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# Those "Whose Writings were Exchanged"

## JOHN OF DAMASCUS, GEORGE CHOEROBOSCUS AND JOHN 'ARKLAS' ACCORDING TO THE PROOIMION OF EUSTATHIUS'S *EXEGESIS IN CANONEM IAMBICUM DE PENTECOSTE*

Silvia Ronchey

Following as it does the Byzantine commentaries to the liturgical canons of Theodosius Grammaticus, Gregory of Corinth, Prodrromus and Zonaras, Eustathius's *Exegesis in Canonem Iambicum de Pentecoste*, his last and least known commentary, is also the most extensive and individual of all<sup>1</sup>. In this work the strictly exegetical purpose is outweighed by the sheer extent of the author's aims and interests. As an elderly man, he took in an even wider range of topics than in the professorial rhetoric lectures given in his younger days<sup>2</sup>.

Eustathius, who was in his seventies when he drew up the *Exegesis*<sup>3</sup>, was no longer teaching. Nonetheless, the audience for the exegetical genre to which his work belongs

<sup>1</sup> Eustathius's treatise is probably the most extensive commentary ever written on a single canon. Its *editio princeps* is in Mai, pp. 161–383, reproduced with few variations and an unreliable Latin translation in PG 136, 504–754. A few scattered passages had already been printed in the form of more or less defective quotations by Leo Allatius: see coll. 613f. of *De Ecclesiae Occidentalis atque Orientalis Perpetua Consensione*, Cologne 1648; the *Prolegomena*, which we can read in John of Damascus, *Opera omnia*, ed. P. M. Lequien, I, Paris 1712, chap. 78–80, and which were later reproduced in vol. 94 of the PG; the chap. 7 of the article [XIII] *Georgius Choeroboscus* in the *Bibliotheca Graeca* by Fabricius-Harless, Hamburg 1809, pp. 18f. A new critical edition is now in print: *Eustathii Exegeseos in Canonem Iambicum de Pentecoste Priorem Partem Prooemium, Acrostichida et Odas I-III complectentem ed. et adnot. S. Ronchey; Alteram Partem Odas IV-IX et Indices complectentem ed. et adnot. P. Cesaretti*. A specimen, namely Eustathius's interpretation of both the acrostic and the heirmos of the first ode, can be found in Ronchey, *Exegesis*. The project was submitted twenty years ago in Vienna: S. Ronchey, *Domini Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Exegesis in Canonem Iambicum Iohannis Melodi de Festo die Spiritus Sancti*, in XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten, I/Beiheft, Wien 1981 (*Jahrb. Österr. Byz. 31/Beiheft [1981]*), 2.1; cf. R. Browning: XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, *ibid.*, I, 1 (*Jahrb. Österr. Byz. 31, 1 [1981]* 61). See also P. Cesaretti, *Eustathios' Commentary on the Pentecostal Hymn Ascribed to St. John Damascene: A New Critical Edition*, *Svenska Kommittén för Bysantinska Studier Bulletin 5* (1987) 19–22; and finally Ronchey, *Introduction*, with an explanation of the *constitutio textus* and a survey of the main philological and historical problems, including the puzzle of Eustathius's sources.

<sup>2</sup> As P. Cesaretti and I have tried to show in previous articles examining individual aspects: S. Ronchey, *Riferimenti pindarici nell'"exegesis in canonem iambicum" di Eustazio di Tessalonica*, *Quaderni Urbinati*, n.s. 25, 1 (1987) 53–56; ead., *Introduction*; P. Cesaretti, *Eustazio di Tessalonica e l'etimologia di "physis": una fonte stoica?*, *Studi Classici e Orientali 36* (1986) 53–56; id., *Interpretazioni aristofanee nel commento di Eustazio all'Inno pentecostale attribuito a Giovanni Damasceno*, in: A. M. Buongiovanni et al., *Interpretazioni antiche e moderne di testi greci (Ricerche di filologia classica 3)*, Pisa 1987, pp. 169–213.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. S. Ronchey, *Sulla datazione dell'"exegesis in canonem iambicum" di Eustazio di Tessalonica*, *Athenaeum*, n.s. 74 (1986) 103–110.

was undoubtedly scholastic. The hymnographic collection of John and Cosmas<sup>4</sup>, always extremely popular in the Orthodox Church, was used in Byzantine schools as suitable for schedography<sup>5</sup>. In the 12th century, in particular, high-level exegetical lectures were held, probably not in real university institutions, but as courses for a select group of pupils, accommodated perhaps in the small ecclesiastical environments where the teachers lived<sup>6</sup>. Exhaustive text-books, such as that of Prodrômus<sup>7</sup>, were created as a result, and one can assume that in Eustathius's later years a teacher would have based his classes on these works, as well as on the less complete works of previous commentators<sup>8</sup>. No one, however, had yet dared to comment thoroughly upon the Pentecostal iambic canon<sup>9</sup>.

