz and Mommsen, 6.1:172,22; Williamson, 61). On James the brother of the Lord, see also Henri Leclercq, “Jacques le Mineur,” *DACL* 7.2:2109–2116; Wilhelm Pratscher, “Jakobus (Herrnbruder),” *RAC* 16:1227–43; Eugen Ruckstuhl, “Jakobus,” *TRE* 16:485–88; Florence Morgan Gillman, “James, Brother of the Lord,” *ABD* 3:620–21; Lorenz Oberlinner, “Jakobus der Jüngere, Apostel,” *LTK* 5:719–20; Hannes Möhle, “Jakobus, Bruder Jesu,” *LTK* 5:720–21; R. B. Ward, “James of Jerusalem in the First Two Centuries,” *ANRW* 2.26.1:779–812; Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, eds., *The Brother of Jesus: James the Just and His Mission* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Patrick J. Hartin, *James of Jerusalem: Heir to Jesus of Nazareth* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004); Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *James the Just and Christian Origins* (NovTSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 1999); John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Literally, “head.”



Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> It is worthy that we should be amazed that the commemoration of the first high priest of Jerusalem and the commemoration of the orthodox bishop Theodosius [B 25] occurred at the same time and in the same fashion.<sup>2</sup>

(§8) The blessed Romanus, the father of the monks and the head of the fathers, completed five years in Antioch in exile,<sup>3</sup> enlightened many through [his] orthodox preaching, and turned [them] from error to the truth.<sup>4</sup> For Marcian, indeed fighting against God,<sup>5</sup> imprisoned the blessed one there for another purpose and end, since the city was at the time [a city] of the Nestorians,<sup>6</sup> in that it had been the mother of the wicked Paul of Samosata<sup>7</sup> and Nestorius, and at that time similar[-minded] high priests, clergymen, and the greater part of the laypeople were in power. [Marcian] expected that the mighty soldier of Christ,<sup>8</sup> the blessed Romanus, would either be persuaded and perverted by the heretics or be in danger and perish. But the one who frustrates the clever plans of the wise,<sup>9</sup> the one who fights on behalf of all those who hope in him, turned [Marcian's] assault to the contrary. He gave his servant such grace, wisdom, and strength that he caused many of the heterodox, changing and arousing [them] from [their] ungodliness, to return to the fear of God and made [them] zealous

who were "turned . . . from error to the truth" and most likely also anti-Chalcedonians.

<sup>5</sup> Rufus characterizes Marcian as "God-hating" at *Vit. Pet.* §88 (R 62).

<sup>6</sup> Anti-Chalcedonians tended to refer to Chalcedonians polemically as "Nestorians." See, e.g., *Pler.* 14, 62, and 88, where "Nestorians" are either followers of Nestorius or Chalcedonians.

<sup>7</sup> Paul was bishop of Samosata ca. 260–268. His modalistic or monarchical Trinitarian teachings as well as his emphasis on Jesus' ordinary manhood of body and soul and rejection of Jesus' preexistence led to his condemnation by two synods held in Antioch in 264 and 268.

<sup>8</sup> Note the military image. See also *Vit. Pet.* §50 (R 33), which speaks of John the Eunuch as Peter's "fellow-soldier," and the reference to further examples in other early Christian literature.

<sup>9</sup> See 1 Cor 3:19.



for the orthodox faith,<sup>2</sup> so that the prophetic word of Jeremiah was fulfilled with regards to him, “And those who led you into captivity will become captives.”<sup>3</sup>

(§9) During the whole time [when] the blessed Romanus was in Antioch, such hunger and lack of rain came upon all of Palestine that the earth dried up and all of them were in danger of being destroyed by hunger.<sup>4</sup> There arose a great outcry from the inhabitants of the region against Juvenal the Apostate because<sup>5</sup> he was [B 26] the cause of that saint’s exile,<sup>6</sup> and they said that such justified wrath had been laid upon them by God. That wretched one<sup>7</sup> was so afraid they would stone him with rocks or bring him to naught in another way that against his will he came to be [Romanus’s] advocate before Marcian. He also asked Empress Eudocia to petition [Marcian] with him for the return of our father Romanus.<sup>8</sup> When that one<sup>9</sup> not only gave permission to him but also ordered on account of him that every one of the saints who were in exile<sup>10</sup> should return to his place,<sup>11</sup> the blessed one likewise returned to his old monastery that is located in Tekoa,<sup>12</sup> from where he had departed. [However,] because [the monastery] was located in the diocese<sup>13</sup> of Juvenal and because the village that was near them had been stirred up by evil people,<sup>14</sup> he came [instead] to the re-

*rum*, 18 n. 1 (Latin). Literally, “that all the saints who were in exile, [that] every one of them.”

<sup>11</sup> The amnesty granted to anti-Chalcedonians in Syria allowing their return to Palestine does not seem to have affected anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt. Peter the Iberian, who had joined his fellow-believers in Egypt, stayed in the country for almost two decades.

