

THE ASSUMPTION AND THE JERUSALEM LITURGY

It is twenty-six years since the late Abbot Capelle undertook to present the evidence for a feast of the Assumption of Our Lady in the Jerusalem liturgy,¹ and in more recent times a new codex of the Armenian lectionary (which preserves that liturgy) has been edited² and an accessible edition of the Georgian liturgy, dependent on that of Jerusalem, has been made.³ It may not therefore be inappropriate to look once again at the evidence as it is now assembled.

Conybeare's edition of the Armenian lectionary long ago gave notice of a feast on August 15: "The day of Mariam Theotokos. At the third milestone of Bethlehem is said Psalm 131:8; Isai 7:10-15; Gal 3:29 to 4:7; Alleluia: Psalm 109:1; Lk 2:1-7." Conybeare was using a Paris ms. of the tenth century, helping it out with a Bodleian ms. of the thirteenth. The lectionary habitually gives the Scripture passages for entry, epistles, alleluia verse, and Gospel; no offertory or Communion verse is provided. The newly-presented ms. from Jerusalem (it was known many years ago but had not been edited) has been described and edited by Dom A. Renoux, who printed first the material of the thirteen-page contents list and then, having at last obtained facsimiles of the pages of the lectionary itself, completed his task a year later. This ms., now in Jerusalem, was written in Cilicia in the year 1192. For August 15 it gives this introduction: "The day of Mariam Theotokos. At the second milestone from Bethlehem, this canon is carried out: Psalm 131, with verse 8 as anthem," and then follow the same Scripture pieces as in Conybeare. The new ms. makes certain what one was able to conjecture previously, that the entry psalm was chosen for the appositeness of its eighth verse: "Arise, O Lord, and go to thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy might" (Ps 132[131]: 8 RSV). Abbot Capelle was flying in the face of the evidence when he claimed (*art. cit.*, p. 22) that this psalm must have been chosen on

¹ B. Capelle, O.S.B., "La fête de la Vierge à Jérusalem au cinquième siècle," *Muséon* 56 (1943) 1-33. Wartime conditions restricted the circulation of this article, and it was not seen by the next writer on the subject, A. Raes, S.J. ("Aux origines de la fête de l'Assomption en Orient," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 12 [1946] 262-74), until he had received the proofs of his own article. Thus much confusion beset work on this subject.

² A. Renoux, O.S.B., "Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem," *Muséon* 74 (1961) 361-85; 75 (1962) 385-98. The Paris ms. was edited by F. C. Conybeare in *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford, 1905) pp. 507-27, but, as it now appears, with some haste and inaccuracy.

³ *Le grand lectionnaire de l'église de Jérusalem (V-VIII^e siècle)*, two volumes of Georgian text and two volumes of Latin translation, edited by M. Tarnichsvili (CSCO 188-189, 204-205). K. Kekelidze had edited (in Russian) one ms. of this liturgy in 1912, but his work was inaccessible to most liturgists.

account of its eleventh verse: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne." The fact must be faced that, when this liturgy was being carried out, the typology of the ark of the covenant was quite widely and at low levels understood to be fulfilled in the Blessed Virgin, whatever the character of the feast that was being celebrated in her honor.

The Georgian lectionary begins with these words: "This is the statute and order of the orthodox teachers, which is carried out in Jerusalem." For August 15 it has this heading: "In the building of the emperor Maurice, at *Gesamania*, commemoration of the holy Theotokos." By now troparia have been introduced at the start of the liturgy,⁴ one in the fourth mode, one in the third, and one in the sixth. The *incipit* of each of these is given by the editor thus: (1) *Quando transmigravisti, Dei genetrix. . .* (2) *Hodie mundi templum. . .* (3) *Hodie porta illa caeli. . .* There follows the Magnificat, with its second verse (*Quia respexit*) as a refrain. The reading from Galatians has survived, but before it come three new passages from the Old Testament: Prv 31:29-31 ("Many women have done excellently . . ."), Jb 28:5-11 (a strange choice, for it is in verse 12 that the real point is made: "Where is wisdom to be found?"), and Ez 44:1-3 (on the closed door). All these are obviously Marian passages, though the Job pericope is somewhat rare. For the alleluia verse Ps 44:11-12 (*Audi, filia*) is now used, and the Gospel is the story of the Visitation (Lk 1:39-56). Some chants for the offertory and hand-washing are added.