From evidence in the text we can assume that Eustathius was asked to compose his *Exegesis* by a teacher, probably a younger man and perhaps an ecclesiastic<sup>10</sup>. This anonymous ἀδελφός apparently conveyed his request after long

<sup>4</sup> These liturgical canons attributed to John of Damascus and Cosmas of Jerusalem (his adoptive brother, according to legend, and bishop of Maiouma at the time of Constantine Copronymos) are published in PG 96, 817–856 (John), and 98, 460–524 (Cosmas), and in W. Christ—M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum*, Leipzig 1871 (rpt. Hildesheim 1963), pp. 161–204 (Cosmas) and 205–236 (John). For the iambic canons attributed to Damascus, see in particular A. Nauck, *Iohannis Damasceni Canones Iambici cum Commentario et Indice Verborum ex Schedis Augusti Nauck editi*, in: *Mélanges gréco-romains V*, St. Petersburg 1893, pp. 199–223. More general information is to be found in E. Follieri, *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae I–V*, Città del Vaticano 1960–1966.

<sup>5</sup> This practice has never ceased: see Ronchey, Introduction, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> The evidence provided by Eustathius confirms the theories of Speck, Kaiserliche Universität (cf. A. Pontani, *La filologia*, in: *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, II. *La ricezione e l'attualizzazione del testo*, Rome—Salerno 1995, pp. 319f.). That these courses must have been of a rather advanced level is suggested by the words used by Eustathius in the commentary to the first troparion of the first ode: "I am speaking to youngsters who must have already reached a good degree of classical education"; cf. A. Demetrakopoulos, *The Exegeses of the Canons in the Twelfth Century as School Texts*, Δίπτυχα 1 (1979) 143–158.

<sup>7</sup> *Theodori Prodrômi Commentarios in Carmina Sacra Melodorum Cosmae Hierosolymitani et Ioannis Damasceni*, ed. H. M. Stevenson, praefatus est I. B. Pitra, Rome 1888.

<sup>8</sup> See my observations in *Exegesis*, p. 247, n. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Eustathius's report in the first lines of his Προοίμιον ἐξήγησις [...] ὕμνου μελωδικοῦ [...] περὶ εὐρωαμένου τοῖς τὰ τοιαῦτα μετελοθοῦσιν ἐπιμελέστερον might be a stereotype, but the silence of Prodrômus, who did not include the Pentecostal canon in his commentaries, is truly surprising: see my observations in Introduction, p. 155. As regards the ἐρμηνεία by Gregory of Corinthus, preserved by various manuscripts (the "better codex" is probably Vat. gr. 2078), as well as by the marginalia of one of the three complete testimonia of Eustathius's exegesis (cod. Alexandrinus Patriarchalis 62 [107]), they are extremely short, poor and ambiguous, in any case far from being an exhaustive commentary: see Komines, pp. 100–123, and recently E. Montana, *I canoni giambici di Giovanni Damasceno per le feste di Natale, Teofania e Pentecoste nelle esegesi di Gregorio di Corinto*, *Koinonia* 13 (1989) 31–39; id. (ed.), *Le esegesi di Gregorio di Corinto ai canoni giambici di Cosma e Giovanni*, Pisa 1995. As for the other exegetical sources, such as Theodosius Grammarian's paraphrasis or the λέξεις included in the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, see my remarks in *Exegesis*, pp. 243f. and notes.

<sup>10</sup> One who would have been expected, during his courses, to comment on the hymnographical collection of Cosmas and John: see Mai, p. 161, 1–11, analysed in Ronchey, Introduction, pp. 154f.

hesitation and with evident embarrassment<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, it is said, expressing one's opinion of the Pentecostal iambic canon was "quite a troublesome task": ἠθέλησας εἰς πρᾶγμα δύσεργον ἐμέ προκαλέσασθαι<sup>12</sup>.

