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ASCETICISM AND  
CHRISTOLOGICAL  
CONTROVERSY IN  
FIFTH-CENTURY  
PALESTINE

THE CAREER OF PETER THE IBERIAN



*Cornelia B. Horn*

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Asceticism and Christological  
Controversy in Fifth-Century  
Palestine

*The Career of Peter the Iberian*

CORNELIA B. HORN

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Meinen Eltern, meiner Patin,  
und meinem Ehegatten



Icon of Peter the Iberian (accompanying N. Y. Marr's edition of the Georgian text, reproduced from the 1896 imprint in *Pravoslavnyy Palestinskiy Sbornik*, public domain)

## PREFACE

This book is based on a dissertation which I defended in April 2001 at the Catholic University of America, Washington DC. I am grateful to my dissertation committee, the Revd Dr Sidney H. Griffith, the Revd Dr David W. Johnson, and Prof. Dr Robin Darling Young, for introducing me to the field of Early Christianity in general and, more particularly, for the guidance and expert advice they provided over the first set of years of research and writing. Stimulating discussions with Fr Griffith guided me along the path. Prof. Young provided reliable support and challenging questions. I am very grateful in particular to Fr Johnson who proved to be an unfailing source of constructive criticism and encouragement. All throughout those years I have also found indefatigable assistance and friendship in Dr Monica Blanchard, academic librarian of the Institute for Christian Oriental Research (ICOR) at The Catholic University of America. She shared my enthusiasm in Peter the Iberian. I treasure her support greatly.

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Cornelia Horn

*St Louis*

*Feast of St Nikolas, 2004*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>ACO</i>	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
<i>Acta SS. Boll.</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> . Edited by Socii Bollandiani. Original edition 70 vols. Antwerp, 1643–1770; Tongerlo, 1794; Paris, 1875–87; Brussels, 1780–1944. Reprint vols. i–xliii, Venice, 1734–1770; vols. i–lx, Paris, 1863–1870; reprint of the original edition, vols. i–lx, Paris 1966–1971
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
<i>ARAM</i>	<i>ARAM. Journal of the Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies</i> . Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.
<i>BBKL</i>	<i>Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon</i> . Edited by F. W. Bautz, continued by Trautgott Bautz. 1975–
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> . Edited by François Halkin. <i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i> 8a. 3 vols. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957
<i>BHO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis</i> . Edited by Socii Bollandiani (P. Peeters). <i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i> 10. Brussels and Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1910; reprinted Brussels, 1970
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter
BM	British Museum
<i>Catholicisme</i>	<i>Catholicisme: Hier–Aujourd’hui–Demain</i> . Directed by G. Jacquement. Paris, 1948–
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Edited by August Böckh, Johannes Franz, Ernst

- Curtius, Adolf Kirchhoff, and Hermann Roehl. 5 vols. Berlin: G. Reimer, 1828–1877
- CPG *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, Turnhout, 1983–
- CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
- CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
- CWS Classics of Western Spirituality
- DACL *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*. Edited by F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq. 15 vols. Paris, 1907–1951
- DECL *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*. Edited by Siegmund Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings. English translation by Matthew O'Connell. New York, 2000
- DHGE *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*. Edited by R. Aubert. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912–
- DSp *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*. Edited by M. Viller *et al.* Paris: Beauchesne, 1932–
- DThC *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. Edited by A. Vacant and E. Mangenot, continued by E. Amann. 15 vols. Paris, 1903–1950
- EEC *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York and London, 1990; 2nd edn. 1998
- EECh *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*. Edited by Angelo Di Berardino. 2 vols. Translated from the Italian by Adrian Walford. New York, 1992
- FOTC The Fathers of the Church
- GCS Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
- LACHL *Lexikon der Antiken Christlichen Literatur*. Edited by Siegmund Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings. Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1998
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- Le Muséon *Le Muséon. Revue d'Études Orientales*
- LThK *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. Edited by M. Buchberger. 10 vols. Freiburg im

	Breisgau, 1930–1938. Second edition by J. Höfer and Karl Rahner. 10 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1957–1967. Third edition by Walter Kasper <i>et al.</i> 10 vols. and 1 register. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1993–2001
LXX	Septuagint
Mansi	Joannes Dominicus Mansi. <i>Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> . Florence: Antonii Zatta Veneti, 1759–1798
MGH. aa	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctorum antiquissimorum
MGH.Epistolarum	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistolarum
MGH.SRM	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum
MS /ms. and MSS /mss.	Manuscript and manuscripts
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
n.s.	New series
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
ODB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> . Edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan <i>et al.</i> 3 vols. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PWRE	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . New edition by G. Wissowa and W. Kroll. Stuttgart, 1894–1980
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . Edited by Th. Klauser <i>et al.</i> Stuttgart, 1941 (1950)–. Supplements, Stuttgart, 1985–
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SCh	Sources Chrétiennes
Script. Arab.	Scriptores Arabici
Script. Copt.	Scriptores Coptici
Script. Iber.	Scriptores Iberici
Script. Syr.	Scriptores Syri

t. /tt.  
*TRE*  
TU

tomus /tomoi  
*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*  
Texte und Untersuchungen zur  
Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur

# Introduction

Palestine is one of the major stages on which the controversies between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian parties unfolded. For a few years in the immediate aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), monastic groups, which had gained power and influence over the episcopal see of Jerusalem, played a particularly important and decisive role. The unique situation of the Holy Land with its sacred geography of important holy places, together with the numerous pilgrims attracted by the sites, created a dramatic setting for these theological controversies. Part of the significance of the present study is that it deals with a period in the history of the church in Palestine when the see of Jerusalem actively set out to gain importance as an influential and powerful leader in the Christian *oikumenē*.

Situated within the larger context of the Christological controversies in fifth-century Palestine, this study focuses on the career of Peter the Iberian as it is accessible from most, if not all the extant historical, literary, and hagiographical sources. This book introduces and discusses Peter the Iberian as a key figure in the Christological controversies and as one of the most influential ascetic leaders of the anti-Chalcedonian movement in fifth-century Palestine. As both a monk and a bishop, Peter combined in his person the often conflicting authorities of the hierarch and the charismatic. His descent from the ruling house of Georgia allowed him easy access to various persons of power and prestige in the Eastern Roman capital of Constantinople, in Jerusalem, and in other places. As both a visionary and a miracle-worker, Peter could claim divine justification for the anti-Chalcedonian side, which he represented. Due to the ease with which he moved throughout his life in the clerical and ascetic circles of the Roman Empire in the east, he was instrumental in establishing a well-functioning network of defenders of the anti-Chalcedonian cause.

Although this study moves through well-known territory, it also explores new ground. It deepens aspects of earlier studies that have explored the history of the fifth- and sixth-century Church in

Palestine, particularly the monks' involvement in and impact on the life of that church. A significant number of studies on the theological aspects of the Chalcedonian Controversy exist, as well as the occasional treatment of Chalcedonian asceticism and its influence in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> This study addresses the central contribution of anti-Chalcedonian monks to Christianity in Palestine.

Many scholars working from the perspective of late-antique studies, theology, Byzantine studies, and allied disciplines have advanced the enquiry into the development of intriguing debates surrounding the Christological controversies of the fifth century. Was Mary the Mother of God (*Theotokos*)? How can Christ be fully God and fully man at the same time? Does He have two natures? Also, would He then not be two persons? These and related questions were at the centre of the debates in the fourth and fifth centuries. The various attempts to settle these questions, undertaken by the respective participants in the debates and councils both verbally and by force, have received close scrutiny. Yet the question of why individuals, indeed whole segments of the ancient Christian world, so keenly concerned themselves with these issues has received much less attention. That people still felt the urgent need to preserve and guarantee the Nicene Trinitarian orthodoxy that had been defended so vehemently in the previous century must form part of the answer. Another piece of the answer lies in the realm of soteriology, the human person's eternal and on-going quest for understanding the sound basis for an individual's salvation.

Recent scholarly discourse addressing the development of the Christological controversies in the context of fifth- and early sixth-century Palestine finds ardent protagonists in the offerings of Friedrich Heyer<sup>2</sup> and Lorenzo Perrone.<sup>3</sup> This approach maintains that the Chalcedonian side lacked sound theological arguments to support its cause. The main concern of the anti-Chalcedonian opposition to the council's formulations was their lack of terminological precision in theological expression. Factors other than the theo-philosophical debates concerning terminology are rarely con-

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, eds., *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Würzburg, 1951–1954); Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.i: *Das Konzil von Chalkedon (451). Rezeption und Widerspruch (451–518)* (Freiburg, 1986); and John Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine 314–631* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte des Heiligen Landes* (Stuttgart, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Lorenzo Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche: Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)*, Testi e ricerche di Scienze religiose pubblicati a cura dell'Istituto per le Scienze religiose di Bologna 18 (Brescia, 1980).

sidered as having had any major impact on the controversies.<sup>4</sup> This especially is the case in assessing the context of the post-Chalcedonian period.

In contrast to and in modification of such a view this book demonstrates that in order to understand more fully the Christological controversies that arose in fifth-century Palestine one needs to take into account contextual factors that explain how and why debates over abstract theological arguments and terminology became compelling on a massive scale. The experiential dimensions of asceticism and authority, the practice of pilgrimage and the customs surrounding it, as well as the cross as that centre of the anti-Chalcedonian, ascetic spirituality, are essential motivating and determining factors in Peter's life and career. By focusing on these issues one can show how the Christological controversies in Palestine were influenced and fuelled by very practical concerns arising from the wider realm of spirituality, practical and ascetical theology, but also from the realm of controversial theology, politics, and the wider fields of sociology and anthropology. The way in which people endowed with different character traits and coming from differing social backgrounds were interacting with one another provides valuable illustrations and allows for significant insights.

This book ventures onto new territory by giving attention to anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine, an area so far relatively neglected in academic studies. Anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine is significant and crucial because it was in Jerusalem in the middle of the fifth century that monks who opposed the Council of Chalcedon first attempted to establish a dissenting anti-Chalcedonian ecclesiastical hierarchy. The monk Peter the Iberian in particular was a key force in this project because of his high-level political connections to the members of the imperial court in Constantinople. His influence was critical in bringing success to the Jerusalemite monks' attempt to exclude the Chalcedonians from exercising power in the see of the Holy City. Although the monks' success was short-lived, the relevant events took place in the very heart of a church extolled throughout Christendom as the 'mother of all the churches'. The beginnings of anti-Chalcedonian history in Palestine therefore constitute the first tangible manifestation of the schism

<sup>4</sup> See Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 97, 'Se questi pochi episodi di opposizione a Teodosio non lascino trasparire motivazioni di natura strettamente teologica, ma piuttosto timori o perplessità per una rottura ecclesiale, ben diversa si presenta la situazione degli insorti. Infatti gli avversari di Giovenale e del concilio erano indubbiamente mossi da reali preoccupazioni dottrinali, anche se no si può escludere l'interferenza di motivi d'altro ordine.'

between the adherents and opponents of the Council of Chalcedon, a schism which endures until the present.<sup>5</sup> It is also plausible that what happened in Jerusalem under the leadership of the monks was instrumental in providing inspiration to anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt to resist and remove their own Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria. The presence of some monks from Palestine who previously had revolted against Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem, a Chalcedonian bishop, and who later were forced to flee to Egypt in consequence of persecution at his command may have given courage to and then supported the anti-Chalcedonian uprising against Juvenal's colleague, Proterius, in Egypt.

This study offers a further contribution in the field-work carried out on site in the Middle East. The archaeological and topographical evidence places the events studied here into clearer context. The field-work traced the footsteps of Peter the Iberian and his followers into the regions of modern Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Sinai /Egypt.

In order to understand Peter the Iberian and the ancient literary portrait painted of him that inspired the minds and hearts of anti-Chalcedonians, it is necessary to take account of the nature and character of all sources that provide information about him. The first chapter of this book discusses significant aspects of the work and person of Peter's biographer, John Rufus. The chapter also introduces the reader to the other two main sources of information concerning Peter: the works of Zachariah Rhetor and the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian'. As the work on anti-Chalcedonian Christianity in Syria-Palestine continues to be advanced by editions and translations of relevant sources as well as scholarly studies in the coming years, it is to be hoped that the time will soon come to revisit

<sup>5</sup> For discussions of ecumenical implications and developments in modern times, see, for example, K. M. George, 'Oriental Orthodox-Orthodox Dialogue', in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, eds. Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Pauline Webb (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 859-862; Ronald G. Roberson, 'Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue', in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 862-864; C. Chaillot and A. Belopopsky, eds., *Towards Unity: The Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches* (Geneva, 1998); Stuart G. Hall, 'Past Creeds and Present Formula at the Council of Chalcedon', in *The Church Retrospective, Papers Read at the 1995 Summer Meeting and the 1996 Winter Meeting of The Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson, *Studies in Church History* 33 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press; Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 1997), 19-29; Fairy von Lilienfeld, 'Orthodoxe Kirchen', in *TRE* 25 (1995), 423-464; Paulos Gregorios, William H. Lazareth, and Nikos A. Nissiotis, eds., *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology* (Geneva, 1981).

the early anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine in the context of a fuller study of the life and career of John Rufus.

The figure of Peter the Iberian will not be too familiar to most of the students of the early Christian world. Recognizing this fact, Chapter 2 outlines the major stages in Peter's life and career. At the same time, the discussion highlights the impact of different geographical, cultural, and political influences, namely those of Georgia, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Palestine, Alexandria, and Egypt, and the contributions of individuals from different social roles, such as imperial nobility, patriarchs, monks, pilgrims, and women. Central to this examination is Peter's multifaceted role of prince, monk, and bishop. Peter played a central role in the history of the anti-Chalcedonian community in Palestine, both as a figure who decisively influenced events, a point more strongly emphasized in Chapter 2, as well as a model and hero still inspiring people to adhere to an ideal even after his death, a dimension that comes more to the fore when one observes Rufus' skilful presentation of specific features of Peter's spirituality and life. While probably having a *fundamentum in re*, these features function primarily as an example to anti-Chalcedonians through the medium of the literary genre of hagio-biography in which they are presented.

Chapter 3 considers the practice of asceticism as a locus of authority in the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonian community that gathered around Peter. It shows how Rufus portrayed Peter's ascetic development arising hand in hand with the leading role Peter assumed among anti-Chalcedonian ascetics in their resistance against Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem. The fourth chapter concentrates on the role of the Holy Land as a singular setting for the Christological controversies in the fifth century. In the context of pilgrimage to the numerous holy places, Peter's own role as a pilgrim to the Holy Land comes into focus. The spiritual and political implications of his personal pilgrimage as well as the sensitivities of anti-Chalcedonians concerning the fact that the holy places were in the hands of 'heretical' Chalcedonians, are crucial to understand both Peter's role as well as the model held out for future generations by Rufus. Chapter 5 concludes this investigation with a discussion of the spirituality centred on the cross as a characteristic element of anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine. Given the unique setting of the Holy Land defined by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, given the experience of persecution which anti-Chalcedonians felt they suffered at the hands of Chalcedonians, and given the authority and sovereignty ascetics achieved in matters of faith *qua* being ascetics, anti-Chalcedonian ascetic spirituality is marked strongly by a sense of the monk's or the nun's self-identification with the crucified Christ. A future study may test the

hypothesis concerning the extent to which the self-identification of Peter's ascetic followers as 'bearers of the cross', although not foreign also to Chalcedonian ascetics, can be seen as the fertile soil out of which emerged the momentum for anti-Chalcedonians to adopt the slogan 'the one who was crucified for us' as their rallying cry in the *Trisagion* Controversy.

A basic tension runs through the whole of this study. Given that only traces at best of Peter's *ipsissima vox* have been preserved, how could one ever know what this fifth-century anti-Chalcedonian religious leader 'really' said? Is not all of what we have in the end determined by the lens which Rufus as his successor places in front of our eyes? One may even go a step further and ask how much we can know about Rufus' perception of the tumult of his day, given that all that remains are sources mainly in Syriac translation. In the case of late antique contemporary historiography as it was advanced by the opposing side, namely, the Chalcedonian interests of Cyril of Scythopolis, the sources at least are preserved in Greek, the language of their original composition. Yet also in regard to that camp, more recent scholarly investigations raise the same concerns of historical reliability of the Chalcedonian sources that one might voice regarding the historical reality of Peter or reliability of John Rufus' account.<sup>6</sup> While Chalcedonian sources have been scrutinized carefully over at least the last thirty years,<sup>7</sup> the same careful analysis of anti-Chalcedonian texts is only in its beginnings. A significant obstacle to the study of anti-Chalcedonian leaders and the wider anti-Chalcedonian position in the Christological controversies of the fifth century has been the lack of convenient access to reliable editions and English translations of sources preserved in a number of Eastern Christian languages: particularly for this study in Syriac, Greek, Georgian, Armenian, Coptic, and Arabic. In an effort to remedy this situation, the full revised editions and English translations of the works of John Rufus, preserved in Syriac, are forthcoming in two separate volumes. English translations of texts pertaining to the reception history of Peter the Iberian, especially the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian', will also be published separately in due course. In the light of these uneven conditions, the goal of the present book is, perhaps, more modest than the expectations of an enquirer used to the more robust

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Daniël Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis' Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism* (Rome, 2001). Even though Hombergen's study as a whole does not focus exclusively on the Chalcedonian /anti-Chalcedonian conflict, nevertheless, his critique of Cyril is relevant for an understanding of the events of the fifth century.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the important study by Bernard Flusin, *Miracle et histoire dans l'oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris, 1983).

pace of Chalcedonian studies. This study sets out the witnesses of the sources in a manner that is sensitive and understanding, yet impartial to the forces and inspirations that motivated both the subjects of the story and the author who captured the events for his audience at the time.

Any attempt at historiography gives only a selective description of the past. While much is said, even more is left untold. As a historian of early Christian theology and late antiquity, who is writing a chapter of the history of the life of the Christian community in the Middle East, I am at the same time aware of and subject to these same constraints and limitations, some self-imposed, others unavoidable. When approaching the sources, it was my concern to let them speak for themselves. Yet I saw it as my task to help them say more explicitly and as fully as possible what they intended to say and express in their own context, but what a modern audience may no longer be able to hear or read. Thus I also took it upon myself to fill the role of a mediator between the sources' ancient context and the modern, interested audience.

Engaging in historical reconstruction, I attempted to come as close as I felt justified to what might reasonably have been the picture of the life and career of Peter the Iberian. My presupposition concerning John Rufus was that he provided an account of a person who had left a lasting impression on him and whose ideals and practices of life had served well to provide inner coherence for a minority community that felt exposed to persecution and harrassment from the side of Chalcedonians. As much as I had no reason to assume that *all* of what Cyril of Scythopolis wrote was literary fiction, I also placed John Rufus into that same category of an ancient historiographer of the life of a saint. What both Cyril and John produced can be classified, borrowing the terminology of de Certeau and Van Uytfanghe,<sup>8</sup> as *discours hagiographique*, consisting of a composition with elements of hagiography, spiritual biography, and historiography. In the course of this study, I refer to John Rufus' *Vita Petri Iberi* more often as a hagiographical biography. In addition to exploring the literary witness, this study also investigates the remnants of the material life that may strengthen the case for the historical reliability of at least some

<sup>8</sup> See M. de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire* (Paris, 1975), 274–288; M. de Certeau, 'Hagiographie', in *Encyclopaedia Universalis* 8 (1968), 207–209, reprinted in *Encyclopaedia Universalis* 11 (1990), 160–165; M. van Uytfanghe, 'Heiligenverehrung II (Hagiographie)', in *RAC* 14 (1988), 150–183, here 152; M. van Uytfanghe, 'L'hagiographie: un "genre" chrétien ou antique tardif?' *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993), 135–188, here 148–149. For a discussion of how to apply this terminology most beneficially to the work of Cyril of Scythopolis, see Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy*, 89–112.

aspects of the story told by John Rufus. To examine and trace in minute detail the extent to which Rufus as biographer and author followed other models of ascetical, classical, and philosophical literature will have to be left to a monograph on the life and career of John Rufus. Where appropriate, some parallels are indicated in the present study when they further the themes that have been proposed for consideration in a given chapter and when they can serve as an indication to help set Peter the Iberian and Gazan monasticism in the larger context of Egyptian and Syriac asceticism and its features of Cappadocian and Evagrian spirituality. The fuller picture would tell more about the biographer than about his subject matter and thus is not pursued in this book.

A final comment on my choice of ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ as a label that designates those Christians who accept only the first three ecumenical councils. I have met with opposition from the side of modern-day members of individual Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, who felt that my use of the term ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ was inappropriate, given that in the light of more recent developments in the ecumenical realm understanding has grown on all sides of the controversy that ‘anti-Chalcedonians’ had no objections to the essence of the doctrine about Christ as it was expressed at Chalcedon. In the eyes of my critics, my labelling of a group of Christians as ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ is seen as an act of persisting in an attempt to disqualify a given group of people on the basis of their presumed adversarial attitude to an ancient council.

I am most grateful for the frank expressions of such criticism that I encountered. Other scholars have responded to such concerns by choosing to speak of ‘non-Chalcedonians’ instead of ‘anti-Chalcedonians’. I have three reasons for why I think it is not helpful for this study to adjust the terminology in this direction.

The designation ‘non-Chalcedonian’ describes a person who does not belong to the community of believers who actively accepted and still accept the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon as the normative formulation of their faith. Historically such a group-definition included the native churches in Egypt and Ethiopia, in Syria-Palestine, and in Armenia, whose members did not accept Chalcedon, i.e. the Coptic Orthodox Church,<sup>9</sup> the Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Armenian Orthodox Church. Yet it also includes the Assyrian Church of the East whose members never had to make the

<sup>9</sup> Technically, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church only became independent from the Coptic Orthodox Church in the course of the twentieth century. In addition, the Eritrean Orthodox Church asserted its independence from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church also in the late twentieth century.

decision to accept or reject the definitions of Chalcedon. Thus, the designation ‘non-Chalcedonian’, being co-extensive with the designation ‘Oriental Orthodox’, which in its turn in scholarly discourse on a more global level also includes the ‘pre-Chalcedonian’ churches, i.e. the Assyrian Church of the East,<sup>10</sup> from the perspective of doctrinal definitions would lack the necessary scientific clarity if it were applied in the present context.

To speak of ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ in a historical study makes a valid and appropriate statement. The participants in the conflict that focused on the Council of Chalcedon, in their specific historical locale and time frame, did indeed disagree with, and therefore not accept Chalcedon. They were not ‘non’-Chalcedonian in the sense of being indifferent with regard to Chalcedon, quite the contrary. Rather they were very explicit in expressing their ‘anti’-Chalcedonian sentiment. Thus, the choice of ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ accurately reflects the historical context.

A third reason which convinces me to resist the wave of ‘political correctness’ has to do with the concern that language be freed from polemical usage. The fact that someone is ‘against’ a given claim or position, even if it is numerically better represented, does not disqualify that person, morally or otherwise. Within a Christian framework of looking at the world, every human being is called upon to make a choice. Yet the direction of that choice, whether ‘anti’ or ‘pro’, is not what determines whether or not the choice is ‘correct’ or ‘valid’. Positions expressive of an ‘anti’ attitude (such as anti-Chalcedonian, anti-Western, anti-abortion, anti-communist, etc.) still require judgement as to the intrinsic value or lack thereof of the issue, idea, or object that is to be judged, as well as to the historical and political circumstances of the situation. The same, obviously, holds true in regard to positions expressive of a ‘pro’ attitude (as e.g. pro-Chalcedonian, pro-abortion, pro-Western, etc.). Thus, I am using the directional preposition ‘anti’ in the phrase ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ without any polemical connotations, but merely as a historical designation.

<sup>10</sup> Scholarly designations for various churches in e.g. German can group the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the Church of the East /Assyrian Orthodox Church together under the label ‘altorientalisch’ (i.e. ancient oriental) or ‘vor-Chalkedonensisch’ (pre-Chalcedonian).

# I

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## The Main Sources and Their Authors: The Relevant Works of John Rufus and Zachariah Rhetor

### THE SOURCES

The historian who intends to study the life and career of Peter the Iberian in the anti-Chalcedonian milieu of fifth-century AD Palestine has available two main sources, both of which are texts of late antique origin.<sup>1</sup> The first source, the *Vita Petri Iberi*, is the hagiographical biography of Peter.<sup>2</sup> The second work, the so-called *Plerophoriae*, is a collection of *apophthegmata*-like anecdotes which focus on the controversy over the acceptance of the decisions of the

<sup>1</sup> Among his own fellow countrymen and -women, Peter the Iberian is still *en vogue*. See, for example, the appearance of the novel by K'et'evan Nuc'ubize, *Petre Iberi: istoriuli romani* (Tbilisi, 1975). Jeff W. Childers, 'Peter the Iberian (ca. 413–491)', in *EEC* (1998), 907–908, here 907, emphasizing Peter's Georgian heritage, misleadingly speaks of Peter as an 'ascetic leader in Georgia (Iberia)'. Neither the sources preserved in Syriac nor those that have come down in Georgian support a picture of Peter celebrating ascetic feats already during his youth in Georgia. For the relationship between Iberia and Georgia, see below, p. 50, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> For the critical edition and German translation of John Rufus' *Vita Petri Iberi* see Richard Raabe, ed. and tr., *Petrus der Iberer: ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts: syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten griechischen Biographie* (Leipzig, 1895). In 1999, Sebastian P. Brock kindly made available to me a manuscript of a draft of an English translation of the *Vita Petri Iberi* by Derwas Chitty. According to the record of notes accompanying the manuscript, the translation was produced around 1967. When reference is made in the following to Raabe's introduction or German translation, the abbreviation 'Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*' is used. Reference to the Syriac text will appear as '*Vita Petri Iberi*' followed by page number(s). A modestly revised re-edition of Raabe's text along with a new English translation of the *Vita Petri Iberi* by Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. is forthcoming in Writings from the Greco-Roman World series, SBL and Brill publishers.

Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt.<sup>3</sup> John Rufus most likely wrote or was the final redactor of both works.<sup>4</sup>

Eduard Schwartz was the first modern-day scholar to study the person of John Rufus.<sup>5</sup> Despite Schwartz's stimulating article in 1912, Rufus and his work subsequently received little scholarly attention until very recently.<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive study of John Rufus has yet to be written; the following sketch cannot be a substitute for it. Nevertheless, each biographer views the subject of his or her work through a lens which is specifically his or her own. Thus, before

<sup>3</sup> For the critical edition and French translation of the *Plerophoriae* see F. Nau and M. Brière, ed. and tr., *Jean Rufus, Évêque de Maïouma: Plérophories, c'est-à-dire témoignages et révélations*, PO 8.1 (Paris, 1911). For a critique of Nau's edition see V. Ermoni, 'Les Plérophories de Jean, évêque de Maïouma', *Bulletin critique*, 20th year, vol. 5, 2nd ser. (Paris, 1899), 304–307. See also Nau's reply to Ermoni in F. Nau, 'Note de M. Nau sur les Plérophories', *Bulletin critique*, 21st year, vol. 6, 2nd ser. (Paris, 1900), 113–119. When reference is made to Nau's introduction, appendix, or specific pages, the abbreviation 'Nau, *Plérophories*' is used. Reference to the Syriac text will appear as '*Plerophoriae*' followed by the number of the episode. An English translation of the *Plerophoriae* by Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. is in preparation. For comment on the description '*apophthegmata*-like', see below, ch. 1, p. 18, n. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Against Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 184; and J.-M. Sauget and Tito Orlandi, 'John of Maiuma (John Rufus)', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 445–446, an article in which they say on p. 446 that 'The *Life of Peter the Iberian* is wrongly attributed to J[ohn of Maiuma], though written in a milieu close to him'. In a personal communication from 23 October 1997, Orlandi also expressed doubts that John Rufus could be labelled author of the *Plerophoriae* in any modern sense of the word. See the discussion of the likelihood of Rufus' authorship of the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae* below, ch. 1, pp. 31–44.

<sup>5</sup> See Eduard Schwartz, 'Johannes Rufus, ein monophysitischer Schriftsteller', *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 16. Abteilung (1912), 1–28. Also see the comments in Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 184.

<sup>6</sup> At the end of the twentieth century Lorenzo Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places and Pilgrimage in an Age of Dogmatic Conflicts', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 48 (1998), 22 n. 33, expressed the view that further studies of John Rufus are a *desideratum*. First sketches began to appear, especially by Jan-Eric Steppa, 'Plerophories: The World-Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture' (MA thesis, University of Lund, 1998), chs. 2 and 3. See also Steppa's recently published book (*John Rufus and the World View of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Piscataway, NJ, 2002)), in which he presented a more fully developed portrait of John Rufus embedded in the investigation of the cultural idiom of the anti-Chalcedonian community in the Gaza area. For a critically appreciative discussion of the book see my review in *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 6.1 (2003) at <http://syrc.com.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol6No1/HV6N1PRHorn.html>. For an abbreviated version of his thesis, see also Jan-Eric Steppa, 'Heresy and Orthodoxy: The Anti-Chalcedonian Hagiography of John Rufus', in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*, ed. Brouria-Bitton Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 89–106.

engaging in a detailed study of the career of Peter the Iberian, it is necessary to present in a few quick strokes the work and person of John Rufus.

## The Work and Person of Peter's Biographer John Rufus

### *John Rufus' Work*

#### **The *Vita Petri Iberi***

*The Manuscript Evidence* The *Vita Petri Iberi* is the main literary source for Peter's life and career.<sup>7</sup> The vivid description of individual events, most notably in connection with Peter's passing away and burial,<sup>8</sup> support the likelihood that Rufus wrote the work around AD 500, presumably within a decade or two after Peter's death. Subsequently, probably within the course of the sixth century,<sup>9</sup> an unidentifiable hand translated the original Greek composition into Syriac.<sup>10</sup> The original Greek text that Evagrius Scholasticus may have consulted for his knowledge of Peter the Iberian has perished.<sup>11</sup> In modern times,

<sup>7</sup> For a brief discussion of a second *Life of Peter* stemming from the pen of Zachariah Scholasticus /Rhetor, see below, ch. 1, pp. 45–46 and 48–49.

<sup>8</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 137–146. See also Steppa, *John Rufus*, 61 n. 16.

<sup>9</sup> John Rufus' second major work, the *Plerophoriae*, existed in Syriac translation at the latest in the second half of the sixth century. See below, p. 22, n. 62.

<sup>10</sup> BM MS Add. 17,193, described in W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1872), 989–1002, and dated to A. Gr. 1185 (corresponding to AD 874) contains an extract from a letter by Bishop Sergius bar Karyā (Wright, *Catalogue*, 994, no. 49). A certain Abbot Sergius bar Karyā, who may or may not be identical with Bishop Sergius bar Karyā, is named as the translator from Greek into Syriac of John of Aphthonia's *Vita Severi*, included in MS Sachau 321 and indexed in Eduard Sachau, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, vol. xxiii: *Verzeichniss der Syrischen Handschriften*, pt. i (Berlin, 1899), 98. While Abbot Sergius is not mentioned explicitly as translator of the *Vita Petri Iberi* which is also contained in that MS Sachau 321 (see below, p. 14), his name appears to be the only name of a translator mentioned for any of the texts contained in that manuscript.

<sup>11</sup> See Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 2, chs. 5 and 8, and bk. 3, ch. 33 (ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with Scholia* (London, 1898), 52, 56, 132; English tr. in Edward Waldorf, *A History of the Church, . . . and from A.D. 431 to A.D. 594, by Evagrius* (London, 1954), 302, 306, 372, as well as more recently in Michael Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool, 2000), 79, 85, 175). Although Evagrius '[a]s an urban dweller and official employee . . . could well have survived without knowing Syriac' (Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, xxv n. 36), it is certainly possible that he had at least some familiarity with that language and may already have used the Syriac version of the *Vita Petri Iberi*. Evagrius himself does not say whether his source was available to him in Greek or in Syriac.

access to the *Vita Petri Iberi* is possible almost exclusively through the Syriac translation. It is likely that most adherents of the anti-Chalcedonian community in the later part of the sixth century had access primarily, if not exclusively through the Syriac version of Peter's *Vita*.<sup>12</sup> It is most likely the Syriac text which constitutes the medium which made Peter known as leader and model of the acceptable life both in the immediate community of his followers and among the members of the anti-Chalcedonian Church, in the early history of which Peter had been intimately involved. Thus it is only appropriate to pay sufficient attention to the facts connected with the manuscript tradition of that Syriac text.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> As anti-Chalcedonian Christians continued to define their identity over and against a Greek-speaking Chalcedonian Church, which not infrequently took to means of violence and persecution against dissidents, in the course of the sixth century AD the Syriac language became a primary medium of religious and cultural identification for the emerging anti-Chalcedonian Church in Syria-Palestine.

The case may have been different in Egypt. The two Coptic fragments of a *Life of Timothy Aelurus* which are taken almost *verbatim* from the *Vita Petri Iberi* may have been translated either from the Greek or from the Syriac version. See Hugh G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādi 'n Natrūn*, pt. i: *New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius* (New York, 1926), 164–167, especially 164 and n. 7. *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 2 (1991), 567, col. 1, shows a page of the *Life of Timothy*, wrongly identified as 'the life of Peter the Iberian'.

<sup>13</sup> It seems likely that the translation of the *Vita Petri Iberi* from Greek into Syriac was undertaken for reasons similar to those that inspired and guided the translation from Greek into Syriac of other anti-Chalcedonian works. As ecclesial communion between anti-Chalcedonians and Chalcedonians fell apart, the destruction of texts authored by doctrinal opponents seems to have occurred (see, e.g. *Plerophoriae* 46). In addition, the need seems to have arisen, especially on the part of anti-Chalcedonians, to preserve relevant documents in a language that was *not* the main language of the opponent. Known examples of other significant translation activities of theological texts include the work of Jacob of Edessa and Athanasius of Nisibis' labour in translating Severus of Antioch's *Cathedral Homilies*. See Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 251–252 and 259. For a discussion of translation methods, see C. J. A. Lash, 'Techniques of a Translator: Work-Notes on the Methods of Jacob of Edessa in Translating the Homilies of Severus of Antioch', in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, TU 125 (Berlin, 1981), 365–383. Sebastian P. Brock has published numerous studies contributing towards a history of Syriac translation technique. To select only a few, see, for example, Sebastian Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, Variorum Collected Studies 199 (London, 1984; repr. Aldershot, and Burlington, Vt., 2001); Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique', OCA 221 (1983), 1–14; Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, 1982), 17–34; and Brock, 'Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979), 69–87. Harald Suermann, 'Die Übersetzungen des Probus und eine Theorie zur



or in English: *Account of the Ways of Life of the Holy Peter the Iberian, Bishop, Venerable Confessor, and Ascetic of Our Lord*.<sup>22</sup> While a title to the *Vita Petri Iberi* was clearly a part of the transmission of the text in the Syriac manuscript tradition,<sup>23</sup> it is not certain if the title given in the Syriac text was translated literally from the Greek. The title as a whole may even have been added by the Syriac translator without a basis for it in the Greek original. Thus the precise wording of an original Greek title, which may or may not have existed, cannot be determined yet.

*The Content of the Vita Petri Iberi in Outline:* The *Vita Petri Iberi* speaks of the life of the young Georgian prince Peter the Iberian. It traces his steps from the time of his birth and youth in Georgia,<sup>24</sup> through his stay as a hostage at the court of Theodosius II in Constantinople,<sup>25</sup> to his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> The narration of Peter's activities in the Holy Land can be divided into two sections. When it describes the first round,<sup>27</sup> the *Vita Petri Iberi* focuses on his life as a monk and only to a lesser extent on his exercise of the office of bishop of Maiuma, as well as on his involvement in the anti-Chalcedonian uprising against Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem (AD 422–458, unable to occupy his see from 452 to 453).<sup>28</sup> After recounting Peter's time spent in Gaza,<sup>29</sup> his sojourn and labours in Egypt,<sup>30</sup> and his second round of activities in the Holy Land, which were a part of his wanderings and preaching activities in the Roman provinces of *Palaestina*, *Arabia*, and *Phoenicia*,<sup>31</sup> the *Vita Petri Iberi* ends with an account of his death and his burial as a venerated abbot in his own monastery in the vicinity of Maiuma, Gaza.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Instead of printing the title immediately preceding the Syriac text, which in Raabe's edition begins at *Vita Petri Iberi* 3, Raabe placed it on a separate page as *Vita Petri Iberi* 1.

<sup>23</sup> In MS Sachau 321, folio 68 verso, bottom of the right-hand column, only about the first half of the title is difficult to read. The text of the *Vita Petri Iberi* begins at the very top of the left-hand column on the same folio. In MS BM Add. 12,174, folio 48b, the title is clearly legible and placed immediately preceding the text.

<sup>24</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 14–15.

<sup>25</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16–22.

<sup>26</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22–27.

<sup>27</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27–49.

<sup>28</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51–52. On Juvenal of Jerusalem, see also conveniently Hans-Udo Rosenbaum, 'Juvenal', in *BBKL* 3 (1992), 901–903.

<sup>29</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49–58.

<sup>30</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 58–77.

<sup>31</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 77–132.

<sup>32</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 132–146. Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 33 (ed. Paulus Geyer, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 129–153, here p. 145, ll. 16–17) describes the distance between Gaza and Maiuma: *De Maioma usque in Gaza miliarium unum*. On Maiuma, Gaza, see Yoram Tsafrir, Leah Di Segni, and Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani: Iudaea Palaestina: Eretz Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Jerusalem, 1994), 175. Evidence for the

The *Sitz im Leben* of the *Written Composition of the Vita Petri Iberi*: Several pointers in the *Vita Petri Iberi* allow the attentive reader to formulate a reasonable hypothesis as to the setting in the life of the community of Peter's followers which prompted the composition of a written account of the life and feats of their hero. The following discussion assembles evidence that can be adduced to postulate the annual celebration of the memorial of Peter's death and burial as the *Sitz im Leben* for the written composition of the *Vita Petri Iberi*.

The *Vita Petri Iberi* presents the *translatio* of Peter's body from the place of his death near Ashkelon to his monastery in Maiuma in a way that suggests a procession. Peter's spiritual heirs carried his coffin, accompanied by the brethren of his community and the inhabitants of that area.<sup>33</sup> It is not unlikely that a procession taking place in Maiuma in honour of the saint at his annual commemoration could have been in the background of such a description.<sup>34</sup> Yet even if no processions in Peter's memory ever took place, at least Rufus' description of the *translatio* of Peter's body to Maiuma seems to be an appropriate continuation of, or perhaps a conclusion to, the constant travelling and moving about which was so characteristic of Peter's whole life.<sup>35</sup> In that sense the *translatio* serves as a testimony that

continued existence of Christians in Maiuma, Gaza, at least up to the Umayyad period, is provided by the *Vita Ioannis Damasceni* 34 (PG 94.477–482). See also Robert Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians in Palestine during the Byzantine-Umayyad Transition, A.D. 600–750', 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Chicago, 1987), entry: Maiuma Gaza (152), 609.

<sup>33</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 138.

<sup>34</sup> Ronald L. Grimes, *Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico* (Ithaca, NY, 1976), 62–74, provides a useful discussion of the phenomenological distinctions between processions, pilgrimages, and parades. For a potentially parallel case, see the discussion in Janet A. Timbie, 'A Liturgical Procession in the Desert of Apa Shenoute', in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden, 1998), 415–441. See also Ronald L. Grimes, 'Procession', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 12 (1987), 1–3; H. Leclercq, 'Procession', in *DAcL* 14.2 (1948), 1895–1896; P. Fahey, 'Procession', in *EECh* 2 (New York, 1992), 712; W. Pax, 'Bittprozession', in *RAC* 2 (Stuttgart, 1954), 422–429; Anton Quack, 'Prozession. I. Religionsgeschichtlich', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 678–679; Sabine Felbecker, 'Prozession. II. Liturgisch', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 679–680; Fred G. Rausch, 'Prozession. III. Frömmigkeitsgeschichtlich', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 680–681; C. H. Ratschow, 'Prozession. I. Religionsgeschichtlich', in *RGG* 5 (1961), 668–669; and H. Hohlwein and H. Barion, 'Prozession. II. Im Christentum', in *RGG* 5 (1961), 669–671.

<sup>35</sup> For a fuller discussion of the centrality of travelling and pilgrimage in Peter's life, especially as an expression of his desire for martyrdom, see Cornelia Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown: John Rufus's View of Peter the Iberian's Journeys in Late Antique Palestine', Symposium Syriacum VIII, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56.1–4 (2004), 171–190. See also below, ch. 4.

Peter's wish to 'weave also in [his] end the crown of a good pilgrimage', to finish his life as a pilgrim, found a rather fitting fulfilment.<sup>36</sup>

Commemorating certain saints by name, primarily in the context of prayer, had developed into an ongoing tradition also in Peter's monastery. Peter himself had introduced a specific form of that veneration. In gratitude for the inspiring example of his relatives who are suggested to have imprinted upon him the value and beauty of the ascetic life already in his early years,<sup>37</sup> Peter instituted the liturgical commemoration of several of the members of his own family.<sup>38</sup> One supposes that the brethren of Peter's community did not abandon the practice after Peter's death, but that they carried on with it,<sup>39</sup> presumably enlarging that list also to include Peter's name.

According to Rufus, the brethren kept the tradition of mentioning the names of certain Persian martyrs, whose bones Peter had brought along from his home in Georgia. The liturgical commemoration, which most likely took place in Peter's monastery in Maiuma, likewise grew out of a custom which, judging from Rufus' account, Peter had introduced. At the liturgical commemoration of those martyrs the accounts of their martyrdoms were read.<sup>40</sup>

The practice of commemorating various saints and some of Peter's close relatives at his monastery and the tradition of telling about those saints' lives at such occasions make it very likely that the *Vita Petri Iberi* had a function in such a context, even if other additional reasons had prompted its composition. Rufus states at the end of the *Vita Petri Iberi* that Peter's commemoration was celebrated for a period of three days in his monastery between Maiuma and Gaza.<sup>41</sup> It seems likely that initially at the memorial of Peter's death Rufus would have recounted events from Peter's life merely in an oral presentation. Eventually, Rufus committed that oral narration to parchment or vellum, working out a written account.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, the *Vita Petri Iberi* would have been read aloud to the monks, perhaps even to the lay people, who were gathered in the monastery's church on the days of Peter's annual commemoration.

<sup>36</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 122.

<sup>37</sup> See below, ch. 2, pp. 50–59.

<sup>38</sup> See, however, the contrary instructions which Bishop Rabbula of Edessa gave to the monks under his jurisdiction. Rabbula's Canon 3 (ed. J. J. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* (Oxford, 1865), 210) states that monks are not to commemorate dead members of their family in the assembly. An English translation of these canons, as well as of the complete corpus of Rabbula's works, by Cornelia Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr. is forthcoming in the Writings from the Greco-Roman World series (SBL / Brill publishers).

<sup>39</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

<sup>41</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 146.

<sup>42</sup> Traces of this process are still noticeable in the text. See, for example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 3–4, 6, 14, 69, 83, 122, and at other instances.

To read out loud the text of the *Vita Petri Iberi* would have taken several hours. Yet a memorial celebration extending over three days would have allowed the audience sufficient time to listen to the complete story.

### The *Plerophoriae*

Next to the *Vita Petri Iberi*, the second major source for a study of Peter's life and career is the so-called *Plerophoriae*, an 'apophthegmata-like'<sup>43</sup> collection of short anecdotes, stories, memories, and brief episodes, which their author characterized as 'witnesses and revelations'.<sup>44</sup> Rufus, the author or at the least the final redactor of the work, intended the *Plerophoriae* as a witness against the Council of

<sup>43</sup> 'Apophthegmata-like' is referring to the style of short anecdotes and words of wisdom passed on in the so-called *Apophthegmata Patrum*, accessible in three collections, namely, the Alphabetical Collection (ed. J. B. Cotelier (n.p., 1677), reprinted in PG 65.71–440; English translation Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, 1975)), the Anonymous Collection (ed. F. Nau, 'Histoire des solitaires égyptiens (MS Coislin 126, fol. 158 sqq.)', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 12 (1907), 43–47, 171–189, 393–413; 13 (1908), 47–66, 266–297; 14 (1909), 357–379; 17 (1912), 204–211, 294–301; 18 (1913), 137–146; see also F. Nau, 'Le chapitre *Περὶ ἀναχωρητῶν ἀγίων* et les sources de la Vie de St. Paul de Thèbes', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 10 (1905), 387–417; for an English translation see Benedicta Ward, *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers: The Apophthegmata Patrum (the Anonymous Series)* (Oxford, 1975)), and the Systematic Collection (Jean-Claude Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: collection systématique*, SCH 387 (Paris, 1993–)). Still indispensable is W. Bousset, *Apophthegmata: Studien zur Geschichte des ältesten Mönchtums: Textüberlieferung und Charakter der Apophthegmata Patrum* (Tübingen, 1923). The material published in PO 8.164–183 as an appendix to the *Plerophoriae* is closely related to the traditions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. It has been suggested that the redaction of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is to be located outside of Egypt and, more precisely, is to be associated closely with asceticism in Palestine. See Lucien Regnault, 'Les Apophtegmes des Pères en Palestine aux V<sup>e</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Irenikon* 54.3 (1981), 320–330. See also the more comprehensive and more recent discussion in Graham Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford, 1993), 1–25.

<sup>44</sup> *Περὶ τῶν ἀποφθεγμάτων τῶν ἀγίων*, *Plerophoriae*, title, to be found at Nau, *Plerophories*, 11. The scholarship that concentrates specifically on this text is not voluminous. The first significant study to appear was Schwartz's 'Johannes Rufus', which used respective passages from the *Plerophoriae* as well as from Zachariah Scholasticus' *Life of Severus* (ed. M. A. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', in *Sévère Patriarche d'Antioche 512–518*, PO 2.1 (Paris, 1907), 7–115; abbreviated in this study as 'Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi*') to establish Rufus' authorship of the *Vita Petri Iberi*. Almost eighty years later, Lorenzo Perrone, 'Dissenso dottrinale e propaganda visionaria: le *Pleroforie* di Giovanni di Maiuma', *Augustinianum* 29 (1989), 451–495, provided an analysis of the internal thematic and literary structure of the work. Witold Witakowski, 'Syrian Monophysite Propaganda in the Fifth to Seventh Centuries', in *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, ed. Lennart Rydén and Jan Olof Rosenqvist (Uppsala,

Chalcedon and its adherents.<sup>45</sup> With it he tried to give advice to and prepare his audience for attacks from the Chalcedonian side. One of the techniques he employed for that purpose was a catechetical ‘question and answer’ style.<sup>46</sup> At a given instance he would formulate a short question with which anti-Chalcedonians could and would be confronted and then he provided an appropriate response to it from an anti-Chalcedonian perspective. His answers not only reveal that anti-Chalcedonians took recourse to claims of apostolic authority,<sup>47</sup> but also demonstrate that they had to justify themselves and defend their own position as a minority group taking a stand on matters of faith against the opinions and the pressures of the Chalcedonian majority.<sup>48</sup>

Judging from internal evidence which consists of the description of ‘the power, at present, which is from him [i.e. God] and in his [i.e. God’s] hands’ that is working against ‘heretical [i.e. Chalcedonian] bishops’,<sup>49</sup> it seems most likely that the collection of the *Plerophoriae* as it presents itself in the Syriac version was composed during the

1993), 57–66, situated the *Plerophoriae* in its wider context of anti-Chalcedonian literature originally composed in Syriac, including works by Philoxenus of Mabbugh, Simeon of Beth Arsham, and, for example, the forged *Letter of the Jews to Marcian* (for discussion and references, see Witakowski, 64–65). Most recently, Jan-Eric Steppa (see above, ch. 1, p. 11, n. 6) has read the work in an attempt to reconstruct the cultural milieu in which it functioned and which it shaped. On the *Letter to Marcian*, see also Andrea Barbara Schmidt, ‘Syrische Tradition in armenischer Adaptation: die armenische Rezeption des Geschichtswerks von Michael Syrus und der antichalcedonische Judenbrief an Kaiser Markianos’, in *Symposium Syriacum VII*, OCA 256 (1998), 359–371; and Lucas Van Rompay, ‘A Letter of the Jews to the Emperor Marcian Concerning the Council of Chalcedon’, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 12 (1981), 215–224. See also the more general study of Günter Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im Heiligen Land: Palästina unter Konstantin und Theodosius* (Munich, 1987).

<sup>45</sup> In Tito Orlandi, ‘John of Mayuma’, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5 (1991), 1366, the phrase ‘that were meant to testify to the orthodoxy of the Chalcedonians’ should be corrected to ‘that were meant to testify to the orthodoxy of the anti-Chalcedonians’.

<sup>46</sup> For a recent revival of interest in this literary style, see also the contributions collected in Annelie Volgers and Claudio Zamagni, eds., *Erotapokriseis: Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context* (Leuven and Duley, Mass., 2004).

<sup>47</sup> *Plerophoriae* 59: In his attempt to provide an answer to a question which the Chalcedonians posed, namely why anti-Chalcedonians called them transgressors and oppressors, in his long explanation Rufus takes recourse to apostolic law as given by Paul to the Galatians (Galatians 2:18) and the Chalcedonians’ violation of it.

<sup>48</sup> *Plerophoriae* 55: The reproach made by the Chalcedonians states, ‘The whole habitable earth is approaching the churches. And you alone who are few are being separated. And you are calling yourselves orthodox ones and zealots of the truth’. The answer to be given, as Rufus suggests, is that to be with the majority does not guarantee at all that one is not a rebel and a transgressor against God.

<sup>49</sup> *Plerophoriae* 24. See also Steppa, *John Rufus*, 78.

period of relatively greatest strength of the anti-Chalcedonian resistance under the patriarchate of Severus of Antioch, lasting from AD 512 to 518.<sup>50</sup> The text contains a confirmation for a *terminus post quem* for its composition. Prior to the quotation cited above, the text recounts a vision of Archimandrite Stephen of Isauria,<sup>51</sup> which was meant to illustrate the public humiliation and expulsion from the Church of Basil of Seleucia (bishop c.AD 440–468)<sup>52</sup> on account of his continued support for Chalcedon. This vision is interpreted as

a prophecy of these things, which were about to take place in the ordinance<sup>53</sup> which happened just now by the holy and blessed Severus, the archbishop of the queen of the cities, Antioch. For the name of Basil was silenced and was erased from the diptychs.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> For a study focusing on the patriarchate of Severus of Antioch see Robin Darling, 'The Patriarchate of Severus of Antioch, 512–518' (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1982).

<sup>51</sup> While still a young layman, Stephen was a close friend and supporter of Basil of Seleucia. Later on, as Archimandrite of the Monastery of Tagon in Seleucia, Isauria, Stephen showed himself as a zealous opponent of Chalcedon as well as of Basil of Seleucia, who supported Chalcedon. See *Plerophoriae* 22–24.

<sup>52</sup> As archbishop of Seleucia, Basil first turned against Eutyches at the Synod of Constantinople in AD 448, but then supported Eutyches at the so-called *Latrocinium* in Ephesus in AD 449. Finally, at Chalcedon he subscribed to Pope Leo the Great's *Tomus ad Flavianum*, condemning both Eutyches and Dioscorus. He co-authored a letter to Emperor Leo I in support of Chalcedon (ed. Eduard Schwartz, *ACO* ii.v, pp. 46–49). It has been shown that Basil did not write the two-volume work on St Thecla, vol. i being a paraphrastic version of a *Life of Thecla*, vol. ii a collection of miracles attributed to her (*Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle*, ed. Gilbert Dagron, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1978); see also the brief discussion in Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of St. Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford and New York, 2001), 40–41), which the manuscript tradition firmly ascribes to him. Whether Basil's ecclesiastical rival in Seleucia, the author of that work, had any connections to the anti-Chalcedonian milieu remains to be studied. Numerous sermons from Basil's pen, predominantly on biblical themes, are preserved. They are edited in PG 85.27–474, to which ought to be added the pseudo-Athanasian sermons printed in PG 28.1047–1061 and 28.1073–1108, as well as Pierre Camelot, 'Une homélie inédite de Basile de Séleucie', in *Mélanges offerts à A.-M. Desrousseaux* (Paris, 1937), 35–48. On Basil of Seleucia, see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. iii (Westminster, Md., repr. 1994), 526–528. For more recent studies, one may consult with benefit Claude de Rohan-Chabot, 'Exégèse de Job 2:6 dans une homélie inédite de Basile de Séleucie', *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989), 197–201; Johannes Marius Tevel, 'The Manuscript Tradition of Basilius of Seleucia and some Deductions concerning the Early Development of Liturgical Collections', *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989), 396–401; and Bernd R. Voss, 'Berührungen von Hagiographie und Historiographie in der Spätantike', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 4 (1970), 53–69.

<sup>53</sup> Syriac ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ for Greek *κατάστασις*, which next to 'appointment' and 'institution' can also mean 'ordinance' or 'decree'. See Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1929), 774.

<sup>54</sup> *Plerophoriae* 23.

Severus was consecrated Patriarch of Antioch on 16 November 512.<sup>55</sup> Even though Emperor Anastasius (AD 491–518) had commanded Severus never to speak or act against the Council of Chalcedon,<sup>56</sup> as soon as Severus was consecrated, he anathematized Chalcedon and accepted the *Henotikon*. In the letters which he sent out as new patriarch of Antioch he expressed the same anti-Chalcedonian stance, rejecting any Christology of two natures and requesting his subordinates to conform to his decrees.<sup>57</sup> Severus probably did not delay too long before ordering the removal from the diptychs of the name of bishop Basil of Seleucia-in-Isauria.<sup>58</sup> Orlandi assumes a date of around AD 515 for Rufus' composition of the *Plerophoriae*.<sup>59</sup>

The Greek Original Major textual witness to the *Plerophoriae* is preserved in four languages of the ancient Christian Near East: Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian.<sup>60</sup> Most likely, Greek was the

<sup>55</sup> See Linda Knezevich, 'Severus of Antioch', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 7 (1991), 2123–2125, here 2124.

<sup>56</sup> See Knezevich, 'Severus of Antioch', 2124, who refers to the *Synodikon*.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Severus of Antioch, *Letters*, bk. 1, letters 6, 24, and 27 (ed. E. W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. i, pt. i (London and Oxford, 1902; Westmead, repr. 1969), 42–43, 94, 98, and elsewhere; tr. E. W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. ii, pt. i (London and Oxford, 1903; Westmead, repr. 1969), 38–39, 84, 88, and elsewhere). See also M.-A. Kugener, 'Allocution prononcée par Sévère après son élévation sur le trône patriarcal d'Antioch', *Oriens Christianus* 2 (1902), 265–282.

<sup>58</sup> On the date of the redaction, see Nau, *Plérôphories*, 56 n. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Orlandi, 'John of Mayuma', 1366.

<sup>60</sup> The three different lines of transmission of the Armenian text of the *Plerophoriae* (transmission 1 extant in two manuscripts, MS Tbilisi 21 (AD 1316) and MS Tübingen Ma XIII.102 (end of the sixteenth century) (folios 136<sup>v</sup>–156<sup>v</sup>, inspected at the occasion of a research visit there in 1998; a description of MS Tübingen Ma XIII.102 can be found in Franz Nikolaus Finck and Levon Gjandschezian, *Verzeichnis der Armenischen Handschriften der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek, Systematisch-Alphabetischer Hauptkatalog der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek zu Tübingen. M. Handschriften. a) Orientalische. XIII* (Tübingen, 1907), 162–168); transmission 2 grounded in the double Armenian translation of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (AD 1166–1199) by the Armenian historian Vardan Arewelc'i and the Syrian Priest Yeshu' (Armen. Iškoh), Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, bk. 8, ch. 9 (Armenian text ed. in *Teaṛn Mixayēli Patriark' i Asorwoc' Zamanakagrut' iwn* (Jerusalem, 1870), this text is very close to that of the manuscripts used as basis for the French translation produced by Victor Langlois (Venice, 1868); the more widely quoted edition of a separate Armenian translation appeared as *Zamanakagrut' iwn Teaṛn Mixayēli Asorwoc' Patriark' i* (Jerusalem, 1871), there pp. 176–206); and transmission 3 to be found in the Armenian 'Book of Letters' (Գիրք թղթոց; Մսարեւսագրութիւնն լսալիսեաց (*Girk' T'ht'oc'; Matenagrut' iwn naxneac'*), (Tbilisi, 1901), 510–525; see

language of the original composition. However, only a few fragments of what may have been the Greek version are still extant. In an appendix to the edition of the Syriac version of the *Plerophoriae*, Nau presented various episodes from mostly unpublished Greek manuscripts containing stories that are closely related to themes and events recounted in the Syriac version of the *Plerophoriae*.<sup>61</sup> It is a matter for further investigation to establish whether or not that material suffices to reconstruct a Greek original of the *Plerophoriae*, or whether one needs to be content with simply pointing out the parallels between the preserved Syriac version and the Greek material. The greater part of the Greek passages seems to come from collections containing sayings of the Fathers.

*The Syriac Version* The collection of the *Plerophoriae* is preserved presumably in almost complete form in the Syriac translation, which probably existed at the latest from AD 572 on.<sup>62</sup> The British Library owns two manuscripts which contain the Syriac version. The more fully preserved text is to be found in the older manuscript, BM Add. 14,650.<sup>63</sup> A note on folio 235<sup>r</sup> states that the later part of the manuscript was written by ‘Simeon the sinner from the monastery of Mar Solomon near Dulikh’ in the year 1186 of the Seleucids, corresponding to AD 875.<sup>64</sup> The text of the 89 short chapters of the

also Andrea B. Schmidt, ‘Das armenische ‘Buch der Briefe’: Seine Bedeutung als quellenkundliche Sammlung für die christologischen Streitigkeiten in Armenien im 6/7 Jh’, in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Berlin /New York, 1993), 511–533), ultimately all depend on the double Armenian translation of the abbreviated Syriac text of the *Plerophoriae* as found in Michael the Syrian’s *Chronicle* (ed. Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d’Antioche*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1910), vol. iv (1910), 203–215 (Syriac text), vol. ii (1901), 69–88 (French)). For a detailed comparison of the Armenian text with its Syriac *Vorlage* see Andrea Barbara Schmidt, ‘Warum schreibt Petrus der Iberer an die Armenier? Ein pseudonymer Brief und die Armenisierung der syrischen Plerophorien’, in *Horizonte der Christenheit; Festschrift für Friedrich Heyer zu seinem 85. Geburtstag*, ed. by Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski, *Oikonomia: Quellen und Studien zur orthodoxen Theologie* 34 (Erlangen, 1994), 258–260. Other scholars who have recognized and studied the Armenian transmission of the *Plerophoriae* include F. Nau, ‘Sur un abrégé arménien des Plérophories’, *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 4 (1899), 134–135; Ernest Honigmann, *Pierre l’Ibérien et les écrits du pseudo-Denys l’Aréopagite*, *Memoires de l’Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques* 47.3 (Brussels, 1952), 54–55; and L. Melik’set’-Bek’ (for references to his works see Schmidt, ‘Warum schreibt Petrus der Iberer an die Armenier?’ 253 n. 13).

<sup>61</sup> Nau, *Plérophories*, 164–165, 168–183.

<sup>62</sup> See Nau, *Plérophories*, 7. Following him, see also Schmidt, ‘Warum schreibt Petrus der Iberer an die Armenier?’ 250 n. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. iii, 1103–1107. MS BM Add. 14,650 is listed as no. 949. It consists of 235 folios.

<sup>64</sup> See Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. iii, 1107.

*Plerophoriae* contained in the first half of the manuscript on folios 90<sup>r</sup>–134<sup>v</sup><sup>65</sup> could very well have been written by a different scribe.

The second manuscript, BM Add. 14,631, was copied in the ninth or tenth century.<sup>66</sup> It preserves the Syriac text of chapters 2 to 83 of the *Plerophoriae* on folios 17–44.<sup>67</sup> Several leaves are hardly legible or even illegible and some sections are missing.<sup>68</sup> It is not unlikely that BM Add. 14,631 is merely a transcription of BM Add. 14,650.<sup>69</sup> While the place at which the transcription was undertaken cannot be determined, BM Add. 14,650, as indicated in the note concerning the scribe quoted above, was written in the monastery of Mar Solomon near Dulikh, the modern-day Dolik in the south-eastern part of Turkey.

For his edition Nau utilized two further source texts. Extracts of the *Plerophoriae* are also contained in the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre* or *Chronicle of Zuqnin*,<sup>70</sup> and in the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*.<sup>71</sup>

*The Coptic Version* It seems likely that a Coptic version of the *Plerophoriae* was also once extant.<sup>72</sup> Evidence for its existence can be gleaned first from Coptic ostraca published and translated by

<sup>65</sup> Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. iii, 1104–1105. Nau, *Plérôphories*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. iii, 1080. MS BM Add. 14,631 is listed as no. 933.

<sup>67</sup> Nau, *Plérôphories*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed listing of these sections, see Nau, *Plérôphories*, 5. These mutilations may have been the reason, as Steppa, ‘Plerophories’, 8, observed, why Wright missed identifying the text in MS BM Add. 14,631 as a copy of the *Plerophoriae*.

<sup>69</sup> An ancient reader of BM Add. 14,650 added marginal notes which later appeared as insertions into the text of BM Add. 14,631. Yet in the critical edition of the Syriac version, which was published in 1912 on the basis of four textual witnesses (see Nau, *Plérôphories*, 5–6), Nau emphasized that BM Add. 14,650 and BM Add. 14,631 differ from one another only in orthographic details, the spellings of names of places and people, and slight variations in the choice of Syriac vocabulary.

<sup>70</sup> *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre* (ed. and tr. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronicon anonymum pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, vol. i, CSCO 91, Scriptorum Syri, ser. 3, t. 1 (Paris, 1927), pp. 209–222 (Syriac); CSCO 121, Scriptorum Syri, ser. 3, t. 1 (Louvain, 1949), pp. 156–165 (Latin)). See also Witold Witakowski, ‘The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē: A Study in the History of Historiography’, *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 9 (Ph.D. diss., University of Uppsala, 1987); and the English translation of the work by W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel Mahre: Chronicle III* (Liverpool, 1996).

<sup>71</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* (ed. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, Patriarche Jacobite d’Antioche (1166–1199)*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1910; repr. Brussels, 1963), here vol. iv, pp. 203–215 (text), vol. ii, pp. 69–88 (French translation)). See also above, ch. 1, pp. 21–22, n. 60.

<sup>72</sup> See Honigsmann, *Pierre l’Ibérien*, 55 n. 2 for bibliography.

W. E. Crum.<sup>73</sup> Number 459 in Crum's publication (C 8110) preserves a section of a list of books and of various articles, most of them garments, which once may have belonged to a monastery.<sup>74</sup> The only three non-biblical and non-apocryphal books listed in the fragment can all be assigned to the anti-Chalcedonian milieu: 'a *καθήγησις* of Apa Shenoute',<sup>75</sup> 'the *Life* of Apa Chrysaphius the Ethiopian', whose memory as patron of Dioscorus would have been held in esteem among anti-Chalcedonians, as Crum notes,<sup>76</sup> and 'the *Πληροφορία* of Apa Peter the Iberian'.<sup>77</sup>

A likely reference to a Coptic version of the *Plerophoriae* is made also in the *Antiphonary*.<sup>78</sup> Crum quotes the context as 'Those that would forsake the treachery of Chalcedon, let them take the Book of

<sup>73</sup> W. E. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca from the Collection of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the Cairo Museum, and Others* (London, 1902), 42, ostrakon no. 459.

<sup>74</sup> The clothing materials listed comprise 4 sheepskins, a monk's dress, 16 robes (*καμίσιον*), 27 pairs of grave-clothes (*κειρία*), and a small child's dress.

<sup>75</sup> Exactly which text of Shenute's corpus is referenced here as *καθήγησις* will be difficult to determine. Given the context of lists of books, a possible candidate may be the catechetical homily described in Tito Orlandi, 'A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenoute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi', *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982), 85–95, and edited, accompanied by an Italian translation, in Tito Orlandi, *Shenute: Contra Origenistas* (Fiesole, Florence, 1985). As Stephen Emmel's 'Shenoute's Literary Corpus' (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993), the groundbreaking work for the reconstruction of the Shenutian corpus, will guide the researcher's steps for decades to come, the future may bring a clearer answer. Emmel's work is more easily accessible in lightly revised and updated form in Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, 2 vols., CSCO 599–600, Subsidia tt. 111–112 (Louvain, 2004). On Abba Shenute, see conveniently his successor Besa's *Life of Shenute* (ed. Johannes Leipoldt and W. E. Crum, *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, CSCO 41, *Scriptores Coptici I* (Louvain, 1906); tr. David N. Bell, *The Life of Shenoute by Besa* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1983)), as well as the still classic study by Johannes Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national ägyptischen Christentums* (Leipzig, 1903), which is undergoing significant scholarly reconsideration and correction. See also the more readily available discussion in Karl Heinz Kuhn, 'Shenute, Saint', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 7 (1991), 2131–2133. See below, ch. 3, p. 209 and n. 497.

<sup>76</sup> Crum, *Coptic Ostraca*, 42 n. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Although the reference is in Coptic, in and of itself it does not constitute sufficient evidence for the existence of a Coptic text of the *Plerophoriae*. For comments on Peter the Iberian's likely involvement in the composition of this work, see below, pp. 26–27.

<sup>78</sup> On the Coptic *Antiphonary*, see Emile Maher Ishaq, 'Difnār', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 3 (1991), 900–901; an edition of the Coptic text is available in Evans De Lacy O'Leary, ed., *The Difnār (Antiphonarium) of the Coptic Church* (London, 1926–1930). Unfortunately, I had no access to it. In preparation is the edition of the Bohairic text to be accompanied by a German translation, announced as Gawdat Gabra, *Das Difnār (Antiphonarium) der koptischen Kirche nach der ältesten bohairischen Überlieferung*. See also Hany N. Takla, 'A Difnār Hymn on the Nativity', *St. Shenouda Coptic Newsletter* 1.2 (1995), 1–2.

Testimonies (ΧΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΜΕΤΜΕΘΡΕΥ) of Peter and the συντάγματα of Timothy the ὁμολογητής and the Letters of Severus.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> W. E. Crum, ed., *Theological Texts from Coptic Papyri* (Oxford, 1913), 62 n. 9 with reference to Rylands, *Catal.*, p. 212, which I have not been able to identify. It is not unlikely that ‘the συντάγματα of Timothy the ὁμολογητής’ refers to the so-called *Refutation of the Council of Chalcedon* of Timothy Aelurus. Fragments of the Greek original can be traced in Leontius of Scetis, Ephraem of Antioch, and Photius. See Eduard Schwartz, *Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431: eine antichalcedonische Sammlung aus der Zeit Kaiser Zenos*, *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse* 32.6 (Munich, 1927), 129 n. 1. In *Plerophoriae* 89, Rufus appears to be quoting either from that work or from related texts written by Timothy against Chalcedon. An abbreviated Syriac translation of the *Refutatio* is preserved in MS BM Add. 12,156 (from the sixth century); see Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. ii, 639–641; Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 162. Also see Rifaat Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham, ‘Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon’, in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 18 (Leuven, 1985), 115–166, reproduction of part of the Syriac text on pp. 120–142; Rifaat Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham, ‘A Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 21 (1970), 321–369. A presumably complete Armenian translation of the work was found in Eǰmiatsin in 1897 in a manuscript from the ninth–tenth century (MS 1958 (olim MS 1945)). This Armenian text was published in 1908, accompanied by an introduction in German and Modern Armenian. See Karapet Ter-Mékérttschian and Erwand Ter-Minassiantz, *Timotheus Älurus’ des Patriarchen von Alexandrien Widerlegung der auf der Synode zu Chalcedon festgesetzten Lehre* (Leipzig, 1908). For an informative study of the significance of that text especially for the development of Armenian church history see Andrea B. Schmidt, ‘Die *Refutatio* des Timotheus Aelurus gegen das Konzil von Chalcedon. Ihre Bedeutung für die Bekenntnisentwicklung der armenischen Kirche Persiens im 6. Jh.’, *Oriens Christianus* 73 (1989), 149–165. For works of Timothy Aelurus that are preserved in Coptic, see with regard to the historical narrative ascribed to him, W. E. Crum, ‘Eusebius and Coptic Church Histories’, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 24 (1902), 68–84; and for his sermon, see the edition in A. van Lantenschoot, ‘Allocution de Timothée d’Alexandrie prononcée à l’occasion de la dédicace de l’église de Pachome à Pboou’, *Le Muséon* 47 (1934), 13–54. Although Timothy was clearly known as author of a historical work (see also *Plerophoriae* 36), the authenticity of both Coptic texts here referred to remains uncertain. See Donald B. Spanel, ‘Timothy II Aelurus’, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 7 (1991), 2263–2268, here 2266. For a critical evaluation of church histories in Coptic, see David W. Johnson, ‘Coptic Sources of *The History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*’ (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1973). While the first of Severus of Antioch’s 125 *Cathedral Homilies* survives complete only in Sahidic (ed. and tr. Maurice Brière and François Graffin, *Les ‘Homiliae Cathedrales’ de Sévère d’Antioche: Traduction Syriaque de Jacques d’Édesse (Homélie I à XVII)*, PO 38.2, fasc. 175 (Turnhout, 1976), 254–269) and while other Coptic fragments of his homilies have come to the fore, for example, of homily 24 (Enzo Lucchesi, ‘L’homélie XXIV de Sévère d’Antioche dans un papyrus copte de Vienne’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982), 182–183) and of homily 103 (E. Lucchesi, ‘Un fragment copte inédit de l’homélie CIII sur l’Épiphanie de Sévère d’Antioche’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979), 197–201; and the earlier discussions by E. Porcher in *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien*, 1907, 1913, 1914,

Given that these two references suggest the circulation of the *Plerophoriae* in a milieu in which Coptic was current, we are fortunate to possess actual fragments of such a Coptic version. In 1913, Crum was the first to publish two folios of a Sahidic fragment from a papyrus written around the seventh century.<sup>80</sup> He identified the text on the first folio as a passage which is parallel to the end of chapter 26 and the beginning of chapter 27 of the Syriac version of the *Plerophoriae* published by Nau.<sup>81</sup> No parallel text to the section on the second folio has yet been identified. Careful comparison of the first Coptic fragment with the respective Syriac passage shows notable differences in details. This, combined with the fact that both the book-list on the ostrakon and the testimony of the *Antiphonary* ascribe the 'testimonies' or '*plerophoriae*' to a Peter, possibly Peter the Iberian, indicated to Crum that the Coptic version was not directly a translation of the Syriac. Rather, he assumed that Rufus redacted the *Plerophoriae* by making use of a prior collection which owed its existence to Peter the Iberian himself.<sup>82</sup> More recently, Orlandi has published further Coptic papyrus fragments of the *Plerophoriae*.<sup>83</sup>

Michel van Esbroeck spoke of the *Plerophoriae* as 'an aggressively Monophysite work' and dated it to 'around 500 A.D.'<sup>84</sup> As just seen, Crum, the first editor of Coptic fragments of the *Plerophoriae*, identified Peter as plausibly being the author of what may have been the kernel or *Urform* of the *Plerophoriae*. Indeed, in the *Plerophoriae* the person referred to most often is Peter.<sup>85</sup> Episodes from his early years in Constantinople begin the whole work and thus set the tone. One is being informed about how Peter was scandalized by Nestorius when the bishop delivered his sermon on the Virgin in the Church of the

and 1915), Coptic translations of his correspondence seem to have disappeared completely. See Lucchesi, 'Un fragment copte', 198 n. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Fragment 13 in Crum, *Theological Texts*, 62–64. For a description of the papyrus fragment see preface, p. v. The papyrus is written in a very fine script.

<sup>81</sup> Crum, *Theological Texts*, 62 n. 6. <sup>82</sup> Crum, *Theological Texts*, 62.

<sup>83</sup> Tito Orlandi, 'Giovanni Rufo di Maiuma, Pleroforie (K 2502a–b; (appendice) K 7343; K 2502c–e)', in *Koptische Papyri theologischen Inhalts, Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Vienna, 1974), 110–120; Tito Orlandi, 'Un frammento delle Pleroforie in Copto', *Studi e Ricerche sull' Oriente Cristiano* 2.1 (1979), 3–12. See also Orlandi, 'John of Mayuma', 1366. The fragments published by Orlandi supply us with Coptic text for parts of *Plerophoriae* 26, 27, 51, 59, 64, 70, 71, and 87 of the Syriac version.

<sup>84</sup> Michel van Esbroeck, 'Peter the Iberian and Dionysius the Areopagite: *Honigmann's thesis revisited*', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 59 (1993), 217–227, here 218.

<sup>85</sup> Peter is clearly introduced as speaker or mentioned by name in *Plerophoriae* 1, 2, 3, 12, 17, 18, 19, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 45, 49, 53, 54, 56, 65, 76, and 77.

Forty Martyrs. Peter witnessed how Nestorius was suddenly struck by an angel for his blasphemy.<sup>86</sup> The creation of such a prelude that features Peter in prominent position over and against Nestorius as the arch-enemy of anti-Chalcedonians may very well have been the work of Rufus as redactor. In harmony with several other anecdotes found in the *Plerophoriae*, such passages suggest that the work is the final collection of stories reflecting a process whereby oral traditions became written, authoritative expression of the anti-Chalcedonian position, formulated in a decisively anti-Chalcedonian way of confessing the Christian faith. Van Esbroeck's classification of the overall character of the work is therefore certainly justified.

One of the questions arising from this conclusion is whether Peter, if he in fact authored any of the material that was later incorporated into the *Plerophoriae*, composed these inclusions in Greek or in Coptic.<sup>87</sup> While it is not impossible that during his almost twenty years of travel up and down Egypt he could have acquired some competence in Coptic, possibly to an extent that would have allowed him to communicate with ascetics and lay people in their native tongue, it cannot be excluded that he may have preferred Greek. In that case someone else may have subsequently translated these texts from Greek into Coptic. In the end the question of which language Peter used, if indeed he originally wrote sections of what now is preserved as the *Plerophoriae*, cannot be answered with certainty. Since there is no evidence that would indicate that Rufus ever went to Egypt, it seems rather unlikely that he would have worked from a Coptic

<sup>86</sup> *Plerophoriae* I.

<sup>87</sup> That Peter wrote is attested by a letter from his hand incorporated into *Plerophoriae* 22 (see below, ch. I, p. 40). It is also reported at *Vita Petri Iberi* 80 (see discussion below, ch. I, pp. 43–44 and n. 141) and implied by Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 10. For the Syriac text and Latin translation of the *Chronicle* see Zachariah Rhetor, *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, ed. and tr. by E. W. Brooks, CSCO 83 and 84, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, tt. 5 and 6 (textus) (Paris, 1919 and 1921); CSCO 87 and 88, *Scriptores Syri*, tt. 41 and 42 (versio) (Louvain, 1953). For an English translation of the work, see Zachariah of Mitylene, *The Syriac Chronicle, Known as That of Zachariah of Mitylene*, tr. by F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks (London, 1899). For a German translation see K. Ahrens and G. Krüger, *Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor in deutscher Übersetzung* (Leipzig, 1899). A short letter preserved in two slightly different versions in Armenian and purported to have been composed by Peter is not authentic. In the different manuscript traditions of the Armenian recension of the *Plerophoriae* such a letter, in which Peter praised the Armenians for not having participated at Chalcedon, but rather having preserved their ancient faith, sometimes precedes and at other times follows the text of the *Plerophoriae*. For a transliteration of the Armenian text, a German translation, as well as a discussion of the literary context, authenticity, and function of that letter, see Schmidt, 'Warum schreibt Peter der Iberer an die Armenier?' 260–267.



establishing explicitly the textual connection with the *De obitu Theodosii*, Raabe understood the relationship of the two texts as complementary; Schwartz, and most recently Steppa, followed him.<sup>94</sup> Accepting the solution as the most plausible one, it is still possible to contribute an additional observation regarding the choice of the same Syriac noun ܠܘܢܝܢ in a specific phrase in both texts, which strengthens the proposed identification of Rufus as author of both texts. In both the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *De obitu Theodosii* the author states that he intends to recount not only the death of Theodosius of Jerusalem, but more precisely, ‘the manner of his death’, which is formulated in the Syriac as ܡܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܠܘܢܝܢ in *Vita Petri Iberi* 62, l. 10, and as ܡܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܠܘܢܝܢ in *De obitu Theodosii*, p. 21, l. 2. The formula ‘the manner of his . . .’, translating a Syriac construction which presumably renders identical Greek phrases in both texts, could be taken as an additional proof. While it is clear that on its own such an observation cannot bear the full weight of identifying the respective authors as identical, it is suggestive in the context of other facts.

Since the *De obitu Theodosii* is the least known work which may reasonably be ascribed to Rufus, it seems in place to give a short summary of its content. Theodosius, who was bishop of Jerusalem from AD 451 to 453, was sent into exile to Egypt.<sup>95</sup> In order to mediate in a dispute between two orthodox men in Antioch or in order to gain the support of Simeon Stylites,<sup>96</sup> Theodosius travelled to Antioch where he was recognized in front of the gates of the city, taken captive, and brought to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Marcian, whose reign extended from 25 August 450 to 457. First, Marcian tried to win him over to agree with the decisions of Chalcedon by promising him certain benefits. Yet when Theodosius stayed firm in his resistance, he was handed over ‘to the archimandrite of the monastery which is called “that of Dios,”<sup>97</sup> a man [who

<sup>94</sup> Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 146 (of the Syriac text); Schwartz, ‘Johannes Rufus’, 11; Steppa, ‘Plerophories’, 16, and Steppa, *John Rufus*, 71.

<sup>95</sup> Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 114, also mentions his initial refuge on Sinai.

<sup>96</sup> For convenient access to the ancient tradition concerning this most famous pillar-saint, see the English translation of three ancient versions of his *Life* in Robert Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo, 1992).

<sup>97</sup> The monk Dios, a native of Antioch and founder of the monastery in Constantinople that bore his name, was a contemporary of Atticus, who was bishop of Constantinople from AD 406 to 425. On Saint Dios, see the entry in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, ed. by H. Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Brussels, 1902), 830. See also Nicholas P. Constatas, ‘Four Christological Homilies of Proclus of Constantinople: Introduction, Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary’ (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1994), 24 n. 71. For the revised publication of this material see

was] a zealot of the evil of the doctrine of Nestorius and a combatant on account of the Council of Chalcedon'.<sup>98</sup> The archimandrite tried to persuade him with words and threats. When that was not enough, Theodosius was locked into a narrow lime-filled cell during winter. Through hunger, cold, further tortures, and in complete isolation Theodosius became severely ill. After Marcian's death, the new emperor, Leo, who ruled from AD 457 to 474, on learning that Theodosius was approaching death very rapidly, allowed him to be handed over to his friends who took him to the monastery of Sykai, opposite Constantinople.<sup>99</sup> In that monastery, Theodosius died after only a few days. In order to prevent the Chalcedonians from taking away Theodosius' body and subsequently declaring him to have gone over to the Chalcedonian side, the anti-Chalcedonians quickly transported Theodosius' body by boat to Cyprus and buried him in an anti-Chalcedonian monastery. While the *De obitu Theodosii* does not provide the name or location of that monastery, the *Plerophoriae* attests to at least a temporary anti-Chalcedonian presence on the island.<sup>100</sup>

The *De obitu Theodosii* is of interest not only because of the information it provides about Theodosius of Jerusalem, but also because it is one of the main sources available today about Abba Romanus, the great 'Father of the Monks', associate of Empress Eudocia<sup>101</sup> and founder and abbot of the anti-Chalcedonian monastery at Eleutheropolis.<sup>102</sup>

### John Rufus

The only sources of information about John Rufus are his own works. Thus, any discussion of him is dependent on their authority. At the

Nicholas Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translation* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 27 n. 71. On the monastery of Dios, see Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5980 (AD 487/8) (ed. Carolus de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim, 1963), 132.27–30; tr. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), 204).

<sup>98</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 23.

<sup>99</sup> 'Sykai', lit. 'fig-trees' or 'fig-field'. That area of Constantinople, located opposite the Golden Horn, is today known as Galata. See Cyril Mango, 'Galata', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 815–816. See also Procopius, *Buildings* 1.5.9 (re-ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing and Glanville Downey, *Procopius: Buildings* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1954), 58–59).

<sup>100</sup> *Plerophoriae* 28 (the monks Cyriacus and Julius).

<sup>101</sup> *Plerophoriae* 25.

<sup>102</sup> For a brief discussion of Romanus and references to sources on his life see especially above, ch. 1, p. 28 with n. 90, as well as below, ch. 1, p. 38.

same time, his presentation is conditioned by the physical and ideological limits of the content of these sources. In the light of such constraints one needs to ask what those texts may reveal about their author.<sup>103</sup>

### Rufus in the *Vita Petri Iberi*

The two Syriac manuscripts containing the *Vita Petri Iberi* do not indicate the name of the author of the text. Whether or not the Greek original was ascribed to a specified author in the manuscript tradition at all cannot be determined. The fact that Evagrius Scholasticus, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, quotes from the Greek version of the *Vita Petri Iberi* without mentioning the name of the author of his source led Schwartz to assume that the Greek original of the *Vita Petri Iberi* likewise did not carry the author's name.<sup>104</sup> That, of course, does not necessarily have to be the case, since it is possible that the identifica-

<sup>103</sup> For references to the main secondary literature on Rufus and his work see above, ch. 1, p. 11 with nn. 5 and 6. See also the discussion of John Rufus in Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'.

<sup>104</sup> Schwartz, 'Johannes Rufus', 1. Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. 2, ch. 8 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 56.8–12; tr. Waldorf, *Evagrius Scholasticus: History of the Church*, 306; more recently Whitby, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Ecclesiastical History*, 85) says: Παρήσαν δὲ τῇ χειροτονίᾳ Εὐσέβιος ὁ τοῦ Πηλουσίου πρόεδρος, Πέτρος τε ὁ ἐξ Ἰβηρίας Μαίουμα τοῦ πολυχρίου, ὡς τὰ περὶ τούτων ἰστόρηται τῷ τὸν βίον συγγράφοντι Πέτρον ὃς φησι τὸν Προτέριον μὴ τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ τινα τῶν στρατιωτῶν διαχειρίσασθαι. Whitby translates this passage as follows: 'Eusebius, the prelate of Pelusium, was present at the ordination, and Peter the Iberian, prelate of the township of Maiuma, according to the narrative of these events by the composer of the life of Peter; he says that it was not the mob, but one of the soldiers who slaughtered Proterius'. It is open to debate who exactly this 'composer of the life of Peter' was and with that whether the Syriac *Vita Petri Iberi* published by Raabe is the text in question. Both in Zachariah Rhetor and in the works to be attributed to John Rufus one can find knowledge of Proterius being murdered by a [Roman] soldier. See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 4, ch. 2 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 171; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 66), who speaks of 'a certain Roman . . . stirred to anger in his heart', who 'drew his sword and stabbed Proterius in the ribs along with his Roman comrades'. Yet this does not prove that in his 'Life of Peter' Zachariah Rhetor would have reported the same detail. *Vita Petri Iberi* 58–59 alludes to, but does not explicitly speak of Proterius' murder. At *Plerophoriae* 66, however, Timothy Aelurus is quoted as saying that in a vision he 'saw a certain soldier who appeared and killed that wild wolf', and the commentator explains that 'it is evident, however, that that wolf was Proterius'. Thus, while the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* does not display interest or knowledge of Proterius' murderer being a soldier, the author of the *Plerophoriae* knew of that detail. Yet this observation does not exclude the possibility that both authors were identical. In as far as later historians show knowledge of Proterius' murderer being a soldier, their knowledge probably derived from either Zachariah Rhetor or John Rufus. Theodore Lector, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, epitome 368, does not speak of a soldier as Proterius' murderer. See Theodoros

tion of the author, if he was widely known, was not felt to be necessary.

Two passages in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, one short, the other rather long, provide valuable information about its author. Both shall be quoted here *in toto*. The first section reads:

At this time [i.e. during the reign of Emperor Basiliscus], *the one [who is] useless to everyone*, 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, whereas he had received [communion rather] from the Fathers.<sup>105</sup>

Here it is stated that the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* was ordained a priest in Antioch before August, AD 476.<sup>106</sup> At that time, Peter the Fuller had returned from his exile and presided over the Church of Antioch as patriarch.<sup>107</sup> It is not unlikely that already prior to becoming a priest the author had been living in Antioch and had engaged himself in Church matters.<sup>108</sup> The second passage elaborates:

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 and Paul of Ephesus were cast into exile, the blessed Peter [the Iberian], dwelling in Palestine, was a support for everyone. In the likeness of the light of the sun

Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. by Günther Christian Hansen, GCS n.s. 3 (Berlin, 1995), 103–104. Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5950 (AD 457/8) (ed. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. i (Leipzig, 1883), 110.26 and 111.2; tr. Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford, 1997), 170), does not directly speak of Proterius as being murdered by a soldier, rather by one of the *πλήθη γὰρ ἀτάκτων ἀνδρῶν*, i.e. 'a throng of disorderly men'. In the end, it seems that Zachariah Rhetor, John Rufus, or even an anonymous writer could be possible candidates for the authorship of the 'Life of Peter' in question here.

<sup>105</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 79, ll. 10–15 (emphasis added).

<sup>106</sup> Basiliscus usurped the imperial throne of Constantinople on 9 January 475, and held it until August 476. 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, 1972), 169.

<sup>107</sup> On Peter the Fuller, see Eduard Schwartz, *Publizistische Sammlungen zum Acacianischen Schisma* (Munich, 1934), 287–300; Ernest Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites d'Asie Antérieure au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CSCO 127, Subsidia t. 2 (Louvain, 1951), 3–6; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. ii.ii (London and Louisville, Ky., 1995), 252–266; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 167–168, 170, 174–175, 188–189; Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Petros der Walker', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 143; and Peter Bruns, 'Peter the Fuller', in *DECL* (2000), 482.

<sup>108</sup> For the thesis that John Rufus most likely belonged to and originated from an Arab tribe in the greater Antioch area, see the discussion in Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'.

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.

[Meanwhile,] the Church in Antioch had been delivered up to the foul name, Calendion, a man who was a hard and rapacious wolf, who did not spare his flock and [who was] a zealot of the heresies which were [taught] in Chalcedon. At this time, *the useless servant* who was mentioned before, separated himself from the harm [ful peril] and the fellowship of this [Calendion], who for a long time had brotherly love and familiar acquaintance with Theodore, the [ex-]lawyer who was mentioned [above], since [the days when they] dwelt together in Beirut. [Theodore] had left the regions of Syria and hastened to the Promised Land, I mean to Palestine, [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.

So when he came to Palestine and through him [i.e. through Theodore] was esteemed worthy to get to know and become acquainted of this saint, he found such grace with him by the mercies of the merciful God, who came to call the sinners to repentance, that immediately he became for the saint a sharer in [his] communion and a companion of [his] ministry. He was so motivated towards faithfulness and love for him that he would think that he was seeing Peter, the head of the Apostles, and [that he] was near him and conversing with him, was 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] which God, the friend of man, who is ready to spare and plentiful in mercies, granted. He stirred the heart of the saint to such sympathy and love towards *this useless one* that he accepted him and made him [his] fellow-monk. He did everything to look after his salvation like a merciful father, so that while removing him from the bonds of death and from his evil habits, he put him on the true way of repentance. He presented to the Lord [this] lost sheep, like that Good Shepherd, bearing him with joy on his shoulders and calling together his beloved friends and his neighbours to share [his] joy in finding him.

On account of this fear took [83] hold of him [namely, *the useless one*] 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. For on the one hand he was esteemed worthy to see and hear many things, which can bring even hearts of stones 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 rejected completely.

The kind[s] of things *the one who writes them* was deemed worthy to see personally or to experience, or that he heard from the mouth of that truth-

loving and undecitful saint, I will put down carefully, [though but] a few out of many, even if the word is feeble and inadequate for the account.<sup>109</sup>

[Immediately following is the account about Peter's journey to the hot springs in Arabia, at the eastern shores of the Dead Sea.]

From this long passage one learns that the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* separated himself from the communion of the clergy of the Church of Antioch at the time of Peter the Fuller's second exile from the patriarchal throne of Antioch,<sup>110</sup> when in Antioch the Chalcedonians were in power under Calendion (AD 479–484). During a previous stay in Beirut he had befriended Theodore, a young lawyer and native of Ashkelon.<sup>111</sup> The two kept up contact by letter, and repeatedly Theodore had urged the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* to come to Palestine, where Theodore had joined the group of ascetics gathering around Peter the Iberian. That same Theodore introduced the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* to Peter's circle and in that way helped him quickly to become a 'fellow of [Peter's] communion' and a 'companion of [his] ministry'. It is probable that this spiritual friendship formed the basis for the author's subsequent and continued involvement in the affairs of the Iberian's ascetic community, even after Peter's death. The author expresses great admiration for Peter. His longing to be allowed to stay with Peter for the rest of his life was fulfilled. Their close relationship, comparable to that between a father and a son, led to numerous opportunities for the author to become an eyewitness to events in Peter's life, of which the biography gives testimony.

As one attempts to extract further information about the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi*, the text following the passage quoted above leads one to see the author as having been an eyewitness of Peter's life at the latest from the time when Peter went on his tour to the hot springs

<sup>109</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81, l. 4 to 83, l. 13 (emphasis added).

<sup>110</sup> Having been reinstated into his episcopal office at Antioch by the usurper Basiliscus, Peter the Fuller was exiled from the throne a second time by Emperor Zeno in AD 477.

<sup>111</sup> On Theodore of Ashkelon, see *Vita Petri Iberi* 78, 81–82, 134, and 145; possibly *Plerophoriae* 38; see also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 3–4 (ed. E. W. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in *Vitae virorum apud Monophysitas celeberrimorum*, CSCO 7 (Paris and Leipzig, 1907), 3–16, here 3–4 (Syriac); tr. CSCO 8 (Paris and Leipzig, 1907), 3–10, here 3 (Latin)). Reference to the edition of the Syriac text of the *Life of Isaiah* will appear in the following as Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae*. See further below, ch. 1, pp. 44–45 with nn. 144 and 146. See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 78.10–11, 86.11–87.3, 100.8, 107.1, 109.1–13, and 111.9–10 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', pp. 78, 86–87, 100, 107, 109, and 111). See also below, ch. 4, pp. 309–310.

of Livias and Ba'ar in Arabia, i.e. east of the Jordan.<sup>112</sup> This conclusion is based on the literary structure of the text which consists of individual episodes arranged in chronological order combined with information from the *Plerophoriae* that its author, Rufus, was a native of the *provincia Arabia*.<sup>113</sup> One of the reasons why Peter appears to have had an interest in taking Rufus along on his tour to the hot baths could have been that he needed the assistance of someone who was more familiar with those regions which presumably were part of Rufus' native province. Rufus could have served Peter well as a guide, both at the hot springs and on the subsequent wanderings to Mount Nebo, Madaba, and other places in the *provincia Arabia*.<sup>114</sup> Peter undertook those travels during the later years of his life. Thus, the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* was in direct and close personal acquaintance with Peter during those years. While the sources do not specify how many people Peter took along on his journeys, the author probably belonged to a close circle of Peter's followers. At different occasions along the way, Peter shared with his future biographer remembrances and thoughts about the various events that had happened, probably both those before and during their joint travels, even though one does not have to assume that the author was constantly at Peter's side.

Given the close friendship and fellowship between the two and given that the author was one of Peter's most faithful followers, one might not go wrong in assuming that the author himself was an ascetic.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, it is stated in the passage quoted above that Peter made him a monk. The phraseology employed by the author

<sup>112</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 83–84 (visit to Livias) and *Vita Petri Iberi* 85 and 90–94 (visit to Ba'ar). For a study of the hot springs at Ba'ar/Baarou and recent archaeological discoveries in that area see Christa Clamer, 'The Hot Springs of Kallirrhoe and Baarou', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 221–225. I wish to thank Dr Clamer for kindly allowing me to see her work prior to publication and for discussing it with me. See also below, ch. 4, p. 253 with n. 126.

<sup>113</sup> *Plerophoriae* 22.

<sup>114</sup> Even if John Rufus as a native of the *provincia Arabia* actually was a native of Ashkelon, as some reason on the basis of the fact that the *provincia Arabia* at that time included areas along the Mediterranean coast, it is still justifiable to assume a greater familiarity with the area of the province by a native over that of a foreigner. For a more detailed discussion of Rufus' origins see Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'. The question of a special language competence on the part of Rufus from which Peter could have benefited is not raised in the *Vita Petri Iberi*.

<sup>115</sup> Schwartz, 'Johannes Rufus', 1, thinks that the author was an ascetic, without giving further details that would justify such an assumption. Of interest for Rufus' asceticism is Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 86–87 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', pp. 86–87). John, surnamed Rufus, also was called Lazarus, perhaps because of the seriousness of his facial expression and the exceptional degree of asceticism to which he subjected his body.

to characterize his style of reporting, ‘the composition is timid and inadequate for the account’, very likely grows out of the ascetic and monastic practice of humility. Schwartz thought that for reasons of ascetic humility the author did not mention his name at all.<sup>116</sup> Yet that does not seem to be an all-encompassing explanation. The author’s self-designation as ‘the useless one’ may also be regarded as a stylistic means of downplaying the saint’s surroundings, in true hagiographic fashion, in order to let the exceptional holiness and worthiness of the saint, by contrast, shine forth all the more.<sup>117</sup> Various other reasons could move an author to keep his or her identity a secret. Especially since anti-Chalcedonians had to live as a minority in Palestine at the time of the composition of the *Vita Petri Iberi*, it is reasonably plausible to postulate a certain impact of the kind of mindset developed by people who are forced to constantly live in hiding as having prompted the author of the *Vita Petri Iberi* not to mention his name. That anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine had to keep away from public view is noticeable in the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae* particularly at instances at which the author indicates that anti-Chalcedonian saints chose to go and pray in the holy places at night-time.<sup>118</sup> It is likely that during the daytime their presence at public places of worship was not welcome. It may also be that they themselves did not wish to share the holy places or be seen at them together with Chalcedonians.<sup>119</sup>

The narrative flow in the last paragraph quoted above<sup>120</sup> does not make it necessary or even appropriate that at such a point the author would state his name and thus identify himself. If most of the *Vita Petri Iberi* indeed grew out of Rufus’ oral presentations of the memory of Peter the Iberian, one may reasonably assume that the audience knew the author’s name very well and thus no extra mention was necessary.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Schwartz, ‘Johannes Rufus’, I.

<sup>117</sup> I owe this suggestion to Inta Ivanovska.

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 40 and 98–99, and *Plerophoriae* 4, 6, and 54.

<sup>119</sup> Other explanations are possible and have to be studied further. For example, there may have been a preference for conducting liturgical services at night, for example, night-time vigils, among anti-Chalcedonians. For a fuller discussion of the attitudes of anti-Chalcedonians towards the holy places, see below, ch. 4.

<sup>120</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 83, ll. 9–13, see above, ch. I, pp. 33–34.

<sup>121</sup> The main section of the longer passage quoted above seems puzzling in Raabe’s German translation. Two observations may indicate that Raabe himself was not certain about the meaning of this passage:

(a) Assuming that ‘*the one [who is] useless to everyone*’ was Theodore, Raabe wished to move the section given above as the shorter passage (*Vita Petri Iberi* 79.9–15) from its present location in the text closer to the longer section (Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 76 n. 5 (German translation)).



oration of members of his family.<sup>125</sup> He wrote as one who was well informed and acquainted with that commemoration and who, moreover, was in a position in the monastery that allowed him to determine the continuation of that practice of commemoration, even after Peter's death.

### **Rufus in the *De obitu Theodosii***

The author of the *De obitu Theodosii* was acquainted with traditions concerning the lives of both Theodosius, anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, and Abba Romanus, the Father of the Monks. If one assumes that the author himself was both bishop of Maiuma and ascetic in Peter's monastery in Maiuma, one can see why he would have had an interest in writing about two anti-Chalcedonian holy men who had been in situations similar to his own. That consideration, of course, is not evidence in a strict sense. Nevertheless it is consistent with the idea of John Rufus as the author of the *De obitu Theodosii*.

### **Rufus in the *Plerophoriae***

To a large extent the *Plerophoriae* is based on Peter's oral reports which Rufus heard and wrote down, or also found in written form and then used for his own composition by way of redacting and expanding upon the material. The title of the *Plerophoriae* clearly indicates that at least in their final form they were 'committed to writing by one of the disciples of the holy Peter the Iberian, a priest whose name is John of Beth-Rufina of Antioch, bishop of Maiuma, at Gaza'.<sup>126</sup> For the content of the title to be true it is not necessary that the original author himself formulated that title. Nevertheless, the title identifies Rufus as bishop of Maiuma and constitutes the only piece of positive proof available that Rufus indeed became Peter's successor to the see of Maiuma.<sup>127</sup>

Chapter 22 of the *Plerophoriae* is the one section in which the author provides a wealth of information about himself. It seems appropriate to quote the passage as a whole, especially since it also

Gaza', *ARAM* 15 (2003), 109–128, especially 124–126. Also see below, ch. 3, pp. 212–214.

<sup>125</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 6.

<sup>126</sup> Nau, *Plérôphories*, II. This information establishes Rufus as a native of the larger area around Antioch.

<sup>127</sup> Contributing towards a fuller discussion of this question are the comments in Steppa, *John Rufus*, 18–19 and 58.

contains the text of a letter by Peter the Iberian and thus an opportunity to read Peter's *ipsissima vox*, if the letter indeed was composed by him.

When Peter [the Fuller], who was archbishop of Antioch at the time of the *Encyclical*,<sup>128</sup> from whom also I received the priesthood even though *I am not worthy*, returned from exile to Antioch and received [again] the high-priesthood, he also sent his synodal letter to the leader of the holy Church of God of Jerusalem,—[who was] Martyrius [at the time],—through a certain one named Peter the bishop, who was an Isaurian by race, from that aforementioned Titopolis, who was carrying out the office of bishop as [his] disciple and cell-mate.<sup>129</sup> He [i.e. Peter the bishop] was the heir of the most renowned and blessed confessor Bishop Pamreprios. For it also seemed that he was worthy of his [i.e. Pamreprios'] high-priesthood, which he would receive, and that he was about to display [some] of the zeal which was equal to his own [i.e. Pamreprios'], on account of the orthodox faith. When he [i.e. Peter the Fuller] sent with him [i.e. Peter the bishop] also a certain priest of the church of the Antiochians, whose name was Solomon and who also was by race an Armenian, he [was one], who once had been cell-mate both to him [i.e. Peter the Fuller] and to my poor soul. I loved him [i.e. Solomon] much, although he [i.e. Peter the Fuller] commanded them [i.e. Peter the bishop and Solomon] to persuade my poor soul by all means [possible] to return to him [i.e. to Peter the Fuller].

When I had departed from the city of the Antiochians after his [i.e. Peter the Fuller's] exile and the seizing [of power] by the heretics, I was esteemed worthy to be in intimate acquaintance with the holy Fathers in Palestine, and especially with my Abba [who] both was guiding me<sup>130</sup> and was receiving foreigners, Abba Peter, the bishop, the Iberian, and the great ascetic, Abba Isaiah. As I abundantly enjoyed the love of the saint, I made the promise<sup>131</sup> that from that time on I would dwell in Palestine and not become separated from their faith, hope, and heritage, though [in] silence<sup>132</sup> I was holding out in Jerusalem, where once was a numerous congregation of orthodox fathers. They had a monastery and cells for quietness.<sup>133</sup> Yet when the ones who brought those synodal letters, I mean Peter the bishop of Titopolis and Solomon the priest, came to the Holy City, and persistently sought out and found my poor soul, they suddenly were standing opposite from me and without ceasing were pressing me, striving by every means to lead me away while showing me also a multitude of allowances for expenses,<sup>134</sup> that is to

<sup>128</sup> i.e. during the reign of Emperor Flavius Basiliscus (January, AD 475, to summer 476).

<sup>129</sup> The Syriac here transliterates the Greek *σύνκελλος*.

<sup>130</sup> Literally, 'was standing at my head'.

<sup>131</sup> Literally, 'made the response'.

<sup>132</sup> This might refer to the author's secret dwelling in Jerusalem or to his withdrawn, silently ascetic way of life there.