It may be taken for granted that the Georgian record represents a later stage of the development of the Jerusalem liturgy than the Armenian. One small point in this change is the dropping of the psalm verse that goes with the alleluia (Ps 109:1) in favor of Ps 44:11-12. It is well known that there are two fifth-century Marian sermons, one from Hesychius (who was ordained in 412 and died *ca.* 450) and one from Chrysippus (who was ordained *ca.* 455 and died in 479).⁵ Both men go through the liturgy for this feast, giving it homiletic treatment, and while Hesychius refers to Ps 109, Chrysippus at the same point in his discourse mentions Ps 44:11. One can be sure, therefore, that this particular change in the liturgy came somewhere between 412 and 479. Both preachers have Ps 131:8 as the entry and both retain the Isaiah passage and the Gospel from Lk 2:1-7. The

⁴ Capelle, in his rendering of the first words of the troparion (*art. cit.*, p. 3), has entirely missed the allusion to the Assumption in the word "transmigravisti."

⁵ The sermon by Hesychius is in *PG* 93, 1460-68; that by Chrysippus in *PO* 19, 336-43. They were studied comparatively by C. Martin, S.J., in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 35 (1939) 54-60, but Père Martin did not think of bringing in the Jerusalem liturgy as a *tertium comparationis*.

two men were not, however, as Abbot Capelle claimed, exact contemporaries.

Hesychius begins his discourse with a selection of titles for the Blessed Virgin similar to those found in popular litanies of the next century written on Egyptian ostraca. "One man calls her mother of light; another, star of life; a third, throne of God; a fourth, temple greater than the heavens." When he warms to his theme, he thrice cites Ps 131:8, though the exegesis he gives of it is curious. "Arise, O Lord, from the bosom of the Father and find thy rest in Bethlehem" is the sense he gives it; but when he comes to deal with the second part of the phrase, he says: "The ark of thy sanctification: the Virgin Theotokos, surely. If thou art the pearl, then she must be the ark. Since thou art the sun, needs must the Virgin be called the heavens." He makes no attempt, however, at this point to speak of the Kathisma, or resting place of the Virgin, which according to legend was at a distance of three miles from Bethlehem.⁶ Here the lady Ikelia had built a church in the time of the Patriarch Juvenal (417-58). One might argue that, if Hesychius was preaching in this church, he would not need to mention it in his sermon; but against this excuse for his silence is the fact that he is quite explicit that the resting place of Christ is "the cave and the stall and the swaddling bands at Bethlehem." One cannot easily accept the idea that the sermon is being preached at the Kathisma feast. He is certainly not preaching on Christmas Day; for Conybeare's Armenian lectionary marks December 25 simply as the feast of (King) David and of James (of Jerusalem), while concentrating on the Epiphany all the Nativity material. The new document of Renoux has an additional rubric for December 25: "On this day in other cities they keep the birth of Christ." Now it was Juvenal who introduced Christmas as a feast at Jerusalem, at some time between 430 and his death in 458, after which it was suppressed for a period. The Georgian liturgy has Christmas in full, and indeed makes it the beginning of the liturgical year. It has also a dedication feast for the Kathisma church on December 3, while on August 13 there is an entry which runs thus: "On the way to Bethlehem, at the Kathisma, three miles' distance, in the hamlet of Bethebre, in the church of the Theotokos, dedication." One of the mss. reads thus, while the other says, perhaps more correctly, "synaxis" instead of "dedication." The fact that the Armenian texts are free of these subsidiary feasts would suggest that they are reporting a state of

⁶ The Kathisma church is first mentioned in Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii*, ed. E. Schwartz (*TU* 49/2, 236; Leipzig, 1939). This writing can be dated to ca. 530; it dates the building of the church to the period following the Council of Chalcedon (451).

things prior to the building of the Kathisma church. It may have been a custom to go out as far as three miles on August 15 in the days when the liturgy as they report it was being carried out, and then to return for Mass in Jerusalem. Such processions are a feature of the narrative of the lady Etheria, who must now be allowed to enter the picture, though I hope she will not steal it.

The lady Etheria somehow seems to have fallen victim to confusion when she was keeping the feast of the Ascension at Jerusalem. Her account avers that on the Wednesday all went to Bethlehem after the sixth hour, to keep the vigil of the feast in the church of the Nativity. Then on the Thursday, forty days after Easter, Mass was celebrated there and the bishop preached, "treating of the things suitable to the day and the place, and afterwards everyone returned to Jerusalem late." Baumstark, in a desperate attempt to explain this excursion, suggested that in the year when Etheria was there, the feast of the Holy Innocents was celebrated on the day which happened to be the fortieth after Easter; the trip to Jerusalem would therefore be to honor the Innocents.⁷ Evidence for the feast of the Innocents is found in the Armenian lectionary, though the mss. disagree about its date, one fixing May 9 and the other May 18. It could happen that one of these days should coincide with Ascension Day, but what about the precedence of feasts? Had the Innocents priority over Christ on such a day? In the Georgian lectionary there is no feast of the Innocents, which makes the mystery all the greater. Renoux has shown that both mss. of the Armenian lectionary had a set of readings for the Ascension and that Conybeare by inadvertence had not seen that his ms. had lost a page at that very place. What was to be read on the Ascension (Ps 47 or 46, with Acts 1:1-14 and Lk 24:41-53) was suitable to the day, but hardly to the place, if the service was being held at Bethlehem.^{7a}