Like the two other iambic canons of the John and Cosmas corpus, namely those for Christmas and Epiphany, the Pentecostal canon was attributed—as it still is today—to John of Damascus. But the attribution, as the Prooimion makes clear, is to be rejected. Eustathius demonstrates this by a stylistic comparison of the above canons with those that he supposes to be John of Damascus's authentic poetical writings<sup>13</sup>. Among the latter, it is worth noting, Eustathius also includes a tragedy "in the Euripidean style" inspired by the Biblical legend of Susannah, of which he quotes a line—an iambic line, of course<sup>14</sup>. This is incidentally the only attestation we have of this lost piece, whose existence Eustathius had already mentioned in his commentary on Dionysius Periegetes<sup>15</sup>. (Whether or not this "Euripidean tragedy" was really written by John of Damascus is, naturally, quite another matter.)

Eustathius's tortuous argumentation, with its frequent passages of ambiguity and obscure allusion, can be summarised as follows:

- (a) Even though tradition attributes the three iambic canons to John of Damascus (Mai, p. 164, 1–5), we ascribe them to two different authors, on stylistic grounds (τῆ φράσει τεκμαιρόμενος): on one hand, the two canons for Christmas and for the Epiphany; on the other, that on Pentecost (Mai, p. 164, 5–11).
- (b) The Damascenic paternity of the hymns for Christmas and Epiphany can be rejected by examining the saint's style, which shows the rhetorical virtue of the σαφήνεια, and by considering not only his prose writings but also, and particularly, his iambic verses: we quote a verse from his Euripidean tragedy *Suzanne*, unknown elsewhere (Mai, pp. 164, 11–165, 14); then, by opposing this poetic clarity to the "lycophronian" style of the author of the canon for the Holy Spirit (πνευματικὸν μελωδόν), we criticise those who, in support of their attribution of the hymn to John of Damascus, claim that he had deliberately altered his style (Mai, pp. 165, 27–166, 5).

<sup>11</sup> Although a dedication to an imaginary addressee and a claim that one's work was composed at the latter's request is a longstanding rhetorical device, the description of the embarrassment of Eustathius's supplicant does sound genuine; all the more so as the reasons for his discomfort can be explained, as we shall see below. If, on the other hand, we did not credit this claim, it would be hard to understand why Eustathius returned to the exegetical genre or why he turned to hymnology, a field which he, unlike his colleague Prodrômus, had never approached in his scholarly and scholastic past: see Ronchey, Introduction, p. 155.

<sup>12</sup> Mai, p. 161, 8. If we admit that Prodrômus's silence betrays his difficulties over the expounding of the Pentecostal canon, it is conceivable that a teacher would have had trouble doing it correctly in class, as hinted in the Prooimion, *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> Mai, pp. 164f. and 171–173.

<sup>14</sup> Ὁ ἀρχέκακος δράκων πάλιν πλανῶν / ἔσπευδε τὴν Εὐάν ἐμέ, Mai, p. 165, 7–12.

<sup>15</sup> Ref. and bibl. in Ronchey, Exegesis, p. 156, n. 60.

- (c) After making a formal concession to the traditional view (Mai, pp. 165, 27–166, 5) and after addressing a rhetorical invocation to Saint John of Damascus, with the aim of discovering whether he would welcome these illegitimate children (i.e. the three canons) allotted to him as authentic relatives (Mai, p. 166, 14–18), we declare that the Pentecostal canon was composed by John “Arklas,” as is confirmed by “those who know” (ὡς φασιν οἱ ἴδμονες) (Mai, p. 166, 18–22).
- (d) With our dissertation “on the caconymes” — in which we strongly criticise “those who give insulting nicknames to illustrious men” and draw an analogy between the epithet of Arklas and that of Choeroboscus given to the Constantinopolitan scholar George — we uphold the moral, literary and theological dignity of the hymn’s unknown author (καὶ φιλοπόνῳ ἐκείνῳ καὶ μεγαλοφώνῳ καὶ φιλοσόφῳ ἀνδρὶ), his poetic and musical skill (σοφὸν καὶ μουσικὸν ἐπιστήμονα) and his celebrity, which he shares with Choeroboscus (ἀνδράσι περιωνύμοις); finally, we establish that Arklas’s plight is only one of the numerous cases of literary plagiarism inflicted not only on the classical authors but also “in recent times” (ἐν τοῖς καθ’ ἡμᾶς, Mai, pp. 166, 19–28; 167, 7–16).
- (e) After a long digression, we again resume the theme of the respect due to the traditional attribution to John of Damascus; the line of reasoning can be summarised and interpreted as follows: if false attribution is the price for not finding hymns widely transmitted and in official liturgical use on the Index<sup>16</sup>, it is better to side with the φήμη of the multitude and not to challenge the idea that our canon is “the son of a father of virtuous (i.e. orthodox?) intellect”; rather than ignore him, it is better to adopt him and hold him in high esteem, passing over his illegitimate and suspect fatherhood; and all of this must be done because everything made for the Church or used in a church — even a fragment of mosaic or mural decoration — must be conserved and not thrown away, most especially if it concerns, as here, a text of great artistic and theological value (Mai, p. 172, 7–24).
- (f) Again resuming — for the last time in the Prooimion — the instrument of stylistic analysis, we contrast, in a definitive manner, the obscurity and poetic length displayed by the hymn’s author with the characteristics of Damascus’s writing as illustrated above; thus, it would appear to be confirmed that, while a cleric may evade the truth for good cause, there is no reason to deny the philologist the right to apply the instruments of scientific inquiry to distinguish truth from falsehood (Mai, pp. 173f.).