<sup>133</sup> Literally, 'cells of quietness'.

<sup>134</sup> Syriac ܠܘܬܝܢܐ, a scribal error for ܠܘܬܝܢܐ, for the Greek *ἀνάλωμα*.

say, provisions for the way and the letters of Archbishop Peter, which were full of great joy and persuasion. They were adding also this [comment] to such persuasion, ‘We have orders from him for your assurance,<sup>135</sup> that we should persuade you by all means to come to him [i.e. to Peter the Fuller, who is] saying, “He shall come to me only so that we will see each other. Give him [my] word that no one will force him to receive communion when no persuasion is effected. Rather, I will send him off in peace.”’

Without delay I made those [things] known to the saint, my father and saviour after God, Abba Peter the Iberian, who at that time was gathered [with his followers] in the places at the city of Ashkelon,<sup>136</sup> while making supplication and asking that [according to] what seemed [right] to him he would send me a brief answer. After a few days I received from him such a response.

*Letter of the holy Peter the Iberian:* ‘When we read the epistle of Your Purity, all of us, your friends, were in mourning, depression, and sighs, seeing the snares of the adversary who is devising and preparing in every [way] to take [as] a spoil your hope and your salvation which is in God. He will dishonour your works, which you have accomplished for yourself and for the orthodox faith. First, namely, it is certain that if you go to Antioch, being troubled and persuaded by [your] friends and by that one who is holding [power] there, you will either become [someone who is] in communion with him, or you will be dismissed [as] an enemy, if [at all] you will be allowed [to leave]. Act therefore according to your strength. We here are doing what we can that you will not offend God, [not] be in want of the great [goods], nor grieve us, your friends.’

When I received this response, I firmly set my heart to obey the saints rather than the ones who are leading [me] astray. I made supplication to our Lord and Saviour, who in his mercy had let me go out of the darkness and the shadows of death, not to turn away from me.

Yet when those from Antioch were harshly setting upon me, striving with all means to take me away, there came, however, with them both the ones opposing me and those from Arabia belonging to my family and my kindred. When they heard [about me] and were in joy, like lay people and ones who think of the things of the world, they immediately hastened to me, since they were all agitated and were urging on my return to Antioch. As I fled to the Lord and without ceasing fell down before him, and the holy Fathers were fighting with me in their prayers, such divine guidance happened. Suddenly the two of them, Peter the bishop and Solomon the priest would fall into a grievous sickness which also brought [them] [in]to danger [for their life], which is being called *ἡμυρταίος*, that is, the half of three, that

<sup>135</sup> The Syriac here uses ܠܝܢܘܨܝܠܐ.

<sup>136</sup> On Ashkelon, see Tsafrir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 68–70; Claudine Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine: Peuplement et Populations*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 10 /nn. 168 and 185, pp. 870 and 871–872; and Schick, ‘The Fate of the Christians’, entry: Ascalon (13), 420–423.

is to say, the third fever. Yet, when their sickness became known to me, it seemed to me proper and useful to visit them, although previously it [i.e. visiting] was for me [connected] with difficulty. It seemed [thus] to everyone. When I went to where they were lodging, an amazing and remarkable house, I saw the bishop, laid against the door and agitated when he heard about my approach. Thus, although he was burning with fever and was agitated, he leapt up from [his] bed and stood up, while calling out and saying, 'Come in peace, servant of Christ'—I am speaking with his voice—'Take pity on me! Take pity on me! I have sinned against you. I have sinned against you. It depends on you, whether I live or die. I know exactly that I am suffering these things and [that] the wrath of God came upon me because of you. The judgement of God is just. My ruin and transgression were not sufficient for me, but I was also calling upon you, who were standing well, to suffer the same as I and become an apostate. I am making supplication to you; from this day on we will not importune you again. Do as you wish. Only, make supplication on my behalf. For you see our vexation and danger, in which the two of us are, and that we are in [our] last breath.'

Yet as I was marvelling and in amazement at these things which were being said, I asked what was the reason of these words and of such a change. He began with great anguish and tears to tell the whole matter [which the reader already knows] from above and [he told it] from the beginning, [that] which I put [down] about the blessed Pamprepios, the bishop and confessor, who had been to him his father and archimandrite, how he was at the Council [of Chalcedon], and when he saw from the beginning the fight of the bishops on behalf of the truth, the capitulation, and the apostasy henceforward, that he enclosed himself [in] his lodging and asked the Lord, and that he was made worthy of such assurance and revelation; in what manner he came to his city and proclaimed to them the truth, exposed the apostasy which [had] happened, and how he persisted until the end without bending and without apostasy, and that thus he was perfected in glory and in a beautiful old age. Peter therefore told about himself in shame and in tears how he was enticed by desire for the office of bishop. He was persuaded by Basil, the metropolitan, transgressed the faith, and was one [who was] in communion with the Council of those apostates.

Yet when I heard these things, I was both sad in my soul and noticed the greatness of the mercies of God, which [pertained] to my sadness after the conversation. Immediately I ran to the holy [Church of the] Resurrection. As I kept a time of silence and prostrated [myself] before the altar and the adorable Golgotha with bitter tears which [came] from the depth of my heart, I cried out and said, 'Lord, who am I, an abortive [foetus] and a dog which is putrid, a worm, a contentious house, a den of thieves, a whited tomb (see Matt. 23:27), that in this way you poured out over me the multitude of your mercifulness and of your wonders which you increased and worked according to your mercies and your benevolence, that in this way those who came because of this, wishing and acting cunningly in every way and constraining and encouraging me to become an apostate and to fall

from the hope which is in you and from a good conscience, that those will be for me confirmation, instruction, and a warning? What then will I repay to the Lord, my God, because of all the things which you have done with your servant? (Psalm 116:12) Because of this I offer to you David's [words] when I am saying, "It is good [that] I confess the Lord with my mouth. In the midst of many I will praise him. For he stood at the right hand of the unfortunate to save him from the persecutors (Psalm 109:30–31)."

From this lengthy section one learns that Rufus, the likely author of the *Plerophoriae*, had family and relatives in the *provincia Arabia* and presumably was a native of that area. No explanation is given of how and why he went to Antioch. His family may have set their hopes on his making a career there and thus supported the attempts of the two messengers, Peter the Isaurian, bishop of Titopolis, and the Armenian priest Solomon, sent by Peter the Fuller, to persuade him to return to Antioch.<sup>137</sup>

Rufus had become a priest at the hands of Peter the Fuller, the first anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch. The precise date of his ordination is not recorded. Since mention is made not of events relating to Peter the Fuller's first occupancy of the patriarchal throne of Antioch and his first exile, but of the *Encyclical* under Emperor Basiliscus (AD 475–476) and Peter the Fuller's holding office then,<sup>138</sup> it is likely that Rufus was ordained a priest between AD 475 and 477.

With the return to power of Emperor Zeno, who ruled from AD 474–475 and again from 476–491 in Constantinople, Peter the Fuller was expelled from his patriarchate for a second time and the Chalcedonians seized power in Antioch. At that time, Rufus went off to Palestine in order to live in communion with the anti-Chalcedonians there. When Peter the Fuller regained the patriarchate in AD 485, he wished to establish communion with Martyrius, who was bishop of Jerusalem from AD 478 to 486, and thus sent his synodal letter. At that occasion, Peter the Isaurian, bishop of Titopolis

<sup>137</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this constellation see Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'.

<sup>138</sup> For the text of the *Encyclical* see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 5, ch. 2 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 211–213; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 105–107), and Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* bk. 3, ch. 4 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 101.6–104.19; tr. Whitby, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Ecclesiastical History*, 134–137). See also Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 171 n. 1. On the *Encyclical* see E. Doveve, 'L' *Ἐγκύκλιον Βασιλίσκου*: Un caso di normativa imperiale in Oriente su temi di dogmatica teologica', *Studia et documenta historiae et juris* 51 (1985), 153–188. See also Alexander P. Kazhdan, 'Encyclical', in *ODB* 1 (1991), 696. On Basiliscus, see conveniently Timothy E. Gregory, 'Basiliskos', in *ODB* 1 (1991), 267.

and a cell-mate of Peter the Fuller, and the Armenian priest Solomon were sent to persuade Rufus to return to Antioch. Perhaps Peter the Fuller thought that the influence of Solomon on Rufus would still be strong enough, since formerly the two had been cell-mates.

While living in the Holy City, however, Rufus in the meantime had established close ties to the numerous anti-Chalcedonian monastic communities there, especially to Peter the Iberian, who is described as Rufus' predecessor and as the one who had received Rufus hospitably upon his arrival in Palestine. The *Plerophoriae* states that at that time the anti-Chalcedonian community in the Holy City consisted of a great congregation of orthodox fathers, with a monastery and cells of quietness. One suspects that the monastery mentioned indirectly was Peter's, the one 'close to the Tower of David'.<sup>139</sup> At the time Peter himself did not lodge in the Holy City, but rather in the area around Ashkelon. The connection between Rufus and the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians had become strong and binding. Rufus felt committed to dwelling in Palestine and did not wish to separate 'from their [i.e. the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians'] faith, hope, and heritage'.<sup>140</sup>

Once the two visitors from Antioch had delivered their message and Rufus felt the threat of having to choose between a more radical form of anti-Chalcedonianism in Palestine and a more conciliatory one in Antioch, he, in Jerusalem, and Peter the Iberian in Ashkelon exchanged thoughts and Rufus asked for concrete advice. By letter, Peter sent a clear warning that Rufus would be in danger of losing his anti-Chalcedonian faith if he re-entered into communion with those in Antioch.

That piece of advice was the decisive element for Rufus not to return. Peter's letter which pointed to the danger inherent in Rufus' possible return to an anti-Chalcedonian patriarch who supposedly was not sufficiently clear and decided in his anti-Chalcedonian position could be taken as evidence both that Peter himself was a radical anti-Chalcedonian at that point, and that Rufus, his future successor who published the letter in the *Plerophoriae* as the document that determined his own decision, was about to become one.

That Peter was known to have been in correspondence with his followers is not a matter of doubt.<sup>141</sup> Yet, an alternative evaluation

<sup>139</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.      <sup>140</sup> *Plerophoriae* 22.

<sup>141</sup> At least two further instances of letters attributed to Peter's hand can be mentioned. Zachariah Scholasticus/Rhetor reports in his *Life of Severus* (Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 88, ll. 3-4 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sèvre par Zacharie le Scholastique', 88)) that his fellow countryman Lucius once received a letter from Peter in which he exhorted him to keep the divine laws. In his *Chronicle*, Zachariah

could take into account Rufus' redactional contribution in revising material he had available for writing the *Plerophoriae*. Thus, one may see the letter of Peter the Iberian as recorded in the *Plerophoriae* more as the final product of Rufus and as an attempt on his part to gather support from his famous Abba for his own radically anti-Chalcedonian position, leaving open the question, to what extent Peter the Iberian actually would have shared that position.

### *Zachariah Rhetor and His Knowledge of Peter the Iberian*

Next to Rufus, the second most important ecclesiastical writer who provides details about Peter the Iberian and who had knowledge about him independent of the information available to Rufus is Zachariah Rhetor, also known as Zachariah Scholasticus and Zachariah of Mitylene.<sup>142</sup> He deals with Peter in each of the books of his *Chronicle* of ecclesiastical history.<sup>143</sup> Of significance for the study of Peter are two other works by Zachariah: his biographies of Severus of Antioch and of Abba Isaiah.<sup>144</sup> In the *Vita Severi*, Zachariah recalls

Scholasticus /Rhetor knows of one occasion at which a letter which contained disagreeable teachings regarding the faith was circulated under Peter's name. Instead of dismissing the case as irrelevant, Peter carefully inspected the text of the letter and then stated that it did not come from his pen, thus at the least indicating that he indeed composed letters and sent them around. For the last incident, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 10 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 164; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 58). For the inauthentic letter attributed to Peter that was circulated in the Armenian *Plerophoriae* tradition, see above, ch. 1, pp. 21–22 with n. 60.

<sup>142</sup> See Ernest Honigmann, 'Zacharias of Mitylene (536 A. D.)', in *Patristic Studies*, Studi e Testi 173 (Città del Vaticano, 1953), XXI, pp. 194–204. For a discussion of opinions concerning this identification see also D. M. Lang, 'Peter the Iberian and his Biographers', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2 (1951), 158–168, here 159–160. On Zachariah, see also D. Stiernon, 'Zacharias Scholasticus or the Rhetor', in *EECh* 2 (1992), 884.

<sup>143</sup> See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, chs. 4, 5, 7, and 10; bk. 4, ch. 1; bk. 5, chs. 4 and 9; and bk. 6, chs. 1 and 3. See E. W. Brooks' discussion of Zachariah Rhetor as the author of books 3 to 6, to be found on p. 2 of the introduction to Brooks' and F. J. Hamilton's translation of the work, *The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene*.

<sup>144</sup> For reference to the edition of the Syriac text, accompanied by a French translation, of Zachariah's *Life of Severus*, see above, ch. 1, p. 18, n. 44. For reference to the edition of the Syriac text of Zachariah's *Life of Isaiah* accompanied by a Latin translation, see above, ch. 1, p. 34, n. 111. A German translation of the *Life of Isaiah* can be found in Ahrens and Krüger, *Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor*, 263–274. An English translation of the *Life of Isaiah* is in progress.

Peter numerous times.<sup>145</sup> The fact that he deals with Peter in the *Vita Isaiae* was to be expected. The two ascetics, Peter and Isaiah, lived in very close proximity to one another for about three years. Moreover, until the end of their lives they maintained a very close friendship.<sup>146</sup>

Zachariah was a native of the Gaza area. His father's house was located in the neighbourhood of Peter's Maiuma monastery.<sup>147</sup> Still, it seems that Zachariah never met Peter. According to his own witness, Zachariah Rhetor wrote about Peter the Iberian, perhaps even a whole 'Life of Peter', as some scholars have assumed. Such a thesis is based on information Zachariah presents at the beginning of the *Vita Isaiae*. There Zachariah indicated not only that he considered Abba Isaiah, Abba Theodore, who for a while functioned as bishop of Antinoë,<sup>148</sup> and the 'blessed Peter', probably Peter the Iberian, as three outstanding men, but that he also wrote about them.<sup>149</sup>

If a Syriac fragment, found in MS Sachau 321, is part of the text of the 'Life of Peter' by Zachariah, most likely originally written in Greek, then the text of that 'Life' appears to have been rather short, at the most only about two to three folios long.<sup>150</sup> The fragment, as Brooks speculates, might provide us with the last few lines of a later Syriac translation of Zachariah's 'Life of Peter'.<sup>151</sup> Yet the text has

<sup>145</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 77–78, 83–89, 93–96, 98, 100, 102, 106–109, 111, and 115–116 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', pp. 77–78, 83–89, 93–96, 98, 100, 102, 106–109, 11, and 115–116).

<sup>146</sup> The works of John Rufus give witness to this close relationship and friendship between Peter and Isaiah. For Abba Isaiah in Rufus' *Vita Petri Iberi*, see *Vita Petri Iberi* 101–104, 124–126, and 145. For Abba Isaiah in the *Plerophoriae*, see *Plerophoriae* 12, 22, 27, 48, 65, and 73. See also the discussion below, ch. 3, pp. 152–170.

<sup>147</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 88 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 88, l. 9).

<sup>148</sup> See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 78 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 78, l. 10).

<sup>149</sup> See Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 3–4 (ed. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7, pp. 3–4; Latin tr. Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 8, p. 3). See also M.-A. Kugener, 'Observations sur la Vie de l'ascète Isaïe et sur les Vies de Pierre l'Ibérien et de Théodore d'Antinoë par Zacharie le Scolastique', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 9 (1900), 464–470.

<sup>150</sup> In MS Sachau 321 the text of John Rufus' *De obitu Theodosii* breaks off about a page before the end of the text. Brooks indicates that in all there is a lacuna of three folios of the manuscript, before the end of a 'Life of Peter', presumably that of Zachariah Scholasticus /Rhetor, comes to a close at the top of folio 105<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>151</sup> See Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 3–4. The Syriac fragments which are believed to be part of that 'Life of Peter' are edited and translated into Latin by E. W. Brooks, *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum*, CSCO 7, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, t. 25 (*textus*) (Paris and Leipzig, 1907), p. 18; CSCO 8, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, t. 25 (*versio*) (Paris and Leipzig, 1907), p. 12. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 183.



*The Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian'*

A further source for Peter's biography is the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian'.<sup>156</sup> In 1896, Nikolai Marr edited the text and translated it into Russian.<sup>157</sup> The Georgian translator, the priest Makarios, remarked in a note that the 'Life' he translated was based on the 'Life' written in Syriac by a certain Zachariah, who had been 'a disciple of Peter the Georgian'.<sup>158</sup> Stephanus Sikorski may well have been the first to provide a text-critical stemma for the different versions of the lives.<sup>159</sup> After his work was published, Honigmann observed that instead of having been merely transliterated back into Georgian, many of the proper names which appear in the Syriac 'Life' had been exchanged for different Georgian ones.<sup>160</sup> Peter's original Georgian name therefore was not Nabarnugios, but Murvanos.<sup>161</sup> Several other changes are noticeable. For example, now Peter appears not as an anti-Chalcedonian, but rather as a Chalcedonian saint. In addition, one finds numerous changes of proper names of people and places. Also, the fact that anti-Chalcedonianism is not addressed as such, but rather is called the 'heresy of the Severians and the Jacobites', is noteworthy. Similarly, one notes the addition of an introduction and a conclusion to the text which is not part of the Syriac *Vita Petri Iberi*. Despite these differences Honigmann claimed

<sup>156</sup> For a brief discussion of significant features of this Georgian text, see Michael Tarchnišvili and Julius Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, Studi e Testi 185 (Città del Vaticano, 1955), 246–248. I would like to express my gratitude to Medea Abashidze, State Library, Tbilisi, Georgia, who kindly provided invaluable bibliographical assistance.

<sup>157</sup> N. Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa [Life of Peter the Iberian]', *Pravoslavnyy Palestinskiy Sbornik* 47 = XVI. 2 (St Petersburg, 1896), 1–78 (Georgian text), pp. 81–115 (Russian translation). For a more recent edition of the Georgian text see *Areopagetuli krebuli: gamosatcemat moamzada Iv. Lolashvilma* (Tbilisi, 1983), pp. 117–158 (to be abbreviated in the following as Lolashvili, 'Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian').

<sup>158</sup> Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa', 53. See also Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa', introduction, p. 20. The name 'Zachariah' also appears in Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa', 29 (chapter 38). I am deeply grateful to Matushka Juliana Pantelic, Australia, for translating the introduction of Marr's article for me.

<sup>159</sup> Stephanus Sikorski, 'Die Lebensbeschreibungen Peters des Iberers', 92. *Jahresbericht der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Kultur*, vol. i, pt. 4a (Breslau, 1915), 7 ff.; mentioned by Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der Altkirchlichen Literatur*, vol. iv: *Das Fünfte Jahrhundert mit Einschluss der syrischen Literatur des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1924), 315. I have not yet been able to see Sikorski's study.

<sup>160</sup> Honigmann, *Pierre l'Ibérien*, 55.

<sup>161</sup> Robert R. Phenix Jr. suggested that the last name mentioned may have been derived from an original 'Mar Rufinos' or 'Mor Rufinos'. See also below, ch. 2, p. 50 and n. 2.

that the Georgian 'Life' actually is but a version of Rufus' *Vita Petri Iberi*. He attributed all the revisions of the text to the pen of a certain *protopapas* Paul.<sup>162</sup>

In contrast to Honigmann's thesis, which considers the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' to be a reworking of the Syriac text of Rufus' *Vita Petri Iberi*, Lang contended that the Georgian text is 'derive[d] from the work of Zacharias Scholasticus'.<sup>163</sup>

Lang summarizes the two main conclusions of his insightful discussion of the value of the Georgian 'Life' for Peter's biography at the end of his article as follows:

First, . . . the Georgian life published by Marr represents a third-hand adaptation of the biography of Peter the Iberian composed by Zacharias Rhetor / Scholasticus at Berytos about the year 490. The original Greek has perished, as well as the Syriac version from which the Georgian text derives, except for the small concluding fragment published by Brooks. The reliability of the Georgian version is much weakened by tendentious suppression of the Monophysite leanings of Peter and his biographer.

Secondly, . . . the life of Peter published by Raabe has no connection with the Georgian version, apart from the personal contacts of both Zacharias and John Rufus with Peter and the cloister at Maiuma. The only common source that can be postulated for the two lives consists in the oral reminiscences of the saint himself and his disciples. It is noteworthy that Zacharias and John Rufus are not apparently agreed on Peter's original Georgian name. Although the two writers were almost certainly acquainted, in view of John Rufus's friendly reference to Zacharias in the *Plerophoriae*, there is no evidence to suggest literary collaboration between them.<sup>164</sup>

In a review of Lang's work a year after its appearance, Paul Devos responded to the question of the relationship between the Syriac and the Georgian life.<sup>165</sup> In agreement with Honigmann, yet in opposition to Lang, he stressed the resemblance between the Georgian 'Life' and the Syriac *Vita Petri Iberi*, despite the undeniable transformations that the Georgian translator or editor had made to the Syriac text.

Given the resemblance between the Georgian 'Life' and the Syriac *Vita Petri Iberi* with regard to the general chronology of events in Peter's life, it seems more reasonable to postulate a connection between these two extant texts than to claim a connection between

<sup>162</sup> Honigmann, *Pierre l'Ibérien*, 55. Reference to this Paul is also made in Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa', 15–17, 19–20, and 24.

<sup>163</sup> Lang, 'Peter the Iberian and His Biographers', 159.

<sup>164</sup> Lang, 'Peter the Iberian and His Biographers', 167–168.

<sup>165</sup> Paul Devos, 'On D. M. Lang, "Peter the Iberian and his Biographers," excerpt from *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, t. II (1951), p. 158–168', *Analecta Bollandiana* 70 (1952), 385–388.

the Georgian 'Life' and Zachariah Rhetor's 'Life of Peter', which for all practical matters is lost, and the content of which merely is subject for speculation. The priest Makarios' comment appears to be inconclusive, since the label 'disciple of Peter the Georgian' seems to fit much better for Rufus than for Zachariah. The idea that a tendentious translator with Chalcedonian bent would have exchanged the names is not to be excluded as a possible explanation, although it would not explain why the names may have been perceived as offensive in the first place.

A final word will have to await a more thorough study of the Georgian 'Life'. The fact that it is a Georgian translation of a Syriac text, which in itself already represents a translation of an originally Greek composition, and which thus is twice removed from the original text in terms of language and several hundred years removed from it in terms of culture and theology, makes that study all the more laborious.<sup>166</sup> Given the substantial reworking of the text, however, the Georgian 'Life' probably has no independent value as a source for the reconstruction of Peter's life and career.

<sup>166</sup> I wish to record my gratitude to Prof. Dr Konstantine Lerner, Department for Indian, Iranian, and Armenian Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for his kind assistance with questions pertaining to the translation of the initial three chapters of the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian'.

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## The Life and Career of Peter the Iberian

### HOSTAGE, PILGRIM, AND MONK: PETER'S LIFE BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

#### Peter's Origins in Georgia

Peter was a native of Iberia, K'art'li in the Georgian language, the eastern and central region of Georgia.<sup>1</sup> In the ancient sources his Iberian name is given both as Nabarnugios and as Murvanos.<sup>2</sup> Only when he became a monk did he receive the new name Peter.<sup>3</sup> Rufus indicates that this new name 'Peter' already contained a whole programme: as much as the apostle Peter was to be considered as the head of Christ's Church, so Rufus seems to have thought that God had in mind to establish Peter as the leader of the anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>4</sup> In order to avoid confusion, the name Peter will be used throughout the present study.

Peter's father was Bosmarios (II),<sup>5</sup> king of the Iberians. His mother's name was Bakurduktia.<sup>6</sup> His grandparents on his father's side were Bosmarios (I), king of the Iberians, and Osduktia.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> For an informative and accessible overview of the pre-historic through late antique history of *Iberia secunda*, or the 'second Iberia', the name by which the eastern region of Georgia was known to the ancients, see Heinzgerd Brakmann and Otar Lordkipanidse, 'Iberia II (Georgien)', in *RAC* 17 (1994), 12–106, here 13. See also David J. Melling, 'Peter the Iberian', in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, 1999), 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 4, *Plerophoriae* 56 (Nabarnugios). Lolashvili, 'Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian', sect. 2, p. 119, and elsewhere (Murvanos). For a detailed epitome of the *Vita Petri Iberi* see J. B. Chabot, 'Pierre l'Ibérien, Evêque Monophysite de Mayouma [Gaza] à la Fin du V<sup>e</sup> Siècle', *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 3 (1895), 367–397.

<sup>3</sup> See Susanna Elm, 'Virgins of God': *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), 296 n. 37, for comments and literature on name changes.

<sup>4</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 4–5.

<sup>5</sup> Peter's paternal grandfather's name was also Bosmarios. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 5. Thus Bosmarios (I) shall be used to refer to Peter's grandfather, Bosmarios (II) to his father.

<sup>6</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5.      <sup>7</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5.

name of the brother of Osduktia was Pharasmanios, who had been in the service of the Roman emperor Arcadius (AD 395–408).<sup>8</sup>

On his mother's side the names of Peter's grandparents were Bakurios, who, as far as Rufus knew, was the first Christian king of the Iberians, and Duktia, whom Rufus portrayed as a very saintly and ascetic woman.<sup>9</sup> Also worthy of special mention for Rufus is Arsilios, the brother of Bakurios.<sup>10</sup> His outstanding piety showed itself in a life of dedicated virginity and complete sanctity. In accordance with a special custom practised among the Iberians, Bosmarios (I), Bakurios, and Arsilios shared the reign over the Iberians.<sup>11</sup>

The *Vita Petri Iberi* is full of telling information about Peter's ancestors and relatives.<sup>12</sup> Joseph Markwart studied the genealogy of Peter's family as presented at the beginning of the *Vita Petri Iberi* in greater detail.<sup>13</sup> The genealogy is strongly hagiographic in character;

<sup>8</sup> According to *Vita Petri Iberi* 5, trouble had arisen concerning Pharasmanios and Eudoxia, the wife of Arcadius. Consequently Pharasmanios fled from the court and withdrew to Iberia. Rufus does not provide an explanation as to what the exact nature of the discord between Pharasmanios, Arcadius, and Eudoxia was. It may be nothing but a rumour that the issue at stake was an extramarital affair of Eudoxia with Pharasmanios. A man named P'arsman is mentioned in *The Conversion of K'art'li* by Nino sect. 135 (tr. Robert W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History* (Oxford, 1996), 149). This P'arsman was one of the sons of Varaz-Bak'ar. His mother was the granddaughter of P'eroz. See Paul Peeters, 'Les débuts du christianisme en Géorgie d'après les sources hagiographiques', *Analecta Bollandiana* 50 (1932), 5–58, here 56–57, for comments on the affair. Beyond that reference no other sources have come to light.

<sup>9</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5.

<sup>10</sup> The *Georgian Chronicle* (ed. S. Qauxč'išvili, *K'art'lis C'xovreba anna dedop'li-seuli nusxa* (Tbilissi, 1942), 91) features King Arčil (AD 422–432). According to Moses of Khoren (c.407–492), *History of the Armenians*, bk. 3, ch. 60 (tr. Robert W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i: History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978), 333), 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'.

<sup>11</sup> It seems to have been customary for Iberian kings and leaders to share the reign among themselves. That practice applied to the generation of Peter's grandparents and presumably was still in place when Peter's father was king. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 5. This system of government is related to the rule of the nobility (*naxarar*) in Armenia. See also Nicholas Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian: The Political Conditions based on the Naxarar System*, translated with partial revisions by Nina G. Garsoian (Lisbon, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 1–15.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Markwart, 'Die Bekehrung Iberiens und die beiden ältesten Dokumente der iberischen Kirche', *Caucasica* 7 (1931), 123–128. More recently, also Bernard Flusin, 'Naissance d'une Ville sainte: autour de la Vie de Pierre l'Ibère', *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sciences Religieuses* 100 (1991–92), 365–368, has briefly assessed the historical value of this hagiographical presentation of Peter's ancestors.

several of Peter's ancestors appear as outstanding saintly ascetics. Honigmann assumed that the saintly character of the figures was introduced into the *Vita Petri Iberi* later on, in order to counter-balance the historically attested kings, mentioned in the *Georgian Chronicle*.<sup>14</sup>

It is not clear on the basis of which criteria and to what extent one can draw conclusions concerning the existence or the fictitious nature of the people mentioned as Peter's ancestors or family members. Rufus does not try to hide the fact that Peter's father Bosmarios (II) kept a concubine, even though he had a wife who was legally and rightfully married to him.<sup>15</sup> By his concubine, Bosmarios had a daughter, named Bosmirosparia. In accord with his father's wishes, Peter treated her like a real sister. In the light of Rufus' heightened awareness and positive evaluation of sexual renunciation, which emerges readily from other details in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, such a disclosure of an extramarital relationship of Peter's father must have been rather embarrassing, probably both for Peter and for Rufus. That Rufus did not hide it speaks in favour of a certain historical accuracy with which he related what he knew about Peter's family.

It is to be noted that according to Rufus' evaluation of events reported in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, right from the beginning Peter's life stood under the influence and mediation of the supernatural realm. One day when Peter's father Bosmarios returned from the countryside, he met a man on the street, who announced to him that he would have a son, whose virtuous conduct would be a shining example for everyone. A son was born soon thereafter, just as the angel had announced.

Chabot, Raabe, and others date Peter's birth to the year AD 409.<sup>16</sup> Devos revisited the question of the chronology of Peter's life and with convincing reasons redated his birth to AD 417 or possibly to

<sup>14</sup> Honigmann, *Pierre l'Ibérien*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> For studies of the practice of concubinage and the situations of concubines in the early Christian and Late Antique world, see Joelle Beaucamp, *Le statut de la femme à Byzance (4e-7e siècle)*, I: *Le droit impérial* (Paris, 1990), 195-201; and Susan Treggiari, 'Concubinae', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 49 (1981), 59-81. See also Judith Evans Grubbs, 'Concubinage', in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Post-classical World* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1999), 388-389; Kim Power, 'Concubine/Concubinage', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cambridge, 1999), 222-223; H. Crouzel, 'Concubinage', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 189; and Judith Herrin and Alexander Kazhdan, 'Concubinage', in *ODB* 1 (1991), 493.

<sup>16</sup> Chabot, 'Pierre l'Ibérien', 370; and Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 10 n., not numbered.

AD 412.<sup>17</sup> Neither day nor month of the year can be determined. The present study accepts AD 417 as the year of Peter's birth.<sup>18</sup> The annunciation of the birth of a holy man or woman by an angel or otherwise heavenly messenger is a common topos in early Christian literature, patterned after those annunciations of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> In the immediate literary environment upon which Rufus' works would have exerted influence, i.e. Palestine of the late fifth and sixth centuries, the heavenly messenger's prediction of the birth of the influential Chalcedonian monk Euthymius is prominent.<sup>20</sup> The origin of the tradition of the annunciation of Euthymius' birth is uncertain. It may have emerged in oral sources long before Cyril of Scythopolis put his own account of it into writing, or Cyril may have invented that element.

The monk Euthymius embodies the distinct opposition to the rejection of the Council of Chalcedon that had arisen in the Holy Land in monastic circles and that was forcefully directed against Juvenal of Jerusalem after AD 451.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Cyril portrays

<sup>17</sup> Paul Devos, 'Quand Pierre l'Ibère vient-il à Jérusalem?' *Analecta Bollandiana* 86 (1968), 337–350, here especially 349. The Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' led Honigmann and following him Devos to consider AD 412 as a possibility.

<sup>18</sup> AD 417 still allows one to assume that even as a young boy considering asceticism Peter could have come to some familiarity and first appreciation of and respect for Nestorius of Constantinople, which then turned into manifest aversion. See *Plerophoriae* 1 and the discussion below, pp. 61–62, and ch.3, pp. 134–137.

<sup>19</sup> Luke 1:5–25; and Luke 1:26–38. In early Christian literature, also the birth of holy women would occasionally be announced by a heavenly messenger. For the announcement of the special status and character of the to-be-born Macrina as 'Thecla' by 'a being of greater magnificance in form and appearance than a mortal man' see Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Macrina* 2 (ed. Pierre Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysses: Vie de Sainte Macrine*, SCh 178 (Paris, 1971), 146; tr. Joan M. Petersen, *Handmaids of the Lord* (Kalamazoo, 1996), 53).

<sup>20</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 2 (ed. Eduard Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig, 1939), 9.6–9; English translation by R. M. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, Cistercian Studies 114 (Kalamazoo, 1991), 5). For a study of Cyril's work of documenting the lives of ascetic saints and leaders in late antique Palestine that centres on the tension between the miraculous and the objective task of the historian, see Bernard Flusin, *Miracle et histoire dans l'oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris, 1983). On pp. 88–95, Flusin discusses Cyril's treatment of the birth and infancy of Euthymius, but does not refer to a potential parallel with or allusion to Rufus' account of the annunciation of Peter's birth.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding Euthymius' influence on ecclesiastical politics see Ernest Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), 211–279. On Euthymius, see also S. Vaillhé, 'S. Euthyme le Grand', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 12 (1907), 298–312 and 337–366; 13 (1908), 181–191 and 225–246; and 14 (1909), 189–202 and 256–263; Jacques Noret, 'A propos des vies de saint Euthyme, Abbé († 473)', *Analecta Bollandiana* 104 (1986), 453–455; Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism Under the Christian Empire* (Crestwood, NY, 1966), 82–100; Elisabeth Grünbeck, 'Euthymius der

Euthymius' birth as having been announced by an angel is significant, even though it has received little attention thus far. Flusin compared Euthymius' birth with the birth of the monk Sabas, as recounted by Cyril in his *Life of Sabas*. He recognized Cyril's construction of a literary connection between the two events, which Cyril established by way of reference to the conception of Samuel.<sup>22</sup> Yet given the intense milieu of doctrinal struggles in Palestine at the time, in which the access of ascetic leaders to supernatural powers was seen as ultimately determining the events of history, it is of considerable importance that the birth of Peter the Iberian, one of the main representatives of the anti-Chalcedonian resistance in monastic and hierarchical domains in Palestine in the second half of the fifth century, also was portrayed as having been announced by a heavenly messenger. The literary portrait of Peter, moreover, was created before that of Euthymius. Thus the rivalry between the two doctrinal and ascetic factions in Palestine, or rather between the leading historical and biographical *literati* of both camps, is traceable in this instance even down to the very details of the literary works these writers composed for their respective communities. In line with previous ascetic hagiography of holy men and women of influence, such as Athanasius' *Vita Antonii* and the individual hagiographical biographies collected in Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Historia Religiosa*,<sup>23</sup> with his *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus had created the formative hagiographical biography of the leader of anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine.<sup>24</sup>

Größe', in *LThK* 3 (1995), 1020; Ekkart Sauser, 'Euthymios der Große', in *BBKL* 14 (1994), 964–966; R. Janin, 'Euthyme le Grand', in *DHGE* 16 (1967), 61; and Jean Darrouzès, 'Euthyme le Grand (saint)', in *DSP* 4.2 (1961), 1720–1722.

<sup>22</sup> See 1 Samuel 1:9–20.

<sup>23</sup> For the Greek text of Athanasius of Alexandria's *Vita Antonii* see the edition and French translation in G. J. M. Bartelink, *Athanase d'Alexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*, SCh 400 (Paris, 1994); for an English translation see Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (Mahwah, NJ, 1980), 29–99. For the text of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Historia Religiosa* see the edition and translation by P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, *Theodoret de Cyr: Histoire des moines de Syrie*, SCh 234 and 257 (Paris, 1977–1979); for an English translation see R. M. Price, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: A History of the Monks of Syria*, Cistercian Studies Series 88 (Kalamazoo, 1985).

<sup>24</sup> See above, Introduction, p. 7. The volume of study of the concept of the 'holy man' and/or 'holy woman' in Late Antiquity and his, to a lesser extent also her, influence in the early Christian/Late Antique world is enormous. For the seminal study of the 'holy man', see Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101; as well as two later articles, namely Peter Brown, 'The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations* 1.2 (1983), 1–25, and Peter Brown, 'Arbiters of the Holy: The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity', in Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge, 1995), 57–78. Also note the

Writing decades after Rufus and in opposition to the movement Rufus represented, Cyril would produce his saints' lives as counter-portraits to anti-Chalcedonian hagiographical compositions.

Scholarship on the history of Christianity in Palestine in the fifth and sixth centuries has rightly appreciated the weight of Cyril's writings. Yet despite all best efforts it often continues to work from a position of confessional and linguistic bias, and thus still tends to overemphasize Cyril's contribution both as fully determinative of Palestinian hagiography on the one hand and as an innovative work, almost emerging out of a vacuum, on the other.<sup>25</sup> Flusin's study has traced Cyril's sources in Greek literature. In a further effort to rectify the persistent one-sidedness, van Esbroeck has already indicated that reconstructing Christian history in Palestine in the fifth and sixth centuries requires a better understanding of how Cyril relied upon anti-Chalcedonian models, primarily the works of Rufus.<sup>26</sup> The discussion of the motif of the angel's annunciation of the birth of the holy man in the case of Peter and Euthymius introduced above is a further step in that direction. More recently in his study on Rufus, Steppa has contributed to the discussion of the relationship between Rufus and Cyril by showing further parallels and differences.<sup>27</sup> A future study of Rufus that would pursue this line of enquiry in a systematic and comprehensive way, may yield insightful results.

After his birth the infant Peter was handed over into the care of a woman named Zuzo. Her daughter Ota nursed the child. Rufus also mentions Ota's husband, Khuranios, her brother Bardelios, and Ota's and Khuranios' two foster-sons, Qata and Murgages.<sup>28</sup> As a monk in the monastery at Maiuma, Peter included the names of his

reconsideration of the various directions into which scholarship had taken the investigation of the 'holy man' in the contributions published in the Fall 1998 issue of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, including Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity, 1971-1997', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.3 (1998), 353-376.

<sup>25</sup> For a recent, brief analysis of factors contributing to this problem, see Steppa, *John Rufus*, xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>26</sup> Michel van Esbroeck, 'Review of: Bernard Flusin, *Miracle et Histoire dans l'oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1983, pp. 262', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 50 (1984), 238-240, here 240. Flusin and van Esbroeck agree on the need to study anti-Chalcedonian texts as sources for Cyril of Scythopolis (oral communication by Prof. Dr Michel van Esbroeck, July 2002). See also Bernard Flusin, 'L'hagiographie palestinienne et la réception du concile de Chalcedoine', in *AEIΜΩΝ: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Uppsala, 1996), 25-47.

<sup>27</sup> Steppa, *John Rufus*, 110-111.

<sup>28</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 6.

extended foster-family in the liturgical commemoration for his family, suggesting his personal affection and gratitude to those who had raised him. It also helps define the terms ‘family’ and ‘family structure’ as they were understood in the world of Late Antiquity, consisting of individuals beyond blood relationship.<sup>29</sup>

Peter’s wet-nurse Ota and her husband raised children who were not their own.<sup>30</sup> While the couple were probably paid for their services, an element of generosity and love expressed by their raising of foster-children remains. Their generosity could have been one of the factors inspiring Peter to take an active role in using his energy and resources to support foreigners, specifically for the entertainment of the many pilgrims who came to Jerusalem. Basil of Caesarea’s spirituality and teachings, specifically his great concern for social

<sup>29</sup> The study of family life in the early Christian and Late Antique world has made significant progress over the last two decades. For a study of the role of prayer in family life see Balthasar Fischer, ‘Common Prayer of Congregation and Family in the Ancient Church’, *Studia Liturgica* 10.3–4 (1974), 106–124. For other useful studies on families in the ancient world, see most recently the contributions in Halvor Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London and New York, 1997). See also Geoffrey S. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London and New York, 2000); Robert W. Shaffern, ‘The Late Antique Family in the Christian East’, *Diakonia* 31.1 (1998), 15–30; Carolyn Osiek, ‘The Family in Early Christianity: “Family Values” Revisited’, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 58 (1996), 1–25; James S. Jeffers, ‘The Influence of the Roman Family and Social Structures on Early Christianity in Rome’, *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 27 (1988), 370–384; and J. Kevin Coyle, ‘Empire and Eschaton: The Early Church and the Question of Domestic Relationships’, *Église et Théologie* 12 (1981), 35–94.

<sup>30</sup> It was common practice for wealthy families to hand over their children to wet-nurses and foster-parents. See e.g. Basil the Great, *Letter* 37 (ed. and tr. Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile: Lettres, Tome I* (Paris, 1957), 79–80, here 80; ed. and tr. Roy Joseph Deferrari, *Saint Basil: The Letters*, LCL, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, repr. 1961), 192–195; also tr. Sister Agnes Clare Way, *Saint Basil: Letters (Volume 1 (1–185))*, FOTC 13 (New York, 1951), 83), where Basil speaks of the son of his former wet-nurse. Yet the role of wet-nurses in the early Christian and Late Antique world has received little scholarly attention. For the contributions made by Suzanne Dixon see her books *The Roman Mother* (Norman, 1988), 120–129, and *The Roman Family* (Baltimore and London, 1992), 119 and literature cited there, as well as her earlier work published as ‘Roman Nurses and Foster-Mothers: Some Problems of Terminology’, *AULLA, Papers and Synopses from the 22nd Congress of the Australian Universities Language and Literature Association* 22 (1983), 9–24. For an entertaining account of the choices Erythrios faced when having to secure the nourishing of his just-born son whose mother had passed away when giving birth, see the discussion in Hans Herter, ‘Amme oder Saugflasche’, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, suppl. 1 (1964), 168–172.

justice, which became a mark of Cappadocian asceticism,<sup>31</sup> may well have exerted additional influence on Peter. It is difficult to establish whether Basil's social ideas might have influenced Peter's social and charitable conscience while still in Georgia.<sup>32</sup> Such an influence was certainly more prominent and had greater formative impact on the young man in the Byzantine capital and on the Mount of Olives. Peter's charitable activities themselves are a good example of the influential social role and function of monastic communities and of individual ascetics in the Holy Land. One particular area in which monks were active was the establishment of orphanages and the care for the young.<sup>33</sup> Recent archaeological research allows one to document more fully the phenomenon that monastic communities functioned as orphanages in the early Christian world.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See the fine selection of Basil of Caesarea's treatises on ethics and the moral life collected in M. Monica Wagner, tr., *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works*, FOTC 9 (New York, 1950). For useful studies of individual aspects of Basil's moral and social concern, see e.g. Vasiliki Limberis, 'The Eyes Infected by Evil: Basil of Caesarea's Homily, "On Envy"' *Harvard Theological Review* 84.2 (1991), 163–184; Graham Gould, 'Basil of Caesarea and the Problem of the Wealth of Monasteries', in *The Church and Wealth* (Oxford, 1987), 15–24; Marcella Forlin Patrucco, 'Social Patronage and Political Mediation in the Activity of Basil of Caesarea', *Studia Patristica* 17.3 (1982), 1102–1107; Ramon Teja, 'San Basilio y la esclavitud: teoría y praxis', in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, vol. i (Toronto, 1981), 393–403; and Ioannes Karayannopoulos, 'St. Basil's Social Activity: Principles and Praxis', in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, vol. ii (Toronto, 1981), 375–391. Both Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley, 1994) and Paul J. Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea* (Toronto, 1979), present formidable studies of Basil of Caesarea and his dealings with community life. See also below, ch. 3, pp. 200 and 209–210.

<sup>32</sup> Several of the works of Basil of Caesarea were translated into Georgian and were widely used. The earliest to have been translated seem to be those by Euthymius Mt'ac'mideli, to be dated to AD 977–981. See Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 145 and 147. For access to Basil's work in Georgian, see also Paul J. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana Universalis: A Study of the Manuscript Tradition of the Works of Basil of Caesarea* (Turnhout, 1993–). For an overview of the development of Georgian monasticism, see Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 60–79, as well as the study by Oliver Reisner, 'Das Mönchtum im frühmittelalterlichen Georgien', *Georgica* 15 (1992), 67–81. The earliest monasteries in Georgia appear under King Vakhtang Gorgasal in the fifth century AD. See Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 61. On the role of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers in the development of monasticism, see below, ch. 4, p. 300, n. 430.

<sup>33</sup> For the Byzantine realm, see now the valuable study by Timothy S. Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium: Child Welfare in the Christian Empire* (Washington, DC, 2003). Focusing on the *Orphanotropheion* in Constantinople, Miller also considers evidence from throughout Asia Minor and the Byzantine provinces.

<sup>34</sup> For an example from an early ascetic text witnessing to that phenomenon, see Basil of Caesarea, *Long Rules*, Question 15 (ed. PG 31.889–1052, here cols. 951–962);

A further issue concerning Peter's origins in Georgia is the question of the evangelization of that country.<sup>35</sup> One line of tradition holds that Christianity entered the country in the early fourth century and spread under the impact of the missionary activities of St Nino. In response to her exemplary Christian lifestyle, her preaching of the Christian faith, and the instances of miraculous healing she was granted to work, the Georgian king Mirian and with him all the people converted.<sup>36</sup> That line of tradition seems to conflict somewhat with Rufus' claim that Peter's grandfather Bakurios was the first Christian king of the Georgians.<sup>37</sup>

Bakurios is not an uncommon early Georgian name, it seems. A Georgian prince Bakurios served in the Byzantine army in Pales-

Wagner, *Saint Basil: Ascetical Works*, 264). See now also the Armenian recension of the *Rules*, where Question 15 (Greek) corresponds to Question 13 (Armenian) (ed. and tr. Gabriella Uluhogian, *Basilio di Cesarea: Il Libro delle Domande (Le Regole)*, CSCO 536 and 537, *Scriptores Armeniaci*, tt. 19–20 (Louvain, 1993), 72–76 (Armenian) and 51–54 (Italian)). The bio-archaeological research of a group of scholars from Notre Dame University, Indiana, which includes analyses of bones from the tombs of the monks in St Stephen's Monastery, Jerusalem, could be quoted in favour of such assumptions. The project, directed by Susan Guise Sheridan, is entitled: *Byzantine St Stephen's: A Biocultural Reconstruction of Urban Monastic Life*. While in Jerusalem, I was fortunate to visit the site and talk with some of the researchers involved in the project. For an overview of public presentations given by project participants between 1996 and 1999, see <http://www.nd.edu/~stephens/Presentations.html>. See in particular also Rebecca A. Sanders and Susan Guise Sheridan, "'All God's Children': Subadult Health in a Byzantine Jerusalem Monastery', abstract, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, suppl. 28 (1999), 239; and J. Cheadle and Susan Guise Sheridan, 'Non-Metric Dental Variation in Remains from a Byzantine Monastic Community in Jerusalem', abstract, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, suppl. 28 (1999), 105–106. Also see below, ch. 4, pp. 283–284.

<sup>35</sup> See also the discussion in Peeters, 'Les débuts du Christianisme en Géorgie'.

<sup>36</sup> For a study on St Nino's missionary activities among the Georgians and the appreciation or lack thereof of her missionary role, see Cornelia Horn, 'St. Nino and the Christianization of pagan Georgia', *Medieval Encounters* 4.3 (1998), 242–264. On St Nino, see also the important article 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. by Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski, *Oikonomia: Quellen und Studien zur orthodoxen Theologie* 34 (Erlangen, 1994), 224–249.

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5. St Nino's pivotal role in the conversion of the Georgians tended to be suppressed in Georgian historiography, both ancient and modern. Her female gender seems to have been the main stumbling-block for historians, even if that does not constitute the full explanation for acts of *damnatio memoriae* for her. The shift to and emphasis on St Andrew is in part also due to Georgia's autocephaly, gained in the eleventh century and better served by a more direct link with the apostolic tradition.

tine. His task was to help secure the eastern borders of the Roman province of *Palestina Prima*. In AD 395 the monk and church historian Rufinus of Aquileia (c.345–410) who lived in Melania the Elder's monastery on the Mount of Olives had an encounter with him. Bakurios was Rufinus' informant concerning the conversion of the Georgians to Christianity and the instrumental role of St Nino in that enterprise.<sup>38</sup> According to Heyer, the nobleman Bakurios has to be regarded as the figure at the very centre of the earliest connections between Georgia and the Holy Land.<sup>39</sup> If this prince Bakurios holds primacy chronologically and in regard to military connections, Peter has to be accorded primacy in regard to the more dominating religious and ascetical connection that was to develop between Georgia and Palestine.<sup>40</sup> Peter is the first known Georgian, and a Georgian Byzantine monk at that, who settled permanently in the Holy Land and whose whole life story became intricately connected with Palestine and its fifth-century history. Yet before his move to the Holy Land, the young Peter first spent several years of his teenage life in the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

<sup>38</sup> Rufinus of Aquileia, *Ecclesiastical History* 10.11 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, 'Paralipomena: Rufinus Vorrede, Einlage über Gregorius Thaumaturgus, Buch X und XI', in *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, ii.ii, ed. by Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, 2nd edn. Friedhelm Winkelmann, GCS n.s. 6.2 (Berlin, 1999), 951–1040, here 973–6). Besides Rufinus' account, the other significant source for those events is the Georgian 'Life of St Nino', easily accessible in English translation in Margery Wardrop, 'The Life of St. Nino', *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica* 5 (1903), 1–88.

<sup>39</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 43.

<sup>40</sup> In the sixth century, Emperor Justinian commissioned the repair of two Georgian monasteries in the Jerusalem/Judaean Desert area. See Procopius, *De aedificiis* 5.9 (ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera omnia* (Leipzig, 1913), 169; re-ed. and tr. Dewing and Downey, *Procopius: Buildings* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1954), 358–359): τὸ τῶν Ἰβήρων ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. τὸ τῶν Λαζῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἱεροσολύμων. The presence of Georgian monks in the Sabaite monasteries in the first half of the sixth century is documented by the so-called *Testament of St Sabas* according to which the Georgians seemed to have had their own church in the Sabaite monastery in the Kedron valley (MS Sinai 1096; referenced by Archimandrite Gregory Peradze, 'An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine as Revealed in the Writings of Non-Georgian Pilgrims', *Georgica: A Journal for Georgian and Caucasian Studies* 4–5 (1937), 181–246, p. 184 and n. 2). One may also wish to refer to the well-known and documented translation work from Greek into Georgian accomplished by such Georgian monks in the Sabaite monasteries. For secondary literature see Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 61–63; R. Janin, 'Les Géorgiens à Jérusalem', *Échos d'Orient* 16 (1913), 32–38 and 211–219, updated by Peradze, 'An Account of the Georgian Monks'; for the later period, see also Richard B. Rose, 'Jerusalem and Jihad: The Devotion of the Iberian Nation to Jerusalem: A Footnote on the Role of the Georgians in Late Medieval Jerusalem', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 41 (1991), 10–24.

### Peter's Early Teenage Years in Constantinople

Peter's father Bosmarios (II) feared the Persians would take his son as a hostage, as their army was wont to do with noble offspring.<sup>41</sup> While Peter was still young, his father had kept him hidden with his foster mother Zuzo.<sup>42</sup> As Peter became older, that option may not have been as feasible as it had been before. Certainly, there were also instances of noble children placed by the free will of their parents into the protection and guardianship of the Persian king, to wit Theodosius II himself, whose father, Arcadius, according to tradition, had entrusted him as a seven-year-old boy to the protection of the Persian king Yazdgard I.<sup>43</sup>

About the year AD 429, when Peter had reached the age of twelve,<sup>44</sup> that is the age of transition from childhood to young adulthood,<sup>45</sup> Peter's father sent his son as a hostage to the court of

<sup>41</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 6.

<sup>42</sup> See the respective comment in Brakmann and Lordkipanidze, 'Tberia II (Georgien)', 36.

<sup>43</sup> See Procopius of Caesarea, *Bellum Persarum* bk. 1, 2.1–10 (reprint of Haury's edition and tr. H. B. Dewing, *Procopius: History of the Wars: The Persian War: bks. 1 and 2*, LCL (London and Cambridge, Mass., repr. 1971), 8–10). See also Kenneth G. Holum's treatment of that instance in his *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and London, 1982), 82–83, with references to ancient sources and modern discussions. See also A. A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1932), 122 (English translation, A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire 324–1453* (Madison, 1952), 96), who thinks that 'il n'y a donc aucune bonne raison pour . . . rejeter' the story as unhistorical. See also Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.1 (ed. Henricus Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.33–84I, here cols. 740–741; ed. Günther Christian Hansen and Manja Širinjan, *Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS n.s. 1 (Berlin, 1995), 348; tr. in A. C. Zenos, *The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus*, NPNF 2nd ser. 2 (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1989), 154); and J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395–800)* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1889; repr. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1966), vol. 1, p. 122.

<sup>44</sup> According to Chabot, 'Pierre l'Ibérien', 370 n. 3, in AD 422.

<sup>45</sup> In early Christian and Late Antique settings, age twelve most commonly marks the point of completion of childhood. See Elena Giannarelli, 'Nota sui dodici anni, l'età della scelta, nella tradizione letteraria antica', *Maia* 29–30 (1977–78), 127–133; Francesco Scorza Barcellona, 'Infanzia e martirio: la testimonianza della più antica letteratura Cristiana', in *Bambini santi: rappresentazioni dell'infanzia e modelli agiografici* (Turin, 1991), 59–83, here 59–60. An early Christian audience may also have thought of the Gospel account of the young Jesus, aged twelve, staying behind in the Temple and discussing with Jewish teachers instead of joining his parents on their return travel after pilgrimage. See Luke 2:41–51. See also Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, 'Let the Little Ones Come to Me': *Children in the Early Christian Community* (Baltimore, forthcoming), ch. 1 for discussion of age boundaries for children in early Christian times.

Theodosius II in Constantinople for political and possibly religious reasons.<sup>46</sup> The Byzantine emperor wished to secure the allegiance of Georgia to the Roman Empire against Persia.<sup>47</sup> Rufus states explicitly that the Iberians valued friendship with the Christian Romans more than the support of the godless Persians.<sup>48</sup>

Georgian historical sources reveal that the request of a royal hostage had an immediate and very similar precedent. The *Georgian Chronicle* tells that in a situation of conflict between the Roman Empire under Constantine on the one hand and the Georgians and Persians on the other hand, after numerous losses on the Georgian and Persian side, King Mirian sent envoys to Constantine and promised to defect from the Persians and subject himself to the Byzantines.<sup>49</sup> Constantine assented. Yet he also arranged that 'the son of Mirian, who was called Bak'ar, was sent as hostage' to him.<sup>50</sup> Thus Theodosius II and Peter's father who wished to befriend the Christian Romans had models for their decision.

At the time of Peter's arrival in the Byzantine capital those 'Christian Romans' were under the ecclesiastical leadership of Bishop Nestorius (AD 428–431).<sup>51</sup> At least initially, the young boy Peter had very friendly contacts with Constantinople's bishop. Peter's biographer however is quick to emphasize that Nestorius' care and concern for the young Peter was met with staunch opposition from the moment that the young fellow became a witness to Nestorius' theological preaching against the application of the title *Theotokos* to the Virgin Mary.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For a detailed discussion of that episode and Rufus' interpretation of it, see Cornelia Horn, 'Befriending the Christian Romans or the Impious Persians? The *Vita Petri Iberi* on Byzantine–Georgian Relations in the Fifth Century AD', abstract, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference Abstracts* (November 4–7, 1999) University of Maryland, College Park, 122–123. For a discussion of some of the larger historical issues, see K. Hannestad, 'Les relations de Byzance avec la Transcaucasie et l'Asie Centrale aux 5<sup>e</sup> et 6<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Byzantion* 25–27, fasc. 2 (1955–57), 421–456. See also Brakmann and Lordkipanidze, 'Iberia II (Georgien)', 35–36.

<sup>47</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 15–16.

<sup>48</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.

<sup>49</sup> *Georgian Chronicle*, ch. 70.

<sup>50</sup> For this English translation of the *Georgian Chronicle* see Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, 83. One does wonder whether there is any relationship between this Bak'ar and the aforementioned Georgian prince Bakurios who served in the Roman army in Palestine. Also, one might doubt the historicity of Peter's condition of having been sent as hostage and suspect Rufus to have crafted the description of this circumstance on the basis of information which eventually found its literary form in the *Georgian Chronicle*.

<sup>51</sup> Except for Nestorius no other bishop of Constantinople is mentioned by name in Rufus' works.

<sup>52</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 1. For a discussion of the centrality of this issue both to the theology of the anti-Chalcedonian movement as a whole and to the recognition of

The *Vita Petri Iberi* suggests that after Peter had been sent to Constantinople as a hostage, he grew up at the imperial court under the parental care of Theodosius II and his wife Eudocia.<sup>53</sup> Rufus does not address any role Pulcheria may have had in Peter's upbringing and education, presumably because of his contempt for her as a supporter, even organizer of the Council of Chalcedon.

As an adopted member of the Byzantine imperial family Peter probably received a good classical education. It is not unlikely that Peter already brought along with him some basic schooling he had received in his home country, Georgia.<sup>54</sup> Yet Constantinople was a city renowned for its institutions of higher learning. In AD 330 Constantine had founded a university in the capital.<sup>55</sup> According to Rufus, Emperor Theodosius II considered Peter as a son during the young boy's years in the royal city.<sup>56</sup> The Emperor also displayed manifest interest in matters of higher learning when in AD 425 he developed a new organizational structure for the university founded by Constantine.<sup>57</sup> Thus when Peter came to the capital, having reached the proper age for the pursuit of academic wisdom, the necessary institutions were already in place.

the role of women within that movement, see Cornelia Horn, 'Fighting with the Devil: The Central Function of Women in John Rufus's Anti-Chalcedonian Polemics', paper delivered at the 16th Annual Meeting of the North American Patristics Society, Chicago, Ill. (May 2002), unpublished manuscript.

<sup>53</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16. On Eudocia's quasi-motherly concern for Peter, see Cornelia Horn, 'Empress Eudocia and the Monk Peter the Iberian: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Love of a Foster-Mother in Fifth-Century Palestine', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 28 (2004), 197–213.

<sup>54</sup> The Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' speaks of the სამწიგნობრობა (*samc'ignobred*), i.e. the 'school' which the young child attended from age three onwards. See Marr, 'Chovreba Petre Iverisa [Life of Peter the Iberian]', para. 5, p. 5; Lolashvili, 'Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian', sect. 2, p. 119. See also the brief discussion in Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 57.

<sup>55</sup> R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine* (Paris, 1964), 164.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.

<sup>57</sup> Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, 164. Constatas, 'Four Christological Homilies of Proclus of Constantinople', 3. On the history in the context of which Theodosius II's 'Higher School' or 'University', founded on 27 February 425, has to be placed, see F. Schemmel, 'Die Hochschule von Konstantinopel im IV. Jahrhundert', *Neue Jahrbücher für Pädagogik* 22 (1908), 147–168; L. Bréhier, 'Notes sur l'histoire de l'enseignement supérieur à Constantinople', *Byzantion* 3 (1926), 73–94; 4 (1927), 13–28; L. Bréhier, 'L'enseignement classique et l'enseignement religieux à Byzance', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 21 (1941), 34–69; M. J. Kyriakides, 'The University: Origin and Early Phases in Constantinople', *Byzantion* 41 (1971), 161–182; for further literature see also Constatas, 'Four Christological Homilies of Proclus of Constantinople', 7–8 n. 19.

It is likely that at this point in his life Peter knew at least two, and possibly three languages, Georgian, Persian, and Greek. One may reasonably assume that the members of the royal family in Georgia would have learned and used Greek as the court language, not only to set themselves apart from ordinary people outside the court, but also for its usefulness in furthering their relationship with the Byzantine court. It is also clear from Rufus' account that when Peter grew up with his foster-family and with his nurse, he understood Georgian. Peter remembered that his Georgian foster-mother Zuzo used to say a prayer over him every night,<sup>58</sup> 'Lord Jesus, my God and Giver of my life, have mercy on me'—a clear instance of the use of the so-called 'Jesus-Prayer'.<sup>59</sup> Rufus explicitly states that she said the words in the Iberian language.<sup>60</sup> No doubt that at the Byzantine court of Theodosius II, at the latest, Peter learned to express himself and communicate with others in Greek. It is to be assumed that the letters sent to him by his relatives back home in Georgia, which Peter refused to accept when he was already living in Jerusalem, were written either in Persian or in Georgian.<sup>61</sup>

There is some evidence that Peter's education at the court extended also to more practical matters. Zachariah Rhetor remarks that the young Georgian prince was given charge of the royal horses.<sup>62</sup> Monica Blanchard pointed out that one of the things for

<sup>58</sup> Even though the young boy 'was sleeping at her side' (*Vita Petri Iberi* 11) and thus presumably was asleep when Zuzo was praying for and over him, it is not unreasonable to assume that the tears and laments that accompanied Zuzo's prayer could easily have woken him up, at least occasionally, and he would have listened to her words, and probably would have understood them.

<sup>59</sup> Irénée Hausherr, *The Name of Jesus: The Names of Jesus Used by Early Christians: The Development of the 'Jesus Prayer'* (Kalamazoo, 1978), 266, refers to this text, but does not recognize its importance as a very early instance of the 'Jesus-Prayer'.

<sup>60</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 11. It is likely that the prayer which she uttered when an earthquake was threatening to destroy her house and put an end to the lives of her beloved ones was also formulated in Georgian. Even though the text of the *Vita Petri Iberi* does not explicitly state this, the fact that this prayer is mentioned immediately following the one she used to say in Georgian every night over the infant Peter suggests that Zuzo used to pray in Georgian, and Peter understood what she was saying.

<sup>61</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 12. It is likely that in Eastern Georgia both Georgian and Persian were in use.

<sup>62</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 4 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 158; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 51). It would be too far-fetched to conclude from this statement that Peter actually held the office of *magister militum*, the post-Constantinian version of the office of *magister equitum*. On these offices see Adolf Berger, 'Magister equitum', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society n.s. 43, pt. 2 (Philadelphia, 1953), 570–571; and Adolf Berger, 'Magister militum', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, Transactions of the American Philosophical

which the Georgians had a great reputation were their wonderful horses.<sup>63</sup> Thus it is likely that a Georgian would have been believed to possess a special capability and ease for dealing adequately with those animals. It is possible that Peter could have demonstrated his skills more openly. In his discussion of individual sites of Byzantine Constantinople Janin also treats the so-called *Tzykanisterion*.<sup>64</sup> In its original size it was rather small and was built by Theodosius II.<sup>65</sup> It was a kind of stadium used for entertaining the royal court. The name of the stadium was derived from the Persian word *tshu-gan* which had been taken over into Greek as *τζυκανίζω* or *τζουκανίζω* and referred to playing a ball with a stick from horseback.<sup>66</sup> In the *Tzykanisterion* therefore the princes busied themselves with exercises on horseback and in particular with a game from Persia, similar to polo. One can easily imagine young Peter riding on his horse and playing polo in his spare time, at least occasionally in less contemplative and ascetic moments, a depiction of which would have been beyond the goals of Rufus' enterprise.

Theodosius II's eldest sister Pulcheria, who had vowed perpetual virginity, was in charge of running the Empire and making the political and administrative decisions for her younger and rather weak-willed brother. Pulcheria practically turned the palace into a monastery.<sup>67</sup> In their descriptions of life at the court during Pulcheria's time historians seem to be in agreement concerning that aspect of court life, independent of whether or not they assigned proper credit to the person in charge. Working with remarkable care and attention to historical accuracy,<sup>68</sup> Sozomen provides valuable details of how Pulcheria, in imitation of her grandmother Flaccilla's piety and humility, became the driving force for turning the lives of all the

Society, n.s. 43, pt. 2 (Philadelphia, 1953), 571. It seems likely that Zachariah's remark was the basis for the comment of H. G. Opitz, 'Petros (5)', in *PWRE* 19.2 (1938), col. 1296, in regard to Peter having been an imperial official for a while.

<sup>63</sup> Monica Blanchard, 'Peter the Iberian' (April 1982), unpublished manuscript.

<sup>64</sup> In Greek either *Τζυκανιστήριον* or *Τζουκανιστήριον*.

<sup>65</sup> See Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, 118–119.

<sup>66</sup> See Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, 118–119. See also E. A. Sophokles, 'τζυκανίζω', in *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (New York, 1887), 1080.

<sup>67</sup> See especially Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.22.4–5: οὐκ ἀλλοιότερα δὲ ἀσκητηρίου κατέστησε τὰ βασιλεία (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.785; also ed. Hansen and Širinjan, *Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS n.s. 1 (Berlin, 1995), 368), who assigns the credit for doing so to Theodosius. Given Socrates' anti-Chalcedonian leanings, he avoided mentioning Pulcheria by name.

<sup>68</sup> Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 91.

members of the royal family towards asceticism.<sup>69</sup> Women in particular followed the instructions of early Christian theologians with ascetic zeal. They were instructed to renounce such ‘vanities as cosmetics, luxurious apparel, and the usual idleness of aristocratic females, to devote themselves to the loom and other household occupations suitable for “admirable” women’.<sup>70</sup> At court, one followed the ancient fasting practice of abstaining on Wednesdays and Fridays, a rule already prescribed by the *Didache*.<sup>71</sup> At canonical hours the imperial sisters gathered with their brother for the chanting of antiphons and scriptural recitations, learned by heart. Yet this ascetic effort was not turned towards personal betterment only. Through establishing houses of prayer, places of refuge for homeless people and beggars, and through setting up and monetarily providing from her personal income for monastic communities Pulcheria ‘embraced her family’s tradition of philanthropy “for the least of these”’,<sup>72</sup>

In such an environment, the young Georgian prince Peter devoted himself increasingly to prayer and the practice of religious and ascetic virtues. He cultivated them in collaboration with his chosen companion and religious guide, John the Eunuch, whose native name, Mithridatos, would reveal some Persian influence. The text identified John the Eunuch as being of Lazic origins.<sup>73</sup> Peter progressed rapidly, such that God endowed him with the gifts of working miracles, receiving visions, and predicting future events. On the one hand, people at the court greatly admired him and his example inspired many others to strive for and embrace that kind of monastic life.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, his ascetic behaviour and demands led to

<sup>69</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 9.1 (ed. Henricus Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.844–1629, here cols. 1593–1597; ed. Joseph Bidez and Günther Christian Hansen, *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 50 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), 390–392; tr. Chester D. Hartranft, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomon, Comprising a History of the Church*, NPNF 2nd ser. 2 (repr. Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, Mich., 1989), 239–427, here 419).

<sup>70</sup> See the discussion in Holum, *Theodosian Emperresses*, 91. Early Christian theologians with ascetic inclination certainly included John Chrysostom and Jerome. For references to their work, see Holum, *Theodosian Emperresses*, 91 n. 53.

<sup>71</sup> *Didache* 8 (ed. and French tr. Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didache)*, SCh 248 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978), 172; tr. in Cyril C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (New York, 1996), 174): ὑμεῖς δὲ νηστεύσατε τετράδα καὶ παρασκευήν.

<sup>72</sup> Holum, *Theodosian Emperresses*, 91.

<sup>73</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21. See also *Vita Petri Iberi* 29. The Lazi were a Georgian people who had settled along the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea. See David M. Lang, *The Georgians* (London and New York, 1966), 20. See also Brakmann and Lordkipanidze, ‘Iberia II (Georgien)’, 79–90.

<sup>74</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 15–19.

complaints among certain members of the palace staff who had come along with the young prince from Georgia in order to be of service to him at the Byzantine court, but who also had hoped for promotions up the court ranks through their connections with an influential prince. Peter chose to ignore their concerns and complaints. Rather he converted his bedroom into a small shrine and there devoted much of his time to the veneration of the relics of Persian martyrs which he had brought along from Georgia.<sup>75</sup>

This dedication to the memory of martyrs has connections with Georgian history. The earliest witnesses that remain of the Georgian literary tradition are indeed martyrdom accounts, those of St Shushanik and of the Nine Children of Kola.<sup>76</sup> In the *Martyrdom of St Shushanik*, in addition to references to the Gospels, Paul's Letters, and the Psalms, other texts attested to as written pieces are 'the holy books of the Martyrs'.<sup>77</sup> Shushanik herself speaks of 'sepulchres for the martyrs' which her father-in-law had raised up in the country.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17–18 and 21; on this part of Peter's life, see also Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 4 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 158; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 51).

<sup>76</sup> For the Georgian text of the *Martyrdom of the Nine Children of Kola* see N. Y. Marr, 'Muchenichestvo otrokov Kolaytsev', in *Teksty i Razyskaniya po Armyano-Gruzinskoy Filologii*, vol. v (St Petersburg, 1903), 55–61; an English translation can be found in D. M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London and New York, 1956), ch. 2, pp. 40–43: 'The Nine Martyred Children of Kola'. For the Georgian text of Jakob of Tsurta, *Martyrdom of St. Shushanik*, see I. Abulaze, ed. and tr. into Armenian, *Երկու Գურգաველი, Թարգմանությունը Մեսանիկոսի (Iak'ob Curt'aveli, Mart'wilobay Susanik'isi)*, (Tbilisi, 1938; repr. 1978); see also I. B. Abulaze, ed., *ძველი ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ლიტერატურის ძეგლები (Zveli kartuli agiograpiuli lit'erat'uris zeglebi* (= *Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographical Literature*)), vols. i–v (Tbilisi, 1963), vol. i, pp. 11–29; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, ch. 3, pp. 44–56: 'A Martyred Princess: The Passion of St. Shushanik'. On the *Martyrdom of St Shushanik*, see also the valuable study by Paul Peeters, 'Sainte Sousanik, martyre en Arméno-Géorgie († 13 Décembre 482–484)', *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1935), 5–48, 245–307. While Shushanik's martyrdom in the second half of the fifth century cannot be claimed to have influenced Peter the Iberian's spirituality during the early years of his life, the accumulation of evidence from Georgian sources for the dedication to martyrs nevertheless witnesses to a general climate there in which martyrs provided models for identification, and were presented as models to the faithful for that purpose.

<sup>77</sup> Jakob of Tsurta, *Martyrdom of St Shushanik* 5 (ed. Abulaze, *ძველი ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ლიტერატურის ძეგლები* (Tbilisi, 1963), vol. i, p. 16; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 49): *და წმიდანი იგი წიგნნი მოწამეთანი*. See also Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Jakob of Tsurta, *Martyrdom of St Shushanik* 4 (ed. Abulaze, *ძველი ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ლიტერატურის ძეგლები* (Tbilisi, 1963), vol. i, p. 15, ll. 5–6; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 48): *მამამან შენმან აღჰმართნა სამარტკლენი და ეკლესიანი აღამშენა*.

Thus it seems likely that the growth of Christianity in Georgia was advanced both through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the witness of martyrs. No wonder that a veneration of the relics of martyrs would hold such a central place in Peter's spirituality.

According to Rufus, several factors influenced Peter's turn to the ascetic life. In the *Plerophoriae* he states that contact with a certain deacon Basil, who was a native of Antioch, filled Peter's heart with the desire for the monastic life. Rufus knew that Basil had entered Peter on the way to salvation while Peter was still a young teenager in the imperial city.<sup>79</sup> In Constantinople Peter also made the acquaintance of Melania the Younger, that famous Roman noble lady who had given up all her wealth and had chosen to live as an ascetic on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup> Upon Theodosius II's invitation, Melania came to Constantinople in AD 437,<sup>81</sup> most likely in the context of the preparations for the celebration of the wedding between Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia which was to take place on 29 October, 437.<sup>82</sup> On the occasion of her visit, her personality and ascetic conduct impressed Peter so much that he resolved to imitate her example. The special importance of that encounter becomes clear when one realizes that from that time onward Peter felt a longing to live the ascetic life in the Holy Land.

Rufus knew how to increase the glory of his hero through a skilful presentation of the impact not only of Melania on Peter, but also of Peter on Melania. Rufus simply emphasized that when Melania met the royal youth, she took a liking to him because she could see how the grace of Christ rested upon him.<sup>83</sup> Thus Rufus effectively stressed that God loved Peter from his youth. Peter's divine election would clearly increase in credibility with the ascetic audience listening to the *Vita Petri Iberi* if it indicated that a recognized holy woman like Melania perceived Peter's special status and divine support even before it was manifested more fully.

<sup>79</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35.

<sup>80</sup> For the account of Melania's life see Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Junioris* (ed. Denys Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, SCh 90 (Paris, 1962); tr. Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (New York, 1984)). For a discussion of the ascetic influence which Melania and her husband, Pinianus, had on Peter the Iberian, see below, ch. 3, pp. 138–141.

<sup>81</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29–30; see also Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 50–56 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 224–239; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 64–69).

<sup>82</sup> Licinia Eudoxia (born AD 422) was the oldest of the three children of Theodosius II and Athenais Eudocia. See also Timothy E. Gregory, 'Valentinian III', in *ODB* 3 (1991), 2152.

<sup>83</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29.

### Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Life in Jerusalem

His encounter with Melania appears to have been the decisive moment that convinced Peter to abandon the worldly life, leave the court, and go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The emperor resisted the thought of letting Peter leave because he did not want to lose his Georgian hostage who functioned as an assurance of the Georgian allegiance to the Byzantine Empire. Therefore Theodosius simply refused to let the young prince go.

It took Peter a while to design a plan of action that would allow him to overcome such an imperial hurdle. When Peter was about twenty years of age,<sup>84</sup> i.e. around AD 437, he and John the Eunuch, one of his chamberlains and by that time his trusted confidant, finally decided that the time had come to flee and embark on a pilgrimage to the holy places.<sup>85</sup> With John's assistance Peter managed to escape from the surveillance and protection under which he was placed at the court. Having implored the help of Persian martyrs, likely those of Karkā dBet Slok and Jacobus Intercissus, or less formally, James the Cut-Up,<sup>86</sup> whose relics Peter revered and kept in a small box stored in the shrine in his bedroom, Peter and John felt secure.<sup>87</sup> Rufus describes how those Persian martyrs left their shrine and, like a pillar of fire, led the way for the two youths during the night of the two friends' flight. The martyrs were singing a certain hymn, at least one line of which Rufus records in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, possibly the refrain of that hymn. The words proclaimed: 'Seek Christ and behold the light from the light.'<sup>88</sup> Heyer emphasized the fact that all throughout his life, Peter never forgot the melody which he heard on that occasion.<sup>89</sup> They passed unharmed through the rows of guards keeping watch all over the palace and left behind the city boundaries of Constantinople. The two must have left Constantinople after Melania returned from her visit to Constantinople to

<sup>84</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.                      <sup>85</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>86</sup> See below, ch. 3, pp. 200–201 and nn. 436–443.

<sup>87</sup> For the significance of relics in the context of Peter's life as a pilgrim, see the discussion in Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown'. For a fuller identification of the martyrs and relics, see Cornelia Horn, 'Transgressing Claims to Sacred Space: The Advantage of Portable Relics in the Christological Conflict in Fifth Century AD Syria-Palestine', paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion /Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, Ga. (November 2003), in preparation for publication. For a discussion of the significance of relics in the overall composition of Rufus' work, see below, ch. 4, pp. 260–270.

<sup>88</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.                      <sup>89</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 44.

Jerusalem in February AD 437.<sup>90</sup> Whether or not any changes in imperial politics made their escape possible remains to be determined.

At least three elements come to the fore in Rufus' account of Peter's and John's escape from Constantinople. Those aspects deserve to be highlighted because they represent important themes that need to be studied in greater detail. A fuller study will situate them in the context of a discussion on the importance of pilgrimage for Rufus' purposes. The first aspect concerns the description of the relics of the Persian martyrs as 'pillars of fire' when they are showing the way for the youths on their flight. The expression 'pillars of fire' recalls the Exodus imagery of God leading the Israelites out of Egypt by moving ahead of them in the form of a cloud or a pillar of fire.<sup>91</sup> On a closer look one discovers in the *Vita Petri Iberi* several instances in which Rufus employs language and imagery derived from the Pentateuch. The procession of the martyrs and the two friends during their escape exemplifies a second motif. The *Vita Petri Iberi* employs it here as a liturgical topos. Other events, for example, the procession with Peter's physical remains, are transparent to a liturgical interpretation as well, together pointing to the liturgical function of the text itself. A third element is the importance of holy relics, specifically those of martyrs, at critical points in Peter's life. Peter felt compelled to venerate them and at the same time drew inspiration from them to follow their example and continue their mission.

The two young men's pilgrimage journey through Asia Minor, which may have taken them a few months, in its latter part also took them along the coastal cities of Syria. Peter and John carried with them the relics of the martyrs in a golden box and a copy of the Gospel of John in the cover of which Peter had inserted a fragment of the holy Cross. He had received that precious relic from certain clerics who on the occasion of their visits had brought such fragments from Jerusalem as gifts for the emperor.<sup>92</sup> After some trouble *en route* during which they were mistaken for fugitive slaves and even arrested for a while,<sup>93</sup> they arrived in Jerusalem.<sup>94</sup>

Rufus' account of their first impression of the Holy City clearly situates the events in the context of Palestine the public appearance of which had been transformed to display a Christian face at every corner. When the two young men approached Jerusalem and saw at a distance of 5 *stadia* the glistening roofs of the churches of the Holy Cross, of the Resurrection, and of the Ascension, they cried out aloud with the words of the verse of Isaiah 33:20 (LXX): 'Look upon Zion,

<sup>90</sup> See Devos, 'Quand Pierre l'Ibère', 344 and 347.

<sup>91</sup> Exodus 13:21.

<sup>92</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23–24 and 39.

<sup>93</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 25.

<sup>94</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26.

the city of our salvation; thine eyes will see Jerusalem . . .'<sup>95</sup> They fell on their faces and advanced on their knees until they entered the city and arrived at the Church of the Anastasis, where they cried and, according to Rufus, gave praises as if they were with Jesus in heaven.<sup>96</sup> Through Rufus' literary portrayal of them the two pilgrims do indeed seem to have taken sides in the debates over the 'heavenly Jerusalem'.<sup>97</sup>

Melania the Younger's grandmother, Melania the Elder, had already erected monastic foundations on the Mount of Olives.<sup>98</sup> Rufus credits her granddaughter, Melania the Younger, with having established specifically two monasteries on the Mount of Olives, one for men and one for women.<sup>99</sup> She learned of the arrival of Peter and John the Eunuch and welcomed them joyfully into her monastery. Given their already established acquaintance from the previous encounter in Constantinople, the connection that now developed between the prince-turned-pilgrim Peter and the lady-turned-ascetic Melania may have come quite naturally. During the initial stages of Peter's career in Palestine, the two pilgrims Peter and John lived in the monastery for men, which Melania had founded close to the Imbomon on the Mount of Olives.<sup>100</sup> From Gerontius, who was the superior of Melania's monasteries, at least of those on the Mount of Olives, Peter and John received the monastic habit in a special ceremony in the Church of the Anastasis.<sup>101</sup> From that time onwards the former Nabarnugios would be called Peter, and the former Mithridatos would carry the name John. It was clear for Rufus that Peter's new name already included a God-given programme in parallel to the function of the Apostle Peter in the Church as a whole. When Peter received the monastic garb and with it his new name from Gerontius, he was twenty years old.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26–27.

<sup>96</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26–27.

<sup>97</sup> See the study by Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven and London, 1992), esp. chs. 4 and 5.

<sup>98</sup> Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 46.5 (ed. Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius*, vol. ii (Cambridge, 1904), 135; tr. Robert T. Meyer, *Palladius: The Lausiaca History*, ACW 34 (Westminster, Md., and London, 1965), 124; German tr. by Jacques Laager, *Palladius, Historia Lausiaca: Die frühen Heiligen in der Wüste* (Zurich, 1987), 231). For the Syriac witness, see the edition and translation by René Draguet, *Les Formes Syriaques de la matière de l'histoire Lausiaque*, CSCO 398–399, *Scriptores Syri*, tt. 173–174 (Louvain, 1978), 298, l. 17 (Syriac) and 197 (French).

<sup>99</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27–28. Some sources speak of three monasteries that were under Melania's guidance.

<sup>100</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 44.

<sup>101</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 30–32.

<sup>102</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 33. The pilgrimage journey from Constantinople to Jerusalem and the two young men's initial encounter with the ascetics on the Mount of Olives thus did not seem to have taken a long time.

From Rufus' account one gets the strong impression that Gerontius exerted some influence on Peter's personal, religious, and ideological development. Gerontius was of Jerusalemite origin. He was known primarily for his unceasing persistence in defending anti-Chalcedonian doctrines. Most likely he also is the author of the *Life of Melania*. After Melania's death in AD 439, he supervised Melania's monasteries in Jerusalem.<sup>103</sup> He suffered for the anti-Chalcedonian faith, consistently refused to communicate with those who agreed with the Council of Chalcedon, and avoided any contact and converse with Juvenal, Jerusalem's Chalcedonian bishop.

Peter's stay in Jerusalem marks a phase in his life that was dominated by his contribution to the rebuilding of the architectural landscape of the city. According to Rufus' description, the Holy City proper had only few inhabitants and a limited number of housing facilities in the 440s. Rufus explains therefore that the church representatives wished to increase the number of residents in the Holy City and desired that more buildings should be erected. Thus they gave permission to all who wished and could, to claim and take possession of any place in whichever part of the city they liked without payment.<sup>104</sup> Peter and his friend John built a monastery close to the so-called Tower of David in the area called Mount Zion.<sup>105</sup> The monastery was also known as the 'Monastery of the Iberians'.<sup>106</sup> This building activity of Peter and John constitutes the very beginning of the presence of Georgian monasticism in the Holy Land. Peter is thus to be regarded as the first Georgian monk in Jerusalem and the first founder of Georgian monastic establishments there.<sup>107</sup>

Initially, they set up their monastery as a hostel for pilgrims, and for quite a while they were able to accommodate pilgrims for

<sup>103</sup> On Gerontius, see J. Gribomont, 'Gerontius', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 350. On Melania see A. Pollastri, 'Melania junior', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 550; Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'Melania the Younger', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 1331–1332.

<sup>104</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 44–45.

<sup>105</sup> What is now known as the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem was in the early centuries of the city's Christian history an area that was heavily populated by ascetics and that was known as 'Mount Zion'.

<sup>106</sup> This monastery is not identical with the well-known Georgian 'Monastery of the Cross', situated to the west of the Old City of Jerusalem, close to the main campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For a brief discussion of the history of the 'Monastery of the Cross', see Vassilios Tzaferis, 'The Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem', in *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem and Washington, DC, 1993), 143–146.

<sup>107</sup> In an analogous sense, one could state the same in regard to John the Eunuch and the beginnings of a Lazic monastic tradition in the Holy Land, which, however, seems even less well documented. See also below, p. 72, n. 111.

free.<sup>108</sup> In that way Peter and John became considerably involved in the Holy City's pilgrimage 'boom' at the time, probably more than was beneficial for the two young ascetics' spiritual development. Foreseeing this danger and noticing that Peter and John were neglecting the proper monastic way of life, the monk Zeno, disciple of the famous Silvanus,<sup>109</sup> who also functioned as Peter's spiritual adviser, recalled them to their monastic vocation.<sup>110</sup> In response to Abba Zeno's advice, Peter and John entered another monastery. Rufus does not state clearly whether that monastery was one of those located more immediately within the Holy City or of those a bit further away, possibly in the Judaeian Desert.<sup>111</sup> It might very well be that at that occasion Peter and John undertook their pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, on the top of which ascetics were preserving sacred the

<sup>108</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46. See also H. Leclercq, 'Hôpitaux, hospices, hôtelleries', in *DACL* 6 (1925), cols. 2748–2770.

<sup>109</sup> For a discussion of Abba Silvanus and his disciple Zeno 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', *Irenikon* 61 (1988), 315–331, 451–480. More recently, for a discussion of Silvanus' and Zeno's place in the context of Gazan monasticism, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, 'ניירות עזה בתקופה הביזנטית [The Monastic Community of Gaza in the Byzantine Period]', *קתדרה [Katedrah le-toldot Erets Yisrael ve-Yishuvah] /Cathedra* 96 (2000), 69–110, here 79–81 (Silvanus) and 81–82 (Zeno); an English version of this material appeared as Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, 'Gazan Monasticism in the Fourth–Sixth Centuries: From Anchoritic to Cenobitic', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50 (2000), 14–62, here 25–28.

<sup>110</sup> On Abba Zeno, see *Vita Petri Iberi* 47, 49–51 and *Plerophoriae* 8, 13, and 52.

<sup>111</sup> A remarkable new discovery may suggest even another scenario. Recent excavations in the south-east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Umm Lisan have brought to light a crypt that formerly functioned as the burial hall of a small Byzantine monastery. It housed 13 tombs that held the remains of about 30 monks. One burial trough in particular contained the remains of an elderly monk, who probably died in his sixties. The trough carries an inscription in ancient Georgian, which reads, 'Bishop Ioane of Georgia'. Preliminary epigraphic analysis dates the inscription to the fifth to sixth centuries AD. See Jon Seligman, 'A Newly Discovered Georgian Monastery Near Jerusalem', paper delivered at the American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Ga., 2003, as well as the internet announcements on *Independent Online (IOL)* ('Georgian Monks Were Here, Inscription Says', at [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za), published 15 November 2002; accessed 30 November, 2004), and on *Archeology News* ('A Newly Discovered Georgian Monastery in Jerusalem', at [www.nclci.org/news/archeology\\_news.htm](http://www.nclci.org/news/archeology_news.htm), accessed 30 November, 2004). See also Tamila Mgaloblishvili, 'An Unknown Georgian Monastery from the 5th Century in Umm Lisan, near Jerusalem', paper delivered at ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies Twenty-First International Conference, Oxford, July 2005. What connections may have existed between Peter the Iberian and this group of monks is a question inviting further research. Perhaps it was indeed the monastery Peter and John entered in response to Abba Zeno's advice.

memory of Moses.<sup>112</sup> After some time there, the two returned to their own monastery at the Tower of David.<sup>113</sup>

It is very likely that during his years in Jerusalem Peter was exposed to the powerful influence of the famous preacher and theologian Hesychius, who served as presbyter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>114</sup> Rufus alludes to Hesychius as a witness and concerned spokesman of the harmful effect of the Council of Chalcedon on the local population of Jerusalem.<sup>115</sup> The close contact which Hesychius appears to have enjoyed with Empress Eudocia suggests that he was a man of great influence and power. Scholars like Klaudius Jüssen see no 'monophysite' tendencies in Hesychius' works.<sup>116</sup> Yet such an evaluation obviously does not preclude friendly contact between this famous Jerusalemite theologian and the people who later on would become central figures of the anti-Chalcedonian movement. Rufus, on his part, did not exclude Hesychius from being mentioned in his work, and moreover does not raise any criticism against him. Thus, later anti-Chalcedonian memory saw no reason to object to Hesychius' teachings. Nevertheless, the precise scope of Peter, John, and Hesychius' contact, and, perhaps, even mutual influence, is difficult to assess.<sup>117</sup>

Rufus notes that Peter's presence in the Holy City had come to Juvenal's attention. Juvenal wished to ordain him as a priest. Yet Peter managed to escape his repeated attempts, thus, as seen from the anti-Chalcedonian perspective, avoiding priestly ordination from the hands of the chief betrayer of the faith at Chalcedon.<sup>118</sup>

When Empress Eudocia finally settled in Jerusalem around AD 441/442 and wished to meet the young prince Peter, of whom she had taken care like a mother during his time in Constantinople, Peter repeatedly avoided her.<sup>119</sup> As a reason for this behaviour Rufus suggests Peter's fear that he would violate the monastic rules by looking at a woman.<sup>120</sup> Finally Eudocia took the initiative and came to him on her own. However, when she wanted to visit Peter

<sup>112</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85–86.

<sup>113</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47–48.

<sup>114</sup> On Hesychius, see below, ch. 3, p. 152; ch. 4, pp. 279 and 281–282; and especially ch. 5, pp. 370–372. See also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 64–75.

<sup>115</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10.

<sup>116</sup> See Klaudius Jüssen, *Die dogmatischen Anschauungen des Hesychius von Jerusalem*, 2 vols. (Münster, 1931–34), esp. i. 152–160.

<sup>117</sup> For physical remains of a building in Jerusalem, connected with the name of Hesychius, see below, ch. 4, pp. 281–282. For a discussion of aspects of the influence of Hesychius' preaching on Peter the Iberian, see below, ch. 5, pp. 371–372.

<sup>118</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 50; *Plerophoriae* 42.

<sup>119</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 48.

<sup>120</sup> Peter's contact with Melania appears not to have constituted grounds for similar concerns, likely because Melania, as an ascetic woman, already had left behind the restrictive categories of physical womanhood. 'Becoming male' was indeed a goal of the ascetic life for some women. Early Christian literature preserves

again, he followed the advice of his spiritual father, who had told him, 'Save yourself!'<sup>121</sup> Thus, Peter left the Holy City, departed to Maiuma, the port city of Gaza,<sup>122</sup> and joined a monastic community, located between Gaza and Maiuma.<sup>123</sup>

## THE AFTERMATH OF THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON IN THE HOLY LAND

### Monks Rebelling against Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem

One particular event which clearly manifested the admiration and respect for Cyril of Alexandria in Palestine as well as his authority in the Jerusalemite Church occurred in AD 438. Empress Eudocia, who had become quite extensively involved in the building activities in Jerusalem, had extended a special invitation to Cyril to come to the Holy City and officiate at the consecration of the Church of St Stephen.<sup>124</sup> When the relics of the protomartyr Stephen were

quite a few hagiographies of women dressing in male garments, and living in male monasteries. For a recent discussion of this phenomenon with bibliographical references to relevant texts, see Stephen J. Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex: Intertextuality and Gender in Early Christian Legends of Holy Women Disguised as Men', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.1 (2002), 1–36.

<sup>121</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49. For a fuller discussion of the relationship between Peter and Eudocia see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

<sup>122</sup> On Gaza, see Tsafrir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 129–131; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 10/n. 331, p. 885. On excavations in Gaza immediately relevant for the history of Christianity, see also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Gaza (68), 478–480. See also Asher Ovadiah, 'Gaza', in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. ii (1993), 464–467; and A. Negev, 'Gaza', in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton, NJ, 1976), 345–346.

<sup>123</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49. See also Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 44. See especially below, ch. 3, pp. 206–214, as well as Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism'.

<sup>124</sup> For detailed information on the archaeology of specific buildings she promoted in the Jerusalem area, see Klaus Bieberstein and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem: Grundzüge der Baugeschichte vom Chalkolithikum bis zur Frühzeit der osmanischen Herrschaft*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften), Nr. 100/1–3, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1994), vol. i, pp. 158–161 and vol. ii, p. 51 (Church of St George); vol. ii, pp. 114–117 and vol. iii, p. 143 (city walls); vol. ii, pp. 146–147 (inscription with Eudocia's name); vol. ii, pp. 231–237 (Church of St Stephen); and vol. ii, p. 388 (hostel or palace). Yet also other regions of Palestine benefited from her largesse, sometimes even artistically. See e.g. Judith Green and Yoram Tsafrir, 'Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader: A Poem by the Empress Eudocia and Two Building Inscriptions', *Israel Exploration Journal* 32 (1982), 77–96, here 79–80, for the text of her poem.

discovered, Eudocia commissioned the building of a new *martyrion* with adjacent monastery for the repose of those relics. The consecration of the Church of St Stephen and the depositing of the proto-martyr's relics took place on 15 March, 438.<sup>125</sup> Melania the Younger died in 439. Cyril died on 27 June, 444.<sup>126</sup> Thus the consecration and deposition ceremonies must have taken place at the occasion of Eudocia's first pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 438.<sup>127</sup> That Cyril rather than Juvenal was chosen to preside over the dedicatory liturgy at the new *martyrion* of St Stephen is to be regarded both as a recognition for the Alexandrian archbishop as well as a sign of the high esteem in which Cyril's theology was held in Palestine and in imperial circles represented by Eudocia.<sup>128</sup> Up until 451, the bishop of Jerusalem was a suffragan of the metropolitan of Caesarea, who in his turn was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Antioch. Perhaps Eudocia also intended to show her antipathy for Nestorius and his supporters.

At the occasion of Cyril's visit, Melania invited him to deposit the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Armenia, and a different relic of St Stephen in another *martyrion* which she had built on the Mount of Olives. The second ceremony took place on the day after the consecration of the Church of St Stephen north of Jerusalem. In the context of the service on the Mount of Olives on 16 March, AD 438, Cyril also deposited the relics of the Persian martyrs which Peter had brought along with him from Constantinople.<sup>129</sup>

Three points seem important to note here: first, the splendid celebrations laid due emphasis on the role of martyrs as examples to be imitated in the life of Christians in general and of ascetics in particular in the Church in the Holy Land. Second, with regard to

<sup>125</sup> Michel Aubineau, *Les Homélie Festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, vol. i: *Les Homélie I–XV*, Subsidia Hagiographica 59 (Brussels, 1978), p. 318 and nn. 1 and 2; see also P. Devos, 'ΣΕΜΝΟΣ = ΜΙΚΡΟΣ chez Jean Rufus et Gêrontios', *Analecta Bollandiana* 86 (1968), 258.

<sup>126</sup> Manlio Simonetti, 'Cyril of Alexandria', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 214. See also Chabot, 'Pierre l'Ibérien', 372 n. 5, for the date of his commemoration on 29 January 445.

<sup>127</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 33–34.

<sup>128</sup> It was only through the regulations of canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon that the bishop of Jerusalem received the title 'patriarch' and the see of Jerusalem emerged as a patriarchate in its own right. See Aristeides Papadakis and Alexander Kazhdan, 'Patriarchates', in *ODB* 3 (1991), 1599–1600, here 1600. More generally, only after Chalcedon was the title 'patriarch' as a technical term applied to the respective incumbents of the five patriarchal sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. One wonders why the *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, produced in Rome, does not have any entry under 'patriarch' or 'patriarchate', while *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* does not contain any entry under 'pope'.

<sup>129</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32–33.

knitting more tightly the net of relationships that influenced and determined Peter's personal and public development it becomes visible here that the ties between Eudocia, Melania, and Peter were renewed in Jerusalem.<sup>130</sup> Third, it is obvious that a personal encounter between Peter and Cyril of Alexandria was within easy reach at the occasion of Cyril's visit to Jerusalem. Thus, a staunch anti-Chalcedonian like Rufus did not miss the opportunity to talk in retrospect as extensively as possible about such a formative encounter between Cyril and his own hero, Peter, even if in reality their contact was limited, probably, to being present together at the same liturgical celebration.<sup>131</sup>

The ties between the Alexandrian and the Jerusalemite church hierarchy have a long history. It must suffice here to point to the role that Theophilus had played earlier in the fourth century in the context of the Origenist crisis in Palestine.<sup>132</sup> For a while he had functioned as a mediator between the different parties involved, but in AD 399 he gave up his more balanced stance and condemned the Origenists outright.<sup>133</sup>

It seems that a one-sided, and thus restricted, understanding of Cyril of Alexandria's 'one-nature' theology, which modern-day scholars for a long time have labelled 'Monophysitism',<sup>134</sup> had spread rather quickly and extensively in Palestine,<sup>135</sup> especially among the ascetic communities. The rebellions that were to break out in Palestine in the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 are a clear indication of this.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>130</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 33.

<sup>131</sup> For background information on Cyril's visit see also 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)*, Seminarium Franciscane Orientale Ghizae (Aegypti) (Cairo, 1947), 203-230.

<sup>132</sup> A more recent monograph dedicated to the study of that crisis is Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992).

<sup>133</sup> See Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 68.

<sup>134</sup> See Pauline Allen, 'Monophysiten', in *TRE* 23 (1994), 219-233, for clarifications regarding the terminology.

<sup>135</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 237.

<sup>136</sup> Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', is still the fundamental study of events that led up to the rebellion of the Palestinian monks against their bishop in AD 451, as well as of the rebellion itself. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 89-103, resumed and elaborated on this study. Also consult with benefit F. Winkelmann, 'Konzeptionen des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Staat im frühen Byzanz, untersucht am Beispiel der *Apostasia* Palästinas (452-453)', in *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium* (Praha, 1985), 73-85. Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 235, summarized that

Juvenal of Jerusalem had supported Cyril's condemnation of Nestorius.<sup>137</sup> In 449, at the meeting of the so-called 'robber council' of Ephesus, together with twenty-one Palestinian bishops Juvenal supported Dioscorus, Cyril's successor. Both events indicate strong Palestinian support for the interests and theology of Alexandria and its archbishop. Ultimately, however, it became clear that Juvenal's main goal was to sustain, support, and if possible expand his own rule over Jerusalem and beyond.

In the aftermath of the Second Council of Ephesus, Juvenal gained the support of Emperor Theodosius II for the fulfilment of one of his long-standing desires. Probably in the context of a local synod of Constantinople, held in connection with the consecration of Maximus of Antioch sometime between April and 28 July, AD 450, the day when Theodosius II died,<sup>138</sup> Juvenal had the three provinces of *Phoenicia Prima*, *Phoenicia Secunda*, and *Arabia* assigned to his ecclesiastical territory.<sup>139</sup> Just about a month after Theodosius' death, on 24 or 25 August, AD 450, Marcian, the newly-wed husband of Theodosius' sister Pulcheria, became emperor.<sup>140</sup> The new imperial couple were united in their disapproval of the 'heretical'<sup>141</sup> and 'impious' errors committed at the Second Council of Ephesus, and

Dioscorus of Alexandria and Juvenal of Jerusalem 'came off as victors in the struggle fought out at [the Second Council, aka "Robber Synod" of] Ephesus' in AD 449. For him it also was 'quite safe to assume that Juvenal's leading role at the side of Dioscorus highly impressed the Palestinians' (p. 237).

<sup>137</sup> On the condemnatory document Juvenal placed his signature immediately following Cyril's. See Eduard Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Ephesenum*, 'Gesta Ephesena', *ACO* i.i.ii, p. 55. For Juvenal's pre-eminent position, see also *ACO* i.i.ii, p. 3; *ACO* i.ii, p. 27; *ACO* i.iii, p. 52; and *ACO* i.v, p. 85. Occasionally, other signatures are placed between those of Cyril and Juvenal. See e.g. the *Letter to the Clergy and People of Constantinople on the Deposition of Nestorius*, which is signed by Juvenal immediately following the signatures of Cyril of Alexandria and Philippus, presbyter of the Church of the Apostles in Constantinople. See *ACO* i.iii, p. 95.

<sup>138</sup> Theodore Lector, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.1 and II.64, in PG 86.1, cols. 165A and 213B. For the section in I.1, see also Theodoros Anagnostes, *Kirchengeschichte*, epitome 353, ed. by G. Chr. Hansen, GCS n.s. 3 (Berlin, 1995), 100, ll. 4–6. See also Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5942 [AD 449/50] (ed. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. i (Leipzig, 1883), 103.8; tr. Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes* (Oxford, 1997), 159); and Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 238 and 239 n.

14.

<sup>139</sup> Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 238, see also n. 7.

<sup>140</sup> Marcellinus Comes, *Chronica minora*, vol. ii, ed. Mommsen (Berlin, 1894), 83; see Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 239 n. 15.

<sup>141</sup> In his *Letter* 60, dated to 17 March 450 and sent to Pulcheria, Pope Leo quoted Pulcheria as having expressed her dismay over the 'heretical error' committed at the Second Council of Ephesus in a previous letter. *Epistle* 60 = *ACO* ii.iv, p. 29.1–20; see Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 239 n. 16.

Marcian intended to convoke a new council to undo those errors.<sup>142</sup> That new council was to convene under the presidency of Pope Leo.