⁷ Etheria has baffled many since her narrative was first printed in *CSEL* 39, 37-101. An English version, with the evidence from Conybeare's Armenian lectionary set down as parallel, was made by Mrs. M. McClure and C. L. Feltoe, *The Pilgrimage of Etheria* (London, 1919). A. Baumstark (*Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 7 [1927] 358-59) advanced his hypothesis as a means of dating the visit of Etheria to a year when Ascension Day fell on May 9; he did not know that the Jerusalem ms. of the Armenian lectionary read May 18 for May 9, a fact which indicates some uncertainty about the keeping of the Holy Innocents day.

^{7a} Since writing the above, I have been able to read what the Bollandist Paul Devos has to say about Etheria (*Analecta Bollandiana* 85 [1967] 165-94; 86 [1968] 87-108). His main concern is to date the travelogue that she composed for her friends in Spain, but in doing so he has to go over all the evidence for the feast of the Holy Innocents on May 18; for it is a principal part of his case that in the year 383, and in that year alone of the *tempus utile*, May 18 would have been the fortieth day after Easter. He infers

Prof. J. G. Davies has put forward a far more likely explanation of the procession to Bethlehem on Ascension Day.⁸ He notices that there is in much patristic writing a tendency to appeal to the idea of "In the end is my beginning," and to speak of Christ's life on earth when discussing the end of it. Such *recirculatio* is not perhaps natural to our ways of thinking, but there is plenty of evidence, adduced by Davies, to show that it was natural in antiquity. One might start an appreciation of the ancient point of view with a consideration of Eph 4:10. Etheria herself, whether she went to Jerusalem just before or just after 400, was one of the first of the Holy Land pilgrims. The great wave of interest in the sites of Gospel events comes with the fifth century, and there is an admirable letter of Leo the Great to Bishop Juvenal which gave eloquent expression to that interest.⁹ To an earlier age it would not seem strange to keep Ascension Day at Bethlehem. There was a church, the Imbomon, at the site of the Ascension, and it was in existence before the visit of Etheria (at least from 386 onwards; see Jerome, *Epist.* 108, 12 [CSEL 55, 320]), but it was not so notable a church as the one that Constantine had given to Bethlehem.

The relevance of this link between Nativity and Ascension for the problem of the Assumption feast may now be suggested. The rather heavy-handed exegesis of Hesychius on the subject of the ark of the covenant has been cited above. It involved him in saying that the words "Arise, O Lord" meant in fact "Descend, O Lord," and he was not yet aware of the difficulties of the Bishop of Woolwich. The *anapausis* of heaven had to be left, in a manner of speaking, at the Incarna-

that it was on that day in 383 that Etheria went to Bethlehem, as she describes in her *Itinerarium* (42). I do not want my prophecy to become true and to have Etheria stealing the picture; my comment on Devos's articles will therefore be brief. If Etheria can be dated to 383, then the Armenian lectionary, which differs from her in a more primitive direction, must be well within the time of Cyril's episcopate for its subject matter. This is what one would expect from its agreement with him about the *Catecheses*. I am not quite happy about Devos's arguments. The liturgy of the Holy Innocents' feast according to the Armenian lectionary needs more research. In the Paris ms. it is put on May 18; in the Jerusalem ms. it is on May 9; the Bodleian ms. has for May 18 "Jeremiah in Anathoth," a feast which the other mss. put on May 7, but for which the Gospel reading was Mt 2:16-18, as for the Innocents. Devos does not deal with the difficulty about the precedence of feasts. The Armenian lectionary had a liturgy for the Ascension, to be carried out on the fortieth day after Easter, and this must have taken place at Jerusalem while Etheria was away at Bethlehem.

⁸ "The *Peregrinatio Egeriae* and the Ascension," *Vigiliae christianae* 8 (1954) 93-100. Davies was working at the time on his Bampton Lectures, published in 1958: *He Ascended into Heaven* (London, 1958).

⁹ Leo the Great, *Epist.* 139 (Schwartz, *ACO* 2, 4, 92).

tion for the toils of earth, and Hesychius could do no better with this than to say that rest was no longer necessary. Was he, by chance, adapting to an Incarnation setting a text which already had an accepted Marian interpretation? That this was so may now be argued from recently discovered evidence. If this can be established, then it may well be true that Assumption Celebrations, like those for the Ascension, were sometimes linked with those for the Incarnation, as if these two points were regarded as beginning and end of the *oikonomia* or *dispensatio* of Christ.