<sup>12</sup> According to *Pler.* 25, Abba Romanus headed a monastery of about six hundred monks in Tekoa, a village fifteen miles south of Jerusalem. See also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Euth.* 30, 45 (Schwartz, 49,10–13, 67.16–17; Price, 46, 64). Tekoa was also home to the prophet Amos. Eventually, after Romanus’s death and during the days of St. Saba, the monastery became known as the site of the “New Laura.” See, e.g., Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vit. Sab.* 36 (Schwartz, 123,4–8; Price, 132). For further reference to the site, see also Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 248; and Claudine Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine: Peuplement et Populations* (3 vols.; BAR International Series 726; Oxford: Archaeopress, 1998), 3:928.

<sup>13</sup> The Syriac word more literally describes a place, region, or sphere over which authority is exercised.

<sup>14</sup> An indicator that the local population had joined the Chalcedonian side.

[illegible]

<sup>4</sup> The relics of the prophet Zachariah and of the protomartyr Stephen were found at the same time in 415, the former about four to five miles north of Eleutheropolis, the latter at Kefar Gamala. For further references, see the entry “Caphar Zachria, Beth Zacharia” in Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 99–100. One may wish to add the reference to Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5919 [426/7 c.e.] (de Boor, 1:86; Mango and Scott, 135).

gion of the town of Eleutheropolis.<sup>1</sup> Since he was received by them very affectionately,<sup>2</sup> he remained in this place. The Lord had prepared [it] before his [arrival], [and so] he also found a height that was fitting for a monastery and the establishment of a residence<sup>3</sup> about two miles from the temple of the holy prophet Zachariah,<sup>4</sup> within the boundary of the village called Kefar Turban,<sup>5</sup> which belongs to Empress Eudocia. At the request of Empress Eudocia he built a large and comely monastery there,<sup>6</sup> while God assisted and strengthened [him]. He gave [him] everything and sent [him] out to go around [to] the houses [of the neighborhood].<sup>7</sup> Thus dwelling in it, he lived [there] for a long time. He prepared many souls in all holiness and [in] the way of life of the gospel. He raised up for God sheep endowed with reason, a living sacrifice<sup>8</sup> pleasing to the Lord. When with these [deeds] he had fought the good fight, finished his race, and kept the orthodox faith until the end,<sup>9</sup> at a good old age [B 27], full of days, he departed to Jesus, whom he loved.<sup>10</sup> His holy body was buried there under the holy altar.<sup>11</sup>

(§10) A great wonder, however, also happened at this [occasion], which we ought not to hide. When, namely, the site of the temple was under construction and the brothers had wanted to dig and construct a place under the holy table in which the blessed one would be buried, he refused and did not want [this] to be done. Since they did not dare to oppose [him], they were con-

<sup>5</sup> See the entries “Beththerabis” and “Caphar Tob, Torban” in Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 87 and 99.

<sup>6</sup> Rufus’s account witnesses again to Eudocia’s support of anti-Chalcedonians. See Horn, “Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian.”

<sup>7</sup> Romanus appears to have visited with the locals, both to request their material support and to provide them with instruction in the faith, as the following comments make even clearer.

<sup>8</sup> For this combination of imagery, compare also *Vit. Pet.* §150 (R 113) on Peter’s recruiting efforts among the law-school students of Beirut.

<sup>9</sup> See 2 Tim 4:7.

<sup>10</sup> Romanus is portrayed as entertaining a relationship with Jesus on a very personal and intimate level, similar to Peter’s as described at *Vit. Pet.* §§38, 53, 69, 99, 127, 147 (R 27, 36, 47, 73, 94, 110).

<sup>11</sup> See the same practice followed in the case of Peter the Iberian and referred to at *Vit. Pet.* §§192–193 (R 145–46). See also §120 (R 87) in reference to the site of the prophet Moses.





cerned only to level the ground of the temple. Now, the ground was hard rock. While they were hewing and leveling, suddenly a natural cave opened up, [one] built by God, that was just large enough to contain the body of the saint.<sup>1</sup> After some time when he had died, as was said, he was buried in it under the holy altar with much praise and honor.

(§11) The commemoration of our holy Abba Romanus, the priest and archimandrite, is on the twenty-fifth of Second Teshrin,<sup>2</sup> six days before the commemoration of our Abba Peter, the bishop.<sup>3</sup> Since they gained brotherly and in honor equal virtues, it is fitting for them also to have commemorations [that] would be brothers and neighbors to each other.

(§12) On the very same day is the commemoration of the blessed Passarion, the priest<sup>4</sup> who nourished the poor and raised orphans, who was archimandrite [of the monastery] of our holy Abba Romanus, [and] who built the famous house for the poor, the one outside the gates of the Holy City, to the east. [May] Christ our Savior also deem us with them worthy of the kingdom of heaven unto the ages. Amen.

(§13) The account concerning the death of Theodosius, the holy bishop of Jerusalem has come to an end.<sup>5</sup>

Mango and Scott, 135–36); and F. Delmas, “St. Passarion,” *EO* 3 (1899): 162–63.

<sup>5</sup> This last sentence may well be an addition by the scribe, likely the monk Joseph, who copied MS BM Add. 12,174 in the twelfth century while he was residing at the Monastery of Abū Ghālib. See William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (3 vols.; London: British Museum, 1870–72), 1137–38. MS BM Add. 12,174 adds at the very end: “May his prayer be with us.”



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