Thus, after demonstrating the falsity of the attribution to John of Damascus, Eustathius reveals the name of the real author of the canon: a mysterious John Arklas<sup>17</sup>. Eustathius does not mention John’s last name. He only says that Arklas is nothing but an offensive nickname: οὐδὲ σεμνὸν γοῦν τι αὐτοῖ ὄνομα χαριζόμενοι (Mai, p. 166, 22–3).

<sup>16</sup> Ἐξοθερίσαι, a term that can signify censorship due to heresy: v. Lampe, s.v.

<sup>17</sup> Arklas and Choeroboscus were the topic of my short paper at the 17th International Byzantine Congress: Ronchey, Crise et continuité.

The nature of this offense is unclear, for all the word ἄρκλα itself suggests is just a “box” or “chest” or “purse”<sup>18</sup> (or *Damaleos turris*, according to Choniates)<sup>19</sup>. Alternatively, the *epitheton* ἄρκλᾶς might be simply a *volkssprachliche* parody of σκρινιάριος, as suggested by Paul Speck<sup>20</sup>. I shall not insist on the various other tentative (and generally unsatisfactory) interpretations of this epithet’s origin and meaning. Nor is it worth confuting the opinion of a modern Orthodox prelate, who takes ἄρκλᾶς to mean “podium,” thus designating John of Damascus himself as “towering” above all saints: this is clearly contradicted by the evidence of the Prooimion<sup>21</sup>. What is certain, however, is that Eustathius links John’s nickname to the epitheton χοιροβοσκός bestowed upon the well-known George<sup>22</sup>, in an invective on what he calls “the caconymes”, where he harshly blames those who use them for men he refers to as “distinguished” and “illustrious”. Unlike that of Arklas, the offensive double-meaning of the word χοιροβοσκός has always been clear to the Byzantines<sup>23</sup>. And if further evidence to that effect were necessary, Eustathius’s Exegesis confirms that it was not a surname, as some scholars have imagined, but an abusive nickname apparently insinuating a controversial stance in the post-iconoclastic tradition.

The studies of Bühler and Theodoridis have shown that Choeroboscus flourished in the Second Iconoclasm, or possibly later. In their article of 1976 the main evidence for postponing Choeroboscus’s *floruit* lay in the quotations, in his *Epimerismi in Psalmos* (1, 3, p. 44, 6ff.; 2, 3, p. 80ff., 4ff.; 3, 4, p. 93, 3ff. Gaisford), from our iambic canons (for Christmas, v. 36ff.; for Pentecost, v. 3f.; for the Epiphany, v. 68f.), which the two scholars still attributed to John of Damascus<sup>24</sup>. The *terminus post quem*, assigned to John of Damascus’s time, was then placed a few decades later in Theodoridis’s article of 1980, since four verses by Clemens the Hymnographer, dated by H.G. Beck to the beginning of the 9th century, were also traced in Choeroboscus’s work<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> As in Prodomika IV, 31 (Hesseling-Pernot) (ἀνοιῶν καὶ τὴν ἄρκλαν μου νὰ βρῶ φορὴν κομμᾶτι): cf. Kriaras, s.v.