A sermon of Athanasius has recently been recovered from a Coptic papyrus; it was preached in 348 on his return to Egypt from exile, and in its doctrinal part is Mariological.¹⁰ The hortatory part is mainly concerned with the avoidance of *porneia*, evidence about the spread of which he may have been shocked to discover after a long absence. Athanasius is familiar with the typology of the ark of the covenant:

To what shall I liken thee, among all creatures? O ark of the new covenant, clad on all sides with purity in place of gold; the one in whom is found the golden vase with its true manna, that is, the flesh in which lies the Godhead. . . . If I say that heaven is high, it is not thy equal, for it is written "Heaven is my throne" (Is 66:1), while thou art the resting place of God.

He recurs to the theme twice in later passages: "Thou hast thrown into the abyss death, which lorded it over the womb of woman" (217). "Moses declared thee blessed, making to thy likeness a new ark, all covered with gold on every side" (218). This last passage is part of an exegesis of the words of the Magnificat "All generations shall

¹⁰ The papyrus was published, with a French version by L. Lefort, in *Muséon* 71 (1958) 1-50, 209-39. Athanasius has elaborated the typology that is given in a fragment of Irenaeus (Harvey, frag. 8 in the Greek and Latin, frag. 25 in the Syriac): "That ark is shown to be a type of the body of Christ pure and undefiled; for just as that ark was gilded with fine gold both within and without, so too is the body of Christ pure and bright, adorned within by the Word and guarded without by the Spirit, so that from these two the brightness of the natures may be manifest." Athanasius is cited by the *Chronicon paschale* (PG 92, 544) for a comment on Ps 131:8, where he takes the ark to typify the flesh of Christ taken up into heaven at the Ascension. When Athanasius transfers this point of the typology to the Blessed Virgin, he must have been aware that he was implying her Assumption—or was he? The comment on Ps 131:8 ascribed to Athanasius in PG 27, 521 is clear about the Ascension of Christ being meant, and not a descent towards Incarnation. The sermon for the Hypapante (PG 28, 993) is probably not authentically by Athanasius; it declares that David called Mary the ark of sanctification. The feast of Hypapante was kept in Jerusalem before the end of the fourth century (according to Etheria and the Armenian lectionary); Athanasius could have known of it from his travels. The homily may therefore owe something to him, even if it is not his.

declare me blessed." For Athanasius the manna is the divinity of Christ, the golden vase is its fleshly receptacle, and the ark (the word *kibōtos* is taken over in the Coptic as a loanword) is the Blessed Virgin.

The same exegesis can be found in Hilary some twenty years later, and it may be given here as a supporting piece. Hilary is commenting on the Psalms one by one. On Ps 131:8 he says:

We recall that the ark of the covenant was gilded over within and without. In it were the tables of stone, the holy writings, the book of the covenant, the *gomor* of manna. But all this is the figure of that body which the Lord took to Himself, that summed up all the mysteries of the law. Divine Spirit and fleshly creation are united together there and it is gilded within and without, for the Lord Jesus is in the glory of the Father; and it holds the eternal manna, for He is the living Bread; and it preserves within itself the tables of the law and the book of the covenant, for in Him are the words of life.¹¹

The features of the parallel are the same as those given by Athanasius, though there is now some slight elaboration on the Christological side. The emphasis on flesh and divinity (with no mention of the soul) would not be so placed after the heresy of Apollinaris had once become manifest.

In the paraphrase of the Psalms written in Homeric hexameters by Apollinaris this verse receives due honor: "Arise, King of all; mayest thou attain to thy rest. With thee too mayest thou take up the all-inviolable ark." There has been some argument in Germany about the dating of this poem.¹² Its author, perhaps unwisely, gave some cryptic hints about his identity in an opening paragraph, and this has given the Germans scope for all manner of conjectures about the fitness or unfitness of Apollinaris for the role of author. One can only say that the enterprise would be far more natural in the fourth century, when Julian the Apostate was forbidding Christians to study the classics, than in the fifth, when it would be hard to find a Christian who could turn out so much work in Homeric language. What Apollinaris understood by "the all-inviolable ark" is open to debate. He could have

¹¹ Hilary, *Tractatus super psalmos* (CSEL 22, 674), was writing nearly twenty years after Athanasius had preached his Coptic sermon. Hilary does not appeal to the two-fold gilding of the ark as signifying the Word and the Spirit; rather he sees in the contents of the ark (manna, divine law) the symbols of the Godhead.