After Bishop Flavian of Constantinople had died in consequence of beatings he had suffered in the context of the Second Council of Ephesus, Anatolius became bishop of Constantinople in April 450. On 21 October, AD 450, he signed the famous *Tome of Leo*.<sup>143</sup> This dogmatic letter was one of the several products of cooperation between Pope Leo and the layman Prosper of Aquitaine.<sup>144</sup> The *Tome* was sent first, on 13 June, AD 449, to Flavian, then the bishop of Constantinople,<sup>145</sup> and resent to Constantinople on 16 July, AD 450, the second time to the new bishop, Anatolius.<sup>146</sup> Leo's theological formulations of the relationship between the human and the divine nature in Christ caused a conflict of conscience for those who, in line with Dioscorus, supported a strict defence of Cyril's theological formulation of the one incarnate nature of Christ.<sup>147</sup> Thus Juvenal, as a Palestinian in support of Cyril, must have felt challenged when the *Tome of Leo*, after Anatolius had signed it, was sent 'to all the metropolitan sees' to be signed by the bishops.<sup>148</sup> Honigmann assumes that Juvenal did not refuse his signature at that point.<sup>149</sup> If that was the case, perhaps Juvenal played a double game, voicing to the hierarchical representatives agreement with the *Tome of Leo* on the one hand, yet on the other hand sounding his rejection of the *Tome* to

<sup>142</sup> In a letter to Pope Leo, the new emperor Marcian announced his intention 'to do away with all impious error' by calling together a new synod. *Epistularum ante gesta collect.*, 27, *ACO*, ii.iii.i, p. 17.17–28; Greek tr.: *Collectio M*, 10, *ACO* ii.i.i, p. 10, ll. 5–18. See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 239 n. 17.

<sup>143</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 240.

<sup>144</sup> On the collaboration between Prosper of Aquitaine and Pope Leo in formulating the *Tome of Leo* see J. Gaidioz, 'Saint Prosper d'Aquitaine et le Tome à Flavien', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 23 (1949), 270–301. For a more recent discussion, which corrects Gaidioz's assumption that neat differentiations between the work of Leo and that of Prosper can be made based on sorting documents according to their use of 'substantia' and 'natura', see N. W. James, 'Leo the Great and Prosper of Aquitaine: A Fifth Century Pope and His Adviser', *Journal of Theological Studies* 44.2 (1993), 554–584, esp. 555–557.

<sup>145</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 233. For the *Tome of Leo*, see, Leo, *Epistula* 28 (JK 423) = *Collectio Novariensis de re Eutyichis* 5, *ACO* ii.ii.i (Berlin and Leipzig, 1932), pp. 24.15–33.2. See *Gestorum Chalcedonensium versio a Rustico edita*, act. II (III), 20, *ACO* ii.iii.ii (Berlin and Leipzig, 1936), p. 14.27–30 (273.27–30).

<sup>146</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 233 n. 68: 'The letter was translated into Greek after the pope had sent it again on July 16, 450, plus a short florilegium, to Patriarch Anatolius'.

<sup>147</sup> See the discussion in Robert V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London, 1961), ch. 2, pp. 254–301.

<sup>148</sup> *Concilii Chalcedonensis actio* XIX.23, *ACO* ii.i.iii, p. 106.26 (465.26): τοῖς ἀπανταχοῦ μητροπολίταις. See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 240 n. 22.

<sup>149</sup> Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 240.

the members of his own church in Palestine, especially the monks. Rufus describes the impression Juvenal had tried to make in Jerusalem before he went to the Council of Chalcedon:

[H]e had rejected what is called the *Tome of Leo*, scoffing at the ungodliness which 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,' and, 'He who consents to it deserves to be circumcised.'<sup>150</sup>

Despite such strong words of opposition to the *Tome of Leo* and the theology expressed in it, the Palestinian monks, according to Rufus, had less than perfect trust in their bishop. They thought it necessary to watch him closely.

Indeed, it would not take long before Juvenal reconsidered the situation and thus also brought about a sudden change in the mutually supportive relationship between Palestine and Egypt. That change occurred at Chalcedon, where Juvenal openly abandoned Dioscorus.

Although Pulcheria had given instructions to clear the city of Chalcedon of clergy, monks, and lay people, who were not welcome there,<sup>151</sup> several monks from Palestine managed to be present in the city and supposedly at the council as well. The fact that these Palestinian monks felt it necessary to be in Chalcedon in person indicates their lack of trust in their own bishop and in any reports Juvenal would bring back to Jerusalem about events at the council. Although Juvenal is reported to have rejected Pope Leo's doctrinal letter before he left for Chalcedon, at the council itself, the so-called *Tome of Leo* turned out to be the basis and the determining influence for the final formulation of the faith. Thus Juvenal may have felt he had no other choice than to accept the *Tome* with his own signature.

Juvenal staged his change of sides effectively. At an appropriate occasion he arose from his seat at Dioscorus' side and sat down on a chair at the side of the majority party that dominated the council's

<sup>150</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52. Other authors describe the stance Juvenal expressed to the monks of the Holy Land in a similar way. See, for example, Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 3 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 157, ll. 7–8; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 50): 'But he [i.e. Juvenal] showed himself like Pilate, saying, "What I have written, I have written."' See also below, ch. 2, p. 82.

<sup>151</sup> Pulcheria, 'Letter to Strategios, governor of Bithynia', ed. by Eduard Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense*, ACO ii.i.i, letter 15, p. 29 (Greek); ACO ii.iii.i, letter 33, p. 21 (Latin). See Heinrich Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (431–519)', in Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, eds., *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. ii: *Entscheidung um Chalkedon* (Würzburg, 1953), p. 236 and n. 31.

affairs, the group led by Anatolius of Constantinople and Pope Leo's representatives. That act and Juvenal's subsequent signing of Leo's *Tome* did not go unnoticed.

On 8 October, AD 451, when Juvenal, together with nineteen Palestinian and twenty-six Phoenician bishops,<sup>152</sup> was present at the opening of the Council of Chalcedon in the Church of Saint Euphemia, sitting in the company of Dioscorus and the Egyptian and Illyrian bishops,<sup>153</sup> monks from Palestine were watching the proceedings. Several monks from Palestine had come to Chalcedon, led by a certain Theodosius. Leontius, a former monk and archimandrite from Palestine, who in the meantime had become bishop of Ashkelon, had accompanied Juvenal to the Council. Rufus claims, probably polemically, that this Leontius was a great supporter of Nestorius, meaning by that, at the very least, that he was a Chalcedonian.<sup>154</sup> Rumours circulated among anti-Chalcedonians that this Leontius of Ashkelon 'was the one who was summoning Juvenal to subscribe to the apostasy more than all the [other] ones'.<sup>155</sup> As they were present at the Council, the Palestinian monks could observe Juvenal's dramatic move when he switched sides<sup>156</sup> and separated himself from the party of Dioscorus. Dioscorus was exiled,<sup>157</sup> an event which struck a lasting blow to the Church of Egypt.

At least one of the monks, the Theodosius mentioned above, who had come along as unofficial observer from Palestine, was outraged.<sup>158</sup> Immediately after the proclamation of the decision he returned hastily to Jerusalem, making sure that he would be there before any one of the returning bishops. He felt morally obliged to alert believers back home about the scandalous decisions at the Council. Yet even more than that he wanted to spread the news about Juvenal's impertinent conduct. In the eyes of Theodosius and the monks who had accompanied him, Juvenal appeared as a traitor of the faith. In their view he had broken a promise they thought he had made, namely, never to accept the *Tome of Leo*. According to the monks' understanding, the solution which Chalcedon had reached

<sup>152</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 241, who also lists the names of the Palestinian bishops and of three Phoenician ones.

<sup>153</sup> *Council of Chalcedonensis actio* I.4, *ACO* ii.i.i, p. 65.8–14. See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 240–241.

<sup>154</sup> *Plerophoriae* 52. <sup>155</sup> *Plerophoriae* 52.

<sup>156</sup> See, for example, the account in Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 3 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 156; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 49–50).

<sup>157</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>158</sup> For documentation establishing the presence of Theodosius in Chalcedon at the time of the council, see discussion and references above, ch. 2, p. 79 and n. 151.

with the distinction of two natures in Christ was a revival of the Nestorian heresy which previously had been condemned at Ephesus. Nothing could deter those Palestinian monks from their conviction that this was exactly what had happened. Like other strict supporters in Egypt of Cyril's theology, the Palestinian monks proved to be completely uncompromising.

After the council, Juvenal travelled back to Palestine, not trying to conceal his return in any way, although, according to Rufus, he had declared to the monks prior to his departure for Chalcedon that anyone who agreed with the *Tome of Leo* would be worthy of excommunication. While Juvenal was still on his way back from the council, some Palestinian monks, led by Theodosius, arrived before him in Palestine and spread the news of what had happened, proclaiming angrily that Chalcedon was a great victory of the Nestorians.<sup>159</sup> In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus describes the likely situation in Palestine:

the rejection [of the faith] by signature of all those rebellious bishops [including] the ratification of the wicked *Tome of Leo* and the renewal of the wicked teachings of Nestorius was proclaimed everywhere.<sup>160</sup>

Evagrius' portrayal of the same situation is even more colourful. He says in the *Ecclesiastical History*:

But not even the desert areas in the vicinity of Jerusalem maintained tranquillity, for some of the monks who had been present at the Synod but wished to hold different opinions from it, came [back] to Palestine; and lamenting the betrayal of the faith, they were eager to reignite and reawaken the monastic community.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, while Juvenal was on his way back to Palestine, uproar and revolt were building up among the Palestinian clerics and ascetics. Monks and nuns went out onto the streets in expectation of Juvenal's return. Full of zeal they were ready to set him right and put him back on the way of God. They intended to remind him of his own promise,

<sup>159</sup> See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', 248. Honigmann pointed out that '[t]he monk Theodosius spread the rumor that the synod, in contradiction to the symbol of the holy fathers, had decreed that two Sons, two Christs, and two Persons be venerated'. On p. 248 n. 2, Honigmann cites as basis for this information Emperor Marcian's letter to Bishop Macarius and the monks of Mount Sinai, *ACO* ii.i.iii, p. 131.20 (490.20) and Emperor Marcian's letter to the Palestinian synod, *ACO* ii.i.iii, p. 133.17 (492.17).

<sup>160</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>161</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 2, ch. 5 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 51.28–52.1; tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 78 (modified); see also Walford, *Evagrius Scholasticus: History of the Church*, 302).

made before he left for Chalcedon. The ascetic crowd was ready to fight for the truth.<sup>162</sup>

In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus presents his audience with a scene in which ascetics and clerics gathered in the Holy City, having, as he said, ‘the Lord Jesus Christ in their midst’.<sup>163</sup> These ascetics were filled with a burning zeal to defend Jesus, who in their opinion was being denied by the godless ones. The importance of the motif of Christ’s crucifixion and death as an element inspiring the ascetics’ way of life is expressed clearly when references are made to Jesus as the one who enables the truth to win and who supports and aids the right-believing Church which he redeemed with his own blood.<sup>164</sup> Mentioning Christ’s shedding of his blood would also have reminded the monks of the blood of Christ they received in the Eucharist, the right celebration of which they considered to be of greatest importance for their ascetic life and their eternal salvation.<sup>165</sup>

Imagery related to the events of Christ’s passion and death is quite frequently used in anti-Chalcedonian literature. In his *Chronicle* Zachariah Rhetor compared Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem to Pilate. When describing the scene in which the monks confronted Juvenal and asked him to withdraw his signature from the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, Zachariah stated that ‘[Juvenal] showed himself like Pilate, saying, “What I have written, I have written”,’<sup>166</sup> citing literally Pilate’s words as recorded in John 19:22. Rufus called Juvenal ‘high-priest of Jerusalem’, which is correct in so far as Juvenal was the bishop of Jerusalem, but which also carries the overtones of identifying Juvenal with the Jewish high-priest who handed Jesus over to the Romans. Moreover, Rufus claimed that as ‘high-priest of

<sup>162</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>163</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>164</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>165</sup> The sacrament of the Eucharist played an important role in the development of the Christological controversies. See the important article by Henry Chadwick, ‘Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy’, *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 2 (1951), 145–164, for the early period. For a consideration of attitudes to the Eucharist in anti-Chalcedonian settings in the course of the sixth century, see Volker Menze, ‘Priests, Laity and the Sacrament of the Eucharist in Sixth-Century Syria’, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 7.2 (2004), <http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol7No2/HV7N2Menze.html>. Also see below, ch. 2, pp. 83 and 88–91. The central role of the Eucharist in particular and the proper celebration of the sacraments more broadly in Rufus’ works as they bear upon the Chalcedonian /anti-Chalcedonian Christological controversies in Palestine form the subject of a separate study in progress, tentatively entitled ‘Eucharist, Baptism, and the Separation of the Churches in Response to Chalcedon (AD 451) in the Light of Contemporary Documents from Palestine’.

<sup>166</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 3 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 157; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 50).

Jerusalem' Juvenal 'agreed with the transgression of the law'.<sup>167</sup> According to Rufus, Juvenal also 'preferred . . . the part of Judas the betrayer'.<sup>168</sup>

Rufus paints a vivid picture of what, he claims, happened when the crowd of Palestinian ascetics went out to meet Juvenal upon his return from Chalcedon and hindered his attempt to enter Palestine. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus describes a scene of outrage among the Palestinian clergy and ascetics when they learned of Juvenal's signing the *tomos* of Chalcedon:

When the clergy and the holy monks in Palestine heard [of] these things, being agitated by divine zeal they first of all went out to confront Juvenal on the road. They very earnestly entreated him to remember his [own] words, to reject the ungodliness, and to fight on behalf of the truth. When he was not persuaded,<sup>169</sup> they gathered together in the Holy City, having Our Lord Jesus Christ in their midst, who was denied by the godless ones, but who helps His truth and His orthodox Church, which He has redeemed by His blood.<sup>170</sup>

The passage attests to the fact that the encounter between Juvenal and the rebellious monks did not take place in Jerusalem, but somewhere 'on the road'. Furthermore, no specific information is provided about what exactly happened to Juvenal. In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus fills in some of the missing details when he reports on a Eucharistic miracle that happened at that time in the Church of the Apostles at Caesarea.<sup>171</sup>

When the holy orthodox fathers went to the meeting with Juvenal, the apostate, on his return from the Council [of Chalcedon], in order to rebuke him or to persuade him to repent and to set himself right, they were prohibited by the governor from entering Caesarea, because they were numerous. Since many [other] people were joining them, he [i.e. the governor] persuaded them to celebrate the Eucharist in the Church of the Apostles which is [located] outside of the city. As many believers received and kept [the Eucharist] with them, they later found [that it had changed into] real flesh and blood. The priest Abba Maxos, a trustworthy man, also

<sup>167</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>168</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>169</sup> See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 3 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 157; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 50), with the reference to Pilate.

<sup>170</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>171</sup> On Caesarea, see Tsafrir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 94–96; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 5 / n. 57, pp. 744–747; and Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Caesarea (41), 450–453.

testified to this wonder when he said that he was an eye-witness of such a mystic symbol.<sup>172</sup>

It appears that the crowd of the clergy and ascetics had gone all the way up to Caesarea to meet Juvenal at his port of entry into Palestine.<sup>173</sup> The number of people involved seems to have been very large and probably included lay people who had joined the troops of monks and clerics hoping to convince their former archbishop, now patriarch, to change his mind. Yet the governor of Caesarea, fearing grave unrest, did not allow the crowds of monks, clerics, and lay people to enter the city. The people and their patriarch met outside of the city in the Church of the Apostles.<sup>174</sup> That meeting had the character of a public trial.<sup>175</sup> For his defence, Juvenal reminded the monks that their protest was an insubordinate act towards their emperor. Yet Juvenal was not the only one who appealed to the emperor's authority. If one looks more carefully at the role Peter the Iberian played in these events, it becomes clear that he likewise proved to be an influential participant in favour of the side of the anti-Chalcedonians, precisely because he could refer to his connections with the imperial court.

### **The Significance of Peter the Iberian's Role in the Rebellion of the Monks against Juvenal of Jerusalem**

In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus allows his reader to gain some insight into the special role that Peter held in the movement of resistance to Juvenal. Rufus informs his audience that:

When the apostate Juvenal returned from the council of the oppressors, it seemed good to the holy orthodox Fathers and the monks who were in Palestine to meet [him] on [his] way, act according to their strength, and instruct him so that he would know his folly, set himself straight, and cast off the scandal from the inhabited world. However, they also asked the blessed Abba Peter who was gathered at that time in the *lavra* of Maiuma to go with them. As he [tr]ied to excuse himself for not being accustomed to leaving [his place], and because of [his lack of experience] conversing with lay people, especially with those from the court, from among whom Juvenal had many coming down with him for his assistance and his security, our Saviour appeared to him [i.e. Peter], saying, 'I am being oppressed and my

<sup>172</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10.

<sup>173</sup> Apparently Juvenal returned from Chalcedon /Constantinople to Palestine by boat, whereas Peter and his friend John had chosen a land route for their former pilgrimage travels from Constantinople to Palestine.

<sup>174</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10.

<sup>175</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 71.

faith is transgressed. And you are seeking your honour and your tranquillity.’ And in this way he was stirred up, got up, [and] went forward.<sup>176</sup>

The situation in which Peter found himself at the time was the following. When the monk Theodosius hastily returned from Chalcedon with the news of Juvenal’s broken promise, Peter no longer lived in Jerusalem. He had already taken up residence among the monks in Maiuma and enjoyed the quiet there near the seashore. Thus, when the Jerusalemite monks were outraged about Juvenal and asked Peter to participate in their protest and opposition, he was first hesitant to join them. Rufus listed the reasons for his initial reluctance: (1) he was not used to going out and leaving his monastic cell in order to undertake worldly business; (2) he wished to avoid contact with certain lay people; and (3) he especially did not want to meet any of the people connected with the court who were accompanying Juvenal.<sup>177</sup> In the end it took divine intervention to convince Peter that the cause was worthy of his full attention and action.

Thus when Peter joined the rest of the monks and ‘all of them were walking in cheerfulness . . . [to] give testimony’,<sup>178</sup> an incident occurred which illustrates how useful and crucial was Peter’s participation in the resistance of the monks.

[W]hen it came to a meeting of the Fathers with the unholy Juvenal, the blessed Theodosius, that monk whom the believers eventually made archbishop in Jerusalem, also boldly put to shame the apostasy which happened in Chalcedon. [He held authority] as one who had been present the whole time and knew all the things that had been performed [there]. When he laid out Juvenal’s obvious hypocrisy and apostasy, Juvenal was furious and commanded a certain *decurion*, one of those who were following him, to deal secretly with [Theodosius] as a revolutionary and [as] one who resisted the emperor’s will. As that one [i.e. the *decurion*] was about to do so, the blessed Peter, still being a monk and not [yet] having the dignity of the office of bishop, was inflamed with zeal. He knew that one, however, from [his time at] the court. He threw his stole around his neck and said to him with the strength of a prophecy, ‘You [there], do you dare to act as mediator concerning the faith and speak about all of it? Did you not do these and other [things] in that night? I am the least of all the saints who are here. [But if] you seek [to do so], I will speak and immediately fire will come down from heaven and will destroy you and those who belong to you.’ When that one [i.e. the *decurion*] was in fear and was shaking, knowing who he [i.e.

<sup>176</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>177</sup> The fact that people from the court were sent along with Juvenal ‘for his assistance and his security’ is telling. It indicates that Juvenal may well have been aware of and may have foreseen difficulties in explaining his move at Chalcedon to his own flock at home.

<sup>178</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

Peter the Iberian] was, he fell down at his feet, asking him in front of everyone, ‘Forgive me, Lord Nabarnugi! I did not know that your Holiness is here.’ And thus he let the blessed Theodosius go, no longer daring to speak again or do [anything] against the saints. He took Juvenal and returned to Caesarea.<sup>179</sup>

This passage shows that when Juvenal was about to make use of his imperial protection and send the *decurion* against the monk Theodosius, Peter relied on and used his knowledge of particular circumstances in the *decurion*’s life. In doing so Peter revealed to the *decurion* his identity as a quasi-member of the imperial family. Rufus skilfully managed to connect the imperial authority Peter was able to claim for himself with an element of ascetic and prophetic authority. Peter threatened the *decurion* with divine judgement from heaven. The fact that the *decurion* responded to Peter by addressing him both as ‘Lord Nabarnugi’ and ‘your Holiness’ seems to indicate that he felt required to show proper respect both to Peter’s imperial connection and to his religious or ascetic authority. In the end, therefore, Peter’s intervention saved the day for the monk Theodosius, the very initiator of the monks’ rebellion. Thus Peter and the authority he commanded were crucial for the success of the anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine, even if it was only a temporary success that would come to an end after slightly more than a year.

### **The Beginning of the Anti-Chalcedonian Church**

Based on and dependent upon Peter the Iberian’s command of authority in the situation of the confrontation between the furious monks and Juvenal, events could develop into a direction that allowed for the establishment of the beginnings of the anti-Chalcedonian Church in the years 452–453 in Palestine. Juvenal and his companions, including the bishops that had travelled along with him, were not able to keep their hold over Palestine, at least not for the moment. Exposed to the mob’s fury, some of the Palestinian bishops returning with Juvenal were even in mortal danger. The Chalcedonian metropolitan of Scythopolis, Severianos, was killed.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>179</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>180</sup> Emperor Marcian, ‘Letter to the Archimandrites and Monks of Jerusalem’, *ACO* ii.i.iii, p. 125, ll. 13–18: *προβαίνοντος δὲ ἐπὶ χεῖρῳ τοῦ κακοῦ τοῖς ὕστερον χαλεποῖς μικρὰ τὰ προλαβόντα δεικνύντες Ἰουβενάλιον τὸν ὀσιώτατον ἐπίσκοπον καὶ ἐτέρους εὐλαβεῖς ἱερέας διὰ τοῦ πεμφθέντος ἀνελεῖν ἠβουλήθητε ὡς δὲ τῆς ἐλπίδος ὁ σταλεῖς ἐσφάλῃ, πάρεργον τῆς αὐτοῦ μανίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστειλάντων αὐτὸν ἐποιήσατο Σευηριανὸν τὸν τῆς ὀσίας μνήμης ἐπίσκοπον ξίφει διαχρησάμενος μηδὲ τῶν συνόντων αὐτῶι φεισάμενος.*

Leontius, the bishop of Ashkelon, fled to Cyprus.<sup>181</sup> Juvenal finally had to return to Constantinople in order to seek imperial support against his monks who had gone wild. In such an escalated situation in Palestine the monks went one step further in expressing their opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, a historically significant step on the way to the schism or break with the larger Church.<sup>182</sup>

Once the bishops who had signed the definition of the council were out of the way, the anti-Chalcedonian opposition took over the institutional functions in the Church in Palestine. Under great public uproar the monks, and Peter among them, installed Theodosius, the monk who had delivered the first news of Juvenal's betrayal, as the new patriarch of the Holy City. Great responsibility exercised in the process of coming to this decision also rested upon the shoulders of Abba Romanus.<sup>183</sup> Theodosius ordained new anti-Chalcedonian bishops for various cities in Palestine. The terminology of 'schism' in the Church is by custom only used rightly when two opposing bishops lay claim to or have appointed constituencies at one and the same see and are personally present there at the same time. Theodosius' installation as bishop of Jerusalem and his move of ordaining anti-Chalcedonian bishops certainly prepared the grounds for later developments deepening and finalizing a real schism. Strictly speaking, 'schism' existed only for that short period of time when upon Juvenal's eventual return to Jerusalem in AD 453 there were in fact two bishops with claims to the episcopal throne of Jerusalem present in the city at the same time.

Not without tactical considerations did Patriarch Theodosius allow the population of the various Palestinian cities to participate in the ordinations of new bishops he was conducting. As Kofsky remarks, it was with an eye towards strengthening the anti-Chalcedonian hold on the Palestinian communities that Theodosius wished to ordain candidates who already possessed extensive popular support among their own constituencies.<sup>184</sup> According to what can be learned from the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Theodosius let the people forward the names of episcopal candidates they wanted to have ordained as

<sup>181</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 52.

<sup>182</sup> Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 95, has another way of expressing this when he says, 'La chiesa "dissidente" della Palestina veniva a porsi così come una vera e propria alternativa alla chiesa imperiale, il primo di una lunga serie di tentativi nella storia del monofisismo.'

<sup>183</sup> *Plerophoriae* 25 witnesses to Archimandrite Romanus' instrumental role in that situation.

<sup>184</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52–53; *Plerophoriae* 25; see Aryeh Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine', *Liber Annuus* 47 (1997), 209–222, here 214.

leaders for their communities. Anti-Chalcedonian loyalty was the primary qualification. Heyer tends to see the episcopal ordinations of anti-Chalcedonians as a strategy that already created an anti-Chalcedonian Church in its own right and, thus, a real alternative to the imperial Church.<sup>185</sup> Griffith prefers not to speak of a real Church schism in situations where there is only one hierarch in place for any given city.<sup>186</sup> Chalcedonians did not question the validity of Juvenal's holding of episcopal power over Jerusalem during the years 452–453, even though technically he was not in the city but rather in exile in Constantinople. Anti-Chalcedonians acknowledged Theodosius as bishop of Jerusalem, certainly for the time until Juvenal's return in AD 453. Some scholars are reluctant to make a claim for the existence of a separate and independent anti-Chalcedonian Church already from those early moments in AD 452/453 onwards, since almost no instances occurred in which two opposing bishops were present at the same time in the same city with claims to the leadership of that same city. Yet such a situation did exist, at least for the brief moment of the few early days of Juvenal's return to Jerusalem in AD 453, while Theodosius was still in town and effectively functioned as bishop of the city, being recognized by his followers, and not willing to leave until pushed out by force. If one were to look at the months prior to Juvenal's return, even though he was in exile, he was still seen as bishop of Jerusalem by his Chalcedonian followers. At the same time, Theodosius was recognized as anti-Chalcedonian bishop by his followers. Thus, it seems obvious that one can notice clearly the first beginnings of the move towards separation. An anti-Chalcedonian /Chalcedonian schism existed and at least among anti-Chalcedonian faithful the awareness was growing that a new church was in its birthpangs.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 72. Rufus and Severus of Antioch would constitute the second generation. See also W. H. C. Frend, 'Severus of Antioch and the Origins of the Monophysite Hierarchy', *OCA* 195 (1973), 261–275, who discusses the role Severus played in establishing an anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy. In his turn against Chalcedon, Severus was influenced by the example set by Peter the Iberian. See also W. H. C. Frend, 'The Monophysites and the Transition between the Ancient World and the Middle Ages', in *Passaggio dal mondo antico al Medio Evo da Teodosio a San Gregorio Magno: Convegno Internazionale, Roma, 25–28 Maggio 1977*, *Atti dei convegni lincei* 45 (Rome, 1980), 339–365, here 354 and 357. See also below, ch. 2, p. 109 and n. 281.

<sup>186</sup> Personal communication. For a discussion of several steps on the road to an independent church, see also Albert van Roey, 'Les débuts de l'Église jacobite', in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. ii (Würzburg, 1953), 339–360.

<sup>187</sup> Since this aspect of the formation of the anti-Chalcedonian Church appears to be more of a concern on the part of John Rufus, I propose to look at these questions separately in my work in progress, 'Eucharist, Baptism, and the Separation of the

### Ascetics in Power: Peter as Bishop of Maiuma

In due course the people of Maiuma, the port-city of Gaza,<sup>188</sup> hurried to the Holy City and requested Peter's ordination as their bishop.<sup>189</sup> When given the opportunity to be involved in the process of selecting a new bishop, it may well have been the case that the local population kept in mind very practical considerations in their choice of a candidate.<sup>190</sup> Peter was of royal descent and therefore could have

Churches'. See now also Volker Menze, 'Die Stimme von Maiuma: Johannes Rufus, das Konzil von Chalkedon und die wahre Kirche', in *Literarische Konstituierung von Identifikationsfiguren in der Antike*, ed. Barbara Aland, Johannes Hahn, and Christian Ronning (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 215–223; and Volker Menze, 'The Making of a Church: The Syrian Orthodox in the Shadow of Byzantium and the Papacy' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2004).

<sup>188</sup> On Maiuma, see Gustav Hölscher, 'Maiuma (1: Hafenstadt von Gaza and 2: Hafenstadt von Askalon)', in *PWRE* 14/1 (Stuttgart, 1928), 610; Ulrich Hübner, 'Maiuma', in *LThK* 6 (1997), 1215. For a useful description of life in the countryside surrounding Gaza, see ch. 3 in Glanville Downey, *Gaza in the Early Sixth Century* (Norman, 1963), 60–72. For studies of Gaza in ancient times through the Byzantine period, see C. A. M. Glucker, *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Oxford, 1987). For a chronologically more comprehensive account see Martin Abraham Meyer, *History of the City of Gaza from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (New York, 1907; republished 1966). See also Glanville Downey, 'Gaza', in *RAC* 8 (1972), 1123–1134; Geoffrey V. Gillard, 'Gaza', in *TRE* 12 (1984), 29–31; D. and L. Stiernon, 'Gaza', in *DHGE* 20, fasc. 114 (1981), 154–176; and Ulrich Hübner, 'Gaza', in *LThK* 4 (1995), 306–307.

<sup>189</sup> While the population of Gaza itself had resisted Christian missionary attempts rather vehemently, the population in the surrounding areas seems to have been more open and receptive to the new faith. Maiuma's population in particular welcomed Christianity quite readily. For a while and in recognition of its witness to the Christian faith the city of Maiuma even carried the name 'Constantia', after Constantine's sister. See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 4, ch. 38 (ed. Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 135, ll. 2–4; revised translation by Ernest Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 550). See also Downey, 'Gaza', 1127–1128. For the activities of Christian preachers and missionaries in and on behalf of the city of Gaza, see the account of the deeds of Saint Porphyrius of Gaza in Mark the Deacon, *Vita Porphyrii Gazensis* 17–33, 41–45, 53, 57–74, 80–83, 91, 97–100 (ed. Henri Grégoire and Marc-Antoine Kugener, tr., *Marc le diacre: Vie de Porphyre, évêque de Gaza* (Paris, 1930), 15–28, 35–38, 43–44, 46–59, 63–66, 70–71, 74–77). Porphyry's attempt at bringing Christianity to Gaza has been studied in Rubin Zeev, 'Porphyrius of Gaza and the Conflict between Christianity and Paganism in Southern Palestine', in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land: First–Fifteenth Centuries CE* (Jerusalem, 1998), 31–66. For a study of the Georgian version of the *Life of Porphyry* see J. W. Childers, 'The Georgian Life of Porphyry of Gaza', *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001), 374–384.

<sup>190</sup> A bishop Paulinianus of Gaza was among those who signed the documents at the Council of Ephesus (see Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Ephesenum*, 'Gesta

become a useful advocate, even a patron with the imperial government should the need arise for such contacts. Rufus vividly depicts how Peter resisted the people's advance, locking and barring the door of his house 'when he saw how they were coming against him like hordes of robbers'. Yet the resolve of the people proved stronger and they managed to carry him off to Jerusalem.

Peter had a history of avoiding public ecclesiastical offices. He had escaped Juvenal's earlier attempts at ordaining him a priest. Eventually, in about AD 446,<sup>191</sup> Juvenal's nephew Paul, then bishop of Maiuma, had trapped him and laid hands on him, elevating him to the priesthood.<sup>192</sup> Kofsky speculated that Peter's priestly 'ordination may have been orchestrated by Juvenal himself with Paul's assistance'.<sup>193</sup> Being not quite thirty years of age, Peter avoided conducting any liturgical services for the following first seven years of his priesthood; he did not preside at the divine liturgy until he became the new bishop of Maiuma.<sup>194</sup> Yet again, in Jerusalem in early AD 453, when Patriarch Theodosius was about to ordain him a bishop, Peter argued that he was unworthy for that honour, a strategy not at all uncommon.<sup>195</sup> Ultimately, his resistance was without success, and the Maiumans celebrated their new bishop with great joy.<sup>196</sup>

Rufus illustrates the great importance which anti-Chalcedonians attached to the proper celebration and reception of the Eucharist, a sacrament which was of particular significance in the Christological

Ephesena', *ACO* i.i.ii, p. 59 n. 95; see also *ACO* i.iii, p. 53). Among the most well-known bishops of Maiuma is the eighth-century Kosmas Hagiopolites, also known as Kosmas the Melode. See Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'Kosmas the Hymnographer', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 1152; Wolfram Hörander, 'Kosmas v. Jerusalem', in *LThK* 6 (1997), 394 (with further literature). On the bishops of Gaza and Maiuma, see also Michel Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus in quatuor patriarchatus digestus, quo exhibentur ecclesiae patriarchae, caeterique praesules totius orientis*, vol iii (Paris, 1740; repr. Graz, 1958), 603–626.

<sup>191</sup> One arrives at that year by counting seven years backwards from Peter's episcopal ordination, the seven years during which Peter did not exercise his priestly ministry.

<sup>192</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51. <sup>193</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 214.

<sup>194</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>195</sup> See, for example, the case of Gregory Thaumaturgos, presented by Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi* (ed. Gunther Heil, *Gregorii Nysseni Sermones*, pt. 2, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. x.i (Leiden, 1990), 3–57, here 13–16; tr. Michael Slusser, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgos: Life and Works*, FOTC 98 (Washington, DC, 1998), 41–87, here 50–53).

<sup>196</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 54 and 57. For the anti-Chalcedonian rebellion and Peter's forced episcopal ordination, see also Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, chs. 3–4 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 155–159; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 49–52). See below, ch. 3, for a discussion of the ascetic dimensions of Peter's authority.

controversies in Palestine.<sup>197</sup> Eucharistic communion functioned as a device for establishing ecclesiastic unity, and sealed the power and jurisdiction of the celebrant over his flock. Rufus says that when Peter arrived from Jerusalem, the Maiumans desired to receive the 'salvific mysteries' of the Eucharist from the hands of the newly ordained bishop. Yet in his great humility Peter hesitated to celebrate the Eucharist, pondering whether he should let his priests conduct the liturgy for him. The people became outraged at such a prospect and threatened to burn the church together with him, if he would not in his own person celebrate the liturgy.<sup>198</sup> Once they had obtained an appropriate celebrant and shepherd for their community, they were not willing to let him withdraw.

Similar to the Maiumans who were ready to take recourse to violent means to achieve their goals, so also the reign of the anti-Chalcedonian Bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem was marked by a visible involvement of monks in the fight against Chalcedon, including numerous violent acts of the outraged populace against Chalcedonians.<sup>199</sup> In their struggle both opposing parties claimed imperial support: the Chalcedonians were aided by Pulcheria and several members of the international nobility present in the Holy City, while Empress Eudocia, by then the widow of Theodosius II,<sup>200</sup> applied her political influence and financial means to support the anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>201</sup>

### Consequences: Expulsion and Flight to Egypt

Peter served as bishop of Maiuma for only six months until the anti-Chalcedonian rebellion was crushed. In August 453, Juvenal returned with the protection and help of *comes* Dorotheus and the

<sup>197</sup> Note again the centrality of the Eucharistic celebration. See also above, p. 82, n. 165.

<sup>198</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 55.

<sup>199</sup> For a recent study of the question of violence in religious settings, specifically in connection with ascetics, see Michael Gaddis, 'There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1999). In the last chapter, the author discusses the time period immediately relevant for the present study.

<sup>200</sup> Theodosius II passed away on 28 July, AD 450, having injured his spine from a fall while hunting on horseback near Constantinople. For documentation regarding the event and date, see above, p. 77, n. 138, and Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 208 n. 158.

<sup>201</sup> For a detailed study of Eudocia's support of anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine, see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

imperial army,<sup>202</sup> and was reinstated as archbishop of Jerusalem. Anti-Chalcedonian sources remember this event as a bloody massacre, in which Juvenal used both Roman troops and Samaritans to kill the monks in Neapolis who resisted him.<sup>203</sup> The blood of many clergy and lay people was shed also in the valley of Josaphat.<sup>204</sup> Theodosius left for Egypt,<sup>205</sup> and many anti-Chalcedonian monks went with him. The anti-Chalcedonian bishops appointed by Theodosius were banished by decree. While Rufus does not indicate any imperial intervention, according to Zachariah Rhetor Peter was privileged and exempted from exile by Empress Pulcheria, sister of the now late emperor Theodosius II and by then the wife of the Chalcedonian emperor Marcian.<sup>206</sup> For about a year and a half Peter agreed to taking advantage of the milder treatment he was granted. Eventually, however, a vision of Christ admonished and challenged him. In response to it he decided to join his anti-Chalcedonian brethren in Egypt.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 5 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 159; Latin tr. in Brooks, ed., *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 87, p. 109; English tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 52); on Dorotheus see also the letter, preserved in Arabic, which he sent to Marcel and Mari. See the discussion in Michel van Esbroeck, 'Une lettre de Dorothee comte de Palestine à Marcel et Mari en 452', *Analecta Bollandiana* 104.1–2 (1986), 145–159. The Arabic letter, accompanied by a French translation, is to be found on pp. 156–159.

<sup>203</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 10 (ed. Nau, *Plérôphories*, 24); Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 5 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 159–160; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 52–53).

<sup>204</sup> See also Ps.-Dionysius of Alexandria, *Panegyric on Macarius* 7.5–7 and 8.9–10 (ed. David W. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Tkōw, Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, CSCO 415, *Scriptores Coptici*, t. 41 (Louvain, 1980), 49–53 and 61–65 (Coptic); CSCO 416, *Scriptores Coptici*, t. 42 (Louvain, 1980), 38–40 and 47–49 (English)). See also below, ch. 3, pp. 220–221 and n. 551.

<sup>205</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 21, ll. 6 and 20. In 457, Theodosius left his exile in Egypt and headed towards Antioch in order to solve a dispute there. See *De obitu Theodosii* 22, l. 2. As indicated above, Rufus tells about Theodosius' sad fate in Antioch and later on in Constantinople in *De obitu Theodosii* 22–24. See above, pp. 29–30.

<sup>206</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57; Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 5 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 159; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 52); John of Beth Aphthonia, *Vita Severi* 222 (ed. M.-A. Kugener, *Vie de Sèvre par Jean de Beith-Aphthonia*, PO 2.3 (Paris, 1907), 222).

<sup>207</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 7 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 160; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 54); *Vita Petri Iberi* 58. Depending on how one looks at the sources, one may or may not want to speak of Peter as having been sent into exile to Egypt. The flow of Rufus' narrative at *Vita Petri Iberi* 57–58 suggests that Peter was one of those bishops sent away from Palestine by imperial command, even though Rufus simply says that Peter 'departed', not that he was sent or dragged away. From the discussion in Paul Figueras, 'The Road Linking Palestine and Egypt along the Sinai Coast', in

## GATHERING STRENGTH: PETER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN EGYPT

In 455 Peter left for Egypt, which had become the prime place of refuge for anti-Chalcedonian dissidents. Increasingly large portions of the Christian Church in Egypt were taking side with the anti-Chalcedonian cause. Peter mostly lived in the countryside, often in hiding, for almost twenty years. For a while he seemed to have stayed in Alexandria, but then predominantly in the region around Oxyrhynchus, the modern-day al-Bahnasā.<sup>208</sup> One of his main concerns and tasks was to equip anti-Chalcedonian believers against a subtly refined, often hardly detectable Chalcedonian propaganda.

Rufus recounts an episode in which Peter heard the proclamation of a doctrinal text that had been composed by Proterius, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>209</sup> According to Rufus, Peter characterized the speech by claiming that in his words the patriarch had 'mixed poison with honey'.<sup>210</sup> Peter's anti-Chalcedonian sympa-

*The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 211–214, one gets a good sense of the places through which Peter might have passed on the road.

<sup>208</sup> For a sense of the density of monastic settlement in the area, see René-Georges Coquin and Jean Gascou, 'Monasteries of the Lower Sa'īd', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5 (1991), 1652–1653; René-Georges Coquin, 'Monasteries of the Middle Sa'īd', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5 (1991), 1654–1655; with Maps 7 and 8 (*The Coptic Encyclopedia* 8 (1991), 7–8).

<sup>209</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 61. See also above, ch. 1, pp. 31–32. On Proterius of Alexandria, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 2 and bk. 4, chs. 1 and 2 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 154–155 and 169–171; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 48 and 64–66); Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium* 14 and 15 (ed. Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense*, ACO ii.v, pp. 123–124; an English translation of the work is in progress); and Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 2, chs. 5 and 8 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 50.29–51.27 and 55.9–59.17; tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 76–77 and 84–89). For comments on Proterius' violent death, see above, ch. 1, pp. 31–32, n. 104, and below, p. 95 and n. 218. For evidence for Proterius' literary activity, see the correspondence between Proterius and Pope Leo the Great, preserved in the collection of Leo's letters. See Leo the Great, *Epistula* 129 'To Proterius' (ed. PL 54.1075–1078; also ed. Schwartz, ACO ii.iv, pp. 84–86; tr. Brother Edmund Hunt, *St. Leo the Great: Letters*, FOTC 34 (New York, 1957), 214–217), in which Leo confirms Proterius' authority as patriarch; and Leo the Great, *Epistula* 133 'Letter by Proterius to Leo the Great' (ed. PL 54.1084–1094), in which Proterius comments on the computation of the date for Easter according to the Alexandrian custom. On Proterius, see also Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 148–149, 154–155, and 160–163; P.-Th. Camelot, 'Protérius d'Alexandrie', in *Catholicisme: Hier-Aujourd'hui-Demain* 12 (1990), 92–93; and Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Proterios', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 651.

<sup>210</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 61. See also Maria Cramer and Heinrich Bacht, 'Der anti-chalcedonische Aspekt im historisch-biographischen Schrifttum der koptischen

thizers at Oxyrhynchus insistently urged him to take up action against that Chalcedonian threat that Proterius promoted. For a while Peter resisted their pressure because, as Rufus suggests, he did not feel sufficiently prepared for such a task. Finally, however, his friends took to mild force and placed him on top of the base of a pillar with the statue of the emperor right next to him.<sup>211</sup> Rather expressively, in such a constellation Peter's public appearance combined the images of a Roman rhetor on the *rostrum* and of a fifth- and sixth-century Syrian stylite on his pillar, holding in his hands Proterius' document.<sup>212</sup> In order to properly explain and refute the document's teaching in front of the crowds gathered around him, Peter needed and received, as Rufus suggests, the immediate and direct assistance of Theodosius of Jerusalem, who by now had already passed away in Constantinople with the reputation of being a bishop-martyr.<sup>213</sup> The late patriarch appeared to Peter in a vision standing at his side and pointing with his finger to every single spot at which the writings of Proterius were heretical and misleading for anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>214</sup>

Rufus makes it clear that with the death of Theodosius the strength of Chalcedon's opponents was not exhausted. Once Dioscorus, the anti-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria, had died in exile in Gangra, it was through Peter the Iberian, one of the few Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians who held the episcopal rank,<sup>215</sup> that the exist-

Monophysiten (6.–7. Jahrhundert): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Entstehung der monophysitischen Kirche Ägyptens', in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. ii (Würzburg, 1953), 315–338, here 323.

<sup>211</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62.      <sup>212</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62.

<sup>213</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62, *De obitu Theodosii* 24. For a study of Peter's vision of Theodosius at the time of his death, in which Peter saw him surrounded by angels and clad in the white stole of the archbishop of Jerusalem, see Paul Devos, 'Cyrillie de Scythopolis: Influences littéraires—Vêtement de l'évêque de Jérusalem—Passarion et Pierre l'Ibère', *Analecta Bollandiana* 98 (1980), 25–38, here 33–36 and 38.

<sup>214</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62.

<sup>215</sup> The question of the validity of Peter's episcopal ordination through the rebel Patriarch Theodosius is open to debate. One could say that the ordination was invalid, since Theodosius had been installed into his office in opposition to the rightful Patriarch Juvenal. Moreover, the sources do not name any bishops who would have had the right to ordain him (see also below, p. 95, n. 220). Rather, the texts that survive leave one with the impression that Theodosius was appointed bishop via some kind of acclamation through the monks who opposed Juvenal. Yet there also seems to have been some official recognition of Peter's rank as bishop, given the fact that Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 5 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 159; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 52) says that although all bishops consecrated by Theodosius were deposed at Juvenal's return, monks and people were punished, and (the bishops and monks supposedly) were expelled, 'by the desire of the queen, Peter the Iberian of Gaza alone was to be spared, if he would not wish to have fellowship with the rest of

ence and continuation of the Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy could be secured—a vital concern not only for the rising anti-Chalcedonian Church in general, but, more particularly, a concern for Rufus as Peter's episcopal successor.<sup>216</sup>

After the anti-Chalcedonian riots in Alexandria against the new bishop Proterius had come to an end, Peter sought and found refuge in Oxyrhynchus in the Thebaid.<sup>217</sup> There he did not spend his time in idleness. Rather, in the desert of the Thebaid he emerged as an active anti-Chalcedonian leader, engaged in public and semi-underground activities in his fight for the anti-Chalcedonian cause. His experience of the desert populated by ascetics may have provided the catalyst which triggered a change in Peter's intensity of engagement in the struggles on the anti-Chalcedonian side. After his sojourn in Egypt Peter undertook to play an even more active part in the anti-Chalcedonian cause.

Proterius' death, which according to Liberatus of Carthage occurred on Holy Thursday, 28 March 457,<sup>218</sup> was the result of an act of violence. Yet for anti-Chalcedonians it seemingly constituted a necessity in order to be able to install a new bishop for Alexandria and all of Egypt. Church regulations required the presence of three bishops for an episcopal ordination.<sup>219</sup> The so-called 'Ecclesiastical Canons of the Holy Apostles', however, say that a bishop was to be ordained by two or three bishops, thus providing an acceptable exception to the rule.<sup>220</sup> The only anti-Chalcedonian bishop available in Egypt at the time was Eusebius of Pelusium, the successor of

the bishops'. My translation. For the Syriac, see Brooks, ed. *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, Scriptorum Syri, ser. 3, t. 5 (text) (Paris, 1919), p. 159, ll. 13–15. At least by implication, Pulcheria seems to have acknowledged that Peter and the other anti-Chalcedonian bishops were bishops.

<sup>216</sup> See above, ch. 1, p. 38 and n. 126, on the question of Rufus as episcopal successor of Peter.

<sup>217</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 60.

<sup>218</sup> Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium* 15 (ed. Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense*, ACO ii.v, p. 124, ll. 8–11): *et ante triduum paschae, quo cena domini celebratur, ab ipsis turbis concluditur in ecclesia sanctae memoriae Proterius, quo se timore contulerat, ibique eadem die in baptisterio occiditur laniatur eicitur et funus eius incenditur, sparguntur et cineres eius in ventos*. See also Robert Devreesse, 'Les Premières Années du Monophysisme. Une collection antichalcédonienne', *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 19 (1930), 251–265, here 258.

<sup>219</sup> See Canon 4 of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) and Canon 13 of the African Code (AD 419), English translation in Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, NPNF 2nd ser. 14 (New York, 1990), pp. 11 and 448.

<sup>220</sup> *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* 8.47.1 (ed. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Paderborn, 1905), 564): *Ἐπίσκοπος τοῖνυν ὑπὸ ἐπισκόπων χειροτονείσθω δύο ἢ τριῶν*.

Ammonius of Pelusium. Most of what is known about Eusebius comes from the more than 2,000 letters of his famous neighbour and contemporary, Isidore of Pelusium (AD c. 370–440).<sup>221</sup>

According to Rufus, all other anti-Chalcedonian bishops were forced to remain in hiding.<sup>222</sup> The crowds of monks and laymen of Alexandria, who, as anti-Chalcedonian sources express it, felt relieved after the death of Emperor Marcian in February 457, gathered in the church named 'Kaisarion' and dragged along with them as their candidate for the patriarchate the monk Timothy Aelurus, or the 'Weasel'.<sup>223</sup> Until then Timothy had stayed in a desert monastery, possibly even having had contact with Peter the Iberian. It was only through Peter's assistance that Timothy's ordination as new anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Alexandria on 16 March 457 became possible. That Proterius, the rightful Chalcedonian patriarch, died only twelve days later, is a detail not commented on in anti-Chalcedonian sources.<sup>224</sup>

For almost the whole of the following two decades Peter remained in Egypt. He appears to have stayed in close contact with Timothy and to have taken a vital role in organizing and encouraging the

<sup>221</sup> In several of his more than 2,000 letters Isidore rebuked Eusebius and his clergy in proper polemical fashion for trafficking in priestly offices, neglecting their congregations, and wasting church funds on buildings instead of spending it on the poor. See Isidore of Pelusium, *Letters* 1232, 1276, 1304, and 1409 (ed. and tr. Pierre Evieux, *Isidore de Péluse: Lettres*, vol. i: *Lettres 1214–1413*, Sch 422 (Paris, 1997), 208–211, 280–281, 336–339, and 492–495); Isidore of Pelusium, *Letters* 1419, 1480, 1521, 1551, 1630, and 1669 (ed. and tr. Pierre Evieux, *Isidore de Péluse: Lettres*, vol. ii: *Lettres 1414–1700*, Sch 454 (Paris, 2000), 24–27, 138–139, 202–203, 240–241, 366–367, and 420–423). Also see Pierre Evieux, 'From Rhetoric to Monasticism: The Personal Itinerary of Isidore of Pelusium', in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church* (Everton Park, Queensland, Australia, 1998), 143–157; Pierre Evieux, 'Isidore de Péluse, moine égyptien du V<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997), 451–454; Pierre Evieux, *Isidore de Péluse* (Paris, 1995); Ursula Treu, 'Der Briefschreiber Isidor von Pelusion', in *Philohistor* (Louvain, 1994), 163–176; and R. M. Price, 'Holy Men's Letters of Rebuke', *Studia Patristica* 16.2 (1985), 50–53, discussing also instances of Isidore exhorting a staff member of the *dux Aegypti* and rebuking the soldier Isaiah.

<sup>222</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 65.

<sup>223</sup> On Timothy Aelurus' writings against Chalcedon, see above, ch. 1, p. 25 with n. 79. In the *Plerophoriae*, Rufus also quotes both from Timothy's works against Chalcedon (*Plerophoriae* 89) and from a now lost *History of the Church* by him (*Plerophoriae* 33 (reference) and 36 (quote)). Timothy himself figures relatively prominently throughout the *Plerophoriae* (see *Plerophoriae* 7, 13, 15, 26, 33, 36, 59, 65, 66, 67, 74, and 89). Peter the Iberian and Timothy had been in frequent contact with one another, later on predominantly by mail. See Ebied and Wickham, 'Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon', 115 n. 1, for a clarification of the cognomen 'Aelurus' as 'Weasel'.

<sup>224</sup> For a discussion of Liberatus' witness, see also Devreesse, 'Les Premières Années du Monophysisme', 257–258.

anti-Chalcedonians during the difficult years of a new wave of opposition directed against them that had set in under Emperor Leo (AD 457–474).<sup>225</sup>

## HOW PALESTINE BECAME CHALCEDONIAN<sup>226</sup>

As the schism between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians became permanent in Alexandria and Antioch, in Jerusalem jurisdictional unity was eventually regained. This unity was brought about by the activities of several individuals. Eudocia, who had been a great source of support for the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine, may have caused at least some trouble and pain for them if indeed, finally, before her death on 20 October AD 460,<sup>227</sup> she reconciled with Juvenal.<sup>228</sup> How complete, deep, and fundamental that reconciliation was, is difficult to determine. In any case, it seems that it did not affect the material support which anti-Chalcedonians received from her and her stewards.<sup>229</sup>

It seems mainly due to the influence of Pope Leo and the monk Euthymius that Eudocia was moved to consider reconciling with Juvenal.<sup>230</sup> To his letter to Eudocia, Leo appended a theological explanation, addressed to the rebellious Palestinian monks. In his correspondence with Juvenal, Leo assigned some share of the responsibility for the Palestinian rebellion also to him.<sup>231</sup> When Pope Leo sent another letter to Palestine, this time addressed directly to the presbyters, archimandrites, and monks there,<sup>232</sup> his main

<sup>225</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 70–71.

<sup>226</sup> See also the discussion of this very question in John Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ* (Oxford, 1994), 183–199.

<sup>227</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 35 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 54.8–10; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 50).

<sup>228</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 30 and 36 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 47.5–49.19 and 53.5–54.10; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 43–46 and 49–50).

<sup>229</sup> For a detailed discussion of the material and strategic support she was able to provide for the anti-Chalcedonian party in Palestine, see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

<sup>230</sup> Pope Leo sent Eudocia a letter, dated to 15 June, 453. *ACO* ii.iv, p. 77.7–33. He referred to it also in his letter 117 to Julian of Cos, the papal agent in the East. See *ACO* ii.iv, p. 69.30–37. For the encounter between Eudocia and Euthymius, see Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 48.6–31; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 44–45).

<sup>231</sup> See letter 139 from 4 September, 454, published in *ACO* ii.iv, pp. 91.27–93.26, here 91.29–33.

<sup>232</sup> Leo the Great, Letter 124 (ed. *ACO* ii.iv, pp. 159–163; English tr. in NPNF 2nd ser. 12, pp. 91–95). This *Tome to the Palestinian Monks*, together with the *Tome of*

attention focused on re-establishing peace between the monks and the hierarchy.

Eudocia had several other guides who encouraged her and attempted to lead her towards reconciliation with the Chalcedonian party. The contacts she entertained with Anastasius, the auxiliary bishop of Jerusalem, and with Cosmas, the *staurophylax*,<sup>233</sup> may have functioned as a bridge between her and Juvenal, guaranteeing that, if she so desired, she had the possibility to communicate with him, either directly or indirectly. According to Chalcedonian accounts from the pen of Cyril of Scythopolis, who certainly pursued his own agenda in constructing an account of the royal lady finally siding with his Chalcedonian party, Eudocia showed some hesitation before undertaking such a far-reaching step. Cyril suggests that she decided to seek a consultation with Simeon Stylites, her most trusted spiritual authority. However, Simeon on his part declined to meet with and counsel her and instead recommended she turn to the monk Euthymius for advice. The decisive meeting between Eudocia and Euthymius took place at the so-called ‘Tower of Eudocia’, a building erected at Eudocia’s command on top of the highest hill in the eastern Judean Desert.<sup>234</sup> Eudocia’s subsequent reconciliation with Juvenal, whatever form it may have taken, appears to have had some impact on the anti-Chalcedonian community in Palestine. Some of them seem to have followed her example and joined the Chalcedonian party, thus weakening the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians. Nevertheless, accurate, unpartisan information is scarce. The available anti-Chalcedonian sources, namely mostly Rufus’ works, do not indicate or problematize such a shift of allegiance on her part. While they do not say much about her final years, they clearly indicate that members of Eudocia’s entourage continued to support anti-Chalcedonians.

*Leo*, and the *Tome to the Emperor Leo* in 458 form a set of writings which represents a significant portion of the collaborative work of Pope Leo and Prosper of Aquitaine. Portions of the *Tome to the Emperor Leo* were taken directly from the earlier *Tome to the Palestinian Monks*, which, in turn, is ‘a précis of [the Tome] to Flavian’. See James, ‘Leo the Great and Prosper of Aquitaine’, 558–563.

<sup>233</sup> For reference to this office see below, ch. 5, p. 360 and nn. 115–116.

<sup>234</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 38 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 127.15–16; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 136). Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 89 n. 72, identifies the site as Jebel Muntar. For reference to Tobler’s survey of the terrain in search of Eudocia’s tower, see also Y. Hirschfeld, ‘List of the Byzantine Monasteries in the Judean Desert’, in G. C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, and E. Alliata, eds., *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land: New Discoveries: Essays in Honour of Virgilio C. Corbo*, OFM, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Maior 36 (Jerusalem, 1990), 1–89, here 21.

The case of Eudocia, for which the sources from opposing camps seem to provide contrary pictures, is not unique. At least one other such case, that of the monk Marcianus of Bethlehem, deserves to be mentioned.<sup>235</sup> For now, a definitive discussion has to be postponed until the critical edition of numerous fragments of Greek works, attributed and attributable to him, has appeared.<sup>236</sup> Based on a survey of scholarly studies, one gets the impression that both Chalcedonians, like Cyril of Scythopolis, and anti-Chalcedonians, like Zachariah, claimed Marcianus' witness for their own side.<sup>237</sup> It is to be hoped that a future careful study of his reconstructed corpus will bring clarification.

With the rise of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, more and more the population there took on the character of an international and diverse community. Thus further source of growth and support for the Chalcedonians of Palestine can be observed in the increasing influx into the country of monks from Cappadocia who were friendly towards Chalcedon. In 456, along with such wandering groups of monks, a young man, named Sabas, came into the country as well. The Palestinian monastic and ecclesiastical scene was enriched by this new and increasingly influential component of foreigners residing in the country, a component, which over time became the determining factor of the Christian life there by providing the new leadership.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>235</sup> On the monk Marcianus, see J. Lebon (ed. by A. van Roey), *Le moine Saint Marcien: Étude critique des sources* (Louvain, 1968); for improved readings see also S. Brock, 'Review of J. Lebon, *Le moine Saint Marcien: Étude critique des sources*, Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1968', *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969), 646–649. See furthermore A. van Roey, 'Remarques sur le moine Marcien', *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975), 160–177; and J. Kirchmeyer, 'Le moine Marcien (de Bethlehem?)', *Studia Patristica* 5 (1962), 341–359.

<sup>236</sup> See the announcement and report in Michael Kohlbacher, 'Unpublizierte Fragmente des Markianos von Bethlehem (nunc CPG 3898 a–d)', in *Horizonte der Christenheit* (Erlangen, 1994), 137–166; and Michael Kohlbacher, 'Unpublished Greek Fragments of Markianos of Bethlehem (d 492): An Edition in Progress', *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997), 495–500.

<sup>237</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 66.23–67.14; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 63); and Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 5, ch. 6 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 220–221; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 114).

<sup>238</sup> Significant and helpful studies of the monk Sabas and Sabaitic monasticism, leading into the early Islamic period, include Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1995); Sidney H. Griffith, 'Christians, Muslims, and Neo-Martyrs: Saints' Lives and Holy Land History', in *Sharing the Sacred* (Jerusalem, 1998), 163–207; Joseph Patrich, 'The Hermitage of St John the Hesychast in the Great Laura of Sabas', *Liber Annuus* 43 (1993), 315–337, the Hebrew

Some monks and lay people of Palestine persisted in their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon. However, they found less and less support from the side of the authorities. During the years of Peter the Iberian's absence, the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine did retain a few outstanding leading figures. Two in particular were of central importance: Gerontius, the influential abbot of Melania's monasteries,<sup>239</sup> and Abba Romanus, the founder of the anti-Chalcedonian monastery at Eleutheropolis.<sup>240</sup> In 479, when Martyrius, the new patriarch of Jerusalem, achieved a union between the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sides in Palestine,<sup>241</sup> Gerontius' position was in real danger. Abba Romanus, one of the prudent and unrelenting opponents of Chalcedon, moved away from his old *coenobium* in Tekoa, because it was located in a region too close to Juvenal's immediate jurisdiction.<sup>242</sup> After five years of forced exile in Antioch,<sup>243</sup> Abba Romanus managed to receive all the help he needed, much of it from Eudocia. He built a more stable and protected base in the form of his new *coenobium* in Eleutheropolis,<sup>244</sup> which quickly became a powerful centre for the anti-Chalcedonian resistance.

version of this article appeared in *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Ancient Israel in honour of Moshe Dothan* (Haifa, 1993), 243–264, English abstract on pp. 25–26; Joseph Patrich, 'Chapels and Hermitages of St Sabas' Monastery', in *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem, 1993), 233–243; Sidney H. Griffith, 'Anthony David of Baghdad, Scribe and Monk of Mar Sabas: Arabic in the Monasteries of Palestine', *Church History* 58 (1989), 7–19; Georg Heydock, *Der Heilige Sabas und seine Reliquien* (Geisenheim, 1970); Otto F. A. Meinardus, 'Historical Notes on the Lavra of Mar Saba', *Eastern Churches Review* 2 (1969), 392–401; and Gabriel Salem, 'The Monastery of St. Saba, and the Return of the Relics', *Eastern Churches Review* 1 (1966), 41–46.

<sup>239</sup> See below, ch. 3, pp. 141–150. See also Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 87, 89, 91, 93, 101–102, and 109.

<sup>240</sup> On Romanus, see especially the accounts provided by Rufus in *De obitu Theodosii* 21 and 25–26 as well as in *Plerophoriae* 10 and 25. Also see *Vita Petri Iberi* 52. Events and people connected with his monastery are featured moreover in *Plerophoriae* 39 and 87. See also Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 89–90, 92, 95, 98–99, 101, 105, 112, 114, and 119; and Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 154 and 202.

<sup>241</sup> See the accounts in Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 5, ch. 6 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 220–223; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 114–117).

<sup>242</sup> For locating Tekoa (Thecoa) and literature concerning it, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 248; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuilles 11–12 /n. 326, p. 928. See also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Tekoa (233), 687.

<sup>243</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 25.

<sup>244</sup> On Eleutheropolis /Beth Guvrin, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 118–119; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue*, Feuilles 11–12 /n. 369 (Beit Guvrin), p. 933; Amos Kloner, 'The City of Eleutheropolis', in

ENDURING RESISTANCE: PETER'S ROLE IN THE  
ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN MOVEMENT WITHIN AND  
BEYOND THE PROVINCES OF *PALAESTINA*

The third important anti-Chalcedonian figure, besides Gerontius and Romanus, who exercised influence in Palestine despite his physical absence was Peter the Iberian. While he was still in Egypt, the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians heard about the power and strength with which he was working for the anti-Chalcedonian cause there. As they saw it, Peter endured the difficulties and persecutions without giving in. Rufus describes how the members of the flock of Peter's bishopric in Maiuma and the surrounding area desired to regain their bishop for their cause in the Holy Land. Several times they sent messengers to Egypt to convince him that he had a higher responsibility towards his own flock in Palestine than towards the anti-Chalcedonian believers in Egypt.<sup>245</sup> Probably with the intention of portraying Peter as a responsible and circumspect leader, Rufus notes that Peter needed God's explicit assurance that he had sufficiently built up and strengthened the anti-Chalcedonian community in Alexandria and Egypt before he could decide to return home to the provinces of *Palaestina*. In 475, Peter reached the coast of the Holy Land at Ashkelon. He stayed in Palaea, a village not far away from Ashkelon.<sup>246</sup> According to the information available to Rufus, Peter's activities in Palaea concentrated on strengthening and confirming the faith of people whom he had more recently won over to the anti-Chalcedonian side. His ascetic charisma inspired several individuals to renounce the world and choose the path of monasticism. For reasons not given by Rufus, upon his return from Egypt Peter did not go and dwell in his previous monastery between Maiuma and Gaza. Rufus does know of a time when the religious climate in Maiuma seemed not to have been favourable for anti-Chalcedonians, at least for the more zealous ones, if, indeed, one ought to introduce such a distinction. He speaks about a certain Cyril who had been

*The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 244–246 and plate XII (aerial view of the excavations at Bet-Guvrin–Eleutheropolis); see also the entry 'Bet Guvrin' in Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land* (Oxford and New York, 1998), 183–188.

<sup>245</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 77.

<sup>246</sup> About 10 *stadia* away from Ashkelon. On Palaea, see Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, 'Sur quelques localités de Palestine mentionnées dans la Vie de Pierre l'Ibère', in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* 113 (Paris, 1896), 1–22, here 2–9: 'Peleia-Hamâmè, El-Medjdel et le véritable site d'Ascalon'.

driven away from Maiuma because of his anti-Chalcedonian convictions, had to settle in Ashkelon, and there earned a living as a keeper of a tavern.<sup>247</sup> Eventually, also Pelagius of Edessa, one of Peter's former frequent visitors, had to flee and hide in Ashkelon, although Rufus does not state explicitly that Pelagius was driven away.<sup>248</sup> Few anti-Chalcedonians could maintain their presence in Maiuma.<sup>249</sup> However, under Peter's leadership a new nucleus of an anti-Chalcedonian centre was formed in the Ashkelon area. It was mainly due to Peter's ascetic experience and vigour that anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in that part of the Holy Land began to flourish again for a while.

During the short interval of Emperor Basiliscus' reign (AD 475–476), when his *Encyclical* annulled the decisions of Chalcedon,<sup>250</sup> the anti-Chalcedonians also beyond the confines of Palestine gained new impetus. The exiled anti-Chalcedonian Timothy Aelurus was allowed to return to his see.<sup>251</sup> Having regained strength, Timothy showed his appreciation for Peter's personal friendship and for his anti-Chalcedonian impact on the Egyptian population. Consequently, Timothy tried to win Peter back for direct cooperation in Alexandria. Peter declined the offer respectfully, but sent monks of his own training to Egypt in order to support the Patriarch in his mission. Moreover, he kept friendly contacts with Timothy by way of exchange of letters.<sup>252</sup>

In AD 476 Zeno overthrew Basiliscus and annulled Basiliscus' *Encyclical*. The anti-Chalcedonian patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, Timothy Aelurus and Peter the Fuller, who had just returned from exile, faced renewed exile. Timothy died before he actually had to leave his see,<sup>253</sup> but Peter the Fuller did have to leave.<sup>254</sup> In Jerusalem, Patriarch Anastasius (AD 459–478) and the Palestinian bishops who had adhered to the *Encyclical* now accepted its repudiation. This did not imply a change of jurisdiction in Palestine. Heyer emphasizes that the Holy Land remained an open land.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>247</sup> *Plerophoriae* 6.                      <sup>248</sup> On Pelagius, see *Plerophoriae* 2–6.

<sup>249</sup> *Plerophoriae* 6.                      <sup>250</sup> See above, ch. I, p. 42 and n. 138.

<sup>251</sup> See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 170.

<sup>252</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 80. For further documentation on Peter's capability of corresponding with people via letters, see above, ch. I, pp. 21–22 with n. 60, p. 40, and pp. 43–44, with n. 141.

<sup>253</sup> On Timothy Aelurus' death before he learned that he was to be sent into exile again, see *Vita Petri Iberi* 80. Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense, ACO* ii.v, p. 125, ll. 13–15) suggests that Timothy Aelurus committed suicide. I owe the reference to Liberatus to Prof. Dr David W. Johnson.

<sup>254</sup> See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 174.

<sup>255</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 77.

Anastasius' successor, Patriarch Martyrius of Jerusalem (AD 478–486), desired unity with the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians by way of compromise. On the basis of their confession of faith made at baptism, large numbers of anti-Chalcedonians were again received into full sacramental union with the Chalcedonian Church. Zachariah Rhetor preserved a sermon in which Patriarch Martyrius addresses the issue of reconciliation.<sup>256</sup> Zachariah excerpted passages from the sermon which focus on the anti-Chalcedonian concern about the alleged Chalcedonian corruption of the faith proclaimed at Nicaea. For Martyrius it was clear that the faith of Nicaea had to and did continue to be the sole ground of all the subsequent councils. If that Nicaean faith could not be recognized in a given council, its formulation was invalid.<sup>257</sup> Heyer saw in such efforts Patriarch Martyrius' attempt to create for Jerusalem its own peace. The anti-Chalcedonian resistance dissolved.<sup>258</sup> Only a few anti-Chalcedonians remained in their opposition. Gerontius was one of them. Persisting in his unwillingness to reconcile, he was forced to leave his monastery on the Mount of Olives and to withdraw from the Holy City.<sup>259</sup> Abba Romanus was another unreconcilable opponent, possibly also Marcianus of Bethlehem. The circle around Peter the Iberian constituted the largest remaining group of resisting anti-Chalcedonian forces.

For a while Peter stayed within the confines of Palestine. During that time, he was the only anti-Chalcedonian hierarch there, leading a restless life of travels throughout the territories of the provinces of *Palaestina*, and even going beyond those areas into the bordering regions of the province of *Arabia*.<sup>260</sup> Being an eyewitness to the events of the later years of Peter's life, Rufus recounts how the population of the cities, villages, and farms along the way joyfully and full of faith went out in order to meet their hero. They would hasten to him and ask for his blessing.<sup>261</sup> Wherever Peter visited or stayed for a while, Rufus portrays him as the preacher, charismatic

<sup>256</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 5, ch. 6 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 221–222; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 115–116).

<sup>257</sup> See also below, ch. 4, p. 259 and n. 156.

<sup>258</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 78.

<sup>259</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyryllos von Skythopolis*, 67.14–17; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64).

<sup>260</sup> For a discussion of Peter's travels to *Arabia*, his contacts with the local population there, and his anti-Chalcedonian missionary endeavours among the Arab population, see Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'. See also Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, 'La province Romaine d'Arabie et ses gouverneurs', in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études* 113 (Paris, 1896), 83–92.

<sup>261</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 84, 90, and 94.

public speaker, and successful wonder-worker on behalf of anti-Chalcedonian orthodoxy.

At first, the union between the Chalcedonian and the anti-Chalcedonian parties in the Holy Land was not well received in Constantinople. Yet eventually it even served as a model for Emperor Zeno's attempt at forging a union by way of the document known as the *Henotikon* (AD 482).<sup>262</sup> In some points the *Henotikon* went beyond the Chalcedonian offer made in Jerusalem; Zeno sought to make it easy for anti-Chalcedonians to re-enter the Church of the emperor. One of the key elements of the *Henotikon* with which Zeno hoped to gain anti-Chalcedonian approval and one which was well received was the inclusion of Cyril's Twelve Chapters or rather Twelve Anathemas.<sup>263</sup>

Despite all efforts and diplomacy, resistance remained mainly among anti-Chalcedonian ascetics. In Palestine these supporters constituted a minority of the monastics. The *Plerophoriae* provides insight on why some anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine continued their resistance. One important reason was the personal charisma of Peter the Iberian.

Even after his return to Palestine, Peter maintained contact with monastic circles in Egypt. There the acceptance of the *Henotikon*,

<sup>262</sup> For the text of Zeno's *Henotikon*, see Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 3, ch. 14 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 111.1–114.5; tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 147–149; see also Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 362–366); and Schwartz, *Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431*, n. 75, pp. 52–54. The Latin text can be found in Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium* 17 (ed. Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense, ACO* ii.v, pp. 127, l. 188–p. 129, l. 2). For a discussion of the historical context, see Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, ch. 4. See also Hanns Christof Brennecke, 'Chalcedonense und Henotikon: Bemerkungen zum Prozeß der östlichen Rezeption der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon', in *Chalkedon: Geschichte und Aktualität: Studien zur Rezeption der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon*, eds. J. van Oort and J. Roldanus (Leuven, 1997), 24–53, here 42–51; S. Salaville, 'L'affaire de 'Hénotique' ou le premier schisme byzantin au V<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Échos d'Orient* 18 (1918), 255–265; 19 (1919), 389–397; and 20 (1920), 49–68 and 415–433; Rhaban Haacke, 'Die kaiserliche Politik in den Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (451–553)', in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. ii (Würzburg, 1953), 95–177, here 117–141; P.-Th. Camelot, 'Hénotique', in *Catholicisme: Hier-Aujourd'hui-Demain* 5 (1962), 605; Anonymous, 'Hénotique', in *DHGE* 23, fasc. 136 (1990), 1044; Timothy E. Gregory, 'Henotikon', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 913; and Guido Bausenhardt, 'Henotikon', in *LThK* 4 (1995), 1426.

<sup>263</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 3, ch. 14 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 112.33–113.2; tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 148–149); and Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 361.

upheld by Patriarch Peter Mongus,<sup>264</sup> was greatly disliked because the *Henotikon* lacked an explicit condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon and its definitions. Zachariah Rhetor states that Peter Mongus was carefully examined by a monastic committee, headed by Peter the Iberian.<sup>265</sup> In front of that committee, Mongus defended his orthodoxy on the basis of four of his homilies, thus condemning Chalcedon with his own signature. Yet in the eyes of the committee and especially in Peter's eyes that was insufficient. Apparently, Peter showed himself in this situation from his most irreconcilable side. When Peter Mongus expelled the monks, who refused communion with him, it only made matters worse.<sup>266</sup> On top of all these complications, Emperor Zeno invited Peter the Iberian as well as Abba Isaiah to the capital, entertaining the manifest intention to get them to agree to the *Henotikon*. Abba Isaiah prayed and fell sick, yet recovered from his sickness immediately on the day after Zeno's messenger had left. Peter excused himself and took flight.<sup>267</sup>

Peter's travels through the regions of the provinces of *Palaestina*, *Arabia*, and *Phoenicia*, which Rufus portrays as effective missionary journeys, clearly also functioned as a flight from acts of oppression and persecution. The fact that Peter was not alone in such straits is well illustrated in the account of the fate of Epiphanius of Pamphylia. The episode in the *Plerophoriae* which is dealing with him illustrates well how the situation became increasingly severe for the anti-Chalcedonians, starting from around AD 481. Epiphanius, an anti-Chalcedonian who had been forced to give up his episcopal see, fled to the Holy Land and entered the monastery of Urbicia and Euphrasius on the Mount of Olives in his search for peace. However, his hopes were disappointed when the archdeacon of the Church of the

<sup>264</sup> On Peter Mongus, see Christopher Haas, 'Patriarch and People: Peter Mongus of Alexandria and Episcopal Leadership in the Late Fifth Century', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993), 297–316; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 174–181; and Philippe Blaudeau, 'Le cas Pierre Monge au regard des sources monophysites d'origine palestinienne (Fin V<sup>e</sup> s.–Début VI<sup>e</sup> s.)', *Studia Patristica* 37 (1999/2000), 353–360. Also see Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Petros III. Mongos', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 130; and T. Böhm, 'Peter III (Mongus) of Alexandria', in *DECL* (2000), 480.

<sup>265</sup> Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 6, ch. 1 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 84, t. 39 (Louvain, 1953), p. 3; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 134).

<sup>266</sup> According to Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 6, ch. 1 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 84, t. 39 (Louvain, 1953), p. 3; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 134), Nephalius was one of them.

<sup>267</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103–104; Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 6, ch. 3 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 84, t. 39 (Louvain, 1953), 6–7; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 137).

Ascension in the immediate neighbourhood of that monastery told him that if he wished to stay in a monastery under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Jerusalem, he had to be in communion with that patriarch. Epiphanius, who did not think he could make that choice for Chalcedon, had to leave, and Urbicia and her brother Euphrasius with him.<sup>268</sup>

### PETER'S ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN LEGACY

Peter was over seventy years old when he died in AD 491, surrounded by his disciples, in a place outside Jamnia.<sup>269</sup> He was buried in his old monastery between Gaza and Maiuma.<sup>270</sup> Shortly before his death, his disciples gathered around him and he instructed them in what he thought should be the three basic, guiding principles or even commandments of every Christian: to keep the orthodox faith, to speak the truth, and to keep one's body pure from fornication and lasciviousness. Besides those three commandments, Peter encouraged his followers repeatedly to practise repentance.<sup>271</sup> These instructions can be understood as being directed towards both anti-Chalcedonians and Chalcedonians alike. Peter's anti-Chalcedonian followers are called upon to fully live out the ideal of ascetic life, namely to turn away from the world and from sin, and instead to turn to God, the fullness

<sup>268</sup> *Plerophoriae* 44. <sup>269</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 137.

<sup>270</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 142. See discussion in Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', especially pp. 109–110 and 120–126.

<sup>271</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 117–118. Christians encountered discussions concerning the value of repentance and especially *paenitentia secunda*, i.e. penance after baptism, early on, e.g. in the *Shepherd of Hermas* and Tertullian's *De paenitentia*. On the latter, see also Guy G. Stroumsa, 'From Repentance to Penance in Early Christianity: Tertullian's *De Paenitentia* in Context', in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1999), 167–178. Heinrich Karpp, ed. and tr., *Die Busse: Quellen zur Entstehung des altkirchlichen Busswesens*, *Traditio christiana* 1 (Zurich, 1969) provides a good orientation on the topic. For useful discussions of ways in which ascetic literature dealt with the need of and call to repentance, especially in the limited context of Gazan monasticism, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Penitence in Late Antique Monastic Literature', in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1999), 179–194; and Aryeh Kofsky, 'Aspects of Sin in the Monastic School of Gaza', in *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1999), 421–437. For a comparative study of early Christian views of repentance across linguistic and geographical boundaries, see also Cornelia Horn, 'Penitence in Early Christianity in Its Historical and Theological Setting: Selected Views from Eastern and Western Sources', in *Penitence in Canonical and Christian Perspective*, ed. M. Boda and G. Smith (Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 2006) (forthcoming).

of truth. Inspirations for the practice of penitence, or *metanoia*,<sup>272</sup> provided by respected teachers were readily available in the milieu in which Peter had moved about, especially in the Greek-speaking world,<sup>273</sup> most directly in the form of Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon*,<sup>274</sup> and also in Egypt, where Peter had spent many of his years in exile.<sup>275</sup> The focus on repentance and conversion to the truth and to the true life makes it likely that either the historical Peter or Rufus in his function as author of the literary portrait of Peter intended to direct an exhortation at Chalcedonians to repent from what anti-Chalcedonians perceived was an apostasy from the true faith.

The events surrounding Epiphanius' experience a decade before Peter's passing away had been only a prelude to what was to come. After Peter's death, during the years 492 to 494, a new group of

<sup>272</sup> See also Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 855–858.

<sup>273</sup> Examples of sources in the Greek-speaking milieu include Mark the Hermit, *On Penance* (ed. PG 65.965–984; also ed. and tr. Georges-Matthieu de Durand, *Marc le Moine: Traités I*, SCh 445 (Paris, 1999), 214–259; most recently, C. Clark Carlton, 'The Dogmatic and Ascetical Theology of St. Mark the Monk' (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 2002), 7 and ch. 10, dates Mark's *floruit* to the second quarter of the fifth century in the geographical context of Asia Minor or Syria, thus in an area through which Peter the Iberian may well have travelled on his way to Jerusalem); Asterius of Amaseia, *Homily XIII: Penitential Sermon* (ed. Cornelis Datema, *Asterius of Amasea: Homilies I–XIV* (Leiden, 1970), 183–194; Galusha Anderson and Edgar Johnson Goodspeed, *Ancient Sermons for Modern Times by Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, circa 375–405, A.D.* (New York, Boston, Chicago, 1904) do not translate this sermon); and John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Repentance* (ed. PG 49.277–350; tr. Gus George Christo, *John Chrysostom: Homilies on Repentance and Almsgiving*, FOTC 96 (Washington, DC, 1998), 1–130). For a useful discussion of aspects of Basil of Caesarea's thought on penance, with references to relevant passages in his works, see Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 216–220. The collection of primary sources in Heinrich Karpp, ed. and tr., *Die Busse: Quellen zur Entstehung des altkirchlichen Busswesens* (Zurich, 1969) is helpful. See further Jacques Guillet, 'Metanoia', in *DSp* 10 (1980), 1093–1099; Pierre Adnès, 'Pénitence', in *DSp* 12 (1983), 943–1010; C. Vogel, E. Dassmann, and V. Saxer, 'Penitence', in *EECh* 2 (1992), 667–669; Gustav Adolf Benrath, 'Buße V', in *TRE* 7 (1981), 452–473, especially 452–458; and H. Emonds and B. Poschmann, 'Buße', in *RAC* 2 (1954), 802–812. See also below, ch. 5, p. 375 with nn. 191–192, and the literature cited there.

<sup>274</sup> See especially the discourse dedicated to repentance in Abba Isaiah of Scetis, *Asceticon* 21 (tr. John Chryssavgis and Pachomios (Robert) Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses* (Kalamazoo, 2002), 149–161). For fuller documentation of Isaiah's *Asceticon*, see below, ch. 3, p. 155, n. 206.

<sup>275</sup> Crum, *Theological Texts*, 36–53, published the Coptic text, accompanied by an English translation, of a homily on repentance and on Romans 4:15, attributed to Gregory Nazianzen. Whether Peter himself knew Coptic is not certain, but possible. For a glimpse at the closely related struggle for 'purity' in the Egyptian ascetic milieu at the time, see the discussion in Caroline T. Schroeder, 'Purity and Pollution in the Asceticism of Shenute of Atripe', *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001), 142–147.

Chalcedonian defenders gathered in the Holy Land. With strong conviction they pressed for full acceptance of the Chalcedonian confession. When in 492 Sallustius, the patriarch of Jerusalem, was sick in his palace, crowds of monks gathered in the palace and 'by common vote' elected Sabas and Theodosius, two staunch fighters for Chalcedon, as archimandrites for the *lavrae* and the *coenobia*.<sup>276</sup> After his election in AD 494, Patriarch Elias immediately sought to strengthen his connections with the emperor in Constantinople. In his effort he broke the unity between Jerusalem and the anti-Chalcedonian patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria. When finally, in AD 508, he commissioned the formerly anti-Chalcedonian monk Nephalius, now converted to Chalcedon,<sup>277</sup> to expel the anti-Chalcedonian monks from Palestinian monasteries, peace in the Holy Land was destroyed or restored, depending on one's perspective.

Yet throughout those years the anti-Chalcedonian monks of Maiuma and Eleutheropolis, who carried on Peter's spiritual heritage and who now were under Rufus' leadership, had regained strength. When several anti-Chalcedonian monks from Apamea were forced to leave the Patriarchate of Antioch under the Chalcedonian Flavian, they found refuge in the anti-Chalcedonian monasteries in Maiuma and Eleutheropolis.<sup>278</sup> They were welcomed by the heirs of Peter the Iberian and by the monk Severus, the famous future anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch.

Severus was born in Pisidia. After the death of his father he had become a student of grammar in Alexandria, and since AD 486 he had studied law in Beirut.<sup>279</sup> Yet theology exerted the greatest attrac-

<sup>276</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 114.23–115.21; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 124).

<sup>277</sup> On Nephalius, see Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle* bk. 6, chs. 1, 2, and 4 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 84, t. 39 (Louvain, 1953), 4–5 and 7–8; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 134–135 and 138); and Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 100.14–104.5 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', pp. 100–104); Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 3, chs. 22 and 33 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 120.9–121.30 and 131.20–133.14; tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 157–158 and 175–178). See also Ch. Moeller, 'Nephalius d'Alexandrie: un représentant de la Christologie néochalcedonienne au début du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 40 (1944–45), 73–140; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. ii, pt. ii, pp. 47–52; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 201 and 207; and Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 113.

<sup>278</sup> See Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 111.1–6 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 111).

<sup>279</sup> Beirut was home to one of the most famous law schools in antiquity. For the still authoritative study of the ancient Beirut Law School, see Paul Collinet, *Histoire de l'École de Droit de Beyrouth* (Paris, 1925). More recently, see Linda Jones Hall, 'Berytus, "Mother of Laws": Studies in the Social History of Beirut from the Third



Although Severus succeeded in influencing imperial policy, in the eastern patriarchates the situation developed in a way quite unfavourable for anti-Chalcedonians. A unity that was created between the patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem revealed attempts to rehabilitate the Council of Chalcedon. Facing such a situation, the anti-Chalcedonian goal for the Holy Land was twofold: the opponents of Chalcedon wished to bring about an end of the persecutions of their adherents in Palestine; and they also worked towards an agreement between the eastern patriarchates on the basis of an anti-Chalcedonian interpretation of the *Henotikon*.

Some success was achieved with regard to the first goal: Emperor Anastasius (AD 491–518) ‘succeeded to the throne of Zeno and gave full freedom to the ἀποσχισταί’.<sup>285</sup> He issued an order that anti-Chalcedonian monks were allowed to retake possession of their monasteries. He also sent out a ‘dogmatic encyclical’ to their archimandrites to that effect in 510. In that writing, Anastasius confirmed the formulation ἐκ δύο φύσεων.<sup>286</sup>

In AD 510/11, Severus pressed Anastasius to issue the *Typos* (τύπος τῆς πληροφορίας), elevating to law the anti-Chalcedonian interpretation of the *Henotikon*.<sup>287</sup> Elias of Jerusalem joined Flavian in his refusal of acceptance.<sup>288</sup> In AD 511, Severus returned to his *lavra* close to Maiuma. Philoxenus of Mabbugh exerted pressure on Emperor Anastasius to depose Flavian of Antioch (in AD 512) and Elias of Jerusalem (in AD 516). Once Flavian had been removed, Severus became anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch on 8 November, AD 512.<sup>289</sup> His anti-Chalcedonian supporters, the so-called ‘Severians’, tried to establish and increase their influence upon the life of the Church in the Holy Land. The torch of leadership of the anti-Chalcedonian community in Syria-Palestine that previously was in

<sup>285</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 115.10–12; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 124 (slightly modified)): Ἀναστασίου τὴν βασιλείαν Ζήνωνος διαδεξαμένου καὶ τοῖς Ἀποσχισταῖς παρρησίαν δεδοκός. See also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 50 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 139.24–27; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 149). With the term ἀποσχισταί Cyril refers to the anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine. See also references in Eduard Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, TU 49.2 (Leipzig, 1939), 259.

<sup>286</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 105 (ed. Kugener, ‘Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique’, p. 105); Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 217–218.

<sup>287</sup> See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 217; see Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 107–108 (ed. Kugener, ‘Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique’, pp. 107–108). For a Latin translation of the Armenian text of the *Typos* and a discussion see Ch. Moeller, ‘Un fragment du Type de l’empereur Anastase I’, *Studia Patristica*, vol. iii, TU 78 (Berlin, 1961), 240–7.

<sup>288</sup> See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 218.

<sup>289</sup> See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 219.

the hands of the first generation, consisting of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, Abba Gerontius, and Abba Romanus, by now had clearly been passed on into the hands of Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbugh, and John Rufus in Maiuma, Gaza.

The *Plerophoriae* presents arguments brought forth by anti-Chalcedonians during their time of triumph, the years of Severus' patriarchate in Antioch from AD 512 to 518. At that time, Rufus was still bishop of Maiuma. As he expressed it in the *Plerophoriae*, he saw strong confirmation of the anti-Chalcedonian position in the numerous miracles, visions, prodigies, and prophecies he was able to recount on behalf of the anti-Chalcedonian side. For him they proved that Chalcedon was the revenge of the 'Nestorians'.

Most of what Rufus compiled in his *Plerophoriae* came from what he had heard from the mouth of Peter the Iberian. Even though the final composition and redaction of the *Plerophoriae* are likely to be Rufus' work, the text reveals intimate details of Peter's life, thought, and activities. A very significant layer that was part of the historical reality of Peter's life as much as it became a dominant dimension in the literary portrait which Rufus takes great care in detailing regarding Peter, is that of Peter's asceticism. That layer is strong in both the *Plerophoriae* and the *Vita Petri Iberi*.

One way in which the battle between anti-Chalcedonians and Chalcedonians in Palestine was fought on the literary level was by constructing competing portrayals of ascetic authority. The Chalcedonian response with its portraits of Chalcedonian 'holy men', delivered by Cyril of Scythopolis at a point in time when the anti-Chalcedonian party had already mostly been defeated, has been studied in exemplary fashion by Flusin and others. Yet one's understanding of history could easily become distorted if one did not consider the overall picture from a perspective that situates and evaluates events with regard to the historical sequence in which they occurred. Thus the following chapter attempts to close the gap that still exists, providing a study of the anti-Chalcedonian model of the authoritative ascetic that was the earlier one to be put forth for the consideration of the Christian audience.

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## Asceticism as Locus of Authority: The Case of Peter the Iberian

### SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE DISCUSSION

The question of the relationship between asceticism and authority is rich in nuances throughout early Christian literature.<sup>1</sup> In Palestine, anti-Chalcedonian literary works, primarily those of John Rufus, used the practice and language of asceticism to characterize and identify their own ascetic leaders, for example, Peter the Iberian, not only as the ones who deserved to be followed but also as the

<sup>1</sup> Without referencing in detail the voluminous body of literature created by the discussion of the role of the 'holy man' in the ancient, early Christian, and late antique world, it is necessary to point the reader to at least a few of the more specific studies, which are immediately relevant as background to the present chapter. Indispensable for situating the topic is Peter Brown's article 'Arbiters of the Holy: The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity'. For a study of the language of moral authority which monks created in the early medieval West, see Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2001). See also on the related subject of the rhetoric of gendered authority in ascetic and episcopal settings, Conrad Leyser, 'Vulnerability and Power: The Early Christian Rhetoric of Masculine Authority', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 80 (1998), 159–173. Concerning the question of ecclesial dimensions of ascetic authority, see Simon J. Coates, 'The Bishop as Pastor and Solitary: Bede and the Spiritual Authority of the Monk Bishop', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996), 601–619; John Chryssavgis, 'Obedience: Hierarchy and Asceticism: The Concept of Spiritual Authority in the Church', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 34.1 (1990), 49–60; Paul Henry, 'From Apostle to Abbot: The Legitimation of Spiritual Authority in the Early Church', *Studia Patristica* 17.2 (1982), 491–505; Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, 1978); and Philip Rousseau, 'Spiritual Authority of the Monk Bishop: Eastern Elements in some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 380–419. For a recent discussion of aspects of the question of the relationship between ascetic authority and spatial confinement or transgression thereof, as it will be dealt with in both the present and the following chapters, see also Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 2002).

ones who had the right to demand the respect and obedience of the true Christians. Both the final redaction of the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae* reflect the struggle which took place in the course of the second half of the fifth and the first part of the sixth century over the question of whose authority a Christian, and especially an ascetic Christian, ought to follow. The answer which anti-Chalcedonians gave was clear: that of the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic. The following discussion will lay out in detail the dimensions of such a portrayal of ascetic authority. This chapter will demonstrate how ascetics gained authority and used that authority to promote adherence to the particular religious group with which they were affiliated. In particular, this study will address those issues of authority, which surfaced in the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic milieu in the fifth and early sixth centuries in the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. Given the more narrow focus of this study as a whole, the present discussion will focus only on people and events pertaining to Peter the Iberian's life and career.

First, this chapter will examine ascetic influences to which Peter was exposed during the formative years of his life, starting in Georgia, then in Constantinople, and, eventually, in a highly concentrated and direct way in the Holy Land. Secondly, the study will highlight the specific ascetic style which Peter appears to have developed and which his biographer Rufus further worked out in the literary portrait of Peter. Instead of presenting all possible aspects of Peter's ascetic style, attention will focus on three specific motifs. The section will open with a brief discussion of the more familiar theme of the authority of the ascetic over adversarial and demonic forces. Then, in a second part, the function of Rufus' presentation of Peter as imitator of biblical heroes will be studied. While the modelling of one's ascetic endeavours in imitation of biblical figures is not a novel trait of ascetic behaviour and its interpretation, in the case of Rufus' interpretation of Peter the choice of two dominant models, those of Moses and the Apostle Peter, becomes very meaningful in the context of anti-Chalcedonian struggles for authority and survival. Peter's imitation of Moses, 'the Patriarch', will also be a significant element for a better understanding of the dimension of pilgrimage, which characterizes the whole of Peter's life. That discussion will form part of Chapter 4.

The attentive reader of Rufus' works readily notices the prominent emphasis which Rufus laid on specifically 'Nazirite' qualities of Peter's ascetic endeavour. Given that one does not encounter this particular feature of ascetic characterization too frequently in studies of monastic texts and in the texts themselves, the third part of the second section of the discussion in the present chapter will state the

implications of the ‘Nazirite’ motif for the question of ascetic authority among anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine. By paying careful attention to this aspect of Peter’s asceticism one is also able to situate his practice and his witness more firmly in the world of asceticism that was influenced by Syrian traditions. The accounts of his deeds also contribute to these influences, not least by virtue of their having become a part of the Syriac-speaking literary realm early on. Given that the building of dwelling places both serves a natural need for protection and makes a claim to physical space, thus establishing authority, the third and final major section of the present chapter will study the monastic foundations which Peter and his circle created in the Jerusalem and Gaza areas and by which they claimed authority over concrete physical spaces. Further, the discussion will turn to a broader consideration of the connection between space and ascetic authority, namely, the question of how anti-Chalcedonian ascetics could make claims to ‘space’ in the spheres of the internal life of the Church as well as with regard to their relationship to the Empire. The redefinition of sacred space and its locality, determined by the figure of the ascetic himself, became crucial for questions of religious identity in Palestine. Eventually, in Chapter 4, this claim to space will have to be set in the larger framework of pilgrimage. First, however, this chapter will focus attention on the quality of the ascetic portrayal of Peter and the environment that formed his ascetic authority.

## FORMATIVE ASCETIC INFLUENCES ON PETER

Rufus’ portrayal of Peter’s youth strongly suggests that aspects of the ascetic life had a formative influence (*auctoritas*) on Peter from the earliest days of his life. In his depiction of Peter’s childhood in Georgia and his teenage years in Constantinople, Rufus takes pains to describe several such influential moments. The following investigation will attempt to trace the scope of ascetical inspiration that shaped the young boy. The resulting thick description of the perceived ideal influences on the life of the future ascetic delivers at the same time one dimension of the model that Rufus held up for imitation before the eyes of Peter’s followers and the people associating with them.

### **Ascetic Influences in Georgia**

Rufus’ sources of information concerning the early history of Peter’s life remain unknown. Possibly, it was on the basis of reports which

Rufus might have heard from Peter directly, that he felt enabled to trace Peter's family tree back to the very beginnings of Christianity in Georgia. Peter's maternal grandfather 'was the great Bakurios, . . . who [was] the first Christian king who ruled that country [i.e. Iberia]'.<sup>2</sup> Those who know of St Nino's missionary activities among the Georgians and the subsequent conversion of the Georgian King Mirian and his family<sup>3</sup> may consider Rufus' reference to King Bakurios as the earliest Christian Georgian king a distortion of history. Nevertheless, what remains significant for the purposes of the present discussion is that by connecting the roots of Peter's Christian faith to the very origins of the conversion of the Georgians, moreover, to the royal family in Georgia, Rufus was able to endow his hero with authority. That authority was derived from several factors. To a considerable extent, as shown here, it was grounded in tradition and in royal prestige.

Yet Rufus was eager to elaborate upon a further dimension. He claims that several of the first Georgian Christians from the royal family, namely Peter's relatives, lived holy ascetic lives. In particular, Rufus presents Peter's maternal grandparents Bakurios and Duktia, his grandfather Bakurios' brother Arsilios, and Peter's mother Bakurduktia as models of the ascetic life.

The life of ascesis which Bakurios and Duktia practised was characterized by humility and service to the poor.<sup>4</sup> Bakurios and Duktia were said to have avoided sexual relations, except for begetting children. Both practised fasting and prayer and gave generously to the poor. Bakurios built a special house and supplied it with food for the poor from the kitchen of the palace. The king himself had the meals cooked, visited that house regularly, and fed the poor with his own hands.<sup>5</sup> Rufus emphasizes love as the principle force that motivated Bakurios' work on behalf of the poor.

Duktia's care for the poor came as a result of her renunciation of her high royal status. She took off her royal garments and dressed in

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5. One notes that the name Bakurios seems to have been common among Georgian nobility. Whatever one may want to make of it, it is striking that a certain Bakurios, a Georgian prince and commander of imperial Roman troops in Syrian Palestine, was Rufinus of Aquileia's source of information for his account of the conversion of the Georgians to Christianity. See Rufinus of Aquileia, *Ecclesiastical History*, 10.11 (ed. Mommsen, 'Paralipomena: Rufinus', in *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, ii.ii, GCS n.s. 6.2 (Berlin, 1999), 973–976).

<sup>3</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 59 and n. 38.

<sup>4</sup> The ascesis of that royal couple appears as like to that of Melania and Pinianus. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 28–29.

<sup>5</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 7.

sackcloth, the outfit of the penitent and the poor.<sup>6</sup> Eastern Christians would have seen in Duktia's action a desire to imitate Christ. In Eastern Christian literature, especially Syriac literature, Christ's *kenosis* and the implied example of humility are often expressed by the image of Christ putting on the human body like a garment, a poor and simple garment, not the garment of divine splendour.<sup>7</sup> Besides the change in dress, Duktia also sold her sedan chair and her fine pearls and jewellery. While those actions illustrated her renunciation of high royal status, they also had a practical consequence: they supplied her with money for the poor.

In regard to Duktia's pious and ascetical exercises, Rufus points to a particular moment at which asceticism and authority are connected. As a result of fasting and praying on the sabbath, Duktia received the gift of healing. She needed only to lay hands on the sick and they would be healed.<sup>8</sup> Duktia was empowered to become more

<sup>6</sup> For sackcloth as the outfit of penitents one may refer, among others, to the biblical model of the King of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5–6 and 3:8). The primary hagiographic model of the sinner taking off costly garments and re-dressing in the garb of the penitent is Pelagia of Antioch. For easy access in English to the traditions surrounding Pelagia, who might be the woman sinner John Chrysostom referred to in his *Homilies on Matthew* 67 (PG 58.636–637), see the *Life of Saint Pelagia the Harlot* by the Deacon James translated from the Latin of Eustochius and introduced by Benedicta Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo, 1987), 57–75; see also the English translation of the Syriac tradition in Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987; updated edition 1998), 40–62. Pelagia's model of repentance readily found entrance into other forms of early Christian literature, for example, poetic and homiletic materials in the Syriac tradition. For a study of the influence of the motif of re-dressing in penitential garments in the development of biblical interpretation of the figure of the Sinful Woman in Mark 14:3–9, Matt. 26:6–13, and Luke 7:36–50 in Syriac literature see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, 'Why the Perfume Mattered: The Sinful Woman in Syriac Exegetical Tradition', in *In Dominico Eloquentia: In Lordly Eloquence* (Grand Rapids, and Cambridge, 2002), 69–89, especially 84–86. As a former priest of the Church in Antioch Rufus was probably familiar with some of these traditions.

<sup>7</sup> For an important study of the theological significance of clothing language in Eastern Christian traditions see Sebastian Brock, 'Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition', in *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter*, ed. Margot Schmidt (Regensburg, 1981), 11–38.

<sup>8</sup> Combining the practices of fasting and prayer Duktia may well have followed Christ's insight and guidance, that certain acts of authority, in the Gospel directed against demons, are only possible to those who pray and fast. See variants to Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29. Raabe's comment that the gift of healing was not a permanent possession of Duktia's, only one which she received at those moments of intensified devotion and spiritual elevation, makes the connection between asceticism and authority all the more obvious. However, what the significance is of Duktia's choice of the sabbath for her prayers and fasting, awaits exploration.

like Christ, the healer of the sick. In its own right, this is a clear example of how the practice of asceticism supports the restoration of the true image of the human person, and here even in a very tangible, twofold way in both Duktia and the healed person. She was enabled to participate in the act of healing and thus replenishing, even recreating human life, and the sick person received the restoration of the health of his or her body and thus came close to the fullness of human life.

The example of Bakurios serves to draw attention to the idea that humility is particularly effective when it is practised in the service of the Christian faith and the Church. Rufus wrote that Bakurios used to sweep the floor of the local church. That seemingly insignificant detail foreshadows Peter's later acts of sweeping his room in Constantinople in order to prepare it as a sanctuary for the veneration of the relics of martyrs. In Rufus' text, sweeping becomes a means of symbolically drawing Peter's ascetic lineage back to Bakurios. When recounting events that took place in Constantinople, Rufus states that in the royal palace in the capital of the Byzantine Empire Peter prepared his bed-chamber for the veneration of the relics of the Persian martyrs by wiping the wall and the ceiling, sweeping and washing the floor, and washing and polishing many lamps with his own hands.<sup>9</sup> Thus Peter's activities there, modelled partially on those of Bakurios, demonstrated how ascetic humility was to be exercised in the service of the practice of the faith. Yet Rufus mentions that Bakurios did not sweep any building, rather he swept only the floor of the church. Peter did much more than sweep; he polished and washed the walls and ceiling. Thus Rufus suggests to his readers that Peter's humility and piety exceeded that of his grandfather. Peter was not only the heir, he was greater than his ancestor. From the comparison of these two acts of cleaning, performed by the two men, one is to conclude that Peter ought to be seen as having a larger portion of ascetic authority than his predecessors.<sup>10</sup>

Rufus portrays Arsilios, brother of Bakurios, as a model of virginity and piety, who was practising 'philosophy' through his asceticism.<sup>11</sup> Arsilios reached old age and reigned together with Bosmarios (II), Peter's father. Earlier on, members of the royal family had urged him

<sup>9</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>10</sup> Likewise, this scene already foreshadows the Elisha /Elijah motif, which underlies the representation of the story of a conversation between the old man from Scetis and Peter on Mount Nebo. See below, ch. 3, p. 183. Robert R. Phenix Jr. alerted me to that parallel.

<sup>11</sup> On asceticism as fulfilment of the ideal of the philosophical life, see the comments below at ch. 3, p. 131, n. 71.

to take a wife in order to continue the family line. Under pressure, Arsilios had agreed, yet never had had sexual intercourse with his wife. Utterly dissatisfied with such a merely platonic relationship his wife had sought another lover. Having been caught in the act, the adulterous couple were subjected to punishments of quite unequal measure: the lover was allowed to flee, while Arsilios' wife was the target of her husband's punitive curse that God would 'cause [her] genitals to breed worms [and that t]hus [her] flesh [would] be consumed'.<sup>12</sup> Only the power of repentance brought about her redemption.