<sup>19</sup> Nic. Chon. 205, 42 (van Dieten), app.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Dimitrakos, who quotes Suidas: σκρινιάριοι οἱ χαρτοφύλακες βασιλέων· σκρίνια γὰρ αἱ ἄρκλαι. See also the word ἄρκάριος (*arcarius = arcae publicae custos*) according to Gregory of Corinth: ἄρκάριος ὁ θησαυροφύλαξ· ἄρκα γὰρ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ἢ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἄρκλα.

<sup>21</sup> B. Koutloumianos (ed.), Πεντηκοστέριον χαρμόσουνον τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πάσχα μέχρι τῆς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων κυριακῆς ἀνήχουσιν αὐτῷ ἀκολουθίαν περιέχων, Venice—Athens, s.d., p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> This passage from Eustathius’s Prooimion is well known enough to have been already examined by Leo Allatius in his *Diatriba de Georgiis* (see n. 1). According to Byzantine authors, however, the *epitheton* Choeroboscus was, as far as we know, rarely quoted and used.

<sup>23</sup> To the literal meaning of “swine-herd” was added that of “pander”: cf. e.g. [Ps.]-Joannes Damascenus, Barlaam and Joasaf, edd. G. R. Woodward—H. Mattingly, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

<sup>24</sup> W. Bühler—C. Theodoridis, Johannes von Damaskos terminus post quem für Choiroboskos, *Byz. Zeitschr.* 69 (1976) 397–401.

<sup>25</sup> C. Theodoridis, Der Hymnograph Klemens terminus post quem für Choiroboskos, *Byz. Zeitschr.* 73 (1980) 341–345.

Since Bühler and Theodoridis's studies, Choeroboscus's iconoclasm has been taken for granted by several scholars<sup>26</sup>. The connection made by Eustathius between Choeroboscus and Arklas, victims of a similar slur, may therefore be credited with chronological significance. The link is further strengthened by the quotations from Arklas's hymn in the Ἐπιμερισμοί. The whole sequence of data therefore suggests that Choeroboscus and Arklas were roughly contemporary. From clues in both the *Exegesis* and Merkouropoulos's *Life* of John and Cosmas, John Arklas must be regarded as significantly later than John of Damascus († 749)<sup>27</sup>. And to the same period of Theodoridis's final dating for Choeroboscus (i.e. the 9th century) a dating has also been advanced for the other *melodos* author of the iambic canons of the collection: Cosmas of Jerusalem<sup>28</sup>.

If so, both John Arklas and George Choeroboscus should have been active at the imperial court. Several historians credit the imperial court with intense hymnographic activity, under the emperor Leo V the Armenian. According to the account of his *dolophonia* in Theophanes Continuatus—though the information from this source is not altogether reliable<sup>29</sup>—the emperor is reported to have been murdered in 820, during the liturgy of December 25th, in the very act of singing the heirmos of the seventh ode of John's iambic canon on Christmas Ἔσωσε λαόν (a hymn, we should remark, which is ascribed by Eustathius to a different and possibly earlier author than the one on Pentecost)<sup>30</sup>. Even according to B. Georgiades, τὸν Ἀρκλᾶν τοῦτον Ἰωάννην ... ἤκμαζε κατὰ πᾶσαν πιθανότητα περὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῆς

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. P. Schreiner, *Der byzantinische Bilderstreit: kritische Analyse der zeitgenössischen Meinungen und das Urteil der Nachwelt bis heute*, in: *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'Alto Medioevo*, Spoleto, 3–9 Aprile 1986, Spoleto 1988, p. 396. As for the opinion (shared by Cohn) that Choeroboscus was a οἰκουμενικός διδάσκαλος, perhaps a member of the clergy, who taught in Constantinople at that time, there are no longer further grounds for taking it into consideration after the conclusions of Speck, *Kaiserliche Universität*, pp. 74ff.; id., *Ideologische Ansprüche—historische Realität. Zum Problem des Selbstverständnisses der Byzantiner, Byzanz und seine Nachbarn*, hrsg. von A. Hohlweg (*Südosteuropajahrbuch* 26), München 1996, pp. 19–45 (p. 39).