¹² The passage from this poem is found in PG 33, 1513. There was a critical edition by A. Ludwich (Leipzig, 1912). Discussion of the author's prologue and its biographical value went on in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, where J. Golega (39 [1939] 1-22) impugned the authenticity and F. Scheidweiler (49 [1956] 336-44) defended it; but both articles are inconclusive.

thought of the human nature of Christ, but it would hardly be natural, even for him, to think of it as an adjunct to the Person. The wording of the Greek really requires as interpretation "thyself, and another," whoever and whatever it may be that is figured by the ark.

The Jerusalem liturgy had a feast of the ark on July 2. This is quite a singular event in the liturgical year, for no other Jewish treasure or practice attracted such interest. The entry reads: "July 2, of the ark of the covenant, at Kariathiarim. Ps 131, with 131:8 as anthem; 1 K 6:18-7:2 [the return of the ark by the Philistines]; 2 K 6:12-20 [David dancing before the ark]; Heb 9:1-10; alleluia verse Ps 92:1 (or 93); Mt 5:17:24." The choice of Gospel is highly significant. Christ has not come to destroy all this typology of the ark but to fulfil it. That must have been the message that worshipers took away with them on their nine-mile journey back to Jerusalem. Etheria, who knew about the feasts in Jerusalem from Epiphany to the dedication feast in September, is silent about this feast of the ark in July. Perhaps she did not care to go so far afield when there was no shrine at the end of the journey. That the date should be chosen in later times for the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin is not perhaps a simple coincidence.¹³ The best that research has been able to do for the origins of the Visitation feast is to trace it back to the Franciscans and to the year 1263. It may be that their links with Palestine had given them some idea of "goings on" at Ain Karim on July 2, for that village lies between Jerusalem and Kariathiarim.¹⁴ One cannot help noticing how this Jerusalem liturgy does settle the dates of a number of feasts which we still keep on their Jerusalem days: one might instance Antony the Abbot (January 17), Cyril of Jerusalem (March 18), martyrs of Sebaste (March 9), Maccabees (August 1), Andrew (November 30), John the Baptist (June 24 and August 29).

How far back the Armenian lectionary can take our knowledge of the Jerusalem liturgy is not easily determined, but it must be noticed that it gives the series of Scripture lessons which are to precede the Lenten lectures to the catechumens in the same order and with the same passages as those set out at the head of the *Catecheses* of Cyril,

¹³ This is not so wild as it may seem. The travel narrative of one Theodosius (*ca.* 530) has an entry (*CSEL* 39, 139) as follows: "De Hierusalem in Silona, ubi fuit arca testamenti Domni, milia VIII." He says that there was a church there. The name Silona suggests that he thought it was Silo, but that is a much easier name to handle than Kariathiarim. The distance is right, for his next calling place was Nikopolis, nine miles further from Jerusalem. Bede identified Silona and Kariathiarim (see *Corpus christianorum* 175, 97).

¹⁴ The feast of the Visitation, where it exists in Eastern liturgies, has been introduced from the West.

which were preached in 348. This fact was pointed out by Conybeare but has scarcely been noticed by liturgists. There is only one variation in the two lists, and this comes at the end, where the Armenian has 1 Tim 3:14-16 for its last lecture, while Cyril, who quotes the passage in his last lecture, ends up with one lecture less during Lent. On the matter of postbaptismal lectures, the Armenian envisages four such being given, on the Monday after Easter (with 1 Pt 5:8-14), on the Friday (with 1 Jn 2:20-27), on the Saturday (with 1 Cor 11:23-32), and on Low Sunday (with 1 Pt 2:1-10). These answer to four of the five *Mystagogic Catecheses* of Cyril; only his second one (on baptism, with Rom 6:3-14 as reading) is not represented in the Armenian.¹⁵ In the Georgian version of this liturgy the catecheses have been radically altered. They are reduced in number to ten, given from Monday to Friday on the fifth and sixth weeks of Lent, and ending just before Palm Sunday. The readings *super catechumenos* are now two for each lecture, the series used by Cyril being kept intact in its first ten items; the added pieces are taken, some of them from what Cyril had in his later lectures (11-18), some entirely new choices; one only is from the mystagogic series of Cyril (1 Cor 11:23-32). The Georgian makes no provision for mystagogic catecheses after Easter. These facts are extremely important for evaluating the textual tradition of Cyril's *Catecheses*. It can no longer be argued that a codex which has the Lenten catecheses without the mystagogic is a witness against the authenticity of the latter; rather it should be taken as favoring their authenticity, as they could not be the product of a later forger when the demand for them had been taken away.¹⁶