While those two lovers certainly were not the only example of an extra-marital affair in ascetic literature,<sup>13</sup> Rufus may have had at least four reasons for raising the issue of love affairs in the *Vita Petri Iberi*. One certainly was his intention to teach concerning the need for repentance and acts of penitence. Yet he may have had three additional reasons. One notices that he does not indicate any doubts concerning Eudocia's marital fidelity, which later Byzantine authors questioned.<sup>14</sup> Whether or not he knew of any allegations against her is difficult to decide, since he and his fellow anti-Chalcedonians had every reason to show their gratitude towards Eudocia.<sup>15</sup> By not talking about Eudocia's affair, Rufus may have intended to show that anti-Chalcedonians did not think that she was guilty or to be blamed, and thus perhaps Rufus wished to prove her innocence by simply not referring to her.<sup>16</sup> Rufus, however, does mention Pharsamanios, the brother of Peter's paternal grandmother,<sup>17</sup> and his dangerous involvement with Eudoxia, the wife of Arcadius.<sup>18</sup> The immorality of their affair was one concern of Rufus' to bring up their case. Another concern might have been the disastrous consequences caused by their behaviour. The Georgians suffered when

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 9.

<sup>13</sup> A slightly more famous one, whether or not of a merely platonic nature, that involved Evagrius Ponticus—Pontus being somewhat in the vicinity of Iberia—and the wife of the city prefect of Constantinople comes to mind. While Evagrius likewise flees, nothing seems to be known about the fate of the city prefect's wife. See Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.30.9–11 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.1384–1388; also ed. Bidez and Hansen, *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 50 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), 285–286; tr. Hartranft, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomon, comprising a History of the Church', in NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., vol. ii (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1989), 368–369).

<sup>14</sup> See Horn, 'Empress Eudocia', 202–204 and 207–208.

<sup>15</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

<sup>16</sup> I wish to acknowledge Inta Ivanovska's contribution in suggesting this reason to me.

<sup>17</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 5.

Pharsamanios had to flee the capital, became ruler over the Georgians, and then brought the White Huns into the country. Immorality in this instance had political consequences.

By the time Rufus was writing the *Vita Petri Iberi*, namely, within a decade or two after Peter's death in AD 491, the Byzantine Empire still had not managed to gain the approval of all anti-Chalcedonians, including the extreme ones, but rather continued to be seen by them as a threat and as a seat of moral corruption because of its history of support for Chalcedon. Rufus, therefore, with stories from the distant past in Georgia, appears to warn his audience of the corrupting influence that the involvement with imperial powers almost necessarily entails. Only a life of utter renunciation stands a chance of overcoming that threat. To those who would not heed such authority, punishment would be meted out and only repentance and conversion could commute the sentence, as Rufus illustrates in his continuation of the story.

Arsilios insisted on his wife's repentance. Yet he framed his curse in such pious language that the final responsibility for her punishment lay with God. As punishment for her transgression Arsilios' wife, or rather her genitalia, were eaten by worms.<sup>19</sup> Her body changed into mere bones and skin, and the only way out of that miserable situation was for her to repent publicly. In the *Vita Petri Iberi*, however, public penance seems significant beyond the moral limits of the story of Arsilios and his wife. As just mentioned, Rufus states that through the sufferings of Arsilios' wife, her body was reduced to bones and dry skin. In the later course of the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus tells that Peter practised asceticism to such an extent that he also became only bones and skin.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, he describes Peter as consisting of only bone and skin towards the end of his life.<sup>21</sup> By way of describing both figures with the same expression, Rufus seems to have invited his readers to compare them with one another. Such a comparison would probably lead the reader to see Peter as the ascetic who is so concerned about his 'minor' sins that he self-inflicted severe acts of penance that equalled those prescribed only for grave sinners. As the foremost champion of repentance, in his asceticism Peter thus set an example of what true repentance had to look like. While Arsilios' wife was forcefully brought to the exercise of an extreme degree of

<sup>19</sup> Contrast the scene to the worms afflicting St Shushanik in Jakob of Tsurta, *Martyrdom of St Shushanik* 15 (ed. Abulaze, ძველი ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ლიტერატურის ძეგლები (Tbilisi, 1963), vol. 1, p. 25; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 55).

<sup>20</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 83.

repentance, real, perfect saints could and would exercise such repentance voluntarily.<sup>22</sup>

Peter's behaviour also is described in order to illustrate that in the face of God's abundant mercy the true ascetic must exercise humility and renunciation to the point of physically resembling repentant sinners. This is his vestment, his charism, his *cheirotomia*. It is quite likely that Rufus' interest in Peter as a penitent received some of its inspiration also from works of ascetic literature produced in the Gaza area, Isaiah's *Asceticon* rather prominently among them.<sup>23</sup> The call to penitence is a significant theme found in ascetic writings from that area.<sup>24</sup>

Rufus portrays repentance as an act that goes beyond any strictly moral judgement. Repentance is required of all, even of great ascetics, and therefore certainly also of those who have 'sinned' against the faith at Chalcedon. Repentance also is shown as a parallel structure of power. It forms the basis of a hierarchy that is living within and that is opposed to the 'outer' hierarchy of the Church, especially the leaders and bishops when they are to be seen as corrupted. For anti-Chalcedonians, certainly, the bishops' acceptance of the decisions of Chalcedon was a sign of such corruption.

Even though a modern reader may shrink from the severity and self-righteousness reflected in Arsilios' curse and its consequences, Rufus is full of praise for his virtues and ascetic qualities. Moreover, Rufus indicates that God directly approved of Arsilios, by allowing the curse to become effective. This effectiveness shows to the reader that Arsilios' authority derives from his holiness, gained through his ascetical practices. Further support of the authority inherent in acts of asceticism and penitence is to be found in the fact that the wife's healing from worm infestation was achieved when all the people of the city engaged in fasting, prayer, tears, and sighing.<sup>25</sup> In the context of the anti-Chalcedonian milieu in and for which Rufus was writing, the effect of such a message equalled a general call on the masses to repentance.

As a final example of ascetic influences on Peter in his home-country, a glance at the lifestyle of Peter's mother Bakurduktia is

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Inta Ivanovska for discussing this aspect of Peter's portrayal as penitent with me.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon* 21 (trans. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses* (Kalamazoo, 2002), 149–161).

<sup>24</sup> For a study of some aspects of the role of penitence in ancient monastic literature, see also Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Penitence in Late Antique Monastic Literature'.

<sup>25</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 10.

appropriate.<sup>26</sup> After her husband's death, Bakurduktia decided not to marry again. In line with Christian convictions current at the time, a second marriage was considered less honourable than the state of widowhood.<sup>27</sup> Emphasizing the opportunity for asceticism opened up by this state of life, Rufus takes care to note that Bakurduktia spent her days in fasting and prayer.

Rufus also points out that Bakurduktia did not wish to continue living in the city, but rather preferred to move to one of her villages.<sup>28</sup> In each one of them she built a *xenodocheion*, that is, a guest-house, and a hospital for the care of strangers passing by and for the sick.<sup>29</sup> Rufus' emphasis on Bakurduktia's charitable activities makes her, along with Passarion,<sup>30</sup> a model of inspiration from which Peter may have drawn when he cared for the flocks of pilgrims coming to the Holy City.

<sup>26</sup> Although one needs to be aware of the conjectural nature of the following comment, it is hard to resist noticing that Bakurduktia's name is a compound built from the names of her father Bakurios and her mother Duktia. One wonders if Rufus would not have explained to his audience in Maiuma at one of their gatherings that this could be seen as a sign that in Bakurduktia the ascetic virtues of her parents merged and were even doubled, so that she then was able to pass that full load on to her son Peter.

<sup>27</sup> For opinions on the preferability of widowhood over second marriage see, for example, John Chrysostom, *Ad viduam iuniorum* (ed. PG 48.399–410; also ed. Bernard Grillet and Gérard H. Ettlinger, *Jean Chrysostome: A une jeune veuve, Sur le mariage unique*, SCh 138 (Paris, 1968), 112–159; tr. W. R. W. Stephens, 'St. Chrysostom: Letter to a Young Widow', in *Saint Chrysostom: On the Priesthood; Ascetic Treatises; Select Homilies and Letters; Homilies on the Statues*, NPNF 9 (New York, copyright 1889, printed 1908), 121–128) with the often appended work John Chrysostom, *De non iterando coniugio III ἐπὶ μοναδικίας* (ed. PG 48.609–620; also ed. B. Grillet and G. H. Ettlinger, *Jean Chrysostome: A une jeune veuve, Sur le mariage unique*, SCh 138 (Paris, 1968), 160–201; German tr. J. Fluck, *Die ascetischen Schriften des hl. Johannes Chrysostomus* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864), 299–312; English tr. Sally Rieger Shore, *Saint John Chrysostom: On Virginity; Against Remarriage* (Lewiston, 1983), 129–145). Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium*, 101–102, discusses the concern for children's inheritance rights as well as their spiritual and emotional well-being as a possible motivation for exhortations to women to refrain from second marriages. See John Chrysostom, *De non iterando coniugio III ἐπὶ μοναδικίας 2* (ed. Grillet and Ettlinger, *Jean Chrysostome: A une jeune veuve, Sur le mariage unique*, 172; tr. Shore, *Saint John Chrysostom: On Virginity; Against Remarriage*, 133). Yet since Rufus does not date the year of Bakurios' death, it is difficult to evaluate all the motives for Bakurduktia's decision.

<sup>28</sup> The fact that Bakurduktia as a widow still possessed villages indicates that she did not renounce her wealth, at least not completely.

<sup>29</sup> See Alexander Kazhdan and Alice-Mary Talbot, 'Xenodocheion', in *ODB* 3 (1991), 2208. For a fuller study of the development of the healthcare system in the larger Byzantine world, see Timothy S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire* (Baltimore and London, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> On the influence of Passarion on Peter, see the discussion below pp. 150–152.

Rufus' presentation of these ascetic models serves several purposes. These examples allow him to praise Peter as the descendant of a worthy Christian family. His family supplied pre-monastic, ascetic models that inspired Peter from his earliest years of life in Georgia. These examples also provided Rufus with a good opportunity to develop in an attractive, literary way a connection between ascetic practices and the basis of spiritual authority. Perhaps most significantly, these ascetic models allowed Rufus to establish a lineage of divine authority that was rooted largely outside of the borders of the Byzantine Empire and that, probably at the time of his writing, was also outside of the Chalcedonian Church.<sup>31</sup> Thus, his emphasis on ascetic authority constructed on the basis of the Georgian models allowed him to reject implicitly both secular and ecclesiastical Chalcedonian powers.<sup>32</sup>

Peter and Rufus saw monasticism as an opportunity for a life of peace achieved through renunciation of the world.<sup>33</sup> According to Rufus, Peter credited the support of his family for his ability to obtain peace in the monastic life. Thus, when Peter prayed for and commemorated his relatives in services in his own monasteries, he may have been motivated by a belief that he received grace and empowerment from God through the intercession of those models of asceticism.

Yet Rufus also used this early part of his work to emphasize certain key virtues of ascetic spirituality. The figures he singled out illustrate the central importance of humility, repentance, imitation of Christ, virginity lived in a context of devotion to God, as well as renunciation of the world in order to be enabled to serve all the members of the body of Christ better, especially the poor and needy. As a result, the one who practises such ascetic virtues participates in the experience of seeing the human being restored to wholeness, either in his or her

<sup>31</sup> At the Synod of Dvin in AD 505/6 the majority of the Georgian bishops joined the Armenian bishops in condemning Chalcedon. See Julius Aßfalg and David Marshall Lang, 'Georgien', in *TRE* 12 (1994), 389–396, here 391; Brakmann and Lordkipanidse, 'Iberia II (Georgien)', 53 and 56. About a century later, the Church in Georgia reversed its position, accepted Chalcedon, and separated from the Armenian Church in AD 608 under Bishop Kyrion II. See also Boghos Levon Zekiyani, 'La rupture entre les églises géorgienne et arménienne au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Essai d'une vue d'ensemble de l'arrière-plan historique', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 16 (1982), 155–174; Schmidt, 'Warum schreibt Petrus der Iberer and die Armenier?' 257; see also most recently the study by Gorun Kojababian, *The Relations between the Armenian and Georgian Churches: According to the Armenian Sources, 300–610* (Antelias, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> I wish to thank Robert R. Phenix Jr. for helpful discussions concerning this point.

<sup>33</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 6.

own person or in those whom the ascetic serves. This is most clearly visible in the example of Duktia's gift of healing, which establishes a clear connection between ascetic life and the formative influence (*auctoritas*) which this style of life can have. The writings of Abba Isaiah and Evagrius of Pontus feature a comparable emphasis on the restoration of the human being through ascetic practice, especially through the practice of repentance and humility.<sup>34</sup>

Miracles of healing, worked by ascetics, moreover, highlight authority in yet another significant way, especially when they are seen in the light of a comparison between the ascetic wonderworker and Jesus, or here also the apostle Peter.<sup>35</sup> Miracles of healing can function as a fulfilment of Christ's promise in John 14:12 to the one who believes, for he or she will do even greater works than those Jesus had done on earth. Thus healing miracles also become the point of connection between spiritual and doctrinal authority.<sup>36</sup>

Taken individually, the different aspects of the spirituality of ascetic life as they come to the fore in the earliest portion of Peter's biography, as they continue to emerge throughout the rest of his life, and as they are supplemented by additional themes, e.g. that of spiritual friendship, are also to be found in other ascetic contexts in the early Christian world. It will be the task of a separate study of the role of John Rufus as author to investigate in minute detail the use he makes of hagiographic models as well as to show his use of sources from the wider ascetical literature. The present discussion will indicate a few of these influences, primarily Abba Isaiah, Evagrius of Pontus, Basil the Great, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* tradition, and a few others, in order to suggest that the effect of Rufus' portrayal of Peter as a man endowed with ascetic authority also relied on claims that Peter embodied the authentic interpretation of that ascetic tradition, and thus embodied its sole authentic continuation.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon* 25 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses*, 186–189); and Evagrius of Pontus, *Ad Monachos* 53 (ed. Hugo Greßmann, 'Nonnenspiegel und Mönchsspiegel des Euagrius Pontikos', in TU 39.4 (Leipzig, 1913), 143–165, here 157; Ch. Joest is working on a re-edition with German translation of this work for the series *Fontes Christiani*); and Evagrius of Pontus, *Admonition to Prayer* (ed. W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus*, in *Abhandlungen der kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl. n.s. 13.2* (Berlin, 1912), p. 558 (BM Add. 14,578 fol. 156 verso); tr. Sebastian Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo, 1987), 68–69), who compares the penitent to a dead person who has come back to life, as well as to a sick person who has regained health, or to someone near starvation, who in the end received enough to eat to survive. See also Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Penitence in Late Antique Monastic Literature', 179–182.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Acts 3:6–7.

<sup>36</sup> I wish to thank Inta Ivanovska for inspiring me to reflect on this point.

### Ascetic Influences in Constantinople

At the age of twelve the young prince Peter was sent as a hostage to Theodosius II's court.<sup>37</sup> As Rufus depicted the situation, Peter was impressed not only by Theodosius' and Eudocia's fear of God and love for Christ, but also by the seriousness with which many at the court practised ascetic virtues.

The seriousness (σπουδή) and zeal (ζήλος) were manifest in the fact that Theodosius, Eudocia, their male and female servants, and especially the chamberlains (*cubicularii*)<sup>38</sup> 'were all living in the palace as in a monastery'.<sup>39</sup> The reader will note that in describing Arsilios' activities in Georgia, Rufus had stated that like King David Arsilios employed 'sacred singers' in his palace who accompanied the daily meals with 'singing the holy words of God'. In that way, Arsilios had turned his palace for all practical purposes into a church, as Rufus clearly mentions.<sup>40</sup> The parallel of this simile to the ascetic and liturgical climate at the royal court of Theodosius II in Constantinople cannot be overlooked, independent of whether Rufus intended to give a competing or a complementary portrayal. Life at the court in Constantinople was regulated by prayers, fasts, night services, and 'these other [exercises] which are pleasing to God'.<sup>41</sup> In his *Church History*, Socrates described Theodosius' ascetic inclinations in a very similar way:

Such was his fortitude in undergoing hardships, that he would courageously endure both heat and cold; fasting very frequently, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays; and he did this from an earnest endeavor to observe with accuracy all the prescribed forms of the Christian religion. *He rendered his palace little different from a monastery*.<sup>42</sup> for together with his sisters, he rose early in the morning and recited hymns in a responsive manner in praise of the Deity. By this training he learned the holy Scriptures by heart.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 15–16. See also above at ch. 2, pp. 60–62. For a detailed discussion of the motives as to why Peter was being kept as a hostage see Horn, 'Befriending the Christian Romans'.

<sup>38</sup> The Syriac almost transliterates the Latin *cubicularium* /Greek κουβικουλάριος, which according to Alexander Kazhdan, 'Koubikoularios', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 1154, is 'a general term to designate palace eunuchs, who waited upon the emperor, the servants of the *sacrum cubiculum*'. See also A. Kazhdan, 'Eunuchs', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 746.

<sup>39</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.      <sup>40</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 11.      <sup>41</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.

<sup>42</sup> οὐκ ἀλλοιότερα δὲ ἀσκητηρίου κατέστησε τὰ βασιλεία.

<sup>43</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.22 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.785A; also ed. Hansen and Širinjan, *Socrates: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS n.s. 1 (Berlin, 1995), 368–369; tr. Zenos, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus', NPNF, 2nd ser. 2 (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1989), 164, italics added, translation lightly modified).

When comparing Rufus and Socrates with regard to their description of life at the court under Theodosius II, one notices at the same time clear parallels and subtle differences. A close parallel exists between their descriptions of the life at the court as resembling that of a monastery. The subtle differences are apparent when one sees that Rufus does not refer to the ascetic efforts of Theodosius II's sister Pulcheria, which Sozomen portrays with even greater emphasis than Socrates.<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly, Rufus avoided any positive mention of Pulcheria, given his contempt for her and her husband Marcian as promoters of Chalcedon.<sup>45</sup>

Two further differences are significant. Rufus readily presents Eudocia as a constituent participant of the ascetic milieu at court, calling her Theodosius' 'companion of zeal',<sup>46</sup> whereas neither Socrates nor Sozomen attribute any such role to her. The second difference lies in the fact that Rufus highlights the eunuchs' participation in the ascetic life at the palace. From other contexts it is well known that eunuchs were able to ascend to positions of great influence and could exercise that influence even on the emperor and his family.<sup>47</sup> The reference to the eunuchs in connection with their ascetic life in the present setting is immediately relevant for Peter's further

<sup>44</sup> In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Sozomen presents Pulcheria as a woman who voluntarily and at young age had chosen to live as a consecrated virgin. See Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 9.1.3 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.1593–1597; also ed. Bidez and Hansen, *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 50 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), 390; tr. Hartranft, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomon, comprising a History of the Church', in NPNF 2nd ser. 2 (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1989), 419, modified): 'The Divine Power . . . foresaw that the emperor would be distinguished by his piety, and therefore determined that Pulcheria, his sister, should be the protector of him and of his government. This princess was not yet fifteen years of age, but had received a mind most wise and divine above her years. She first devoted her virginity to God, and instructed her sisters [Arcadia and Marina] in the same course of life. To avoid all cause of jealousy and intrigue, she permitted no man to enter her palace. In confirmation of her resolution, she took God, the priests, and all the subjects of the Roman empire as witnesses to her self-dedication. In token of her virginity and the headship of her brother, she consecrated in the church of Constantinople a holy table, a remarkable fabric and of very beautiful appearance; it was made of gold and precious stones; and she inscribed these things on the front of the table, so that it might be patent to all.'

<sup>45</sup> Rufus does not mention Pulcheria's name at all in the *Vita Petri Iberi*. In the *Plerophoriae* he speaks of her, calling her by name, only in one polemical, negative context. See *Plerophoriae* 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.

<sup>47</sup> See for example, the influence Eutropius had on Arcadius. For a brief discussion of the conditions and circumstances that allowed for significant access of eunuchs to imperial power, see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 60–61.

development, since his closest friend and soul-mate, John the Eunuch, probably came from those *cubicularii* or court eunuchs.<sup>48</sup>

Already equipped with the example his Georgian relatives provided as role-models early on in his life, according to Rufus Peter caught the fire of ascetic zeal at the court in Constantinople rather quickly. Rufus describes four distinct areas in which Peter practised asceticism: clothing, food, bodily chastisement, and sleeping conditions.

Underneath, touching his body, he was clothed with a hair shirt, 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 (see Daniel 1:12), and this in small measure, and he was taking it once every three or four [17] days, occasionally even [only] once a week. For the subjugation of the flesh and its disorderly joys he loved discipline. The earth was a bed for the young and tender king.<sup>49</sup>

The renunciations practised in the areas of food,<sup>50</sup> clothing, and sleeping conditions are forms of bodily chastisement, but it is also

<sup>48</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21 indicates that Peter and John the Eunuch seem to have met first in Constantinople at the court. That John came from Lazica fits well with the fact that frequently eunuchs were imported as slaves from Persia and the Caucasus and subsequently were emancipated. See Kazhdan, 'Eunuchs', 747; Kazhdan, 'Koubikoularios', 1154. Even though accounting for a slightly later period, Rodolphe Guiland's comments seem already relevant. According to Guiland, Emperor Leo I (457–474) forbade the sale of eunuchs of Roman citizenship on Roman territory, yet he had to authorize the buying and selling of eunuchs of non-Roman origin. According to Guiland, Procopius of Caesarea and Zonaras provide information that noblemen and princes from Abkhazia and Lazica practised the making of eunuchs in large numbers in order to draw financial profit from it. For a while, the greater part of the eunuchs in the service of the palace at Constantinople were of Abghasian origin. See for this information, Rodolphe Guiland, 'Les Eunuques dans l'Empire Byzantin: Études de titulature et de prosopographie byzantines', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 1 (1943), 199. See also *idem*, 'Fonctions et dignités des Eunuques', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 2 (1944), 185–225. E. Honigmann, 'Le cubiculaire Urbicius', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 7 (1949), 47 n. 3, adds several eunuchs to Guiland's list, including Pharismanios, who is mentioned by Isidore of Pelusium, *Epistulae* I.27 (ed. PG 78.200A) and John the Eunuch. The *cubicularius* Urbicius himself, as Honigmann demonstrates, served under seven emperors, from Theodosius II to Anastasius. For the influence of other eunuchs at Theodosius II's court, one may consult with profit the article by Geoffrey Greatrex and Jonathan Bardill, 'Antiochus the Praepositus: A Persian Eunuch at the Court of Theodosius II', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996), 171–197.

<sup>49</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 16–17.

<sup>50</sup> Noticeably, Peter modelled his diet after that of Daniel, whose example was the source of inspiration for so many other early Christians. See, for example, Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on Fasting* 9 (ed. and tr. Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen de Ieiunio*, CSCO 246–247, Script. Syr. 106–107 (Louvain, 1964), 25–29 (Syriac) and 19–21 (German)).

possible that Rufus had other forms of physical discipline in mind. Unfortunately, these are not specified.

According to Rufus Peter dressed in a poor garment that was visible up-close but hidden from casual view. With such a description, Rufus may have intended to establish him as a model ascetic who does not boast nor display his efforts. However, the young prince was at the beginning of his ascetic career, when he was still somewhat uncertain about how to undertake asceticism. He appears to have been searching for a way to reconcile the life of a prince with that of a monk. Although Peter took the monastic habit physically only after he was in Jerusalem, the 'hair shirt' that he wore under his princely costume in Constantinople is a clear indicator that Peter's eventual goal was the full monastic habit. It also reveals the power of a vestment, here specifically the ascetic one.

At the court, Peter saw and realized that the habit of the monks was held in high esteem. A significant example of this attitude is found in the behaviour of Theodosius II. In his *Book of Heracleides* Nestorius made a comment regarding Emperor Theodosius II that 'the *schêma* of the monks was very dear unto him'.<sup>51</sup> Socrates recounts an anecdote illustrating Theodosius' reverence for the garments of the monks:

His piety was such that he had a reverential regard for all who were consecrated to the service of God; and honoured in an especial manner those whom he ascertained to be eminent for their sanctity of life. It is said that at the death of the bishop of Hebron in Constantinople, the emperor expressed a wish to have his cassock of sackcloth of hair; which, although it was excessively filthy, he wore as a cloak, hoping that thus he should become in some degree a partaker of the sanctity of the deceased.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Nestorius, *The Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, p. 375 (tr. G. R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, newly translated from the Syriac and edited with an introduction, notes, and appendices (Oxford, 1925), 272). Luise Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis des Nestorius* (Louvain, 1963), has contributed significantly to the study of Nestorius' defence. See also G. S. Bebis, "'The Apology" of Nestorius: A New Evaluation', *Studia Patristica* 11 (1972), 107–112.

<sup>52</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.22.13–14 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.785B; also ed. Hansen and Širinjan, *Socrates: Kirchengeschichte*, 370; tr. Zenos, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus', 165, modified). Socrates presents the relationship between the bishop of Hebron—here depicted with emphasis on his asceticism, given that bishops were customarily selected from among the members of the monastic body—and Theodosius II as an allusion, or even a reference to that between Antony and Athanasius.

The very garment of a monk possessed sanctity and with that, authority. As was well known, also Athanasius of Alexandria had drawn benefit from such an ascetic cloak.<sup>53</sup>

A closer look at Rufus' choice of vocabulary and imagery when describing Peter's ascetic development in Constantinople is rewarding. Through phrases such as 'was inflamed by zeal', 'a spark of fire', 'the great flame and the fire of heavenly grace'<sup>54</sup> he depicted how Peter's developing, but still hidden ascetic zeal came into the open. Rufus compared Peter's ascetic development to 'a spark of fire' implanted in him in Georgia which grew daily through ascetic exercises in Constantinople, and which finally burned like a 'great flame . . . of heavenly grace'. By practising asceticism, Peter perfected himself and could be likened to 'the great flame and the fire of heavenly grace'.<sup>55</sup>

The image of the perfect ascetic as the recipient of the fire of God's love is present elsewhere in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, always connected to Rufus' description of Peter. In the sections just referred to, it is the love of God that sets Peter aflame. A few pages later, recension A of the manuscript tradition states that in Constantinople '[Peter] had grown up in age and in divine love'.<sup>56</sup> Recension B adds to this remark that 'he continued to increase every day the goodness of the divine fire'.<sup>57</sup> Hand in hand with that increase went Peter's wish to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Peter 'was renewing [one] light from [another] light', or 'was exchanging fire for fire', as Rufus says somewhat mysteriously.<sup>58</sup> The phrase 'light from light' does remind one of the Nicene Creed's  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\kappa \phi\omega\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ,<sup>59</sup> thus suggesting that Rufus intended to show that Peter grew in his understanding of and insight

<sup>53</sup> See Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita Antonii* 91.9 (ed. Bartelink, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*, SCh 400 (Paris, 1994), 370, l. 42; tr. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony* (Mahwah, NJ, 1980), 97).

<sup>54</sup> All quotes from *Vita Petri Iberi* 16.

<sup>55</sup> Early Christian literature knows other examples of experienced ascetics who through their love of God and through their zeal experienced the transformation of parts or all of their bodies into burning flames of fire. See e.g. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, sayings concerning Joseph of Panephrisis, 7, in Benedicta Ward, tr., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, 1975), 103.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20. See also Luke 2:52.

<sup>57</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 20, n. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Either translation seems suitable, see *Vita Petri Iberi* 20. It cannot be excluded that this reference to 'light' / 'fire' also has a dimension which attempted to connect Peter with the authority of mystically inspired men and women. Yet to pursue all the implications of such a layer goes beyond the scope of what is possible in the present study.

<sup>59</sup> Nicene Creed, text quoted here according to the re-edition of G. Alberigo, and others, reprinted in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* vol. i: *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London and Washington, DC, 1990), 5.

into, but also in his exclusive adherence to Nicene theology to the exclusion of any teachings of Chalcedon. Rufus may also have thought both of the practice of asceticism and of the wish to go on pilgrimage as a 'light' or as burning like 'fire'. Yet, which light was renewed from the other light? It becomes clear that pilgrimage was kindled by asceticism, and pilgrimage in turn allowed for greater asceticism. Rufus speaks of pilgrimage as the highest of the virtues, but the ultimate purpose of Peter's pilgrimage to the Holy Land was to live an ascetic life in the immediate vicinity of the holy places.

When Rufus depicts in front of the eyes of his audience the many obstacles that arose on the occasion when Peter and John the Eunuch escaped from the palace, he notes that 'there is nothing mightier than the power of Christ, and no[thing] more fervent than the love of those who love him purely'.<sup>60</sup> The 'fervent love', namely, Peter's love for God, purifying the human desires of the ascetic, fits in well with the imagery of fire and burning employed earlier. Allusions to Peter being 'full of the Holy Spirit'<sup>61</sup> in consequence of acts of renunciation while still in Constantinople would likewise lead at least certain ones among the more reflective members of Rufus' audience to perceive the use of fire imagery as a way of illustrating that Peter's asceticism was empowered by the Holy Spirit. Thus they would come to see Peter's asceticism as one which ultimately derived its authenticity and effectiveness from God,<sup>62</sup> fulfilling the words of Psalm 103:4 that God 'makes his angels spirits and his ministers a fiery flame'.

<sup>60</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20–21.

<sup>61</sup> This description clearly set Peter in parallel with New Testament figures like Jesus (Luke 4:1), Stephen (Acts 6:5 and 7:55), and Barnabas at Antioch (Acts 11:24).

<sup>62</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17: 'Thus as he conducted himself [in discipline] and was purified from every defilement of the flesh and of the spirit and was growing in age, he became a temple of God and full of the Holy Spirit. All of this was in such a way that through divine grace, while he was still a child, many healings and signs and even great [works of] power were accomplished in the palace through his hands.' One may be inclined to note more remote allusions to fire-imagery in the formulations Rufus used in that context. Based on scriptural witnesses, one can readily see a connection between cleansing and purification by fire. That Peter is said to have become a temple of God and 'full of the Holy Spirit' also alludes to fire, if one gives space to biblical language and imagery. Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit in connection with fire for example when John the Baptist is announcing Jesus as the one who would be coming to baptize 'with the Holy Spirit and fire' (Luke 3:16) or at Pentecost when tongues of fire descended upon the disciples (Acts 2:3). Saying that Peter came to be 'a temple of God and full of the Holy Spirit', however, also allows Rufus to give expression to his belief that divine grace filled Peter and subsequently enabled him to work healings, signs, and deeds of power in the palace. Although this is a somewhat sweeping statement since Rufus either cannot or chooses not to tell of a specific healing that happened in the palace, it is significant to note that Rufus ascribes the signs and powerful deeds which occurred during Peter's time in

The whole first part of the *Vita Petri Iberi* unmistakably sets up Peter's authority as being neither from men nor by men, but from God alone. The parallel to Paul's claim in Galatians 1:1 is obvious. In relation to events occurring in Constantinople Rufus first indicates a connection between asceticism and the veneration of the relics of martyrs in Peter's possession. Peter used his bed-chamber in the palace as the place in which to practise the ascetic life.<sup>63</sup> What he did there illustrates that he ultimately received the rule for his ascetic life not from the abbot of a given monastery, but rather from God directly by way of his proven mediators, the martyrs. Peter recited prayers and practised pious exercises in front of a special shrine containing the relics of the Persian martyrs that he had brought along from Georgia.<sup>64</sup> An essential part of Peter's practices seems to have been the conducting of liturgical prayers and rituals in front of those relics. For the prayers, Peter used 'lights, incense, hymns of praise, and intercessions', and the martyrs accompanied him visibly: '[M]any times he saw them openly, chanting [psalms], keeping vigil, and praying with him.'<sup>65</sup> Out of ascetic zeal Peter slept on the ground directly in front of that reliquary. Rufus tells that once in preparation for the feast of Epiphany, instead of visiting the emperor, as custom and proper court etiquette required, Peter withdrew to his room in order to clean and decorate it in honour of the martyrs. Thus Rufus expressed Peter's rejection of the primacy of any claims of imperial authority over him, be they pious or impious.

The source of Peter's inner strength that prepared him to resist political claims laid upon him by his fellow countrymen likewise is grounded in his asceticism. As already alluded to above, Rufus described how Peter tried to honour the martyrs in a fitting manner. Peter 'completely decorated this house of prayer with his [own] hands; he wiped clean the walls and the ceiling [and] even swept and washed the floor'.<sup>66</sup> In doing so, Peter surpassed Bakurios' efforts at ascetic humility. Peter superseded his Georgian relative's example of humility in the face of the sacred.<sup>67</sup> This greater ascetic authority served Peter well as he had to resist the claims on his time

Constantinople in part to the effectiveness of the relics of the Persian martyrs and in part to Peter's influence as an increasingly holy and ascetic man.

<sup>63</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

<sup>64</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the likely provenance and subsequent history of these relics, see Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown'. On the function of relics, see below ch. 4, pp. 260–270.

<sup>65</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17–18.

<sup>66</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>67</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 7. See above, ch. 3, p. 117.

and commitment when fellow Georgians at the court wished to use him for their purposes.

Employing light and fire imagery, Rufus illustrates how Peter's ascetic inclinations caused conflicts with the political interests the Georgians had invested in him. When Peter 'had washed several lamps . . . polished [them] diligently, [and] hung [them] up,' there was a confrontation between him and his store-keeper, one of his servants from Georgia, who refused to 'bring [Peter] oil to light the lamps'.<sup>68</sup> That store-keeper 'was vexed . . . that [Peter] was not mindful of the things of the world'.<sup>69</sup> Being only mindful of his own interests, presumably in gaining a better position at court, and pursuing the interests of the Georgians who relied on Peter as a useful political connection to the Byzantine court, the store-keeper was annoyed at the young prince's pious and ascetic endeavours and said:

[Too] strong [are] the expectations, which both his country and ours have for him, that although he was sent by them for honour and royal glory to the Romans, he should want to become a monk! He will make all of us who depend on him miserable.<sup>70</sup>

Rufus regarded the store-keeper's words as words from the devil's mouth. Thus, he portrayed his hero as an ascetic athlete fighting against demonic powers. While Peter fought as a 'holy youth' and as a 'philosopher',<sup>71</sup> he showed 'serenity and patience' and demonstrated his 'evangelical sincerity'. Against the devil's attacks Peter employed his own prayers, fervent in faith and spirit, and sought the intercession of the martyrs' prayers.<sup>72</sup> By showing that Peter was able to overcome demonic forces through both prayer and ascetic subjugation to the service of the martyrs,<sup>73</sup> Rufus could claim for his hero

<sup>68</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>69</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>70</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>71</sup> In early Christian parlance, the practice of asceticism was often seen as equal to the true life of philosophy. See e.g. Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 27 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 180; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 46), or the portrayal of Macrina as the perfect virgin-philosopher, especially in regard to the depiction of her death as paralleling that of Socrates in Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Soul and the Resurrection* (ed. PG 46.12–160, and J. G. Krabinger, ed., *S. Gregorii episcopi Nysseni De anima et resurrectione cum sorore sua Macrina dialogus* (Leipzig, 1837); tr. Catherine P. Roth, *St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Soul and the Resurrection* (Crestwood, NY, 1993), and Virginia Woods Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works* (Washington, DC, 1967), 198–272). See also the study by Patricia Wilson-Kastner, 'Macrina: Virgin and Teacher', *St Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (1979), 105–117. Also note the study by Johannes Leipoldt, *Griechische Philosophie und frühchristliche Askese* (Berlin, 1961).

<sup>72</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>73</sup> On the classic theme of the relationship between the ascetic /monk and the martyr in early Christian literature, still valuable is Edward E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, DC, 1950).

an authority that was greater than any kind of influence or power deriving from and limited to the worldly realm. With such authority on his side, Peter even came to be the recipient of a divine miracle, an event that confirmed heavenly approval of his choice of ascetic practices and political allegiance (or lack thereof).

[W]hen the evening of the vigil came, he [19] furnished all the lamps with water only [and] not oil, [and] lit [them]. Once lit, they remained [burning] night and day without ceasing during the seven days of the holy feast.<sup>74</sup>

Rufus suggests that the miraculous lighting of the lamps and their burning without oil for a whole week deeply impressed Emperor Theodosius II and the people at the palace. In response to that miracle many were 'moved with zeal by his way of life and by his asceticism'.<sup>75</sup> Those who already practised asceticism started to

<sup>74</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18–19. Compare the tradition underlying Hanukkah; see 2 Maccabees 1:18–36 and its context of martyrs fighting an evil king, especially compare the tradition recorded in the *Scholion to Megillat Ta'anim* on 25 Kislev. See Hans Lichtenstein, 'Die Fastenrolle: Eine Untersuchung zur jüdisch-hellenistischen Geschichte', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 8–9 (1931–1932), 257–317, here 275; and Zvi Lichtenstein (צבי ליכטנשטיין), 'מגלת תענית על פי כתבי ירודפוסיים ישנים', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 8–9 (1931–1932), 318–351, here 341–342. See Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY, 1976), 283, who also references Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 21b. See also James C. VanderKam, 'Dedication, Feast of', in *ABD* 2 (New York, 1992), 125. See also Moshe David Herr, 'Hanukkah', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7 (Jerusalem, 1972), 1280–1288, here 1284. Also compare Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.9.3 (ed. Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS n.s. 6.2 (Berlin, repr. 1999), 538), who reports a miracle of Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, in which Narcissus changed ἐξ ὕδατος εἰς ἐλαίου ποιότητα τὴν φύω, to be used for the lamps of the church. See the comment at Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 26 n. 1. See also Antony of Choziba, *Vita Sancti Georgii Chozebitae* 37 (ed. C. Houze, 'Sancti Georgii Chozebitae confessoris et monachi vita auctore Antonio eius discipulo', *Analecta Bollandiana* 7 (1888), 97–144 and 336–359, here 136, ll. 11–13; tr. Tim Vivian, *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives* (Minneapolis, 1996), 97), where a 'vat of oil' blessed by George of Choziba remained full for three weeks. See also C. Houze, 'Nota in Vitam Sancti Georgii Chozebitae', *Analecta Bollandiana* 8 (1889), 209–210. Vivian's English translation appeared earlier on in Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis, trs., *Antony of Choziba: The Life of Saint George of Choziba; and, The Miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God at Choziba* (San Francisco and London, 1994), 35–92, here 67. Also note the Italian translation in Lea Campagnano Di Segni, *Nel deserto accanto ai fratelli: vite di Gerasimo e di Giorgio di Choziba* (Magnano, 1991). In a separate work one may wish to study in greater detail the literary parallels between the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Vita Sancti Georgii Chozebitae*. The emphasis on holiness and the concern with pilgrims, as worked out in David Olster, 'The Construction of a Byzantine Saint: George of Choziba, Holiness, and the Pilgrimage Trade in Seventh-Century Palestine', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 38 (1993), 309–322, constitute significant themes for such a comparison.

<sup>75</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

gather around Peter.<sup>76</sup> A circle of followers formed, for whom he became a spiritual teacher instructing ‘them [about] the [things] of their salvation’.<sup>77</sup>

The young ascetic’s status only increased when others learned that Peter saw visions of Christ. His followers became more zealous, showed even more love for Peter, and wished to imitate him in his ascetic life all the more. When Rufus says that after Peter had become a monk ‘a multitude of them renounced the world and took the habit’,<sup>78</sup> one is led to assume that a circle of close supporters and followers of Peter continued to exist in Constantinople. That seems supported by the fact that when Peter needed to ask Emperor Zeno to spare him from appearing at court, Peter’s petition was brought to the attention of the emperor by his friends in Constantinople.<sup>79</sup> Peter had mentioned to Rufus the names of all of those in Constantinople who followed his ascetic example. Rufus selected only three of those names, the brothers Theodotus, Proclus, and Sophronius. Rufus described them as ‘illustrious in power’ and ‘builders and stewards of the royal estate’.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>77</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>78</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>79</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 104.

<sup>80</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19–20. While it is not possible to identify a set of three brothers who carried these names, it is possible that at least two of the names mentioned evoked associations with well-known, contemporary figures who had demonstrated their anti-Nestorian zeal. Rufus may have decided to mention the name Theodotus because there was a certain Theodotus who as a violent anti-Nestorian had published a tractate against Nestorius in six volumes and who functioned as bishop of Ancyra. He died c.445/6 or earlier. For studies on him, see especially Albert Van Roey, ‘Le florilège nestorien dans le “Traité contre Nestorius” de Théodote d’Ancyre’, *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975), 155–159; Albert Van Roey, ‘Le florilège nestorien de l’*Adversus Nestorium* de Cyrille d’Alexandrie et du traité contre Nestorius de Théodote d’Ancyre’, in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, ed. Franz Paschke (Berlin, 1981), 573–578. See also A. De Nicola, ‘Theodotus of Ancyra’, in *EECh* (1992), 829–830; and Josef Rist, ‘Theodotus von Ankyra’, in *BBKL* 11 (1996, rev. edn. 1999), 997–999. Yet it cannot be claimed that the Theodotus of Ancyra and the Theodotus mentioned in the *Vita Petri Iberi* are indeed identical. Likewise, it is possible that the name of Proclus helped to bring to memory the activities of that famous Constantinopolitan who preached on the anti-Nestorian side in the context of the Christological controversies, and who sent the famous tome to the Armenians, i.e. Proclus, bishop of Constantinople. Given that Proclus of Constantinople coined the likewise famous theopaschite formula, *Unus e trinitate passus*, Rufus may have seen fit to include a reference to a namesake of his. See also below, ch. 5, p. 379. Proclus of Constantinople died in c.446. For comments on Proclus of Constantinople, see above, ch. 1, pp. 29–30, n. 97 and ch. 2, p. 67, n. 57, and literature cited there. See also F. X. Bauer, *Proklos von Konstantinopel: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1919); Beate Regina Suchla, ‘Proclus of Constantinople’, in *DECL* (New York, 2000), 500–501; J. H. Barkhuizen, *Homilies on the Life of Christ* (Brisbane, 2001); François Joseph Leroy, *L’homilétique de*

Miracles and visions caused the number of ascetics gathered around Peter at the court in Constantinople to grow. While at the beginning Peter had followed the ascetic lead of Theodosius II, through divine aid, namely through the miracles and visions, Peter took an active and, indeed, leading role in the ascetic efforts at the court. Rufus shows Peter's rapid and precocious progress from novice to skilled ascetic already during his sojourn in Constantinople.

*The Case of Nestorius: The Impact of Monks on the Life of the Church in Constantinople*

Even though Peter had not formally joined the monastic ranks during his time as hostage in Constantinople, he seems to have had close contact with ascetics there. He testified that he had been present when the city's bishop, Nestorius, preached against the title *Theotokos*, or, 'Birthgiver [or Mother] of God', which had become customary as an appellation for Mary.<sup>81</sup> At that occasion, Nestorius suffered from harsh treatment by the monks of Constantinople as well as from the greater part of the city's population. His case illustrates well the far-reaching influence of ascetics on Church politics in Constantinople.

Evidence for the monks' rejection of Nestorius, which was imitated by the city's population, is found in Nestorius' account of those events in his *Book of Heracleides*. In book 2, he complained that as soon as opposition against him and his teachings arose from the side of Cyril of Alexandria's followers, everyone turned against him and cut off any kind of communion with him:

[A]ll . . . were busying themselves that they should accept without examination the things which were done without examination against me; and at the same time all of them, even those who had participated with me at table and in prayer and in thought, were agreed, [and] bound themselves together indistinguishably in affection and in visits to one another and by entertainment in [their] houses, and by covenant and by the confirmation of the things [done] against me, and were vowing vows one with another against me.<sup>82</sup>

*Proclus de Constantinople* (Città del Vaticano, 1967); and for the Ethiopic tradition, see Bernd Manuel Weischer, *Traktate des Epiphanius von Zypern und des Proklos von Kyzikos* (Wiesbaden, 1979).

<sup>81</sup> For a study of the focus on Marian theology and the service of women as defenders of that theological focus within the anti-Chalcedonian movement around Peter and John Rufus, see Horn, 'Fighting with the Devil'.

<sup>82</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 373 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 271).

In addition, Nestorius tells how some people spread the word that they had seen dreams or visions which were confirming that Nestorius and his teachings were wrong.<sup>83</sup> Using such supernatural revelations, Nestorius' opponents seemed to have been successful in 'persuading all men of all the things which they were seeing', while the recipients of those revelations were 'likening themselves to angels of light',<sup>84</sup> thus claiming heavenly authority for themselves. The phenomena reportedly used by the orthodox side to discredit Nestorius are very much the same as those pervading many of the stories gathered in the anti-Chalcedonian *Plerophoriae*. In this work too, heavenly revelations demonstrate the truth of the anti-Chalcedonian confession of faith over and against the Chalcedonian one.<sup>85</sup>

In his *Book of Heracleides*, Nestorius claimed that money had persuaded Theodosius II's close advisers to turn the emperor against him.<sup>86</sup> In addition, 'assemblies of priests and troops of monks'<sup>87</sup> came together who 'took counsel against [Nestorius]'.<sup>88</sup> Nestorius observed what also Socrates attested,<sup>89</sup> that 'the *schêma* of the monks was very dear unto [the emperor]', and that the monks opposed to him persuaded the emperor 'that there should be no judgment, while the things which had been done without examination against [Nestorius] should stand'.<sup>90</sup> In effect, monks had become a powerful force of keeping bishops and emperors under control. In great detail and parading the monks' character flaws, Nestorius described the monks' effort to unite and influence the emperor against him:

<sup>83</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 374 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 271).

<sup>84</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 374 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 271).

<sup>85</sup> This fact was already noted by the editor and translator of Nestorius' *Book of Heracleides*. See Driver and Hodgson, trs., *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 271 n. 1.

<sup>86</sup> For some indication of the wealth which Cyril used for bribes, see the list which Irenaeus attached to the letter of Epiphanius, Cyril's archdeacon and syncellus, to Maximianus, bishop of Constantinople. See *ACO* i.iv, pp. 222–225. See also Pierre Batiffol, 'Les présents de Saint Cyrille à la cour de Constantinople', *Études de Liturgie et d'Archéologie Chrétienne* (Paris, 1919), 154–179. See also A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, vol. i (Oxford, 1964), 346; Lionel R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford, 1983), 67 n. 8; and Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 83.

<sup>87</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 374 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 272).

<sup>88</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 374–375 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 272).

<sup>89</sup> See above, ch. 3, pp. 124–125.

<sup>90</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 375 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 272).

[A]ll the monks participated in the one purpose because of me, [even] those who in the rest of the other things were without love among themselves, [some] being envious and [others] envied, especially for the sake of the praise of men. And they took for them[selves] as organizer and chief, in order to overwhelm the emperor with amazement, Dalmatius the archimandrite, who for many years had not gone forth from his monastery; and a multitude of monks surrounded him in the midst of the city, chanting the offices, in order that all the city might be assembled with them and proceed before the Emperor to be able to hinder his purpose. For they had prepared all these things in advance in order that there might not be any hindrance and they went in with [the chanting of] the office even to the Emperor.<sup>91</sup>

Even after a long discussion between Theodosius II and Archimandrite Dalmatius, the emperor still was not convinced that he should lay the blame on Nestorius.<sup>92</sup> Only after Dalmatius and the monks rose up and cried out that ‘before the tribunal of Christ’ they would take the responsibility for everything that would be done against Nestorius did Theodosius II finally grant their requests.<sup>93</sup> Those having been obtained, the monks carried Dalmatius triumphantly through the city and celebrated their victory over Nestorius. In the *Book of Heracleides* Nestorius gives the following description of the tumultuous events in the city:

And after the things were finished which were wrought against me by them, the impious band went forth from [his] Majesty and some spread abroad [some things and others] other things against me; and they carried Dalmatius around, reclining on a couch which was spread with coverlets, and mules bare him in the midst of the streets of the city, in such wise that it was made known unto all men that a victory had been gained over the purpose of the Emperor, amidst great assemblies of the people and of the monks, who were dancing and clapping the hand[s] and crying out the things which can be said against one who has been deprived for iniquity.<sup>94</sup>

What was Peter’s involvement in those events? A look at the first chapter of the *Plerophoriae* may provide some clues. The crowds of the monks of Constantinople do not feature explicitly in that section. Yet it is significant that at the very beginning of that thoroughly polemical anti-Chalcedonian work, which owes key elements of its content and probably also of its composition to Peter, there is an

<sup>91</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 375 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 272–273).

<sup>92</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 375–383 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 273–277).

<sup>93</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 382 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 277).

<sup>94</sup> Nestorius, *Book of Heracleides*, bk. 2, ch. 1, 382 (tr. Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, 277).

account of how the relationship between Nestorius and the young Georgian prince and ascetic deteriorated and finally fell apart.

Our blessed father and bishop, Abba Peter the Iberian, told us [w]hat [happened], while he was still in Constantinople, before he renounced the world: ‘While Nestorius was still alive and held the office of bishop, when [once] the commemoration of the Forty Holy Martyrs was being celebrated in the church, which is called “Maria,” as [Nestorius] stood up to preach in front of all the people in my presence, he spoke with an effeminate and clear voice. [When he had come to] about the middle of his homily, he began to blaspheme and say, “Do not boast, Mary, as if you gave birth to God. For you did not give birth to God, O excellent [woman], but [to] a man, an instrument of God.” As soon as he had said this, he was possessed by an evil spirit at the pulpit, so that both his face and his right hand were overturned to his back. As he was twisted and was about to fall, the attendants and the deacons snatched him. They carried him and brought him to the sacristy. And from that time [on] the greater part of the people of the city fell off from communion with him, especially those of the palace. Also I, before all of them, and although he loved me exceedingly.’<sup>95</sup>

Presumably in full accord and possibly inspired by the example of the crowds of monks Peter ended his contacts with Nestorius completely. Ascetic authority had clearly won the day over the power of ecclesiastical office.

### **The Increase of Ascetic Influences on Peter in the Holy Land**

Peter came to Jerusalem as a pilgrim. Once in the city, he took the monastic habit and participated in the life of the local ascetic community. Connections with experienced ascetics were of great benefit for him because such men and women could offer guidance for his own practice of the ascetic life. Peter himself also contributed considerably to the development of the ascetic network in the Holy Land, eventually on the anti-Chalcedonian side. Having among themselves a prince from Georgia, with potentially powerful and influential connections to the imperial court, probably promised benefits to the community of ascetics in the Holy Land, who already had seen the impact of other wealthy pilgrims-turned-ascetics, for example, Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger.

It is appropriate, therefore, to examine how and to what extent Peter participated in monastic life in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

<sup>95</sup> *Plerophoriae* 1. See also the account in Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.32 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.808–812; also ed. Hansen and Širinjan, *Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte*, 380–382; tr. Zenos, ‘The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus’, 170–171).

Given the dual character of that involvement, both the benefits accruing to Peter, as well as his contributions to Palestinian monasticism have to be considered.

*Melania and Pinianus: Authoritative Ascetic Models*

The Roman lady Melania the Younger was born around AD 382 to Publicola, a wealthy nobleman and senator. She was the granddaughter of Melania the Elder. Married to Pinianus, Melania the Younger had soon given birth to two children, first to a daughter,<sup>96</sup> and then to a baby-boy<sup>97</sup> who was born prematurely and who died soon after having received baptism. The daughter, whom the parents had dedicated to a life of virginity, died shortly after her brother.<sup>98</sup> Having, as she believed, fulfilled the obligation to produce offspring, Melania convinced her husband to take a vow of chastity while still living together as a couple. She then went first to Tagaste, North Africa, where she stayed for seven years,<sup>99</sup> receiving advice, among others also from Augustine, on how best to make her financial resources available to the monasteries.<sup>100</sup> Eventually, after having spent time with the monks in Egypt,<sup>101</sup> she arrived in Jerusalem in AD 417.<sup>102</sup> Melania, her husband Pinianus, and her mother Albina settled in the Holy City.<sup>103</sup> Until her death in AD 439, Melania lived in the Holy

<sup>96</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 1 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 132; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 28).

<sup>97</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 5 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 134–136; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 29).

<sup>98</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 6 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 136; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 30).

<sup>99</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 20–34 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 168–190; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 43–50).

<sup>100</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 20 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 170–171; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 43). For letters which Augustine sent to Melania and members of her family, see Augustine, *Epistulae* 124–126 (ed. Al. Goldbacher, *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae. Pars III. Ep. CXXIV–CLXXXIV A*, CSEL 44 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1904), 1–18; tr. Sister Wilfrid Parsons, *Saint Augustine: Letters, Vol. II (83–130)*, FOTC 18 (New York, 1953), 337–356).

<sup>101</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 34 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 190–192; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 50–51). They went to Egypt a second time later on. See Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 37–39 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 196–202; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 52–54).

<sup>102</sup> Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 35–37 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 192–196; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 51–52). Their return to Jerusalem after their second visit to Egypt is recounted at Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 40 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 202; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 54).

<sup>103</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26.

Land as an ascetic, mainly on the Mount of Olives.<sup>104</sup> In addition to a journey back to Egypt, she seems to have left the holy grounds only one more time when she went on a mission to Constantinople to save a soul.<sup>105</sup>

From Rufus' perspective, Melania's senatorial rank was of importance. Although Melania was not part of the imperial family, for Rufus she 'had a part in the royal family' because of the immense wealth her family controlled.<sup>106</sup> Rufus also states that Melania and Pinianus 'loved Christ with true affection and honoured him more than anyone'.<sup>107</sup> The two Roman pilgrims-turned-ascetics were people who were fully appropriate as associates for members of royal families, such as Peter and Eudocia.

Melania and Pinianus had already set out on the path of asceticism in Rome. Originally they possessed authority based on their abundant wealth. Yet by following the command of the Gospel they '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>108</sup> Rufus formulated concerning them that 'they adhered to him [namely, Christ]' by choosing the life of the poor and needy. Doing so, they 'gird[ed] themselves lovingly with the Cross of our Lord'.<sup>109</sup> By renouncing their wealth and by going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, they chose the side of Christ. In humbling themselves by leading poor and ascetic lives, by joining Christ, they gained an authority that did not depend on owning wealth, but rather, on losing it by giving it away. Thus they acquired the authority of the charitable ascetic.

Melania contributed considerably to the establishment of organized monastic life in Jerusalem. Rufus discussed the specific purpose that she and her husband had when they built two monasteries on the Mount of Olives. While they wished to do this for the glory of God, they wanted to house women and men who wanted to live in the Holy City as ascetics. Since Melania took in Peter and John the Eunuch, one seems to be justified in concluding that Rufus saw Peter as having that very same goal of becoming an ascetic, particularly in Jerusalem, in order to be saved.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Jerusalem (87 G) Church and Convent founded by Saint Melania, 548–549.

<sup>105</sup> For discussion of other circumstances of this event, see also above, ch. 2, p. 67, and below, ch. 4, pp. 233, 279, and 282 n.303.

<sup>106</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.

<sup>107</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27–28.

<sup>108</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28. See Luke 12:33–34.

<sup>109</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.

<sup>110</sup> That this was not an easy undertaking, but one fully in line with apostolic tradition, shines through when Rufus describes Melania's and Pinianus' ascetic life as one of 'fighting the good fight in complete self-denial, quietness, Naziriteship, and

Rufus presents key aspects of Melania's and Pinianus' ascetic lifestyle. For a couple with such a background of fabulous wealth,<sup>111</sup> taking the simple dress of the monastic habit was an extreme form of impoverishment and renunciation. Rufus describes their new clothing as made 'from crushed straw, humble and worthless'.<sup>112</sup> He also gives examples of the forms of physical labour in which Melania and Pinianus engaged as a way of following Christ by carrying his cross.

And keeping the approved yoke of the crucifixion with Christ 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 market without shame; the blessed [Melania] [29] laboured in the work of wool and from this supplied the humble need of her sustenance. The rest she distributed to the needy.<sup>113</sup>

Both cases, that of Pinianus gathering wood in the desert and selling it on the market and that of Melania working with wool, illustrate how the two were called upon to work with their own hands to find ways of supporting themselves through their own labours. The Apostle Paul's example may again linger in the background.<sup>114</sup>

It is intriguing to see in Melania working with wool a direct pointer to the ascetic life. Ascetics were famous for wearing undyed woollen robes.<sup>115</sup> When Peter and John the Eunuch came to Jerusalem and found their first home in Melania's monastery, Rufus describes the famous Roman lady not only as a 'good hostess' receiving the strangers but also as a 'teacher' and as a 'helper of [the young men's] holy desire'.<sup>116</sup> In Melania's monastery for men, the two

humility' (*Vita Petri Iberi* 28). The language of fighting and contest bears clear resemblance to the Apostle Paul's description of his own struggles when in his letters to Timothy he writes about 'the good fight of faith' (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7; see also Ephesians 6:10-17, to which Theresia Hainthaler has kindly called my attention).

<sup>111</sup> On their previous possessions, see Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 15-19 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 156-166; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 38-43); see also José M. Blazquez, 'Las posesiones de Melania la Joven', in *Historiam Pictura Refert* (Rome, 1994), 67-80.

<sup>112</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.

<sup>113</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28-29.

<sup>114</sup> Paul insisted that he would labour as a tentmaker in order to cover his personal expenses and not become a burden to the Christian community. See Acts 18:3; 1 Corinthians 4:12; and 1 Corinthians 9:12.

<sup>115</sup> In later centuries, Islamic mystics even named themselves accordingly as Sufis, or, the 'wool-wearers'. See Nina Jidejian, *Tripoli through the Ages* (Beirut, copyright 1980, distributed 1986), 106. See also A. J. Arberry, 'Mysticism', in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. ii (Cambridge, 1970), 605; Louis Massignon, 'tasawwuf', in *First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-1936*, vol. viii (repr. 1993), 681.

<sup>116</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.



in the young man, they decided to have him enter the rank of the monks.<sup>123</sup>

### ‘Clothed by and with Christ’

Rufus describes the ceremony in which Melania and Pinianus clothed Gerontius with the monastic habit.<sup>124</sup> The circumstances of this ceremony are instructive for a fuller understanding of ascetic authority as it was perceived in the fifth and sixth centuries in Palestine. When the time for the vesting ceremony had come, Melania and Pinianus took Gerontius to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, specifically to the Tomb of Christ. According to Rufus, they placed on the Holy Rock, the site of Christ’s burial, what was necessary for the monastic habit.<sup>125</sup> Then the couple said a prayer asking God that Gerontius would receive three things: right faith, holiness, and tears. Rufus, no doubt, understood that gift of ‘right faith’ as faith in line with anti-Chalcedonian convictions. After they concluded their prayer, they clothed Gerontius with the new habit. Although the couple functioned as mediators, the investiture as such is directly linked back to God.

In monastic literature, it is not an uncommon theme that the ascetic’s habit is intended to function for the monk as a reminder and outward sign of his own mortality. The theme can also be found in later anti-Chalcedonian literature, for example in Stephen of Heracleopolis’ *Panegyric on Apollo*.<sup>126</sup> It is to be assumed that on

<sup>123</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31. Rufus specifies that Melania and Pinianus thought that Gerontius was worthy of the monastic habit because his way of life and his way of thinking already corresponded to that of a monk.

<sup>124</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31.

<sup>125</sup> While Rufus does not specify in greater detail what that would have included, one should think of the individual pieces of clothing that are part of a monk’s garment, like the tunic, hood, cloak, and belt. Raabe’s translation (Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 35) readily leads one to think of money. Yet nothing in the text ever speaks of a fee that may have been required by the Church for dressing a new ascetic in his habit. One might imagine, perhaps, a price to be paid for the weaver of the cloth or the tailor of the garment, or simply dismiss the thought that ‘whatever was necessary for the habit’ would have included the paying of a certain amount of money.

<sup>126</sup> In his *Panegyric on Apollo*, Stephen of Heracleopolis says about Archimandrite Apollo that when he was ‘girded . . . with the armour of righteousness’, i.e. when he received ‘the holy monastic habit’, Apollo ‘was clothed with the tunic that by this the remembrance of leaving this life should become for him a subject for meditation’. Then Stephen explains that monks ‘wear such a garment physically when’ they ‘are leaving this dwelling-place, although [they] give it again to the earth with the earth, which is our wretched body’ (ed. and tr. Karl Heinz Kuhn, *A Panegyric on Apollo, Archimandrite of the Monastery of Isaac, by Stephen, Bishop of Heracleopolis*, CSCO 394–395, Script. Copt. tt. 39–40 (Louvain, 1978), 4 (Coptic) and 3 (English)).

one level the ceremony of clothing Gerontius with the monastic garment at the Holy Tomb was intended to invoke the same idea. By taking the monk's habit, Gerontius would continuously be reminded of 'the death of his body'. Yet since the ceremony took place at the very site of Christ's death, more than a human being's death was at stake. Gerontius could see his life as an ascetic in terms of following Christ and becoming like him in the final moment of his own life. By this connection to Christ the monk can be and act *quasi in persona Christi*. Rufus points out that Melania and Pinianus, who themselves lived as ascetics, clothed Gerontius 'as with the hands of our Lord'.<sup>127</sup> Gerontius received his ascetic authority from Jesus.

Such an understanding of the monk as becoming one who closely imitates and resembles Christ, expressed in the wearing of the monastic habit, also turned into an important moment of authority for Peter the Iberian as well. Several instances in Rufus' report about Peter's activities shall function as illustrations. When evaluating Peter's nightly tour of the holy places both in Jerusalem proper and also in the environs of the Holy City, Rufus employs formulations which reveal that he saw Peter's life in close connection with and as an imitation of the Life of Christ. Rufus speaks about how

[God] did not leave the uncertainty which 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 service and worship in [their] mind, even if they seem to be far away in body.<sup>128</sup>

Rufus uses the image of the holy man 'clothed with Christ', an image very common in Syriac ascetic contexts, yet not limited to such ascetic contexts but rather applicable to every Christian.<sup>129</sup> As much as Christ put on human nature like a garment in the Incarnation, so human beings put on Christ in Baptism. Every Christian therefore is 'clothed with Christ'. Beyond this basic theological fact, however, it seems that Rufus is emphasizing Peter's closeness to Christ to a greater extent when he stresses that as one of 'these saints'

Besides the monk's tunic, also the cloak functioned as a reminder of 'the death of the body'. Bishop Stephen also recounts that '[a]fter the tunic [Apollo] was clothed with a sheepskin cloak fashioned according to the precept of the angels, denoting again . . . the death of the body, that through this he should become dead to all fleshly desires' (ed. Kuhn, *A Panegyric on Apollo*, CSCO 394–395, Script. Copt. tt. 39–40 (Louvain, 1978), 5 (Coptic) and 4 (English)).

<sup>127</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31.

<sup>128</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 100.

<sup>129</sup> On the importance of 'being clothed with Christ' in Syriac asceticism, see the seminal article Brock, 'Clothing Metaphors'.

Peter was 'living with Him and in Him' and was 'drawn near [to Him, namely, Christ] in spirit'.

Rufus constructed the overall narrative of the *Vita Petri Iberi* in a way that made it clear to the reader that from the very beginning of Peter's life, he was to be seen as someone in parallel to Christ. As already discussed above, according to Rufus, Peter's asceticism was inspired early on by ascetic features perceivable in the lives of members of his family. Yet Rufus seems to have seen an even more comprehensive and at the same time more profound basis and source for Peter's and the whole family's ascetical orientation in Scripture. He spoke of Peter as the rose blossom that sprung forth from a [holy] root, by that referring to his holy parents and his God-fearing educators.<sup>130</sup> This choice of imagery reminds the reader of Isaiah's use of such a terminology when he is prophesying about the Messiah who was to come forth from the root of Jesse.<sup>131</sup> In his Letter to the Romans the Apostle Paul adopted Isaiah's imagery of the root and applied it to Jesus as having come forth from Mary.<sup>132</sup> An attentive monastic audience deeply immersed in and familiar with the text and content of the Holy Scriptures would readily have understood the allusion and accepted the implied suggestion of a parallel between Peter and Christ, at least in regard to the promise and significance of their birth.

Early in Peter's life, Christ had given him a powerful sign of his approval of the ascetic way of life. He showed ascetics that their lives imitated his life when he appeared to Peter in a vision, being dressed in the habit of a Nazirite.<sup>133</sup> While a discussion of the details of Nazirite asceticism as a key feature of Peter's ascetic self-understanding will be presented below,<sup>134</sup> every ancient ascetic hearing or reading about this event would probably have agreed that the garment of a Nazirite, and, more generally, the habit of a monk, was the appropriate outfit for an encounter with divine realities.

Rufus emphasizes that Peter's virtuous life was not only rich and founded in God, but also corresponded to the Gospel and was a truly evangelical life.<sup>135</sup> A life in imitation of Christ and the Gospel brought the ascetic in much closer contact with God. Lay people acknowledged this when they regarded ascetics as a different kind of being by calling them 'angels'.<sup>136</sup> This happened to Peter when his

<sup>130</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 12.

<sup>131</sup> Isaiah 11:1 and 11:10.

<sup>132</sup> Romans 15:12.

<sup>133</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>134</sup> See below, ch. 3, pp. 188–196.

<sup>135</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13. See 1 Timothy 4:12.

<sup>136</sup> For other parallels in early Christian literature, see, for example, the *Life of Rabbula* (ed. J. Josephus Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei*

flock in Maiuma rejoiced greatly at his presence there and ‘held and lifted him up like an angel’,<sup>137</sup> or when he ‘was seen and lauded by all like an angel’,<sup>138</sup> after having explained the proper anti-Chalcedonian faith to the people of Oxyrhynchus. All such instances of imitating Christ and passing over into the realm of the heavens and of God gave to the ascetic a considerably greater authority when he (or she) was speaking out on matters of faith. Thus the witness of later ascetics in the service of the anti-Chalcedonian cause, for example those featured in John of Ephesus’ works, also benefited from their being like Christ.<sup>139</sup>

### Gerontius’ Ministry

Eventually, Gerontius was ordained a priest and became archimandrite of Melania’s monasteries on the Mount of Olives, of all the ascetic communities on Olivet, and of all the coenobitic ascetic communities in Palestine.<sup>140</sup> According to Cyril of Scythopolis, Gerontius ‘had succeeded the blessed Melania’,<sup>141</sup> and ‘governed the monasteries of the blessed Melania for forty-five years’.<sup>142</sup>

While Melania was alive, Gerontius was entrusted with celebrating a wide range of divine services in several monasteries on Sundays and

*aliorumque opera selecta* (Oxford, 1865), 159, 169, and 176). Still of great value as a study on the theme of the monastic life as that of angels is Suso Frank, *Angelikos bios: begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ‘engelgleichen Leben’ im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster, Westphalia, 1964). Also see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), ch. 16, pp. 323–338.

<sup>137</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57.

<sup>138</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62.

<sup>139</sup> See John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, and, for example, the study by Peter Plank, ‘Mimesis Christū: zur Interpretation der 52 Heiligengeschichten des Ioannes von Ephesos (507–586)’, in *Unser ganzes Leben Christus unserm Gott Überantworten* (Göttingen, 1982), 167–182.

<sup>140</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii* 4 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 239.5–6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 265). See also *Acta SS. Boll.* II. 686: *Gerontius autem . . . cum quadraginta quinque annos praefuisset B. Melaniae monasteriis*. See Röwekamp, ‘Gerontius’, 255.

<sup>141</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 42.14; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 38, modified). See also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 115.2–3; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 124).

<sup>142</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 67.15–16; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64, translation modified). During Melania’s lifetime Gerontius was commissioned with the priestly service in her monasteries, and after her death (AD 439) he took over full stewardship and leadership of Melania’s monasteries on Olivet. See Röwekamp, ‘Gerontius’, 255.

feast days.<sup>143</sup> Probably due to Melania's personal wishes, on weekdays '[Gerontius] celebrated daily a gathering and a private Service for the blessed Melania according to the custom of the Church of Rome'.<sup>144</sup>

As a sign of the special authority over human hearts, which Gerontius had received from God, the gift of tears, one of the three gifts for which Melania and Pinianus had prayed when clothing Gerontius, manifested itself in him.<sup>145</sup> Rufus tells that

[Gerontius] was esteemed worthy of these three [gifts], and especially of the grace of tears, . . . that when . . . he celebrate[d] . . . gatherings of the Divine Service . . . when he had begun [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 were agitated with shouting and groans, and were shedding tears like him.<sup>146</sup>

Gerontius was able to use the gift of tears in his ministry as a priest among the congregations under his charge. This gift increased the effectiveness of his ministry and made him a role model which his flock could imitate and follow. The gift of tears moved Gerontius and through him all the members of his congregation to repentance. Continuous repentance is one of the essential marks that Peter wanted the monks of his own congregation to exhibit.<sup>147</sup>

The gift of 'right faith', for which Melania and Pinianus likewise had prayed, turned out to be important until the very end of Gerontius' life. Rufus portrays Gerontius as a firm believer in and staunch defender of the anti-Chalcedonian confession. Gerontius exemplified for Peter's and Rufus' monks at least one aspect of the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic ideal, that of commitment to the 'orthodox faith', to which Peter had strictly encouraged his followers to adhere.<sup>148</sup> It is noteworthy that the more customary vow of

<sup>143</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31: 'when he was appointed at the same time as priest and as archimandrite 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.' For discussion of this passage, see also Daniel Callam, 'The Frequency of Mass in the Latin Church ca. 400', *Theological Studies* 45 (1984), 613-650, here 619-620.

<sup>144</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31. See also *Plerophoriae* 41.

<sup>145</sup> For a fuller discussion and documentation of scholarship on the 'gift of tears', see below, ch. 5, p. 375 and n. 191.

<sup>146</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31-32.

<sup>147</sup> For example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 120. See also the discussion above, ch. 3, pp. 118-120 and 120-123.

<sup>148</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 117.

'obedience' is here replaced by the monk's dedication to preserving the 'right faith', a task that seemingly cannot be guaranteed merely by living in obedience, but that requires rather the active responsibility of the individual who is called upon to strive for it. The grace of 'right faith' enabled Gerontius to show 'martyr-like zeal' in 'chains and [in] prisons and [in instances of] standing in front of judges',<sup>149</sup> so that he 'wove the crown of confessorship [and] thus came to perfection'.<sup>150</sup> Under no circumstances would Gerontius even speak with the representatives of the Chalcedonian side. 'The Lord forbid, that I should see the face of Judas the betrayer!'<sup>151</sup> are the only words of comment which Gerontius made about Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem when he returned to Jerusalem and sent the anti-Chalcedonian Bishop Theodosius into exile. In Rufus' eyes, Gerontius died as a confessor.<sup>152</sup> In consequence of his 'right faith', which grew up from the soil of his monastic life, Gerontius achieved the highest possible authority among anti-Chalcedonians.

Chalcedonian observers evaluated Gerontius differently. Yet the information they provide does not contradict the picture Rufus painted of Gerontius' earlier years. In his *Vita Euthymii* Cyril of Scythopolis makes passing, but telling, reference to Gerontius.<sup>153</sup> He presents Gerontius as one of the two monastic archimandrites who went to Euthymius in order to inform him about the Council of Chalcedon. Convinced that Chalcedon was in line with Nestorius since it taught 'that Christ is to be acknowledged in two natures',<sup>154</sup> Gerontius staunchly resisted Euthymius' explanations concerning the orthodoxy of Chalcedon and 'remained unconvinced'.<sup>155</sup> After Juvenal's return, when several of the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians reconciled with the Church, according to Cyril 'Gerontius maintained his previous irrational opposition and drew after him a considerable flock, including two monks called Marcianus and Romanus who, persevering in error, withdrew from Elpidius' community and founded *coenobia*, one near holy Bethlehem, the other at the village

<sup>149</sup> See also Acts 12:6–7; 16:23, 26, 37; 21:32–34; 22:4, 29; Acts 26; Ephesians 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 12–17; Colossians 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:16; and Philemon 1:10, 13; as well as at other places, which form part of the literary context of experience over and against which Rufus characterizes Gerontius' experience.

<sup>150</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32. <sup>151</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32.

<sup>152</sup> A confessor was revered as second in rank only to the martyr.

<sup>153</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (two occurrences), 30, 43, and 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, 42.13–22 and 44.6–8, 49.8–10, 62.19–63.2, and 67.14–20; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 38–39 and 40, 46, 59, and 64).

<sup>154</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, 42.21–22; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 39).

<sup>155</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, 44.6–7; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 40).

of Thekoa'.<sup>156</sup> After that, the number of the monks dwelling in the Holy City and opposing Chalcedon seems to have decreased steadily. Most of the staunch opponents of Chalcedon moved to areas further removed from the direct influence of the see of Jerusalem. Gerontius, however, was able to maintain his rule over the monasteries on the Mount of Olives while persisting in his opposition to Juvenal and Chalcedon. For the rest of his life Gerontius remained a staunch anti-Chalcedonian, even though he was unable to remain until his death archimandrite of the Olivet monasteries. In 478 Martyrius became bishop of Jerusalem (AD 478–486),<sup>157</sup> having been a monk in Egypt before he had to flee after AD 451 as a Chalcedonian to the Judean Desert. When he became patriarch of Jerusalem, the situation there escalated into a crisis. According to Cyril, Patriarch Martyrius was concerned about 'the lawlessness of the ἀποσχισταί and the revolution they had effected in the holy city'.<sup>158</sup> Motivated and encouraged by Basiliscus' *Encyclical*, 'the remaining ἀποσχισταί in the holy city, with Gerontius as archimandrite, were trying to commit outrages similar to those formerly perpetrated by Theodosius'.<sup>159</sup> Martyrius attempted to reconcile the anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>160</sup> Cyril recorded the words of Abba Marcianus, who left communion with the bishop of Jerusalem and founded an anti-Chalcedonian community close to Bethlehem.<sup>161</sup> Having recourse to a biblical

<sup>156</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 49.8–13; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 46). On the monk Marcianus, see the discussion with references above, ch. 2, p. 99 and nn. 235–236. For sources on and a brief discussion of Abba Romanus see above, ch. 2, p. 100 and n. 240.

<sup>157</sup> On Martyrius see Georg Röwekamp, 'Martyrius von Jerusalem', in *LACHL* (1998), 430; Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 127–151.

<sup>158</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 43 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 62.18–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 59).

<sup>159</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 43 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 62.19–63.1; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 59).

<sup>160</sup> The sermon of reconciliation and the letter to the Alexandrian Patriarch Peter Mongus are preserved by Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 5, ch. 6, and bk. 5, ch. 12 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 221–222 and 237–238; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 115–116 and 130–131).

<sup>161</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 49.12–14; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 46); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 111.25; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 121); and Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii* 2 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 237.14–16; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 263). Virgilio Corbo suggested that the ruins of the early Byzantine monastery found at Khirbet Juhzûm, about four miles east of Bethlehem, are to be identified with the Monastery of Marcianus. See Virgilio Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam (Campo dei Pastori) e i monasteri dei dintorni*, Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 11 (Jerusalem, 1955), 156–163, here 162–163. On that monastery, see also S. Vailhé, 'Répertoire alphabétique des

model,<sup>162</sup> Marcianus advised his fellow anti-Chalcedonians: “‘[F]ollowing the Apostolic precedent let us cast lots representing the bishops and the monks. If the lot falls on the monks, let us remain where we are; but if on the bishops, let us join the Church.’”<sup>163</sup> As Marcianus saw it, the question concerning which side to take in the struggle over Chalcedon came down to a choice between the authority of the bishops versus the authority of the monks. When ‘the lot fell on the bishops’,<sup>164</sup> Martyrius successfully reconciled many, though not all, of the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians with himself in AD 479. Extreme opponents of Chalcedon, such as Archimandrite Gerontius, Abba Romanus, and also Peter the Iberian, whom Cyril does not mention, remained separated. According to Cyril ‘[t]he whole mass of the ἀποσχισταί returned to communion, apart from Gerontius the archimandrite, . . . and Romanus, who had founded the monastery of Thekoa. These monks, persisting in their irrational contentiousness, were for this reason expelled from their monasteries.’<sup>165</sup> Forced to leave his monastery on the Mount of Olives, Gerontius ended up ‘wandering hither and thither’<sup>166</sup> with Romanus and died between AD 480 and 485.

The importance and influence of Gerontius’ ascetic authority over the extreme anti-Chalcedonian party in Palestine in general, and over Peter in particular, becomes clear when Rufus states that ‘[Gerontius’] hands gave the [monastic] habit to our fathers, Peter and John [the Eunuch], and he gave them these names in exchange for the names which had been chosen for them by their [own] countries’.<sup>167</sup>

monastères de Palestine’, *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 4 (1899), 512–542; 5 (1900), 19–48, and 272–292, here 5 (1900), 25–26; Rudolf Cohen, ‘Monasteries’, in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. iii (Jerusalem, 1993), 1063–1070, here 1069; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuilles 11–12 /n. 241, pp. 916–917. Hirschfeld, ‘List of the Byzantine Monasteries’, 60–61, no. 54, is critical of such an identification. John Binns, *Cyril of Scythopolis: Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, translated by R. M. Price, introduction and notes by John Binns (Kalamazoo, 1991), n. 33 on the *Life of Sabas*, p. 212, proposes the identification of Khirbet Siyar el Ghanam with the Monastery of Marcianus.

<sup>162</sup> See Acts 1:26.

<sup>163</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 67.2–6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64).

<sup>164</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 67.7; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64).

<sup>165</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 67.14–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64).

<sup>166</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 67.19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 64).

<sup>167</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32.

It was 'in that monastery for men, . . . in which this Gerontius was abbot', that the two young monks 'were dwelling in quiet and were setting a pattern of the utmost height of asceticism'.<sup>168</sup> With those words, Rufus suggested that Peter was the heir, on the one hand, to the monastic and ascetic heritage of Gerontius, and, on the other hand, to the extreme opposition to Chalcedon which Gerontius maintained until his death.<sup>169</sup>

### *Abba Passarion: Charity and Social Work as Sources of Authority*

In Rufus' description of anti-Chalcedonian monasticism, the significant formative influence (*auctoritas*) rests with ascetics who distinguished themselves throughout their lives by their social and charitable works.<sup>170</sup> Peter and John the Eunuch used the monastery they had built in the centre of the Holy City primarily as a hostel for pilgrims. Whatever money they had been able to bring from

<sup>168</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32.

<sup>169</sup> Gerontius' commemoration as 'the blessed one' was celebrated on 27 February in the Church in Jerusalem. See *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary*, entry no. 237 (ed. and tr. Michel Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem (V<sup>e</sup>-VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. i, CSCO 188-189, *Scriptores Iberici*, tt. 9-10 (Louvain, 1959), 40 (Georgian) and 38 (Latin)); see also *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary*, entry no. 917 (ed. and tr. Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem (V<sup>e</sup>-VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. ii, CSCO 204-205, *Scriptores Iberici*, tt. 13-14 (Louvain, 1960), 1 (Georgian) and 5 (Latin)).

<sup>170</sup> Within Eastern Christian asceticism, it will have to suffice to refer to Basil of Caesarea, Bishop Rabbula of Edessa (AD 411/12 to 435), and Abba Shenoute of Atripe (d. c. AD 466; Kuhn, 'Shenute, Saint', 2131) as outstanding models of an attempt to integrate a concern for social justice and service for the poor and needy into the conception of the proper life of the monk. For literature on Basil of Caesarea in that regard, see above, ch. 2, pp. 56-57. Rabbula of Edessa's selling of his own possessions as well as of the precious vessels of the church and subsequent distribution of the money to the poor is also well known. See *Life of Rabbula* (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta*, 165-166 and 172-173). Two English translations of the *Life of Rabbula*, one by Robert Doran, and one by Cornelia Horn and Robert R. Phenix Jr., are forthcoming. For a helpful study of ascetic concern for the poor, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, 'The Holy and the Poor: Models from Early Syriac Christianity', in *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare* (Kirksville, 1994), 43-66. On Abba Shenoute of Atripe's social concern, see, for example, the account of his life written by his disciple and successor Besa, *Vita Sinuthii Archimandritae* 138-143 and 162-171 (ed. Johannes Leipoldt and W. E. Crum, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia*, CSCO 41 (Louvain, 1906), 61-63 and 69-72; tr. David N. Bell, *The Life of Shenoute by Besa* (Kalamazoo, 1983), 80-82 and 86-88). See also Johannes Leipoldt, 'Ein Kloster lindert Kriegsnot; Shenutes Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Weissen Klosters bei Sohag', in '... und fragten nach Jesus': *Festschrift für E. Barnikol zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1964), 52-56; and Kuhn, 'Shenute, Saint', 2133.

Constantinople was spent in Jerusalem on building and maintaining that hostel for the pilgrims.<sup>171</sup>

The most impressive example, which Peter wished to follow in his charitable activities, was that set by the great Abba Passarion.<sup>172</sup> Passarion died in late 428,<sup>173</sup> so Peter probably never met him in person. Yet Passarion and his example exerted considerable influence on several anti-Chalcedonian ascetics. Passarion's successors, first Elpidius, then Elias, were colleagues of Gerontius.<sup>174</sup> Romanus and Marcianus had started their ascetic lives in the *coenobium* of Passarion.<sup>175</sup>

Peter saw in Passarion first and foremost a great friend of the poor and of the strangers. Passarion was also the main exponent of coenobitic monasticism,<sup>176</sup> a chorepiscopus and archimandrite of the monks.<sup>177</sup> Passarion made the connection between ascetic life and service to the poor and needy when he built a house for the poor outside of the eastern gates of Jerusalem.<sup>178</sup> He also erected inside the walls of the city a large monastery for those who wished to praise the Lord.<sup>179</sup> Rufus' praise of Passarion's charitable and social

<sup>171</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>172</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35. See also the discussion in Devos, 'Cyrille de Scythopolis: Influences littéraires—Vêtement de l'évêque de Jérusalem—Passarion et Pierre l'Ibère'; F. Delmas, 'St. Passarion', *Échos d'Orient* 3 (1899), 162–163. Passarion is not to be confused with the Egyptian anchorite Bessarion. See Otto Volk, 'Bessarion', in *LThK* 2 (1994), 319. See also below, ch. 4, pp. 279–287.

<sup>173</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 27.2–4; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22). See also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 36.

<sup>174</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 42.12–14; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 38), and Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 114.27–115.4; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 124).

<sup>175</sup> Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 93. According to Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5920 [AD 427/8] (ed. Carolus de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. i (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim, 1963), 86–87; tr. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), 135–136), Passarion was also involved in the *translatio* of the relics of St Stephen, attesting to the high respect in which he was held in the Church in Palestine more widely.

<sup>176</sup> Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 36.

<sup>177</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.18–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22). See also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 36.

<sup>178</sup> For a brief discussion and references to secondary literature on the archaeological remains of Passarion's monastery and house for the poor, probably connected to a similar building and institution associated with the name of the Jerusalemite presbyter Hesychius, see Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, i. 161, and iii. 413–414. See also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians in Palestine', vol. iii, entry: Jerusalem (86 D), p. 530.

<sup>179</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

work preserved his memory for subsequent generations of anti-Chalcedonians. In the history of Jerusalem's institutions, also the name of the famous preacher, presbyter, theologian, and monk Hesychius (d. after AD 451) is associated with a house in which still in the sixth and seventh centuries bread was distributed to the poor.<sup>180</sup> Yet Rufus' account, while referencing Hesychius, highlights neither his social activities nor his ascetic endeavours.<sup>181</sup>

### *Abba Isaiah: The Authority of Spiritual Friendship*

One man whose friendship and spirituality influenced Peter considerably was the famous ascetic and monk Abba Isaiah.<sup>182</sup> There is reason to assume that Abba Isaiah was a moderate<sup>183</sup> anti-Chalcedonian monk.<sup>184</sup> After having spent the first decades of his life in the desert of Scetis in Egypt, Abba Isaiah moved to the south-western regions of Palestine, eventually settling in a monastery close to the city of Gaza itself. The *Vita Petri Iberi* tells that Abba Isaiah and

<sup>180</sup> The pilgrim account of Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 27 (ed. Geyer, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 143, ll. 20–21: *Item exeuntibus nobis ad portam maiorem venimus ad sanctum Isicium, qui ibidem in corpore iacet*), as well as the *Georgian Calendar* with reference to 22 September (ed. Gérard Garitte, *Le calendrier palestinno-géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 [X<sup>e</sup> siècle]*, (Brussels, 1958), 91: ევსუქი ხუცოსა შენებ(უ)ლსა, ჳსენ(ე)ბ(ა)ჲ მისი, დადგმაჲ ვებრმსი, პ(ა)ვლმსი, ესაიაჲსი, გ(ორგ)ისი, თურხოჲსი, და ფოკასი ('In the building of the priest Hesychius, his commemoration, the deposition of Peter, Paul, Isaiah, George, Thyrsus, and Phocas')) are textual witnesses to that building. See also the comments at Garitte, *Le calendrier palestinno-géorgien*, 336–337. See Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, i. 161; iii. 226; and iii. 410; see also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians in Palestine', vol. iii, entry: Jerusalem (86 X), 540.

<sup>181</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 10. For Hesychius' influence on Peter by way of his role as preacher at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, see below, ch. 5, pp. 371–372.

<sup>182</sup> For useful studies of the spiritual teacher–disciple relationship in the wider world of early Christianity, see Richard Valantasis, *Spiritual Guides of the Third Century: A Semiotic Study of the Guide–Disciple Relationship in Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Gnosticism* (Minneapolis, 1991). Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, 'Letters to the Great Old Man: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2000) has studied the dimensions of this relationship in the specific setting of Gaza/Palestine in the early Christian and Late Antique period. See now also the revised version of this work in Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, *Disciples of the Desert: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza* (Baltimore, 2005).

<sup>183</sup> N. Borengässer, 'Isaias der Skete', in *LThK* 5 (1960), 611.

<sup>184</sup> H. Bacht, 'Isaias der Jüngere', in *LThK* 5 (1960), 782; S. Vailhé, 'Un mystique monophysite: le moine Isaïe', *Échos d'Orient* 9 (1906), 81–91; and Cornelia Horn, 'Abba Isaiah von Sketis', *BBKL* (forthcoming). Also see below, ch. 5, pp. 334, 342–347.

his disciple Peter, who should not be confused with Peter the Iberian,<sup>185</sup> lived in Beth Daltha only four miles away from the place at which Peter the Iberian had settled.<sup>186</sup> Abba Isaiah's lifetime spanned the larger part of the fifth century. The precise date of his birth is not known. He died on 11 August, AD 491.<sup>187</sup>

In scholarly literature Abba Isaiah appears under different names: Isaiah the Egyptian, Isaiah of Scetis,<sup>188</sup> Isaiah of Gaza,<sup>189</sup> Isaiah the Younger,<sup>190</sup> Abba Isaiah,<sup>191</sup> and others. He has been the subject of more extensive scholarly attention only occasionally, most notably by Derwas Chitty and Hermann Keller.<sup>192</sup> Keller showed that Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon* reveals traits that some would label as 'Monophysite'. More recently, Jan-Eric Steppa discussed aspects of the relationship between Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah.<sup>193</sup> Earlier

<sup>185</sup> Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 15, is misleading, better at p. 19. The introduction of that work is unreliable in several places, for example, in order to list only two instances, p. 18, nn. 15, 16, and 17 have no *fundamentum in re*; at p. 19 and n. 28 the authors confuse Peter the Iberian with Peter Mongus. See also L. Villecourt, 'Note sur une Lettre de l'abbé Isaïe à l'abbé Pierre', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 22 (1920-21), 54-56.

<sup>186</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102. For Beth Daltha, see Tsafrir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 81.

<sup>187</sup> The exact date of Isaiah's death is disputed. Georg Graf, 'Isaias der Jüngere', in *LThK* 5 (1933), 620, assumed 11 August, AD 488. Bacht, 'Isaias', 782, agreed with that year. According to Borengässer, 'Isaias', 611, Isaiah died in 491. The date of Isaiah's death depends on the date of Peter the Iberian's death, because the *Vita Petri Iberi* states that Abba Isaiah died only a few months before Peter. Since the date of Peter's death could be ascertained for AD 491 (see above, ch. 2, p. 106), one can thus assume the same year as the year of Isaiah's death and can subsequently calculate month and day.

<sup>188</sup> M. Geerard, 'Isaias Gazaeus (Scetensis?)', in *CPG* (Turnhout, 1974), 5555-5556; Borengässer, 'Isaias der Skete'; R. Aubert, 'Isaïe de Scété', in *DHGE* 26, fasc. 150 (1997), 120-124; J. Gribomont, 'Isaiah of Scete (and Gaza)', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 417; L. Regnault, 'Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza', in *DSP* 7.2, fasc. 50-51 (1971), cols. 2083-2095; L. Regnault, 'Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza?' *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 46 (1970), 33-44; J. Pauli, 'Isaiah, Ascetic (of Gaza /of Scete)', in *DECL* (2000), 306-307.

<sup>189</sup> Geerard, 'Isaias Gazaeus (Scetensis?)'; Regnault, 'Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza'; Regnault, 'Isaïe de Scété ou de Gaza?'; Gribomont, 'Isaiah of Scete (and Gaza)'; R. Aubert, 'Isaïe de Gaza', in *DHGE* 26, fasc. 150 (1997), 115-117; Pauli, 'Isaiah, Ascetic (of Gaza /of Scete)'.

<sup>190</sup> Bacht, 'Isaias', 782; Graf, 'Isaias der Jüngere'; anonymous, *DHGE* 26, fasc. 150 (1997), 118, s.v. 'Isaïe le Jeune'.

<sup>191</sup> L. Petit, 'Isaïe', in *DThC* 8 (1924), cols. 78-81.

<sup>192</sup> J. Derwas Chitty, 'Abba Isaiah', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 47-72; and Hermann D. Keller, 'L'abbé Isaïe-le-jeune', *Irenikon* 16 (1939), 113-126.

<sup>193</sup> Jan-Eric Steppa, 'Petros Iberern och Abba Esaias: Stildrag och tendenser i två anti-Chalcedonensiska munkbiografier [in Swedish]', *Meddelanden från Collegium Patristicum Lundense* 12 (1997), 33-44.

already, Heyer had conveniently summarized the main points of Abba Isaiah's importance for monasticism in the Gaza area.<sup>194</sup>

According to Rufus' account in the *Plerophoriae* of Abba Isaiah's own recollection of a prophecy of Paul of Thebes, which he had communicated to his friend Peter the Iberian, twenty years before the Council of Chalcedon Isaiah still lived in Egypt.<sup>195</sup> In between then and probably the tumultuous events in the aftermath of the council, he left Egypt and moved to the desert surrounding Eleutheropolis, slightly east of Gaza. While in Egypt, Isaiah had been a disciple of Abba Paul of Thebes, who had introduced him to the ascetic life.<sup>196</sup> Eventually, Abba Isaiah himself became a gifted educator of ascetics and gained the reputation of being 'a second Isaiah', obviously in reference to the great prophet of the Old Testament.<sup>197</sup> Rufus stated that all throughout his life Abba Isaiah had possessed a wealth of gifts of the spirit and conducted himself in accord with the Gospel. While providing a portrayal of Isaiah's ascetic conduct, Rufus also presented to the eyes, hearts, and minds of his anti-Chalcedonian audience those features of asceticism which he recommended to them for their imitation and which thus had formative influence (*auctoritas*) on them. Rufus praised Abba Isaiah as a model of extreme abstinence, who 'was torturing his body so much in Naziriteship' through fasting that his belly became like a stone and his spleen and liver would touch and stick to one another because of inner swellings.<sup>198</sup> Quite in accord with the Apostle Paul's model, and in line with Egyptian monastic tradition, Isaiah wanted to pay for his food with the proceeds of the work of his own hands.<sup>199</sup> Rufus notes explicitly that Abba Isaiah was 'taking a little food every day' in his old age and insisted on 'not taking this idly, but [only] if first he had given back as payment three cubits of netting, the work of his hands'.<sup>200</sup>

Having stayed in the desert of Eleutheropolis for a while, eventually Abba Isaiah moved to Beth Daltha, closer to Gaza. Perhaps that move was motivated by a search for greater quiet since Rufus characterizes the saint's new life as 'dwelling in quiet in these places, in

<sup>194</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 49–51.

<sup>195</sup> *Plerophoriae* 12.

<sup>196</sup> *Plerophoriae* 12.

<sup>197</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>198</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>199</sup> See 1 Corinthians 9:6 and 9:12. For a discussion of the relevance of work in early Egyptian asceticism, see, for example, Charles A. Metteer, "'Mary needs Martha': The Purposes of Manual Labor in Early Egyptian Monasticism", *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 43.2 (1999), 163–207, see pp. 164–165 n. 3 for a helpful review of scholarly literature.

<sup>200</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102. See also Steppa, *John Rufus*, 104–105, and for corrections to a one-sided emphasis on spiritual labour over manual labour, see Horn, 'Review of Steppa, *John Rufus*'.

the village which is called Beth Daltha'.<sup>201</sup> Once there, Abba Isaiah indeed 'shut himself up [in] his house of quiet'.<sup>202</sup>

Abba Isaiah lived in the Gaza area for about forty years. Throughout all those years he dedicated his efforts to providing spiritual direction for the monks of the *coenobium* in which he lived and of which Abba Peter the priest, Isaiah's disciple and cell-mate, a man who, according to Rufus, 'had grace which was equal to [that of Isaiah], and serenity and humility and power',<sup>203</sup> was superior.<sup>204</sup> Isaiah clearly preferred withdrawal over contact with, and thus distraction by, visitors. Thus, with those who came to visit him, Isaiah communicated for the most part through Abba Peter the priest. Zachariah tells how people who came from far and wide to him addressed their questions to Abba Peter the priest, who presented the questions to Abba Isaiah, received his answers, and then passed on those answers to the visitors. Enquiry was possible only between the time after the morning prayer and the ninth hour. Occasionally it happened that visitors arrived too late. On those occasions Abba Isaiah demonstrated the gift of foreknowledge. He knew that visitors were on their way and he knew what they wanted to ask, so he gave the appropriate answers to his disciple Peter in advance and added welcoming gifts for the visitors who were arriving too late to communicate with him.<sup>205</sup>

Over the course of time, Abba Peter the priest collected the answers of the old man. These words of wisdom form the body of what came to be known as the *Asceticon*, a work widely read in monastic circles.<sup>206</sup> It established Abba Isaiah's fame as author of spiritual writings and as one endowed with a charism easily recognized by many. Rufus states that many 'received experience of his gifts' and could then benefit from his 'discourses and [from] accounts

<sup>201</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>202</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>203</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>204</sup> For Abba Isaiah's role in spiritual guidance of ascetics, see also John Chrysavgis, 'Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Aspects of Spiritual Direction', *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001), 30–40.

<sup>205</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 10 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7–8, pp. 10 (Syriac) and 7 (Latin)).

<sup>206</sup> The corpus of the *Asceticon* comprises 29 *orationes*. As a whole it is a kind of monastic handbook. A Latin translation of it was first published in Venice in 1558, and then reproduced by Migne (PG 40.1105–1206). The Greek text was published by the monk Augoustinos as *Τοῦ δόσιου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἁββᾶ Ἰσαΐου λόγοι κθ* in Jerusalem in 1911 (2nd edn. Soterios N. Schoinas, Volos, 1962). Gribomont, 'Isaiah of Scete (and Gaza)', 417, indicates that Ekkehard Mühlberg is preparing a new critical edition of the Greek text. Most recently, Chrissyavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses*, have provided the first complete translation of this influential ascetic work into English.

concerning him'.<sup>207</sup> Quite likely, Rufus himself was one of those who learned from Isaiah's wisdom. Isaiah's discourses found a large audience both in the East and in the West, facilitated by translations into many ancient languages.<sup>208</sup>

The *Asceticon* suggests that Abba Isaiah's resettlement in the Gaza area brought him into a region which could boast of being the home of one of the best philosophical and literary schools of the time. Rightly famous are Zosimus of Gaza, a commentator on classical orators,<sup>209</sup> as well as the philosophical and literary talent of the so-called 'Gaza Triad',<sup>210</sup> namely, Aeneas of Gaza (AD c.430–518), Procopius of Gaza (d. AD c.538), and Zachariah Rhetor (d. before AD 553).<sup>211</sup> The immediate relevance of Zachariah Rhetor /Scholasticus for the life of Peter the Iberian, and thus, by implication, also his even if only remote connection with Abba Isaiah has already been demonstrated.<sup>212</sup> Yet beyond his interests as church historian, Zachariah also composed a work, entitled *Ammonius*, in which he dealt with questions concerning creation.<sup>213</sup> Procopius, probably

<sup>207</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>208</sup> Bacht, 'Isaias', 782; Bacht, 'Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums', 273–274; Borengässer, 'Isaias', 611. Abba Isaiah's work was translated into most of the languages of the Christian Near East, including Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic (see Graf, 'Isaias', 620). For further details and a more complete listing of references, see Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses*, bibliography, especially p. 247. Thus it was guaranteed that his work would spread vastly and with this the influence of his thought on the life of Eastern Christian ascetics. According to Bacht, 'Isaias', 782, at the centre of Isaiah's spirituality and piety is the thought and practice of following the crucified Christ.

<sup>209</sup> The grammarian Zosimus of Gaza is known for his commentaries on Lysias and Demosthenes.

<sup>210</sup> Gillard, 'Gaza', 30; David J. Melling, 'Gaza Triad', in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford and Malden, 1999), 207.

<sup>211</sup> See Downey, *Gaza in the Early Sixth Century*, ch. 7, pp. 106–116; Kilian Seitz, *Die Schule von Gaza: Eine literargeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Heidelberg, 1892); and D. Russos, *Die drei Gazäer* (Diss. Leipzig; Constantinople, 1893).

<sup>212</sup> See above, ch. 1, pp. 44–49.

<sup>213</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Ammonius* or *De mundi opificio* (ed. PG 85.1011–1144; more recently, see Maria Minniti Colonna, *Zaccaria Scolastico: Ammonio* (Naples, 1973)). See also Maria Elisabetta Colonna, *Un manoscritto sconosciuto dell'Ammonio [di Zacaria Scolastico]* (Naples, 1959). Zachariah's *Ammonius* /*De mundi opificio* closely imitated Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus* /*De immortalitate animae* (see below, ch. 3, p. 157, n. 217). See Honigsmann, 'Zacharias von Mitylene (563 A.D.)', 199. For a discussion and comparison of the *Ammonius* with Aeneas of Gaza's *Theophrastus*, see Maria Elisabetta Colonna, 'Zacario Scolastico il suo "Ammonio" e il "Teofrasto" di Enea di Gaza', *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (Napoli)* 6 (1956), 107–118. See also Abba Isaiah's comments on 'creation', below, ch. 3, p. 160.

Zachariah's brother,<sup>214</sup> appears to have been concerned primarily with the proper understanding of the Scriptures as commented on by Philo of Alexandria, Origen, Basil of Caesarea, Theodoret of Cyrillus, and Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>215</sup> Of the 'Gaza Triad', Aeneas was most strongly involved in philosophical matters and engaged in dialogue with the philosophical thought of his time.<sup>216</sup> In his work *Theophrastus*,<sup>217</sup> to be dated shortly after AD 484,<sup>218</sup> he gives a *pladoyer* in defence of the immortality of the soul, which he conceives as not pre-existent.<sup>219</sup> This work was also of great importance for the

<sup>214</sup> This claim seems to have been presented first by G. Krüger, 'Zacharias Scholastikos', in *Realencyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 21 (Leipzig, 3rd edn. 1908), 593–598, here 593. See also Honigmann, 'Zacharias of Melitene (536 A.D.)', 195, 199, and 201–204, who confirms the claim. Josef Rist, 'Zachariah Scholastikos', in *BBKL* 14 (1998), 303–307, here 303; Peter Bruns, 'Procopius of Gaza', in *DECL* (2000), 501–502, here 501.

<sup>215</sup> For the edition of Procopius of Gaza's *catenae* on the Book of Ecclesiastes see Sandro Leanza, 'La catena all'Ecclesiasten di Procopio di Gaza del cod. MarcGr. 22', in *Studia codicologica*, TU 124 (Berlin, 1977), 279–289; Sandro Leanza, ed. *Procopii Gazaei Catena in Ecclesiasten: Necnon Pseudochrysostomi Commentarius in eundem Ecclesiasten*, CCSG 4 (Turnhout and Leuven, 1978). At Ruprecht Karls University, Heidelberg, Max Rauer and now Karin Metzler are working on the edition of his Genesis Commentary from the *catena* on the Octateuch. For a discussion of Procopius' commentary work, see Robert Devréesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois*, Studi e Testi 201 (Città del Vaticano, 1959). For an edition of a sizable collection of letters by Procopius see A. Garzya and Raymond J. Loenertz, ed., *Procopii Gazaei Epistulae et declamationes*, Studia Patristica et Byzantina 9 (Ettal, 1963). See also Leendert Gerit Westerlink, 'Ein unbekannter Brief des Prokopius von Gaza', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 60 (1967), 1–2. On Procopius, see also Gillard, 'Gaza', 30; and Wolfgang Aly, 'Prokopios von Gaza', in *PWRE* 23 (Stuttgart, 1957), 259–273.