<sup>27</sup> Merkouropoulos, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> The 8th-century dating of Cosmas of Jerusalem had already been questioned by G. Fiaccadori, who suggested a possible later chronology (oral communication). A 9th century dating has been advanced by A. Kazhdan and S. Gero, *Kosmas of Jerusalem: A More Critical Approach to His Biography*, *Byz. Zeitschr.* 82 (1989) 122–132; cf. also M.-F. Auzépy, *De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe/IXe s.)*: Etienne le Sabbaïte et Jean Damascène, *Trav. et Mém.* 12 (1994) 183–218 (p. 213).

<sup>29</sup> The "Theophanes question" was raised by Speck, who, on the strength of an intuition by C. Mango, Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes, *Zborn. Rad. Vizant. Inst.* 18 (1978) 8–17, drastically diminishes Theophanes's original contribution to the Chronicle that goes by his name; in which case, the so-called Theophanes Continuatus would be a 10th century translation of a demotic original of the late 9th century. Cf. P. Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier. Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 9)*, Bonn 1988; id., *Der 'zweite' Theophanes. Eine These zur Chronographie des Theophanes*, in: *Varia V (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 13)*, Bonn 1994, pp. 431–483.

<sup>30</sup> Mai, p. 164, 5–11 (see above). For the *dolophonia* of Leo the Armenian, see *Theoph. cont.*, I, 25, 38–39 (Bonn). The *basileus* was killed while singing the verse τῷ παντάνκτος ἐξεφάλισαν πόθῳ from the 7th ode of the first of John's iambic canons, said (by the chronicler) to be Leo's favourite: πολλᾶκις τοῦτο δὴ τὸ φίλον αὐτῷ κτλ.

έννάτης έκκονταηρίδος<sup>31</sup>. This is also a more suitable dating than the 8th century for the Pentecostal canon's unusual *acrostichis*<sup>32</sup>.

What, we may ask ourselves, had been the real name of George "the pig feeder"? In this regard, one further detail needs pointing out. When, in the same context, Eustathius defends Choeroboscus's literary worth, he speaks of works "written in George's own hand": ὅτε γράφων ἐχαρκτήριζε τὰ οἰκεῖα<sup>33</sup> His extant works, however, are considered, judging by their titles, as ἀπό φωνῆς i.e., notes taken by pupils who attended his grammar classes in Constantinople<sup>34</sup>. Since Eustathius's words clearly seem to distinguish between a written literary production and an unwritten one, we may wonder whether Choeroboscus did not write other works. Such works would have possibly turned away from the grammatical, educational sphere and dealt

<sup>31</sup> B. Georgiades, Περὶ τοῦ ἱαμβικοῦ κανόνα τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, Ἑκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια 31, 5 (1885) 60–70 (p. 69).

<sup>32</sup> Following the suggestion of Paul Speck, we here could perhaps go one step further. Examination of the acrostics of the collection of John and Cosmas could allow us to date the *floruit* of the two authors, probably along with that of Choeroboscus, to an even later period. The 9th century acrostics, if compared to that of the iambic canon *de Pentecoste*, are technically much less developed. Let us take, for example, the acrostics composed by Theodore of Stoudios: Theodoros Studites, Jamben auf verschiedene Gegenstände, Einleitung, kritischer Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar besorgt von P. Speck (Supplementa Byzantina 1), Berlin 1968, pp. 298 (ep. CXVIII) and 307f. (ep. CXXIV). On a technical and literary assessment of the acrostic, one would say that a certain amount of time had elapsed since the experimentation of the Stoudites and of the intellectuals of the iconoclastic court (on the latter subject, see P. Speck, Die ikonoklastischen Jamben an der Chalke, Hellenika 27 [1974] 376–380, and the detailed comment of all the iconoclastic epigrams given by P. Speck, Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer fremden und der Versuch einer eigenen Herrschaft, Munich 1978, vol. II, pp. 606–619. The author has returned to the subject in Τὰ τῆδε βατταρίσματα πλάνα. Überlegungen zur Aussendekoration der Chalke im achten Jahrhundert, Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte. Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag, edd. B. Borkopp—B. Schellewald—L. Theis, Amsterdam 1995, pp. 211–220). One more point must be brought in. In his meandering argument Eustathius seems to suggest that the author of the hymn was accused of unorthodoxy. This was taken for granted by Sathas, one of the very few scholars involved in the Arklas puzzle. Sathas was convinced that the name concealed an eminent, somewhat compromised figure, whom he identified with John Philoponos or Geometres (K. Sathas, Ἱστορικὸν δοκίμιον περὶ τοῦ θεάτρον καὶ μουσικῆς τῶν Βυζαντινῶν, Venice 1878, pp. 162–164, 182). Such specific identification is by no means likely, but the main indication, that at least one of the authors of the Cosmas and John collection dated to his time, that is, from the age of the Restoration of Images, is no less valuable. Finally, even the use of the caconymes for the authors of the canons would take us not to the beginning of the 9th century but rather to its end or even to the 10th century. In which case, the epithet χοιροβοσκός, instead of viewed as one of the colourful names inflicted by the Iconodoulians on prominent personalities connected with the Iconoclastic milieu, could rather be ascribed to the intellectual controversies following the Restoration of the Images, during which scopic epithets, such as that of Leo Choerosfaktes, proliferated: see A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes*, Oxford 1993, pp. 329ff. The hypothesis of a dating to the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century must therefore be put forward; even though a dating to the age of the Second Iconoclasm in my opinion remains more likely.