¹⁵ Because of its mention of the Theotokos feast, some have suggested that the Armenian lectionary cannot be earlier than 431 (so B. Botte, in *Sacris erudiri* 2 [1949] 111-22, following Capelle), but nothing is more common than the addition of a feast here or there to a pre-existing calendar. F. C. Burkitt published a Syriac lectionary (*Proceedings of British Academy* 10 [1923] 301-38) which had no provision for catecheses nor for a baptism service; it may have been used in a monastery where no baptizing was ever done. It gives one view of the Syriac liturgy of the early fifth century; but Syria is not Jerusalem. The coincidence of the Armenian lectionary and Cyril's catecheses, and their agreement together against Etheria (e.g., when she says that there are mystagogic catecheses all the eight days of Easter week), would suggest that a fourth-century date is more appropriate for the lectionary. Each supposed addition to it would then have to be proved or disproved on its own merits.

¹⁶ W. J. Swaans (in *Muséon* 55 [1942] 1-43) attacked the authenticity of Cyril's *Mystagogic Catecheses*, largely on the ground that some of the mss. ascribe them to John of Jerusalem, or to John and Cyril, while others omit them. It has been shown by Renoux that Swaans misread the Georgian evidence. If, as now appears, the Georgian lectionary witnesses to a radical reorganizing of the catecheses somewhere about 500 with omission of a mystagogic series, then there is every reason for their being left out

The sermon of Chrysippus has an opening paragraph which has caused much speculation. He says that it is ever fitting to praise the Blessed Virgin, "but the present occasion is suitable above all others for hymns addressed to her." (After this point the Greek becomes ambiguous.) "For at this time in many places this feast is solemnly observed, seeing that it is at this time that there was accomplished a mystery passing human understanding." Thus Jugie and others. What the Greek more probably says is: "For in this matter, you see, this splendid gathering comes about at many other times too, but above all when on this occasion a mystery has been accomplished which cannot be grasped by the senses of the multitude." It was easy for Jugie and Capelle to go on from the version they had given of the Greek to conclude that Chrysippus was preaching for the one feast in the year kept at Jerusalem in honor of the Virgin, and that this feast was not the Assumption, or not August 15. They forgot that *pol-lachou* can be an adverb of time as well as of place, and failed to notice that Chrysippus spoke of a mystery which escaped the perception (*aisthēsis*) of the faithful—a remark which would not be true of the Nativity. Capelle indeed abandoned some of Jugie's arguments, being moved by the authority of the Armenian lectionary to accept August 15 as the one annual feast of the Virgin,¹⁷ but he did not see where Jugie had gone wrong over the Greek.

At Constantinople, by 425 there was a feast of Mary at the Christmas season, for Proclus preached on it in the presence of Nestorius.¹⁸ Severus of Antioch is witness that in his own city there was a Marian feast between Epiphany and Lent.¹⁹ A Coptic calendar from Oxyrhynchus (dated to 535) assigned January 17 as the day of holy Mary,²⁰ and a day in January afterwards became in Egypt the feast day of the Dormition (though the Copts kept the Assumption also, but on August 22). Elsewhere January 18 figures as a Marian feast. From all this evidence it does not appear likely that August 15 was the primitive,

of mss. written after that date and for other mss. being vague about their origin. Swaans took no account of this change.

¹⁷ That August 15 was the only feast of Mary held at Jerusalem in the time of Chrysippus is most unlikely. Before the time of Ikelia the feast of Hypapante was certainly kept there, for she did something to enhance it (thus Cyril of Scythopolis, in *TU* 49/2, 236), and that must be reckoned a Marian feast.

¹⁸ Proclus, *Hom.* 1 (*PG* 65, 680).

¹⁹ Severus, *Hom.* 67 (*PO* 8, 349).

²⁰ The calendar from Oxyrhynchus was discussed by H. Delehayé in *Analecta Bollandiana* 42 (1924) 83-99. It is a list of *stationes* for the churches of Oxyrhynchus, rather than a list of feasts. It runs from October 21 to March 22.

unique, and quite general feast of Mary which afterwards developed into a specialized day, the Assumption. The winter feast is a far more likely candidate for that. Nor can it be any longer claimed that August 15 was the dedication day of the Kathisma church near Jerusalem. That the Copts should have kept an August feast of the Assumption in spite of holding the Dormition some 206 days previously betokens a fairly strong tradition in favor of August. The homily of Theoteknos of Livias on the Assumption (*analēpsis* is the word used) is dated by its editor to the period 550–650,²¹ whereas the earliest evidence for the title of Dormition (*koimēsis*) is later than that period. The Georgian version of the Jerusalem lectionary once uses the title *Mariamoba* for the feast of August 15 (so in one ms., where a reference forward is given on August 13: “look for this on the Assumption”), though elsewhere there is mention of the Dormition. From this picture, then, of the evolution of the feast of the Assumption one cannot acquiesce in the common inference that there was first of all a general feast of Mary, that this was later made the Dormition feast, and that later still, under the influence of the *Transitus* legends,²² the Dormition became the Assumption.