<sup>216</sup> See Stephan Sikorski, *De Aenea Gazaeo* (Breslau, 1908); Georg Schalkhauser, *Aeneas von Gaza als Philosoph* (Erlangen, 1898); E. Legier, 'Essai de biographie d'Énée de Gaza', *Oriens Christianus* 7 (1907), 349–369; Raymond Joseph Loenertz, 'Observations sur quelques lettres d'Énée de Gaza', *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 77 (1957), 438–443; V. Grumel, 'Énée (*Aiveias*) de Gaza', in *DHGE* 15 (1961), 458–459; Manfred Wacht, *Aeneas von Gaza als Apologet: seine Kosmologie im Verhältnis zum Platonismus*, Theophrastea 21 (Bonn, 1969); Noël Aujoulat, 'Le De providentia d'Hiéroclès d'Alexandrie et le Théophraste d'Énée de Gaza', *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987), 55–85; Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, 'Aeneas von Gaza', in *BBKL* 1 (1990), 47–48; and J.-M. Sauget, 'Aeneas of Gaza', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 12.

<sup>217</sup> Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus* (ed. J. F. Boissonade (Paris 1846), PG 85.871–1904; also ed. Maria Elisabetta Colonna, *Teofrasto* (Naples, 1958)). For the edition of his 25 surviving letters see Lydia Massa Positano, ed., *Aenea di Gaza: Epistole*, Collana di studi greci 19 (Naples, 1950; 2nd rev. edn. 1962).

<sup>218</sup> See Manfred Wacht, 'Aeneas of Gaza', in *DECL* (2000), 7.

<sup>219</sup> The question of whether or not the human soul pre-existed the creation of the human body and the human person was one that occupied theologians of that time. In 543, Emperor Justinian issued an edict, anathematizing those who defended the

Christian philosophers with respect to the question of the resurrection of the body.<sup>220</sup> Although Isaiah himself appears to have grown up without academic education, his life's experience as an ascetic enabled him to engage in a meaningful conversation with the philosophical teachers and doctrines of his time.<sup>221</sup>

The main goal of Abba Isaiah's teaching and spiritual direction for the monks in his *coenobium*, however, was not of a philosophical or intellectual nature. With his instructions he pursued two main goals. In the first instance, he wished to lead the new monks to true repentance so that they would obtain forgiveness for their sins and salvation. Secondly, he also encouraged them to lead a life in fulfilment of the will of God so that they would be able to persist in the state of grace which they had reached.<sup>222</sup> He advised new monks in the following way:

Do not reveal your thoughts before everyone, lest you scandalize your neighbour. Reveal your thoughts to your fathers, in order that the grace of God may protect you.<sup>223</sup> ... Reveal the spiritual diseases of your soul to your superiors so that you may find the suitable remedy in their advice which will lead to salvation. ... Beware ever to suppress the truth, because the inner lie does not fit together with the fear of God in our heart[s], and never speak boastingly about the good things which you have done for fear that the demon of complacency might bewitch you.<sup>224</sup>

The emphasis on repentance clearly connects Abba Isaiah with Peter the Iberian, whose teaching on repentance was set out in his testament.<sup>225</sup> The surest guide to a life of repentance is when the monk or

pre-existence of the soul. See Justinianus, *Epistula ad Menam*, can. 1 (ed. and tr. Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, *Origenes: Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien* (Darmstadt, 3rd edn., 1992), 822–825, here 822–823). See also Horst Seidl, 'Seele, V. Kirchen- und philosophiegeschichtlich', in *TRE* 30 (1999), 748–759; and Hans-Peter Hasenfratz, 'Seelenwanderung I', in *TRE* 31 (2000), 1–4, here 3.

<sup>220</sup> For a good overview of the discussion, see Reinhart Staats, 'Auferstehung I/4. Alte Kirche', in *TRE* 4 (1979), 467–477, especially 475–477.

<sup>221</sup> See Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 49. The philosophical and theological thought in the Gaza area in the context of the Origenist controversies still awaits study. For a helpful and brief 'lie of the land' of the Origenist disputes, see also Rowan Williams, 'Origenes /Origenismus', in *TRE* 25 (1995), 397–420, especially 414–417.

<sup>222</sup> See Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 50.

<sup>223</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourse 9 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 96).

<sup>224</sup> Translated from Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 50. Heyer does not provide references to his sources and Augoustinos' text was not accessible to me. I was not able to identify the respective passage in Chryssavgis and Penkett's translation. The manuscript of Heyer's book, kept at Heidelberg University and reportedly containing additional references, was not available to me either.

<sup>225</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 119. Also see above, ch. 2, pp. 106–107.

ascetic is motivated in all his or her undertakings by the proper fear of God. Abba Isaiah's teaching on the significance of the fear of God and its central position in the life of the ascetic who has taken up the path of a life of silence, ascetic practices, and weeping over his or her sins, is clearly formulated in Discourse 16 of the *Asceticon*:

All things are abolished by discernment, when it gathers and considers them, but it is impossible for discernment to come to you, unless you cultivate its ground, beginning with silence. Silence gives birth to ascetic discipline. Ascetic discipline gives birth to weeping. Weeping gives rise to fear of God. Godly fear begets humility. Humility begets foresight. Foresight begets love. Love renders the diseased soul free and dispassionate. Then, and only after all this, a person knows that he is far from God.<sup>226</sup>

When reading the *Vita Petri Iberi*, one notices how central a notion the idea of the 'fear of God' is, at least in Rufus' mind, for the proper identity of the anti-Chalcedonian monk. Rufus speaks of Peter the Iberian as 'a confessor of the fear of God',<sup>227</sup> as a 'helper of the fear of God',<sup>228</sup> as one who instructed his followers and new converts by 'the teaching of the ways of life of the fear of God and divine zeal',<sup>229</sup> and as one who brought young virgins, like Eugenia, 'near to the light of the fear of God'.<sup>230</sup> Peter's followers 'hastened to receive their father, both the light and the lamp of the fear of God'.<sup>231</sup> Rufus reveals that the 'adversary... was afraid that perhaps there would be a reversal [of the deed] which [his] diligence had contrived in

<sup>226</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourse 16 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 126, modified).

<sup>227</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 3.

<sup>228</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49.

<sup>229</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 71.

<sup>230</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 115. See also Cornelia Horn, '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, Minn. (April 2002) (unpublished manuscript). See below, ch. 5, pp. 379 and 382. For a discussion of the role of monks in the wider religious field, see, for example, Lorenzo Perrone, 'Monasticism as a Factor of Religious Interaction in the Holy Land during the Byzantine Period', in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land: First-Fifteenth Centuries CE* (Jerusalem, 1998), 67–95.

<sup>231</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121. At numerous other instances does Rufus speak of ideal anti-Chalcedonians or of supporters of or examples for anti-Chalcedonians as characterized and distinguished by their fear of God. See Rufus' depiction of Bakurios (*Vita Petri Iberi* 5 and 7), Duktia (*Vita Petri Iberi* 7), Peter's foster parents (*Vita Petri Iberi* 12), Emperor Theodosius II (*Vita Petri Iberi* 16, 20, and 29), John the Eunuch (*Vita Petri Iberi* 21), Poemenia (*Vita Petri Iberi* 30), Queen Helena (*Vita Petri Iberi* 30 and 37–38), Dioscorus of Alexandria (*Vita Petri Iberi* 51 and 58), Bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem (*Vita Petri Iberi* 52), the bishops appointed by Theodosius of Jerusalem (*Vita Petri Iberi* 57), Timothy Aelurus (*Vita Petri Iberi* 65), the anti-Chalcedonian faithful (*Vita Petri Iberi* 69), Abba Peter the priest, the disciple of Abba Isaiah (*Vita Petri Iberi* 125), and Nestabus, the archdeacon of Maiuma (*Vita Petri Iberi* 133).

writing at Chalcedon against the fear of God'.<sup>232</sup> Thus, Abba Isaiah's teachings, or the sayings attributed to him, had significant influence on what Peter's successor defined as the proper virtues worth striving for.

Abba Isaiah's monastery attracted faithful anti-Chalcedonians and served them as a place of refuge in which they were strengthened in their anti-Chalcedonian faith. Rufus mentions the anti-Chalcedonian monk Epiphanius, who lived in the vicinity of the village named Afta in the area of Saltu<sup>233</sup> near the monastery of Abba Silvanus.<sup>234</sup> Epiphanius suffered persecution from the villagers whom the local Chalcedonian priest had incited to opposition against him. Eventually, Epiphanius gained victory over that priest when, without obvious cause, the priest suddenly died. When describing events later on in Epiphanius' life, Rufus notes that

when he received the crown of the beautiful zeal through the right judgement [he] was esteemed worthy of falling sick in the *coenobium* of our holy Abba, the blessed Isaiah, from where he was accustomed to take part in the mysteries. When he was perfected there, he was laid in a grave in the church among the saints, in a tomb [in which] he was by himself.<sup>235</sup>

One episode recounted in Zachariah's *Life of Isaiah* reflects quite well that Abba Isaiah was dealing with the same range of questions concerning which other intellectuals in the Gaza area were consulted and on which they attempted to provide answers.<sup>236</sup> In the setting of educated persons in Gaza,<sup>237</sup> a local lawyer once asked Abba Isaiah how he interpreted the biblical statement that the human being is created in God's image.<sup>238</sup> In his answer Abba Isaiah exhorted the lawyer to imitate Christ's mercy towards human beings, who suffer. Such actions are the correct way to enquire into the 'nature of Christ'. Through this usage of the term 'nature of Christ', one of the main points of discord between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians in the fifth century, Abba Isaiah pointed to a path away from the dogmatic struggle and toward a greater emphasis on the practical life.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>232</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57.

<sup>233</sup> See Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 132–133.

<sup>234</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 72 and n. 109. <sup>235</sup> *Plerophoriae* 48.

<sup>236</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 7–8 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7–8, pp. 7–8 (Syriac) and 5–6 (Latin)).

<sup>237</sup> See also Glanville Downey, 'The Christian Schools of Palestine: A Chapter in Literary History', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 12 (1958), 297–319.

<sup>238</sup> For a discussion of the centrality of this problem in the first Origenist controversy, see ch. 3 in Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*.

<sup>239</sup> See Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 49.

But other episodes in the *Plerophoriae* in which Abba Isaiah appears as anti-Chalcedonian visionary indicate that emphasis on the practical life did not exclude concern for theological conviction. For the monks and ascetics dogmatic struggles were not quarrels over mere words and phrases. Rather the conflict had very concrete practical consequences, ultimately leading to eternal life or death for the individual, based on one's membership in the right or the wrong community of faith. Rufus' portrait of the saint therefore does not necessarily contradict the image of Abba Isaiah as it emerges from the *Asceticon*.

From Zachariah, Rufus had learned how one day

when he was in Beirut, he saw himself as one who was in the Church of these who were approving [the Council of Chalcedon] there. When a gathering was being celebrated, deacons were giving the cup who did not say the most holy and mystical word, but some other shameful and not dignified [one] instead. When he [namely, Zachariah] was troubled and terrified, he saw Abba Isaiah, the father of the monks, whom he knew, for he had seen him many times. Abba Isaiah said to him, 'Flee from the Church of these [partisans] of a fourfold [god] and separate yourself from them.'<sup>240</sup>

This vision illustrates that in the mind of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics an inseparable connection existed between holding the right doctrine and engaging in the right practice of the faith. Abba Isaiah was seen as a guarantor of that right faith.

Rufus records a prophetic announcement by Abba Paul of Thebes concerning the Council of Chalcedon and the subsequent evils for the churches. Abba Isaiah had heard the visionary prediction around AD 430 and later had sent it as an answer to a question Peter the Iberian had posed to him.

He [namely, Abba Isaiah] was saying, however, 'I know that once I came to a certain one of those great saints, who was Abba Paul, the one of the Thebaid, who thence had come to old age. He was above [or] below a hundred and twenty years old. I heard this prophecy from him. "After twenty years there will be a deviation which will happen through the bishops. This is the separation from God which the Apostle foretold. It will be happening through a wicked man who is emperor, whose name is Marcian. This emperor, however, will be departing [from life] after a little more than six years. After him there will be a deceitful man for a short time and he will bring about peace, particularly in the churches, and it will be quiet. In this way the affairs are rolling on until the coming of the Antichrist."<sup>241</sup>

<sup>240</sup> *Plerophoriae* 73.

<sup>241</sup> *Plerophoriae* 12.

During the short period of time that Peter held the episcopal throne of Maiuma, he was in direct contact with Abba Isaiah. It seems that during that time the seed for the spiritual friendship between the two had taken root, later to blossom into a master/disciple or guide/disciple relationship. Abba Isaiah was the prophet preparing and leading the way for Peter. In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus gives the following account of a prophetic vision which Abba Isaiah had received specifically for Peter.

When our Abba, the blessed Abba Peter, was bishop, he was seated in his church which was in Maiuma. Once that Abba Isaiah the solitary, while gathered [into himself] in his cell, saw such a vision. Some [kind of] a large, high, and ill-smelling heap was [placed] in the middle of the habitable earth, containing almost the whole [of it]. It put to flight many through its foulness. An angel descended from heaven and [was] holding a shovel. He said to Abba Peter the bishop, 'Take this shovel from me and cleanse the habitable earth from the foulness. You, namely, were commanded that you should free this [earth].' Yet as the saint excused himself, saying, 'I cannot do this, for it is a task beyond my strength, and to say the full [truth], beyond human strength,' that angel did not cease, but was determined about it [even] to [the point] of compelling him to take the shovel so that he would cleanse the habitable earth.

When Abba Isaiah had seen these things, at the crack of dawn he went out from his cell [and] went to the blessed one at Maiuma. When he saw him, they greeted one another, and he told him that vision. He returned again to his cell.<sup>242</sup>

Here Abba Isaiah functions as a mediator between heaven and Peter. He revealed to Peter that he was called to take up the cleansing of the earth from the defilement that Chalcedon had created.<sup>243</sup>

More than three decades later when Peter already had laboured hard to fulfil that task of 'cleans[ing] the habitable earth' through his activities in Egypt, the personal contact between him and Abba Isaiah was renewed and deepened over a period of three years. From AD 485 to 488 Peter dwelt in close proximity to Abba Isaiah's monastery in Beth Daltha, only four miles away in the 'village which is called Magdal Tutha [or, Thawatha],<sup>244</sup> south of Gaza, by the side of the temple of the holy Hilarion, the great ascetic, prophet, and

<sup>242</sup> *Plerophoriae* 65.

<sup>243</sup> According to Zachariah, the final word that encouraged Peter to leave behind Palestine and join the anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt, was left for Christ. See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 3, ch. 7 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 160; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 54).

<sup>244</sup> See Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 246. See also Clermont-Ganneau, 'Sur quelques localités de Palestine', 9–14: 'Magdal Tôûthâ, Thabatha et le monastère de saint Hilarion'.

abbot of the monks'.<sup>245</sup> A certain Dionysius, one of Peter's scholastic friends from Gaza, had prepared a comfortable living space for him in that village. During those three years an active exchange of thoughts and of expressions of friendship occurred between the two holy men.

Rufus supplies a detailed description of that stage of their friendship.<sup>246</sup> It was his conviction that God had brought it about that these two 'lights', as he called Peter and Isaiah, should live so close to one another. Struck by awe Rufus described 'the faith and love which these same saints were showing to each other'.<sup>247</sup> He illustrates that caring love when he speaks of how Peter sent food daily to Abba Isaiah. Peter had selected food which he thought was appropriate for the diet of an ascetic whose body had grown weak over the years.<sup>248</sup> For his own consumption, Peter had bread which was made from 'the finest wheaten flour from Gaza'.<sup>249</sup> Daily he sent a loaf of that

<sup>245</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 101. Hilarion is known from Jerome's account of him. See Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* (ed. PL 23.29–54; and H. Hurter, *Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula Selecta*, vol. xlviii (Innsbruck, 1885), reprinted in William Abbott Oldfather, ed., *Studies in the Text Tradition of St. Jerome's Vitae Patrum* (Urbana, 1943), 42–59; tr. Sister Marie Liguori Ewald, 'Life of St. Hilarion by St. Jerome', in *Early Christian Biographies*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, FOTC 15 (n.p., 1952), 245–280). Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 33 (ed. Geyer, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), p. 145, ll. 19–20) knows where Hilarion found his final rest: *Ad secundum miliarium Gazae requiescit sanctus pater Hilario*. On Peter as the successor to Hilarion in anti-Chalcedonian interpretation, see Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 113–115. More generally on Hilarion's place in the context of Gazan monasticism, see Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, 'הקופה הביזנטית [The Monastic Community of Gaza in the Byzantine Period]', 71–79; and in English in the article Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, 'Gazan Monasticism in the Fourth–Sixth Centuries: From Anchoritic to Cenobitic', 17–25. For some of Jerome's classical sources see Susan Weingarten, 'Jerome and the *Golden Ass*', *Studia Patristica* 33 (1995), 383–389. On Hilarion, see also P.Th. Camelot, 'Hilarion de Gaza', in *DHGE* 24 (1990–1993), 471–472. For references to the wider discussion of asceticism in Gaza, see below, ch. 3, pp. 206–214. A study of John Rufus as author will have to consider Jerome's works as possible sources for him.

<sup>246</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102–104.

<sup>247</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>248</sup> For a discussion of the food available to common people in Byzantine Palestine, see Claudine Dauphin, 'Plenty or Just Enough?: The Diet of the Rural and Urban Masses of Byzantine Palestine', *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 17 (1999), 39–65.

<sup>249</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103. Even though I am not aware of any archaeological discoveries of bakeries in the Gaza area, the possibly early-sixth-century, certainly late antique tractate by Julian of Ashkelon, *On the Lavus of Architecture in Palestine* (ed. Catherine Saliou, *Le traité d'urbanisme de Julien d'Ascalon: droit et architecture en Palestine au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1996), 32–77, here 35) includes a discussion of how bread ovens should be built. For a discussion of the identification and date of Julian, see Saliou, *Le traité d'urbanisme*, 27–29 and 84–91. See also Marie Theres Fögen, 'Julian of Askalon', in *ODB* 2 (New York and Oxford, 1991), 1079–1080.

same kind of bread to his friend, Abba Isaiah. Along with the loaf of bread he also sent vegetables, specifically a bundle of cleaned and washed parsley and leeks, and in addition, as a good source of protein (even if Peter had no idea of that), two small fish.<sup>250</sup> In return for those gifts, Abba Isaiah would send Peter ‘three round cakes’.<sup>251</sup>

Given that Abba Isaiah led a secluded life in his private cell and did not engage in any direct contact with others, except for exchanges with his disciple Abba Peter the priest, it is worth noting that Rufus emphasizes that Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah ‘were together with each other in the spirit’ ‘at every hour’.<sup>252</sup> Not only did the two share physical food with one another, but they also ‘enjoy[ed] together an evangelical and heavenly banquet’.<sup>253</sup> Still, one wonders whether the two ever met in person and saw each other face to face. It was part of God’s intention that ascetics and lay people who would come to one of the holy men for advice and help could also benefit from the other one nearby.<sup>254</sup>

The numerous visitors to those two holy men also included women, but only Abba Isaiah could avoid all contact. Rufus says that ‘from converse with women the blessed Isaiah [kept] himself abstinent up to the end and kept this precept without transgression, as an ascetic’.<sup>255</sup> Isaiah had encouraged his monks ‘not even to look at the clothes of a woman’.<sup>256</sup> The advantage which Abba Isaiah had over Peter was that he did ‘not have the same duty, which the blessed Peter had, who was bishop and father of everyone and beyond nature and age was commanded by God to be a watchman

<sup>250</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>251</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>252</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>253</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>254</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102. See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiaae* 10 (ed. and tr. Brooks, ‘Vita Isaiaae Monachi’, in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7–8, pp. 10 (Syriac) and 7 (Latin)).

<sup>255</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>256</sup> Isaiah of Scetis, *Asceticon*, Discourse 3 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 52, modified). See also Discourse 9: ‘Do not eat with a woman’ (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 95); Discourse 16: ‘If bodily beauty attracts your heart, remember its stench, and you will find rest. If the enjoyment of women is sensually most pleasing to you, remember where those women who have already died have gone, and you will find rest’ (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 126); but see also Discourse 27: ‘Never look unless absolutely necessary at a woman or a man’s handsome face’ (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 225). For another instance where Isaiah employs the imagery of women in a negative way, see, for example, Discourse 25 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 184). For examples of the positive use Abba Isaiah is able to make of the image of the female in his instructions, see Discourses 19, 25, and 26 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 145, 206, and 217).

and a benefactor'.<sup>257</sup> That is to say, as an ascetic Peter would have preferred not to deal with women, yet as a bishop his role included spiritual direction for men and for women. Thus, he could not avoid having contact with females.

In general, both ascetics welcomed visitors who came for spiritual advice. One particular visitor, however, the eunuch Cosmas whom Emperor Zeno had sent to invite the two holy men to come to Constantinople, was received less joyfully and less willingly.<sup>258</sup> Rufus suggests that Emperor Zeno appreciated Peter's stature and therefore wished to summon both him and his friend and mentor Abba Isaiah to Constantinople. Diplomatically, Rufus writes that Zeno, having heard of those saints' 'grace and power', conceived 'a desire to become worthy of a blessing from them'.<sup>259</sup> In so far as there might be historical truth to Rufus' statement, one assumes that Zeno had hoped that the two famous ascetics would endorse his Christological compromise, the *Henotikon* (AD 482), and thus help it to become accepted.<sup>260</sup> In the *Vita Isaiae* Zachariah Rhetor veils those imperial intentions when he states that Zeno 'was asking them to come to him together with other holy men so that he would see with his [own] eyes the virtues of these, would receive their prayers, and so would enjoy their truly priestly and spiritual teachings and blessings'.<sup>261</sup> Both Peter and Isaiah found a way out of such a delicate situation.

In the *Vita Isaiae* Zachariah Rhetor presents Isaiah's clever and successful plan. Zachariah tells how Abba Isaiah had prayed that he might fall sick, and actually did so even before the arrival of the emperor's messenger, Cosmas. That one, consequently, became convinced that under these circumstances it would be impossible for such an old man to travel. To be on the safe side, he asked for letters for the emperor, which Abba Isaiah willingly supplied. Cosmas had hardly turned his back on Abba Isaiah, when the old man recovered from his sickness immediately and lived happily and in good health ever after.<sup>262</sup>

[W]hile he showed himself thenceforward free from all sufferings and superior to vain praise, trod under foot, as it is written, in the authority which was given to him by God, the Accuser, the demons, and all their power, and presented himself to God [as] a second Antony, he left [his]

<sup>257</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>258</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>259</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>260</sup> On the *Henotikon*, see above, ch. 2, p. 104 and n. 262.

<sup>261</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 14 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7–8, pp. 14 (Syriac) and 9 (Latin)).

<sup>262</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 14–15 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7–8, pp. 14–15 (Syriac) and 9–10 (Latin)).

passing body to the earth and departed to that one who was dear to him, while he left his disciple, Peter, [as] his heir and double.<sup>263</sup>

In Zachariah's presentation, the ascetic Abba Isaiah, effectively named 'a second Antony' in reference to the famous Antony of Egypt, outsmarted the emperor's messenger.

In regard to Peter, Zachariah says that Peter 'was fleeing from every vain praise'. Therefore 'he was hiding himself and did not show himself'.<sup>264</sup> In the end, he left the territories of the provinces in Palestine and escaped to Phoenicia.<sup>265</sup> Rufus presents a more detailed account of the threat which Peter felt at the prospect of a visit to Emperor Zeno:

When the blessed Peter came to know [of] this [invitation], he was very wearied, and while he was weeping, he was in unceasing mourning and in groaning. In front of 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 which I do not have, and [that] I should do something 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. When he thought thus of his great weakness, and as one who had once promised to God not again to return to Egypt from where he had left, he judged that such a journey was hard 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 until through his friends, who were many in Constantinople, he had written a petition and informed the emperor of his manifold weakness, and were 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 assisting the saint's petition.<sup>266</sup>

Peter was already north in Phoenicia, in the city of Tripoli, when he received notice that the emperor had granted his petition.<sup>267</sup>

Rufus strove to portray Peter as a staunch, uncompromising combatant for the anti-Chalcedonian cause. That tendency is somewhat modified by Zachariah Rhetor, also originally from the Gaza area,<sup>268</sup>

<sup>263</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 15 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7-8, pp. 15 (Syriac) and 10 (Latin)).

<sup>264</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 14 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7-8, pp. 14 (Syriac) and 9 (Latin)).

<sup>265</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 104; Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 14 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7-8, pp. 14 (Syriac) and 9 (Latin)). According to Honigmann, *Pierre l'Ibérien*, 13, Peter did not escape but was actually en route to Constantinople when Zeno's envoy found him in Tripoli.

<sup>266</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 104. <sup>267</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109-110.

<sup>268</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 88 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 88).

who presents him as a more moderate anti-Chalcedonian, at least from the standpoint of the theology of the essential nature of the body of Christ.<sup>269</sup>

Finishing up his northbound journey in the area around Tripoli, Peter changed directions and turned again southwards. When he and his companions stayed for a while in Jamnia,<sup>270</sup> they learned about 'the release of him who belonged to the saints, the father of the monks, Abba Isaiah, the great ascetic and prophet'.<sup>271</sup> Isaiah died on 11 August, AD 491.<sup>272</sup>

The way in which Peter received the news about the death of his friend and mentor is very characteristic of their close and intimate friendship. By the time of Isaiah's passing away, as one sees in Rufus' account, Peter seems to have withdrawn increasingly from the company of his followers. While his companions were sitting at table and

<sup>269</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Isaiae* 11 (ed. and tr. Brooks, 'Vita Isaiae Monachi', in Brooks, *Vitae virorum*, CSCO 7-8, pp. 11 (Syriac) and 8 (Latin)). For reasons which he does not state Honigmann, *Pierre l'Ibérien*, 13-14, wished to moderate Rufus' depiction of Peter the Iberian and portray him as a middle-of-the-road anti-Chalcedonian. He wanted to identify Peter with the author of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings, which may come from the pen of a moderate anti-Chalcedonian. Ten years before Honigmann advanced his thesis, Shalva I. Nuc'ubize, *Tajna pseudo-Dionisija Areopagita*, Akademiia Nauk, Gruzinskoi SSr (1942), reprinted as 'Tajna pseudo-Dionisija Areopagita', *Izvestija Instituta jazyka, istorii i materialnoj Kultury im akademika N. Ĵa. Marra* 14 (1944), 1-55, made a similar proposal. For the discussion of the question of Peter's identification with Pseudo-Dionysius see L. Melikset-Bek, 'Tajna pseudo-Dionisija Areopagita', *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 2.27 (1949), 373-375; Anonymous, 'Une découverte suprenante: l'auteur des 'pseudo-Aréopagitica' est Pierre l'Ibère ou l'Ibérien (411-491 après J.-C.)', *La Nouvelle Cléo* (1952), 308-313; Hieronymus Engberding, 'Kann Petrus der Iberer mit Dionysius Areopagita identifiziert werden?' *Oriens Christianus* 37 (1953), 68-95; Irénée Hausherr, 'Le pseudo-Denys est-il Pierre l'Ibérien?' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19.3-4 (1953), 247-260; C. Moeller, 'Du nouveau sur le pseudo-Denys', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 4 (1953), 654-656; René Roques, 'Pierre l'Ibérien et le 'corpus' dionysien', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 145 (1954), 69-98; V. Grumel, 'Autour de la question pseudo-dionysienne', *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 13 (1955), 21-49; J. M. Hornus, 'Les recherches récentes sur le pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite', *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 35 (1955), 404-407; Hieronymus Engberding, 'Zur neuesten Identifizierung des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita', in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 64 (1956), 218-227; van Esbroeck, 'Peter the Iberian and Dionysius the Areopagite: Honigmann's Thesis Revisited'; and Elguyja Khintibidze, *Georgian-Byzantine Literary Contacts* (Amsterdam, 1996), 145-153.

<sup>270</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 126. For Jamnia (or Yavne), just south of modern-day Jaffa, see also Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 149-150; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuilles 7-8 /n. 213, p. 820.

<sup>271</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 124.

<sup>272</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 124: Abba Isaiah 'took [his] rest on the eleventh of the month of Ab'.

eating, and Peter sat to the side eating by himself, the messenger carrying the news about Abba Isaiah's death entered the quarters.<sup>273</sup> The brethren who were serving Peter received the news first.

The insight with which Rufus describes the ensuing scene illustrates both Rufus' literary talent as well as his detailed and intimate knowledge regarding Peter's inner life. According to Rufus, the brethren hesitated for a moment before telling Peter about Isaiah's death. On the assumption that Peter would not know already, the brethren wanted to wait for the end of the meal. They had no knowledge that the death of his friend had already been communicated to Peter in the spirit. Finally, when one of them, named Zachariah,<sup>274</sup> told Peter, he reacted as follows:

He, however, as if he heard nothing strange, but [rather something] which 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 of the saints die? 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. [125] He wept much by himself, and said only this, when we were hearing him, 'Now it is my [turn].'<sup>275</sup>

Peter elevated Abba Isaiah by placing him somewhat lower than but still in line with the patriarchs and the prophets, and surely including him among 'all the saints'. Peter also was deeply moved by the loss of his close friend, even though he did not show his emotions to his disciples, rather attempting to practise the virtue of being dispassionate, the last and highest one of the virtues in Abba Isaiah's ranking of spiritual qualities.<sup>276</sup> He knew that his life, and in particular the end of his life, was closely connected to Abba Isaiah; so Isaiah's death gave him a foretaste of his own approaching death.

A few days after Isaiah's death, Peter the priest, the 'cell-mate, attendant, and heir' of Abba Isaiah came to Peter the Iberian.<sup>277</sup> Abba Isaiah had expressed his wish that his disciple Abba Peter should receive the prayer of priestly ordination from Peter the Iberian in his function as bishop so that Abba Peter the priest subsequently could conduct the divine liturgy for the brethren in his monastery.<sup>278</sup>

<sup>273</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 124.

<sup>274</sup> This Zachariah, mentioned again at *Vita Petri Iberi* 134, is not identical with Zachariah Rhetor/Scholasticus. See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 86 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 86).

<sup>275</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 124–125.

<sup>276</sup> See Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourse 16, quoted above, ch. 3, p. 159.

<sup>277</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 125. <sup>278</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 126.

With such a request Abba Isaiah on his part had made it clear that he wished for his own monastic community to be under the authority and spiritual headship of Peter the Iberian, an anti-Chalcedonian, as their bishop.<sup>279</sup> However, it did not mean that the lives of the brethren of the community were to be regulated in detail by that bishop. Rather, Abba Isaiah had stated explicitly that the pastoral care over them belonged to his own disciple, Abba Peter the priest.<sup>280</sup>

Through the account of a last miraculous event before Isaiah's death to which Peter the priest had been a witness Rufus provides yet another set of parameters that delineate the relationship between Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah. As he was about to enter Abba Isaiah's cell in order to support him in his weakness as death was approaching, his disciple Abba Peter the priest refrained from stepping into the cell since it seemed that his spiritual master was talking to someone. He only entered after the voices had stopped, explaining that he had not wanted to disturb the conversation, yet at the same time imploring Abba Isaiah to tell him with whom he had been conversing and about what.<sup>281</sup> Isaiah told him that John the Baptist had come to take him away. Rufus commented that it is God's custom to take away his saints with those who are equal to them in zeal and manner.<sup>282</sup> Abba Isaiah also told Peter the priest that he had asked John the Baptist what the 'locusts' were that he ate in the desert and John the Baptist had explained that they were the 'heads of roots from the desert'.<sup>283</sup> While the question concerning the Baptist's food reveals, among other things,<sup>284</sup> fifth-century curiosity concerning the proper ascetic diet, the story more immediately serves the purpose of setting up Abba Isaiah as the perfect leader who was acquainted with the essential ascetic saints. The conversation about 'locusts' proved to his disciple that Abba Isaiah indeed had spoken to John the Baptist, who in the desert had become an expert of that type of food, since he had lived on 'locusts and wild

<sup>279</sup> For Peter as bishop of the region, see above, ch. 2, pp. 89–91.

<sup>280</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 126. <sup>281</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 125.

<sup>282</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 125–126.

<sup>283</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 126. For a discussion of the range of interpretations of 'locusts' in the early Syriac Christian tradition, see Sebastian Brock, 'The Baptist's Diet in Syriac Sources', *Oriens Christianus* 54 (1970), 113–124 (reprinted in Sebastian Brock, *From Ephrem to Romanos: Interactions between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, and Brookfield, Vt., copyright 1999), ch. 10). Brock, 'The Baptist's Diet', 120, briefly mentions the evidence gleaned from the *Vita Petri Iberi*. See also James A. Kelhoffer, "'Locusts and Wild Honey" (Mk 1.6c and Mt. 3.4c): The *Status Quaestionis* concerning the Diet of John the Baptist', *Currents in Biblical Research* 2.1 (2003), 104–127; and James A. Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist: 'Locusts and Wild Honey' in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation* (Tübingen, 2005).

<sup>284</sup> See also below, ch. 3, p. 170.

honey'.<sup>285</sup> The conversation demonstrated that Abba Isaiah had direct access to other ascetic champions.

Many of the monks living in the desert and striving for ascetic perfection intended to follow the impressive example of John the Baptist when it came to living an austere and harsh life.<sup>286</sup> Peter himself also was no exception. At least Rufus made sure that his audience clearly perceived Peter's intentions of fighting against the demons and the powers of darkness in the desert as inspired by John the Baptist.<sup>287</sup>

Elsewhere, Rufus addressed John the Baptist first and foremost as 'the Forerunner',<sup>288</sup> the one who prepared the way for Christ, and gave him credit for being the one 'who was the first chief and teacher of such an evangelical way of life',<sup>289</sup> referring to the life in the desert of Judaea. The distinguishing characteristic of ascetic life in the desert was that one could be 'alone with God', conversing only with him.<sup>290</sup> As generally there were no bishops in the desert, one was solely subject to God's authority. Moreover, John the Baptist's way of life in the desert taught the ascetic how one 'was fighting the contest for greater excellence diligently and "like a man"',<sup>291</sup> Rufus intended to portray Abba Isaiah as the 'forerunner' who prepared the way for Peter the Iberian and then wanted his own disciples to be under Peter's authority.

## PETER'S AUTHORITY AS ASCETIC: ASPECTS OF HIS ASCETIC STYLE

### The Ascetic's Authority: Conquering the Devil and His Temptations

Much of the ascetic and monastic literature of the early Christian world expressed the authority of the ascetic over the forces of evil,

<sup>285</sup> Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6.

<sup>286</sup> AbouZayd, *Ihdayutha*, 126. A study of the literary function of John the Baptist in early Christian, especially ascetic literature is a *desideratum*. Kelhoffer's work has laid a solid basis for such a work.

<sup>287</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34–35. By mentioning John the Baptist in the Judaeian Desert as an example which Peter followed, Rufus may also provide literary evidence that Peter practised the ascetic life in the desert of Judaea for some period of time. Whether he ever founded a monastery there, as the Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' suggests, cannot be verified from only that passage in the *Vita Petri Iberi*. See Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' (ed. Lolashvili, 'Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian', sect. 10, p. 125, and sect. 12, p. 126).

<sup>288</sup> The Syriac ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ is likely to be seen as a rendition of the Greek πρῶδρομος'.

<sup>289</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>290</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>291</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34–35.

both moral and doctrinal, by employing, sometimes in full detail, the image of the battle with the demons.<sup>292</sup> Antony's fight with the demons in the desert of Egypt, in part reflecting aspects of Christ's encounter with Satan during his forty-day period of fasting in the Judean Desert,<sup>293</sup> probably holds pride of place in that regard.<sup>294</sup> Athanasius' effective portrayal of Antony's fight with the demons itself and the wide circulation of the *Vita Antonii* exercised remarkable influence on subsequent ascetic literature on the topic.

In the context of the Chalcedonian /anti-Chalcedonian struggles in Palestine, Rufus made use of the theme of the ascetic fighting against the devil and the demons to illustrate on whose side proper authority rested. In Rufus' portrayal of events, anti-Chalcedonian ascetics manifested their authority by overcoming evil forces, which, understandably in the given context, were identified as representatives of Chalcedonian powers or people.

The motif of Peter's fight with the devil and demonic forces is a recurring theme running evenly throughout the *Vita Petri Iberi*.

<sup>292</sup> For valuable studies of this phenomenon, see, for example, Miriam Raub Vivian, 'Daniel and the Demons: The Battle Against Evil as Central to the Authority of the Monk', *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001), 191–197, where ascetic authority over demons reconciled Emperor Basiliscus and Archbishop Acacius (see the critical comments on the historicity of the event in Brennecke, 'Chalkedonense und Henotikon', 36); see also Richard Valantasis, 'Daemons and the Perfecting of the Monk's Body: Monastic Anthropology, Daemonology, and Asceticism', *Semeia* 58 (1992), 47–79; Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: the Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley, 1985), 134–141; Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 81–101. See also G. J. M. Bartelink, 'Le diable et les démons dans les oeuvres de Jérôme', *Studia Patristica* 17.2 (1982), 463–471; and Gerard J. M. Bartelink, 'Teufels- und Dämonenglaube in christlichen griechischen Texten des fünften Jahrhunderts', in *La Spiritualité de l'univers byzantin dans le verbe et l'image* (Steenbrugis and Turnhout, 1997), 27–38.

<sup>293</sup> See Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:13, and Luke 4:1–13.

<sup>294</sup> Numerous instances can be listed, for example, at Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita Antonii* 5–6, 8–9, 11, 13, 21–25, 40–43 (ed. Bartelink, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*, SCh 400 (Paris, 1994), 142–148, 156–162, 164–166, 168–172, 192–206, and 242–252; tr. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony* (Mahwah, NJ, 1980), 33–35, 37–39, 39–40, 41, 47–50, and 61–64). For the exposition of the demonology of the *Vita Antonii* and the Evagrian corpus as the classic treatment of ascetics' dealings with demons, see Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, 'Démon, III. Dans la plus ancienne littérature monastique', in *DSp* 3 (1957), 189–212. For studies of the demonology of the *Vita Antonii* see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, 'Das Kreuz Christi und die Dämonen: Bemerkungen zur *Vita Antonii* des Athanasius', in *Pietas: Festschrift für Bernhard Köting* (Münster, 1980), 381–392; P. Bright, 'The Combat of the Demons in Antony and Origen', in *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Wolfgang A. Bienert and Uwe Kuhneweg (Louvain, 1999), 339–344; and David Brakke, 'The Making of Monastic Demonology: Three Ascetic Teachers on Withdrawal and Resistance', *Church History* 70.1 (2001), 19–48, esp. 23–32.

Already as a young boy in Constantinople, Peter had noticed that ‘at the instigation of the adversary’ resistance occurred to his ascetical and pious practices.<sup>295</sup> Yet in response, the young prince ‘showed . . . evangelical sincerity in serenity and patience’ and ‘turned anger to prayer’,<sup>296</sup> ultimately gaining the respect of the emperor and the members of the court for his asceticism, which, in its turn, attracted several of them as followers.<sup>297</sup>

Ultimately, however, court and city life were the arena of the devil. These forces of evil attempted to keep Peter in their grip. As Rufus put it, ‘the devil and the demons’ interfered again, hindering Peter and his friend John the Eunuch from fleeing the court in Constantinople for the sake of pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>298</sup> Court and demons represented the gateway through which Peter had to pass in order to reach the ‘desert’, the figurative and earthly Holy Land. The supernatural powers of the demons could only be overcome through the assistance of holy martyrs.<sup>299</sup> Since Peter’s ascetic practices had focused on the veneration of their relics, his access to their power was guaranteed.

In the Holy Land, Peter’s ascetic struggles reached their climax during a stay in the Judaeian Desert. In his portrayal of Peter, Rufus suggests a parallel between the ascetic in the desert and the ascetic fighting with the devil.

How many wrestling-matches and how many contests and how many temptations he endured, ceaselessly fighting against the devil and against his demons, the spirits of evil, at night and by day, not only in dreams and in imagination,<sup>300</sup> but as it is said, hand to hand and personally, continually moving [from one place to another] and coming to the desert of John the Forerunner, who was the first chief and teacher of such an evangelical way of life—I mean, however, that [desert] which is extending to the Jordan. There he led his way of life conversing only with God alone and conducting manfully the contest [35] of virtue with greater diligence. Of what help and consolation from God he was deemed worthy, it lies neither with the weakness of our word to describe [it] nor [in] the measure of time [allowed us to] receive it.<sup>301</sup>

Learning from John how to deal with the demonic forces of the desert, Peter also became the heir to John’s authority. John’s testimony is that of a ‘teacher of . . . an evangelical way of life’. According to Rufus, Peter’s authority comes not from men, but from God, from the God of the desert who was the only conversation partner for John.

<sup>295</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>296</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>297</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>298</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

<sup>299</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20–21.

<sup>300</sup> The Syriac text transliterated the Greek *φαντασία*.

<sup>301</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34–35.

Yet, while fighting temptations of evil spirits clearly is a motif in this section, it is remarkable that Rufus did not allude to Christ's sojourn and temptations in the desert of Judaea.<sup>302</sup> By choosing John the Baptist, Rufus appears to be laying stronger emphasis on the ascetic value of Peter's sojourn in the Judaeian Desert as such than on its quality of occurring in imitation of Christ.

According to Rufus' account, day and night Peter felt attacked by the devil and by various demons, identified as 'spirits of evil'. Those attacks could happen in one of two ways. The first was in the form of 'dreams' and 'appearances'.

One day, when Abba Peter was standing in the choir and was chanting with the brethren, [the devil] showed him a naked and very beautiful woman in front of him. However, while he alone saw the phantasm and knew [that] the vision was unchaste, he covered his face, turning hither and thither. The brethren were amazed and wondered what the cause of this was. He cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Our Lord, Jesus, remove this shameful and impure image and the abomination of this phantasm from before my eyes and let me be by myself!' But when the evil one heard the name of our Saviour, he immediately disappeared.<sup>303</sup>

Rufus explains that the devil 'could not bear the sincerity of their asceticism'.<sup>304</sup> As a means of distracting them from their focused ascetic life and the joy that comes with it, the devil had resorted to stock tactics, tempting a man by showing him the image of a woman in all her natural beauty.<sup>305</sup> That Peter immediately recognized the image of the beautiful naked woman as a 'phantasm',<sup>306</sup> as a trick which his imagination could be playing on him, speaks in favour of his spiritual experience and awareness. He appears to have been aware that visions, and deceptive visions at that, can overcome a person who is practising ascesis and is exposing the body to more than normal physical and psychological stress. It may be counted as a sign of a well-developed piety focusing on Christ that Peter immediately turned in prayer to the 'Lord Jesus' in his need. As soon as the devil heard the name of Jesus, he disappeared. Rufus' presentation of Peter as an ascetic who was fully aware of his close connection to

<sup>302</sup> See above, p. 171, n. 293.

<sup>303</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>304</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>305</sup> See also e.g. Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 7 (ed. PL 23:32–33; see also Hurter, *Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula Selecta*, reprinted in Oldfather, *Studies in the Text Tradition of St. Jerome's Vitae Patrum*, 44; tr. Ewald, 'Life of St. Hilarion by St. Jerome', 250). See also Bazyli Degórski, 'Le tematiche teologiche delle tre *Vitae* Geronimiane', in *The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism* (Cracow, 1995), 183–196, here 188.

<sup>306</sup> See the entries 'φαντάζω', 'φαντασία', 'φαντασιοκοπέω', 'φαντασιώ', 'φάντασμα', and 'φανταστικός' in G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), on pp. 1470–1471.

Christ, and who readily made use of it, firmly situates the ascetic spirituality of Peter and the circle of anti-Chalcedonians forming around him at the early beginnings of the tradition of eastern monasticism that practised the 'Jesus Prayer'.<sup>307</sup> While only partially discernible in the present instance, the use of the Jesus Prayer in a fuller form, effectively employed by Peter's foster-mother Zuzo, is attested to at an earlier instance in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, there also in the context of a situation of threat.<sup>308</sup> Thus in situations of threat coming from natural catastrophes or attacks of the devil, anti-Chalcedonians were encouraged to trust ultimately only in the reliable authority of the power of Jesus. This point Rufus reinforces in other instances.

The second characteristic of demonic attack on anti-Chalcedonians, which Rufus takes great care to emphasize, is the direct, physical involvement between the aggressor, namely, the devil, and the one being attacked. Speaking of the fight between Peter and the devil,

<sup>307</sup> The literature on the Jesus Prayer is significant. Important contributions include Emmanuel Lanne, 'Prière de Jésus dans la tradition égyptienne: témoignage des psalies et des inscriptions', *Irénikon* 50.2 (1977), 163–203; Lucien Regnault, 'La prière continuelle "Monologistos" dans la littérature apophthématique', *Irénikon* 47.4 (1974), 467–493; Antoine Guillaumont, 'Jesus Prayer among the Monks of Egypt', *Eastern Churches Review* 6 (1974), 66–71; Antoine Guillaumont, 'Une inscription copte sur la "Prière de Jésus,"' in *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien: Pour une phénoménologie du monachisme*, Spiritualité Orientale 30 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Begrolles, 1979), 168–183; Alois Grillmeier, 'Das "Gebet zu Jesus" und das "Jesus-Gebet": Eine neue Quelle zum "Jesus-Gebet" aus dem Weißen Kloster', in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History* (Leuven, 1985), 187–202; Kallistos T. Ware, *The Power of the Name: The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford, 1974); Kallistos T. Ware, 'The Origins of the Jesus Prayer: Diadochus, Gaza, Sinai', in *The Study of Spirituality* (New York, 1986), 175–184; Kallistos, Bishop of Diokleia, 'The Jesus Prayer in St. Diadochus of Photice', in *Aksum—Thyateira: Festschrift Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain* (London, 1985), 557–568; Per-Olof Sjögren, *The Jesus Prayer* (London, 1975, repr. 1986); Kari Vogti, 'The Coptic Practice of the Jesus Prayer: A Tradition Revived', in *Between Desert and City: The Coptic Orthodox Church Today* (Oslo, 1997), 111–120; Constantine Fouskas, 'Divine Liturgy and Jesus Prayer: An Orthodox Perspective', in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* (London, 1996), 93–98; Nicolae Corneanu and Luminita Niculescu, 'The Jesus Prayer and Deification', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39.1 (1995), 3–24; John Chryssavgis, 'The Jesus Prayer in the Ladder of St. John Climacus', *Ostkirchliche Studien* 35.1 (1986), 30–33; and Gabriele Winkler, 'The Jesus Prayer as a Spiritual Path in Greek and Russian Monasticism', in *The Continuing Quest for God: Monastic Spirituality in Tradition and Transition* (Collegeville, Minn., 1982), 100–113.

<sup>308</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 11. See also Irénée Hausherr, *The Name of Jesus* (Kalamazoo, 1978), 99–100, where the author discusses passages in *Vita Petri Iberi* 27, 35–36, and 110 that contain the keywords 'Jesus', 'Christ', and 'sinner', sometimes in a prayer context. Yet Hausherr 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'. See also above, ch. 2, p. 63, and n. 59.

Rufus pictured it as having happened ‘hand to hand and personally’.<sup>309</sup> When Peter was in Jerusalem, he had direct encounters with the devil. According to Rufus, when Peter decided to follow Passarion’s example and build a monastery with ‘a certain number of holy monks to praise the Lord’,<sup>310</sup> he fell seriously ill before the construction could begin. Rufus seems to indicate that the devil inflicted this sickness on him. In Rufus’ view, the devil would have seized any opportunity of attacking a physically weakened ascetic. Rufus described the situation as follows:

While [Peter] was lying severely [stricken], he saw the devil who was 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! Speak any word against Him right now and be free!’ But while [Peter] breathed at him and was greatly agitated [36] as one who many times was taken to the test by [the devil’s] shamelessness, he said to him, ‘You are speaking about my Jesus, [you] defiled and shameless dog, contending against God 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>311</sup>

In Peter’s encounter with the evil one, the devil laughed at him, ridiculed him, and pointed out to him how, despite his goodness, virtue, and love for God, he had been struck by God. Although he had left everything for God’s sake, God had abandoned him. Thus he should turn and speak out against God. Satan’s words remind the reader of the conversation about Job taking place between Satan and God. Satan was claiming that as soon as God would turn his favour away from his servant, Job would curse God (Job 1:11). One may also recall the words of Job’s wife to her husband. When through Satan’s machinations many evils and troubles had come upon Job, his wife challenged him no longer to hold on to his pious way of life but to give up on God completely (Job 2:9). The devil treated Peter not any different from how Job’s wife had dealt with her husband.

Peter’s first reaction is interesting: he ‘breathed at [the devil]’. In chapter 9 in the *Plerophoriae* one notices the same reaction and defence mechanism used by Abba Innocent against attacks from the devil. In some early Christian baptismal practices the bishop while baptizing would breathe on the one to be baptized, in an attempt both to blow out evil spirits (*exsufflatio*) and to blow the Holy Spirit into the one who was about to be baptized. As a baptized Christian, but also as an ascetic Christian, Peter had the Holy Spirit

<sup>309</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>310</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

<sup>311</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35–36.

dwelling in him. Thus he could make use of the Spirit's authority against Satan. In Peter's conversation with the devil he gave expression to what could be called holy anger. Labelling the devil as a 'rebel' and a 'blasphemer' applies epithets to the devil that anti-Chalcedonians used polemically against Chalcedonians and their novel, rebellious, and blasphemous doctrines against Christ.<sup>312</sup>

Peter had warned Satan that through 'the power of Christ' he would fall. Rufus records that this was precisely what happened later on. Peter's final victory was won at the moment when Satan heard Christ's name. He immediately dissolved into smoke. One of Rufus' purposes in presenting this episode seems to be to highlight Peter as an experienced ascetic and holy man who had suffered from the devil's challenges, but who knew well how to deal with such attacks. Peter's ascetic practices had prepared him to face such situations. His intimate relationship with the Lord effectively enhanced his authority against the evil powers. In all of this, Peter remained merely a human being. Despite success in his dealings with the devil, Peter may well have feared for his own life when he faced the confrontation with the devil. He may have been disturbed both psychologically and emotionally by demonic temptations and needed supernatural assistance to deal with the stress. Thus the Lord, here Jesus, appeared to him and comforted him. Emphasizing that the Lord appeared to Peter 'immediately', and thus again highlighting the close relationship between Peter and Christ, Rufus continues his account saying that

[a]fter 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". 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, and [that] it is in my hands whether you live or die?"<sup>313</sup>

Jesus' words gave two possible explanations for Peter's tears. One was Peter's natural fear for his life in the struggle with the devil and the subsequent physical exhaustion. The second reason for Peter's sadness may have been that he had not been able to build a church and monastery for God as he had wished to do. The devil intended to convince Peter to give up his efforts at erecting a monastery and thus disrupt his greater plans for ascetic success. God's answer came in the form of a vision of a beautiful church in heaven, full of light and glory, and filled with about fifty monks who were standing in orderly rows,

<sup>312</sup> See, for example, *Plerophoriae* 24, 26, 36, 55, 72, and 89.

<sup>313</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 36.

serving, and singing.<sup>314</sup> With this vision God not only provided a foreshadowing of the ascetic and monastic accomplishments that Peter was about to achieve, but also made known that these plans were already in God's mind, and thus were appointed by the highest possible level of authority.

Also in the *Plerophoriae*, Rufus described several instances of demonic attack on ascetics which involved personal, mostly physical contact between the demons or the devil and the anti-Chalcedonian representatives.<sup>315</sup> A good example is the kind of attack Timothy Aelurus, Archbishop of Alexandria, suffered. While being in exile in Cherson, Timothy had to explain to his visitor Apollon, a priest in Caesarea, the origins of a malignant abscess he had on his foot.<sup>316</sup> Timothy was convinced that the abscess had been brought about by a previous attack of the devil. Using the world of images supplied again by the biblical figure of Job,<sup>317</sup> Timothy recalled that Satan, enraged that Timothy had not signed the *Tome of Leo*, once intruded Timothy's space while he was keeping vigil and praying the office. Timothy courageously resisted the pressure that the 'rebellious' devil, who was 'truly like a serpent and a dragon', attempted to exercise against him. Finally, Satan lost his temper. 'Carrying the *Tome [of Leo]* in his right hand, he lifted [it] up and in rage struck [Timothy] upon [his] eye', which thus became completely deformed and hanging 'like a drop of blood and flesh' down over his cheek.<sup>318</sup> Certainly, it was a ghastly scene which the brethren found when they came in the morning to visit Timothy. While the brethren thought of a catarrh as the possible cause of Timothy's loss of sight, he knew better and rejected any help from their side, relying on 'the sole physician', namely 'that One who is in heaven'. Help came immediately, when Timothy 'threw [him]self on the earth before the Lord'. Timothy could report that '[O]ur God, Jesus Christ, appeared to me, put his stainless hands upon my eyes and healed me so that I would [be able to] see. He left me this little sore as an unforgettable reminder and as an aspect of the grace of his good action.'<sup>319</sup> According to Rufus, Timothy had witnessed God's direct physical assistance against the physical attacks of the devil already once before in his life. Thus he also was convinced that the source of his present evil, the

<sup>314</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 37.

<sup>315</sup> See also *Plerophoriae* 43 (Miqa) and *Plerophoriae* 9 (saints and ascetics in Pamphylia). For a discussion of the case of Miqa, see Horn, 'Fighting with the Devil'.

<sup>316</sup> *Plerophoriae* 26.

<sup>317</sup> *Plerophoriae* 26: 'suddenly a terrible one came, and [I was] scared [by his] blackness and foulness. He was such as the prophet Job described Satan.'

<sup>318</sup> *Plerophoriae* 26.

<sup>319</sup> *Plerophoriae* 26.

abscess on his foot, was the work of the devil who could be overcome now in the same way if he, Timothy, would only place all his hope and trust in the Lord. This is a perfect example of the kind of behaviour anti-Chalcedonians who felt they were experiencing physical attacks from the Chalcedonian side should display, even if such attacks only consisted of being physically expelled from the places they used to inhabit.

As Rufus portrayed it, envy functioned as one of the main motives of the devil's fight against anti-Chalcedonians, particularly in his attacks against Peter.<sup>320</sup> After describing how Peter lived in Maiuma and was greatly beloved by the people who 'were holding him up like an angel and were depending on his compassion and on his love',<sup>321</sup> Rufus contrasted this with the image and behaviour of the devil.

The devil, [who] fights against God and is envious, that first rebel and adviser and patron of rebels, because he would not endure to see any of this praise of God and the salvation of men because he was afraid that, perhaps, there would be a reversal [of the deed] which [his] diligence had contrived in writing at Chalcedon against the fear of God, entered the emperor who at that time was governing and [who] readily listened to his commands. He made him [issue] an imperial decree to the holy and true high-priests zealous for the fear of God, those who had been appointed by Theodosius, the great and apostolic high-priest, [that] they should be driven away from their thrones in all the cities of Palestine and if they were unwilling they would be expelled by force and be subject to [capital] punishment.<sup>322</sup>

Rufus characterizes the devil mainly as a rebel. Two traits in particular express this rebellious behaviour: first, the fact that the devil was fighting against God, and second, that he was envious, both of the praise given to God and of men's salvation. The fact that in this case the devil's hateful actions are directed against bishops should not raise doubts about the relevance of this passage in the present chapter. As far as is known, all the bishops ordained by Bishop Theodosius came from the ranks of the Palestinian monks.<sup>323</sup> The attack of

<sup>320</sup> See also *Vita Petri Iberi* 79.

<sup>321</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57.

<sup>322</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57.

<sup>323</sup> See, however, 1 Timothy 3:2 and 3:4–5, which clearly attests that at least in the first century it was normal to have bishops who were married and had children. See also Norbert Baumert, *Frau und Mann bei Paulus; Überwindung eines Mißverständnisses* (Würzburg, 1992), 217–219, for a useful discussion of ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή. For examples of bishops who were married see the case of Demetrius, the twelfth bishop of Alexandria. See Sawirus (Severus) ibn al-Muqaffa', *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church* 4 (ed. and tr. B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, PO 1, fasc. 2 (Paris, 1907), 154–173).



The effect of the victory of the ascetic and holy man Peter over the devil in a truly biblical manner<sup>329</sup> was to strengthen people in their faith, the anti-Chalcedonian faith, as Rufus specifies.

### **Authority Based on the Imitation of Biblical Figures**

Characterizations of early Christian heroes, especially ascetic ones, that make use of biblical typology are a well-known feature of early Christian literature. The ways in which Theodoret of Cyrrhus employed this literary device have been highlighted in scholarly studies.<sup>330</sup> A careful reading of the *Vita Petri Iberi* reveals that Rufus as the prominent historiographer and biographer of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics in Syria-Palestine likewise employed several models taken from the books of the Old and the New Testament to characterize his hero, Peter, describing Peter's individual features and using parallel events in the lives of biblical figures as a foil. The following exposition will identify and discuss the importance of the biblical models, most prominently the patriarch Moses and the apostle Peter, that Rufus used as types for Peter. For Rufus, the main criterion of choosing biblical typology appears to consist in the contribution which this literary and interpretive technique can make to highlight the connection between the style of asceticism Peter practised and the authority he thus gained.

#### *Peter in Parallel with Old Testament Figures*

##### **Samuel, Israel /Jacob, and Joseph**

By way of indirect allusions, Rufus compared Peter to a number of young men who played significant roles in the history of the people of God in the Old Testament. These figures include Samuel, Israel /Jacob, Joseph, and especially Moses. Recounting how Peter was protected on his flight from the palace in Constantinople and on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Rufus compares him to Samuel, Israel /Jacob, and Joseph.<sup>331</sup> For Rufus, the essential point of comparison lies in the fact that God loved Peter from his early childhood in the same way that God loved Samuel.<sup>332</sup> Because of his protective con-

<sup>329</sup> See e.g. Acts 3:1–10 (Peter and John healing the lame man who used to sit at the Golden Gate).

<sup>330</sup> See, for example, Derek Krueger, 'Typological Figuration in Theodoret of Cyrrhus's Religious History and the Art of Postbiblical Narrative', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1997), 393–419.

<sup>331</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>332</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

cern for him, the Lord guarded Peter as though he were a sheep. That image allowed Rufus to compare Peter to Israel /Jacob and Joseph who also were shepherded by the Lord.

### Moses

Rufus' description of Peter is especially rich in allusions to and direct parallels with elements from the life and deeds of the prophet and patriarch Moses. Rufus himself indicates that he sought to portray Peter as a 'second Moses',<sup>333</sup> probably having the goal of inspiring people to think of Peter as the new law-giver and leader.<sup>334</sup>

In so far as certain elements of the Moses/Peter the Iberian typology are significant for highlighting characteristic features of Peter's intrinsic identity as a pilgrim, the discussion of those specific elements will follow in the next chapter. Yet, it was indeed Peter's journey to Mount Nebo which brought him in immediate contact with the figure of Moses. On the top of Mount Nebo Peter received a special blessing from the hands of an aged ascetic who under duress had moved from Scetis to there.<sup>335</sup> By that act, Peter was in a sense appointed as Moses' heir.

On their pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, Peter was accompanied by his friend, John the Eunuch, and by a young man from Cappadocia.<sup>336</sup> As soon as the three entered his cell, the Scetan monk greeted them and addressed Peter by his Georgian name as 'Nabarnugios, son of Bosmarios bar Bosmarios',<sup>337</sup> revealing an astonishing prophetic gift. The old man also discerned immediately that the young Cappadocian had already received ordination to the diaconate. Thus he invited him to lead the prayer. In their interactions with the monk, Peter was the spokesperson of the group. Although being at first caught by surprise and unwilling, in the end the young Cappadocian could not persist in his refusal but had to participate actively in the prayers conducted by the old ascetic. Rufus leaves the reader with the impression that this was to be counted as a victory of the spiritual authority of the Scetan monk, who as a holy man and a prophet possessed greater insights into the world of spiritual reality.

Rufus described the Scetan monk as an Egyptian and as a prophet who lived on Mount Nebo, where Moses had found his last rest. Thus Rufus strongly suggested that the monk functioned as a *Moses*

<sup>333</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 127. See also below, ch. 5, pp. 346 and 366–369.

<sup>334</sup> See Rufus' reference to Moses as the 'law-giver' in *Vita Petri Iberi* 89.

<sup>335</sup> On the expulsion of the monks from Scetis, see below, ch. 4, p. 307, n. 457 and p. 309.

<sup>336</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85–86.

<sup>337</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 86.

*redivivus*. In the eyes of Rufus' audience, the authority of the patriarch Moses had been transferred onto this aged and spiritually gifted ascetic. With his description of the subsequent actions of the Scetan monk, who by now was the temporary representative of Moses, Rufus managed to create the impression that Peter was to be the successor of the Scetan monk and, ultimately, the recipient of the Mosaic heritage.

One can distinguish several stages of the encounter between the Scetan monk and his guests. In the first section the old Egyptian monk sat down with his three young visitors after prayer and set for them 'the table for the soul' with divine words of healing, stories, and consolations.<sup>338</sup> Having provided his guests with spiritual instruction the monk also arranged for refreshments for the needs of their bodies. Considering as a whole the three elements of initial prayer, stories and healings as food for the soul, and the agape-like refreshments for the body, one can see that Rufus alluded to at least two central events in the history of salvation.<sup>339</sup> On the one hand, the scene seems to refer to Moses' dealings with the Israelites in the desert, when he prayed for them, received from God the Law as spiritual and practical guidance for the people, and through his prayers satisfied their physical needs with quails and manna.<sup>340</sup> The scene also recalls a Eucharistic setting with prayers, spiritual and physical nourishment in the Eucharistic service proper, and the agape meal afterwards. All of this took place in a not strictly liturgical context and environment, even though a church seems to have existed on Mount Nebo at that time.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>338</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 86.

<sup>339</sup> A reflective, meditative ascetic might even have seen a reference to the scene of Abraham's hospitality when he was visited by his three guests at Mamre (Genesis 18).

<sup>340</sup> Exodus 16, 19, and 20–31.

<sup>341</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 87. For literature on the extensive excavations undertaken by Franciscan scholars on Mount Nebo and in the surrounding area see Michele Piccirillo, 'Le due iscrizioni della cappella della Theotokos nel Wadi 'Ayn al-Kanisah sul Monte Nebo', *Liber Annuus* 44 (1994), 521–538; Michele Piccirillo, 'Il dayr del Diacono Tommaso alle 'Uyun Musa—Monte Nebo', *Liber Annuus* 40 (1990), 227–246; Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, 'L'eremitaggio di Procapiis e l'ambiente funerario di Robebos al Monte Nebo—Siyagha', in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1990), 391–426; Eugenio Alliata, 'Nuovo settore del monastero al Monte Nebo-Siyagha', in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1990), 427–466; Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, 'La chiesa del monastero di Kaianos alle "Ayoun Mousa" sul Monte Nebo', in *Quaeritur inventus colitur: miscellanea in onore di Padre Umberto Maria Fasola* (Vatican City, 1989), 561–586; Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (115), 571–572, and entry: Mount Nebo (166), 620–622; Michele Piccirillo, 'Campagna archeologica nella Basilica di Mose profeta sul Monte Nebo-Siyagha', *Liber Annuus* 26 (1976), 281–318 (a summary of this report appeared as Michele Piccirillo, 'Campagne arché-

The decisive encounter between Peter and the monk occurred on the next day when Peter and his friends were about to say goodbye and received the monk's blessings. The monk spoke a few words and then dismissed the group as a whole with a prayer. Yet, he held Peter back, grabbing him by his coat and asking him to stay behind for a moment. At first sight, this may be seen as a simple gesture. An ascetic audience, however, immersed in the language, imagery, and symbolism of the Scriptures, might readily have noticed two details: that the monk is spoken of as 'prophet' and that he held on to Peter's 'coat'. While it is true that the old man did not give his coat to Peter, an audience in tune with allegorical scriptural interpretation could see in the mentioning of the words 'prophet' and 'coat' a reference to the calling of the prophet Elisha, when the prophet Elijah threw his coat over Elisha (1 Kings 19:19). Upon further reflection a biblically informed audience might also recall what happened when the prophet Elijah rolled up his coat and hit the waters of the Jordan so that the waters split in two (2 Kings 2:8). After Elijah had passed his spirit to Elisha, Elisha was able to take Elijah's coat and also make the waters of the Jordan part in two (2 Kings 2:13-14). Not only is the action of parting the waters a close parallel to what Moses did at the Red Sea, but Elijah and Elisha were at the Jordan near Jericho, not far from Mount Nebo, when the Spirit was passed on and they parted the waters. Rufus may not even have intended for his audience to make such connections. Yet once spoken or written on papyrus or parchment, words and texts can take on a life of their own. Therefore, an audience thoroughly familiar with the biblical language could have seen such connections and thus felt confirmed in seeing the Scetan monk as *Moses redivivus* passing on prophetic and spiritual authority to Peter the Iberian.

The special blessing that the old man gave Peter had a prophetic nature. The aged ascetic stated that God had given Peter the fire of His love. According to him, no one in the present generation had been found worthy to possess the fire of God's love to the extent that Peter did. The monk also gave Peter the cautionary warning that he

ologique dans la Basilique du Mont Nebo-Siyagha', *Revue Biblique* 84 (1977), 246-253); P. Collart, 'A propos de l'autel du sanctuaire de Nebo', in *Palmyre: bilan et perspective* (Strasbourg, 1976), 85-95; Virgilio Corbo, 'Nuovi scavi archeologici nella sinagoga di Cafarnao: Scavi archeologici sotto i mosaici della Basilica del Monte Nebo', *Liber Annuus* 20 (1970), 7-52 and 273-298; Hilary Schneider, *Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo* (Jerusalem, 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, 1949); and Sylvester Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1941).

should take care not to extinguish that fire.<sup>342</sup> Again, a biblically versed audience would recall allusions to the ‘fire of the law’ (Deuteronomy 33:2) and the image of the burning bush in which God revealed himself to the prophet Moses.<sup>343</sup> The Egyptian monk then advised Peter not to live with any other brother but John the Eunuch and fulfil his role as guardian and admonisher of the people. Peter interpreted these words as a prophecy that he would receive the office of priesthood in the future, indicating that he viewed the role of a priest as one of teaching God’s commands. Peter was set up as successor to the great Moses in his role of leader, guardian, and law-giver for God’s people, even though Peter felt utterly unworthy and unable to fulfil this role.

The monk would not accept any excuses. He dismissed Peter by holding his head, kissing him, and saying a prayer for him. When Rufus continued his narrative with the story of the revelation of Moses’ burial place on Mount Nebo, the legendary history of this holy place only emphasized what had happened already in the scene between the Egyptian monk and Peter, namely that the authority of the great Moses had been transmitted to him. By placing Peter’s journey in the footsteps of the great Moses, Rufus shows that Peter took on Moses’ authority.

A further comment seems in place. Moses had a significant history in Egypt. Endowed with Moses’ authority, later on Peter became involved in the life of the Church of Alexandria, where together with Eusebius of Pelusium he was instrumental in the ordination of Timothy Aelurus as bishop of Alexandria. Thus the Egyptian monk’s blessing of Peter on Mount Nebo foreshadowed the role Peter would play for the Church in Egypt, for which Peter became the mediator and guarantor of Mosaic, that is, biblical, authority.

### *Peter in Parallel with New Testament Figures*

#### **The Authority of Peter, the Rock (*Kēphā*)**

Early on in his hagiographical biography of Peter, Rufus introduced as a theme the great excellence with which Peter strove to follow the examples of life presented to Christians in the writings of the New Testament. From his youth onwards, according to Rufus, Peter was

<sup>342</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 87.

<sup>343</sup> Exodus 3:2–6. In Scripture, fire often functions as an image for the Holy Spirit. The warning not to extinguish the fire of God’s love thus could be understood as a rephrasing of the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to the Thessalonians, not to extinguish the Holy Spirit in themselves (1 Thessalonians 5:19), which as such would reflect back on Peter and show him as a holy man filled with God’s Spirit.

prepared as one 'who bears the name of Christ and holds [it] in honour and preaches the orthodox faith before all men'.<sup>344</sup> All throughout his life Peter remained 'a disciple and a true imitator of the apostles',<sup>345</sup> and lived 'an excellent life according to the apostolic exhortation'.<sup>346</sup> While John the Baptist's life as well as the model of the life of Christ do occur occasionally in the text as points of reference and inspirations for imitation, of greatest significance in Rufus' portrayal of Peter is his hero's imitation of the apostle Peter. The implications of this postulated relationship of model and faithful imitation are relevant for the question of ascetic authority.

At the outset of the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus talks about one of the fundamental principles of the interplay between right faith and virtuous behaviour. He quotes a passage from the Letter to the Hebrews in which the Apostle Paul admonished the believers to keep in mind those who preached the Word of God to them: '[W]hile you are looking at the end of their [course of] life, imitate their faith'.<sup>347</sup> Commenting on these words, Rufus explains that 'the virtuous course of life of those who in God were the leaders is a great help to salvation for the disciples; they are moved by what is good and joyfully imitate [them]'.<sup>348</sup> Thus he emphasizes that a life of virtue and a life in imitation of individuals filled with virtue will help one to hold on to the right belief and thus one will be guaranteed salvation by virtue of one's allegiance to the community of believers who share that 'right' faith.

Rufus appears to have intended to portray Peter as having lived in accord with that very same principle. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus showed that the young prince received the name Peter at his initiation into monasticism with the expressed intention that he would imitate the apostle Peter's 'manner of life . . . habits and the boldness of his faith'.<sup>349</sup>

Peter's acceptance of the monastic habit was intimately connected with his receiving of a new name, the name of Peter, that of the head of the apostles. Rufus stated that the name given to Peter as a child in Iberia had been Nabarnugios.<sup>350</sup> When he became a monk, he received from Gerontius a consecration name.<sup>351</sup> Rufus attributed the choice of that new name 'Peter' to divine inspiration. According to him, God intended Peter to emulate as closely as possible the first of

<sup>344</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 12.                      <sup>345</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 12–13.                      <sup>346</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13.

<sup>347</sup> Hebrews 13:7. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 3.                      <sup>348</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 3.

<sup>349</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 4.                      <sup>350</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 4.

<sup>351</sup> Note that John Rufus speaks of the receiving of the monastic habit as something of which one first has to be deemed worthy, and which one can receive only subsequently. It is not something which one decides to take up on one's own initiative.

the apostles. It is understood that as a monk he would gain authority very similar to the authority of the apostle Peter.

In order to connect Peter the Iberian and the apostle Peter as closely as possible on the levels of their authority for the community and their responsibility for the true faith, Rufus quoted the whole of the well-known Petrine passage of Matthew 16:18–19, ‘You are *Kēphā*, and upon this rock I will build my church. The gates of Sheol will 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 be loosened in heaven.’<sup>352</sup> When explaining that the Lord founded the orthodox church upon this rock *Ikēphā*, that is, the apostle Peter, Rufus quite obviously implied that for him the orthodox and anti-Chalcedonian Church continued this tradition through their leader Peter the Iberian, inasmuch as he was in line with and a perfect imitator of the apostle Peter.

The parallel between the life of the apostle Peter and the life of Peter the Iberian was meant to be reflected in their manner of life, their habits, and especially their boldness of faith. An example of the boldness of faith in Peter as a parallel to the boldness of faith of the apostle Peter can be seen in one of the incidents that occurred on his travels, when Peter engaged in proclaiming and explaining the faith to the local community. When he was preaching to the people of Madaba a few days before Pentecost,<sup>353</sup> many came to the conviction of the truth of the anti-Chalcedonian faith. Peter’s preaching functioned in a way that was similar to the bold speech that the apostle Peter delivered at Pentecost under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14–36) and in response to which many converted to faith in Christ.

Rufus clearly establishes the function, which this connection between Peter the Iberian and the apostle Peter was to serve in the immediate context of the larger anti-Chalcedonian community. Among the Christians in Egypt and, especially, in Alexandria their former Bishop Peter of Alexandria enjoyed a formidable reputation not only as rightful successor to St Mark, but also as ‘the seal of the martyrs’.<sup>354</sup> As the one who held the office of St Mark, Peter of

<sup>352</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 4–5.

<sup>353</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 90.

<sup>354</sup> The martyrdom of Peter of Alexandria is told in Sawirus (Severus) ibn al-Muqaffa’, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church* 6 (ed. and tr. B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, PO 1, fasc. 4 (Paris, 1907), 383–400). For a critical investigation of the authorship of the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church*, see Johnson, ‘Coptic Sources’. See also G. Heile, ‘The Martyrdom of St. Peter of Alexandria’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 98 (1980), 85–92; Donald B. Spinel and Tim Vivian, ‘Peter I’, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 6 (1991), 1943–1947; and Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia, 1988).

Alexandria had inherited the very same authority of Mark, the famous companion of the apostle Peter. Also by virtue of their martyrdom, Peter of Alexandria, who died on 25 November, AD 311,<sup>355</sup> and the apostle Peter were closely associated with one another.<sup>356</sup> Rufus may also have been familiar with Abba Isaiah's interpretation of the apostle Peter's crucifixion as the ultimate overcoming of 'the wicked conditions contrary to nature' that brought about Adam's fall.<sup>357</sup> Rufus incorporated Peter the Iberian into that circle of famous martyrs, repeatedly emphasizing his identification with them.<sup>358</sup> Peter the Iberian also practised a special devotion to Peter of Alexandria, annually commemorating his martyrdom and experiencing the close companionship of Peter of Alexandria, especially during his priestly service at the altar.<sup>359</sup> At the end of Peter's life, the equality of this companionship of both holy men, according to Rufus' account, found divine approval and recognition. Rufus informs his audience that at his death Peter the Iberian was taken away and presented to the heavenly assembly by Peter of Alexandria, according to the rule '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 manner and in zeal'.<sup>360</sup> On the day of Peter the Iberian's death, a vision revealed to the Egyptian Abba Athanasius that Peter of Alexandria delivered a eulogy in praise of Peter the Iberian before the heavenly assembly.<sup>361</sup> Peter of Alexandria was seen in a vision as being dressed in 'some white and splendidly shining vestment'.<sup>362</sup> This appearance emphasized his authority, as that both of a martyr and of a bishop. He also visually equalled the appearance and authority of Theodosius of Jerusalem, who had been described as wearing a white garment as well as a sign of his episcopal authority as claimed incumbent of the

<sup>355</sup> Peter of Alexandria's martyrdom thus occurred during the reign of Maximian Daia. See also Spanel and Vivian, 'Peter I', 1943.

<sup>356</sup> For the account of the martyrdom of the apostle Peter, see *Acts of Peter* 30–40 (tr. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993), 397–426, here 421–426). See also Karlfried Froehlich, 'Petrus II. Alte Kirche', in *TRE* 26 (1996), 273–278, especially 275–276; and Richard J. Bauckham, 'The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature', *ANRW* 2.26.1 (1992), 539–595.

<sup>357</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourse 18 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 141).

<sup>358</sup> See especially *Vita Petri Iberi* 3 and 82. For references and a fuller discussion of this aspect of the *Vita Petri Iberi*, see below, ch. 4, pp. 260–272. See also Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown'.

<sup>359</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 131–132.

<sup>360</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 131. Rufus recounted the same in the case of Abba Isaiah, who was taken away by John the Baptist. See also *Vita Petri Iberi* 125–126.

<sup>361</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 135–136.

<sup>362</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 136.

see of Jerusalem. Peter of Alexandria's appearance in a white garment therefore approved of Peter the Iberian as the heir of Theodosius of Jerusalem's episcopal authority.<sup>363</sup> Peter the Iberian passed away on the third day of the three-day commemoration of Peter of Alexandria customarily celebrated for that length of time among the Alexandrians.<sup>364</sup> In conformity with the tradition of the Church in Alexandria, the anti-Chalcedonian community in Maiuma celebrated the memory of Peter the Iberian for three consecutive days,<sup>365</sup> and during one of those days, Peter the Iberian and Peter of Alexandria even shared their commemoration with one another. Thus, one can conclude with significant certainty that for the anti-Chalcedonian community in Palestine, the apostle Peter, Peter of Alexandria, and Peter the Iberian were rightful leaders sharing in the same apostolic authority.

### **A Model of Ascesis: Naziriteship and the Authority of James, the First Bishop of Jerusalem**

Rufus' works, while composed originally in Greek by a person who moved about in a bilingual, if not trilingual milieu, are preserved today almost exclusively only in Syriac. Given that these texts were quickly translated into Syriac, in which form they made a lasting impact on the anti-Chalcedonian community in the realm of Syria-Palestine and thus formed the hagio-biographical image of Peter the Iberian, a discussion of these texts cannot bypass considering both the Greek and the Syriac background for important terms and concepts. While educated guesses about the underlying Greek terminology of the preserved Syriac text can certainly be attempted, in the end certainty can only be claimed for the wording in the Syriac text that is preserved. The discussion of terminology in the language into which a given word was translated (here Syriac) is not more remote from the original meaning of the respective text than a discussion of terminology for which one does not know with certainty whether or not a given word was actually the one used in the original composition (here Greek). Consequently, the following investigation will attempt to proceed in a way that does justice to both the Greek and the Syriac.

Throughout his works, Rufus pays special attention to a particular form of asceticism, which he calls 'Naziriteship'. He mentions

<sup>363</sup> See *De obitu Theodosii* 24. See the discussion in Devos, 'Cyrille de Scythopolis: Influences littéraires—Vêtement de l'évêque de Jérusalem', 33–36. See also above, ch. 2, p. 94 and n. 213.

<sup>364</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 145.

<sup>365</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 146.

Naziritship in immediate connection with asceticism as a form of grace in which Peter participated.<sup>366</sup> The Syriac word used in such contexts is ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ (*nazīrūtā*).<sup>367</sup> In the Greek-speaking realm, early Christian writers were familiar with the use of the words *Ναζιραῖος* or *Ναζαπαῖος*, translating the Hebrew נזיר (*nazir*), to describe either a Jewish or a Christian ascetic as a Nazirite.<sup>368</sup> The Greek *Ναζωπαῖος*, understood to designate a ‘man of Nazareth’, in Christian contexts originally referred to Christ.<sup>369</sup> Later on it could be used to describe any Christian or Jewish-Christian.<sup>370</sup> In patristic exegetical tradition, the occurrence of the word at Matthew 2:23, ‘He will be called a Nazorean’, could be interpreted as either ‘Nazorean /Nazarene’ or ‘Nazirite’.<sup>371</sup>

One may ask what ascetic lifestyle would have been the norm for a ‘Nazirite’<sup>372</sup> in the Christian ascetical tradition. A glance at the Jewish tradition is helpful for comparison. Nazirites<sup>373</sup> were regarded as people devoted to God.<sup>374</sup> According to the example of Samson<sup>375</sup>

<sup>366</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13.

<sup>367</sup> See Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 334.

<sup>368</sup> Lampe, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, 896.

<sup>369</sup> Lampe, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, 897, entry 1. Also see Klaus Berger, ‘Jesus als Nasoräer /Nasiräer’, *Novum Testamentum* 38.4 (1996), 323–335, here 329–335; and Stephen Goranson, ‘Nazarenes’, in *ABD* 4 (1992), 1049–1050, here 1049.

<sup>370</sup> Lampe, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, 897, entries 3 and 4. Also see A. F. J. Klijn, ‘Nazoraei’, in *EECh* 2 (1992), 584. For an accessible discussion of the available evidence for Jewish Christianity, see more recently J. Carleton Paget, ‘Jewish Christianity’, in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. iii: *The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge, 1999), 731–775.

<sup>371</sup> See, for example, Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem IV* 8.1 (ed. and tr. Claudio Moreschini and René Braun, *Terullien: Contre Marcion Tome IV (Livre IV)*, SCh 456 (Paris, 2001), 104–105): *Nazaraeus vocari habebat secundum prophetiam Christus creatoris. unde et ipso nomine nos Iudaei Nazarenos appellant per eum. Nam et sumus de quibus scriptum est: ‘Nazaraei exalbatu sunt super nivem’* (Lamentations 4:7). Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 7.2 (ed. PG 22.13–794, here col. 549; tr. W. J. Ferrar, *Eusebius: The Proof of the Gospel*, vol. ii (London and New York, 1920; repr. Grand Rapids, 1981), 84–85) establishes the connection via נזיר (*nēzer*) in Leviticus 21:12, indicating that the LXX reads ἄγιον, Aquila ἀφόρισμα, Symmachus ἄθικρον, and Theodotus ναζῆρ in this instance. See also Hans Heinrich Schaefer, ‘Ναζαρηνός, Ναζωπαῖος,’ in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 4 (1942), 879–884, here 883–884; Lampe, *A Patristic Lexicon*, 897, entry 2; and Alfons Weiser, ‘Nazoräer’, in *LThK* 7 (1993), 712–713. If Rufus worked with such an identification, he may not have had a firm command of a Semitic language.

<sup>372</sup> Note also that Paul is portrayed as a Nazirite at Acts 18:18 and speaks of himself as ‘one set apart’ (ἀφορισμένος) at Romans 1:1. See also Friedrich W. Horn, ‘Paulus, das Nasiräat und die Nasiräer’, *Novum Testamentum* 39 (1997), 117–137.

<sup>373</sup> One finds the spellings ‘Nazirite’ and ‘Nazarite’.

<sup>374</sup> See AbouZayd, *Ihdayutha*, 251.

<sup>375</sup> See Judges 13. See also Hermann-Josef Stipp, ‘Simson, der Nasiräer’, *Vetus Testamentum* 45 (1995), 337–369.

and the rules of Naziriteship set down in Numbers 6:1–21, the guidelines a Nazirite was to follow included abstaining for a set period of time from cutting one's hair, from consuming wine and grapes, and from eating meat as an expression of avoiding contact with the dead.<sup>376</sup> In a Jewish context 'a person might become a Nazirite, especially for a finite period of time, for a variety of legitimate reasons: penitence, seeking divine favor at a time of distress or danger, and self-discipline'.<sup>377</sup> There are also cases of female Nazirites in the Jewish community,<sup>378</sup> such as Queen Helena of Adiabene<sup>379</sup> and Miriam of Tadmor (Palmyra).<sup>380</sup>

Within the Christian tradition, the language used to describe ascetical practices and the ascetic lifestyle occasionally speaks of an ascetic as a Nazirite or makes use of the technical term 'Naziriteship'. The Syriac word for it, ܢܙܝܪܝܬܘܬܐ, is used rather sparingly.<sup>381</sup>

<sup>376</sup> See also Judges 13:4, 13:7, and 13:14; 1 Samuel 1:15; and Luke 7:33.

<sup>377</sup> Steven D. Fraade, 'The Nazirite in Ancient Judaism (Selected Texts)', in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Vincent L. Wim-bush, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Minneapolis, 1990), 213–223, here 214. For archaeological evidence of the likely practice of Naziriteship in a Jewish family in early Christian times, see Nahman Avigad, 'The Burial-Vault of a Nazirite Family on Mount Scopus', *Israel Exploration Journal* 21.4 (1971), 185–200; see also N. Avigad, 'The Tomb of a Nazirite on Mount Scopus', in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968–1974* (New Haven and London, 1976), 66–67. See also Tony W. Cartledge, 'Were Nazirite Vows Unconditional?' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71 (1989), 409–422, especially 421–422.

<sup>378</sup> Markus Bockmuehl, "Let the Dead Bury their Dead" (Matt. 8:22 /Luke 9:60): Jesus and the Halakhah', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 49.2 (1998), 553–581, here 569, observed that both of the tracts 'Nazir and Nedarim appear in the Mishnaic Order *Nashim* ("women") suggest[ing] the immense attraction which Nazirite and other vows evidently exerted over a great many women as well as men.' I have not yet found a reference to a female Christian Nazirite.

<sup>379</sup> See Mishnah, Tractate *Nazir* 3.6 (ed. and tr. Philip Blackman, *Mishnayoth*, vol. iii (London, 1953), 290; see also tr. and discussion in Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Women: Part Three: Nedarim, Nazir: Translation and Explanation* (Leiden, 1980), 138).

<sup>380</sup> See Mishnah, Tractate *Nazir* 6.11 (ed. and tr. Blackman, *Mishnayoth*, vol. iii (London, 1953), 300; see also tr. and discussion in Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Women: Part Three: Nedarim, Nazir: Translation and Explanation* (Leiden, 1980), 172–173).

<sup>381</sup> For references to this word and closely related terminology in Syriac literature consult Carl Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Halle, 1928), 422; R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, vol. ii (Oxford, 1879, and Hildesheim /New York, 1981), 2333–2334. Besides mentioning the occurrence of the word in Philoxenus' *Discourses* as listed in Brockelmann, I wish to thank Monica Blanchard for pointing me to a further occurrence in the same collection of works by Philoxenus. In his second discourse, 'On Faith', Philoxenus states: 'For fasting is not fasting if faith be not therewith, and alms are accounted nothing if they be not given in faith; neither is loving-kindness anything if faith be not therewith. The life of the Nazarite and

The Syriac word for Nazirite is ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ. Ephraem the Syrian employed it when admiringly referring to John the Baptist as ‘that martyr and Nazirite’.<sup>382</sup> The corresponding Greek term, *Ναζιραῖος*, does not occur frequently in early Christian literature.<sup>383</sup> While Numbers 6 does not require sexual abstinence from the one who dedicated himself or herself to God as a Nazirite, Christian usage of the term always implies abstinence and celibacy.

ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ describes the conditions of one who has taken the Nazirite vows.<sup>384</sup> Numbers 6:2 states that God recognized the taking of the vow of a Nazirite as something special. The Nazirite therefore enjoyed divine recognition and one can assume that he or she held an elevated place of spiritual authority in the community. Given the comparatively rare occurrence of the respective terminology in Christian texts, it is striking that one can find six instances of words related to ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ in the *Vita Petri Iberi*<sup>385</sup> and one instance of ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ in the *Plerophoriae*.<sup>386</sup> The discussion of those cases will show what such spiritual authority entailed.

While still in Constantinople, Peter saw an apparition of Jesus, which helped to set the tone for his own ascetical life. One day, when Peter engaged in spiritual conversation with people who were gathered around him, he ‘suddenly saw our Lord among them in the habit of a Nazirite’.<sup>387</sup> Rufus’ words could simply indicate that Jesus appeared to Peter in the habit of a monk. Yet the Syriac translator, if he did not explicitly intend to bring out the notion of Nazirite in the given context, had a wide range of other words to choose from for labelling someone as an ascetic.<sup>388</sup> Thus it seems that Rufus intended

ascetic is nothing unless faith be mingled therewith, and humility and subjection are nothing unless faith supporteth them, and painful seclusion is nothing if faith be not therewith’; see E. A. Wallis Budge, ed. and tr., *The Discourses of Philoxenus Bishop of Mabbogh, A.D. 485–519*, 2 vols. (London, 1893–1894), vol. i, p. 46 (English) and vol. ii, pp. 49–50 (Syriac).

<sup>382</sup> See Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Church* 9.18 (ed. and tr. Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ecclesia*, CSCO 198–199, Script. Syr. tt. 84–85 (Louvain, 1960), 26 (Syriac) and 28 (German)).

<sup>383</sup> Rare examples are found in Origen of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius of Salamis, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, and later on in Theodore the Studite. For references, see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 896 and 897.

<sup>384</sup> See Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 334.

<sup>385</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13, 19, 28, 33, 47, and 102. ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ: 13 (line 21), 28 (line 16), 47 (line 12), and 102 (line 10); ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ: 19 (line 11); ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ: 33 (line 21).

<sup>386</sup> *Plerophoriae* 25, see at Nau, *Plérôphories*, p. 61, line 2.

<sup>387</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>388</sup> Syriac terminology for ascetics includes designations like ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ (‘mourner’), ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ (‘single one’), ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ (‘one of the flock’), or ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ /

to express that when trying to live as Nazirites, the monks primarily took Christ as their model. Moreover, although connotations of Christ as a Nazirite in the biblical witness appear only in indirect formulations, one of the essential and characteristic features of a Nazirite that can be discerned in the New Testament is that the respective person is filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>389</sup> By imitating Christ as Nazirite, an ascetic therefore also acquired access to the Spirit by whom Christ was filled.

How significant the image of Christ as a Nazarene /Nazirite seems to have been in anti-Chalcedonian thinking becomes clearer by carefully considering a detail in one of Peter's theological visions, specifically the vision in which he saw each of the persons of the Trinity under the image of light.<sup>390</sup> Peter told Rufus that in the midst of light he saw 'our Lord [namely, Christ] . . . being depicted [as] a Nazarene (ܢܘܙܪܝܢܐ)'.<sup>391</sup> The general conclusion to be drawn from that vision was that God was to be understood as '[o]ne essence, one nature, one glory, one power, one light, one godhead, three persons'.<sup>392</sup> Specifically, the vision was meant to illustrate that 'while the three are unapproachable, only that one in the middle is like to one who has the sight of a Nazarene man (ܢܘܙܪܝܢܐ ܕܢܘܙܪܝܢܐ), to demonstrate that this one who was crucified is the one from the holy Trinity and not another one'.<sup>393</sup>

Rufus said that in response to this vision, which only Peter had seen, many people who believed in his visionary powers 'renounced the world and took the habit'. Illustrious and powerful men, such as

ܐܒܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ('son/daughter of the covenant'). For a discussion of the range of meaning of individual ascetic terms, see Griffith, 'Asceticism in the Church of Syria'.

<sup>389</sup> See the discussion in Luise Abramowski, 'Die Entstehung der dreigliedrigen Taufformel—ein Versuch: Mit einem Exkurs: Jesus der Naziräer', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 81.4 (1984), 417–446, here 442 and 445.

<sup>390</sup> Within the Syriac tradition, one of the greatest theological composers, Ephraem the Syrian, employed light imagery in application to and in explanation of the Trinity. For a thorough study of this topic, see Edmund Beck, *Ephrāms Trinitätslehre im Bild von Sonne/Feuer, Licht und Wärme* (Louvain, 1981). For comments on the role light imagery played already earlier on in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, see below, ch. 4, pp. 262–263. The implications of Peter's vision and /or Rufus' description of that experience, which cannot be developed here in any detail, need to be considered in a discussion of the identification of the author of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus with either Peter the Iberian or John Rufus.

<sup>391</sup> *Plerophoriae* 37. See Nau, *Plérophories*, 86, line 9.

<sup>392</sup> Syriac ܢܘܙܪܝܢܐ, which is to be understood as 'hypostases' or 'persons'. *Plerophoriae* 37. See Nau, *Plérophories*, 86, lines 11–12.

<sup>393</sup> *Plerophoriae* 37. See Nau, *Plérophories*, 86, line 12, to 87, line 1.

Proclus and Sophronius, imperial architects and treasurers, were among them.<sup>394</sup>

At the age of twenty, Peter himself took the monastic habit. Rufus describes the way in which he led his life from then on by saying that henceforth [Peter] was dwelling there in quiet and was displaying a way of life which agreed with his [monastic] habit. Carrying himself in great asceticism like a Nazirite [נזירי], he subdued and subjected to severity the bridle of the flesh, which has a tendency [to give] offence, which stands against the spirit; and [he subjected also] his rebellious will—that enemy of God, which also cannot subject itself to the law of God. Through hunger and through thirst, through a bed on the earth and through vigil, through [all] these harsh ways of life, he extended all this [namely, his efforts and being] towards asceticism up to the point that he inflicted severe pain to the commotion of the impulses of [his] youth and quenched the flame of the passions. With ease then he was devoting [himself] to be reconciled to the spirit, to be engaged in contemplation, and to have dominion over the flesh. Yet, he would rather bring the two of them [namely, flesh and spirit] into one harmony, when he, who formerly was very healthy and very radiant in the majesty of [his] body, [now] enclosed this great strength and beauty of the body in dried up skin and bones, so that he would already be crook-backed, bowed down by the multitude of contemptible things [which he endured] and by [the practice of] great asceticism.<sup>395</sup>

Eventually, for a while Peter moved out into the Judaeian desert, the one, ‘which was stretching out to the Jordan’,<sup>396</sup> in which John the Baptist had practised his ascetic struggles.<sup>397</sup> The Old Testament model of a Nazirite ascetic found a New Testament embodiment in John the Baptist. Informed by Scripture, one usually has an image of John the Baptist as dwelling in the desert, clothed in a garment made of camel hair, a leather belt around his waist, and eating only honey and locusts (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6). Christian icons also

<sup>394</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19–20. נזירי likewise is one of the terms used to describe the asceticism which Melania and Pinianus practised in their monasteries on the Mount of Olives. When Rufus speaks of their Naziritiship, he seems to regard their monastic habit as the outward sign of an inner, spiritual disposition. The couple ‘were fighting the good fight in complete self-denial, quietness, Naziritiship, and humility, making themselves poor in [their monastic] habit as well’ (*Vita Petri Iberi* 28). More specifically, ‘their clothing was from crushed straw, humble and worthless’ (*Vita Petri Iberi* 28). Moreover, living as a Nazirite was part of the close imitation of Christ crucified, which Rufus confirms when immediately following he says that they were ‘keeping the approved yoke of the crucifixion with Christ’ (all quotes from *Vita Petri Iberi* 28). See also (Pseudo-)Ephraem the Syrian, *In Judicum*, ch. 16, in Assemani, *Ephraem Syri Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, p. 326.

<sup>395</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 33–34.

<sup>396</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>397</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

depict him with long, wavy, often uncombed hair.<sup>398</sup> Rufus may have had that whole imagery in mind when he arranged the composition of his text. In early Syriac literature, more precisely in the *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, ascribed to Ephraem, the connection between John the Baptist and Nazirite ascetics is made explicit. The author wrote:

*In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a certain priest whose name was Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth (Luke 1:5). They were blameless in their entire way of life (Luke 1:6), . . . lest it be said that it was because of their wrongdoing that they had not had any children. Rather, they were continuing to hope for a miracle. And you will have joy (Luke 1:14); not because you will have given birth, but on account of the one to whom you will have given birth. For there is none greater among those born of women than John (cf. Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28). Wine and strong drink he shall not drink (Luke 1:15; cf. Num. 6:1-4), like the Nazirites, sons of the promise, so that it would be known that he was of [their] family.*<sup>399</sup>

The challenge that the desert posed to the ascetic was to face oneself, all alone, experiencing the complete lack of any human company. The desert also contained the opportunity for the individual to be completely available to God. Thus Rufus could say that Peter, who was in the desert 'alone with God', was conversing with God alone.<sup>400</sup> In such closeness to God and, consequently, through being instructed by God, without any human mediator, Peter gained a new level of authority.

In a Christian monastic context, Naziriteship also included the ideal of perfect chastity. Rufus states that when Peter and John the Eunuch had withdrawn from their work among the pilgrims in Jerusalem, they lived for a while in a monastery, where 'they were exercising themselves in all attentiveness, obedience, and Naziriteship'.<sup>401</sup> Precisely the last of the three practices prompted the devil to tempt Peter by setting before his eyes 'a naked and very beautiful woman'.<sup>402</sup>

Naziriteship as practised by Abba Isaiah in his monastery in Beth Daltha included depriving oneself of food to such an extreme that 'when his belly was like a stone, his spleen [and] liver would touch

<sup>398</sup> See, for example, the Kiev icon of St John the Baptist, possibly of Palestinian origin, depicted in Kurt Weitzmann, *The Icon: Holy Images: Sixth to Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1978), plate 7, p. 53.

<sup>399</sup> Ephraem, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, I § 9; translated in Carmel McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2* (Oxford, 1993), 44.

<sup>400</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>401</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>402</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

one another from the swelling and would cleave to [each other]',<sup>403</sup> Isaiah appears to have taken the Old Testament's Nazirite requirement of refraining from wine and beer to the point of refraining from almost any food. Given that Isaiah was consulted by many as a prophet and spiritual adviser, the quality of spiritual advice-giving he exhibited was improved, or even empowered in the first place, by extreme forms of asceticism.

As already mentioned earlier, Rufus reported one instance, when Abba Isaiah's disciple Peter eavesdropped on a visit and conversation between Abba Isaiah and John the Baptist. At that occasion, Abba Isaiah received an explanation from John the Baptist concerning the real nature of the locusts he had eaten in the desert, namely, that they were 'the heads of roots from the desert'.<sup>404</sup> This explanation safeguarded John the Baptist's identity as Nazirite, who would not eat meat. It also reaffirmed Abba Isaiah's identity as Christian ascetic and Nazirite, who is shown as a disciple of John the Baptist, learning from one of the great masters and examples of ascetical life.

A further layer of the claim to authority via ascetics practising the lifestyle of Naziriteship is implicit in Rufus' text. On the basis of that claim, anti-Chalcedonian Nazirite ascetics could even make a case that the episcopal throne of Jerusalem was rightfully theirs. In several instances Rufus hinted at and expressed that Theodosius of Jerusalem was the rightful successor to James, the Brother of the Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>405</sup> An early Christian audience would have been thoroughly familiar with the New Testament's depiction of James as an eager adherent to the Mosaic law.<sup>406</sup> The witness of apocryphal sources, such as the Gospel of the Hebrews, likewise did not go unnoticed.<sup>407</sup> Moreover, Eusebius of Caesarea had quoted from Hegesippus, providing a portrait of James as a Nazirite.<sup>408</sup> Thus

<sup>403</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 102.

<sup>404</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 126.

<sup>405</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 62; *De obitu Theodosii* 24; and *Plerophoriae* 25.

<sup>406</sup> See, for example, Galatians 2:12 and Acts 15:13–21.

<sup>407</sup> See the fragment of the Gospel of the Hebrews recorded in Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 2.11–13 (ed. E. C. Richardson, *Hieronymus: liber De viris illustribus; Gennadius: liber De viris illustribus*, TU 14 (Leipzig, 1896), 8; tr. Thomas P. Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men*, FOTC 100 (Washington, DC, 1999), 8). See also Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 2.4 (ed. Richardson, *Hieronymus: liber De viris illustribus*, 7; tr. Halton, *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men*, 7).

<sup>408</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.5–6 (ed. Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, GCS n.s. 6.1 (Berlin, repr. 1999), 166; tr. G. A. Williamson, *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, revised by Andrew Louth (London, 1965; rev. 1989), 59). See also Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 12–14. See also Ernst Zuckschwerdt, 'Das Naziräat des Herrenbruders Jakobus nach Hegesipp (Euseb, *HE* II 23:5–6)', *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 68.3–4 (1977), 276–287.

James's claim to the episcopal throne of the Holy City was only in part due to his close connection with Christ. He also had gained the respect and adherence of the Jerusalemite community by the quality of his ascetic lifestyle. For an anti-Chalcedonian audience the true successor of James could not be a man like Juvenal, whom anti-Chalcedonians portrayed as someone who despised ascetics and who had deserted proper ascetic life.<sup>409</sup> Rather, the right to true episcopal authority belonged to someone like Theodosius who came from the ranks of the monks.<sup>410</sup> The real authority behind Theodosius, in turn, was ascetics, like Peter and Isaiah, whom Rufus presents as practising more intensive forms of asceticism, namely Naziriteship.