<sup>33</sup> Mai, p. 166 finis. On such expressions, see, for example, the Prooimion of Hesychius's Lexikon, who uses almost the same wording: ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ γράφων ἐγώ etc. (Hesychii Epistula ad Eulogium, I, p. 2 [Latte]). But in the case of Eustathius's Prooimion its significance is enhanced by the context.

<sup>34</sup> With the exception of Brit. Mus. Addit. 5118, which contains the treatise περὶ τῶν τριῶν σχημάτων τῶν συλλογισμῶν (see Cohn ad loc.).



with religious, even hymnological subjects, thereby incurring censorship after the Restoration of the Images. If so, they might have been ascribed, like those of Arklas, to another, more orthodox, author<sup>35</sup>.

As for Arklas, the only early testimony apart from that of Eustathius, as I mentioned above, is that in Merkouropoulos's *Life* of John and Cosmas, considered to be the most genuine of the John of Damascus biographies, even though it is commonly dated some four centuries later than its subject. In a short passage the author rejects the attribution of the iambic canons to John of Damascus, criticises their style, and ascribes them to Arklas, not only on the same grounds, but almost using the same wording as Eustathius, though much more briefly:

τὰς δ' ἱαμβεῖους ὧδὰς τίς τῶν τὸ σαφὲς εἰδόντων καὶ καθαρὸν Ἰωάννου καὶ τὴν ἐκείνου περὶ τὸ γράφειν γλυκύτητα αὐτῷ προσανάθηται; αἱ συντετέθησαν μὲν οὐδαμῶς παρ' αὐτοῦ, παρ' Ἰωάννου δέ τις ἄλλου, καὶ αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἄσκητικούς ἀγῶνας ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὸν μέγαν Σάβαν λαυῖρα ἀνύοντος, ἐπονομαζομένου δ' οὕτως Ἀρκλά· ἐξαπατᾷ δ' ἡ συνωνυμία τοὺς οὐκ εἰδότας τὸ ἀκριβές<sup>36</sup>.

In fact, the two *loci* seem modelled one on the other rather than on any missing common source. Nonetheless, we hesitate to say which came first, as they appear to be roughly contemporary. On the one hand, Merkouropoulos may have been the first in the series of patriarchs of Jerusalem to consult Eustathius's authoritative *Exegesis* before deciding on the attribution of the iambic canons (a series that extends right up to the present day and comprises an almost embarrassing succession of awkward statements or pious lies expressed in the name of either orthodoxy or St. Sabas)<sup>37</sup>. On the other, Eustathius may equally well have sought the support of up-to-date materials on John of Damascus before commenting upon the least certain of his works.

A remarkable disagreement between the positions of the two prelates comes a little further on. Merkouropoulos describes Arklas as a simple, obscure monk of St. Sabas, who only happened to be the namesake of his more gifted model—hence the confusion between the two. He does not spend a single word on the name of Arklas; whereas this, on the contrary, is the main object of Eustathius's emphasis. This raises various questions. First, on what evidence did Eustathius regard it as a name so significant as to merit an indignant digression that introduces, as a parallel, the epithet bestowed upon a member of the Constantinopolitan intelligentsia of the Iconoclastic (or even Post-Iconoclastic) age?

<sup>35</sup> See also the title of the British Museum manuscript quoted above: Γεωργίου Χοιροβοσκοῦ, ὡς τινες λέγουσι.

<sup>36</sup> Merkouropoulos, p. 349. It was followed only by Marcus Eugenicus and by the author—perhaps the copyist himself—of the *inscriptio* of the manuscript Vat. gr. 952 (see Kominis, pp. 122f.).