That the Blessed Virgin is the fulfilment of the typology of the ark makes something like the Assumption the inevitable conclusion of such fulfilment. The Jewish understanding of Ps 131:8 was that the ark was being taken in triumph into Sion, to be laid up there, and that, where the ark went, Jahweh must be thought to accompany it.²³ He was seated above the cherubim, and they were figured just above the ark, so that the ark became a visible sign of the presence of Jahweh. The counterpart to this laying up of the ark in Sion was the vision of John in the Apocalypse (11:19), where the ark is seen in the heavenly temple of God. The obvious difficulty in taking this vision as a presen-

²¹ A. Wenger, *L'Assomption dans la tradition byzantine* (Paris, 1955), printed for the first time (pp. 271–91) a homily of Theoteknos of Livias from a Sinai ms. of the eighth/ninth century. Later he discovered an Arabic version of the same which filled up some of the lacunae of the Greek text. In the Greek, Enoch and Elijah are used as ground of an a fortiori argument for the Assumption. The Arabic adds the assertion that the Assumption took place on August 15, “which is the sixteenth of the month Mesore.” See H. du Manoir, S.J. (ed.), *Maria* 5 (Paris, 1958) 938, n. 49.

²² The earliest ms. of the *Transitus Mariae* is a Syriac version, published by Miss A. S. Lewis in *Studia Sinaitica* 11 (1902). It belongs to the end of the fifth century (Lewis, p. x), and the probable date of its concoction is therefore somewhat later than the first appearance of the belief in the Assumption in sermons and liturgy. A gap of similar proportions separates the genuine Gospels from the penumbra of apocrypha.

²³ This is illustrated in W. G. Braude, *The Midrash on the Psalms* (New Haven, 1960) 318: “The resting place of the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem.” Similar ideas are used in Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (London, 1962) p. 782.

tation, however obscure, of what was later to become the doctrine of the Assumption is the lack of evidence that the Fathers prior to Athanasius understood that the ark typified the Virgin. This would not in itself be an insuperable difficulty. One might instance the doctrine of a particular judgment as distinct from the general, which is not made clear until the Middle Ages, and for which there was no patristic evidence until a papyrus fragment from Bologna recently made us aware that Origen had used the two terms (particular, general) in reference to the judgment.²⁴ But there is at least one text which helps interpreters of the ark typology to bridge the gap.

Hippolytus (the genuine one) wrote on the Psalms, for the famous statue declares this. Three fragments of his sermons on the Psalms are cited by Theodoret in his *Eranistes*, and that is all the surviving evidence of what may have been an extensive collection. One of these passages, from the sermon of Ps 22 ("The Lord is my shepherd"), says that Christ is the ark, but adds that the incorruptible wood from which the ark was made stands for the Blessed Virgin.²⁵

Yes, and the ark from incorruptible wood was the Saviour Himself. That incorruptible and undecaying tabernacle of His declares itself by this, that it produced no corruption of sin. For the sinner makes acknowledgment, saying: "My sores are putrified and corrupted because of my foolishness." Now the Lord was without sin, being in His human nature from incorruptible wood, that is, from the Virgin, and being sheathed as it were with the pure gold of the Spirit without and of the Word within.

The incorruptible wood of the ark is vouched for by Dt 25:10, and Jewish tradition did much to elaborate this datum. If one had asked Hippolytus why he said that the incorruptible wood typified the Virgin, he would have been able to reply that it was the flesh of Christ that was incorruptible and this He drew by the virgin birth from Mary alone. He would not have called her the ark outright, but he was pointing the way to Athanasius.

One category of evidence must not be neglected: the visual. In the wall mosaics of St. Mary Major in Rome the ark is several times depicted, not on the chancel arch but on the walls of the nave. Wilpert thought that the nave mosaics went back to Pope Liberius,²⁶

²⁴ A fragment of a lost homily on Matthew by Origen was published as the first of the *Papyri Bononienses* (ed. O. Montevecchi; Milan, 1953). The terms are *synteleia katholikē* and *synteleia kath' hekaston*.

²⁵ The passages are given in GCS Hippolytus 1/2, 147. These three fragments have an entirely different line of transmission from the ruck of Hippolytean comment on the Psalms.