In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus refers to Naziriteship with unusual frequency. In the rest of his works, he employs the terminology of Naziriteship twice: once as seen above, in the vision of the Trinity,<sup>411</sup> and one more time in the *Plerophoriae*, where he says that Abba Romanus 'went out to the desert and practised Naziriteship and powerful tranquillity, prayers with bitter tears and groans', because 'he was asking from the mercies of the Lord a manifest and indisputable decision'<sup>412</sup> in order to be able to judge the events and teachings of Chalcedon from a perspective that has insight into God's will. Romanus practised 'Naziriteship' when he needed God's help in making a difficult decision. Also in Romanus' case, one can perceive a clear parallel to the Jewish Nazirite practice, in which people had recourse to vows of Naziriteship when 'seeking divine favor at a time of distress or danger.'<sup>413</sup>

## REAL ESTATE AND ASCETIC AUTHORITY: PETER'S ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN MONASTIC SETTLEMENTS

When studying the connection that emerged between asceticism and authority, one must consider the concrete landscape of buildings and properties that came to be in the possession of ascetic communities.<sup>414</sup> Even though ascetics lived a life of poverty, renouncing

<sup>409</sup> See, for example, *Plerophoriae* 16 and 17. See also Ps.-Dionysius of Alexandria, *Panegyric on Macarius* 8.7 (ed. D. W. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Thōw, Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, CSCO 415-416, Script. Copt., tt. 41-42 (Louvain, 1980), 59-60 (Coptic) and 45 (English)).

<sup>410</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>411</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 192.

<sup>412</sup> *Plerophoriae* 25.

<sup>413</sup> Fraade, 'The Nazirite', 214.

<sup>414</sup> For aspects of late antique urban development and building activities in the provinces of *Palaestina* and *Arabia*, see the studies by Leah Di Segni, 'The Involvement of Local, Municipal and Provincial Authorities in Urban Building in Late

worldly goods and possessions, ascetic communities as such owned considerable property. Through the work of their hands, ascetics also increased the economic value of the land of their settlement, for example by irrigating the soil and growing produce in formerly uninhabitable desert areas. The extensive property that belonged to or was used and developed by individual ascetics and ascetic communities indicates that asceticism was a factor to be considered in the economic development of the late antique world.<sup>415</sup> Another factor to be discussed in relation to ascetic ownership of real estate relates to the strategic location of monasteries. In the case of anti-Chalcedonian monasticism in the Holy Land, monks chose, or were forced to choose, sites for their monasteries that allowed them to evade the grip of the bishop of Jerusalem, and thus to establish themselves in areas under their own control.

In his work, Rufus amply illustrates these strategic developments. He describes Peter as an important founder and supporter of monastic establishments:

[Peter] attracted many others, not only men but also women, to the army of Christ. 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 which are at the shore of Gaza, called Maiuma; sometimes, on the other hand, to those which are at Caesarea and Jerusalem, as far as the regions of *Arabia*. Wherever the Spirit was calling and leading him, in every place He 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 would establish through his arrival flocks of believers, congregations of the orthodox, monasteries, and churches.<sup>416</sup>

The following section will discuss those monastic settlements that owe their existence to the initiative or sustained involvement of Peter,

Antique Palestine and Arabia', in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, ed. J. H. Humphrey, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Suppl.* 14 (Ann Arbor, 1995), 312–322; and Leah Di Segni, 'Epigraphic Documentation on Building in the Provinces of *Palaestina* and *Arabia*, 4th–7th c.', in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, vol. ii: *Some Recent Archaeological Research*, ed. J. H. Humphrey, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Suppl.* 31 (Portsmouth, RI, 1999), 149–178.

<sup>415</sup> For the excavation of an agricultural farm that appears to have belonged to a monastery, dating to AD 736, see Claudine Dauphin, 'A Byzantine Ecclesiastical Farm at Shelomi', in *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem, 1993), 43–48; see also Claudine Dauphin, 'חווה של מגור מן התקופה הביזנטית הקדומה בשלומי' [A Monastery Farm of the Early Byzantine Period at Shelomi], *Qadmoniot* 12.1 (45) (1979), 25–29.

<sup>416</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78.

his followers, and, possibly, other Georgian pilgrims to the Holy Land. This discussion will provide one with a better sense of the independent anti-Chalcedonian monastic network in Palestine in the fifth century.

### **Anti-Chalcedonian Asceticism in the Holy City: The Jerusalem Monastery**

In the course of his career, Peter actively advanced the development of the monastic landscape of the Holy City. After the Jewish Revolts (AD 66–70 and 132–135), the Romans completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and rebuilt it as a pagan city. Under Emperor Constantine and his mother, Queen Helena, an impressive rebuilding of Jerusalem as a Christian city took place that allowed the Holy City to develop into an influential monastic centre. The monastery which Peter established within the walls of Jerusalem was an integral part of that ascetic landscape.<sup>417</sup>

In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus mentions a cell that Peter once inhabited. The cell was located directly in Jerusalem, ‘at the side of the tower of the patriarch<sup>418</sup> David’ near the Church of the Holy Zion.<sup>419</sup> The *Vita Petri Iberi* recounts that at a time when space was readily available in Jerusalem for the construction of new houses, Peter chose a spot located north of the Church of Zion and close to the so-called ‘Tower of David’ for his building endeavours.<sup>420</sup> The text describes the location of that spot more precisely as ‘up toward the [Church of the] Holy Zion, in what is called the “Tower of David”, the Prophet’,<sup>421</sup> and adds that the monastery was ‘located on the left as one is coming to the Holy Zion from the second gate of the same Tower [namely, the Tower of David]’.<sup>422</sup> Peter had acquired the land for his monastery without payment.<sup>423</sup>

This description contains several pieces of information. First, it is testimony to the very existence of a Church of /on Zion at the time

<sup>417</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 37–38 and 44–45.

<sup>418</sup> The Syriac literally has ‘head of the fathers’.

<sup>419</sup> *Plerophoriae* 42. Given that Rufus emphasized the proximity between Peter’s monastery and the Tower of David, his anti-Chalcedonian audience may have considered implications of a parallel between Peter and David. Peter could also be seen as a ‘new David’, building the ‘New Jerusalem’, namely, the renewed and restored Church.

<sup>420</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

<sup>421</sup> Although both manuscripts read ܕܒܪܐܝܢ, one can accept ܕܒܪܐܝܢ as an emendation, suggested by Sidney H. Griffith (marginal notes to the Syriac text). The emendation makes good sense also for syntactical reasons.

<sup>422</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

<sup>423</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

when Peter was in Jerusalem, and probably still at the time when Rufus was writing the *Vita Petri Iberi*. It is also evidence of the fact that the site that is nowadays called the 'Tower of David' carried that same name in the fifth century. More importantly, it is evidence of monastic settlements in the fifth century in the immediate vicinity of the Tower of David. Other sources of both a literary and archaeological nature indicate that the area extending toward the south between the Tower of David and what today is known as the Church of the Dormition on Mount Zion, and extending to the north up to the immediate neighbourhood of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was heavily populated by ascetics and built up with various cells and monasteries.<sup>424</sup> It appears that by the later part of the fifth century the western half of the Holy City was settled mainly by ascetics. Already at the time when Rufus was writing the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Peter's monastery in the City of Jerusalem was known as 'that of the Iberians'.<sup>425</sup>

In his comments on Peter's cell in the Jerusalem Monastery, Rufus mentions only a 'little door'. Thus the cell appears to have been only of small size. From the fact that once, when Peter intended to flee from his cell because Juvenal's messengers were coming from the Church of Zion to get him, he was 'throw[ing] himself down from some high roof', one may conclude that the cell was located on the upper level of a building.<sup>426</sup>

Rufus suggests that Passarion's example had inspired Peter to build a monastery within the walls of Jerusalem.

[Passarion,] the great lover of the poor and the 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 for the service and for the chanting [of psalms] of those who continuously without ceasing are praising the Lord.<sup>427</sup>

Peter 'longed to become an imitator of this good thing' and in consequence 'made up his mind that with the help of the Lord he would build a house and would there establish a certain number of holy monks to praise the Lord'.<sup>428</sup> He vowed to God that he would build him a temple.<sup>429</sup> Inspired by what he saw in a vision, Peter laid down as a rule that the monks of his monastery were to stand

<sup>424</sup> See the collection of material, references, and discussion in Tsafirir, 'Zion', English summary, pp. 3-4, and chs. 1 and 2.

<sup>425</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45. <sup>426</sup> *Plerophoriae* 42.

<sup>427</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35. Also see above, ch. 3, pp. 150-152.

<sup>428</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35. <sup>429</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 36.



Armenian,<sup>441</sup> and Arabic.<sup>442</sup> An appendix to the complete text of the *passio* in Coptic describes how Peter's disciples were involved in the bringing the relics of St James the Cut-Up from Jerusalem to a place close to Oxyrhynchus in Egypt. On his flight to Alexandria, Peter appears to have been accompanied by two of his disciples who carried the relics. When they were exposed to renewed persecution in Alexandria, the group sought refuge with Bishop Moses at Oxyrhynchus. Finally, Peter and his disciples were able to build a shrine at Paim near Oxyrhynchus where they laid James's relics to rest.<sup>443</sup>

Certainly in the monasteries associated with Peter's community in Jerusalem and at Maiuma, and probably in all of Peter's foundations, the brethren continued a tradition of mentioning the names of certain Persian martyrs, those whose bones Peter had brought from Georgia. This liturgical tradition grew out of a practice Peter had initiated. At the liturgical commemoration, the accounts of their martyrdoms were read.<sup>444</sup>

Likewise, literary sources of Byzantine and early Islamic times reflect knowledge of the existence of the monastery founded by Peter east of the so-called Tower of David.<sup>445</sup> The original foundation

<sup>441</sup> For references to texts in Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic, see *BHO* (Brussels, 1910), pp. 91–92, nn. 394–398.

<sup>442</sup> For edition and Latin translation of the witness of the Synaxarium, see Jacques Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, CSCO 47, Script. Arab. 3 (Louvain, 1905; repr. 1954), 122–123 (Arabic), and CSCO 78, Script. Arab. 12 (Louvain, 1922; repr. 1953), 155–156 (Latin). The text is also familiar with a tradition that connects Peter and James's relics, yet it identifies Peter as Bishop of Edessa. Also Tito Orlandi, 'James Intercissus, Saint', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 4 (1991), 1321, refers to the Arabic tradition.

<sup>443</sup> The appendix is to be found in Balestri and Hyvernat, eds., *Acta Martyrum II*, CSCO 86, Script. Copt., t. 6 (Louvain, repr. 1953), 50–61 (Coptic); tr. Hyvernat, *Acta Martyrum II*, CSCO 125, Script. Copt. t. 2 (Louvain, 1950), 35–42 (Latin). Two years earlier, the appendix to the Bohairic *passio* was presented in Oscar von Lemm, 'Iberica', in *Iberica*, Mémoires de L'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St-Petersbourg, 8th series, Classe Historico-Philologique, t. VII. 6 (1906), 1–17, here 3–8 (Coptic), 8–17 (German). Orlandi, 'James Intercissus', 1321, thinks that the appendix originated in the fifth century. For the remains of a church or sanctuary in Egypt, which one might be able to connect with the tradition surrounding Peter the Iberian, see U. Monneret de Villard, 'Una chiesa di tipo georgiano nella necropoli tebana', in *Coptic Studies in Honor of Walter Ewing Crum* (Boston, 1950), 495–500; see also Michel Tarchnišvili, 'Un vestige de l'art géorgien en Égypte', *Bedi Kartlisa* 32/33 (1959), 24–26. See also Brakmann and Lordkipanidse, 'Iberia II (Georgien)', 54–55.

<sup>444</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

<sup>445</sup> Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, pp. 170–171, conveniently summarized the available information about the Monastery of the Iberians located in the Old City of Jerusalem. The coordinates of the ancient site of this monastery are 1718.1314.

occurred some time after AD 430. In the sixth century, the Monastery of the Iberians was one of the monasteries that Justinian repaired and restored.<sup>446</sup> In between the Old City and the so-called Monastery of the Cross, which, according to tradition, goes back in its foundations to the first Georgians settling in the Holy City,<sup>447</sup> evidence of an early Georgian presence came to light in the form of the tombstone of the Georgian bishop Samuel (between the fifth and eighth centuries).<sup>448</sup> The inscription on the tombstone reads: ‘Tombstone, belonging to Samuel, bishop of the Iberians and of his monastery, which they acquired at the Tower of David.’<sup>449</sup> At the least, the tombstone witnesses to a connection between this cemetery and the Monastery of the Iberians in the Old City. The last preserved record of the monastery comes from the eighth century. After that, the monastery was probably deserted. In the immediate vicinity of the Monastery of the Iberians one of the Jerusalem guest-houses (*ξενοδοχεία*) of Mar Sabas’ *lavra* was founded in AD 495.<sup>450</sup> From Crusader times, several witnesses attest to the existence of a church at the place.<sup>451</sup>

Testimony exists from the year AD 1493 that a Crusader church once located in the place in question had been turned into a mosque and named Zāwiyat aš-Šaykh Ya‘qūb al-‘Ajāmī.<sup>452</sup> One may assume that the church-turned-mosque was the church which had been part of the Jerusalem guest-house of Mar Sabas. The Arabic name of the mosque recalls the Byzantine tradition that connected the place with

<sup>446</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *Buildings* 5.9.6 (ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera omnia*, vol. iii.ii (Leipzig, 1913), 169, line 16): τὸ τῶν Ἰβήρων ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις.

<sup>447</sup> In an area slightly to the west of the present YMCA. Coordinates in Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem: 1709.1313*. See also Tzaferis, ‘Monastery of the Cross’.

<sup>448</sup> Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, pp. 36–37.

<sup>449</sup> †[μ]νήμα διαφ(έ)ρ(ον) Σα[μουν]ήλ ἐπισκόπου Ἰβερῶ[ν] κ(αί) τῆς μονῆς αὐτοῦ ὃ ἡ[γ]όρασαν ἐν τῷ πύργῳ Δα(ουί)δ. Greek text quoted from Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, p. 36. See further Joseph Patrich and Rudolf Cohen, ‘Monasteries’, in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. iii (1993), 1068–1069, on the inscription concerning Bishop Samuel and the Georgian monastery. See also J. H. Illife, ‘Cemeteries and a “Monastery” at the Y.M.C.A., Jerusalem’, *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 4 (1934), 78–80 and plate XLVIII.

<sup>450</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 31 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 116.9–11; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 125).

<sup>451</sup> For references to archaeological sources, see Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, p. 171.

<sup>452</sup> Also known as az-Zāwiyat al-Ya‘qūbīya. For a fuller discussion of sanctuaries of St James the Cut-Up in Palestine, of interest to both Christians and Muslims, see Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, ‘Les sanctuaires de Saint Jacques l’Intercis en Palestine’, in *Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études*, 113 (Paris, 1896), no. 10, pp. 108–110.

relics of St James the Cut-Up originally preserved in the Monastery of the Iberians. Since that monastery is no longer attested in the times of the Crusaders, the tradition of remembering the relics of St James the Cut-Up may have been transferred to the guest-house of Mar Sabas. Thus the Crusader church, which was turned into a mosque, is to be identified as the former chapel of the Sabaite guest-house.<sup>453</sup>

The existence of Byzantine archaeological remains of either the Monastery of the Iberians or the Sabaite guest-house is very uncertain. It is not impossible that tomb inscriptions as well as mosaics found west of the Anglican Christ Church can be connected with either one of the two buildings.<sup>454</sup>

### The Iberian Monastery between Bethlehem and Jerusalem

Franciscan archaeologists in Jerusalem discovered and identified the remains of an early sixth-century Georgian monastery half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Georgian inscriptions found in that monastery make it very plausible that, if Peter was not personally involved with the building of the monastery, at least the monks erecting it were related to Peter's family.

In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus testifies to the fact that Peter went into the Judaeen Desert and experienced it as a place of struggle and temptations of the devil. Rufus describes the Judaeen Desert as 'the desert of John, the Forerunner, who was the first as founder and teacher of such an evangelical way of life', indicating that John the Baptist reached out to the Jordan and explicitly chose that area for his way of life.<sup>455</sup> The Syriac *Vita Petri Iberi*, however, does not provide evidence for any monastery which Peter would have founded in the Judaeen Desert.

In contrast to this, the Georgian *Life of Peter the Iberian* suggests the existence of a Georgian monastery in the Judaeen Desert.<sup>456</sup> It is too early to comment conclusively on the nature of the relationship between the Georgian monastery here indicated and the Georgian presence at the recently discovered site south-east of Jerusalem.<sup>457</sup> Since the Georgian *Life of Peter the Iberian* most likely reflects the

<sup>453</sup> See Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, p. 170.

<sup>454</sup> For detailed references on the history of the Monastery of the Iberians, the guest-house of St Sabas (in later centuries spoken of as a *μετόχιον*), and the archaeology of the mosque al-Ya'qūbiyeh, see Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, p. 170.

<sup>455</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>456</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 170, n. 287.

<sup>457</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 72 and n. III.

situation of monastic settlement in the desert of Judaea in the Middle Ages, it cannot be used as reliable evidence.

In 1946 the Franciscan friar Virgilio Corbo discovered a Georgian monastery at Bir El-Qutt, north-west of Khirbet Siyar El-Ghanam near Bethlehem.<sup>458</sup> It is not possible to prove that Peter founded that monastery. Nevertheless, at the site a series of four Georgian inscriptions were discovered. They are among the most ancient, and most extensive Georgian inscriptions in the Holy Land.<sup>459</sup>

The inscriptions read as follows:<sup>460</sup>

*Inscription A:* With the help of Christ and the intercession of Saint T'eodore let (God) have mercy on Abba Antoni and Iosia the layer of this mosaic and the parents of Tosio. Amen.<sup>461</sup>

*Inscription B:* And their *alumni* Bakur and Gri-Ormizd and their children. Christ! . . . have mercy. Amen.<sup>462</sup>

*Inscription C:* Saint T'eodore! Maruan and Burzen . . . EN . . . AMI . . . E.<sup>463</sup>

*Inscription D:* (Fragmentary, only seven characters are preserved.)<sup>464</sup>

<sup>458</sup> See Corbo, *Gli scavi di Khirbet Siyar El-Ghanam*, 113–139 and plates 32–42. See also Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuilles 11–12 / n. 211, p. 912; and Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', vol. iii, entry: Bir el-Qutt (40), pp. 449–450.

<sup>459</sup> Michel Tarchnišvili deciphered the inscriptions and G. Tseret'eli closely examined them. See Michel Tarchnišvili, 'Les récentes découvertes épigraphiques et littéraires en géorgien', *Le Muséon* 63 (1950), 249–260; G. Tseret'eli, 'The Most Ancient Georgian Inscriptions in Palestine', *Bedi Kartlisa: Revue de Kartvélogie* 7 (1961), 111–130. The Georgian inscriptions excavated by Corbo are kept in the Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. More recently, a shorter tomb-inscription in ancient Georgian, discovered in the general area, is dated slightly earlier, to the late fifth and early sixth century. See above, ch. 2, p. 72 with n. 111.

<sup>460</sup> For an English translation, see also Blanchard, 'Peter the Iberian'.

<sup>461</sup> For a transliteration of the Georgian text see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 135; for the Georgian text, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, plate 34, photo 104. For a reproduction, see Vasiliï Illarionovich Chachanidze, *Petr Iveri arkheologicheskie raskopi Gruzinskogo monastyrja v. Ierusalime* [*Peter the Iberian and Archaeological Excavations of the Georgian Monastery in Jerusalem*] (Tbilisi, 1977), photo 104, plate I. For a Latin translation, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 137.

<sup>462</sup> For a transliteration of the Georgian text see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 137; for the Georgian text, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, plate 38, photos 119–120; reproduced in Chachanidze, *Petr Iveri*, photos 119–120, plate IV. For a Latin translation, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 137.

<sup>463</sup> For a transliteration of the Georgian text see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 138; for the Georgian text, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, plate 35, photo 107; reproduced in Chachanidze, *Petr Iveri*, photo 107, plate II. For a Latin translation, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 138.

<sup>464</sup> For a transliteration of the fragments of the Georgian text see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, 138; for the Georgian text, see Corbo, *Gli scavi di Kh. Siyar El Ghanam*, plate 38, photo 118; reproduced in Chachanidze, *Petr Iveri*, photo 118, plate III.

Abba Antoni of the first inscription could be identified with Abba Antoni in the Greek *Vita* of St Martha, the mother of Simeon Stylites.<sup>465</sup> According to the *Vita Marthae*, Antoni was a Georgian priest and monk who lived in Palestine between AD 532 and 552.<sup>466</sup> St Theodore, mentioned in the first and second inscriptions, can be identified as Theodorus Tiro (or Tyro), a fourth-century martyr.<sup>467</sup> Maruan and Burzen of Inscription II and Bakur of inscription III are to be identified as Peter the Iberian himself,<sup>468</sup> Peter's maternal grandfather Bakur, and Burzen = Buzmihir = Bosmarios,<sup>469</sup> either Peter's father or grandfather. So far, all attempts have failed to identify the name Gri-Ormizd, which likely is to be situated in a Persian /Zoroastrian context.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the construction of the monastic site proceeded in two stages.<sup>470</sup> The restoration of the monastery is assigned to Abba Antoni about one hundred years after Peter. Corbo's excavation report does not conflict with this.

The inscriptions at Khirbet Siyar El-Ghanam are not only among the earliest Georgian inscriptions in the Holy Land, but also among the earliest extant examples of Georgian writing.<sup>471</sup> If the

<sup>465</sup> Oral communication by Monica Blanchard. For the Greek text of the *Vita Marthae* (Halkin, ed., *BHG*, 3rd edn., p. 1174) see the edition of Paul van den Ven, 'La vie de Sainte Marthe, Mère de Syméon Stylite le Jeune', in Paul van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521-592)*, Subsidia Hagiographica 32 (Brussels, 1970), 249-314.

<sup>466</sup> See *Vita Marthae* 53, 56-58, 62, and 66-68 (ed. van den Ven, 'La vie de Sainte Marthe', 297-298, 299-302, 304-305, and 308-310).

<sup>467</sup> I owe this identification to Blanchard, 'Peter the Iberian'. On Theodorus Tiro (or Tyro), see *BHG* 1760-1773; *BHO* 1171-1173; Agostine Amore and Maria Chiara Celletti, 'Teodoro ad Amasea', in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 12 (c1969), cols. 238-242; and F. G. Holweck, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints* (St Louis, Mo., and London, 1924; republished Detroit, 1969), 963.

<sup>468</sup> The Georgian 'Life of Peter the Iberian' uses the name Murvan for Peter. For references see above, ch. 2, p. 50 and n. 2.

<sup>469</sup> The root of this name is Persian.

<sup>470</sup> Tseret'eli, 'The Most Ancient Georgian Inscriptions', 123, believed that Peter set up the original building. He quotes the Georgian 'Life' as saying, 'The blessed fathers Peter and John went out from there and set out for a desert place on the banks of the Jordan and there they built a monastery for themselves.' For reasons mentioned above (see ch. 1, pp. 47-49), however, it does not seem advisable to use the Georgian *Life of Peter the Iberian* as evidence.

<sup>471</sup> Koriun, *Vark' Mashtots'i*, the description of the life and death of Mesrop Mashtots' (361/2-440), contains an account of Mesrop's invention of the Georgian alphabet and script. For a German translation see Koriun, *Beschreibung des Lebens und Sterbens des hl. Lehrers Mesrop*, tr. and with intro. by Simon Weber, BKV 57 (Munich, 1927), 196-232, especially 213-214; see more recently the edition and German translation by Gabriele Winkler, *Koriuns Biographie des Mesrop Maštoc'* (Rome, 1994). An earlier critical edition with Modern Armenian translation was

Maruan, mentioned in Inscription II, is, indeed, identical with Peter, the inscriptions would also constitute evidence that cultural ties between Peter and other Iberians in Palestine existed.

### **Anti-Chalcedonian Asceticism in Gaza: the Maiuma Monastery**

Recent scholarly attention focuses more on the history of asceticism in the Gaza area.<sup>472</sup> A crucial component of that history is the participation of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics.

For a period of several decades at the turn from the fifth to the sixth century, the presence of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics significantly shaped the monastic character of the region around Gaza and up to Ashkelon. In a separate publication, I have looked at the history, identification, and function of Peter's monastery located between Gaza and Maiuma near to the Mediterranean coast.<sup>473</sup> Literary and archaeological evidence suggests that it played a role both as a centre for notable anti-Chalcedonian ascetics and as a place from which anti-Chalcedonian teachings were disseminated among the pilgrims visiting the sanctuary of a certain Saint Victor. Rufus' description of

published by Manuk Abeghyan, ed., *Vark' Mashtots'i: bnagire, dzeragrakan ayl ent'erts'vatsnerov* (Yerevan, 1941), reprinted with English translation by Bedros Norehead (Delmar, NY, 1985). W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1932), 310, points out that the Georgians had a script of their own before the alleged introduction of the *khutuzuri* (church script or priestly script) by Mesrop in the fifth century. For Allen this seems borne out by references in the *Annals*. Allen states, for example, that 'We read . . . that King Miriani in the fourth century, before adopting Christianity, endeavoured to inquire into the worth of the new religion, and with this object read many "old and new books—and also the *Book of Nimvrod*.'" The *Annals* state also that St. Nino, the Illuminator of Georgia, before her death, related the events of her life, and the Princess Salome wrote all down. Prince Murvano, a son of King Waraz-Bakur, is also recorded to have learnt reading so quickly that he astonished his elders.'

<sup>472</sup> Asceticism in the Gaza region increasingly receives scholarly attention in recent years. See e.g. Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, 'Letters to the Great Old Man: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2000); Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, 'ניירות עזה בתקופה הביזנטית' [The Monastic Community of Gaza in the Byzantine Period]; Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky, 'Gazan Monasticism in the Fourth–Sixth Centuries: From Anchoritic to Cenobitic; and most recently Hevelone-Harper, *Disciples of the Desert*.

<sup>473</sup> Individual aspects of anti-Chalcedonian monasticism in the Gaza area are studied in Cornelia Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism in Gaza in the light of Old and New Sources', paper read at the Mid-Atlantic regional AAR/SBL meeting, Glen Mills, Pa. (24 March, 2000), unpublished manuscript; and Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism'.

the buildings and economic functions at the monastery indicate that the monks living there were able to produce whatever they needed for their sustenance. Even though around the time of Peter's death the monks suffered somewhat from a scarcity of economic resources, they were able to recover quickly, renovate the monastery, and bring it to a flourishing state.

Having been formally initiated into the life of a monk, Peter eventually left behind the Holy City and went off to the Gaza area in search of greater solitude. Yet often enough his hopes were frustrated and he was not able to live out the ideal of a hermit's life in complete isolation. A constant stream of visitors, it seems, continued to flock to him. One of these visitors was Abba Pelagius.<sup>474</sup> Having found a refuge in Palestine, the monk and prophet Pelagius of Edessa lived at a certain place in Palestine, which Rufus does not identify. This Pelagius used to come to visit Abba Peter. Given the apparent frequency of his visits, Pelagius may have lived in the greater Maiuma area, which would have made repeated visits to Peter's *lavra* more convenient.

Pelagius' visits to Peter took place at a time when Peter inhabited a *lavra* that seemed to have belonged to the monastic establishment of 'the community which is between Gaza and the little town called Maiuma, which at that time was full of many holy men, monks bearing their cross'.<sup>475</sup> The name of the abbot of that monastery appears to have been Irenion.<sup>476</sup> Rufus indicates that Abba Irenion and Peter as well as John the Eunuch considered each other as neighbours and were on excellent terms with one another.<sup>477</sup> The monastery in question may have been named after the martyr Victor.<sup>478</sup>

Within the setting of Maiuma's location as the port city of Gaza,<sup>479</sup> Peter's *lavra* presumably was located close to the seashore. Rufus describes Pelagius and Peter as 'pacing up and down in the sandy places of the *lavra*' and disputing with one another about theological

<sup>474</sup> *Plerophoriae* 2.

<sup>475</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49.

<sup>476</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>477</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>478</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the importance of the veneration of the martyr Victor for Peter's monastery in Maiuma, see Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 116–117, 125–126. See also Hans Reinhard Seeliger, 'Victor, hll. Martyrer', in *LThK* 10 (2001), 764–767, who at cols. 764–765 accounts for a certain Victor (Būqtūr) of Antioch. This Victor of Antioch is a likely, but not the only candidate for identification with the martyr Victor at Maiuma.

<sup>479</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78: '[Peter the Iberian] headed off to the places which are at the shore of Gaza, called Maiuma.' For a discussion of Peter's role as bishop of Maiuma as well as for references to literature on Maiuma, see above, ch. 2, pp. 89–91.

questions.<sup>480</sup> Pelagius' visits seem to have occurred regularly and he was not the only one to frequent Peter's company.<sup>481</sup>

Several of Peter's disciples, who lived in the Maiuma Monastery, are mentioned by name. They included Andrew,<sup>482</sup> an Egyptian monk,<sup>483</sup> who after Peter's death was the leader of the monastery,<sup>484</sup> Zachariah, who like Andrew, had been Peter's cell-mate,<sup>485</sup> and Paul, a former sophist,<sup>486</sup> who may represent a direct link to the philosophical school at Gaza. Paul and Andrew were companions.<sup>487</sup> Theosebius, Andrew's brother, became convinced of the truth proclaimed by the anti-Chalcedonians through a vision in which he saw John the Evangelist. Filled with zeal from that vision, Theosebius became an anti-Chalcedonian preacher.<sup>488</sup> The priest Zosimus, who formerly had dwelled in Rhaitou and on Mount Sinai, also became one of Peter's disciples.<sup>489</sup>

It was from his *lavra* in Maiuma that Peter was called away to join the group of monks from the Holy City who set out to confront Juvenal.<sup>490</sup> Rufus informed his audience that by that time Peter had become accustomed to a withdrawn life of quietness in his *lavra* and did not wish to mingle with the world.

The members of Peter's monastery practised the commemoration of saints of their own community. Besides Peter's own name, the list of local saints of the Maiuma Monastery probably included the names of the various members of Peter's family and friends, since Peter himself introduced such a custom. He also had started other liturgical practices in his monastery in Maiuma, for example, the usage of a particular covering for the altar on the feast day of the commemoration of Peter of Alexandria.<sup>491</sup>

Rufus gives special attention to the altar that was in use at the monastery. After Peter had become bishop, he once convinced John the Eunuch to serve the liturgy at that altar.<sup>492</sup> Based on a vision that

<sup>480</sup> *Plerophoriae* 2.

<sup>481</sup> *Plerophoriae* 3: Rufus mentions 'other saints' who were approaching Peter together with Pelagius.

<sup>482</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10: an eyewitness of the signs of the objects, perhaps paste-balls, hailstones, or small bricks that fell down from heaven, the Eucharistic miracle at Caesarea, and the healing of the blind Samaritan through the blood of the slain monks at Neapolis.

<sup>483</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14. <sup>484</sup> *Plerophoriae* 57.

<sup>485</sup> *Plerophoriae* 12. Both of them functioned as Rufus' informants.

<sup>486</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14. <sup>487</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14. <sup>488</sup> *Plerophoriae* 57.

<sup>489</sup> *Plerophoriae* 30. For a fuller discussion of the individuals attracted to Peter's monastery, see Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 117–120.

<sup>490</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56. See above, ch. 2, pp. 84–86.

<sup>491</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 132.

<sup>492</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 4.

John received, the Maiuman anti-Chalcedonian community thought of that altar as representing the one and only true altar on earth.<sup>493</sup>

With that conviction, Peter's community at Maiuma stated that after what they perceived had been a catastrophe at Chalcedon they were the only rightful and God-pleasing Christian community in existence. Significantly enough, Peter testified that he had seen a vision revealing how that altar had been consecrated in Egypt by the holy Mark himself,<sup>494</sup> thus establishing a very tight link between Palestinian and Egyptian anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>495</sup> The link was strengthened even more, since Peter's monastery in Maiuma attracted several ascetics from Egypt, who chose to live under Peter's spiritual guidance. Athanasius, an Egyptian priest, a monk and a former disciple of Abba Sana, is one example;<sup>496</sup> Abraham of Athrīb is another.

Through Abraham of Athrīb Peter the Iberian's community was connected with at least one ascetic who may have come from one of the most famous regions of ascetic life in Egypt, given that Athrīb was a name that in people's imagination is almost identical with Abba Shenute and the White Monastery.<sup>497</sup> Given, however, that there was more than only one locality in Egypt that carried the name of Athrīb,<sup>498</sup> it is not completely certain how close Abraham of Athrīb was associated with the circle around Abba Shenute.

Many of the monastic communities throughout the Christian Middle East accepted to some degree the Rule of Basil the Great.<sup>499</sup>

<sup>493</sup> *Plerophoriae* 43.      <sup>494</sup> *Plerophoriae* 44.

<sup>495</sup> For a useful discussion of the relationship between Egyptian and Palestinian monks, see Samuel Rubenson, 'The Egyptian Relations of Early Palestinian Monasticism', in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land* (London, 1995), 35–46.

<sup>496</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 129.

<sup>497</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 142. See above, ch. 1, p. 24 and n. 75. The White Monastery is located close to the village of Athrīb, near Suhāj, in the region of Akhmīm. See Kuhn, 'Shenute', 2131. Life at the White Monastery under the rule of Shenute has most recently been examined by Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2002), and Caroline T. Schroeder, 'Disciplining the Monastic Body: Asceticism, Ideology, and Gender in the Egyptian Monastery of Shenoute of Atripe' (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002).

<sup>498</sup> See Randall Stewart, 'Athrīb', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 1 (1991), 307. This Athrīb is located about 30 miles north of Cairo. It is also depicted on the Madaba Map. See Eugenio Alliata, 'The Legends of the Madaba Map', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 47–101, here 97 and entry 141.

<sup>499</sup> See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. iii, p. 213. See also Karl Suso Frank, 'Basiliusregeln', in *LThK* 2 (1994), 71–72. See also above, ch. 2, pp. 56–58. The rigour and strong concern for ascetic purity among the anti-Chalcedonian disciples in Peter's monastery (see Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 121–122) may have to be seen as an attempt to achieve a state of purity of heart. Basil of Caesarea would have been one of their spiritual teachers in

In his last will Peter designated Basil's Rule as the one to be followed by his monks.<sup>500</sup> At the point of death, Peter named four brethren as heirs and surrendered to them 'his whole monastery and the administration and leadership of the brethren'.<sup>501</sup> The names of these four heirs are John the Canopite, Zachariah and Andrew (his former cellmates), and Theodore of Ashkelon.<sup>502</sup>

While Peter dwelt in Maiuma, he ordered the construction of 'three sarcophagi which were joined to one another'.<sup>503</sup> Those sarcophagi were to serve as resting-places for his own relics and those of two of his friends. Peter's relics were laid in the middle sarcophagus, John the Eunuch's in the one on the right, and the relics of Abba Abraham, the 'holy and ascetic old man of Athrib', who had come from Egypt to join Peter's community and who passed away only thirty days after his arrival, were placed in the sarcophagus on the left.<sup>504</sup>

With the *translatio* of Peter's relics to the monastery between Gaza and Maiuma, several of the brethren of his community returned to their spiritual father's old monastery, which they rebuilt and revived. During the years of Peter's absence the monastery had fallen somewhat into decay. At the time of their return the community grew in number, now comprising thirty members, so that those few cells from earlier years were no longer sufficient. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus describes specific building measures that Peter's heirs, especially Theodore of Ashkelon, had initiated even though financial resources were few:<sup>505</sup>

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

that regard. See Harriet A. Luckman, 'Basil of Caesarea and Purity of Heart', in *Purity of Heart in Early Ascetic and Monastic Literature* (Collegeville, Minn., 1999), 89–106. See also George E. Saint Laurent, 'St. Basil of Caesarea and the Rule of St. Benedict', *Diakonia* 16.1 (1981), 71–79; and Thomas Špidlik, 'L'idéal du monachisme basilien', in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, vol. i (Toronto, 1981), 361–374.

<sup>500</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 135: 'Meditate, however, and read always in the book on asceticism, the *Questions of the Brethren*, of the blessed Basil the Bishop. Straighten out your ways of life and your manners according to his holy ordinances and his legislation. For as the God-inspired Scriptures 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>501</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 134.

<sup>502</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 134. See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 86 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', 86).

<sup>503</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 141.

<sup>504</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 142.

<sup>505</sup> The following material has also been discussed in Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 121–124.

those were [such] that one was neglecting them, they prepared to revive the place. There was want of many supplies and the blessed one had left [behind] little, hardly [144] sufficient for a few days' nourishment of the brethren, who were about thirty in number. For the blessed one had left only twenty-four dinars<sup>506</sup> for supplies, because he used to distribute the greater part [of his money] to the poor, and there was also not one [source] of income, 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. If, however, anyone was offering 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; accepting the work, he began the building with much cheerfulness, faith, and hope. And 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. He built also the wall of the monastery and let [it] go around [it]. He constructed many cells, both lower and upper [chambers]. He led a wall around the porticos, the pillars, and the courtyard and dug a well. He arranged gardens and took care of the rest of what was necessary and of the building of the monastery, and of the work of the hands of the brethren, while he was relying only on the grace, care, and help of the Lord. When he had finished the construction of the building and they had decorated [145] the house of prayer, they dug a place of reverence under the altar. And they transferred to there the body of the saint during the following year, one day before [the anniversary] of his death.<sup>507</sup>

From this account one learns that the old monastery consisted of several cells. To these new ones were added, possibly in two-storeyed structures, or, if spread out over a larger area, located on higher and lower spots of land. Pillars and porticoes are mentioned as well, suggesting the presence of one or more central courtyards. The monks planted gardens and dug a well to secure their water supply. A wall surrounded the whole monastery, probably for purposes of defence against intruders. Perhaps, this could also reflect animosities from the locals, to which the anti-Chalcedonian monks might have been exposed, at least occasionally. A tower and a new church were constructed as well.

Within the church building, the monks erected a special house of prayer which seems to have been the focal point of the liturgical life of the community. After the construction of the house of prayer was

<sup>506</sup> Syriac ܕܢܝܢܐ. According to Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 91, a *dinar* was generally gold, sometimes silver.

<sup>507</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 143-145.

finished, Peter's relics were transferred from the middle sarcophagus and deposited in a special 'place of reverence under the altar'.<sup>508</sup> The community at the Maiuma Monastery kept alive a sense of Peter's continued presence and uninterrupted intercession in heaven for the needs of the brethren.<sup>509</sup> According to Rufus, the Gaza community of anti-Chalcedonians followed the model of Egyptian liturgical practice applied to the celebration of the commemoration of Archbishop Peter of Alexandria. They celebrated the feast of their founding father, Peter the Iberian, on three consecutive days.<sup>510</sup>

In the *Vita Severi*, Zachariah Rhetor provides a valuable description of the monastic lifestyle practised by the monks at Peter's monastery in Maiuma. When Severus of Antioch came to visit the community, he observed that the monks

spent every day fasting, taking the earth for their bed, standing upright every day, giving the entire night to watching, praying constantly, and assisting at the office. They gave only a small part of the day to manual labor, so that they could acquire what they need[ed] to nourish their bodies and to help the poor. Each one labored over the sacred Scriptures during the hour of manual labor. Their chastity was so great that they did not look at each other's faces. They looked at the ground and made their responses to everyone. They labored religiously at all things that led to virtue and attempted not to speak unnecessarily.

Zachariah, on his part,

knew some among them who, during the bodily lifetime of the great Peter, were advised to remain silent for six years, speaking only to God in the prayers and the divine office, and not to reveal (because of the curiosity of the demons) that God had given this combat as a remedy for their faults. They were careful to obey, so that no needless words left their mouths and they did not even express useless thoughts by standing still, or walking, or moving their eyes.<sup>511</sup>

According to Rufus, Peter's *lavra* and monastery were located 'between Gaza and Maiuma'.<sup>512</sup> Recent archaeological excavations in the Gaza area have been rather difficult, not very promising, or nearly impossible. On the one hand, the proximity of the Mediterranean Sea creates weather conditions unfavourable for the preservation

<sup>508</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 145.

<sup>509</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 145.

<sup>510</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 146.

<sup>511</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 93–94 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', 93–94); English translation quoted from: Robin A. Darling Young, 'ZACHARIAS The Life of Severus', in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity A Sourcebook*, ed. by Vincent L. Wimbush (Minneapolis, 1990), 325. Jan-Eric Steppa is working on a complete translation of the text into English.

<sup>512</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 44.

of stone materials. Some stones are no longer recognizable, while others have not survived at all. Under Islamic rule, materials from formerly Christian buildings were reused for edifices with purposes other than their original usage and intent. The present political, social, and economic situation of the population in the Gaza area does not favour archaeological work either.

Nevertheless, some archaeological research is being carried out and yields interesting results.<sup>513</sup> Rufus' account is a literary witness to Peter's Maiuma Monastery and the relative importance of the martyr Victor in that area. A recent publication reports that fragments of a mosaic floor were found in a location that could qualify as the site of an ancient sanctuary of the martyr Victor.<sup>514</sup> Elsewhere, I have discussed the likelihood of that discovery being part of Peter's Maiuma Monastery instead.<sup>515</sup> Either one of these theses, however, remains a mere hypothesis, since the mosaics, which recent building activity has destroyed already, consisted merely of black and white geometric patterns, without any inscriptions. A monastery, called the Monastery of Peter the Iberian, did indeed exist. One knows from John of Ephesus' 'Life of John of Hephæstropolis' that the John of whom he spoke was of Palestinian origins, 'from the city of Gaza, and he lived in a great convent called that of father Peter the Iberian,

<sup>513</sup> Mosaic floors of sixth-century churches were discovered which previously were known only from the sixth-century descriptions of Choricus of Gaza. Archaeological research is carried out by the Department of Antiquities of the Palestinian Authority, especially in collaboration with Fr Jean-Baptiste Humbert of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in St Stephen's Monastery, Jerusalem. See Jean-Baptiste Humbert, 'The Rivers of Paradise in the Byzantine Church near Jabaliyah-Gaza', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 216–218 (see plate XI Gaza and photos on p. 215 in the same volume for additional views of the mosaics of that church); and, more recently, Catherine Saliou, 'Gaza dans l'antiquité tardive: Nouveaux documents épigraphiques', *Revue Biblique* 107.3 (2000), 390–411, for a discussion of the evidence of a mosaic floor of an ecclesiastical complex (church and baptistery) at Jabaliyah. The dated inscriptions fall between the years AD 496/497 and 732. Mention is made of Bishop Marcianos (c.525–550), whose activities Choricus of Gaza celebrated.

<sup>514</sup> Mohammed-Moain Sadek, in collaboration with Yasser Matar Abu Hassuneh and Jean-Baptiste Humbert, OP, 'Gaza', *Les dossiers d'archéologie* 240 (Special issue: *L'Archéologie Palestinienne*) (January /February 1999), 46–67. I am grateful to Dr Stéphane Verhelst for having drawn my attention to this article. See also Mohammed Moain Sadeq, 'Mosaic Pavements Recently Found in the Gaza Strip', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 214–215.

<sup>515</sup> See Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 124–126. For references to a proposed identification of the site of the tomb of Sheikh Radwan with Peter's monastery, see Yizhar Hirschfeld, 'The Monasteries of Gaza: An Archaeological Review', in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*, ed. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 61–88, and Hirschfeld, figs. 1–29, here 75 and fig. 6.

the doer of great and apostolic signs'.<sup>516</sup> That monastery was also known as the Monastery of Theodore, most likely Theodore of Ashkelon, one of Peter's heirs, who was in charge of governing the monastery after Peter's death.<sup>517</sup> Still, Peter's monastery was not the only one located 'between Gaza and Maiuma'. The *lavra* of Severus of Antioch, for example, was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Peter's monastery.<sup>518</sup> The Madaba map as a guide and orientation for pilgrims also indicates that a church or a monastery 'of St Victor', probably visited by many pilgrims, was in the area as well.<sup>519</sup>

During his earlier as much as during his later years in Palestine, Peter the Iberian clearly was a strong promoter and participant in the monastic milieu of the Holy Land. The monasteries he established and the monasteries of which he became a part laid physical claim to sacred landscape for anti-Chalcedonians there. Nevertheless, by advancing one's options on monastic real estate one extended efforts only to one of the dimensions of spiritual territory that could be held on to in Palestine. The following discussion searches to unveil several other, less materially conditioned dimensions that are part of that very same struggle over spiritual space.

<sup>516</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, PO 18, p. 527: 'This blessed man again, the great and divine John the bishop, was by his birth (*γένεος*) a Syrian, that is a Palestinian, from the city of Gaza, and he lived in a great convent called that of father Peter the Iberian, the doer of great and apostolic signs. This convent was expelled with the rest, and came into the territory of Alexandria; and there it lived in a place called Ennaton which means "ninth", viz. miles; and there the saint dwelt with the rest of his convent, living a devout life and following great and divine practices.'

<sup>517</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78; Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 7, ch. 10 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 84 (Louvain, 1953), 51, l. 10; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 180). This Theodore is identical with Theodore the scholastic, also known as Theodore of Ashkelon. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 134. For a recent more speculative attempt at reconstructing the later history of the anti-Chalcedonian monasteries in the Gaza area, see now also Aryeh Kofsky, 'What Happened to the Monophysite Monasticism of Gaza?' in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*, eds. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky (Leiden and Boston, 2004), 183–194.

<sup>518</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 109 and n. 282. For a recent study of the influence of the Palestinian ascetic milieu on Severus, see Kathleen Hay, 'Severus of Antioch, an Inheritor of Palestinian Monasticism', *ARAM* 15.1 (2003), 159–171.

<sup>519</sup> For a good photograph of the respective section of the Madaba Map, see plate XI in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999). The question of whether or not this (church or monastery) 'of St Victor' may even have been identical with the monastery of Peter the Iberian is open for discussion.

## CLAIMING SPACE

**Ascetics and Ordained Ministry**

Peter's ecclesiastical career presents a classic example of the conflict that disturbed many monks: whether or not to take up service under a bishop as an ordained priest. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus says that while Peter was still living in the Holy City, Juvenal tried many times to ordain him to the priesthood. Only through God's protection was Peter able to escape. During a celebration of the divine liturgy in the Church of Zion, within easy walking distance from Peter's monastery near the Tower of David, Juvenal sent men with the order to fetch Peter from his nearby cell and carry him to the Church of Zion so that Juvenal could ordain him a priest. Rufus reports that an angel appeared to Peter to warn him and so Peter managed to flee.<sup>520</sup>

Later, when Peter lived on the Gazan coast, he was again confronted with attempts at priestly ordination, this time coming from the local bishop Paul, Juvenal's nephew. It seems that when Peter first moved to the area, he had explicitly asked Bishop Paul to refrain from ordaining him and had received a promise from him, possibly even in writing.<sup>521</sup>

As discussed above, it is likely that a church or monastery dedicated to the memory of the martyr Victor existed in the area between Gaza and Maiuma in the middle of the sixth century at the latest.<sup>522</sup> Literary evidence from the *Vita Petri Iberi* establishes the veneration of this North African or West Asian martyr in the region a century earlier, namely, in the first half of the fifth century. When Peter had just moved to the monastery at Maiuma, a synod of bishops met in Maiuma on the occasion of the annual memorial day of the martyr Victor.<sup>523</sup> According to Rufus, Bishop Paul tried to make good use of the opportunity. He convinced one of the other bishops present at the synod to assist him in ordaining Peter. That bishop in his turn made common cause with Irenion, the abbot of the monastery in which Peter and John the Eunuch were living.<sup>524</sup> All three, namely, the

<sup>520</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 50.

<sup>521</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>522</sup> The Madaba Map refers to a sanctuary 'of the holy Victor'. The pilgrim report of Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 33 (ed. Geyer, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 145, ll. 15–16), says: *Exinde venimus in civitatem Maioma Gaza, in qua requiescit sanctus Victor martyr*, attesting to the presence of relics of St Victor in Maiuma between AD 560 and 570.

<sup>523</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52.

<sup>524</sup> The *Vita Petri Iberi* contains the information that Abba Irenion was a neighbour to Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch, who were cell-companions. Abba

visiting bishop, Abba Irenion, and Bishop Paul, seized Peter and John and ordained them with force and against their will as priests.<sup>525</sup>

However, not much changed after that surprising attack. For a period of seven years, according to the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Peter refused to serve as a priest. He only started to exercise his priesthood after he was consecrated bishop at the hands of the anti-Chalcedonian Theodosius during AD 452/453. Peter's ordination to the priesthood probably took place in AD 445.<sup>526</sup>

Several important points emerge from this chain of events. They are relevant to a proper understanding of how Peter, a representative of the community of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics in Palestine, viewed his life first as a non-ordained ascetic and later after his ordination, even if it has to be granted that in his description Rufus may have embellished Peter's resistance. While such a resistance to priestly ordination is a common theme in biographies of saints, this does not mean that in individual cases it did not really occur. From Peter's perspective as an ascetic, ordination to the priesthood was not at all desirable or even necessary to fulfil God's plan for his life. Peter enjoyed his withdrawn life on the shores of the Mediterranean coast, since it allowed him at least for a while the time to develop his ascetic spirituality. Moreover, he was free to act as a minister to the souls of the many visitors who came to seek his advice on theological and spiritual matters.

Juvenal's repeated attempts at ordination as well as his nephew Paul's broken promise enabled Rufus to illustrate the wickedness of the Chalcedonian bishops. Yet these incidents also provided an opportunity to show that priestly ordination of ascetics could be a means of bringing them under the control of the local bishops. The fact that Abba Irenion who otherwise seems to have been on friendly terms with Peter and John the Eunuch acted as an accomplice of Bishop Paul shows that a debate was taking place within ascetic circles. Ascetics were trying to define the ascetic life, with some being in favour of greater involvement with and subordination to the local church, and some maintaining the ideals of independence and freedom to serve God in a life of withdrawal and spiritual counselling.

It is significant, moreover, that Peter received ordination on the feastday of a martyr. That fact needs to be seen in the context of the words which Bishop Theodosius used when he ordained anti-

Irenion also is described as their revered neighbour (בְּצַרְבָּא בְּנֵיָא), which could indicate that he was the abbot of the monastery. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>525</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 51.

<sup>526</sup> So Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 52 n. 3. Other sources suggest AD 447 as date.

Chalcedonian ascetics as bishops. He called upon the newly ordained bishops to be ‘martyrs and heralds of the orthodox faith’.<sup>527</sup>

### Tensions between Ascetic and Episcopal Authority

Already at the end of the fourth century one can discern elements that favoured open conflict between the Palestinian monks and episcopal authority.<sup>528</sup> Both Palladius’ *Lausiaca History* and Jerome’s writings witness to the emergence of a serious schism among the Palestinian monks, between John of Jerusalem on the one side and Jerome on the other over the ordination of Paulinianus and the first Origenist crisis.<sup>529</sup> This crisis can be viewed as a prelude to the rebellion of Theodosius and his supporters against Juvenal in the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>530</sup>

Chalcedon made explicit attempts to regulate the relationship between ascetics and their bishops.<sup>531</sup> When anti-Chalcedonians resisted Chalcedon, they faced the dilemma of having to choose between obeying ecclesiastical authority or their own convictions. Rufus provides many examples of ascetics who were confronted with that choice.<sup>532</sup>

The example of the deaconess Urbicia is a good case in point.<sup>533</sup> Despite the fact that Jerusalem’s governor sent the archdeacon of the Church of the Ascension to admonish her to adhere to the Bishop of Jerusalem, who was a Chalcedonian, Urbicia refused to be in communion with him. When the archdeacon tried to persuade her, saying

<sup>527</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 53. See also Horn, ‘Weaving the Pilgrim’s Crown’.

<sup>528</sup> Up until then, Palestinian monasticism was satisfied with leaving the part of the interpretation of orthodoxy to the bishop, as Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 39, has noted.

<sup>529</sup> See also Michael Kohlbacher, ‘Vom Enkel des Origenes zum Vater der Chalcedongegner: Einleitungsfragen zum Lehrbekenntnis des Johannes von Jerusalem (CPG 3621)’, in *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Leuven, 1999), 655–672. For a broader discussion of the first Origenist crisis, see E. A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*.

<sup>530</sup> See also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 39.

<sup>531</sup> See, for example, the discussion in L. Ueding, ‘Die Kanones von Chalkedon in ihrer Bedeutung für Mönchtum und Klerus’, in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, eds., *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Würzburg, 1951–1954), here vol. ii, pp. 569–676.

<sup>532</sup> For a discussion of the wider conflict between ascetics and ecclesiastical authorities, see Bacht, ‘Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums’; also see more recently the article by Johannes Roldanus, ‘Stützen und Störenfriede: Mönchische Einmischung in die doktrinäre und kirchenpolitische Rezeption von Chalkedon’, in *Chalkedon: Geschichte und Aktualität* (Leuven, 1997), 123–146.

<sup>533</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 44.

that in case Chalcedon were wrong she would not be held responsible and incur any guilt, since she had obeyed the proper authority, Urbicia still refused vehemently. No power on earth, no prophet, no heavenly voice, she said, would be capable of moving her to adhere to Chalcedon. She was ready to assume the responsibility for the salvation of her own soul. The final element prompting her refusal, however, was the fact that she felt that by accepting Chalcedon she would come under the anathema of the anti-Chalcedonian monk Timothy of Crete, her spiritual father.<sup>534</sup> This anathema, potentially voiced by an ascetic, ranked higher than her own judgement, though her own judgement ranked above any command from the side of the archdeacon, who represented the local ecclesiastical authority.

Rufus reveals a particular concern for the independence of ascetic authority in the account of the conflict between the recognition of either Basiliscus' *Encyclical* or his *anti-Encyclical*. While anti-Chalcedonians felt some relief in regard to the *Encyclical*, they were vehemently opposed to the *anti-Encyclical*. Rufus lined up several examples of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics who protested against ecclesiastical authorities accepting the *anti-Encyclical*. Prominent among them was Zoe, a woman archimandrite and abbess of a convent of virgins in Attalia, Pamphylia.<sup>535</sup>

In a vision Zoe saw herself in paradise.<sup>536</sup> Numerous bees were flying around the Tree of Life, trying to taste some of its fruits, but a deacon kept chasing them away. The explanation she received for this curious sight was that the bees were those who, after the overturning of the *Encyclical* and its replacement by the *anti-Encyclical*, defected and adhered from then on to Chalcedon. Ecclesiastical authority in the form of the deacon kept them from achieving salvation.

Rufus recounts a further episode, presenting Zoe in confrontation with Claudian, the bishop of Attalia, modern-day Antalya (Adalia), Turkey.<sup>537</sup> Claudian came to visit Zoe, but was reproached by her for

<sup>534</sup> *Plerophoriae* 44.

<sup>535</sup> For a discussion of different aspects of the contribution of women to the anti-Chalcedonian faction in Palestine, see Horn, 'Fighting with the Devil', and Cornelia Horn, 'Towards a Feminist Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Social History of Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism in Syria-Palestine in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries', paper delivered at the session 'Late Antiquity in Interdisciplinary Perspective', American Academy of Religion / Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada (November 2002).

<sup>536</sup> *Plerophoriae* 82.

<sup>537</sup> *Plerophoriae* 82. See A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford, 2nd edn. 1971), 130-147; and John D. Wineland, 'Attalia', in *ABD* 1 (1992), 523.

having signed the *anti-Encyclical*. As an excuse, Claudian admitted that he had signed the document with his hand, yet ‘neither with the soul nor with the heart’. Zoe immediately scolded him for such a self-deceiving attitude and proved him a liar, since ‘the hand [cannot move] without the soul’.<sup>538</sup> It was clear to her that he must have given wilful assent to his signature.

Rufus also vented his anger against the bishops who signed the declarations of Chalcedon and against secular, imperial authority. The case of the deacon Basil nicely summarized that concern.<sup>539</sup> Basil was a deacon in the Church in Antioch. Later on, he lived in the desert of the Thebaid as an ascetic in Egypt. Some time before Chalcedon, in anticipation of the coming evils, a voice from heaven called upon Basil and sent him out into the world in order to fight for the faith. The voice in particular warned Basil that a denial of the Only Son of God by the bishops and the kings was at hand.

Rufus paid particular attention to the conflicts and tensions which arose in Palestine, and specifically in Jerusalem, between ascetics and Bishop Juvenal. He attempted to create the impression that both during Juvenal’s first and second tenure on the episcopal throne of Jerusalem, the relationship between him and the truly orthodox local ascetics, namely, those of anti-Chalcedonian inclination and persuasion, was hostile. Rufus tried to convince his audience that orthodox ascetics always opposed Juvenal as a traitor.

Relying on Peter’s testimony, Rufus knew that Juvenal used to visit the monasteries around the Holy City<sup>540</sup> and stop at the cells of individual ‘perfect ones’, that is, ascetics.<sup>541</sup> One of them, however, locked the door of his cell in protest and did not let him in. In an outburst of anger—Rufus would probably want his audience to think of this reaction as an instance of righteous or ‘holy’ anger—the ascetic accused Juvenal of being the Antichrist and the companion of Judas.<sup>542</sup> Juvenal’s reply was more restrained, but no less insulting.

<sup>538</sup> *Plerophoriae* 82.

<sup>539</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35.

<sup>540</sup> On these tours, as even Rufus admits, Juvenal was accompanied by a crowd of clerics and citizens. This observation shows that he had a system of support among the clergy and the non-ascetic population.

<sup>541</sup> *Plerophoriae* 17. The Syriac *Liber Graduum* applies that language of perfection to those pursuing the path of asceticism. See also M. G. Bianco, ‘Liber Graduum’, in *EECh* 1 (1992), 485. For references to editions and translations of the *Liber Graduum*, see below, ch. 4, p. 254, n. 136.

<sup>542</sup> Occasionally, ascetics would also take to physical violence against a bishop who transgressed or was about to transgress against the faith. See, for example, at *Plerophoriae* 89, the case of an ascetic who lived in a hut at the gate of the imperial summer palace in Antioch. When Rufus took Bishop Nonnus of Qenneshrin along with him for a visit, that ascetic slapped Nonnus and threatened him, since he anticipated and knew beforehand that Nonnus would turn from being a zealous,

He controlled his anger and ashamed his companions by characterizing the ascetic as one who ‘does not know what he is saying’, because ‘too much asceticism has dried up his brain’,<sup>543</sup> an unmistakably negative assessment of the value of ascetic life and practice.

Earlier, Rufus had made it clear that Juvenal had broken with his former asceticism. Rufus noted that before becoming bishop, Juvenal had dwelt in a great monastery, located in Jerusalem, along the Shiloa valley.<sup>544</sup> By the time Rufus was living in Jerusalem,<sup>545</sup> the monastery was in a state of complete decay, ‘growing old and falling [into ruins]’. Rufus noted that the trees surrounding it were either withered or growing wild. The only other plants were useless vines and briars. The place was completely uninhabitable and looked like a wasteland. For Rufus it had also fallen under ‘the curse of Judas’.<sup>546</sup> An ascetic who knew the area well explained to Rufus that the change from flourishing monastery to deserted place had happened all of a sudden after Chalcedon, ‘as if by a blow of the wrath of God’.<sup>547</sup> Rufus illustrated Bishop Juvenal’s complete expulsion not only from the right faith, but also from the right practice, and thus from asceticism, by divine judgement on the monastery.

Rufus ensured that the opposition of ascetics to Juvenal remained prominent in anti-Chalcedonian memory. His works recorded how Peter first had to flee Juvenal and his attempts to pull him away from asceticism and into ecclesiastical service under his jurisdiction,<sup>548</sup> and later on, how Juvenal’s pressure against anti-Chalcedonian bishops—all of whom were ascetics at the same time—made it impossible for Peter to remain in Palestine.<sup>549</sup> When Juvenal returned a second time to his see and managed to expel Theodosius, the tensions between him and the monks continued. Evagrius records in his *Ecclesiastical History* that ‘after the arrival of Juvenal, there were many unholy occurrences as those from one side or

ascetic defender of the faith, that is, from being an anti-Chalcedonian, to becoming a transgressor of the faith at the time of the Chalcedonian Bishop Calendion of Antioch.

<sup>543</sup> *Plerophoriae* 17.

<sup>544</sup> *Plerophoriae* 16. See Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, vol. iii, pp. 410–411.

<sup>545</sup> i.e. around AD 480.

<sup>546</sup> *Plerophoriae* 16; Acts 1:20, referring to Psalms 69:25.

<sup>547</sup> *Plerophoriae* 16. <sup>548</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 42. <sup>549</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 57–58.

the other proceeded with whatever their rage suggested to them'.<sup>550</sup> Anti-Chalcedonian sources also deplored these events.<sup>551</sup>

These events were kept alive in the memory of the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonian community for a long time by means of the accounts collected in the *Plerophoriae*. One of these stories told, for example, of a pre-Chalcedonian vision and prediction of the priest Pelagius who lamented Juvenal and foresaw that the bishop of Jerusalem would cease to be a champion of the monks and secular clergy and, instead, be carried about in triumph by the Romans and the demons.<sup>552</sup>

### Peter's Attitude towards Imperial Powers

Rufus made little attempt to veil his criticism of imperial powers. In several instances he directed his polemical attacks against individual Byzantine rulers,<sup>553</sup> but he differentiated between emperors who, in his perception, worked in favour of anti-Chalcedonians, such as Theodosius II, and those who were to be blamed for the Council of Chalcedon and subsequent evils. In the end, emperors were seen as subject to divine judgement and could end up either in a place of heavenly bliss or in eternal torture.<sup>554</sup>

<sup>550</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, bk. 2, ch. 5 (Greek text edited in Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 52.25–27; English tr. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 80). Walford, *Evagrius Scholasticus: History of the Church*, 302, translated: 'many sad occurrences followed the arrival of Juvenal, while either party indulged in whatever proceedings their anger suggested'.

<sup>551</sup> See Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle* bk. 3, ch. 5 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, pp. 159–160; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 52–53) and the mid-sixth-century account in Ps.-Dionysius of Alexandria, *Panegyric on Macarius* 7.1–8.16 (ed. D. W. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Tkōw*, CSCO 415–416, Script. Copt. tt. 41–42 (Louvain, 1980), 45–70 (Coptic) and 34–54 (English)). Also see above, ch. 2, p. 92 and n. 204. Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2003), 101 and nn. 48 and 49, also speaks of these events. Yet one needs to distinguish more carefully between what happened at Juvenal's return from the Council of Chalcedon and the events at Juvenal's second return to Jerusalem in AD 453, when he expelled the monk-bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem and his followers. In connection with the events of AD 453, also Peter the Iberian had to leave for Egypt.

<sup>552</sup> *Plerophoriae* 4.

<sup>553</sup> Especially against Marcian and Pulcheria. See, for example, *Plerophoriae* 3 (Pulcheria) and 2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 25, 27, 61, 67, and 91 (Marcian); see also *Vita Petri Iberi* 62–64 and *De obitu Theodosii* 23, 24, and 25 for negative references to Marcian.

<sup>554</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 27. See also *Plerophoriae* 3, 4, 7, 10, 25, 35, 59, and 89; and *Vita Petri Iberi* 57 and 73.

With regard to Peter's attitude toward imperial powers, it is remarkable how Rufus repeatedly depicts him as one who tried to stay away from the world and who did not wish to have any further dealings with imperial powers. Once Peter had moved away from Jerusalem to live as ascetic in the Maiuma /Gaza area, according to Rufus, he no longer wished to have contact with the secular world or with people from the court.<sup>555</sup> Nevertheless, when Peter felt it was necessary to assist the monk Theodosius against Juvenal, he used his knowledge of court affairs to Theodosius' advantage. Protected by an imperial army and surrounded by an entourage from the court in Constantinople, Juvenal met the monks who had come out to Caesarea to convince him to change his mind. Juvenal directed his attack against the monk Theodosius, whom he saw as a disturber and an opponent of the will of the emperor. When Rufus reported how Peter defended Theodosius, Rufus obviously intended to call upon anti-Chalcedonians to oppose the emperor and his followers whenever it seemed necessary to do so in defence of their fellow believers and in defence of their faith.<sup>556</sup>

Another element of criticism directed against imperial authority becomes evident in that the *ducenarius* from Constantinople, whom Peter confronted regarding earlier sins, consequently lost his moral credibility,<sup>557</sup> and thus also his authority to speak on matters of faith. The anti-Chalcedonian claim that only people with proper moral integrity were allowed to speak on matters of faith was maintained. In Rufus' depiction of the scene, even the threat of fire falling from heaven came to the fore, indicating that God's power was infinitely superior to any power emanating from Constantinople.

### **How Peter and other Anti-Chalcedonians Undermined Chalcedonian Territorial Authority**

Peter's very way of life as a pilgrim and foreigner in all the places he visited allowed him to explore authority from a particular angle, one open to an ascetic wanderer. The ease with which he passed through the territories of several Chalcedonian bishops and recruited converts to his anti-Chalcedonian convictions proved for Rufus that he undermined the territorial authority of Chalcedonian bishops.

Gerontius and the monk Romanus evaded Juvenal's jurisdiction by moving away from the immediate neighbourhood of the Holy City. Romanus founded a new monastery in Eleutheropolis.<sup>558</sup> Peter him-

<sup>555</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>556</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>557</sup> *Plerophoriae* 56.

<sup>558</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 26.

self avoided close contact with ascetics under Juvenal's authority in the very early stages of his ascetic development. During his difficult experiences as founder of a new monastery and as host for pilgrims, he did not seek spiritual advice from a monk in the Holy City but rather turned to Abba Zeno, Abba Silvanus' disciple, in the Gaza area.<sup>559</sup> Yet there was a clear difference between Gerontius and Romanus on the one hand and Peter on the other. Neither of the earlier group took to a life of constant wandering. Peter, however, desired to 'prepar[e] for the Lord a people' by 'attracting many . . . to the army of Christ (see 1 Timothy 1:18)'.<sup>560</sup> Rufus said explicitly that 'for this end [Peter] frequently made trips from place to place',<sup>561</sup> thinking of Maiuma at the shore of Gaza, Caesarea, Jerusalem, places in *Arabia*, and in effect also many places along the Phoenician coast, including Arca, Orthosias, Tripoli, Beirut, and Tyre.

Wherever the Spirit was calling and leading him, in every place He also bestowed grace on him, . . . so that everywhere he would establish through his arrival flocks of believers, congregations of the orthodox, monasteries, and churches. There was no place he went, where he did not offer to the Lord the salvation of many souls, since he accepted the apostolic contest and race.<sup>562</sup>

According to Rufus, Peter won anti-Chalcedonian followers wherever he went. When Rufus reported that Peter established monasteries and churches of orthodox believers, he meant that these were congregations of faithful anti-Chalcedonians, who did not acknowledge the local bishop's authority in matters of faith but rather turned to Peter for spiritual guidance and for the celebration of the sacraments. In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus could give an example of how in Beirut anti-Chalcedonian students from Alexandria were excluded from the Eucharist by the local bishop. Rather than despair about it, they shared the Eucharist that anti-Chalcedonian fathers in Alexandria had consecrated for them. Their spiritual fathers in Alexandria had explicitly instructed them to do so.<sup>563</sup> A heavenly sign, the transformation of the bread into flesh and blood, confirmed their stance.

The vision of Agathoclea of Alexandria, a woman who according to Rufus was of great modesty, likewise challenged the authority and

<sup>559</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47. On Abba Silvanus and his monastery see above, ch. 2, p. 72 and n. 109.

<sup>560</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78. <sup>561</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78.

<sup>562</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78. See also Kathleen M. Hay, 'Evolution of Resistance: Peter the Iberian, Itinerant Bishop', in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church* (Everton Park, Queensland, 1998), 159–168.

<sup>563</sup> *Plerophoriae* 78.

legitimacy of the anti-Chalcedonian Eucharist. Yet in the end she became convinced of its exclusive validity. When Agathoclea was in doubt concerning the *anti-Encyclical*, she saw in a vision two altars: one great, but dark and bare, clearly the altar of the majority group, at which a Chalcedonian bishop was celebrating; the other altar was much smaller, but beautifully adorned, ‘shining with much gold and precious stones’.<sup>564</sup> Moreover, a little boy, whom Agathoclea recognized as Christ, was serving at it, inviting her to partake of the Eucharist from his altar, which represented the anti-Chalcedonian side.<sup>565</sup>

The fact that Peter was intruding onto territory of Chalcedonian bishops becomes clear from Rufus’ account of an event in northern Phoenicia. When Peter came to Arca, the local magistrate Maximus received him very favourably. The Chalcedonian bishop of the city, on the other hand, drew a clear line. He probably was not really ‘a wretched, daring, and totally defiled man’,<sup>566</sup> as Rufus tried to portray him, since the bishop seems to have accorded the visitors proper hospitality. Nevertheless, he asked that Peter ‘either be in communion’ or ‘depart, for a city cannot have two bishops’.<sup>567</sup> Chalcedonian bishops felt their authority challenged by having in their midst a bishop who did not share their faith. This was an issue of territory in a spiritual sense, as seen in Rufus’ remark that the Bishop of Arca had the devil as his father. He belonged to an authority and realm different from God’s. According to Rufus, Peter immediately left the area. His avoidance of confrontation may have been rooted in his personal preference for ascetic peacefulness.

Both while living in the greater Gaza area after his return from Egypt and throughout his travels through Phoenicia, Peter led many young men and women to become anti-Chalcedonian ascetics. A core of anti-Chalcedonian resistance formed around him in the southern coastal regions of Palestine. Rufus records several names: Cyril, Procopius, Theodore, and John the Canopite.<sup>568</sup> His efforts in Beirut were crowned with outstanding success, when he was able to recruit a prominent group of students from the city’s famous Law School.<sup>569</sup> The most famous among those students, who were attracted by Peter’s charisma and reputation, were Severus of Anti-

<sup>564</sup> *Plerophoriae* 86.      <sup>565</sup> *Plerophoriae* 86.      <sup>566</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 105.

<sup>567</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 105. For a discussion of the implications of Theodosius’ tenure of the see of Jerusalem for the establishment of the anti-Chalcedonian Church as the consequence of having two bishops in a given locality, see above, ch. 2, pp. 86–88.

<sup>568</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78–79.

<sup>569</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 114. See also the discussion in Horn, ‘Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism’, 117–120.

och and Zachariah Rhetor.<sup>570</sup> John Rufus and Theodore of Ashkelon, among others, joined Peter's ascetic community while he was still alive; others, like Severus, came after Peter's death.

Of particular interest in this regard is Rufus' description of Peter's recruiting efforts and outreach to Chalcedonians in Eucharistic terms. When teaching, preaching, and recruiting among those students, Peter clearly felt commissioned by the Lord to prepare the students as a Eucharistic sacrifice to the Lord. Peter would get loaves of fine, white bread from a special bakery, not from the common market, for the oblation. In a vision, however, Peter heard Christ say to him, 'I want you to offer to me market [loaves of] bread and to celebrate the Eucharist from them. For with these I am pleased.'<sup>571</sup> Peter had no doubt that Christ was comparing the Law School students to the loaves of white bread. Since the Law School was located right next to the market,<sup>572</sup> and the students were preparing for public office, the comparison would have seemed obvious to him. Thus with his recruiting efforts, Peter reached out not only into the realm of opposing Chalcedonian bishops, but even into the wider common area and into the realm of public life. As an ascetic he claimed territory among those who were preparing for public office by gathering them into his anti-Chalcedonian fold.

The Eucharist celebrates the act of communion of the body of Christ and the ultimate event of salvation. It is the primary and authoritative commemoration of Christ's death on the Cross. Thus the investigation of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality of the Cross in the milieu created and sustained by Peter the Iberian and John Rufus, will first turn in the following chapter to the movement of pilgrimage towards the Holy Land as that place where Christ's death on the Cross as the act of salvation took place in historical time. The final chapter will then consider in detail the characteristic dimensions of that Cross-centred spirituality that can be traced among those who defended their faith in 'the One who was crucified for us'.

<sup>570</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 85–88 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', pp. 85–88).

<sup>571</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 113.

<sup>572</sup> The Beirut Law School is believed to have been located in the immediate neighbourhood of the Roman *forum*, adjacent to the modern-day Greek Orthodox Church of St George next to the Place de l'Étoile. See Collinet, *Histoire de l'École de Droit de Beyrouth*, map 3, reprinted from Jean Lauffray, 'Forums et monuments de Béryte', *Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 7 (1944–1945), plate 1.

## Weaving the Crown of Pilgrimage: The Spiritual and Polemical Dimensions of Pilgrimage and the Holy Places from an Anti-Chalcedonian Perspective

### PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND AND CHRISTIAN HOLY PLACES

Ever since the fourth century, streams of pilgrims flocked to the land in which they believed God had become man, had died, and had arisen from the dead.<sup>1</sup> Those pilgrims wished to pray at places that

<sup>1</sup> Paulus Geyer, ed., *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi IIII–VIII*, CSEL 39 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1898), and more recently *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965) provide convenient access to editions of the Latin texts of early Christian pilgrim accounts, like those of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (*Itinerarium Burdigalense*; ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, CCSL 175, 1–26), Egeria (*Itinerarium Egeriae*; ed. Aet. Franceschini and R. Weber, CCSL 175, 37–90), Antoninus Placentinus (*Itinerarium*; ed. P. Geyer, CCSL 175, 129–153), Peter the Deacon (*Liber de locis sanctis*; appendix to *Itinerarium Egeriae*; ed. R. Weber, CCSL 175, 93–103), Eucherius (*De situ Hierusolimae Epistula ad Faustum Presbyterum*; ed. I. Fraipont, CCSL 175, 237–243), Theodosius (*De situ Terrae Sanctae*; ed. P. Geyer, CCSL 175, 115–125), Breviarius (*De Hierosolyma*; ed. R. Weber, CCSL 175, 109–112), Adamnanus (*De locis sanctis*; ed. L. Bieler, CCSL 175, 183–234), and Beda Venerabilis (*De locis sanctis*; ed. I. Fraipont, CCSL 175, 251–280). For translations and discussions, see John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977); and F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginning of Modern Times* (Princeton, 1985). For good introductory and survey discussions of pilgrimage in the early Christian world, see H. Leclercq, ‘Pèlerinages aux lieux saints’, in *DACL* 14.1 (1939), cols. 65–176; Aimé Solignac, ‘Pèlerinages’, in *DSp* 12 (1983), cols. 888–893; and Pierre Maraval, ‘II. Pèlerinages Chrétiens: A. En Orient des origines au 7<sup>e</sup> siècle’, in *DSp* 12 (1983), cols. 901–909. See also Pierre Maraval, ‘The Earliest Phase of Christian Pilgrimage in the Near East (Before the 7th Century)’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), 63–74. Note especially the foundational study on pilgrimage in the ancient world by Bernhard Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der Alten Kirche* (Münster, 2nd edn. 1980). See also more recently the collection of essays in Bernhard Kötting, *Ecclesia peregrinans: Das Gottesvolk unterwegs* (Münster, 1988).

were in some direct, physical way connected with events in Christ's life. Controversy over access to these holy places is as old as the history of pilgrimage to them, as are debates about the benefits and detriments of pilgrimage.<sup>2</sup>

The past two decades have seen a considerable scholarly investigation of the increase of pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the fourth century on.<sup>3</sup> In addition, several studies on the question and importance of the holy places have appeared.<sup>4</sup> These studies help establish the setting for Peter's activities.

<sup>2</sup> Monographic studies of this topic have appeared. See Peter W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1990). Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony dealt with the inner Christian debate about pilgrimage to the Holy Land as it emerged in patristic and monastic literature of the fourth to the sixth century AD. See Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage: Perceptions and Reactions in the Patristic and Monastic Literature of the Fourth–Sixth Centuries [in Hebrew]' (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995). The revised version of this work in English translation is announced under the title *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 38 (Berkeley, 2005) forthcoming. Recently, the same author has published an article on this issue; see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Attitudes of the Church Fathers towards Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York, 1999), 188–203. See also Jörg Ulrich, 'Wallfahrt und Wallfahrtskritik bei Gregor von Nyssa', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 3 (1999), 87–96. For a comparison of the contrary views of Egeria and Gregory of Nyssa, see Pierre Maraval, 'Égérie et Grégoire de Nysse, pèlerins aux lieux saints de Palestine', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sulla Peregrinatio Egeriae*, ed. by Alberto Fatucchi and others (Arezzo, 1990), 315–331.

<sup>3</sup> For studies pertaining to the immediate relevancy of the question see M. Prior, 'Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Yesterday and Today', in *Christians in the Holy Land* (London, 1995), 169–199; and A. O'Mahony, 'Church, State, and the Christian Communities and the Holy Places of Palestine', in *Christians in the Holy Land* (London, 1995), 11–27. For studies spanning the 2000-year-long history of the Christian aspects of the question see the papers collected in R. N. Swanson, ed., *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History: Papers Read at the 1998 Summer Meeting and the 1999 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY, 2000). For a discussion of the role of women in such pilgrimages, see Bernadette McNary-Zak, 'Problematizing Women and Holy Land Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity', *Magistra* 8.2 (2002), 3–24; for aspects of the pilgrimage business in the seventh century see also Olster, 'Construction of a Byzantine Saint: George of Choziba'. For a study of the connection between pilgrimage and monasticism see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage in Monastic Culture in Late Antiquity', in *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land* (Leuven and Sterling, Va., 2002), 1–17. The scholarship on the topic is significantly more numerous than can be detailed here.

<sup>4</sup> Laurenz Volken, 'Sinn und Botschaft des Heiligen Landes', in *Papers Read at the 1979 Tantar Conference on Christianity in the Holy Land*, ed. by D.-M. A. Jaeger (Jerusalem, 1981), 97–118, broke open untrodden ground with a discussion of the

Pilgrims to late Roman Palestine were drawn to the holy places. For a Christian pilgrim a holy place was and is first and foremost a site concerning which a sufficient level of certainty can be reached that during his life on earth Christ came into physical contact with it.<sup>5</sup> Other places which qualified as holy places were sites related to the lives of Mary, the apostles, St Paul, or other New Testament figures,

meaning and message of the Holy Land. See also Francine Cardman, 'The Rhetoric of Holy Places: Palestine in the Fourth Century', *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982), 18–25. Welcoming Friedrich Heyer's *Church History of the Holy Land*, Lorenzo Perrone expressed the need for further and more in-depth studies of the topic in 'Per la storia della Palestina cristiana: La Storia della chiesa di Terra Santa di Friedrich Heyer', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 7 (1986), 141–165. Robert Wilken investigated the history of the concept of the 'Holy Land' first pursuing the idea of a Holy Land in an encyclopedia article, entitled 'Heiliges Land', in *TRE* 14 (1984), 684–694. Eight years later he studied the concept of the Holy Land chronologically in his substantial monograph *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven and London, 1992). For further useful studies see Sabine MacCormack, 'Loca Sancta: The Organization of Sacred Topography in Late Antiquity', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill., 1990), 7–40; John Wilkinson, 'Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill., 1990), 41–53; Cynthia Hahn, 'Loca Sancta Souvenirs: Sealing the Pilgrim's Experience', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill., 1990), 85–96; Robert Ousterhout, 'Loca Sancta and the Architectural Response to Pilgrimage', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill., 1990), 108–124; Robert Wilken, 'Eusebius and the Christian Holy Land', in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism* (Detroit, 1992), 736–759; Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford, 1993); Robert A. Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994), 257–271; Dorothea R. French, 'Mapping Sacred Centers: Pilgrimage and the Creation of Christian Topographies in Roman Palestine', in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 22–28 September, 1991*, vol. ii (Münster and Vatican City, 1995), 792–797; Aaron Demsky, 'Holy City and Holy Land as Viewed by Jews and Christians in the Byzantine Period: A Conceptual Approach to Sacred Space', in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden, 1998), 285–296; Hillel Isaac Newman, 'Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem: Jerome and the holy places of Palestine,' in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden, 1998), 215–227; and Zeev Rubin, 'The Cult of the Holy Places and Christian Politics in Byzantine Jerusalem', in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York, 1999), 151–162.

<sup>5</sup> The relevant sites could be connected with any event between the annunciation of Christ's birth to his ascension into heaven. According to ancient Christian tradition, that ascension happened on the Mount of Olives. It would be intriguing to search out if it was indeed Christ's ascension from the Mount of Olives which inspired so many early Christian ascetics to choose the Mount of Olives as the location of their cells. The Mount of Olives was also connected with the Messianic restoration prophesied by Ezekiel. From Rufus' works the Mount of Olives clearly emerges as one of the anti-Chalcedonian centres in the immediate environment of Jerusalem. A more detailed study of ascetic life on the Mount of Olives as such as well as of the spread of anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine is a *desideratum*.

or places that gained their significance from Old Testament events or persons. The sufficient, while still relative certainty was established mainly by way of reference to events in such people's lives in oral or written traditions which connected the person with the given site. Palestine also had its share of holy places in the form of tombs of martyrs, particularly from the pre-Constantinian persecutions.<sup>6</sup> With the growing recognition of the influence of holy men and women, many holy places emerged on the grounds that divinely favoured saints, mostly ascetics, had been or still were dwelling there. In such cases pilgrims desired to receive blessings from their immediate contact not so much with the sacred ground, but rather with the holy man or woman.<sup>7</sup>

Peter the Iberian is an excellent example of a fifth-century pilgrim to early Byzantine Palestine.<sup>8</sup> The discussion of his role as a

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea's *On the Martyrs of Palestine* is our main source of information concerning the persecution of Christians in Palestine during the first three centuries. Two recensions of this work, a shorter and a longer version, circulated. The shorter one is preserved in Greek. Of the longer one, Greek fragments have come down to us. The Greek text and fragments were published by Eduard Schwartz, 'Paralipomena: Eusebius über die Märtyrer in Palaestina', in Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann, *Eusebius: Kirchengeschichte*, ii.ii, GCS n.s. 6.2 (1999), 907–950. The full text of the longer recension is preserved in an ancient Syriac version, ed. and tr. in William Cureton, *History of the Martyrs in Palestine by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Discovered in a Very Ancient Syriac Manuscript* (London, 1861). A Georgian version has likewise been published. See G. Garitte, 'Version géorgienne de la Passion de saint Procope par Eusèbe', *Le Muséon* 66 (1953), 245–266.

<sup>7</sup> Walker, Hunt, Kofsky, and Perrone contributed significantly to the study of the question of Early Christian holy places. Walker demonstrated the emergence of a Christian theology in regard to the holy places in the fourth century based on the discoveries of relics and imperial building activities at holy places, especially in Jerusalem. See Peter W. L. Walker, 'Eusebius, Cyril, and the Holy Places', *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989), 306–314. See also Peter W. L. Walker, 'Gospel Sites and "Holy Places": The Contrasting Attitudes of Eusebius and Cyril', *Tyndale Bulletin* 41.1 (1990), 89–108. Hunt laid out in detail the importance of wealthy, aristocratic pilgrims for Jerusalem's development into the thriving centre of the Holy Land. See E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–460* (Oxford, 1984). Arieh Kofsky contributed to the issue in Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', as well as in Arieh Kofsky, 'Mamre: A Case of Regional Cult?' in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land (Fifth to Fifteenth Centuries C.E.)*, ed. by Guy G. Stroumsa and Arieh Kofsky (Jerusalem, 1998), 19–30. Lorenzo Perrone presented a paper at the International Workshop on 'Holy Land Pilgrimage', organized by Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Department of Comparative Religion, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Jerusalem, 4–7 February 1996). Subsequently the revised version was published as Lorenzo Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places and Pilgrimage in an Age of Dogmatic Conflicts: Popular Religion and Confessional Affiliation in Byzantine Palestine (Fifth to Seventh Centuries)', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 48 (1998), 5–37.

<sup>8</sup> For a modern Hebrew translation of several of the central passages in the *Vita Petri Iberi* that portray Peter as a pilgrim, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony,

pilgrim to the Holy Land and of related spiritual and polemical dimensions of the anti-Chalcedonian perception of pilgrimage as both אֲרֻמָּה / ξενιτεία and martyrdom can capitalize on insights gained from Rufus' main works.<sup>9</sup> The present chapter therefore treats aspects of pilgrimage to the Holy Land and veneration of the holy places which were of immediate relevance in Peter's career as the main representative of Palestinian anti-Chalcedonianism. Special attention is drawn to the severe difficulties anti-Chalcedonians experienced when their desire to venerate at holy places was frustrated by Chalcedonian control of the sites.

## THE ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN PILGRIM'S GOAL AND DESTINY

### 'Going Up to Jerusalem'

Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem is patterned in general on the example of Jews who for centuries regularly 'would go up to Jerusalem' to worship in the Temple.<sup>10</sup> The idea of going up to the Mountain of the Lord as evoked in the Psalms and in Isaiah was open to carrying notions of pilgrimage that developed in later centuries.<sup>11</sup> In the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Rufus speaks about the Holy City as the place of the 'rising of God and our Savior, Christ'.<sup>12</sup> When Abba Isaiah, Peter's influential soul-mate, spoke about the mystery of Christ's

פִּטְרוֹס הַיִּבְרִי עוֹלָה לְרִגְלֵי [The Pilgrim Peter the Iberian]', קַתְדֵרָה [Katedrah le-toldot Erets Yisrael ve-Yishuvah] / *Cathedra* 91 (1999), 97–112, here 107–112. On pp. 97–107 the author offers a brief discussion.

<sup>9</sup> See below, ch. 4, pp. 254–273.

<sup>10</sup> The specific formulation depends on the location of the City of Jerusalem rather high up in the hill country of Judaea. Two hills, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion, are familiar by name to many. The Jewish practice consisted of pilgrimage to Jerusalem on three separate annual feast days: on Pesach, Shavuot, and the Feast of Tabernacles. For a useful study of Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Jewish pilgrimage practices see Shmuel Safrai, *Die Wallfahrt im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> See Psalm 24:3, Psalms 120–134; and Isaiah 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 37. Raabe (*Petrus der Iberer*, 40) understands this phrase as expressing the 'rising [like the sun] of God and our Savior, Christ'. One might also think of Christ's 'rising' up on the Cross or even be reminded of the ascension as Christ's rising up into heaven. In addition to 'rising', the Syriac ܪܘܡܐ also means, in a more metaphorical sense, 'manifestation' or 'epiphany', which would allow for a smoother rendering into English. See Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 95.

death on the Cross, he often also talked about Christ as ‘ascending’ onto the Cross.<sup>13</sup> Even if Rufus did not use the phrase with the intention of establishing a connection between pilgrimage as ‘going up to Jerusalem’ and the experience of suffering of anti-Chalcedonians as their way of imitating Christ who ‘ascended’ onto the Cross, an attentive anti-Chalcedonian reader or listener may have drawn the parallel and seen it as a matrix for understanding and interpreting his or her own life’s experience, spanned between constant journeying and restlessness on the one hand and the suffering of the Cross on the other.

### PETER AS A PILGRIM

Of the many pilgrims who came to the Holy Land, some decided to stay there not only for a few days or weeks. Some ended up dwelling in the land for several years, others were even buried in the holy ground<sup>14</sup> at the end of their lives. Kofsky aptly formulated that ‘[a]mong the numerous Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land in the Late Roman and early Byzantine period, many came to stay’.<sup>15</sup> For that subgroup within the larger spectrum of Holy Land pilgrims he

<sup>13</sup> For related language, see also Matthew 27:42: ‘let him come down from the Cross now’. ‘Ascend’ often translates the Hebrew קָוַם (*qwm*), ‘stand’ or ‘stand up’, which is what one does on a cross. For bibliographical references and a more detailed discussion of this aspect of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality of the Cross, see below, ch. 5, pp. 342–350.

<sup>14</sup> Hesperius, assistant to an official in Augustine’s diocese, kept a lump of soil from the Holy Land in his bedroom. See Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei* 22.8 (ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphons Kalb, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Civitate Dei, libri XI–XXII*, CCSL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), 820, ll. 199–214): *Acceperat autem ab amico suo terram sanctam de Hierosolymis adlatam, ubi sepultus Christus die tertio resurrexit, eamque suspenderat in cubiculo suo, ne quid mali etiam ipse pateretur*. At that new holy site a young paralytic found healing (ll. 210–214). In c.400, in a letter to Severinus, Augustine of Hippo, *Epistula* 52.2 (ed. Al. Goldbacher, *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae, pars II, ep. XXXI–CXXIII*, CSEL 34 (Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, 1898), 150, ll. 6–11; tr. Sister Wilfrid Parson, *Saint Augustine: Letters, Vol. I (1–82)*, FOTC 12 (New York, 1951), 243–244) also suggested that the Donatists would show reverence to soil brought from the Holy Land, should the opportunity arise. See E. D. Hunt, ‘The Traffic in Relics: Some Late Roman Evidence’, in *The Byzantine Saint* (London, 1981; repr. Crestwood, NY, 2001), 171–180, here 177, who takes it as a fact that they did so. The language for referring to Israel/Palestine as ‘holy ground’ (אֲדַמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ / אֲדַמַת קֹּדֶשׁ / ἡ ἀγία γῆ / *terra sancta*) developed over time. See also the informative discussion in Wilken, ‘Heiliges Land’, 684–685, with references to Zechariah 2:16, Exodus 3:5, and others.

<sup>15</sup> Kofsky, ‘Peter the Iberian’, 209.

coined the handy term 'one-way pilgrims'.<sup>16</sup> Among ancient one-way pilgrims one can include Paula, Eustochium, Jerome, and Melania the Younger.<sup>17</sup>

Peter is a very good example of a slightly different kind of pilgrim. From among the larger set of one-way pilgrims one could single out a subset of visitors who made regular pilgrimages. Peter fits into this category: he visited the Holy Land at several instances throughout his life. First he came to the Holy City as pilgrim, settling directly in Jerusalem and, like the famous Egeria before him, visiting churches and holy places, including Mount Nebo.<sup>18</sup> After his almost twenty years as a refugee in Egypt, he returned to Palestine and again visited holy places, sometimes having to do so secretly. When he was on a missionary tour through parts of Arabia, again he saw himself as a pilgrim and in addition revisited the holy place of Mount Nebo. Finally, after his long tour along the Phoenician coast, his return was once more to the Holy Land, where he was buried in Maiuma.<sup>19</sup>

With the rise of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Christians held those able to live in Jerusalem in great esteem. An episode involving Arsilios, brother of Peter's grandfather, illustrates this. When Arsilios learned that Peter had renounced the world and was living as ascetic in the Holy City, Arsilios evoked a saying which was circulating among the Georgians and called out, 'Blessed is he who has seed in Zion and sons of [his] house in Jerusalem.'<sup>20</sup> Arsilios also asked Peter

<sup>16</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 209.

<sup>17</sup> See also the discussion in Hagith Sivan, 'Pilgrimage, Monasticism, and the Emergence of Christian Palestine in the 4th Century', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill. 1990), 54–65.

<sup>18</sup> The famous and exemplary pilgrim Egeria described her pilgrimage to Mount Nebo and sites in Jordan in her *Diary*. See Egeria, *Diary* 10–16 (ed. Aetio [Ezio] Franceschini and Robert Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 50–58; tr. George E. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 65–75). See also Michele Piccirillo, 'Il pellegrinaggio di Egeria al Monte Nebo in Arabia', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sulla Peregrinatio Egeriae*, ed. Alberto Fatucchi and others (Arezzo, 1990), 193–214.

<sup>19</sup> There are people who will always return, once the seed of affection and love for the Holy Land is planted in their hearts. The phenomenon continues until the present day and is documented in modern sources. The example of John Wiggins may suffice as illustration. Alan Mairson, 'The Three Faces of Jerusalem', *National Geographic*, 189.4 (April 1996), 8, writes about him: 'You might think Wiggins would have returned home for good, but his spiritual quest keeps pulling him back to the holiest of cities, a place that both fascinates and repels him. . . . He lives here now for six months of every year, spending much of his time visiting religious sites.'

<sup>20</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 10. See Psalm 128:5–6. I owe this reference to Robert R. Phenix Jr.



ascents in his heart. . . . [and] was exchanging fire for fire, higher and clearer,<sup>27</sup> he yearned to depart afar from the world and from its vanity and to hasten to the first of virtues, which is pilgrimage'.<sup>28</sup> Notice the emphasis which Peter and John laid on considering 'pilgrimage' or the 'condition of a stranger' as 'the first of virtues'. While several other men and women from throughout the known Christian world at the time came on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and turned it effectively into 'a land of strangers', Peter and John's motivation seemed to have consisted more in reaching the heavenly Jerusalem, and, thus, in coming 'home' rather than in seeing the benefit of experiencing the situation of being away from home, a state of deprivation, in order to reach the greater good later on.

At the end of his life, Peter expressly stated his wish to die while on pilgrimage. On his return journey to his Maiuma Monastery he arrived at Ashdod where he 'lodged in a depot, set up at the seashore, a narrow and despicable place, and without any bodily comfort. For in lodging[s] like these the blessed one rejoiced, as a stranger and a foreigner'.<sup>29</sup> Peter resisted all urges and petitions from his friends and from visitors who insisted that he speed up his journey to reach his home monastery more quickly. Instead, as Rufus said, Peter was 'taking pains . . . that he would be perfected in a foreign country and weave also in [his] end the crown of a good pilgrimage'.<sup>30</sup>

### *Stages of His Pilgrimage*

While Peter's whole life can be seen as a pilgrimage in a wider sense, he also undertook pilgrimages in the narrower sense of the word by engaging in travel in order to reach religiously important sites. Rufus specified at least two pilgrimages; one to Jerusalem and a shorter one to Mount Nebo.

The first and more significant pilgrimage, the one to Jerusalem, developed in several stages. Rufus distinguished an initial, preparatory period during which Peter and his friend John the Eunuch had to find ways of how best to escape from the imperial court. The central stage comprised their flight from the palace and their wanderings through Asia Minor and along the Mediterranean coast of southern Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, and finally Palestine. For Rufus those wanderings were comparable to the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion above, ch. 3, pp. 128–129.

<sup>28</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

<sup>29</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121. For Ashdod, see Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 72; and Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 10 /nn. 25, 36, 73, and 87, pp. 860, 861, 863, and 864.

<sup>30</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 122.

The concluding section of that pilgrimage featured Peter's and John the Eunuch's emotionally charged encounter with the Holy City as the embodiment of the Promised Land.

### **Obstacles in Constantinople**

The first who learned about Peter's pilgrimage plans were members of his Georgian entourage, the slaves of his own household, and his bodyguard.<sup>31</sup> He soon met with resistance even to the point of attacks on his life in order to prevent him from leaving the court. Rufus characterized these attacks as demonic forces instigating human beings for their own ends.<sup>32</sup> Rufus did not ignore that Peter's servants and household members had concrete national and private interests which motivated their actions as well. Out of loyalty to the Georgian king, some might have felt a certain sense of responsibility to assure that the young prince would be well protected and properly guarded at the court. Others, somewhat reminiscent of the Israelites in the desert who deplored their loss of Egypt's fleshpots,<sup>33</sup> simply seemed afraid of the prospect of having to exchange their privileged, comfortable conditions at the court for a troublesome, dangerous existence on the road accompanying their master on his pilgrimage or, later on, living with him in a new, unknown environment in Jerusalem. Again others, as Georgians, exemplified by his store-keeper, had strong expectations of their young prince. Peter had been sent 'for honour and royal glory to the Romans',<sup>34</sup> not to become a monk, which was part of Peter's goal as a pilgrim.

Peter's planned pilgrimage threatened to cause political problems in so far as it implied his absence from the imperial court.<sup>35</sup> Since he was not simply a guest at Theodosius' court, but rather was there as a political hostage and as such was a guarantee of Georgian loyalty to the Byzantine Empire, it is no surprise that Theodosius was unfavourable to Peter's plans. Rufus expressed Theodosius' concerns by saying that

the God-fearing King Theodosius . . . was anxious to keep [him] as a hostage, so that if [the child] were demanded [back] by [his] people and he [could] not present him as he received him, he should make them foes and enemies instead of friends and allies.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

<sup>32</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>33</sup> Exodus 16:3.

<sup>34</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18.

<sup>35</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 210, shares the view that '[t]he political implication of his [namely, Peter's] escape may have prevented him from leaving' at any earlier point in time.

<sup>36</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

It seems that Theodosius II explained to Peter his hesitations and finally gave his *non placet* to the young man. Rufus did not indicate whether a meeting took place in a formal audience or privately. As a consequence Peter was placed under strict custody in order to prevent any unforeseeable activities on his part, particularly his escape.<sup>37</sup>

### **Flight**

The only way Peter could escape out of imperially imposed custody was by taking to flight, Rufus calling it ‘the flight of salvation’.<sup>38</sup> Both Peter and his companion, John, the ‘advisor and companion of the flight of salvation’,<sup>39</sup> escaped with divine help through the mediation of martyrs.

Pilgrimage as flight constituted a significant motif in Peter’s life. Taking to flight typified Peter’s reaction to a given situation when he wished to remain true to what he perceived as God’s will.<sup>40</sup> Those occasions were stages from which he continued on his life-long journey in defence of the anti-Chalcedonian confession.

*The Implications of the Use of Exodus Imagery* Wishing to show how God helped Peter in the early stages of his pilgrimage, Rufus alluded to the Exodus. According to Rufus, God freed Peter from imperial custody as he once freed the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. God ‘led and guarded him . . . with a mighty hand and outstretched arm’.<sup>41</sup> With reference to ‘signs and wonders’ Rufus implied that the miracles which God worked for Peter and John on their way to Jerusalem could be compared to the many miracles which God worked for the sustenance and protection of the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land.<sup>42</sup> Rufus emphasized the comparison when he said that Christ ‘led and guarded [Peter] . . . as he once snatched Israel from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and brought [them] into the Land of the Promise, which is flowing with milk and honey’.<sup>43</sup>

Early Christian biblical exegesis and liturgical commentary on Scripture developed an interpretation of the Exodus of the Israelites

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

<sup>38</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>39</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>40</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49, 50, 54, and elsewhere.

<sup>41</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21. See Deuteronomy 11:2.

<sup>42</sup> The combination of God’s powerful hand and lifted arm and the ‘signs and wonders’ recalls Deuteronomy 11:2–3. See also the prominence of this theme of ‘signs and wonders’ in the mind of later Chalcedonian writers, fittingly highlighted already in the title of the article by Sidney H. Griffith, ‘The Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy: Miracles and Monks’ Lives in Sixth-Century Palestine’, in *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth* (Notre Dame, Ind. 1999), 139–168.

<sup>43</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21. See Deuteronomy 11:9.

as a typological prefiguration of baptism. One may discover on the literary level this layer of meaning underlying Rufus' account.<sup>44</sup> In his treatise *de baptismo* Tertullian explained that

First, indeed, when the people, set unconditionally free, escaped the violence of the Egyptian king by crossing over through water, it was water that extinguished the king himself, with his entire forces. What figure is present more clearly in the sacrament of baptism? The nations are set free from the world by means of water, to wit: and the devil, their old tyrant, they leave quite behind, overwhelmed in the water.<sup>45</sup>

Cyprian developed this theology of baptism further. He explained that in the same way in which Pharaoh set out after the Israelites pursuing them up to the Red Sea and finally being defeated so also does the devil pursue the catechumens right up to the waters of baptism trying to snatch them away at the last minute.<sup>46</sup> Dölger has shown that this motif became a commonplace in early Christian baptismal catecheses.<sup>47</sup> If one combines the three elements, namely, first that Peter experienced resistance from the sides of Theodosius II, his bodyguards, and the members of his household, the latter of whom in particular were described as instruments of the demons, second that Rufus employed Exodus imagery to illustrate Peter's pilgrimage, and third that Peter received the monastic habit in Jerusalem, that is, in the 'Promised Land', Rufus seems to suggest that in his pilgrimage to Jerusalem Peter was preparing himself for the initiation into the proper monastic life which finally occurred in

<sup>44</sup> For a useful summary and discussion of the Exodus motif in early Christian literature see Jean Daniélou, 'Exodus', in *RAC* 7 (1969), cols. 22–44; for the following see especially cols. 33–34.

<sup>45</sup> Tertullian, *De baptismo* 9.1 (ed. R. F. Refoulé and M. Drouzy, *Traité du baptême*, SCh 35 (Paris, 1952), 78; English tr. S. Thelwall, ANF 3 (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1950), 673 (modified)): *Primum quidem, cum populus de Aegypto expeditus, vim regis Aegypti per aquam transgressus evadit, ipsum regem cum totis copiis aqua extinguit. quae figura manifestior in baptismi sacramento? liberantur de saeculo nationes, per aquam scilicet, et diabolum dominatorem pristinum in aqua obpressum derelinquunt.*

<sup>46</sup> Cyprian, *Epistulae* 69.15 (ed. Wilhelm Hartel, *S. Thasci Caecili Cypriani Opera Omnia*, CSEL 3. 2 (1871), 749–766, 764–765). See also Origen, *In Exodum* 5.5 (ed. PG 12.297–396, here 330–331; ed. W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke*, vol. vi: *Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, pt. i: *Die Homilien zu Genesis, Exodus und Leviticus*, GCS 29 (Leipzig, 1920), 189–191, here 190; ed. and tr. Marcel Borret, *Origène: Homélie sur l'Exode*, SCh 321 (Paris, 1985), 164–168; also tr. Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, FOTC 71 (Washington, DC, 1982), 227–387, here 282–284). See also Daniélou, 'Exodus', 33.