<sup>37</sup> Above (n. 21) we quoted the peculiar explanation of Ἀρκλᾶς in Koutloumianos' Πεντηκοστήριον χερμόσουνον. Even more striking is the censorious attitude of Nikodemos Hagioreites, Ἐορτοδρόμιον, Venice 1836, pp. 553f., whose presentation of the Pentecostal canon mentions, and shows an understanding of, the arguments in Eustathius's Prooimion, and yet hypocritically concludes: ὥστε κατὰ τὴν πολλῶν φήμην καὶ κοινὴν γνώμην ὁ κανὼν οὗτος εἶναι τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, ἂν καὶ τοῦ Ἀρκλᾶ ἐπιγράφεται.

Second, how, in those times, could a polemical epithet have been applied to a obscure monk belonging to a monastery renowned as a symbol of orthodoxy itself? Third, given that Eustathius speaks of Arklas as an illustrious man of letters<sup>38</sup>, why is it that the remaining Byzantine authors have remained silent about him?

Let us attempt some conclusions. The hypothesis has already been advanced that some of the missing Iconoclast-winged writings may not have been actually been lost after the Restoration<sup>39</sup>. At least, certain hymnological works that had already achieved a measure of popularity through liturgical use and could boast objective worth and substantially neutral Christian content<sup>40</sup> may, when the times changed, have been concealed under the names of the most blameless authors — for instance, those of the Iconodoulian champions themselves — as a sort of ideological guarantee of survival. “For we know many authors”, Eustathius says, “whose writings were exchanged in recent times” (ἐπεὶ τοὶ πολλοὺς οἶδαμεν ... ἐν τοῖς καθ’ ἡμᾶς, οἱ τὰ γραφικὰ μετατιθήμενοι ἐξηλλάττοντο)<sup>41</sup>. It could be for this reason that Eustathius states — as mentioned above — that, if such false attributions are the condition for preventing hymns of considerable popularity and well-established liturgical use from being placed on the Index (ἐξαθερίσι), it is better to bow to the φήμη of the majority and be sure that our canon is “the child of a virtuous-minded father” (ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς νοὸς ἔκγονον); that, rather than disclaiming its paternity and admitting that it is illegitimate and suspect (νόθον καὶ ὑποβολιμαῖον), it is better “to have it adopted and to keep it in the highest esteem” (εἰσποιεῖσθαι καὶ ἐν λόγῳ τίθεσθαι πολλῶ)<sup>42</sup>.

Thus, at the very climax of his lengthy argument in favour of Arklas’s authorship, Eustathius eventually suggests that his readers should forget about philology and instead bow down in deference to the traditional orthodox assumption. In short, they should piously pretend that the iambic canons were the original work of John of Damascus — a remarkable conclusion for such a moralist and philologist<sup>43</sup>. The coded message sent by the Byzantine prelate — one essentially justified by “reasons of church” even at the price of a voluntary sacrifice of philological reason — may therefore be the following suggestion: that we research the *diseiecta membra* of the Iconoclastic theological literature under the guise (at times impervious to identification) of paradoxical and hyperorthodox attributions.

<sup>38</sup> Mai, pp. 166, 23 and 167, 10–12.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Ronchey, *Crise et continuité*, p. 298.

<sup>40</sup> As Eustathius states in the argument (Mai, p. 172, 7–24) expounded above.

<sup>41</sup> Mai, p. 167, 14–16.

<sup>42</sup> Mai, p. 172, 7–8.

<sup>43</sup> Eustathius’s suggestion was followed (unconsciously or not) by most ecclesiastical scholars, who continue to attribute the Pentecostal canon to John of Damascus and paradoxically quote Eustathius’s words as proof: see e.g. T. Xydes, *Βυζαντινὴ ὕμνογραφία*, Athens 1978, p. 82. Among the few exceptions, it is worth mentioning C. Emerau, *Hymnographi Byzantini*, II, *Echos d’Orient* 23 (1924) 195–200 (pp. 196–197); S. Eustratiades, *Ἐἱρηολόγιον*, Chennevières-sur-Marne 1932; id., *Ποιηταὶ καὶ ὕμνογράφοι τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ἐκκλησίας*, I, Jerusalem 1940, pp. 646–651; A. Komines, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca* III, Rome 1972, p. 614, and IV, Rome 1976, p. 797.

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