²⁶ Joseph Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien* (Freiburg, 1917) Vol. 1

but more recent critical opinion is in favor of making them contemporary with those of the chancel arch, where the name of Sixtus III is openly displayed as evidence for the date (432-40).²⁷ The ark is shown crossing the Jordan, approaching the walls of Jericho, and being greeted with a fanfare of trumpets, very much as the paintings of the Joshua roll (sheets 2 and 5) depict it. That this typology should in the early fifth century be appealed to in a basilica which honored the Virgin indicates what the popular mind of that period was ready to accept, and what the authorities in Rome thought fitting that it should accept.^{27a}

More than ten years ago the present writer brought into theological discussion a phrase of Augustine from one of his more recently discovered sermons, in which he called the Blessed Virgin "supereminens membrum ecclesiae."²⁸ Vatican II saw fit to use the phrase (*Lumen gentium* 8, 53) but did not give its reference nor the qualification which Augustine added: "sed tamen totius corporis membrum." If the typology which links Mary with the Church is not to lead to an impasse, recourse to the vision of John in Ap 11:19 will be necessary. The ark was seen *within* the heavenly temple. One has only to look back to 2 Chr 6:41 to see what this would mean to a scripturally-minded Jew. There the verse of Ps 131:8 was sung as Solomon dedicated the temple and the ark was brought into its resting place. In one of the very few Christian comments on the passage of Chronicles, Rabanus Maurus, that gleaner of patristic learning, offers a typological interpretation:

The outer hall of the Temple stands for the Church that sojourns on earth; the holy of holies for the enclosed happiness of our heavenly home. Then the ark that is taken within the holy of holies tells of the humanity of Christ that was taken up and drawn within the veil of the heavenly palace. . . . The nature of the ark and how it was placed could not be seen save by those

of text, 414-415, 423, 470. K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll* (Princeton, 1948) figs. 5 and 16, illustrates the motif very well. He assigns a later date to the miniatures in the Joshua roll, but admits that there was an artistic tradition of the presentation of these scenes. The adage "Cunctas haereses sola interemisti" owes something to this typology of the ark, for the artists consistently show the ark as a military asset of Israel.

²⁷ A more recent study of the mosaics in St. Mary Major is that by C. Cecchelli, *I mosaici della basilica di S. Maria Maggiore* (Turin, 1956).

^{27a} There is now a very good picture book by H. Karpp, *Die frühchristlichen und mittelalterlichen Mosaiken in Santa Maria Maggiore zu Rom* (Baden-Baden, 1966). Plates 125-42 give details of the ark.

²⁸ J. H. Crehan, S.J., "Maria Paredros," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 16 (1955) 414-23. The words of Augustine (from Morin's *Sermones post Maurinos*, p. 163) are cited on p. 422, n. 30. The sermon is from Denis (*Serm.* 25) and is accepted as genuine in the *Supplementum* (2, 863) to Migne; it can be read at *PL* 46, 932.

who had entered within the hall; for none of the saints, how high so ever he may soar in contemplation, has full sight of the glory of his Redeemer, but only the heavenly citizens who are there present.²⁹

Once the ark is linked with the humanity of Christ, the question of the status of the Virgin is imminent. Rabanus might use the text (2 Chr 5:9) about the ark not being visible from without but only the ends of the poles which upheld it, yet John had seen into the depths of the Temple. Some of those Latin Fathers who studied his vision tremble on the verge of disclosing its meaning. Primasius can write:

Christ at the destruction of that ark of old carried the tables of the law within Him, for He came not to annul the law but to complete it. All the promises of God are within Him, the golden urn holding the manna . . . and Aaron's rod; for being born in wondrous wise of an undefiled virgin, He is declared to hold within the tent house of His flesh, which is like almond wood, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Hence the Psalm: "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy sanctification."³⁰

The Greek Fathers, e.g., Pseudo-Proclus,³¹ thanks to the Jerusalem liturgy, already knew what the vision meant.

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²⁹ *Expositio in Paralipomena* 3, 5 (PL 109, 460).

³⁰ Primasius Hadrumetanus, *In Apoc.* 11 (PL 68, 871). What Primasius understood by the comparison to almond wood is anyone's guess. The Jewish tradition about the wood of the ark was that it was made of acacia or setim wood. Jerome (on Joel 3; PL 25, 986) says that it is found nowhere in the Roman Empire save in the deserts of Jordan, which he had visited. Perhaps Primasius in North Africa had no acquaintance with *acacia seyal* and did his best with what he knew. For another Latin Father "trembling on the brink," see Prosper, *Expositio psalmorum*, on Ps 131:8 (PL 51, 379).

³¹ Proclus, *Hom.* 6, 17 (PG 65, 753) is not authentic, but cannot be much later in date than the end of the fifth century.