<sup>47</sup> F. J. Dölger, 'Der Durchzug durch das Rote Meer als Sinnbild der christlichen Taufe', *Antike und Christentum* 2 (Münster, 1930), 63–69.

Jerusalem in a way that was very similar to the common preparation for baptism.

Imitatio Mosis:<sup>48</sup> *Peter and Moses*: Not unlike other early Christian authors, Rufus was able to exploit for his literary feats the rich imagery provided by the portrait of the patriarch Moses and found mainly in the Pentateuch.<sup>49</sup> Rufus compares Peter to Moses frequently.<sup>50</sup> The discussion of the dimensions of Peter's ascetic identity has already shown that on a certain level the imitation of Moses was relevant for Peter's ascetic self-understanding.<sup>51</sup> The parallel between Moses and Peter is even more prominent with regard to Peter's identity as a pilgrim.

After Peter arrived in the Holy City he went on a short pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, not far from Jerusalem and slightly to the north-east of the Dead Sea. The great prophet Moses had died in that area.<sup>52</sup> Yet Scripture states explicitly that no one knew the exact place of his burial.<sup>53</sup> In the course of time, however, Mount Nebo came to be

<sup>48</sup> For the application of that phrase to circumstances within a strictly Jewish context, see Burton L. Mack, 'Imitatio Mosis: Patterns of Cosmology and Soteriology in the Hellenistic Synagogue', in *Studia Philonica*, vol. i (Chicago, 1972), 27–55.

<sup>49</sup> A discussion of the extent to which Peter the Iberian or John Rufus qualify as potentially identifiable with the author of the Pseudo-Dionysian *Corpus* will have to consider the use of Moses in that work. For a study of the role of the figure of Moses in Pseudo-Dionysian spirituality, see Paul Rorem, 'Moses as the Paradigm for the Liturgical Spirituality of Pseudo-Dionysius', *Studia Patristica* 18.2 (1989), 275–279.

<sup>50</sup> Comparisons between Moses and a given early Christian figure are not uncommon. Eusebius of Caesarea readily drew a parallel between Moses and Emperor Constantine. See Michael J. Hollerich, 'The Comparison of Moses and Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine*', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 80–85; a study of the parallel between Moses and Peter the Iberian appeared as Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Imitatio Mosis and Pilgrimage in the Life of Peter the Iberian', in *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2004), 108–131. The author kindly alerted me to her forthcoming work.

<sup>51</sup> See above, ch. 3, pp. 181–184.

<sup>52</sup> For studies of the death of Moses see Samuel E. Loewenstamm, 'The Death of Moses', in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (Missoula, Mont., 1976), 185–217; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, 'The Testament of Abraham and Texts Concerning Moses' Death', in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (Missoula, Mont., 1976), 219–225; Rüdiger Lux, 'Der Tod des Mose als "besprochene und erzählte Welt": Überlegungen zu einer literaturwissenschaftlichen und theologischen Interpretation von Deuteronomium 32,48–52 und 34', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 84.4 (1987), 395–425; Klaus Haacker and Peter Schäfer, 'Nachbiblische Traditionen vom Tod des Mose', in *Josephus-Studien: Untersuchungen zu Josephus, dem antiken Judentum und dem Neuen Testament: Otto Mechel zum 70sten Geburtstag gewidmet* (Göttingen, 1974), 147–174.

<sup>53</sup> See Deuteronomy 34:6.

seen as Moses' burial site.<sup>54</sup> On the occasion of reporting about Peter's second visit to Mount Nebo, to which he went in the company of Rufus, Rufus also told about Peter's first pilgrimage to the site.<sup>55</sup> One notices that Peter climbed up to Mount Nebo twice and prayed at the traditional burial place of Moses, who himself had ascended two mountains, Horeb (Exodus 3:1) and Sinai (Exodus 19:20), the latter of which he ascended also a second time (Exodus 24:12–18), and encountered God. In detailing such events, Rufus seems to suggest that one should view the whole of Peter's life as a pilgrimage within the tight framework of a close comparison to the events in the life of the prophet Moses. Rufus might have intended to portray Peter as one who surpassed Moses;<sup>56</sup> he certainly wished to present him as one who fulfilled what was begun in Moses' life. God had led Moses up to the Promised Land but had allowed him only to see it from afar. Peter, on the other hand, could enter and even dwell directly in that Promised Land.

The particular purpose for which Moses' sanctuary on Mount Nebo served in popular piety is telling. Rufus wrote that

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 for all people, of souls and of bodies, and a [place of] refuge for all those who arrive here from everywhere and are in sorrow in [their] soul and are seized by various sufferings.<sup>57</sup>

Whoever made a pilgrimage to Mount Nebo and climbed up the mountain found healing not only for his or her body, but, more importantly, also for his or her soul. Early Christian literature had a long tradition of interpreting the Exodus as a journey of the soul.<sup>58</sup> Following Origen, biblical exegesis emphasized a moral application

<sup>54</sup> See Egeria, *Diary* 12.2 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 52; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 68).

<sup>55</sup> See also Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo*, 341–347 and 110–111; Piccirillo, 'Il pellegrinaggio di Egeria al Monte Nebo', 210; and Eugenio Alliata, 'The Pilgrimage Routes in the Byzantine Period in Transjordan', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 121–124.

<sup>56</sup> For the discussion of classic aspects of such a motif where events of Christian history surpass the Old Testament models, see, for example, Sara F. Harding, 'Christ as greater than Moses in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* I–II', *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997), 397–400.

<sup>57</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 89.

<sup>58</sup> Daniélou, 'Exodus', 33–34.

of biblical events, exemplifying it also with the Exodus experience.<sup>59</sup> Such travels were seen as illustrations of how the soul became estranged from its familiar places where it felt at home.

One of the important works in Eastern Christian literature that is based on this motif is Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*.<sup>60</sup> Having composed it in two parts, a *historia* and a *theoria*, Gregory first talked about the Exodus from Egypt, following closely the model of Philo of Alexandria's *Vita Mosis*.<sup>61</sup> In the second part, Gregory incorporated his account of the travels of the soul from its birth up until its mystical ascent into heaven and a section of the life of the prophet Moses, which Origen had not dealt with, namely, the ascent to Mount Sinai.<sup>62</sup> One wonders if Rufus may not have seen a further parallel between the prophet Moses and Peter in regard to their ascent onto a mountain: in the case of Moses the ascent both onto Mount Sinai and onto Mount Nebo, and in the case of Peter, following in Moses' footsteps, at least the ascent onto Mount Nebo, the very mountain dedicated to the prophet Moses, which indeed happened twice.<sup>63</sup> Moses became the law-giver for the people of Israel—a fact which Rufus emphasized by calling him 'the great prophet and law-giver'.<sup>64</sup> Peter did not become a law-giver in the full sense of the word. Yet the authority of the one whose decisions determined what had to be followed, and what thus was the law, did rest with him. By placing Peter in parallel to Moses, Rufus expressed that for anti-Chalcedonians Peter was the true custodian of the law, and thus the true custodian of the faith that is as old as Moses. In line with the prophets, that faith goes back to the same source from which Moses received the law, namely, to God. Through the parallel with Moses, Peter became the guarantee of the true faith for anti-Chalcedonians.

After Peter had assisted in Timothy Aelurus' episcopal ordination and had withdrawn from Alexandria in order to live in quiet and devotion to God, Rufus introduced his return to the public platform by calling him a 'servant of God and fellow of the zeal of the great Moses'.<sup>65</sup> Subsequently, Rufus described how Peter became aware of the threat posed to the truth of the faith of the anti-Chalcedonians and went around strengthening them in their weakness:

<sup>59</sup> Daniélou, 'Exodus', 38–39, refers to Ambrose (*Expl. in Ps.* 118: 5. 3/4; 12. 35; 13.6; 16.22 and 29) and Jerome (*Ep.* 78, which summarizes Origen's homily 27 on Numbers) as main representatives of this interpretation in the West.

<sup>60</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis*, ed. Jean Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse: La Vie de Moïse ou traité de la perfection en matière de vertu*, Sch 1 (Paris, 2nd edn. 1955).

<sup>61</sup> Daniélou, 'Exodus', 39. See also Jean Daniélou, 'Moïse exemple et figure chez Grégoire de Nysse', *Cahiers Sion* 8 (1954), 267–305.

<sup>62</sup> Daniélou, 'Exodus', 39. <sup>63</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

<sup>64</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 89. <sup>65</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 70–71.

[H]e went again to the city of the Alexandrians and to the holy monasteries surrounding it and to many other cities and villages of Egypt, going around everywhere secretly. He was building up and supporting the crowds of the orthodox and . . . giving in word and in deed his way of life and his manner [as] an example for the teaching of the ways of life of the fear of God and divine zeal.<sup>66</sup>

Even if this ‘going around everywhere secretly’ is not an act of pilgrimage in the sense of visiting a holy site or holy people for the purpose of veneration, nevertheless, it is expressive of an essential aspect of the spirituality of pilgrimage. The one ‘going around’ is on the way and is doing so for the purpose of strengthening faith, either his or her own faith or the faith of others. In addition, it also captures the ultimate freedom of the ascetic.

While travelling in the areas of Arabia and in need of healing for his ailing body, Peter once went to bathe in the hot spring ‘which is in Livias, the one which is called “of Saint Moses”’.<sup>67</sup> Even though the waters of that hot spring did not show their curative powers in the case of Peter’s sickness, the fact that Rufus mentioned the name of the spring as that ‘of Saint Moses’ implies that trust in the intercessory power of ‘Saint Moses’ for healing his bodily needs functioned as a motive for Peter’s trip to that spring. Continuing his journey from the spring ‘of Saint Moses’ to another hot spring at Ba‘ar and then leading his steps toward Madaba, ‘midway [Peter and the group] arrived at the holy Mountain of Moses, . . . where God had said to him, “Ascend and die!”’.<sup>68</sup>

For the second time when Peter visited Mount Nebo Rufus attested to the presence there of a sanctuary of Moses, a ‘very large’ and ‘worshipful temple’, with ‘many monasteries built around it in a

<sup>66</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 71.

<sup>67</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 83. For the waters of the spa at Livias, see also the description of Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 10 (ed. Paulus Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi III–VIII*, CSEL 39 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1898), 165–166), who says: *Ibi in proximo est civitas quae vocantur Liviada, ubi remanserunt duo semis tribus Israel, antequam Iordanem transirent, in quo loco sunt termas ex se lavantes, quae vocantur Moysi, ibi etiam et leprosi mundantur. Est ibi fons, aqua dulcissima, quae pro catarticum bibitur et sanat multos languores, non longe a mare salinarum, in qua etiam et Iordanis ingreditur subtus Sodoma et Gomurra, . . . In qua mare mense Iulio et Augusto et medio Septembrio tota die iacent leprosi; ad vesperum lavant in illas termas Moysi et aliquotiens, quem vult deus, mundatur.* As bathing was not only applied in cases of sickness, note Claudine Dauphin, ‘Leprosy, Lust and Lice: Health and Hygiene in Byzantine Palestine’, *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 15 (1996–7), 55–80, who provides valuable background information on conditions of hygiene in Palestine at the time.

<sup>68</sup> Deuteronomy 31:4; *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

circle'.<sup>69</sup> The first time Peter had visited the location only as a pilgrim. The second time a large crowd of people from the surrounding area accompanied him and his friends and went up to Mount Nebo not only to be 'esteemed . . . worthy of the blessing and the veneration of such a prophet', referring to the prophet Moses, but for the express purpose of meeting with 'the Old Man', which in the given context is to be understood as a reference to Peter.<sup>70</sup> Rufus presented the crowds of people as engaging in a double pilgrimage, a pilgrimage to meet two holy men, one already dead and one still alive. Thus, of course, Rufus was substantially enhancing Peter's status by connecting it with the aura of a recognized holy man, patriarch, and prophet.

The next station on Peter's way was the city of Madaba.<sup>71</sup> According to Rufus, Peter's prayers there opened up the heavens so that rain poured down on the dried-up land of the region, ending a lengthy period of drought. In response to the miracle, all of the people

were calling him [that is, Peter] 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 (see 1 Kings 18), the latter, on the other hand, as one who brought forth water from solid rock for those who were in danger from thirst (see Exodus 17:1-7).<sup>72</sup>

In the same way that the prophet Moses had prayed and worked miracles in the desert, letting water gush forth from the rocks for the Israelites,<sup>73</sup> so now Rufus could depict Peter as the holy man whose prayers opened the gates of heaven and let rain pour down on the people who were living at the fringes of the desert.

Three aspects of Rufus' description of Peter's visit to the hot springs of Ba'ar fit with the Mosaic topos. First, when the reed huts, in which the people who accompanied Peter were staying, caught fire and threatened to burn everyone,

<sup>69</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85. For excavation reports of several of these buildings, see the references above, ch. 3, pp. 182-183, n. 341.

<sup>70</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

<sup>71</sup> For studies pertaining to the late antique Christian history of that city and the adjacent region, see American Schools of Oriental Research, *Tell Madaba Archaeological Project* (Boston, 1998); Patricia Maynor Bikai, Thomas A. Dailey, and Timothy Harrison, *Madaba: Cultural Heritage* (Amman, 1996); Branwen Denton, *The Madaba Archaeological Park* (Amman, 1994); Herbert Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: an Introductory Guide* (Kampen, 1992); Michele Piccirillo, *Madaba, Mount Nebo, Umm er-Rasas: A Brief Guide to the Antiquities* (Amman, 1990); and Michele Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici di Madaba* (Jerusalem, 1989). See also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Madaba (146), 596-603.

<sup>72</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 90.

<sup>73</sup> Exodus 17:6.

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. And while his mouth was silent, in his heart only he was crying out to God like Moses.<sup>74</sup>

In response to Peter's prayers, all the booths immediately became dust and ashes and the fire was extinguished. No one was hurt, 'except for only a pack-saddle of one donkey'.<sup>75</sup> The description of Peter as the one who 'stood in front of all of them and stretched out his hands to heaven', praying 'in his heart . . . like Moses' recalls the scene of the Israelites' victorious battle against the Amalekites, on which occasion Moses prayed with outstretched arms, supported on the left and on the right by Aaron and Hur.<sup>76</sup>

The second miracle at the occasion of Peter's visit to the spring of Ba'ar showed the absence of even a single swarm of flies which usually troubled the people bathing.<sup>77</sup> One is reminded of one of the plagues afflicting the Egyptians when they did not want to let the Israelites leave their country.<sup>78</sup> To the extent that Moses' presence in Egypt shielded the Israelites from the insects afflicting the Egyptians, so too did Peter's presence protect the people coming along with him in order to take a bath. Finally, the natural wonder of two streams of water, one hot, the other cold, gushing forth from two holes in the wall of a cave at the locality of the spring of Ba'ar and providing a bath of pleasant temperature,<sup>79</sup> even if Peter was not actively involved in working or influencing this natural miracle, easily recalls the scenes in which upon Moses' command water erupted from the rock in the desert at Meribah.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 92.

<sup>75</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 93. The precision in recording this detail might be taken as an attempt on the part of Rufus to keep a balance between recording astonishing, miraculous events and historical facts that could be proven physically.

<sup>76</sup> See Exodus 17:8–13.

<sup>77</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 93.

<sup>78</sup> Exodus 8:16–19.

<sup>79</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 93–94.

<sup>80</sup> Exodus 17:5–7 and Numbers 20:8–11. Note the discussion in Hendrik F. Stander, 'The Patristic Exegesis of Moses Striking the Rock (Ex 17:1–7 and Num 20:1–13)', *Coptic Church Review* 12 (1991), 67–77. For a traditional identification of the location of the rock from which Moses' staff caused water to come forth in the neighbourhood of Mount Nebo, see Egeria, *Diary* II.2 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 51–52; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 67). See also Theodosius, *De situ Terrae Sanctae* 19 (ed. P. Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi IIII–VIII*, CSEL 39 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1898), 137–150, here 145; also ed. P. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 115–125, here 121) and Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 37 (ed. P. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 129–153, here 147).

The parallel between Peter and Moses is drawn until the very end of Peter's life. When he and his friends stayed in and around Jamnia, Peter worked many wonders, healings, and exorcisms so that 'when those believers were seeing these wonders and were enjoying his help, they called him a second Moses'.<sup>81</sup> Thus Rufus took every effort to portray Peter as a 'prophet like Moses'.

The expectation of a 'prophet like Moses' had strongly messianic overtones in certain minority communities in Palestine,<sup>82</sup> especially among the Samaritans, with whom Peter and his disciples were in contact.<sup>83</sup> Rufus' agenda in emphasizing the parallel between Peter and Moses therefore may have included the hope to gain converts from among other minority communities to the anti-Chalcedonian circle around Peter the Iberian.

A second interest Rufus might have been pursuing in portraying Peter as being in parallel to Moses is implicit. For Rufus, Peter not only paralleled but ultimately surpassed Moses. Rufus did not need to remind his audience that Moses died without having been able to enter the Promised Land. A biblically immersed audience knew that God had denied him access.<sup>84</sup> During the earlier part of his life, Peter the Iberian had had free access to the Holy City and had been able to travel without any hindrance to whichever site he wished. After his return from Egypt, however, Peter had to avoid entering Jerusalem, most pressingly because of the Chalcedonian hostility to any anti-Chalcedonian presence. As a man who interpreted the whole of his life as a pilgrimage, to live out such a decision would have been difficult at the very least on a spiritual level. Despite Chalcedonian control, the Holy City continued to be the main point of attraction for any pilgrim, including the anti-Chalcedonian one, by virtue of the presence of the central holy places. Thus, when Rufus told of Peter's spiritual nightly pilgrimages to the Holy City,<sup>85</sup> he presented him, at least indirectly, as someone who had the authority to determine on his own when and how often he would enter that 'Promised Land'.

<sup>81</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 127.

<sup>82</sup> On this important motif in early Jewish literature, see the discussion in Ferdinand Dexinger, 'Der "Prophet wie Mose" in Qumran und bei den Samaritanern', in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Mathias Delcor* (Kluge, 1985), 97–111.

<sup>83</sup> While some encounters between anti-Chalcedonian ascetics and Samaritans took place in the context of bloody violence (see *Plerophoriae* 10), in instances in which Peter the Iberian was personally involved, the encounter focused on the healing and miraculous power of which Peter disposed and thus even led to conversions (see *Vita Petri Iberi* 127).

<sup>84</sup> Exodus 34:4.

<sup>85</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98–100.

## Reaching the Goal of the Pilgrimage: The Holy Places

Peter and John approached the Holy City from the north. Their first encounter with the city occurred on top of a hill. The precise location of that hill cannot be determined,<sup>86</sup> since Rufus only tells that the hill was at a distance of five ‘stadia’, that is, about half a mile, from the city, and that the two pilgrims approaching the city could see the Church of the Ascension located opposite to them on the top of the Mount of Olives.<sup>87</sup>

The view of Jerusalem must have been spectacular. Peter and John ‘saw . . . like the flashing of the sunrise the high roof of the holy and worshipful churches, that of the saving and worshipful Cross, of the holy Anastasis’.<sup>88</sup> The Church of the Holy Sepulchre or Anastasis was clearly at the centre of the two pilgrims’ attention. They came for and found the place of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of

<sup>86</sup> Other pilgrims to the Holy City like David of Garesja (late fifth /early sixth century), one of the thirteen Syrian Fathers of Georgia, ‘arrived at the place which is called the Hill of Mercy, from which the city of God, the holy Jerusalem, can be seen’. See Arsen II of Georgia, ‘Life of David of Garesja’ (tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, ch. 5, pp. 83–93, here 93). On the authorship of the ‘Life of David of Garesja’, see Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 411.

<sup>87</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, ch. 43 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius I.1 (Berlin, 1975), 101–102; revised tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 530–531) 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, for example, Egeria, *Diary* 30.2 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘Itinerarium Egeriae’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 77; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 104). The place more explicitly identified as the one ‘from which the Lord ascended into heaven’ by Egeria, *Diary* 35.4 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘Itinerarium Egeriae’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 79; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 108), was marked by the so-called Imbomon or Inbomon, which was erected as a church before AD 378 by the wealthy Roman lady Poemenia (see *Vita Petri Iberi* 30). When Rufus speaks of the Church of the Ascension, he has not in mind the building erected by Queen Helena, and ultimately destroyed by the Persians in AD 610, but rather Poemenia’s foundation on the top of the hill. See also Schick, ‘The Fate of the Christians’, entry: Jerusalem (87 A) Eleona, pp. 542–543, and entry: Jerusalem (87 E) Ascension, pp. 547–548.

<sup>88</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26. While in the West, the church is best known as ‘the Church of the Holy Sepulchre’, Eastern tradition refers to it as ‘the Church of the Anastasis’ or ‘the Church of the Resurrection’.

Christ. A Christian audience that would have heard the description ‘flashing like the sunrise’ would readily be reminded of Christ, who not infrequently was venerated with reference to the image of the sun. Such an allusion would also have confirmed a Christian’s imagination of Christ at his second coming, who was expected to arise from the east like the rising of the sun.<sup>89</sup>

It is worth noting that Rufus spoke of one roof for churches, using ‘churches’ in the plural. Clearly, he seems to be referring only to one building, namely the Holy Sepulchre or Anastasis, that ‘central shrine of Christendom’,<sup>90</sup> erected by Constantine.<sup>91</sup> When it was finished in AD 384, it consisted of four elements: ‘[1] an atrium, . . . ; [2] a covered apsidal basilica; [3] an open courtyard with the block of stone venerated as Golgotha in the south-east corner; [4] the tomb in a circular edifice’.<sup>92</sup> Rufus’ plural, ‘churches’, might be explained by the presence of several individual sites in the one location. The ‘roof’ he refers to is most certainly the outer lead layer<sup>93</sup> of the roof of the covered basilica with apsis.

Approaching Jerusalem, Peter and John felt they were experiencing the fulfilment of the prophecy, which Isaiah had pronounced. Rufus said that when atop the hill the two ‘cried out aloud, fulfilling that prophetic word, “Behold, Zion, the city of our salvation. Your eyes shall see Jerusalem.”’<sup>94</sup> The salvation referred to is the salvation of mankind accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in this city. When writing against heretics, Irenaeus of Lyons had already used Isaiah 33:20 as a text which proved ‘that He

<sup>89</sup> See most recently the study by Martin Wallraff, *Christus Verus Sol: Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike* (Münster, 2001). See also Martin Wallraff, ‘Die Ursprünge der christlichen Gebetsostung’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 111.2 (2000), 169–184.

<sup>90</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land* (Oxford and New York, 1998), 45.

<sup>91</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, chs. 26–40 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 95–101; revised tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 527–530).

<sup>92</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land*, 47 (spelling modified).

<sup>93</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, ch. 36 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 100; revised tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 529): ‘With regard to the roof, it was covered on the outside with lead, as a protection against the rains of winter.’

<sup>94</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26–27. See Luke 2:30–31, alluding to Isaiah 40:5 and Isaiah 52:10.

Himself would become very man, visible, while being the Word giving salvation'.<sup>95</sup>

When the two pilgrims saw Jerusalem, they praised Christ in deep gratitude that through calling the two to a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he had led them out of Constantinople and guided them, saving and protecting them against the dangers on the journey.<sup>96</sup> Given that Rufus had made extensive use of Exodus imagery in his description of their pilgrimage, one may not go wrong in understanding also their love for Christ in the sense that they were thankful for having been called to be God's chosen people, being called out of exile and led to their true home, a place in immediate proximity to Christ, and for having been saved from death by the life-giving death of Christ on the Cross, which now they were able to reach as the goal of their pilgrimage.

Peter and John expressed their joy in a physical way by coming in direct bodily contact with the Holy Land and the places there. When they were on top of the hill north of Jerusalem, they threw themselves on their faces, performing an act of prostration (*proskynesis*). The two pilgrims crawled on their knees for the rest of the way until they arrived inside of the walls of the Holy City and embraced the base of the Cross on Golgotha. On their way, they repeatedly touched the holy ground with their lips and eyes. The pilgrims' expressions of happiness—weeping, praising, lauding, and glorifying—were stimulated by their sense of sight. The two senses of touch and sight both constituted the experience of physically accepting Jesus. It also mediated to them the feeling that they were already 'dwelling with Him in heaven'.<sup>97</sup>

Yet another aspect of Peter's and John's worship practice seems open to different interpretations. Rufus repeatedly mentions that either Peter or one of his later anti-Chalcedonian fellow believers was praying at night at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or at another of the holy places.<sup>98</sup> Of course, then as now night-time prayer and prayer services were not unheard of.<sup>99</sup> They were and

<sup>95</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* 3.20.4 (ed. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau, *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les Hérésies*, bk. 3. SCh 211 (Paris, 1974), 394, ll. 12–15): *Et quoniam hic ipse homo verus visibilis incipiet esse, cum sit Verbum salutare, rursus Esaias ait: 'Ecce, Sion civitas, salutarem nostrum oculi tui videbunt.'*

<sup>96</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27. <sup>97</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.

<sup>98</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40, 98–99, 130, and 137.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 11 and 16; *Plerophoriae* 4, 21, 25, 29, 51, 90, and 92, probably also at *Plerophoriae* 72 and 77. Also Melania 'remained at the Cross (*παρέμεινεν τῷ Σταυρῷ*)' and prayed in the Anastasis complex at night, after the gates had been closed. Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 36 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 194–196). See also, for example, Tertullian, *Ad uxorem* II. 5.3 (ed. and

still seem to be attended most often by ascetics, both monks and nuns.<sup>100</sup> However, Rufus' description of anti-Chalcedonian saints praying at the holy places at night also indicates either that the anti-Chalcedonians had to avoid visiting those places by day, because the Chalcedonians did not welcome their opponents' presence, or that anti-Chalcedonians did not wish to be seen praying at the same places where Chalcedonians were performing their services and liturgies.

### *The Central Holy Place: The Anastasis or Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was of particular importance for Peter and his fellow anti-Chalcedonians. Rufus' account reflects that centrality in several ways. During his time in the Holy City, Peter frequently went at night to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and, especially, to the Rock of Golgotha in order to pray.<sup>101</sup> Rufus repeatedly speaks of the churches of the Holy City as 'holy', 'venerable', 'saving', and 'worshipful'.<sup>102</sup> He uses the adjectives 'saving' and 'worshipful' in particular with reference to the *Anastasis*.<sup>103</sup> Knowledge of the fact that Melania and Pinianus had clothed Gerontius with the monastic habit after it had been laid on the Rock of Golgotha in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre very likely influenced Peter to see the significance of that special holy place for his own life and self-identity as an ascetic. In later years, a whole order of ascetics developed whose specific task was to pray to and venerate God at the holy sites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>104</sup> A clear sign of Peter's

French tr. Charles Munier, *Tertullien: A son épouse*, Sch 273 (Paris, 1980), 138 and 139; English tr. William P. Le Saint, 'To his Wife', bks. 1 and 2, in *Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage; To his Wife; An Exhortation to Chastity; Monogamy*, ACW 13 (Westminster, Md., 1951), 10–36, here 30): *Latebisme tu, cum lectulum, cum corpusculum tuum signas, cum aliquid immundum flatu explodis, cum etiam per noctem exurgis oratum?* On the practice of keeping vigil at night, see also Angelus A. Häussling, 'Vigil', in *LThK* 10 (Freiburg, Basel, Rome, Vienna, 2001), 785–787. See also Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, Minn., 1986), especially ch. 9, pp. 165–190.

<sup>100</sup> Based on personal observations and enquiries among Orthodox Christian religious communities in Jerusalem during 1998–99.

<sup>101</sup> For example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 27, 40, and 99.

<sup>102</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 38, 40, 45, 48, 50, 55, and 99 (holy); 27 and 33 (venerable); 26, 30, 38, 39, and 98 (worshipful).

<sup>103</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26–27, 38, 40, 85, and 98–99.

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, S. Pétridès, 'Le Monastère des Spoudaei à Jérusalem et les Spoudaei de Constantinople', *Échos d'Orient* 4 (1900–1901), 225–231; and S. Pétridès, 'Spoudaei et Philopones', *Échos d'Orient* 7 (1904), 341–348.

and John's personal commitment to and trust in the effectiveness of prayer in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was their special visit to the place in order to pray for healing of the skin disease affecting John's face.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the *Anastasis* as the place of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection clearly represented the focal point of Peter's spirituality of holy places.

### *Peter's Pilgrimage Travels to Specific Holy Places*

Rufus portrayed his hero Peter as having been thoroughly familiar with typical pilgrimage routes. This claim can be verified on the basis of at least two reports concerning Peter's visits to holy places: a spiritual pilgrimage to sites within the confines of the Holy City and his second pilgrimage to Mount Nebo. Rufus speaks of at least one particular night journey which Peter undertook, starting from and returning to Beth Tafsha.<sup>106</sup> At that occasion Peter made sure to pray and venerate at each of the most important holy places within the city confines of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives as well as on its eastern slopes, in Bethlehem, and at holy places located in the area between Bethlehem and Jerusalem.<sup>107</sup> Describing Peter's tour, Rufus also listed the main pilgrimage sites in the area. Coming to the city from the north, Peter prayed (1) at the *martyrion* of St Stephen, where he venerated the relics of the protomartyr in the grotto of the *martyrion*;<sup>108</sup> (2) at the Church of Golgotha, venerating the site of Christ's

<sup>105</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40. That episode is also referred to in the Georgian 'Life of Peter'. See Lolashvili, 'Georgian Life of Peter the Iberian', 12.

<sup>106</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98 identifies the location of Beth Tafsha as 'about five miles to the north of the Holy City, on the slope of the mountain'. See also Tsafrir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 86, to which one might add a reference to the discussion of the local fish-pond as found in L. Delekat, 'Ein frühbyzantinischer Fischteich bei Jerusalem', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 84 (1968), 185–186. I wish to thank Monica Blanchard for alerting me to this article.

<sup>107</sup> For a suggested pilgrimage route through Jerusalem and the whole of the Holy Land which Jerome wanted to undertake in the company of Marcella, see Jerome, *Epistulae* 46.13 (ed. Isidor Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, pt. 1, CSEL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910), 343–345; tr. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, 'Against Vigilantius', in *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, NPNF 6 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1893), 65).

<sup>108</sup> For the account of Stephen's martyrdom, see Acts 7:54–60. For an account of the finding of Stephen's relics see Avitus of Braga's Latin translation of the letter of Lucian of Caphargamala. See Avitus of Braga, *Epistola Luciani ad omnem ecclesiam, De revelatione corporis Stephani martyris primi et aliorum* (ed. PL 41.807–818; two recensions). See G. Röwekamp, 'Lucian of Caphargamala', in *DECL* (2000), 389; E. Reichert, 'Avitus of Braga', in *DECL* (2000), 85. Helpful studies of the development of the cult of Stephen's relics include Hunt, 'The Traffic in Relics'; Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Claims on the Bones of Saint Stephen: The Partisans of Melania and

crucifixion;<sup>109</sup> (3) in the Holy Sepulchre; (4) in the Church of Pilate;<sup>110</sup> (5) in the Church of the Paralytic;<sup>111</sup> (6) in Gethsemane, where he also visited other holy places in the immediate vicinity;

Eudocia', *Church History* 51 (1982), 141–156; Kenneth G. Holum and Gary Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory, Adventus Ceremonial, and the Relics of St. Stephen', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), 113–133. For the impact Stephen's relics had in Minorca, see Scott Bradbury, ed. and tr., *Severus of Minorca: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford, 1996); E. D. Hunt, 'St. Stephen in Minorca: An Episode in Jewish-Christian Relations in the Early 5th Century AD', *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982), 106–123; and Kenneth D. Snyder, 'Bishop Severus and the Conversion of Jews in Early Fifth-Century Minorca: The Social Role of the Bishop and the Christianization of the Later Roman Empire' (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1996).

<sup>109</sup> See also *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.

<sup>110</sup> Theodosius, *De situ Terrae Sanctae* 7 (ed. Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi III–VIII*, CSEL 39 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1898), 141; ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 118); Breviarius, *De Hierosolyma* 5 (ed. Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi III–VIII*, CSEL 39 (Vienna, Prague, and Leipzig, 1898), 155; ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 109–112, here 112: *Inde vadis ad domum Pilati, ubi tradidit Dominum flagellatum Iudaeis. Ubi est basilica grandis et est ibi cubiculus, ubi expoliaverunt eum et flagellatus est, et vocatur Sancta Sophia*); and Antoninus Placentinus attest a church at the site. Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 23.7–11 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 141: *In ipsa basilica est sedis, ubi Pilatus sedit, quando Dominum audivit. Petra autem... in qua levatus est Dominus, quando auditus est a Pilato, ubi etiam vestigia illius remanserunt*) describes the Church of St Sophia, which contained both the judgement seat of Pilate and the rock on which Christ left imprints of his feet when being judged by Pilate.

<sup>111</sup> The reference here is to the Church of the Probatike, sometimes also known as 'Pool of the Paralytic'. Several witnesses to the special status of the place exist for the time prior to the *Vita Petri Iberi*. The Gospel of John states that 'in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Bethzatha, which has five porticoes' (see John 5:2); Origen, who may have derived his information from the Gospel of John or from sight, talked about 'four porticos that encircled the pool and a fifth one that cut it in half'; Eusebius of Caesarea (in AD 340) and Jerome (in AD 385) said that the place once had five porticos; Pseudo-Athanasius (ed. PG 28.164C; to be attributed to Basil of Seleucia) reported that the Probatike once had five porticos which at this time were destroyed; other witnesses include the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (in AD 333) and Cyril of Jerusalem (in AD 347). These prior witnesses had only talked about the pool and the porticos but had not mentioned a church. Thus the reference to the church at the Probatike in the *Vita Petri Iberi* 99 might be the first testimony to a Christian church at the site. Note also the reference at *Plerophoriae* 18 to a young reader from the Church of the Probatike, who one day had a vision which he recounted to Peter the Iberian. N. Van der Vliet, '*Sainte Marie où elle est née*' et la Piscine Probatique (Jerusalem/Paris, 1938), 149, fig. 74, prints the picture of a relevant archaeological find, the tombstone of Amos, deacon of the Probatike, dating to the fifth or early sixth century. The epitaph reads: ΘΗΚΗ ΔΙΑΦΕΡΟΥΣΑ ΑΜΟΣ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΒΑΤΙΚΗΣ. On the basis of the witness of the *Plerophoriae*, Van der Vliet, '*Sainte Marie où elle est née*' et la Piscine Probatique, 150, assumed that the Church of the Probatike existed at the time

(7) in the Upper Room of the disciples;<sup>112</sup> (8) in the Church of the Ascension;<sup>113</sup> (9) in Bethany in the House of Lazarus;<sup>114</sup> (10) in Bethlehem;<sup>115</sup> and on the way back to Jerusalem he visited (11) the Tomb of Rachel,<sup>116</sup> praying and venerating at other temples and houses of prayer along the way, spending time (12) at the Church of Siloah, and finally concluding his tour with a visit at (13) the Church on Zion,<sup>117</sup> before he returned to Beth Tafsha. Rufus wanted to create the impression that Peter's nightly visit was not a one-time event. Rather, it seemed that Peter wished to be present at those holy places on a regular basis, even if only in a spiritual way, since the text does not conclusively state whether Peter undertook the pilgrimage tour of the Holy City physically or exclusively in spirit.<sup>118</sup> Rufus

when Peter the Iberian dwelt in Jerusalem before AD 450. It seemed likely to Van der Vliet that the church was built in the first part of the fifth century, most probably by Eudocia, who founded so many churches in Jerusalem between AD 428 and 460. Likewise worthy of note is the almost contemporary witness of Breviarus, *De Hierosolyma* 7B (around AD 500) (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 112): *Et est ibi basilica in tempore, ubi se lavabant infirmi et sanabantur*. See also Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians in Palestine', entry: Jerusalem (85 J) Probatia, 519–520.

<sup>112</sup> This comment witnesses to a practice that locates the Upper Room close to Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, not opposite town near the Church of Zion.

<sup>113</sup> See above, ch. 4, p. 245 and n. 87.

<sup>114</sup> Modern-day Bethany is home to two sites that preserve the memory of Lazarus. The Franciscan friars and the Greek Orthodox Church are in charge of churches at the Tomb of Lazarus. See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land*, 133–135. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia guards the holy site of the House of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. A probably third-century Greek inscription, containing the words 'On this place with Martha and Mary the Messiah spoke about the resurrection' might identify a 'church probably erected in Bethany by St. Helena to commemorate the meeting of Martha with Our Lord when He came from Jericho to raise Lazarus'. See Sylvester J. Saller, *Excavations at Bethany (1949–1953)*, Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 12 (Jerusalem, 1957), 366–367.

<sup>115</sup> Most likely, Peter went to visit the Church of the Nativity. See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, chs. 41–43 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 101–102; revised tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 530–531).

<sup>116</sup> Pilgrim of Bordeaux, *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 598.5 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 1–26, here 20); Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 28 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 167). See also Khalid Nashef, 'Tradition and Reality of Holy Tombs in the Madaba Map', in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999), 234–235.

<sup>117</sup> See also *Vita Petri Iberi* 45 and 48.

<sup>118</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98–100. The comment that 'on the very next day . . . the Abba returned to his journey' is open for interpretation. It might indicate that Peter repeatedly undertook such pilgrimage journeys at night, either physically or in spirit only. It might also be read as describing the end of Peter's stay at Beth Tafsha.

aimed to inform his audience that Peter took visiting the holy places very seriously, possibly in an attempt to heighten the profile of Peter among Christians, Chalcedonian or anti-Chalcedonian, who had great reverence for pilgrims to the holy places.<sup>119</sup>

It seems significant that the first holy place Peter visited was the *martyrion* of St Stephen. No doubt, it was a convenient stop, given that he was coming to Jerusalem from the north. St Stephen's sanctuary was among the first holy places which he would have encountered on the way in any case. By describing Peter's visit to St Stephen's *martyrion* first, Rufus presented Peter as giving special emphasis to the veneration of the first of all the Christian martyrs. In so doing he stressed the close connection between martyrdom, the experience of pilgrimage, and the visits to holy places which became particularly meaningful for and characteristic of Peter's life as an anti-Chalcedonian pilgrim and confessor.

The second example that illustrates familiarity with typical pilgrimage routes either directly on the part of the pilgrim Peter or on the part of Rufus is to be found in the account of Peter's second pilgrimage journey to Mount Nebo.<sup>120</sup> As Peter set out 'to go to the regions of Arabia',<sup>121</sup> his plans paralleled Egeria's 'desire to travel . . . as far as Arabia, to Mount Nebo'.<sup>122</sup> Like Egeria, who '[a]fter crossing the river [namely, the Jordan], . . . came to the city of Livias',<sup>123</sup> Peter wanted to 'bathe in the hot spring, which is at Livias, called 'St Moses' [Spring]' and thus 'came to Livias'.<sup>124</sup> While on her way to Mount Nebo, Egeria stopped at a small church commemorating the

<sup>119</sup> For evidence that visiting holy places increased the reputation of a holy man, see the example of the monk Sabas. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 24 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 108.11–15; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 117). Sabas and his companion Agapētus travelled across country between the Sea of Tiberias and the Jordan, prayed at several revered places, among them Chorsia ('a thriving town on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee') and Heptapēgus ('reputed place of the feeding of the Five Thousand'), and came as far as Pania /Caesarea Philippi ('at the source of the Jordan, near to Mount Hermon'). John Binns (supplying the commentary in Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 211 n. 28) has pointed out how these Lenten journeys of Sabas' increased his reputation throughout Palestine.

<sup>120</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85–89. See also the discussion in F.-M. Abel, 'L'exploration du sud-est de la vallée du Jourdain', *Revue Biblique* 40 (1931), 214–226 and 374–400, here pp. 375–380.

<sup>121</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 83.

<sup>122</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 10.1 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 50; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 65 (modified)).

<sup>123</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 10.4 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 50; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 65 (modified)).

<sup>124</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 83 and 84.

site where 'water which Moses gave to the children of Israel' 'flowed from the rock'.<sup>125</sup> Peter in his turn stopped at the hot springs of Ba'ar.<sup>126</sup> Finally, both pilgrims reached their destination, Mount Nebo, in order to commemorate the death of the Prophet Moses in a church erected for that purpose.<sup>127</sup> The clear-cut parallels between Peter's and Egeria's pilgrimage route speak in favour of an established pilgrimage route that both followed.<sup>128</sup> One may also consider, whether or not Rufus may have had access to Egeria's *Diary* and modelled Peter's pilgrimage travels on her account.<sup>129</sup> Such a dependency cannot be excluded, given that Rufus as a lawyer who had trained at the law school in Beirut most likely also had at least some competence in Latin.<sup>130</sup>

During their first years in the Holy Land, Peter and John did not limit themselves to visiting the holy places in Jerusalem. Rufus detailed at least one other pilgrimage which Peter made, namely the first of his two pilgrimages to the tomb of Moses on Mount Nebo in Jordan.<sup>131</sup> Kofsky hypothesized that 'Rufus suppressed further information showing Peter and John as typical pilgrims on the conventional pilgrimage routes'.<sup>132</sup> Contrary to Kofsky, I think that if Rufus did so, it was not due to 'Peter's later attitude towards the holy places and pilgrimage'.<sup>133</sup> Rufus stated explicitly that he had to select episodes from the life of Peter because he could not possibly tell everything there was to tell.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, Rufus' agenda was likely to propagate a change in attitude to the holy places among anti-Chalcedonians in general, not in regard to Peter's attitude in particular. Even if Peter's access to the holy places was restricted, the fact that he attempted to go to holy places whenever he could, for example, his spiritual journey to Jerusalem's holy places at night or the pilgrimage to Mount Nebo in Jordan, shows that he held to the

<sup>125</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 10.8 and 11.2 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 51; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 66–67). Abel identified the location of that site. See Abel, 'Exploration du sud-est', 222.

<sup>126</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 84–85. See also Clamer, 'The Hot Springs of Kallirrhoe and Baarou', 222–223 and 224–225. For beautiful photos of the landscape at the thermal sources of Hammamat Ma'in and Zara-Callirhoe, see plate VIII in *The Madaba Map Centenary* (Jerusalem, 1999).

<sup>127</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 87–89; Egeria, *Diary* 12.1 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, 'Itinerarium Egeriae', in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 52; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 68).

<sup>128</sup> For a fuller discussion of the stations on Egeria's pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, see Piccirillo, 'Il pellegrinaggio di Egeria al Monte Nebo in Arabia', 194–212.

<sup>129</sup> I am indebted to Inta Ivanovska for this suggestion.

<sup>130</sup> See also above, ch. 1, p. 27; and ch. 2, p. 63.

<sup>131</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

<sup>132</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 212.

<sup>133</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 212.

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 83.

importance of visiting the holy places. The internal conflict among members of the anti-Chalcedonian community over whether or not it was acceptable for them to visit holy places that had come to be in the possession of Chalcedonians emerges more strongly in the *Plerophoriae*, but is hardly if at all present in the *Vita Petri Iberi*.<sup>135</sup> Thus one is led to assume that the views on pilgrimage and on the holy places as they are presented in the *Plerophoriae* reflect Rufus' position on proper attitude towards holy places much more so than Peter's.

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF PILGRIMAGE

### **Pilgrimage as a Form of Ascetic Spirituality**

#### *Pilgrimage as Perfection of the Renunciation of the World*

Describing Peter's years in Constantinople, Rufus emphasized the young prince's increasing devotion and commitment to ascetic life. Peter expressed his inclination towards asceticism in various forms, including fasts, vigils, and special clothing. Early Christian ascetic literature readily talks about different degrees or steps which ascetics took on their path to a perfected life.<sup>136</sup> Rufus had a clear sense of what Peter perceived to be the final step in this development:

When he had grown up in age and in divine love and was making ascents in his heart according to the word of David, the singer of sacred [psalms], and he was exchanging fire for fire, higher and clearer, he yearned to depart afar from the world and from its vanity and to hasten to the first of virtues, which is pilgrimage.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Explicit reference to 'holy places' occurs at *Plerophoriae* 4, 18, 30, 41, 44, and 80. Only at *Plerophoriae* 18, 30, and 41 is Peter the Iberian referenced, not as the one who visited the holy place, but as one who was aware of the respective event featured in the story.

<sup>136</sup> Clear examples of this kind of literature are the Syriac *Liber Graduum* or Book of Steps (ed. Michel Kmoskó, *Liber Graduum*, Patrologia Syriaca 3 (Paris, 1926); tr. Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier, *The Book of Steps: The Syriac Liber Graduum*, Cistercian Studies Series 196 (Kalamazoo, 2004)); Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* (ed. Jean Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysses: La Vie de Moïse ou Traité de la perfection en matière du vertu*, SCh 1 (Paris, 3rd edn. 1968); tr. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses* (New York, 1978)) and later on John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* (ed. PG 88.632–1164; tr. Colm Luibhéid and Norman Russell, *John Climacus: The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, CWS (New York, 1982)). Also note Salvatore Pricoco, 'La scala di Giacobbe—l'interpretazione ascetica di Gen 28,12 da Filone a San Benedetto', *Regula Benedicti Studia* 14–15 (1985–86), 41–58, for the progress towards humility achieved by such an ascent.

<sup>137</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.



equated in the mind of the author to taking the step of aspiring to the most perfect form of virtue, the complete estrangement from the world and from any sense of having a home in it.

Other passages in Rufus' work support such an understanding of the condition of being a pilgrim or a stranger as the perfection of ascetic renunciation of the world. The *Plerophoriae* tells that the deaconess Urbicia from Crete, together with her brother Euphrasios, chose to pursue the perfection of the renunciation of the world in the form of a pilgrimage to the Holy City. Temporarily, they settled in a monastery near the Church of the Ascension. However, in the end they had to leave, move to Alexandria, and continue their life of restless wandering, until at the end of their lives they found their final resting-place at Maiuma, Gaza.<sup>143</sup>

Likewise, the practice of changing one's name at the occasion of receiving the monastic habit seemed to have been understood as an expression that one had changed one's identity, become a citizen of another country, and thus was sharing fully in the experience of being a stranger, a lifelong pilgrim. Rufus recounted such an instance in the *Vita Petri Iberi*. He said that '[t]he hands of [Gerontius] 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'. Immediately following he continued, [W]here they were dwelling in quiet and were setting a pattern of the utmost height of asceticism in that monastery for men, as I have said before, in which . . . Gerontius was abbot, there they laid down the precious bones of these holy martyrs, their good guides and companions, together with the bones of the famous Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.<sup>144</sup>

d'Irénée: aux origines du thème monastique de la "peregrinatio"', *Irénikon* 47.2 (1974), 163–187; see also Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, ch. 3, especially pp. 43–49; and Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, chs. 1 and 2.

<sup>143</sup> *Plerophoriae* 44.

<sup>144</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 32–33. The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste are said to have been executed in Sebaste, Armenia, under Licinius (AD 308–324), co-emperor with Constantine and responsible for the Eastern Roman Empire before his defeat. Brief accounts of their martyrdom and eulogies are presented in Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 9.2 (ed. H. Valesius, *Socratis Scholastici, Hermiae Sozomeni, Historia Ecclesiastica* (Paris, 1859), PG 67.1597–1601; also ed. Bidez and Hansen, *Sozomenus: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 50 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), 392–394; tr. Hartranft, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomon, comprising a History of the Church', in NPNF 2nd ser. 2 (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, repr. 1989), 420–421); Basil of Caesarea, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses* (PG 31.508–525); and Gregory of Nyssa, *Encomium in xl martyres* I and II (ed. and tr. PG 46.749–788; also ed. Otto Lendle, 'In xl martyres' Ia, Ib, and II, in *Gregorii Nysseni Sermones*, pt. 2, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. x, t. 1 (Leiden, 1990), 137–142, 145–156, and 159–169). Also see



word ξένος, which designated both the guest and the host.<sup>149</sup> ܠܘܣܝܢܐ ('aks<sup>o</sup>nāyā) was used when speaking of the 'foreigner', 'stranger', 'pilgrim', or 'guest'.<sup>150</sup> A related third noun is ܠܘܣܝܢܐ ('aks<sup>o</sup>senyā), answering ξένια. This is either a designation for 'a strange/foreign country', 'living abroad', 'travelling', or also for 'exile' or 'banishment'. It may describe a 'guest-house' or a 'place for entertaining strangers'. In a monastic context, it could refer to 'the life of an anchorite', a stranger to the things of this world.<sup>151</sup> Rufus used the word ܠܘܣܝܢܐ ('aks<sup>o</sup>nāyē) for 'pilgrims' when he attested to the presence of a multitude of pilgrims in the Holy City after the Council of Chalcedon. He stated that 'all these pilgrims (ܠܘܣܝܢܐ) are coming to Jerusalem and are endeavouring to find many places, and buy and build monasteries and a house of silence'.<sup>152</sup> Thus the categories of 'strangers', 'travellers', and 'pilgrims' were most closely related, if not often identical.

Next to holiness, virginity, purity, and mercy towards the poor Rufus considered love of strangers and of foreigners as one of the evangelical virtues.<sup>153</sup> He characterized several individuals by the epithet 'friend of the strangers' (ܠܘܣܝܢܐ ܠܘܣܝܢܐ; rāxem 'aks<sup>o</sup>nāyē).<sup>154</sup> Love of the stranger, Syriac ܠܘܣܝܢܐ ܠܘܣܝܢܐ (rexmat<sup>o</sup> 'aks<sup>o</sup>nāyā) most visibly was expressed by hospitality to pilgrims. It was essential for guaranteeing the survival of pilgrims on their journey and thus for the successful conduct of a pilgrimage. It was all the more essential for the survival of ascetics, who interpreted their whole life as a pilgrimage journey, being away from their 'Promised Land', and often enough, as anti-Chalcedonians, finding themselves in situations of oppression, at least according to their own interpretative matrix.

<sup>149</sup> See O. Hiltbrunner, D. Gorce, and H. Wehr, 'Gastfreundschaft', in *RAC* 8 (1972), 1065.

<sup>150</sup> Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 16, s.v. ܠܘܣܝܢܐ, ܠܘܣܝܢܐ.

<sup>151</sup> See Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 16, s.v. ܠܘܣܝܢܐ, ܠܘܣܝܢܐ. On the ideal of 'xeniteia' in the spirituality of ascetics see also the contribution by Graham Gould, 'Moving on and staying put in the Apophthegmata Patrum,' *Studia Patristica* 20 (1989), 231–237.

<sup>152</sup> *Plerophoriae* 16. <sup>153</sup> *Plerophoriae* 20.

<sup>154</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 35 'friend of the poor and lover of the strangers' (about Passarion); *Vita Petri Iberi* 96–97 'a certain man, however, a friend of Christ and a friend of the saints, a friend of the poor and a friend of strangers' (about Elijah, the taskmaster of Empress Eudocia); *Vita Petri Iberi* 111–112 'that honourable one and friend of strangers, our host, the magistrate Maximus'; *Plerophoriae* 49 'a certain one of these friends of the pilgrims and friends of the saints' (about Abba Pior); *Plerophoriae* 49 'this faithful one and friend of pilgrims' (about the owner of a house in Alexandria in which Peter stayed for a while).

One condition for someone to become a true pilgrim was to be open to God's call and to be ready at any time to obey that call. Rufus gave an appropriate example when he spoke of the deacon Basil who came from Antioch to Constantinople. Basil's example carried great weight within the anti-Chalcedonian community, since it was understood that a heavenly call had sent him to Constantinople to 'reprove the wicked Nestorius'.<sup>155</sup> Basil had not been afraid to criticize Emperor Theodosius II for a perceived lack of fervour on behalf of Trinitarian orthodoxy.<sup>156</sup> Rufus showed his high esteem of Basil when he said about him that '[h]e was the one who was the guide of the salvation of Abba Peter when he was a youth and was in the royal city. [Basil] placed in [Peter] the fire and the life of monasticism.'<sup>157</sup>

Rufus described Basil as one who had 'left the world, carried the cross of Christ and followed it'.<sup>158</sup> It will be left for the final chapter to show in greater detail that one characteristic of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality was to interpret the renunciation of the world and the being a stranger to the world in terms of carrying Christ's Cross and following him. In such a framework, travelling and pilgrimage also took on the flavour of being a *via crucis*, an intensified form of and sometimes a necessary substitute for visiting holy places that commemorated Christ's suffering and death. Indeed, such a notion also

<sup>155</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35.

<sup>156</sup> The threat to Trinitarian orthodoxy, which Chalcedon posed to the faith in the eyes of the anti-Chalcedonians, is noticeable in several instances in Rufus' works. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 22 (in the light of the comments below, ch. 4, pp. 261–262), *Vita Petri Iberi* 134, and *Plerophoriae* 37 and 83. The threat was also perceived by Timothy Aelurus, *Epistula ad Epictetum* 8 (ed. and tr. Rifaat Y. Ebied and Lionel R. Wickham, 'A Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters', 334–335 (Syriac) and 353–354 (English), here 334 (Syriac) and 353 (English); also ed. and tr. R. W. Thomson, *Athanasiana Syriaca*, CSCO 257–258, Script. Syr. 114–115 (Louvain, 1965), 73–85 (Syriac) and 55–64 (English), here 81 (Syriac) and 61 (English)): 'They also would be greatly ashamed who thought that there could be a Quaternity instead of a Trinity.' The Trisagion controversy, aspects of which are discussed in ch. 5 below, should also be considered as a factor here. Later anti-Chalcedonian documents continue to reflect that same concern, for example, Ps.-Dionysius of Alexandria, *Panegyric on Macarius* 7.4 (ed. D. W. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Tkōw, Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, CSCO 415–416, Script. Copt., tt. 41–42 (Louvain, 1980), 48 (Coptic) and 37 (English)) and the *Confession of Faith* of John of Tella (AD 428–538), BM Add. 14,549, fos. 219b–226b (Wright, *Catalogue*, 431, nr. III; Volker Menze kindly informed me that he is planning to edit that work). For comments on the Trinitarian dimensions of the controversy over Chalcedon, see also Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and The Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1990), 22; and Steppa, *John Rufus*, p. 26 and n. 85, pp. 31, 147, 150–154, and 171.

<sup>157</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35.

<sup>158</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35.

fitted well into the framework of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality that, as will be shown in the immediately following paragraphs, conceived of pilgrimage as a form of martyrdom and as a possible and necessary response in situations of persecutions.

### **Pilgrimage and Martyrdom**

Rufus compared the relationship between Peter and his companion John the Eunuch to the relationship between Paul and Barnabas.<sup>159</sup> Paul had taken Barnabas along on his missionary travels, preaching the Gospel in foreign lands, founding new churches, and visiting and strengthening already existing communities.<sup>160</sup> Rufus implied that Peter and John went on a similar mission when they left Constantinople. Thus his account provided an early expression of pilgrimage as a witness to Christ. In the early centuries of the Church, the Christian witness *par excellence* was the martyr. In his works, particularly in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Rufus wove together the notions of ‘pilgrim’ and ‘martyr’ by linking pilgrimage to the veneration of the relics of martyrs.

#### *The Role of the Relics of Martyrs in Peter’s Pilgrimage*

When Peter had come to the royal court in Constantinople, he had brought along with him ‘bones of [some] holy martyrs, Persians by race’.<sup>161</sup> Rufus did not mention their names, even though the memory and hence their names were present and known in Peter’s monastic community in Palestine.<sup>162</sup> In his bed-chamber in the palace in Constantinople, Peter had placed the martyrs’ relics ‘in a shrine’ and treated them ‘with honour’. He expressed his reverence by ‘sleep[ing] in front of them on the ground and [by] perform[ing] the divine services with lights, incense, hymns of praise, and intercessions [in front of their shrine]’.<sup>163</sup> The martyrs showed themselves pleased, appearing ‘many times . . . openly chanting [psalms], keeping vigil, and praying with him’.<sup>164</sup> In return, they helped Peter

<sup>159</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21–22.

<sup>160</sup> See Acts 9:27; 11:22–30; 12:25; and 13–15.

<sup>161</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17. By the time of Peter, Christians had experienced persecution in the Persian Empire in the 270s under Vahran II /Bahrām II and a more widespread persecution between 340 and 372 under the Sassanid king Sapor II /Shapur II. See Susan Ashbrook Harvey, ‘Persia’, in *EEC* (1998), 900–901. The ‘great massacre’ under Shapur II was directed ‘against those who by now had to be considered “allies of the Caesars”’. See also F. Rilliet, ‘Persia’, in *EECH* 2 (1992), 674–675.

<sup>162</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

<sup>163</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

<sup>164</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17–18.

miraculously overcome various obstacles: his Georgian servants<sup>165</sup> and Emperor Theodosius II,<sup>166</sup> or, in the words of Rufus, ‘demons and men, their helpers’.<sup>167</sup> Finally, when Peter and John had set their minds on leaving for their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, God ‘raised up for [Peter] . . . the holy martyrs, those who were well pleased by him’ and assigned them the roles of ‘helpers of his flight’, ‘guides’, ‘watchmen’, and ‘companions’.<sup>168</sup> In order to ensure the assistance of the martyrs, Peter

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 the manner of the flight, no one knew nor made [it] known, neither demons nor men, until the plan came to [its] fulfilment.<sup>169</sup>

During the night of the flight, the martyrs proved powerful protectors and guides, so that the two pilgrims passed between the guards undetected. The martyrs’ presence ‘filled their hearts with great courage and strength’.<sup>170</sup> In later years Peter often told his friends that he and John had then been able to see the martyrs guiding them through the darkness ‘as a cloud or a pillar of fire’.<sup>171</sup> The parallel to the Exodus event of the Israelites (Exodus 13:21) is obvious. It implies that Peter, John, and those who subsequently joined Peter’s monastic community were protected and guided by the Lord as the Israelites of old. Such events served to give assurance of divine protection and guidance, ensuring that anti-Chalcedonians would be encouraged and would be strengthened by gaining ‘profit from such accounts’,<sup>172</sup> a goal which the title word of the *Plerophoriae* captures quite explicitly.<sup>173</sup>

While the martyrs were guiding Peter and John out of the palace,<sup>174</sup> ‘they were praising and singing [psalms], with a voice which was fitting and sweet’, a ‘divine doxology’.<sup>175</sup> Peter remembered the hymn’s melody,<sup>176</sup> and Rufus even was able to recount the exact words of the doxology, which he had presumably heard from Peter: ‘Seek Christ, and behold the Light from Light, the incomprehensible glory. For those who seek Him, He is the rewarder of

<sup>165</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 18–19 and 20.

<sup>166</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 20.

<sup>167</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>168</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>169</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>170</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>171</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>172</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>173</sup> The Syriac ܡܝܪܘܦܘܪܝܐ (*p<sup>o</sup>lirōfōrīs*), transliterating the Greek *πληροφορία*, means ‘assurances’ or ‘full assurances’. See also Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) s.v. ‘πληροφορία’, 1093. See also Gerhard Delling, ‘πλήρης, πληρώω, πλήρωμα, ἀναπληρώω, ἀνταναπληρώω, ἐκπληρώω, ἐκπλήρωσις, συμπληρώω, πληροφορέω, πληροφορία’, in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 6 (1965), 283–309, s.v. ‘πληροφορέω’, pp. 307–308, and s.v. ‘πληροφορία’, p. 309.

<sup>174</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>175</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>176</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

the wage.<sup>177</sup> This doxology possesses considerable importance for the topic of the present chapter. It talks about people who seek Christ, suggesting the identification between Christ and ‘the Light from Light’ and ‘the incomprehensible glory’ and promising a reward, namely Christ himself, for those who seek him.

The connection between ‘Christ’ and ‘light’ is fundamental in the Early Christian tradition. On one level, the martyrs singing the doxology express and confess Nicæan orthodoxy when they are speaking of Christ as the  $\text{Νῦρᾶ} \text{ Δμην} \text{ Νῦρᾶ}$  (*nūhrā dmen nūhrā*; or, in Greek:  $\text{φῶς ἐκ φωτός}$ ),<sup>178</sup> the ‘Light from Light’. Gregory Nazianzen’s or Evagrius of Pontus’ teachings might also be in the background.<sup>179</sup> Yet next to these immediately dogmatically and theologically relevant dimensions, the connection between ‘Christ’ and ‘light’ in this passage serves a further purpose.<sup>180</sup> While not exclusive to early Byzantine Palestine, one can observe there an especially popular thematic connection between the imagery of ‘Christ’ and ‘light’ and the practices related to contexts of pilgrimage. Loffreda studied numerous findings of inscribed lamps from Byzantine Palestine and stated that ‘[t]he formula  $\text{φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίει πᾶσιν}$ , i.e. “the light of Christ shines for all” is very popular in the Byzantine lamps’.<sup>181</sup> Allowing for slight variations of the formula, one increases

<sup>177</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22. Note also the similar Qur’ānic phrase  $\text{وَاللّٰهُ سَرِيْعٌ اَحْسَاب}$  (‘and Allah is quick in account’), for example in Surah 2:202: ‘To these will be allotted what they have earned; and Allah is quick in account’ (tr. ‘Abdullah Yūsuf ‘Alī, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur’ān* (Beltsville, Md., 10th edn. repr. 2001), 82), which in the given context amounts to ‘and Allah is quick in crediting /repaying’. For other occurrences of this phrase in the Qur’ān, see Surahs 3:19, 3:199, 5:4, 6:62, 13:41, 14:51, 24:39, and 40:17 (‘Alī, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur’ān*, 131, 181, 246, 310, 600, 617, 879, and 1209).

<sup>178</sup> *Ekthesis of the 318 Fathers* (or, the Nicene Creed) (re-ed. and tr. Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. i: Nicæa I–Lateran V* (London and Washington, DC, 1990), 5).

<sup>179</sup> See, for example, Gregory Nazianzen, *Carmina* 1.32 (ed. in *Sancti Patris Nostri Gregorii Theologi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Carmina, Liber I: Poemata Theologica, Sectio I: Poemata Dogmatica*, PG 37:397–522, here 37.512A):  $\text{φῶς ἐκ φωτός ἀνάργου}$ , and Evagrius of Pontus, *Kephalaia Gnostica* 1.35 (ed. Antoine Guillaumont, ‘Les six siècles des “Kephalaia Gnostica” d’Évagre le Pontique’, in PO 28.1 (Paris, 1958), 33).

<sup>180</sup> More generally on light imagery and its relevance in early Christian thought, see Pierre-Thomas Camelot, ‘Lumière. II Étude Patristique (jusqu’au 5<sup>e</sup> siècle)’, in *DSP* 9 (1976), 1149–1158, whose comments on Evagrius of Pontus, cols. 1153–1154, do not take account of Guillaumont’s edition of the *Kephalaia Gnostica* in 1958; and G. Sfameni Gasparro, ‘Light, Symbolism of’, in *EECh* 1 (1992), 489.

<sup>181</sup> S. Loffreda, ‘The Greek Inscriptions on the Byzantine Lamps from the Holy Land’, in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land: New Discoveries*, ed. G. C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, and E. Alliata, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Maior* 36 (1990), 475–500, here 477, accent on  $\text{πᾶσιν}$  added.

the quantity of archaeological material available to prove the connection between 'Christ' and 'light' claimed for pilgrimage settings. Moreover, those inscribed oil lamps can be connected very closely with the specific pilgrimage milieu of Jerusalem, and even with particular churches there, which were of special interest to individual pilgrims. For example, an oil lamp carrying the inscription  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \chi(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o})\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma \chi(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o})\varsigma \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ , or, 'Christ is light, resurrection. Christ is light',<sup>182</sup> an essential Johannine synonym, probably came from the Church of the *Anastasis*, that is, the Holy Sepulchre, while an oil lamp with the inscription  $\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha \tau\eta\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{o}\kappa\omicron\upsilon \mu\epsilon(\theta\prime \eta\mu)\acute{\omega}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}\gamma\rho\alpha\mu(\mu)\alpha$ , that is, 'The blessing of the Mother of God (is) with us. Inscription.'<sup>183</sup> would have come from a church dedicated to Mary. Thus it is reasonable to suggest a pilgrimage context in which the motive of 'seeking and finding Christ the light' played a significant role. This assumption is strengthened by the detail in the *Vita Petri Iberi* that the martyrs were singing the doxological hymn as they were travelling ahead of the two pilgrims. One can easily picture the group as similar to a procession of pilgrims carrying oil lamps and proceeding to or within one of the major churches at the holy places in Jerusalem, particularly the Holy Sepulchre.

According to the New Testament account of Stephen's martyrdom, Stephen saw in his vision 'the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:55). The open proclamation of his vision was the immediate cause the author of Acts provided for why the Jews stoned Stephen to death. It was to be understood as a sign of God's acceptance of the martyr when God permitted him to see God's glory at the time of death. For a pilgrim, light came to express one's closeness to Christ and one's readiness for witness. Against such a background and on the basis of the fact that the martyrs themselves were singing the doxological hymn for Peter and John, one may understand the phrase 'for those who seek Him, He is the rewarder of the wage', as an indication that the martyrs were suggesting to Peter and John that as much as Christ was the reward for the martyrs when they had witnessed to him by dying for him he would also be the reward for them as pilgrims when they gave witness to Christ by going on pilgrimage.

Peter's monastic community preserved the memory of the Persian martyrs and celebrated memorial services for them.<sup>184</sup> It seems likely that the hymn itself, both melody and text, would have been used as a part of the liturgy held at those celebrations.

<sup>182</sup> Loffreda, 'Greek Inscriptions on Byzantine Lamps', 483.

<sup>183</sup> Loffreda, 'Greek Inscriptions on Byzantine Lamps', 487.

<sup>184</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 17.

In the end, Peter and John decided against going on pilgrimage by ship, but rather ‘walked on foot . . . through the mainland of Asia Minor’<sup>185</sup> and ‘made their journey . . . alone with the holy martyrs, who were their guardians and companions’.<sup>186</sup> The two pilgrims secured the precious treasury of the relics of the Persian martyrs by ‘carr[ying] their precious bones in a little gold reliquary, as the great Moses [had carried] the Ark of God with the cherubim’.<sup>187</sup> Not only did Rufus compare Peter and John to the great Moses, but he also put the relics of the martyrs in the golden reliquary on a par with ‘the Ark of God with the cherubim’. In the Old and the New Testament, the expression ‘Ark of the Covenant’ is a description of both a sacred object and the reality of God’s presence.<sup>188</sup> Thus Rufus was giving expression to his conviction that through the presence of the relics of the martyrs, Peter and John experienced God’s immediate presence with them on their pilgrimage journey.

As much as the martyrs had formerly ‘filled their hearts with great courage and strength’,<sup>189</sup> this function was complemented on the journey by the working of ‘a part of the wood of the holy, precious, and saving Cross’, by which God ‘gave a quiet energy to reassure them and console them’.<sup>190</sup> One needs to see the connection between relics of martyrs as visible signs of the martyrs’ death for Christ and relics of the Cross as testimonies for Christ’s redemptive passion. The site of Christ’s death and resurrection was and is the ultimate goal of any pilgrimage of a Christian to the Holy Land. Through the presence of the relics of martyrs Peter and John experienced the company and strength provided for such a path by those who already had given their lives in the ultimate witness to Christ.

Rufus described how through the martyrs the Holy Spirit announced Peter’s and John’s travels to the people living in the villages along the way.

She [that is, the Holy Spirit]<sup>191</sup> also made manifest their [that is, Peter’s and John’s] arrival through the holy martyrs. While travelling on the[ir] way and passing through regions, cities, and villages, completely unknown to the inhabitants of the regions and to those who were travelling with them, they

<sup>185</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.      <sup>186</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.      <sup>187</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>188</sup> See C. L. Seow, ‘Ark of the Covenant’, in *ABD* 1 (1992), 386 and 393.

<sup>189</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 22.

<sup>190</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23. A fuller discussion of the dimensions of the veneration of the Cross in early Christian and specifically anti-Chalcedonian perspective is to be found below in ch. 5. See especially pp. 353–358 for the cult that developed in the wider Christian community around particles of the Cross.

<sup>191</sup> Note that the Syriac translator, who presumably worked in the sixth century, is still comfortable using the female pronoun for the Holy Spirit. The underlying Greek text would have used either the neuter or, probably less likely, the feminine pronoun.

found in many places outside the gates and outside the entrances gatherings of children, men, and women with branches and torches who had come out to meet the martyrs. Sitting outside the [city] walls [those waiting for them] asked those who entered, 'Where are they and who are they who bear the bones of the holy martyrs?' For they said, 'Yesterday some of their company arrived [to] announce and to command [us], "Go out to meet them!"',<sup>192</sup>

The passage supplies a welcome illustration for late antique practices of veneration of martyrs and describes a scenario, not much different, for example, from Jerome's description of the transportation of the relics of the prophet Samuel from Palestine to Constantinople.<sup>193</sup> It documents the high esteem in which relics of martyrs were held by the Christian population in Asia Minor and along the eastern Mediterranean coast in the early fifth century.<sup>194</sup> It appears that it would not have been an unusual practice to accompany the relics of martyrs in processions in which all who could walk participated, carrying 'branches and torches'.

One of the specific functions of the martyrs accompanying Peter and John was their continuous and effective protection of the two pilgrims against dangers. The martyrs had already guided the two out of imprisonment in the imperial palace. At the appropriate place Rufus stated that '[e]asily and without trouble they travelled with courage and joy, as people who were protected by such a hand'.<sup>195</sup> On one occasion, when one of the locals overpowered the two wanderers and tried 'to take them into his service and enslave [them] to him' and 'led [them away] like foreign slaves and captives',<sup>196</sup> the two pilgrims 'lift[ed] their eyes up to the Lord and cri[ed] out in their heart[s] and call[ed] upon their guardians, the holy martyrs'.<sup>197</sup> The martyrs delivered their help speedily and with proper effect.

That very same night [the martyrs] attacked the [man] 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 [that is, the martyrs] had made him

<sup>192</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24.

<sup>193</sup> Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium* 5 (ed. PL 23.353–368, here 358–359; tr. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, 'Against Vigilantius', in *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, NPNF 6 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1893), 417–423, here 419). See also Hunt, 'The Traffic in Relics', 179.

<sup>194</sup> Important studies of the cult of relics are Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 20 (Brussels, 2nd edn. 1933); André Grabar, *Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1946; repr. London, 1972); and Bernhard Kötting, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude* (Cologne, Opladen, 1965).

<sup>195</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24–25.

<sup>196</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 25.

<sup>197</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 25.

[that is, the captor] ready to let them [that is, the pilgrims] go in honour, immediately first [thing] in the morning, he apologized to them in fear and in trembling, falling down on his face before them.<sup>198</sup>

Experiences like this only stimulated Peter and John to 'let grow in themselves ever greater affection and love for Our Lord and faith in the holy martyrs'.<sup>199</sup> While the description of this experience provides the modern reader a precious glimpse at the troubles and manifold dangers which the pilgrims confronted on their journey, Rufus' purpose was to encourage his anti-Chalcedonian audience to be prepared to put all their trust in the assistance of those who had suffered for the Lord and to be ready to endure the same, if necessary.

### *Veneration of Relics of Martyrs vs. Travels of a Pilgrim*

Later in his life, while Peter saw himself as a lifelong pilgrim travelling along the eastern Mediterranean coast, the revelation of the relics of the martyrs Lucas, Phocas,<sup>200</sup> Romanus,<sup>201</sup> and their companions

<sup>198</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 25.      <sup>199</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26.

<sup>200</sup> Most likely to be identified with Phocas, the gardener from Sinope, who was denounced as a Christian, offered hospitality to the soldiers who had come to kill him, dug his own grave, and was then decapitated. His cult is attested by Asterius of Amaseia, *Homily* 9 (On the Holy Martyr Phocas) (ed. PG 40.299–314; also ed. Datema, *Asterius of Amasea: Homilies I–XIV* (Leiden, 1970), 114–127). Galusha Anderson and Edgar Johnson Goodspeed, *Ancient Sermons for Modern Times by Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, circa 375–405, A.D.* (New York, Boston, Chicago, 1904) do not translate this sermon. His feast day is 22 September or 22 July. Phocas, the martyred bishop of Sinope, is probably identical with the Gardener. See Halkin, *BHG*, vol. ii, pp. 206–207, entries 1535y–1540b. See also Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 58 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 242; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 70) for a reference to a *martyrion* of St Phocas at Sidon. See also C. Van den Vorst and Paulus Peeters, 'Saint Phocas', *Analecta Bollandiana* 30 (1911), 252–295, here 258; K. Lubeck, 'Der hl. Phokas von Sinope', *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 30 (1910), 743–761; Otto Zöckler, 'Phokas', in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 15 (1904), 371–372; Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'Phokas', in *ODB* 3 (1991), 1666–1667; Victor Saxer, 'Phocas of Sinope', in *EECh* 2 (1992), 685; Hubertus R. Drobner, 'Phokas in Sinope', in *LThK* 8 (1999), 264–265.

<sup>201</sup> Romanus might be identical with the martyr Romanus of Caesarea, who suffered martyrdom in Antioch. See Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Martyrs of Palestine*, ch. 2 (ed. and tr. Cureton, *History of the Martyrs of Palestine by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea* (London and Paris, 1861), pp. 1–3 (Syriac) and pp. 6–8 (English); see also the Greek witness, ed. Schwartz, 'Paralipomena: Eusebius über die Märtyrer in Palaestina', in Schwartz, Mommsen, and Winkelmann, *Eusebius: Kirchengeschichte*, ii.ii, GCS n.s. 6.2 (1999), 909; and Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 10 (ed. Ioannes Bergman, *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, CSEL 61 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1926), 291–431, here 370–412; also ed. Mauricius P. Cunningham, *Aurelii Prudentii*

occurred nearby his resting-place in a salt depot near Orthosias.<sup>202</sup> According to Rufus, the martyrs had revealed their presence as guardians of the property and its inhabitants to the gardener of the place, ‘a quiet man’, ‘very simple’, ‘pure and unmarried’.<sup>203</sup> They instructed him to obtain the help and prayers of Bishop Peter the Iberian, to dig a hole and unearth their bones, and then to hand over the relics to Peter.<sup>204</sup> Rufus emphasized that they called Peter ‘Abba Peter, the Bishop, that one who is here “on pilgrimage (ⲕⲁⲗⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓ; *b’aksēnāyūtā*)”’.<sup>205</sup> Rufus for his part referred to Peter as ‘the blessed Peter who in truth [is] a lover of the martyrs’.<sup>206</sup> Illustrating Peter’s sensitive, close relationship to the martyrs in a description full of carefully selected, vivid details, Rufus told that when Peter learned it was the martyrs’ wish that their relics be handed over to him

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 honour them as they deserve?’<sup>207</sup>

From Constantinople to Jerusalem, he had been able to carry along the relics of the Persian martyrs in a golden box without giving a second thought to the matter. Now he felt it was inappropriate to carry relics of martyrs along with him on his travels. His inability to venerate the martyrs’ relics in a fixed locality seems to be at the heart of his concern. As a stranger and one who was moving from place to place he ‘c[ould] not bear [the relics] and carry them around to the saints’.<sup>208</sup> With assurance from God, Peter arranged the following solution. The bishop of Orthosias ‘kn[ew] how to honour [the relics of the martyrs] as they deserve and [how to] perform their deposition’.<sup>209</sup> Rufus portrayed the local bishop as an honourable man, even though he was not an anti-Chalcedonian. The man’s decency of

*Clementis Carmina*, CCSL 126 (Turnhout, 1966), 251–389, here 330–369; tr. Sister M. Clement Eagan, *The Poems of Prudentius*, FOTC 43 (Washington, DC, 1962), 95–280, here 190–239).

<sup>202</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 106–107. The town of Orthosias was located to the south of the mouth of the Eleutheros river. It was about 12 miles away from Tripoli. For the location of Orthosias, see Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, CSCO 127, Subsidia t. 2 (Louvain, 1951), map I: ‘Diffusion du Monophysisme en Orient vers 512–518’. I owe gratitude to Guita G. Hourani for the expert guidance she provided in inspecting the area around Tripoli.

<sup>203</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 107.

<sup>205</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 107.

<sup>207</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 108.

<sup>209</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 108.

<sup>204</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 107–108.

<sup>206</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 107.

<sup>208</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 108.

character, combined with his episcopal rank as well as his familiarity with proper liturgical practice for the veneration of relics, were sufficient and appropriate in the given situation. In an aside it seems worth noting that, again, one witnesses a situation in which, possibly typical of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality, and certainly characteristic of Eastern Christian spirituality with its emphasis on *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the conduct of proper liturgical celebrations is of prime importance, even of an importance that overrides doctrinal concerns.<sup>210</sup> Liturgy embodies doctrine.

When the lead urn with the burnt bones of the martyrs was unearthed, a [ritual] service was held. First the relics were laid in the *diakonikon* of the local church.<sup>211</sup> After the Easter celebrations had been completed and in compliance with the martyrs' wishes the relics were deposited in the *martyrion* of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in a great procession.<sup>212</sup> The comment in the *Vita Petri Iberi* on that *martyrion* seems to constitute thus far the only evidence for its existence.<sup>213</sup>

Rufus stated that Peter and his companions contented themselves with receiving a blessing 'both from that holy vessel, in which [the relics] were laid and from the holy soil [of the place], where their

<sup>210</sup> See also above ch. 2, pp. 75, 82–83, and 90–91, and below, ch. 4, pp. 324–325, and 327–329.

<sup>211</sup> The term *diakonikon* appears in texts from the fourth century AD onwards. It designates a special room or building, used by deacons, in which the sacred vessels were kept. Related terms are *skeuophylakeion* and *pastophoria*. See Robert F. Taft, William Loerke, and Mark J. Johnson, 'Pastophoria', in *ODB* 3 (1991), 1594, for further literature.

<sup>212</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109. The procession and deposition took place 'on the third of the month of Iyar', that is, in early May.

<sup>213</sup> Elizabeth Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley, 1999), 114, likewise was not able to adduce any further evidence, archaeological or otherwise. The famous basilica of SS. Sergius and Bacchus, also known as the Basilica of the Holy Cross, was built in Reşâfa/Sergiopolis early in the fifth century by Bishop Alexander of Hierapolis (Phrygia). See Thilo Ulbert, *Resafa II: Die Basilika des Heiligen Kreuzes in Resafa-Sergiopolis* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986). Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Graecorum affectionum curatio* 8.69 (ed. Pierre Canivet, *Théodoret de Cyr: Thérapeutique des Maladies Helléniques*, vol. ii: *Livres VII–XII*, SCh 57 (Paris, 1958), 337, l. 10) constitutes the earliest literary witness to the cult of these two saints. In Chalcis in AD 514, Severus of Antioch preached his Homily 57 (ed. and tr. Rubens Duval, *Les 'Homiliae Cathedralis' de Sévère d'Antioche: Traduction Syriaque de Jacques d'Édesse (Homélies LII–LVII)*, PO 4.1 (Paris, 1908), 83–94) on these two martyrs. See also Bernhard Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der Alten Kirche* (Münster, 1980), 132–138; Maria-Barbara v. Stritzky, 'Bakchos u. Sergios', in *LThK* 1 (1993), 1362–1363; and Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'Sergios und Bakchos', in *ODB* 3 (New York and Oxford, 1991), 1879.

bones were found'.<sup>214</sup> It is not unlikely that this comment indicates that Peter took with him on his journey the lead urn, then only filled with soil from the spot at which the bones were discovered. Rufus may also have intended his comment to express Peter's humility. For the rest of his life, Peter cultivated and demonstrated his 'faith and full assurance (ܠܝܘܢܘܢܝܐ; *p'lrōfōrīyā*)',<sup>215</sup> in the martyrs because 'he continuously made mention [in memorial] of them in the celebration of the holy Mysteries and in his prayers'.<sup>216</sup> The martyrs, on their part, recognized him as almost one of their own.<sup>217</sup>

In support of this identification Rufus took recourse to an event involving both Peter and the martyr Leontius, whose relevance for the anti-Chalcedonian milieu is attested by Severus of Antioch's homily in praise of Leontius.<sup>218</sup> When Peter stayed in the neighbourhood of Tripoli, the martyr Leontius, whose *martyrion* appears to have been located in the city, close to the harbour,<sup>219</sup> appeared to

<sup>214</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109.

<sup>215</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109.

<sup>216</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109.

<sup>217</sup> For a fuller discussion of the implications of Peter's treatment of the relics of Lucas, Phocas, and Romanus 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 presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion /Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, Georgia (November 2003), unpublished manuscript.

<sup>218</sup> Severus of Antioch, *Cathedral Homilies* 27 (ed. and tr. Maurice Brière and François Graffin, *Les Homiliae Cathedrales de Sévère d'Antioche: Hom. XXVI–XXXI*, PO 37, fasc. 1 (Paris, 1974), 558–573).

<sup>219</sup> On the cult of the martyr Leontius, see Gerontius, *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* 52 (ed. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, 226–228; tr. Clark, *Life of Melania*, 63–64); Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium, rec. alt.* 1b (ed. P. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 157–174, here 157); and Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 79.4, 79.14, 82.11–12 and 92.2 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', 79, 82, and 92). Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* bk. 3 ch. 33 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Historia Ecclesiastica*, 131.29–30; tr. Whitby, *Evagrius Scholasticus: Ecclesiastical History*, 175) refers to the shrine of the martyr Leontius at which Severus of Antioch was baptized. See also the studies by F. Nau, 'Les martyres de s. Léonce de Tripoli et de s. Pierre d'Alexandrie d'après les sources syriaques', *Analecta Bollandiana* 19 (1900), 9–13; and G. Garitte, 'Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à S. Léonce de Tripoli', *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), 313–348; 79 (1966), 335–386; and 81 (1968), 415–440; and J. M. Fiey, 'Un grand sanctuaire perdu? Le martyron de St. Léonce à Tripoli', *Le Muséon* 95 (1982), 77–78. I wish to record my gratitude to Ms Guita George Hourani (director of MARI, the Maronite Research Institute), Revd Dr Abdo Badwi (Director of the School of Sacred Art, Holy Spirit University, Kaslik, Lebanon), and Dr Omar Abd as-Salam Tadmuri (Department of History, Lebanese University in Tripoli) for their assistance with different aspects of this research. I am especially grateful to Ms Hourani for her expert guidance of an excursion to northern Tripoli in search of the site of Leontius' *martyrion* in early 1999.



*Pilgrimage, Wandering, and Martyrdom: Three Related Ways of Suffering*

Rufus mentioned that in his old age, while wandering along the Mediterranean Sea, Peter came to the coastal city of Ashdod.<sup>228</sup> There many people asked him to dwell within the city. Yet Peter preferred to stay in ‘a narrow and despicable place’,<sup>229</sup> most likely a little hut on the coast,<sup>230</sup> which provided not the least comfort for his body. Moreover, Rufus explained that Peter liked such places because ‘in lodgings like these the blessed one rejoiced as a stranger (ܠܘܕܝܢܐ ܠܥܝܢܐ; *’aks<sup>9</sup>nāyā*) and a foreigner’.<sup>231</sup>

Rufus shared that ‘narrow and despicable place’ with Peter and his followers. Yet despite the narrowness of the site, all felt as if they were living in a king’s palace. The lack of space did not limit them. Rather, they received everyone most hospitably and in a festive, joyful way. Rufus indicated that through Peter’s prayers the Lord fulfilled the promise he had made in Job 36:15–16: ‘He delivers the afflicted by their affliction, and opens their ears by adversity. He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no constraint, and what was set on your table was full of fatness.’<sup>232</sup> Out of a situation of need, God created abundance, not in physical space, but in space of heart.

Two aspects of anti-Chalcedonian pilgrimage spirituality emerge from the description of the situation. The first is that the circumstances of need, narrowness, contempt, poverty, and the like, which many a pilgrim and especially the anti-Chalcedonian encountered, were real but could be transformed in a spiritual way. They could become a pleasant, joyful experience of God’s grace caring for the pilgrim. A second, related aspect is that even in a situation of personal need enough is left that can be shared with others who are in even greater need. One is thus called upon to provide hospitality and kindness for those one encounters along the way. One form of such hospitality was to offer material goods to guests. Also, a spiritual form of hospitality could be practised by sharing spiritual teachings and blessings with visitors. Presumably many sought precisely those blessings from Peter and his companions: ‘They gathered together and came to

<sup>228</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121. Also known as ‘Azotus’. For references, see above ch. 4, p. 234, n. 29.

<sup>229</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121.

<sup>230</sup> Probably in one of the salt depots, which are still in use along the coast to extract salt from the sea-water. I wish to thank Ms Guita George Hourani and Revd Dr Abdo Bawdi for guidance in clarifying this point.

<sup>231</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121.

<sup>232</sup> See also Psalm 4:1.

the saint . . . to be saturated and filled for a long time from his teaching, his blessing, and his communion.<sup>233</sup>

Rufus showed in the *Vita Petri Iberi* a concrete connection between pilgrimage, or a life of travel, and martyrdom. As early Christians customarily spoke of 'weaving the crown of martyrdom',<sup>234</sup> Peter saw in pilgrimage an opportunity to gain a crown, similar to that of martyrdom, if he were to die as a pilgrim. Towards the end of his life, when everyone was urging him to return to his monastery between Maiuma and Gaza to complete his earthly life there in peace and in a familiar environment, Peter firmly rejected all such advances. He knew that the day of his death was approaching, and 'he was . . . taking pains . . . so that he would be perfected in a foreign country<sup>235</sup> and weave also in [his] end the crown of a good pilgrimage (ⲕⲁⲥⲉⲛⲁⲓⲩⲧⲁ; 'aksēnāyūtā)',<sup>236</sup>

The image of a martyr or a confessor weaving his or her crown occurs at several instances in the *Vita Petri Iberi*.<sup>237</sup> Rufus stated that when Peter's death was approaching, he 'was rushing towards the goal for the crown of the higher calling of God'.<sup>238</sup> Remaining a pilgrim and a stranger until his end, Peter wanted to imitate the Lord by rejecting praise and honour from men and by loving contempt, even to the point of being a stranger who was unknown to everyone.<sup>239</sup> It would not have escaped the attention of Rufus' audience that also in this regard Peter imitated Moses, whose gravesite was, and is, unknown.

### *Death as the Last Journey*

Rufus took the thought of Peter wanting to remain a pilgrim until the end of his life even a step further. Death itself can be seen as a final journey to God. The Egyptian priest-monk Athanasius, a former disciple of Abba Sana<sup>240</sup> and later on Rufus' prayer companion and neighbour in attending liturgies,<sup>241</sup> expressed this view. While Rufus and Athanasius were in vigil praying for Peter around the time of his death, Athanasius broke out in weeping and explained his behaviour

<sup>233</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 121.

<sup>234</sup> Examples are conveniently listed in Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. μαρτύριον, 829–830, and Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. στέφανος, 1258. See also Walter Grundmann, 'στέφανος, στεφανώω', in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 7 (1964), 615–635, especially 632–633. For a fuller discussion see Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown'.

<sup>235</sup> The Syriac text could also be translated by 'on travel' or 'in exile'.

<sup>236</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 122.

<sup>237</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 8, 32, 59, 70, and 80.

<sup>238</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 128. See also Philippians 3:14. I owe this reference to Robert R. Phenix Jr.

<sup>239</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 122.

<sup>240</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 129.

<sup>241</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 130.

by saying that their father, Abba Peter, was about to be 'going on a journey to the Lord'.<sup>242</sup> Athanasius obviously saw Peter's death as only the beginning of yet another journey or pilgrimage, beyond the boundaries of the present life. The final destination was clear and set beyond any doubt.

With his account of the death of archdeacon Stephen of Jerusalem, Rufus provided a further illustration for how this last pilgrimage might take place. Stephen had been the master and supposedly for a time also the spiritual father of Abba John the Canopite,<sup>243</sup> the first among Peter's heirs.<sup>244</sup> According to Rufus, Stephen's zeal for the anti-Chalcedonian expression of the faith did not allow him to take any part in the transgression of Chalcedon. Rather, Stephen chose to leave the Jerusalemite clergy and 'went out on travels, and was perfected on travels'.<sup>245</sup> Stephen's resistance to Chalcedon found its expression in his choice of becoming a wanderer and a stranger. Rufus described that perfection during Stephen's final travel at his death:

When he was about to depart and go on the journey to Jesus, and was lying in great weakness and immobility, he saw a vision. . . . When he returned from the vision, the archdeacon of Maiuma, . . . 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.' When the hour of the decease of the blessed Stephen drew near, having been immobile [on] those days before in this manner, suddenly he leaped from [his] bed and straightened himself, when he saw the saints, those who had come to take him, and together with them the Lord. And when he had adored Him with joy and cheerfulness, he reclined again and immediately gave up his spirit.<sup>246</sup>

On his last journey to God, therefore, all the saints and the Lord himself accompanied the anti-Chalcedonian saint.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTISING HOSPITALITY<sup>247</sup>

In the Near East of late antiquity as much as today, hospitality is motivated by a strong religious and ethical command to help those who are in need, especially members of one's family or clan. Now as

<sup>242</sup> Or 'going away to the Lord'. *Vita Petri Iberi* 130.

<sup>243</sup> The 'village of Canopis' was 'situated about two miles south of Gaza'. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 132.

<sup>244</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 86.8–9 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', 86).

<sup>245</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 133. <sup>246</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 133.

<sup>247</sup> For a recent discussion of the theological implications of 'hospitality' see Christoph Auffahrt, 'Gastfreundschaft. I. Religionsgeschichtlich', in *LThK* 4

then, the helping hand is also extended to strangers. In desert areas in particular, the survival of an individual in ancient times depended on whether or not the wanderer would find shelter, protection, water and food in the tents of the Bedouins.<sup>248</sup>

One can distinguish at least three basic reasons why hospitality was offered to foreigners.<sup>249</sup> First, the strangers might possess special qualifications from which the host wished to benefit.<sup>250</sup> Second, hospitality might have been granted in the hope of receiving hospitality in return when one was in need.<sup>251</sup> A third and probably the most widespread motive for the practice of hospitality among Christians may be the Lord's command to love the neighbour as oneself.<sup>252</sup>

Hiltbrunner lists several rules established in the Old Testament concerning the practice of hospitality towards foreigners.<sup>253</sup> One was to receive a guest with great appreciation; not to act unjustly against him (Jeremiah 7:6; Zechariah 7:10; Ezekiel 22:7) or inconvenience him (Exodus 23:9). Through the prophet Isaiah God commanded Israel to help the guest in practical ways. He instructed the Israelites, saying, 'Share your bread with the hungry; invite the poor and those wandering around into your house; if you see someone who is naked, clothe him' (Isaiah 58:7). Greed was seen as being at the root of any refusal of hospitality (Job 31:32; see e.g. Genesis 19:2 and Exodus 2:19–20). God revealed Himself in the Psalms as a generous host who prepared a table for his guests and protected them from their enemies (Psalm 23:5). The Lord also protected the strangers (Psalm 146:9) and defended them at court against their oppressors (Malachi 3:5).

(1995), 299; Arnold Stiglmair, 'Gastfreundschaft. II. Biblisch-theologisch', in *LThK* 4 (1995), 299–300; Günter Virt, 'Gastfreundschaft. III. Theologisch-ethisch', in *LThK* 4 (1995), 300; Rolf Zerfass, 'Gastfreundschaft. IV. Praktisch-theologisch', in *LThK* 4 (1995), 300–301. See also Stählin, 'ξένος, ξενία, ξενίζω, ξενοδοχέω, φιλοξενία, φιλόξενος', 16–25; O. Hiltbrunner, 'Herberge', in *RAC* 14 (1988), 602–626; P. Miquel, 'Hospitalité', in *DSP* 7 (1969), 815–818; H. Leclercq, 'Hôpitaux, Hospices, Hôtelleries'.

<sup>248</sup> See Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1061–1077. For a study of the conditions of life of the Palestinian nomads and Arabs in general see the work by Gustaf Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*. Of interest here is especially vol. vi: *Zeltleben, Vieh- und Milchwirtschaft, Jagd, Fischfang* (Hildesheim, 1964).

<sup>249</sup> For these three motives see Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1064–1066.

<sup>250</sup> Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1064.

<sup>251</sup> Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1065.

<sup>252</sup> Luke 10:25–28; Matthew 22:37–40. Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1066.

<sup>253</sup> See for the following Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1071–1073.

Hospitality was of special importance in the Jewish community during the annual pilgrimage celebrations when large numbers of pilgrims came to the Temple in Jerusalem. Without a well-established custom of hospitality it would have been impossible to deal with the masses of visitors.<sup>254</sup>

Hospitality also played an important role in the developing early Christian community.<sup>255</sup> Early Christian preachers and missionaries, Paul among them, were dependent upon the support and generous reception of local hosts.<sup>256</sup> With the development of ascetic lifestyles, partially individualized, partially lived out in common, a conflict between reinforcement and restriction of practising the virtue of hospitality arose. Evidence from the works of John Rufus shows that in the long run anti-Chalcedonian ascetic communities in Syria-Palestine developed and benefited significantly from encouraging and cultivating the virtue of hospitality.

The following section will first consider the literary and experiential models which informed Peter's practice of hospitality. Then the focus of the discussion will turn to Rufus' portrait of Peter the Iberian as host. Finally, the conflict regarding the seemingly opposed attitudes monks could take regarding hospitality as well as the benefits of practising hospitality as they materialized for the anti-Chalcedonian community in Syria-Palestine will be analysed.

## Models Who Inspired Peter to Practise Hospitality

### *Scriptural Models: Abraham*

Any ascetic who meditated extensively upon the Scriptures sooner or later would encounter several models of inspiration or justification for practising hospitality.<sup>257</sup> The hospitality of Abraham

<sup>254</sup> For a fuller discussion of the reasons given in the Old Testament as to why hospitality was to be practised among the ancient Israelites, see Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1070.

<sup>255</sup> Stählin, 'ξένος, ξενία, ξενίζω, ξενοδοχέω, φιλοξενία, φιλόξενος', 19–25.

<sup>256</sup> See, for example, Luke 10:38–42; Acts 16:11–15; Romans 16:1–2; and *Didache* 11–12 (ed. Rordorf and Tuilier, *La Doctrine des Douze Apôtres [Didachè]*, SCh 248 (Paris, 1978), 182–189; tr. Cyril C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (New York, 1996), 176–177). See also the comments in Rowan A. Greer, 'Hospitality in the First Five Centuries of the Church', in *Monastic Studies*, vol. x: *On Hospitality and Other Matters* (Pine City, NY, 1974), 29–48, here 31–32.

<sup>257</sup> Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1071, lists the most important ones.

(Genesis 18:1–8)<sup>258</sup> and Lot (Genesis 19:1–8)<sup>259</sup> is proverbial. Many times the ascetic would be reminded of their example in his or her reading of the Fathers. Well known were the examples of the widow from Sarepta, who despite her great poverty and lack of resources hosted the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:8–16), or the Shunammite woman, who entertained the prophet Elisha at her table (2 Kings 4:8–10). In the Book of Judges Micah (Judges 17:1–13), the father of the Bethlehemite girl (Judges 19:4–9), and the old man dwelling in Gibeon (Judges 19:15–30)<sup>260</sup> extended their hospitality to foreigners. In the Book of Job, the main character could boast that the doors of his house had stood open for strangers and travellers at all times (Job 31:32).

The most significant and influential biblical model was that of Abraham.<sup>261</sup> Early Christian literature repeatedly referred in homilies to his example of greeting and entertaining the three foreigners under the Oak of Mamre,<sup>262</sup> or depicted it in works of art.<sup>263</sup> What made that event of hospitality so significant was that it was

<sup>258</sup> For a discussion of Abraham as host see Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vi. 134–140.

<sup>259</sup> Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vi. 141, discusses Lot's practice of hospitality.

<sup>260</sup> For a discussion of his service to the foreigners, see Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vi. 142.

<sup>261</sup> Koenig, 'Hospitality', 299–301.

<sup>262</sup> See, for example, Origen, *Homilies on Genesis* 4 (ed. W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke*, vol. vi: *Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung*, pt. i: *Die Homilien zu Genesis, Exodus und Leviticus*, GCS 29 (Leipzig, 1920), 1–144, here 50–57; tr. Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, FOTC 71 (Washington, DC, 1982), 47–224, here 103–111); Ambrose, *De Abraham* 1. 5.32–43 (ed. Carolus Schenkl, *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, CSEL 32.1 (Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, 1897), 501–638, here 526–534); John Chrysostom, *De beato Abraham* (ed. PG 50.737–746), who does not comment on Abraham's hospitality; and already from the late first or early second century AD the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (ed. Belkis Philonenko-Sayar and Marc Philonenko, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham*, *Semítica* 31 (Paris, 1981); English tr. Ryszard Rubinkiewicz, 'Apocalypse of Abraham (First to Second Century A.D.), A New Translation and Introduction', in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. i: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY, 1983), 681–705) and the *Testament of Abraham* (ed. and tr. Francis Schmidt, *Le Testament grec d'Abraham* (Tübingen, 1986), 46–82 (short recension) and 96–169 (long recension); tr. E. P. Sanders, 'Testament of Abraham (First to Second Century A.D.), A New Translation and Introduction', in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. i: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, NY, 1983), 871–902).

<sup>263</sup> Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1071. For Abraham as host of the three visitors represented in iconography, see the respective mosaic in the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome. See Vincenzo Monachino, ed., *La carità cristiana in Rome* (Bologna, 1968), fig. 3 (following p. 64).

‘understood as a revelation of the Trinity’.<sup>264</sup> Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land were attracted to the site of the Oak of Mamre, possibly before and certainly after Emperor Constantine had built a *martyrion* there.<sup>265</sup>

Any of the biblical examples of hospitality could have inspired Peter and John at least indirectly, but Rufus understood Abraham’s example as a direct model for them. According to him, the two young monks ‘received pilgrims in Abrahamic manner’.<sup>266</sup> An immediate point of comparison was Peter’s and John’s generosity in providing plenty of food for their guests. The author of Genesis also lavishly illustrated Abraham’s generous hospitality by the variety of dishes of bread, meat, yogurt, and milk that Abraham offered his guests (Genesis 18:5–8). Rufus did not elaborate on Abraham as a model for Peter and John. Yet it seems significant that he chose the figure of Abraham in the first place, in so far as Abraham was the *Stammvater*<sup>267</sup> and ‘father of faith’ of God’s people. By being portrayed as imitating Abraham, Peter and John the Eunuch were placed in a direct line of descent from him, and thus as people who had inherited his authority in matters of faith as well.

### *Models of Hospitality Whom Peter Encountered in Person*

#### **His Mother Bakurduktia**

One of the earliest examples of hospitality referred to in the *Vita Petri Iberi* is found among Peter’s Georgian relatives, especially in the person of Peter’s mother Bakurduktia. Rufus probably knew about her only from hearsay and from what Peter had told him. Yet he found it worthwhile to record that when Bakurduktia had become a widow, she withdrew to the countryside. There she lived in a village she owned, dedicating her resources to building ‘a guest-house for strangers and a hospital’.<sup>268</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Gregory T. Armstrong, ‘Abraham’, in *EEC* (1998), 7–8.

<sup>265</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, ch. 51 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 105; rev. tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 533). See also Kofsky, ‘Mamre’.

<sup>266</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>267</sup> The German word *Stammvater*, better than English terms like ‘progenitor’ or ‘forefather’, renders the idea that Abraham was the root out of which the family tree of God’s chosen people came forth.

<sup>268</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 12.

### **Melania, a Pilgrim-Turned-Ascetic, Offering Hospitality on the Mount of Olives**

Rufus explained that God had ‘prepared for [Peter and John] a good hostess’,<sup>269</sup> and as soon as they arrived in the Holy City, ‘God who guarded and preserved them because they were strangers and inexperienced in these holy places, led them to good hosts of pilgrims.’<sup>270</sup> Those ‘good hosts of pilgrims’ were Melania, her husband Pinianus, and her mother Albina, who, somewhat like Peter and John, had left behind their influential and powerful positions in society as well as their abundant material resources, had gone on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and had settled there permanently, living a life of ascetic renunciation and inviting others to join them.<sup>271</sup> For the two monasteries they built on the Mount of Olives they had ‘set up an endowment . . . for the reception and salvation of the souls of those many, who go there for their salvation’.<sup>272</sup> With such a statement Rufus indicated that Melania, Pinianus, and Albina were eager to take in pilgrims to Jerusalem in order to provide them with an opportunity to enter the monastic life. It was therefore not unusual that Melania, as soon as she learned about the arrival of the two young pilgrims from Constantinople, ‘received them joyfully’,<sup>273</sup> practising hospitality in the proper spirit.

Melania’s hospitality towards Peter and John did not seem to be based exclusively on her hope that the two, or at least Peter, would enter the ascetic life in the Holy City. No doubt that such a hope may have been a stimulating force for her. According to Rufus, she had noticed already at the occasion of her visit to Constantinople in AD 437 that ‘the grace of Christ was upon [Peter] from his youth [on]’ and that ‘[f]rom his childhood he was dear to God’.<sup>274</sup> A call to vowed ascetic life came not long after the two pilgrims took up life in her monastery and observed ‘the examples of the ascetic ways of life’ set by others ‘in the men’s monastery’.<sup>275</sup> They quickly received ‘the habit of the solitary life from holy hands’, namely those of Melania’s archimandrite Gerontius.<sup>276</sup> Yet the immediate reason for Melania’s hospitality was a more personal one. According to Rufus, she felt a strong personal and spiritual connection to Peter. Rufus said that because of Peter’s election by God ‘[s]he loved him much’.<sup>277</sup> That love was like the love of a mother. In Rufus’

<sup>269</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.      <sup>270</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.

<sup>271</sup> See above, ch. 2, pp. 6 and 70–73; and ch. 3, pp. 138–141. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 27–28.

<sup>272</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.      <sup>273</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29.      <sup>274</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29.

<sup>275</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 30.

<sup>276</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 30–31. See also above, ch. 3, pp. 142–145.

<sup>277</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29.

words, Melania 'was the one who received these saints with joy like beloved sons'.<sup>278</sup>

Rufus did not specify how much time went by until the news of Peter's and John's arrival in Jerusalem reached Melania's ears, nor did he mention any place at which the two might have stayed in the meantime. Since Melania seemed to have been Peter's only personal contact in Jerusalem, it is very likely that the two went to her monastery right away. Perhaps Melania also had a certain politically motivated interest in hosting the royal visitor from Constantinople. At least she may have wanted to return the courtesy she had received at the occasion of her visit at the court in Constantinople. Yet Rufus did not elaborate on that aspect.

### *Local Ascetic Heroes of the Recent Past: Passarion, a Friend of Strangers*

Passarion was the third significant model influencing Peter to practise hospitality, particularly hospitality paired with care for the poor and needy. Unfortunately, little is known about Passarion. Most of the available information comes from the works of Rufus and Cyril of Scythopolis.<sup>279</sup>

From Cyril one learns that in AD 428 Passarion was 'rural bishop (*χωρεπίσκοπος*) and archimandrite of the monks' in Jerusalem.<sup>280</sup> On the seventh of May of that same year, Passarion accompanied Archbishop Juvenal and the priest and teacher Hesychius<sup>281</sup> to the second *lavra* of the monk Euthymius (at Khirbet Mird) in order to participate in the consecration of the *lavra*'s new church.<sup>282</sup> According to Cyril, Euthymius greatly rejoiced when he saw Passarion among the

<sup>278</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 30. According to Rufus' portrayal of the circumstances, Peter ended up having at least four women in his life, who conceived of their relationship to him in terms of 'motherhood': Bakurduktia (his natural mother), Zuzo (his foster mother in Iberia), Empress Eudocia (his foster mother in Constantinople), and Melania the Younger (his spiritual mother in Jerusalem and inspiration for him to take up the ascetic life in Constantinople). For a more detailed discussion of this aspect of Empress Eudocia's relationship to him see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

<sup>279</sup> See also above, ch. 3, pp. 150–152 and the literature cited in n. 172.

<sup>280</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.18–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

<sup>281</sup> On Hesychius, see above, ch. 2, p. 73; ch. 3, p. 152; and below ch. 5, pp. 370–372.

<sup>282</sup> Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 414. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.14–23; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

visitors. One also learns from Cyril that Anastasius, the chorbishop and guardian of the sacred vessels of the Church of the Resurrection was close friends with Passarion as a fellow ascetic.<sup>283</sup> Elpidius was Passarion's disciple and, later on, his successor.<sup>284</sup> After Elpidius, Elias and then Lazarus succeeded.<sup>285</sup> Eventually the monk Sabas was appointed in place of Passarion as 'archimandrite and lawgiver of all the *lavrae* and anchorites of Palestine'.<sup>286</sup> One of Cyril's scant remarks about Passarion illustrates how famous Passarion was, particularly because of his charitable hospitality. In the *Vita Euthymii* Cyril described him as 'the Abraham-like Passarion'.<sup>287</sup> Rufus' comparison of Peter's and John's hospitality to that of Abraham constitutes the earlier literary documentation, earlier than that found in Cyril of Scythopolis' work. Yet given the fact that Rufus saw Peter as being in line with Passarion, Peter's and Passarion's shared imitation of Abraham only weaves together more tightly the net between them. It also heightens the importance of the practice of hospitality in the milieu of ascetics and pilgrims in Jerusalem.

Rufus spoke of Passarion's impact on Peter as follows:

Besides his other godly virtues and righteous acts the blessed Passarion, that great lover of the poor and lover of strangers, 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 for the service and for the chanting of [psalms] of those who continuously without ceasing are praising the Lord. When [Peter] saw him, he longed to become an imitator of this good [deed].<sup>288</sup>

Passarion was famous for the support he gave to the poor and the hospitality he extended to strangers. In order to do this, he had built 'a house for the poor'. The description of that house as one built 'for the rest and consolation of those whose bodies were wretchedly afflicted by weakness' suggests a hospital for the sick, who were

<sup>283</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 22 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 35.4–5; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 30–31).

<sup>284</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 27 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 42.12–13; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 38).

<sup>285</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 30 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 114.27–115.2; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 124).

<sup>286</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii* 4 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 239.10–11; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 265–266). For literature on Mar Sabas see above, ch. 2, pp. 99–100 and n. 238.

<sup>287</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.26–27.1; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

<sup>288</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

without means.<sup>289</sup> In the context of Jerusalem in the fifth century, however, a reference to those ‘whose bodies were wretchedly afflicted by weakness’ could also point to pilgrims who had arrived at their destination after long days and weeks of travel. It is therefore possible that Passarion’s house ‘outside the eastern gates of the city’ also functioned as a hostel and hospice for pilgrims.<sup>290</sup>

Literary sources attest to the existence of at least two buildings for the support of the poor and needy in the area ‘outside of the eastern gates of the city’, that is, east of the so-called ‘Stephen’s Gate’ or ‘Lion’s Gate’ of the Old City of Jerusalem. Rufus mentioned that Passarion maintained a ‘house for the poor outside of the eastern gates of the city’.<sup>291</sup> Both the list of Antiochus Strategos of Mar Sabas,<sup>292</sup> documenting the victims of the Sassanian conquest of Jerusalem in AD 614, and the *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary*,<sup>293</sup> completed in the eighth century, mention a building named ‘Passarion’.<sup>294</sup> The writings of the Piacenza

<sup>289</sup> For an important study of the establishments of institutions for the care of the sick in the form of hospitals in the Late Antique and Byzantine world see Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*.

<sup>290</sup> According to Kazhdan and Talbot, ‘Xenodocheion’, 2208, the philanthropic institution of a *xenodocheion*, based on the Christian principle of hospitality, served as ‘a guest house for travelers, the poor, and the sick’.

<sup>291</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

<sup>292</sup> The complete text of Antiochus Strategos, *The Capture of Jerusalem* is preserved in a tenth-century Georgian translation, based on an eighth- or ninth-century Arabic version. Only smaller fragments of the Greek text are extant (PG 86.2, cols. 3235–3268 and PG 89.1849–1856). For the Georgian version, see the edition by Gérard Garitte, *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*, CSCO 202–203, Script. Iber., tt. 11–12 (Louvain, 1960). For the Arabic version, see the comments in Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. i: *Die Übersetzungen*, Studi e Testi 118 (Città del Vaticano, 1944), 411–412. See also Gérard Garitte, ed. and tr., *Expugnatio Hierosolymae A.D. 614: Recensiones Arabicae*, CSCO 340–341 and 347–348, Script. Arab., tt. 26–27 and 28–29 (Louvain, 1973–1974). For an English translation see F. C. Conybeare, ‘Antiochus Strategos’ Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614’, *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 502–517. For recent bibliographical information on the various editions and translations of both the Georgian and the Arabic version, see B. M. Wheeler, ‘Imagining the Sassanian Capture of Jerusalem: The “Prophecy and Dream of Zerubbabel” and Antiochus Strategos’ “Capture of Jerusalem”’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57 (1991), 69–85, here 72 n. 14. See also Alexander Kazhdan, ‘Antiochos Strategos’, in *ODB* I (1991), 119–120.

<sup>293</sup> *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary* (ed. and tr. Michel Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l’église de Jérusalem (V<sup>e</sup>–VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, 2 vols., CSCO 188–189 and 204–205, Script. Iber., tt. 1 and 10, and 13–14 (Louvain, 1959–1960)).

<sup>294</sup> See Antiochus Strategos, *The Capture of Jerusalem* (ed. Garitte, *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*); and *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary* entry 972 (ed. and tr. Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l’Église de Jérusalem*, vol. ii, CSCO 204–205, Script. Iber. 13–14 (Louvain, 1960), 8 (Georgian), and 10 (Latin)). See also Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 414.

pilgrim from the late sixth or early seventh century state that outside of the city gates, east of the pool of Bethesda, there was a tomb of 'St Isicius', at which bread was distributed to the poor and needy.<sup>295</sup> Under the date of 22 September, the *Georgian Lectionary* attests to the building and the tomb of a priest 'St Eusychius'.<sup>296</sup> It seems most likely that in both cases the person referred to is the monk Hesychius, who from AD 412 also served as priest. He became famous as a preacher at the Church of Jerusalem,<sup>297</sup> probably meaning the Holy Sepulchre, and busied himself with writing commentaries on many of the biblical books. From a remark in the *Plerophoriae* it seems likely that Hesychius was at least sympathetic to the cause of the anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>298</sup> Archaeological discoveries in 1935 have brought to light the remains of a building and tombs at the slope east of the 'Lion's Gate',<sup>299</sup> which could be those of either Hesychius' building complex or Passarion's 'house for the poor'.<sup>300</sup>

From Cyril of Scythopolis' writings one knows that Passarion died after the consecration of the church of the *lavra* of Euthymius, either in the winter of AD 428/429 or of 429/430.<sup>301</sup> Devos tried to show that Peter and John the Eunuch had arrived in the Holy City no earlier than AD 437 or 438 and therefore never met Passarion in person.<sup>302</sup> Independent of whether one accepts Devos' line of argument,<sup>303</sup> even if Peter never met Passarion directly, Rufus' statement

<sup>295</sup> See Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 27 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 143). See also Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium (Recensio altera)* 27 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 167). See Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 410.

<sup>296</sup> See Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 410.

<sup>297</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.19–20; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

<sup>298</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 10. On the question of whether or not he himself was one of them no consensus has been reached yet. See above, ch. 2, p. 73. For further discussion of the possibility of Hesychius' influence on Peter the Iberian, see below, ch. 5, pp. 370–372.

<sup>299</sup> For references to the relevant literature, see Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 226.

<sup>300</sup> Suggested in Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 414.

<sup>301</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.18 and 27.2–4; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22). Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 413–414.

<sup>302</sup> Devos, 'Quand Pierre l'Ibère', 347; Devos, 'Cyrille de Scythopolis: Influences littéraires—Vêtement de l'évêque de Jérusalem', 38.

<sup>303</sup> In regard to the question of the reason and thus the timing of Melania's visit to Constantinople, I suggest that at *Vita Petri Iberi* 29 the Syriac word describing the nature of Volusianus' visit at the court could very likely carry the meaning of 'asking the hand of a girl for marriage', thus referring to an engagement context.

that Peter was impressed ‘when he saw the blessed Passarion, that great lover of the poor and lover of the strangers’<sup>304</sup> need not necessarily refer to a personal encounter between Peter and Passarion. The archaeological findings in the area east of the ‘Lion’s Gate’, with the numerous tombs discovered there and the clear indication that the tombs were grouped together and located in the basement of a larger building, make it likely that the tombs of the founders of those buildings were among them.<sup>305</sup> Rufus may be suggesting that the well-known example of hospitality provided by Passarion, whose ‘house for the poor’ Peter readily and often would have seen when coming down from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, inspired Peter in his own activities. Peter may also have visited Passarion’s tomb and thus ‘seen’ him, even if he did not meet him during his lifetime. Another passage in Rufus’ works supports that suggestion. In the *De obitu Theodosii* Rufus provided the reader not only with the precise date of Passarion’s death, the 25th of November, the same day of the year on which also Abba Romanus died several years later,<sup>306</sup> but also showed that the commemoration of Passarion played an important part in the tradition of the anti-Chalcedonian monastic community established by and around Peter. The passage occurring at the very end of the *De obitu Theodosii* reads as follows:

The commemoration of our holy Abba Romanus, the priest and archimandrite, is on the 25th of the second Teshrin (November), six days before the commemoration of our Abba Peter, the bishop. For it is right for them, since they gained brotherly virtues equal in honour, also to have commemorations [which] would be [like] brothers and neighbours for them.

On the very same day is the commemoration of the blessed Passarion, the priest. He is [the one who] nourished the poor and raised the orphans. He [is the one] who was archimandrite [of the monastery] of our holy Abba Romanus [and] he is the one who built the famous house for the poor, the one outside of the gates of the Holy City, in the east. [May it be] that with them Christ Our Saviour may also deem us worthy of the kingdom of heaven unto the ages. Amen.<sup>307</sup>

In this interesting passage Rufus not only verified the location of the ‘house for the poor’ as ‘outside of the gates of the Holy City, in the east’, but also provided a more specific context for Passarion’s ‘house of the poor’ by indicating that it also served as an orphanage.<sup>308</sup> Bio-archaeological research conducted by scholars from the University of

<sup>304</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

<sup>305</sup> See also Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 226.

<sup>306</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 26. <sup>307</sup> *De obitu Theodosii* 26–27.

<sup>308</sup> It would be worth investigating whether any bones were found in these tombs, including bones of children. One also wonders what impression it left on Peter that

Notre Dame, Indiana, at the church and monastery of St Stephen in Jerusalem<sup>309</sup> brought to light evidence for the presence of a significant number of young children at that monastery in late antique times.<sup>310</sup> This evidence suggests that also St Stephen's may have functioned as an orphanage, at least for some time.<sup>311</sup>

If one rereads Rufus' comments on Passarion as a model for Peter quoted above, one notices that Passarion built a monastery in addition to the 'house for the poor'. While the 'house for the poor' was located 'outside the eastern gates of the city', Rufus continued his account by stating that '[Passarion] erected inside the [city] walls of holy Zion a great and comely monastery for the service and for the chanting [of psalms] of those who continuously without ceasing are praising the Lord.'<sup>312</sup> Bieberstein and Bloedhorn thought that 'according to the *Vita Petri Iberi* Passarion, the archimandrite of the monasteries of Jerusalem founded a monastery on the south-western

Zuzo, the woman who raised him, and her husband, were open to raising children who were not their own. Since Peter remembered the names of his former foster-parents in the annual commemoration service for his relatives, he seems to have held the couple in very fond memory. He probably did not think of himself as an orphan, but it is a fact that he grew up repeatedly under a changing set of parents; he may have been cognizant of the harsh fate of orphaned children. See also above, ch. 2, pp. 55–57.

<sup>309</sup> See above, ch. 2, pp. 57–58. For a report on the evidence for the material culture found in the repository of one of the burial caves, see Kelley Coblenz Bautch, Richard Bautch, Gabriel Barkay, and Susan Guise Sheridan, "'The Vessels of the Potter Shall Be Broken": The Material Culture from a Burial Cave at St. Étienne's Monastery, Jerusalem', *Revue Biblique* 107.4 (2000), 561–590. For an evaluation of some of the aspects of ascetical and liturgical life that can be better illustrated on the basis of the analysis of the evidence discovered at St Stephen's, see Michael S. Driscoll and Susan Guise Sheridan, 'Every Knee Shall Bend: A Biocultural Reconstruction of Liturgical and Ascetical Prayer in V–VII Century Palestine', *Worship* 74 (2000), 453–468.

<sup>310</sup> Susan Guise Sheridan, "'New Life the Dead Receive": The Relationship between Human Remains and the Cultural Record for Byzantine St. Stephen's', *Revue Biblique* 106.4 (1999), 574–611, here 585–586, describing the biological record, reports that of the remains of 'over 15,000 bones and fragments . . . exhumed from repository 6 in the St. Stephen's cave complex. . . represent at least 109 adults and 58 children'. Therefore one has a ratio of adults to children of almost 2:1. Thus about half the number of people that can be documented biologically are children. Separate study of the subadult sample of the community is in process. See Sanders and Sheridan, 'All God's Children'.

<sup>311</sup> My conclusions arrived at after personal communications with some of the researchers in the Fall of 1998 at St Stephen's Monastery, Jerusalem. For an innovative study of the fate of orphans in the Byzantine world, see most recently Timothy S. Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium*. See also my review of this book in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12.1 (2004), 135–137.

<sup>312</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 35.

hill, Mount Sion'.<sup>313</sup> They assumed that Passarion's monastery was located in the vicinity of the Church on Mount Sion. While it is certainly true that the grounds that are now the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and the area including the present-day Church of the Dormition were heavily populated by ascetics and crowded with monasteries in late antique and early Byzantine times, and that as a whole the region was known by the name 'Mount Sion',<sup>314</sup> no ruins identifiable as a monastery of Passarion have yet come to light there. Moreover, as demonstrable from Rufus' works, an early Christian author may refer either to the particular area indicated above or to the whole of the city of Jerusalem as 'Zion/Sion'.<sup>315</sup> Since the more straightforward reading of the description of the locations of Passarion's 'house for the poor' and his monastery in the *Vita Petri Iberi* seems to indicate close proximity of the two buildings, I would look for the location of Passarion's monastery in a different part of town, namely the north-eastern part of the Old City, very close to the 'Lion's Gate'.

According to Rufus, Peter transformed his own monastic building into a house for entertaining guests and those in need of his hospitality.<sup>316</sup> It was a common practice and also a practical solution for hospices or hospitals to be built closely adjacent to the monastery of those ascetics who were responsible for serving it.<sup>317</sup> One could cite archaeological evidence from the Monastery of Martyrius, only a few

<sup>313</sup> Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 413: 'Nach der Vita Petri Iberii habe Passarion, der Archimandrit der Klöster Jerusalems, am Südwest-Hügel, dem Berg Zion, ein Kloster gegründet.'

<sup>314</sup> For an archaeological study of this area in particular see Yoram Tsafrir, 'Zion: The South-Western Hill of Jerusalem and Its Place in the Urban Development of the City in the Byzantine Period [in Hebrew]' (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975), unpublished.

<sup>315</sup> For 'Sion' referring to 'Mount Sion' see *Vita Petri Iberi* 45, 48, 50, and 99; *Plerophoriae* 42. For 'Sion' as a name for the whole of the city of Jerusalem see *Vita Petri Iberi* 10, 26–27, and 35 (the section under discussion); *Plerophoriae* 89.

<sup>316</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46–47. It is known that guest-houses (*xenodocheia*) existed inside the walls of Jerusalem and were run by monks whose monasteries were not in close proximity to those guest-houses, for example, the guest-house of the monks of Mar Sabas located in the immediate neighbourhood, if not eventually identical with Peter's monastery near the Tower of David. In those cases, however, the monks' home-monasteries were not in the city at all, but rather far away from Jerusalem, even in the middle of the Judaean Desert. For a brief general orientation on *xenodocheia*, see Kazhdan and Talbot, 'Xenodocheion', 2208; see also Stählin, 'ξένος, ξενία, ξενίζω, ξενοδοχέω, φιλοξενία, φιλόξενος', 24.

<sup>317</sup> See Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 196–199, among other topics for discussion of locations of monasteries and hospices in relation to one another, supporting the present author's assumptions and conclusions.

miles east of Jerusalem, where the guest-house /hospice was located next to the walls of the actual monastery.<sup>318</sup>

The location of Passarion's monastery in the north-eastern part of Jerusalem, right inside the city walls, close to the 'Lion's Gate' and thus close to his 'house for the poor', can be supported by literary and archaeological evidence as well. Several churches and monastic dwelling-places in Jerusalem are only known from accounts in saints' lives or are mentioned in one of several preserved lists:<sup>319</sup> Procopius of Caesarea's list of the monasteries, which were rebuilt or restored under Emperor Justinian;<sup>320</sup> the list of victims of the Sassanian Conquest of Jerusalem in AD 614, compiled by Antiochus Strategos of Mar Sabas;<sup>321</sup> the *Jerusalem Georgian Lectionary* from the eighth century;<sup>322</sup> the *Commematorium de casis Dei vel monasteriis*, which came into existence around AD 808/9 in the context of contacts between the Carolingians and the Abbasids;<sup>323</sup> and the list of Armenian monasteries compiled by Anastasius Vardapet in late Fatimid times.<sup>324</sup>

In 1937 R. W. Hamilton discussed the recent find of the inscribed tombstone of the deacon Amos of the Church of the Probatike,<sup>325</sup> also known as the Church at the Pool of Bethesda, now the area of the Church of St Anne's, which is under the guardianship of the French Order of the White Fathers.<sup>326</sup> One of the first times that church is mentioned is in the *Plerophoriae* in connection with an event Peter

<sup>318</sup> Observation made on a private visit there, summer 1999. I wish to thank Hanswulf Bloedhorn for his kind guidance and instructions at that occasion. See also Y. Magen and H. Hizmi, 'The Monastery of St. Martyrius at Ma'ale Adumim', *Qadmoniot* 18 (1985), 62–92; and Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 197.

<sup>319</sup> For the listing of the following texts see also Bieberstein and Bloedhorn, *Jerusalem*, iii. 406.

<sup>320</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *Buildings* 5.9 (ed. Haury, re-ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing and Glanville Downey, *Procopius: Buildings*, LCL (Cambridge, Mass., and London, repr. 1954), 356–361).

<sup>321</sup> See above, ch. 4, p. 281, n. 292.

<sup>322</sup> See above, ch. 4, p. 281, n. 293.

<sup>323</sup> *Commematorium de casis Dei vel monasteriis* (ed. Titus Tobler and Augustus Molinier, *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae bellis sacris anteriora & latina lingua exarata sumptibus Societatis illustrandis Orientis latini monumentis*, vol. i.ii (Geneva, 1880), 301–305).

<sup>324</sup> For Anastasius Vardapet, also known as Anastasius of Armenia, who is to be dated after AD 975, see L. Alishan, 'Les LXX couvents arméniens de Jérusalem', *Archives de l'Orient Latin* 2 (B) (1884), 394–399; and A. K. Sanjian, 'Anastas Vardapet's List of Armenian Monasteries in Seventh-Century Jerusalem: A Critical Examination', *Le Muséon* 82 (1969), 265–292.

<sup>325</sup> For that tombstone, see also above, ch. 4, pp. 250–251, n. III.

<sup>326</sup> R. W. Hamilton, 'Note on Recent Discoveries outside St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem', *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 6.3–4 (1937), 155.

witnessed in the first half of the fifth century.<sup>327</sup> Hamilton had reasons to assume that Amos, whose tombstone was found at a distance of less than 500 yards from the church, was a monk of a nearby monastery that existed during the Byzantine period and was mentioned for the first time in the list of Armenian monasteries compiled by Anastasius the Armenian. All this taken together shows that monks were probably living in the north-eastern part of Jerusalem, inside the city walls, in the first half of the fifth century, the time relevant for Passarion's activities. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that Passarion built both his 'house for the poor' and his monastery in that area and thus was a direct inspiration for both Peter's ascetic and charitable inclinations.

### Peter as Host for Pilgrims to the Holy City

After Peter and John had been trained in the proper ascetic lifestyle in Melania's monastery for men on the Mount of Olives, they decided to build a monastery of their own in the very heart of Jerusalem, at the place that was close to the Tower of David.<sup>328</sup> Once that monastery was built, the two were not satisfied with the daily ascetic routine but wished to extend their activities beyond the confines of their monastery. Rufus reported that the two had been able to take a significant, yet unspecified, amount of money along with them on their journey from Constantinople to Jerusalem. Presumably, they had spent some of that money for travel expenses. Rufus stated that they donated most of the money to ascetics and to the poor, both on their journey and in the Holy City.<sup>329</sup> The construction of their monastery was inexpensive, since due to special legislation for the rebuilding of Jerusalem they received the land on which they built it for free.<sup>330</sup> With the rest of the money 'they planned to conduct good business',<sup>331</sup> which meant that they became thoroughly involved with the business of Jerusalemite pilgrimage at the time.

Wanting 'to receive and refresh the pilgrims and the poor who were coming from everywhere to worship in the Holy Places',<sup>332</sup> Peter and John converted their monastic habitation into a hostel for pilgrims. There they 'entertained pilgrims at their own expense'.<sup>333</sup> However, since they 'had no experience at all in such services', being themselves 'pilgrims and foreigners', they were often inundated with

<sup>327</sup> *Plerophoriae* 18. See also above, ch. 4, pp. 250–251 and n. III; and below, ch. 4, pp. 324–325.

<sup>328</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

<sup>329</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>330</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

<sup>331</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>332</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>333</sup> Kofsky, 'Peter the Iberian', 213. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

crowds of pilgrims and ‘would even have ten<sup>334</sup> tables [for serving] in one day, particularly on solemn feasts’.<sup>335</sup>

It appears that the two young monks did not employ any additional cooks or house-servants to assist them in serving the pilgrims, but performed all the necessary labours on their own. Even though Rufus wrote that ‘cheerfulness of soul and love of Christ’<sup>336</sup> strengthened and comforted them in their endeavours, he could not deny that they came into extremely stressful situations. Describing one such incident Rufus said that

[o]nce when a multitude of pilgrims had come together at their place, they were wanting in supply. As time was pressing, they were worried, in their heart crying out secretly to God, while being ashamed by the vexation [with] which the pilgrims were wearing [them] out.<sup>337</sup>

In that pressing situation, a miracle helped them out, for all the previously empty vessels in the pantry ‘were found each full with that kind [of food], which earlier had been stored in it’.<sup>338</sup> While Rufus managed to portray the two young monks as aided and supported by God, he also portrayed them as being rather inexperienced in business matters. It almost seems that word had gotten around and pilgrims were taking advantage of Peter’s and John’s hospitality.

How much of a profitable business the providing of hospitality to pilgrims was is not easy to determine. Rufus did not indicate whether or not Peter and John received any payment for their services. Presumably they did not ask for money, but probably accepted it if visitors left a sign of their gratitude. Their own money would have run out after a while. Rufus also did not concede that they ceased practising hospitality from lack of funds, attributing their continued service to divine providence.

While offering hospitality to pilgrims, Peter and John abstained from food; they did not give up their ascetic lifestyle. They seem to have thought of their hospitality as an acceptable ascetic way of life. Rufus did not specify how long Peter and John engaged in the business of caring for pilgrims. He merely said that ‘they thus had spent a long time receiving pilgrims’.<sup>339</sup> Eventually, however, Peter’s spiritual father, Abba Zeno, pointed out the conflict between monastic life and the distractions of pilgrimage life. He called them away from the busy city ‘to enter again a monastery and be further trained through obedience and humility’.<sup>340</sup> Zeno thought that ‘being instructed in the monastery... is more profitable for those who are

<sup>334</sup> Not twenty, as Chitty had read. See Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 87.

<sup>335</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>336</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>337</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>338</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>339</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>340</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

still children in age'.<sup>341</sup> Thus, despite his appreciation for hospitality, in line with the ordering of ascetic virtues presented on occasion by Abba Rufus in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*,<sup>342</sup> Abba Zeno saw the greater importance of obedience.

Abba Zeno was not only a 'hermit and prophet', but also 'a disciple of the great Silvanus'.<sup>343</sup> Thus by way of Abba Zeno and Abba Silvanus, who is attested as having lived at Gerar /Saltu[s Gerariticus] during the fourth century,<sup>344</sup> Peter and John came under the direct influence of Egyptian and Gazan ascetic ideals. While recognizing the divine favour and approval of hospitality,<sup>345</sup> advice given to Egyptian and Gazan ascetics would warn them of the potential dangers of such a practice especially when it occasioned contacts between members of the opposite sex.<sup>346</sup>

### Should Monks Practise Hospitality towards Pilgrims?

Many ascetics who settled in the Holy Land had come originally as pilgrims from other countries. Some of those who had experienced the joys and troubles of pilgrimage stayed involved with pilgrims for the rest of their lives.

If one were to explore the Jewish milieu, one could point to several communities of brethren, for whom the practice of hospitality was a vital part of their rules.<sup>347</sup> Going as far back as the Qumran writings, documents show that for example the 'community of the pious', which the Damascus document addresses, carefully observed the ancient rule of offering hospitality.<sup>348</sup> Members of those circles

<sup>341</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>342</sup> *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Alphabetical Collection, Abba Rufus 2 (ed. PG 65.389–392; tr. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 210–211).

<sup>343</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>344</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 72 and n. 109; and ch. 3, pp. 160 and 223.

<sup>345</sup> *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Alphabetical Collection, Eucharistus the Secular (ed. PG 65.168–169; tr. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 60).

<sup>346</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon* 3 (tr. Chrysavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis: Ascetic Discourses* (Kalamazoo, 2002), 50 and 52).

<sup>347</sup> Hiltbrunner *et al.*, 'Gastfreundschaft', 1072–1073.

<sup>348</sup> See 'Damaskusschrift' CD 6.20–7.1; German translation in E. Lohse, ed., *Die Texte aus Qumran* (Munich, 1964), 79: '... jeder seinen Bruder zu lieben wie sich selbst, des Elenden und des Armen und des Fremdlings sich anzunehmen und ein jeder zu suchen die Wohlfahrt seines Bruders, und daß keiner treulos handle an dem, der Fleisch ist'. See also 'Damaskusschrift' CD 14.12–15; Lohse, *Qumran*, 97: 'Und [dies] ist die Ordnung der Vielen, um alle ihre Belange festzusetzen: den Lohn von we[nig]stens [z]wei Tagen je Monat sollen sie in die Hände des Aufsehers und der Richter abgeben. Davon soll man den W[ai]sen geben, und davon soll man den Elenden und Armen unterstützen und (weiterhin) für den Greis, [der im Sterben

continued to look to Abraham as the example *par excellence* of hospitality.<sup>349</sup> The Essenes would constitute another example of such ‘communities of brethren’ practising hospitality. According to Josephus, individual Essenes did not have to take anything along with them when travelling because in each town they had a steward (*κηδεμών*) in charge of the common possessions and able to supply visiting Essenes with food, clothing, or whatever else they needed.<sup>350</sup> Those examples demonstrate that the ancient world possessed several models for hospitality comparable to that of monastic ‘communities of brethren’.

Scholars have already paid some attention to hospitality as practised by early Christian communities of ascetics.<sup>351</sup> According to Peña, ascetic guests would normally stay for no more than three days and then move on. Moreover, since ‘a guest was considered an ambassador of God’, hospitality was granted not only to fellow ascetics, ‘but to anyone who might come from afar’.<sup>352</sup>

Hospitality was a virtue monks valued highly. Monastic leaders, such as Chariton or Euthymius, often recommended it to their disciples.<sup>353</sup> Even in old age, the monk Cyriacus himself would

liegt,] und für den Mann, der heimatlos ist, und für denjenigen, der in ein fremdes Volk gefangen weggeführt wird’.

<sup>349</sup> See also the *Testament of Abraham* 2.5–5.3 (short recension) (ed. and tr. Schmidt, *Le Testament grec d’Abraham*, 46–57) and *Testament of Abraham* 2.7 and 4.1–7.12 (long recension) (ed. and tr. Schmidt, *Le Testament grec d’Abraham*, 104–119; English tr. Sanders, ‘Testament of Abraham (First to Second Century A.D.)’, 883–886 and 896–897). The archangel Michael, sent by God to Abraham to announce to him that his death was near, was the last guest whom Abraham entertained with all the honours of proper hospitality. Finally, Abraham recognized the angel Michael as one of the three angels who had visited him earlier in his life. See above, ch. 4, pp. 275–277 and 280.

<sup>350</sup> See Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.125 (ed. and tr. Henry St John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Jewish War, Books I–III*, LCL (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1927; repr. 1961), 379).

<sup>351</sup> See, for example, Ignacio Peña, *The Amazing Life of the Syrian Monks in the 4th–6th Centuries* (Milan, 1992), 126–128; Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 196–200; Bitton-Ashkelony, ‘Pilgrimage’, appendix. For a brief discussion of representative voices from the Church Fathers on the intrinsic quality of every Christian as a stranger in this world, and thus on the need of practising hospitality as a central Christian virtue see Amy Oden, ‘God’s Household of Grace: Hospitality in Early Christianity’, in *Ancient and Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, Ill., 2002), 38–48. See also Greer, ‘Hospitality in the First Five Centuries of the Church’.

<sup>352</sup> Peña, *The Amazing Life*, 127.

<sup>353</sup> See *Vita Charitonis* 17 (ed. Gérard Garitte, ‘La Vie prémétaphrastique de S. Chariton’, *Bulletin de l’Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 21 (1941), 5–50, here 29, ll. 10–15; tr. Leah Di Segni, ‘The Life of Chariton’, in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis, 1990) 393–421, here 407); Cyril of Scythopo-

serve his visitors.<sup>354</sup> Sabas offered hospitality to Saracens who came to him in their need.<sup>355</sup> Under no circumstances would the monk Theodosius reduce the amount of bread he set aside to give to his guests.<sup>356</sup> Hirschfeld observed what can likewise be seen from the example of Passarion's 'house for the poor', that 'no clear distinction' was made 'between hospitality and charity in Byzantine sources, so that feeding the poor was considered but one aspect of the virtue of openhandedness'.<sup>357</sup> Charity and hospitality went hand in hand. As will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, one can observe an increased focus of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality on the one 'who was crucified for us'.<sup>358</sup> Given such a cross-centred spirituality, at least some anti-Chalcedonian ascetics may have seen a connection between caring for the pilgrim and the poor and sick on the one hand and the need of an increased awareness of Christ's suffering on the Cross on the other.

As shown above, Peter and John had turned their monastery in Jerusalem into a hospice offering hospitality to pilgrims.<sup>359</sup> In Rufus' account of Peter's experience as a host for pilgrims, one meets a monk who paid too high a price by practising this virtue rigorously. Rufus wrote that

[w]hile they were thus able to provide enough for [their] necessities, they received pilgrims in Abrahamic manner, they [who themselves were] pilgrims and foreigners, and who had no experience at all in such services. Many times it happened that they would even have ten tables [for serving] in one day, particularly on solemn feasts. They alone served them [namely, the pilgrims who came to them], [even] while they were [thus] passing the vigils. For cheerfulness of soul and love of Christ by whom they were strengthened and comforted in a wonderful way were victorious over the weakness of [their] nature.<sup>360</sup>

An alert reader will note that they had to take care of multitudes of pilgrims 'particularly on solemn feasts', when an ascetic would prefer to spend the day in prayer at church and not in the kitchen. Rufus also said that 'they were [thus] passing the vigils', which seems to

lis, *Vita Euthymii* 39 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 59.7–8; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 56). See also Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 196.

<sup>354</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Cyriaci* 21 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 235.7–13; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 259).

<sup>355</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 13 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 96.12–16; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 105).

<sup>356</sup> Theodore of Petra, *Vita Theodosii* 151–152 (ed. Hermann Usener, *Der heilige Theodosios* (Leipzig, 1890), 36–37).

<sup>357</sup> Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, 196.

<sup>358</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 5 below.

<sup>359</sup> See above, ch. 4, pp. 287–289. <sup>360</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

indicate that they were not able to keep the proper hours of prayer because of all their physical work. With those few remarks Rufus revealed that Peter and John ‘somehow neglected the monastic way of life’, as Kofsky phrased it.<sup>361</sup> In view of such conflicts between their service to pilgrims and their responsibilities as monks, Peter and John were fortunate to have an experienced spiritual guide, the monk Zeno, who himself had learned ascetic discipleship under the famous Abba Silvanus.<sup>362</sup> Rufus reported only a few lines later that

[a]fter they had spent a long time receiving pilgrims in this way, finally the holy Zeno, the hermit and prophet, who was a disciple of the great Silvanus and who was renowned everywhere, advised them to enter a monastery again and be further trained through obedience and humility, saying to them, ‘Now that you have performed the reception of pilgrims, come then, labour [in] the monastic way of life, while you are being instructed in a monastery. For this is more profitable for those who are still children in age.’ When they had entered one of the holy monasteries, they exercised themselves in all attentiveness, obedience, and Naziriteship.<sup>363</sup>

The practice of obedience and humility under a spiritual father was more important in the beginning stages of an ascetic career. Indirectly, however, Abba Zeno implied that the proper practice of hospitality was a sure sign of great progress in the ascetic life, when the monk could balance his duties to God and to his neighbour without neglecting either. It would take a longer period of time practising asceticism before the two young men would have reached such a high level of perfection. The concluding section of the episode illustrates the point well:

After they had spent time in the monastery following the advice of the holy Zeno, with his knowledge they returned again 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 distributed well. [Instead,] they wore themselves out in great asceticism and in harsh ways of life.<sup>364</sup>

Even though Peter and John discontinued active hospitality at that stage of their ascetic career, Zeno’s advice did not cause a fundamental change of heart in the two monks. From the hospitality practised by Peter’s ascetic disciples of later years one can conclude that Peter himself continued to have a positive and supportive attitude towards hospitality. As immediate teacher of his disciples, Peter probably was

<sup>361</sup> Kofsky, ‘Peter the Iberian’, 213.

<sup>362</sup> For a useful study on both Silvanus and his disciple Zeno one may consult van Parys, ‘Abba Silvain et ses disciples’.

<sup>363</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47.

<sup>364</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 47–48.

their direct source of encouragement to offer hospitality to the many visitors who came to visit him at the different locations where he rested on his journey<sup>365</sup> or in his monastery in Maiuma.<sup>366</sup> Yet given that Peter instructed his disciples to follow the Rule of Basil,<sup>367</sup> Basil's teachings on hospitality as something to be practised by ascetics probably was a significant additional source of inspiration for the practice of this virtue.<sup>368</sup>

### Hospitality and Spiritual Exchange

There are several instances in Rufus' works when individual ascetics visited one another and extended or received hospitality. According to Rufus, Pelagius of Edessa frequently visited Peter at the *lavra* in Maiuma. For both of them, those visits offered occasion for in-depth spiritual conversations and theological and philosophical exchanges and explorations concerning the ideas and perfections in God.<sup>369</sup> A hospitable environment enhanced the giving of spiritual and practical advice as illustrated by the example of John of Beth-Tatiana, who visited Abba Elladios of the Cells and received a prophecy that at the time of persecution he would find refuge in that very monastery of the Cells.<sup>370</sup> Also Peter's spiritual father, Abba Zeno, who himself was a wandering monk from Kefar She'artha,<sup>371</sup> received monks from everywhere and gave them advice.<sup>372</sup> At the occasion of Peter's pilgrimage to Mount Nebo, shortly after his first arrival at Jerusalem and while still a layman, Peter was welcomed hospitably by an old monk, who had great insight into Peter's future.<sup>373</sup> Epainetes, the scholastic, informed Rufus about his visits to a certain Abba Zeno at the Ennaton.<sup>374</sup> Even Abba Isaiah, who cautioned monks not to move about and visit one another lightly, told Rufus about visits he

<sup>365</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 121, for visitors from Ashkelon, Gaza, and Maiuma being hospitably received by the group of followers around Peter, even though the wandering ascetics themselves were dwelling in a small and narrow place.

<sup>366</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 144: '[The brethren] had been occupied only with the reception and refreshment of these saints and strangers who were continually coming there [namely, to Peter's monastery between Gaza and Maiuma] during the life(-)time of the blessed one.'

<sup>367</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 135.

<sup>368</sup> See also Greer, 'Hospitality in the First Five Centuries of the Church', 37–41.

<sup>369</sup> *Plerophoriae* 2. <sup>370</sup> See *Plerophoriae* 7.

<sup>371</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 50, and *Plerophoriae* 8. See Tsafirir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 165; Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 10 /n. 308, pp. 881–882.

<sup>372</sup> *Plerophoriae* 8. <sup>373</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 86–87.

<sup>374</sup> *Plerophoriae* 13.

made to Abba Paul of the Thebaid.<sup>375</sup> Yet Peter and Abba Isaiah practised a very special form of hospitality between themselves. They usually did not visit one another in person. Nevertheless, they kept a close friendship, practised exchange of spiritual gifts, and sustained one another by also sending gifts of food.<sup>376</sup> Rufus likewise knew of at least two fellow anti-Chalcedonians from Palestine who paid a visit to Timothy of Alexandria during his exile in Chersones: Apollo, the priest of Caesarea, returned from that visit with Timothy's blessings;<sup>377</sup> Abba John had been sent directly by Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians and by Abba Peter in order to console Timothy in his exile.<sup>378</sup> When Peter passed through Ptolemaïs (Akko),<sup>379</sup> Abba Gregory joined Peter's group and when they came to Caesarea, where Gregory had his home-base, he urged Peter to stay with him in his monastery.<sup>380</sup> Rufus said that Gregory and Peter 'were so pleased with each other's converse that he [that is, Abba Gregory] kept us [that is, Peter, Rufus, and their fellow ascetics] there for four months'.<sup>381</sup> The multitude of such examples attests to the frequent exchanges, visits, and accompanying acts of hospitality between Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians.

During these visits matters pertaining to the proper confession of the faith were also discussed. Such a connection between hospitality and debates over theological issues was not without precedent. According to Brakke, Athanasius had 'rallied the desert monks to his cause and introduced the issue of theological disagreement into the monastic practice of hospitality'.<sup>382</sup> It was through Athanasius' influence that '[b]y means of . . . hospitality and intercessory prayer, communities of virgins established networks of outside supporters, whose financial contributions in turn secured spiritual benefits for themselves'.<sup>383</sup> It seems reasonable to suggest that the theologically charged practice of hospitality tied the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonian milieu to that in Egypt.

<sup>375</sup> *Plerophoriae* 12.

<sup>376</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 103.

<sup>377</sup> *Plerophoriae* 26.

<sup>378</sup> *Plerophoriae* 65.

<sup>379</sup> On Ptolemaïs (Akko), see Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine*, vol. iii: *Catalogue* (Oxford, 1998), Feuille 3 /n. 4, pp. 661; and Schick, 'The Fate of the Christians', entry: Acre (4), 410–411.

<sup>380</sup> For references to archaeological discoveries at Caesarea, see above, ch. 2, p. 83, n. 171.

<sup>381</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 120–121.

<sup>382</sup> David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995), 12.

<sup>383</sup> Brakke, *Athanasius*, 30.

### Hospitality Extended to Refugees

No doubt numerous places for lodging were available to normal travellers in late antique Palestine. The *Vita Petri Iberi* contains evidence to that effect.<sup>384</sup> In situations of hardship and persecution being taken in hospitably by fellow believers was essential for the survival of anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine.

In the context of his polemical attack on Nestorius at the beginning of the *Plerophoriae*, Rufus told the story of the monk and prophet Pelagius of Edessa.<sup>385</sup> Pelagius criticized and publicly reproved Ibas, bishop of Edessa, 'a convinced anti-Cyrrillian and partisan of Nestorius'.<sup>386</sup> Subsequently, when Pelagius was driven away from Edessa, he found refuge in Palestine, but Rufus did not reveal where. Perhaps that silence was intentional, for Rufus may have wished to conceal the identity of the hosts, protecting them against possible attacks from Chalcedonians.

By choosing the example of Pelagius, a defender of Cyril of Alexandria and an opponent of Nestorius seeking refuge in Palestine, Rufus demonstrated to his audience that even before Chalcedon Palestine was a place of refuge for defenders of the true faith, even if they were in opposition to the episcopal hierarchy. Later on, when Pelagius had to flee from attacks by Palestinian Chalcedonians and go into hiding, he found refuge in Ashkelon at the inn of Cyril, himself an anti-Chalcedonian refugee from Maiuma.<sup>387</sup>

Rufus' works show that for many anti-Chalcedonians the monasteries of fellow believers functioned as places of refuge. A place of 'refuge' was needed in a variety of situations. Occasionally, Rufus spoke of an individual, here Pelagius, who 'fled' from the world 'to

<sup>384</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 53–54, in reference to hostelrys in Sokha. People from Maiuma stayed overnight with Peter in a hostel there as they were taking him to Jerusalem in order to secure his ordination as the new bishop for their city.

<sup>385</sup> *Plerophoriae* 2.

<sup>386</sup> For the only surviving document, a letter written to Bishop Mari of Ctesiphon, see Ibas of Edessa, *Letter to Mari the Persian* (ed. E. Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Chalcedonense*, ACO ii.i.iii (Berlin and Leipzig, 1935), 32–34). For discussion of this correspondence, see Adhémar de Alès, 'La Lettre d'Ibas à Marès le Persan', *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 22 (1932), 5–25. On Ibas, see further J.-M. Sautet, 'Ibas', in *EECh* 1 (1992), 403; Timothy E. Gregory, 'Ibas', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 970–971; and R. Aubert, 'Ibas, *Hibas*, évêque d'Edesse', in *DHGE* 25, fasc. 144–145 (1994), 587; and Eckhard Halleemann, 'Ibas', in *BBKL* 2 (1990), 1236–1237.

<sup>387</sup> *Plerophoriae* 6. See also above, ch. 3, p. 211, where the monastery wall might indicate a less-than-welcoming climate for the returning anti-Chalcedonian monks.

the monastery'.<sup>388</sup> Yet situations in which anti-Chalcedonian monasteries provided shelter and refuge for anti-Chalcedonians under direct physical threat, both in Egypt and in Palestine, were not rare. According to Rufus, Abba Elladios of the Cells prophesied to John of Beth-Tatiana, a priest from Alexandria, that at a time when persecution would come upon the Church—referring to Chalcedon and its aftermath—John would have to flee and take refuge in the monasteries of the Cells.<sup>389</sup> Rufus also knew of several monks who hid in the monastery of Abba Romanus.<sup>390</sup>

It was essential for the survival of fugitive anti-Chalcedonians that they find a hospitable place of refuge with their fellow believers, who were mostly ascetics, but also included lay persons. When Peter left Maiuma and went to Alexandria, 'a certain one of these friends of the pilgrims and friends of the saints'<sup>391</sup> received him. That the man was a member of the laity can be concluded from the fact that he asked Abba Peter and Abba Pior, who had come to visit Peter, to baptize his little child. In Oxyrhynchus Peter enjoyed the hospitality of Moses, 'a certain one from the magistrates of the city', 'a Christ-loving man and a lover of the saints', who was 'clothed with profits in faith and [good] will'.<sup>392</sup> Rufus emphasized that Moses had spent half of his annual income housing the saints, the poor, and strangers.<sup>393</sup>

In later years, when Peter returned to Palestine and was wandering about in the provinces of *Palaestina*, *Arabia*, and *Phoenicia* on behalf of the anti-Chalcedonian cause, he seems to have found support mainly among lay people. With considerable sums of money out of his own pocket, Dionysius, a lawyer, built new housing for Peter and his friends in Magdal Tutha, south of Gaza and close to the sanctuary of Hilarion.<sup>394</sup> Rufus mentioned the tribune Elijah,<sup>395</sup> 'a lover of Christ and a lover of the saints, a lover of the poor and a lover of the strangers',<sup>396</sup> who was not only a fervent and zealous anti-Chalcedonian, but also 'a eunuch'<sup>397</sup> and the 'taskmaster and steward of the believing and orthodox [that is, anti-Chalcedonian] Empress

<sup>388</sup> *Plerophoriae* 6.                      <sup>389</sup> *Plerophoriae* 7.

<sup>390</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10. The monks named in that context are 'Abba Atarbius, a sincere man, Abba Pragmius, Abba Thomas, the deaf one, the first disciple of Abba Romanus, and many other old men and [people], fair of conscience.'

<sup>391</sup> *Plerophoriae* 49.                      <sup>392</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 60.                      <sup>393</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 60.

<sup>394</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 101. For secondary literature on Hilarion and his sanctuary, see above, ch. 3, p. 163, n. 245. See also Horn, 'Peter the Iberian and Palestinian Anti-Chalcedonian Monasticism', 113–115.

<sup>395</sup> For a detailed discussion of Elijah's support of Peter and the anti-Chalcedonian community see Horn, 'Empress Eudocia'.

<sup>396</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 96.                      <sup>397</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 122.

Eudocia'.<sup>398</sup> Having received healing for his ears from Peter's hands previously, Elijah 'entreated and urged [Peter] very much'<sup>399</sup> to stay at a property of Eudocia's in Beth Tafsha, about 5 miles north of Jerusalem in the mountains,<sup>400</sup> so that Peter might avoid the heat of the summer.<sup>401</sup> A second time Elijah provided Peter with lodging in a house near Jamnia, which once had served as a dwelling-place for Eudocia and was part of the imperial property.<sup>402</sup> On his travels to northern Phoenicia, Peter and his friends enjoyed the warm hospitality of Maximus,<sup>403</sup> the magistrate of Arca,<sup>404</sup> whom Rufus praised as 'honourable one and friend of strangers'<sup>405</sup> and as 'the good host of strangers'.<sup>406</sup> Maximus went out of his way to find lodging for the group. In the end he took his whole family to Tripoli to say goodbye to Peter and to receive his blessings.<sup>407</sup> For some time Peter and his followers were able to stay in Gišra, on one of the estates of the *comes* Apringius,<sup>408</sup> 2 miles away from Tripoli.<sup>409</sup> Finally, Peter's dedicated supporter Maximus quickly provided everything necessary to guarantee a smooth journey on land to Beirut, since Peter suddenly had decided against a voyage by boat.<sup>410</sup> In Ptolemaïs (Akko),<sup>411</sup> the anti-Chalcedonian Aaron 'who was the superintendent of the salt-pan' received Peter hospitably.<sup>412</sup>

Based on such a wealth of citations from the relevant texts, one may securely conclude that anti-Chalcedonian ascetics, who were fleeing from Palestine or who later could not live without impediment in Palestine, found refuge and support from ascetics in monasteries, and from lay people in private homes and estates. In either instance believers supported fellow believers. Rufus' examples suggest that the financial and material assistance that lay people contributed was substantial.<sup>413</sup>

<sup>398</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 97.

<sup>399</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 96.

<sup>400</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98.

<sup>401</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 97.

<sup>402</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 123.

<sup>403</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 105.

<sup>404</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 104 and 114. For the location of Arca (or Arka), just north of Orthosias, and thus about 20 miles north of Tripoli, see Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, CSCO 127, Subsidia t. 2 (Louvain, 1951), map I: 'Diffusion du Monophysisme en Orient vers 512-518'.

<sup>405</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 111.

<sup>406</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 114.

<sup>407</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 112.

<sup>408</sup> See 'Apringius 2', in J. R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. ii: A.D. 395-527 (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, and Sydney, 1980), 123.

<sup>409</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 109.

<sup>410</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 112.

<sup>411</sup> For references to secondary literature on Ptolemaïs (Akko), see above, ch. 4, p. 294, n. 379.

<sup>412</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 119.

<sup>413</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 105: Maximus is described as 'a rich man'.

### **Discerning Where to Stay and Whom to Take In: Hospitality and Dissent**

Although anti-Chalcedonian ascetics received friendly and hospitable support from laypeople who favoured the anti-Chalcedonian cause, their ascetic expectations and their supposedly higher ideals of virtuous conduct in everyday life occasionally came in conflict with practices common in private homes. Rufus recounted an episode in which Peter found himself in a delicate situation as a guest of ‘one of the friends’ of the anti-Chalcedonians in Alexandria. Having been invited for dinner to the house of this well-known Alexandrian, who reportedly belonged to the group ‘of the zealous and diligent ones’,<sup>414</sup> in Alexandria and who thus should be counted among the staunch opponents of Chalcedon there, Peter nevertheless had to be present when that man, given to the ‘evil custom of the world’ and having ‘forgotten with whom he was reclining and eating’,<sup>415</sup> ‘began to give orders to the slaves who were serving and to rebuke them with improper words’.<sup>416</sup> Alarmed by the voice of the Lord, who called on him three times and told him that such behaviour was a way of reviling Christ, Peter was overcome with tears and fled from the house of such a man.<sup>417</sup> When reflecting on his experience, Peter began to understand that no iniquity would remain hidden from God and no one would be able to escape his judgement. The lesson was that one had to be careful in choosing the people with whom to associate and from whom to receive hospitality. For anti-Chalcedonians, perfect moral conduct was one of the essential requirements.<sup>418</sup> In the above instance, Peter’s flight had the effect of converting his Alexandrian host, as Rufus seemed pleased to note.<sup>419</sup>

In several of the cases in which Rufus indicated or implied the practice of hospitality, one can notice that he highlighted expressions of dissent with regard to the given system or against the present rulers. Two of the scenes in the *Plerophoriae* illustrate this point. Abba Zeno, Peter’s spiritual father, who used to receive all monks, in the end shut himself in his cell and refused to receive anyone.<sup>420</sup> Rufus suggested that Abba Zeno had adopted such an inhospitable behaviour as a warning against the coming evil of Chalcedon. Rufus told of another ascetic, who lived in one of the monasteries surrounding the Holy City. That old man refused to receive Bishop Juvenal in his cell when he paid a visit. According to Rufus, the old man expressed his disdain for Juvenal’s future defection from the faith in this way.<sup>421</sup>

<sup>414</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 74.

<sup>417</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 74.

<sup>419</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 75.

<sup>415</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 74.

<sup>418</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 75.

<sup>420</sup> *Plerophoriae* 8.

<sup>416</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 74.

<sup>421</sup> *Plerophoriae* 17.

### The Rewards of Hospitality

In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus indicated that hospitality shown to others, and presumably in a special way hospitality offered to ascetics and men of God, would find its reward in the blessing that one received from the guest and in the grace which God granted to the one who showed that hospitality.<sup>422</sup> The anti-Chalcedonians in Alexandria, together with the man who welcomed Peter into his house, benefited from Peter's public refutation of the pro-Chalcedonian document that circulated by Proterius' order.<sup>423</sup> Dionysius, the fervent anti-Chalcedonian from Gaza, who had invested 300 darics into building comfortable housing for Peter and his friends in Magdal Tutha, experienced the blessings of Peter's presence when he earned again, in a completely unexpected way, the exact amount of money he had spent on his guest.<sup>424</sup> Dionysius knew that the hospitality he had shown was abundantly rewarded. Aaron, who offered Peter hospitality in Ptolemaïs, received blessings for himself and his house from Peter, such that Peter's presence 'inflamed [Aaron's] heart with divine love' and 'Aaron was . . . pricked by the love of Christ'.<sup>425</sup>

#### TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES INFLUENCED BY TENSIONS ARISING OVER THE INFLUX OF INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMS TO THE HOLY LAND?

With the increase in the number of pilgrims to the Holy Land, the composition of the population in Jerusalem became more diverse. Different peoples from all the regions of the Empire were represented.<sup>426</sup> Rufus' works attest to the presence of Latin- and Greek-speaking individuals from the West, and Georgian- and Greek-speaking pilgrims from the East.

Given Peter's Georgian background, it is of interest to note that several Georgians were recorded as having visited the Holy Land as

<sup>422</sup> *Plerophoriae* 49. <sup>423</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 61–62.

<sup>424</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 101. <sup>425</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 119.

<sup>426</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 84, notes the loss of the international character of monasticism in Palestine after the final and decisive move towards the Chalcedonian confession. For a description of the international character of the monastic body present in the Holy Land, see Jerome, *Epistulae* 46.10 (ed. Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, pt. 1, CSEL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910), 340; tr. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, 'Against Vigilantius', in *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, NPNF 6 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1893), 64).

pilgrims or even as having stayed there for longer. Rufinus of Aquileia received his account of the conversion of the Georgians by St Nino from a Georgian *comes*.<sup>427</sup> Apart from Peter, several other royal Georgians went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the fifth century. King Vakhtang Gorgasali arrived with his mother and his sister.<sup>428</sup> The pilgrimage of the Georgian King Tatian is also recorded in history.<sup>429</sup> For the period of the patriarchate of Elias of Jerusalem (AD 494–513) Georgian sources record the pilgrimage to Jerusalem of David of Garesja, one of the thirteen Syrian Fathers who undertook missionary work in Georgia.<sup>430</sup> Peter's companion, John the

<sup>427</sup> Rufinus of Aquileia, *Ecclesiastical History* 10.11 (ed. Mommsen, 'Paralipomena: Rufinus', in *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, ii.ii, GCS n.s. 6.2 (Berlin, 1999), 976).

<sup>428</sup> Juansheri, ცხოვრება ვახტანგ გორგასლისა (*C'xovreba vaxtang gorgasalisa*) [*The Life of King Vaxt'ang Gorgasali*] (ed. S. Qauxch'ishvili, ქართლის ცხოვრება, (*K'art'lis c'xovreba*) [*History of Georgia*], 2 vols. (Tbilisi, 1955 and 1959), vol. i, pp. 139–244, here 186, ll. 8–13; reprinted in Stephen H. Rapp, Jr., *K'art'lis c'xovreba: The Georgian Royal Annals and Their Medieval Armenian Adaptation*, 2 vols. (Delmar, NY, 1998), vol. i, p. 186; also ed. Marie-Félicité Brosset, ქართლის ცხოვრება, დასაბამი-დან მეათეცხრამეტე საუკუნეების, გამოცემული დეკლეთა (*K'art'lis c'xovreba: dasabamit-gan meate'cxrametesaukunebis gamocemuli dek'letia*) [*History of Georgia: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*], re-ed. by Nicolas Marr (St Petersburg, 1923), 137; tr. Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'antiquité jusqu'au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (St Petersburg, 1849), 183; also tr. Robert W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles: The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation* (Oxford and New York, 1996), 153–250, here 202); and Timothy Gabachvili, *Book of the Visit* (tr. M.-F. Brosset, *Additions et éclaircissements à l'Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'en 1469 de J.-C.*, n. 10 (St Petersburg, 1851), 189–209 (extracts), here 198). Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, vol. i. i, p. 183, n. 4, notes that according to Gabachvili, the Monastery of the Cross, Jerusalem, kept a portrait of King Vaxt'ang as memory of the royal visit at the occasion of the pilgrimage. See also Augustus Molinier and Carolus Kohler, *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae bellis sacris anteriora*, vol. ii.i (Geneva, 1885), 170.

<sup>429</sup> See Molinier and Kohler, *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae bellis sacris anteriora*, vol. ii.i, p. 180.

<sup>430</sup> See Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places', 11 n. 13. See Arsen II of Georgia, 'Life of David of Garesja' (tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 92–93). David of Garesja is one of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, who played a significant role in introducing monasticism into Georgia. The larger part of the cycle of their biographies, *The Lives of the Syrian Fathers*, was composed in the tenth century by Catholicos Arsenius II of Georgia (c.955–980). Editions of these *Lives* are available in G. M. P. Sabinini, *Sak'art'velos Samot'xe* [*The Paradise of Georgia*] (St Petersburg, 1882), 193–295 (longer versions); and S. Kakabadze, *Asurel Mamat'a Chovrebat'a Arhetipebi* [*The Archetypes of the Biographies of the Syrian Fathers*] (Tbilisi, 1928). For a brief discussion of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, see Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 81–83. See also Tarchnišvili and Assfalz, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, 107–109 and 410–412. For a discussion of the beginnings of monasticism in Georgia, see G. Peradze, 'Die Anfänge des Mönchtums in Georgien', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1927), 34–75; see also Reisner, 'Mönchtum im frühmittelalterlichen Georgien'.

Eunuch, serves as an example of a pilgrim to the Holy Land from the Lazic people.<sup>431</sup>

Chariton, the founding father of monasticism in the Judaeen Desert, was a native of southern Asia Minor, the son of a well-known family in Iconium.<sup>432</sup> Early in the fourth century he went on pilgrimage to the Holy City.<sup>433</sup> He was captured by robbers and taken to the cave of Pharan, near the spring of 'Ain-Fara, about 5 miles north-east of Jerusalem in the Judaeen Desert. Later on he founded his first monastery there.<sup>434</sup> Euthymius, one of the most influential monks in Palestine, came from Armenia.<sup>435</sup> Theodore of Petra's *Life of Theodosius* attests that by the early sixth century Bessi had settled in the Judaeen Desert monasteries.<sup>436</sup> Chitty, Perrone, and Hirschfeld all noted the clear connection between the monastic movement in the Judaeen Desert and the numerous pilgrims, who planned to come only for a visit but ended up staying in the desert after having seen the

<sup>431</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>432</sup> *Vita Charitonis* 4 (ed. Garitte, 'La Vie prémétaphrastique de S. Chariton', p. 18, l. 23; tr. Di Segni, 'The Life of Chariton', 399). Early Christian Iconium corresponds to the modern-day city of Konya, Turkey. Hardly any traces are left in this city of its once so rich Christian history. Presumably the most famous daughter of that city was Thecla, according to the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (ed. Richard Adelbert Lipsius, 'Πράξεις Παύλου καὶ Θέκλης', in *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1891; Hildesheim, repr. 1959), vol. i, pp. 235–272; tr. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993), 364–388), a companion of Paul and independent missionary. For an insightful study, accompanying a readable German translation, see Anne Jensen, *Thekla—Die Apostolin: Ein apokrypher Text neu entdeckt* (Freiburg, 1995). Also Chariton understood himself as a disciple of Thecla. See *Vita Charitonis* 5 and 10 (ed. Garitte, 'La Vie prémétaphrastique de S. Chariton', p. 20, l. 16, and p. 24, l. 3; tr. Di Segni, 'The Life of Chariton', 400 and 403).

<sup>433</sup> *Vita Charitonis* 8 (ed. Garitte, 'La Vie prémétaphrastique de S. Chariton', p. 22, ll. 16–19; tr. Di Segni, 'The Life of Chariton', 402).

<sup>434</sup> *Vita Charitonis* 9–11 (ed. Garitte, 'La Vie prémétaphrastique de S. Chariton', 22–25; tr. Di Segni, 'The Life of Chariton', 402–404). For the material conditions at the Monastery of Chariton, see Yizhar Hirschfeld, 'The Monastery of Chariton: Survey and Excavations', *Liber Annuus* 50 (2000), 315–362 and plates 1–26; and Yizhar Hirschfeld, 'Life of Chariton: In Light of Archaeological Research', in *Ascetic Behavior in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (Minneapolis, 1990), 425–447. In 1999, a Russian Orthodox hermitage existed at the site.

<sup>435</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 2 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyryllos von Skythopolis*, 8.22–23; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 4).

<sup>436</sup> Theodore of Petra, *Life of Theodosius* 153 (ed. Hermann Usener, *Der heilige Theodosios* (Leipzig, 1890), 45). Bessi was a name originally given to various Thracian tribes and later used as 'a synonym for Thracians in general'. See Iris von Bredow, 'Bessi, Bessoi', in *Brill's New Pauly: An Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, vol. ii (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 613. For a critical comparison between Theodore of Petra's account of Theodosius' life with that of Cyril of Scythopolis, see Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy*, 112–130.

holy places.<sup>437</sup> A similar development seems to have taken place with regard to the monastic communities in the Gaza area. Several of the monks who settled in that region originated in Egypt. They had come on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and stayed on afterwards. On the other hand, monastic life in late antique Palestine benefited considerably from Palestinian individuals who had left their homeland for a while, mostly going to Egypt, but later returned to become founders of monastic centres. Hilarion, the traditional founder of ascetic life in the Gaza area with a monastery at Magdal Tutha /Thawatha, the place of his birth,<sup>438</sup> is an excellent example.<sup>439</sup>

One may consider whether or not the change in the composition of the local population, particularly regarding the increase in the number of ascetics from other parts of the Empire, affected the theological climate in Jerusalem. While Rufus attested to the presence of numerous pilgrims in Jerusalem, who 'endeavoured to find many places, and buy and build monasteries and a house of silence', he noted polemically that in contrast to the lively building activity of new pilgrims who settled in Jerusalem, the monastery of Juvenal 'was dissolved, . . . not inhabited and [turning into] a wasteland'.<sup>440</sup> One has to take this as a blow against the Chalcedonian bishop and his inability to take proper care of his monastic community.<sup>441</sup>

<sup>437</sup> Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 48; Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 34, 37–8, and 43–5; and Hirschfeld, *Judean Desert Monasteries*, II.

<sup>438</sup> Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 2 (ed. PL 23.30; see also Hurter, *Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula Selecta*, reprinted in Oldfather, *Studies in the Text Tradition of St. Jerome's Vitae Patrum*, 42; tr. Ewald, 'Life of St. Hilarion by St. Jerome', 246).

<sup>439</sup> The *Apophthegmata Patrum* tradition preserves a beautiful expression of the close relationship between Hilarion and Antony of Egypt. See *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Alphabetical Collection, Abba Hilarion (ed. PG 65.241; tr. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, III).

<sup>440</sup> *Plerophoriae* 16.

<sup>441</sup> The presence of so many pilgrims also had economic consequences for Palestine. With the money which so many international pilgrims brought along and spent at the holy places, those pilgrims became an important factor in the development of the economy of late antique Palestine. In an article on the economics of Byzantine Palestine, M. Avi-Yonah ('The Economics of Byzantine Palestine', *Israel Exploration Journal* 8 (1958), 39–51) discussed the effects which rich Byzantine pilgrims had had on the land. In the first part of the fifth century a large influx of private investment into the Holy Land allowed for large-scale building activities and substantial charitable donations of money to the poor. The export of relics was another considerable source of income for the economy of the Holy Land. Yet all of these gains were only of a short-term nature. In the later part of the fifth century, when foreign capital dried up, not much was left to continue filling in the holes torn into the economic system and consequently Palestine experienced a dramatic economic decline. I wish to thank Monica Blanchard for drawing my attention to this article.

Rufus recounted two events that may have been influenced by a level of tension arising between pilgrims who started to settle permanently in the Holy City, often enough as ascetics, and the local population or the clergy of the Church of Jerusalem. The first incident took place in the early forties of the fifth century, when Peter and John the Eunuch were building their monastery and hostel in the centre of Jerusalem, close to the Tower of David.<sup>442</sup> As the work on the building was in progress, a dispute arose between Peter and John on the one hand and a well-known cleric of Jerusalem, whose name Rufus did not mention, but who lived in the immediate neighbourhood of the monastery being built. Although Rufus did not state the argument explicitly, the description of the cleric as an angry neighbour suggests that he challenged the borders of Peter's and John's property. While Peter kept himself quietly in his cell, John dealt with the workers and talked to the angry neighbour. In the heat of the dispute, that neighbour hit John on the cheek. Without defending himself, John withdrew into the house and complained to Peter. Rufus recounted that the two fell on their knees and prayed. On the following morning the cleric was found dead, even though nothing at all had been wrong with him previously. Rufus interpreted the event as a sign to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem that God the just Judge had taken revenge for John and would always help his two servants.

It is difficult to determine from Rufus' description, if what happened was merely a case of neighbourly greed, or if possibly an element of opposition to foreigners may have played a role. Rufus did, however, give the story a twist by suggesting that closeness to God and Peter's and John's theological virtues were elements that helped them gain God's support. Implied in this could be a suggestion that the lack of these, possibly the 'other' beliefs held by an official member of the Jerusalem clergy, caused downfall and death. All in all one could read Rufus as advancing the notion that theological differences between the locals and the newly arrived pilgrims settled in the Holy City caused problems.<sup>443</sup>

A second case, that of the deaconess Urbicia and her brother, both of whom were from Crete, and Bishop Epiphanius of Pamphylia, who stayed in their monastery on the Mount of Olives, supports that conclusion. Rufus granted Urbicia's story considerable space in the *Plerophoriae*, presenting her as defending herself against pressure from the archdeacon of the Church of the Ascension who was trying

<sup>442</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45–46.

<sup>443</sup> See also Lorenzo Perrone, 'I Monaci e gli "altri": Il monachesimo come fattore d'interazione religiosa nella Terra Santa di epoca bizantina', *Augustinianum* 35 (1995), 729–761.

to talk her into joining the Chalcedonian communion of the Bishop of Jerusalem. Urbicia's refusal ultimately was grounded in her unwavering allegiance to her spiritual father, Abba Timothy, who lived in Crete. Whatever he would tell her, she would do.<sup>444</sup> While in that case the Jerusalemite archdeacon did not seem to have carried any prejudices against foreigners as such, Urbicia's response showed that foreigners themselves felt bound to non-local authorities, and thus the international origins of individuals clearly contributed to conflicts on the local level. On the whole, however, Rufus' work does not provide significant evidence that would prove that the influx of pilgrims from different ethnic and geographical backgrounds as such exerted a strong influence on the way the Christological controversies developed in Palestine. To evaluate the situation more fully, other sources dealing with Palestinian monasticism would have to be taken into consideration.

## WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD ANTI-CHALCEDONIANS TAKE TOWARDS THE HOLY PLACES?

### **How to Think of a Holy Place**

#### *What Made a Place Holy for Anti-Chalcedonians? Divine Power Inherent in a Holy Place*

Studies concerning the inherent qualities of holy places are informative and readily available.<sup>445</sup> Thus the following discussion will focus on the relevance of the question of the holy places within the work of John Rufus, giving particular attention to Peter the Iberian's experience and interpretation of these sites.

One of the most convincing and impressive arguments for the genuineness of a holy place is the efficacy of divine power dwelling in it. One episode which took place when Peter and John the Eunuch were living in Jerusalem, close to the holy place of Golgotha, may serve as illustration. John had contracted a painful skin disease in his

<sup>444</sup> *Plerophoriae* 44.

<sup>445</sup> See the literature cited above, ch. 4, pp. 226–230. For comments from the Jewish tradition concerning the interaction of divine power and space, see, for example, *Mishnah Berakoth* 9.1: 'If a man saw a place where miracles had been wrought for Israel he should say, "Blessed is he that wrought miracles for our fathers in this place". [If he saw] a place from which idolatry had been rooted out he should say, "Blessed is he that rooted out idolatry from our land"' (tr. Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah, Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford and London, 1933), 9).

face. '[F]ervent in spirit and divine fervour', Peter guided John at night to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>446</sup> Rufus described that

[w]hen 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 (ἁγία ἑσθλα) Rock of the holy Golgotha for worship (ἁγία ἑσθλα), the blessed John saw [41] [something] like a hand come out from there, approach his face, and wipe his whole face clean. At dawn, [his face] was found completely pure, without injury or defilement from the disease.<sup>447</sup>

Rufus succinctly explained that this had happened 'for the demonstration of the divine power of the holy Cross'.<sup>448</sup> Peter had told him about that miracle to demonstrate 'the power of the holy Golgotha and of the divine grace hidden in it'.<sup>449</sup> Since the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was and is precisely the place at which Christ's crucifixion is commemorated, at least on one level Rufus was indicating that the miracle was possible because the two young believers had approached Golgotha as the chosen holy place for their prayers. Moreover, Rufus implied the effectiveness of the redemptive and salvific suffering of Christ for both body and soul of believers.

Rufus' work is a witness to the fact that people believed that prayers at the holy places in Jerusalem had special efficacy or were particularly pleasing to God. When Peter and John approached Jerusalem and for the first time 'embraced the foot of the venerable Cross', they felt like people 'who already had received Jesus, whom they loved, and who henceforth were dwelling with him in heaven'.<sup>450</sup> The two pilgrims' feeling of 'dwelling with [Jesus] in heaven' connects well the ideas of the potential of contact with the transcendent, divine reality mediated by the physical holy places on the one hand and the persistent longing of finding this eternal 'home' not on earth but in heaven, in the 'heavenly Jerusalem', on the other hand. Rufus also knew that Arsilios, the brother of Peter's grandfather Bakurios, had asked Peter to pray for him in Jerusalem.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>446</sup> See also *Plerophoriae* 4: Pelagius of Edessa had the custom of visiting the holy place of Golgotha at night in order to pray there.

<sup>447</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40–41. <sup>448</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 41.

<sup>449</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40.

<sup>450</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27. It is remarkable how Rufus' description of their experiences resembles almost literally the modern call among more evangelistically oriented Christians to 'accept Jesus into one's life', with the promises of thus being saved, or 'entering the kingdom of heaven' and 'being a child of God'. These and similar invitations can be heard at missionary events, sponsored, for example, by the teams of Billy Graham, Reinhard Bonnke (CfaN: Christ for all Nations), and others.

<sup>451</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 10–11.

In the account of John's healing Rufus added as a second motive that the miracle happened 'for the assurance (ϰινησις, *p<sup>o</sup>lirōfōryā*), of our [that is, Peter's and John's] hope'.<sup>452</sup> Thus the word, which as the central theme would characterize the collection of anecdotes which Rufus was to compose or redact later on, was already in this instance brought into focus. Miracles, signs, and wonders, which were happening at holy places, functioned as acts that strengthened the believers in their faith in the power of the Lord and assured them that they were on the right side in the struggle for the faith.<sup>453</sup>

Divine power inherent in a holy place also expressed itself in the form of visions. The example of Pamphylus, deacon of the Church of Jerusalem, illustrates this.<sup>454</sup> While praying at night in the holy place of Golgotha, Pamphylus had a vision. He received foreknowledge that Juvenal would lose the support of the Jerusalemite clergy and ascetics and would choose to side with imperial forces and against the anti-Chalcedonians. Thus a holy place was characterized as a site at which special knowledge was imparted by God, knowledge that allowed one to discern the truth or falsehood of religious claims, independent of the weight of ecclesiastical authority that might have backed up such a claim.

### *What Made a Place Holy for Anti-Chalcedonians? The Presence of a Holy Person at a Holy Place*

Not long after Peter and John had arrived in Jerusalem and had prayed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Christian holy place *par excellence*, Peter set out, as seen above, on another pilgrimage, this time to Mount Nebo in Transjordan.<sup>455</sup> Peter had identified his motivation to Rufus, telling him that he had come 'to this mountain [to see such] a sight (δαλξεζιά; *dalxezīā*) and to pray'.<sup>456</sup>

What makes Peter's pilgrimage to Mount Nebo such an interesting example is that in Rufus' portrayal it functioned as a holy place for two reasons: it was the burial place of Moses, with a large Christian sanctuary erected in commemoration of the guide and law-giver of the Israelites; and it also was the home of a community of monks, many of whom had been expelled from their monasteries in Egypt

<sup>452</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 41.

<sup>453</sup> For a discussion of such dimensions of hagiographical discourse in Chalcedonian settings, see Griffith, 'Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy'.

<sup>454</sup> *Plerophoriae* 4. <sup>455</sup> See above, ch. 4, pp. 238–240.

<sup>456</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85, line 18.

and had settled on that holy ground to venerate Moses' memory.<sup>457</sup> Through their ascetic presence they emphasized and even added to the sacredness of the site. Those two aspects illustrate two of the fundamental reasons why a place was considered holy in the eyes of late antique Palestinians: a place was holy because it could be connected with the memory of a scriptural holy person or event, even with physical remains of that person, or with contemporary witnesses to that presence, allowing for a direct and tangible encounter with that person or event. A place was also holy because holy people, often ascetics, were living there. The strategic advantage of the potential movability of the determiners of 'holy space' in the second case made that moment of definition of 'holy space' especially attractive for anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>458</sup>

According to Rufus, a vision had revealed the presence of the relics of the prophet Moses to a shepherd from the village of Nebo while he was herding his flock.<sup>459</sup> The shepherd saw a brightly lit cave filled with sweet fragrance. Entering the cave, he saw 'a venerable old man, whose face was shining (see Exodus 34:30, 35) and full of all grace, reclining as it were on a bed, bright and flashing in glory and grace'.<sup>460</sup> Convinced that it was the body of Moses, the shepherd hurried to tell his fellow villagers. Although none of them could find the cave or any of Moses' relics, they trusted the shepherd's testimony. All joined together to build a sizable sanctuary dedicated to Moses.<sup>461</sup> Rufus presented Peter as summarizing why that sanctuary was important to the people.

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 for all people, of souls and of bodies, and a [place of] refuge for all those who arrive here

<sup>457</sup> Hugh Gerard Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wādi 'n Natrūn*, pt. ii: *The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis* (New York, 1932), 150–167, discusses the Maziks' invasion of Scetis in the first half of the fifth century. See also Augustine of Hippo, *Epistula* 111.1 (ed. Goldbacher, *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae, pars II, ep. XXXI–CXXXIII*, CSEL 34 (Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, 1898), 642–657, here 643; tr. Sister Wilfrid Parsons, *Saint Augustine: Letters, Vol. II (83–130)*, 245–254, here 245); Philostorgius, *Ecclesiastical History* 11.8 (ed. Joseph Bidez, *Philostorgius: Kirchengeschichte; Mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochien und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen*, GCS 21 (Leipzig, 1913), 137–139); and Chitty, *The Desert A City*, 60–61, 69–70, and 144–145. The Maziks invaded in AD 407–408. Scetis was destroyed a second time in AD 434.

<sup>458</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Horn, 'Transgressing Claims to Sacred Space'.

<sup>459</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 88–89.

<sup>460</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 88.

<sup>461</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 89.



Rufus' account of Peter's pilgrimage to the holy place of Mount Nebo also constitutes an example of the second foundational principle of a holy place, the one ultimately more relevant for anti-Chalcedonians: the presence of a holy man or woman. Peter had told Rufus that when he had come to Mount Nebo he had learned 'that one of the great Scetian 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 monasteries there'.<sup>466</sup> It had been Peter's great desire to be 'allow[ed] . . . the blessing and sight of him (ἰδέσθαι αὐτόν)'.<sup>467</sup> As much as he had wished to enjoy the 'sight' of Mount Nebo, so much did he also long to have 'sight' of that holy man. The choice of the same word (ἰδέσθαι) speaks in favour of the parallel. Moreover, Peter described the Scetian monk as having dwelt in his cell 'for forty years, not going outside of the door nor crossing the threshold; an ascetic man, a prophet, and one full of divine grace'.<sup>468</sup> The additional parallels between Moses and the Scetian monk are not hard to establish. The monk was confined to his cell, the relics of Moses to his cave, and both were given the title 'prophet'. Thus for Peter, Mount Nebo was a holy place both because it was the burial site of Moses and because it had been the dwelling-place of the monk from Scetis, who, moreover, had suffered persecution and had been forced to leave his homeland, go on a journey, and resettle in a foreign land. The ultimate parallel to Peter's experience ought not to be missed.

*The Motive of 'Going to the Saint' as Overriding the Desire for 'Going to the Promised Land'*

In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus revealed some of his own motives for going to the Holy Land.<sup>469</sup> He had served as a priest of the Church of Antioch up until the rise of Calendion in AD 479.<sup>470</sup> Since he saw in Calendion a 'hard and ravenous wolf, who was not sparing the flock',<sup>471</sup> he felt compelled to 'separat[e] himself from the harm and the fellowship' of that Chalcedonian.<sup>472</sup>

Rufus maintained correspondence with Theodore of Ashkelon, the scholastic, an old friend who had been with him in Beirut,<sup>473</sup> most

<sup>466</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

<sup>467</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85, line 23.

<sup>468</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85.

<sup>469</sup> Also see the discussion in Horn, 'A Chapter in the Pre-History'.

<sup>470</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81. See above, ch. 1, pp. 33–34.

<sup>471</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81.

<sup>472</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81.

<sup>473</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81. On Theodore, also see above, ch. 1, p. 34 and n. III.

likely a fellow student at the city's famous law school.<sup>474</sup> Theodore had urged Rufus repeatedly 'to come and visit and gain profit from the saints in Palestine, and especially from the great Peter [the Iberian], the living martyr'.<sup>475</sup> Therefore, when Rufus 'hastened to the Land of Promise',<sup>476</sup> what may have motivated him most was the prospect of being able to live with 'the saints in Palestine'.<sup>477</sup> He probably conceived of his journey as a pilgrimage. Yet his encounter with the saints, that is, with the anti-Chalcedonians, especially his meetings with Peter, transformed his experience of living in the Holy Land into an encounter with the heavenly realm. Rufus came to be so close to Peter that he became 'a fellow of [Peter's] communion' and 'a companion of [his] ministry'.<sup>478</sup> Rufus described his experience of their constant interactions by making use of a comparison between Peter the Iberian and the Apostle Peter. Using the third person singular he said,

He [that is, Rufus] was so motivated towards faithfulness and love for him [that is, Peter] that he would think he was seeing Peter, the head of the Apostles, and was near him and was conversing with him and was enjoying the divine gifts that were in him.<sup>479</sup>

Rufus prayed that he would be protected and could follow such a holy man for the rest of his life, a wish which found its fulfilment when Rufus became a monk in Peter's monastery.

Many instances of pilgrims coming to the Holy Land, staying on, and living in close proximity to the holy places could be listed.<sup>480</sup> Rufus stated that in the case of Poemenia the driving force had been her sheer desire 'to dwell in the holy and worshipful places'.<sup>481</sup> Yet in Rufus' case the motivation was the desire to dwell with a holy person. Thus, the presence of a holy person, namely, one who held anti-Chalcedonian convictions, who had a charismatic personality, and who practised asceticism in an exemplary fashion, and moreover the presence of many people of outstanding holiness were an essential condition for making Palestine a true 'Land of Promise' from the anti-Chalcedonian perspective.<sup>482</sup> The more saints dwelling in a

<sup>474</sup> For references to studies of the law school at Beirut and the socio-cultural conditions in the city in late antique times, see above, ch. 2, pp. 108–109, n. 109.

<sup>475</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 82. <sup>476</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 81, line 22.

<sup>477</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 82. <sup>478</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 82. <sup>479</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 82.

<sup>480</sup> Merely mentioning the examples of Jerome and the two Melanias might suffice.

<sup>481</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 30.

<sup>482</sup> In that regard, God had been extremely generous in an instance where he had arranged that for a while Peter and Abba Isaiah would be dwelling in close vicinity to one another. In that way it was beneficial and 'lawful for these, who were coming because of an advantage to one, to gain from the closeness also of that other one' (*Vita Petri Iberi* 102).

given area, the better. The factor of ultimate geographical location thus could become secondary.

In line with such considerations is the fact that Rufus paid a great deal of attention to signs and miracles occurring when Peter travelled, for example, to the hot springs at Ba'ar, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, in order to regain his health.<sup>483</sup> The natural wonders occurring at that spot, which, according to Rufus' explanation, were caused by Peter's presence, became an opportunity to suggest that a holy man could easily take control of the forces of nature and thus turn any place into a holy place. While people gathered around Peter at that site, a fire broke out that threatened the lives of all. Yet the prayers of Peter, who stretched out his arms like the great prophet Moses, prevented any harm. At that moment Ba'ar became equal to the holy place of Rephidim where Moses had prayed for the victory of the Israelite army.<sup>484</sup> Anti-Chalcedonians increasingly managed to develop an ideology that allowed them greater spiritual independence from the commonly accepted holy places. Rather they were able, or necessity forced them to become able, to bring new sites to prominence through the activities of their own saints.<sup>485</sup>

### THE UNIQUE ROLE OF THE HOLY LAND AS A CENTRAL STAGE FOR THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES IN THE FIFTH CENTURY AD

The holy places in Palestine were unique because no other site could rival their status as the places that Christ had touched physically. Once theological conflicts arose over the person of Christ, those Christologically charged holy places turned into physical 'proof-texts'. They were used for or against teachings about the human and divine natures in Christ.<sup>486</sup>

<sup>483</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 90–94.

<sup>484</sup> See Exodus 17:8–13. For some interesting references gathered from Maraval and Wilkinson that point in the direction of an emergence of new holy places in the context of the Christological controversies, especially at the hands of non-orthodox, mainline groups, see Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places', 11–13.

<sup>485</sup> For references to selected literature on the phenomenon of the 'holy man' see above, ch. 2, pp. 54–55, n. 24. Steppa, *John Rufus*, ch. 3, pp. 81–111, provides a useful sketch of an anti-Chalcedonian ideal of the 'holy man'. See also Horn, 'Review of Steppa, *John Rufus*'.

<sup>486</sup> See also Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage', 28 (English summary), who recently has discussed that various Christian theologians perceived the occurrence of miracles at pilgrimage sites as 'expressions of God's power via the relics of holy men and their tombs' and thus could use them to 'prove Jesus' divinity and [the] truth of his

### **Ecclesiastical Promotion of Pilgrimage and the Holy Places in the Holy Land**

Given the promotion and control that the Jerusalemite ecclesiastical hierarchy sought to exercise over the local holy places, individual dogmatic issues were likely to have a noticeable influence on pilgrimage and the holy places in Palestine, as Perrone noted.<sup>487</sup> While often enough pilgrimage developed in response to people's religious needs, it seems that the regulating, supporting, and manipulating activities of the church hierarchy in the East had its own influence on the pilgrims' theological formation.

In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus reported that while staying at the court of Theodosius II, Peter had come into the possession of a relic of the True Cross. 'According to custom', clerics from Jerusalem had brought that relic and possibly other gifts 'in honour of the emperor'.<sup>488</sup> That incident provides evidence that the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Jerusalem used items from the holy places under their jurisdiction to strengthen their relationship with the secular powers, namely, the Emperor in Constantinople. To what extent the Emperor really appreciated the value of those relics, however, remains undetermined, since he seems to have shared that precious relic with Peter. Of course, that could also be taken as a sign of his high regard for Peter.

Rituals of popular piety functioned as welcome tools, to be manipulated as needed in the power struggles between religious parties. In matters of pilgrimage and veneration of holy places, or, at the level of popular late antique religion when matters of dogmatic and confessional disputes arose,<sup>489</sup> the ecclesiastical hierarchy found ways to intervene, react, and consciously direct the course of events.<sup>490</sup>

#### *Theological Importance of the Holy Places: Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Leo the Great, John Rufus, and Cyril of Scythopolis*

One of the earliest Palestinian theologians who took note of the theological value of the holy places was Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>491</sup> In his

resurrection'. She also states that 'pilgrimages contributed directly and indirectly to the reinforcement of Christian faith'.

<sup>487</sup> See Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places', 9. <sup>488</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 39.

<sup>489</sup> Although W. H. C. Frend, 'Popular Religion and Christological Controversy in the Fifth Century', in *Popular Belief and Practice*, Studies in Church History 8 (Cambridge, 1972) 19–29, does not consider pilgrimage practices as a factor, he provides a helpful discussion of dimensions in which popular religion influenced and even directed doctrinal controversies.

<sup>490</sup> See Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places', 9.

<sup>491</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the issue of the theological importance of the holy places in the writings of Palestinian theologians, a consideration of the

*Catechetical Lectures* he praised the holy places and employed them for pedagogical purposes. For him, the very rock of the tomb of Christ, still visible in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the stone that was rolled in front of the tomb, the burial clothes kept in that tomb, and the site itself, as well as all of the Mount of Olives, from which Christ was believed to have ascended into heaven, were direct witnesses to the mysteries of Christ's resurrection and ascension. In his fourteenth *Catechetical Lecture* Cyril said,

22. There are many witnesses of the Saviour's resurrection.—... the rock of the sepulchre which received Him; the stone also shall rise up against the face of the Jews, for it saw the Lord; even the stone which was then rolled away, itself bears witness to the Resurrection, lying there to this day. Angels of God who were present testified of the Resurrection of the Only-begotten: Peter and John, and Thomas, and all the rest of the Apostles; some of whom ran to the sepulchre, and saw the burial-clothes, in which He was wrapped before, lying there after the Resurrection;... Women too were witnesses, ...: the linen clothes also which were wrapped about Him, and which He left when He rose; ... the spot itself also, yet to be seen;—and this house of the holy Church, which out of the loving affection to Christ of the Emperor Constantine of blessed memory, was both built and beautified as thou seest.

23. ... To this day stands Mount Olivet, still to the eyes of the faithful all but displaying Him Who ascended on a cloud, and the heavenly gate of His ascension. For from heaven He descended to Bethlehem, but to heaven He ascended from the Mount of Olives; at the former place beginning His conflicts among men, but in the latter, crowned after them. Thou hast therefore many witnesses; thou hast this very place of the Resurrection; thou hast also the place of the Ascension towards the east; thou hast also for witnesses the Angels which there bore testimony; and the cloud on which He went up, and the disciples who came down from that place.<sup>492</sup>

Jerome discussed pilgrimage and the holy places to a considerable extent.<sup>493</sup> Yet surprisingly little in his writings is explicit about the

position of Sophronius of Jerusalem would be necessary, but falls outside of the subject matter of the present study. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 170 n. 67, notes that Christoph von Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*, 38–41, justifiably emphasizes the theological aspect of the argumentation in his discussion of the *δέησις*, even if giving in to a certain apologetical 'triumphalism'.

<sup>492</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 14.22–23 (ed. Antonius Augustinus Touttaeus (Paris, 1720), reprinted in PG 33.331–1180, here 853–856; tr. Edwin Hamilton Gifford, *The Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, NPNF 2nd ser. 7 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1894), 1–157, here 100 (modified)).

<sup>493</sup> For discussions of his position, see, for example, Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage', English summary, 13; more recently, see Newman, 'Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem'.

theological importance of the holy places as physical witnesses to mysteries of the Christian faith. Sections in his *Letter* 46 come closest to indicating that he saw a connection between the physical holy places and faith, here faith in the Trinity and the real death of Christ. Jerome explained that

It would be tedious to enumerate all the prophets and holy men who have been sent forth from this place. All that is strange and mysterious to us is familiar and natural to this city and country. By its very names, three in number, it proves the doctrine of the Trinity. For it is called first Jebus, then Salem, then Jerusalem: names of which the first means 'down-trodden', the second 'peace', and the third 'vision of peace'.<sup>494</sup>

Two paragraphs later Jerome talked about the resting-place of the Lord and included references to the death of Christ:

The Jews of old revered the Holy of Holies, because of the things contained in it—the cherubim, the mercy-seat, the ark of the covenant, the manna, Aaron's rod, and the golden altar. Does the Lord's sepulchre seem less worthy of veneration? As often as we enter it we see the Saviour in His grave clothes, and if we linger we see again the angel sitting at His feet, and the napkin folded at His head. Long before this sepulchre was hewn out by Joseph, its glory was foretold in Isaiah's prediction, 'his rest shall be glorious', meaning that the place of the Lord's burial should be held in universal honour.<sup>495</sup>

It was Pope Leo I who took up the theme of the theological significance of the holy places, which the preaching of Cyril of Jerusalem had introduced. Pope Leo formulated it more directly, talking about the holy places as *magister*, or, 'teacher' of the faith.<sup>496</sup> In *Letter* 139, dated 4 September, AD 454, and addressed to Juvenal of Jerusalem,<sup>497</sup> Leo wrote:

For, though no priest ought to be ignorant of that which he preaches, yet any Christian living at Jerusalem is more inexcusable than all the ignorant, seeing that he is taught to understand the power of the Gospel, not only

<sup>494</sup> Jerome, *Epistulae* 46.3 (ed. Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, pt. i, CSEL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910), 332; tr. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, 'Against Vigilantius', in *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, NPNF 6 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1893), 61 (modified)).

<sup>495</sup> Jerome, *Epistulae* 46.5 (ed. Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, pt. i, CSEL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910), 334; tr. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W. G. Martley, 'Against Vigilantius', in *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, NPNF 6 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1893), 62 (modified)).

<sup>496</sup> Perrone called this a specific 'Leonine motif'. See Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 108: 'il motivo leoniano dei Luoghi Santi come pedagogo della fede'. For the following references to Leo's letters, see also Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina*, 105 ff.

<sup>497</sup> *ACO* ii.iv, pp. 91.27–93.26.

by the written word but by the witness of the places themselves, and what elsewhere may not be disbelieved, cannot there remain unseen. Why would the intellect labour, where sight is [its] teacher? And why are things read or heard doubtful, where all the mysteries of man's salvation obtrude themselves upon the sight and touch? As if to each individual doubter the Lord still used His human voice and said, 'Why are ye disturbed and why do thoughts arise into your hearts? See My hand and My feet that it is I myself. Handle Me and see because a spirit hath not bones and flesh, as ye see Me have.'<sup>498</sup>

Leo continued the letter by exhorting Juvenal to make full use of the holy places related to Christ's life, which were within Juvenal's bishopric. In his preaching and teaching Juvenal should feel aided immensely, since he had the clear illustrations of the truths he was talking about right at his fingertips. When standing in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and giving a homily on the death and resurrection of Christ, for example, he immediately could direct the eyes of his audience to Golgotha and the Tomb, or even have the people go and touch the stones or kiss the relics of the Cross.

Make use, therefore, beloved brother, of these incontrovertible proofs of the catholic Faith and support the preaching of the Evangelists by the testimony of the holy places in which you live. In your country is Bethlehem, in which the Light of Salvation sprang from the womb of the Virgin of the house of David, whom wrapped in swaddling clothes the manger of the crowded inn received. In your country was the Saviour's infancy announced by angels, adored by magi, sought by Herod through the death of many infants. In your country was it that His boyhood grew, His youth ripened, and His true man's nature reached to perfect manhood by the increase of the body, not without food for hunger, not without sleep for rest, not without tears of pity, not without fear and dread: for He is one and the same Person, who in the form of God wrought great miracles of power, and in the form of a slave underwent the cruelty of the passion. This the very cross unceasingly says to you: this the stone of the sepulchre cries out, under which the Lord in human condition lay, and from which by Divine power He rose. And when you approach the mount of Olivet, to venerate the place of the

<sup>498</sup> Leo the Great, *Letters* 139.1 (ed. *ACO* ii.iv, p. 92.7–16; tr. in Leo the Great, *Letters*, NPNF 2nd ser. 12, pp. 97–98 (modified)): *Quamvis enim nulli sacerdotum liceat nescire quod praedicat, inexcusabilior tamen est omnibus imperitiis quilibet Hierosolymis habitans Christianus, qui ad cognoscendam virtutem evangelii non solum paginarum eloquiis, sed ipsorum locorum testimoniis eruditur. Et quod alibi non licet non credi, ibi non potest non videri. Quid laborat intellectus, ubi est magister aspectus? et cur lecta vel audita sunt dubia, ubi se et visui et tactui tota humanae salutis ingerunt sacramenta? quasi ad singulos quosque cunctantes adhuc dominus voce corporea utatur et dicat: quid turbati estis et quare cogitationes ascendunt in corda vestra? videte manus meas et pedes meos, quia ipse ego sum; palpate et videte quoniam spiritus carnem et ossa non habet, sicut me videtis habere.*

Ascension, does not the angel's voice ring in your ears, which says to those who were dumb-founded at the Lord's uplifting, 'ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as ye saw Him going into heaven.'<sup>499</sup>

The true birth of Christ, therefore, is confirmed by the true cross; since he is Himself born in our flesh, Who is crucified in our flesh, which, as no sin entered into it, could not have been mortal, unless it had been that of our race.<sup>500</sup>

In *Letter 123*, dated to 15 June, AD 453, which Leo wrote to Empress Eudocia concerning the rebellious monks in Palestine and in which he asked her to use her influence with the monks to call them to order, he formulated the same idea in a slightly different way, saying:

And, therefore, . . . I entreat the Lord to gladden me with the news of your safety, and to bring aid ever more and more by your means to the maintenance of that article of the Faith over which the minds of certain monks within the province of Palestine have been much disturbed; so that to the best of your pious zeal all confidence in such heretical perversity may be destroyed. For what but sheer destruction was to be feared by men who were not moved either by the principles of God's mysteries, or by the authority of the Scriptures, or by the evidence of the sacred places themselves? May it advantage then the Churches, as by God's favour it does advantage them, and may it advantage the human race itself which the Word of God adopted at the Incarnation, that you have conceived the wish to take up your abode in that country where the proofs of His wondrous acts and the signs of His sufferings speak to you of our Lord Jesus Christ as not only true God but also true Man.<sup>501</sup>

Even earlier, in *Letter 109* to Bishop Julian of Cos, written on 25 November, AD 452, Leo had argued that because the rebellious monks were living near the holy places Juvenal should be more able to instruct them in the truth of the faith and bring them back to the right way.

<sup>499</sup> Acts 1:11.

<sup>500</sup> Leo the Great, *Letters* 139.2–3 (ed. *ACO* ii.iv, pp. 92.16–93.4; tr. in Leo the Great, *Letters*, NPNF 2nd ser. 12, p. 98).

<sup>501</sup> Leo the Great, *Letters* 123.1 (ed. *ACO* ii.iv, p. 77.10–20; tr. in Leo the Great, *Letters*, NPNF 2nd ser. 12, p. 90 (modified)): *Et ideo . . . obsecro dominum ut me de tua incolumitate laetificet, et causam fidei, in qua quorundam intra provinciam Palaestinam monachorum fuerant corda turbata, magis magisque per vos faciat adiuvari, ut quantum pietatis tuae studio fieri potest, haereticae perversitati omnis fiducia subtrahatur. Quos enim nec ratio sacramentorum nec auctoritas scripturarum nec ipsa sacratorum locorum testimonia commovebant, quid eis nisi abruptum periculum timeretur? Prosit ergo ecclesiis, sicut favente deo prodest, et generi prosit humano in verbi dei incarnatione suscepto, quod domicilium habitationis vestrae ibi esse voluistis ubi vobis dominum Iesum Christum sicut verum deum, ita et verum hominem in unitate personae et mirabilem indicia et passionum documenta locuntur.*

But bishop Juvenal, whose injuries are to be lamented, joined himself too rashly to those blasphemous heretics, and by embracing Eutyches and Dioscorus, drove many ones of the ignorant fold headlong by his example, albeit he afterwards corrected himself by wiser counsels. These men, however, who drank the wicked poison in more greedily, have become the enemies of him, whose disciples they had been before, so that the very food he had supplied them was turned to his own ruin: and yet it is to be hoped they will imitate him in amending his ways, if only the holy associations of the neighbourhood in which they dwell will help them to recover their senses.<sup>502</sup>

These comments of Leo the Great clearly show that people on the Chalcedonian side were able to see a direct link between their Christological formulation of the faith and the witness of the 'Christological' holy places. Some fifty years later defenders of the anti-Chalcedonian position used the same physical evidence of the holy places to make a case for their Christological understanding. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus recalled Queen Helena's activities as a pilgrim to the Holy Land: how she searched out and visited the holy places of Christ, found 'the venerable Cross', and set it up for adoration.<sup>503</sup> Then Rufus continued,

She later erected great and God-befitting churches for Our Lord, and beautiful shrines over the divine Tomb of Our Lord, at the Holy Place of the Skull, the worshipful Golgotha, which is the true Holy of Holies and the true Altar, from of old by a mystic symbol announced and prefigured by the prophet Moses, constructed by nature from rocks, uncut and unhewn. For what other [altar] is like this [one], except this altar only? 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, who carries the sin of the world.<sup>504</sup>

Rufus was referring to the physical shape of Golgotha, 'the Holy Place of the Skull', the place of Christ's crucifixion. Since it was a

<sup>502</sup> Leo the Great, *Letters* 109.4 (to Bishop Julian of Cos) (ed. *ACO* ii.iv, p. 138.8–14; tr. in Leo the Great, *Letters*, NPNF 2nd ser. 12, p. 82 (modified)): *Episcopus vero Iuvenalis, cuius iniuriæ sunt dolendæ, nimis temere se hæreticorum blasphemis copulant et dum Eutychen Dioscorunque amplectitur, multos imperitis suo in præceps egit exemplo, licet postea se consilio saniore correxerit. Hi tamen qui avidius impietatis virus hauserunt, facti sunt eius adversarii cuius fuerant ante discipuli, ut sua ipse nutrimenta pateretur. Qui ut eandem emendationem quam ille elegit, imitentur, optandum est, si vel ipsa sanctorum locorum circa quæ habitant, testificatione respiscant.*

<sup>503</sup> For an evaluation of Helena's contribution to the building of holy places in Palestine, see Edward Yarnold, 'Who Planned the Churches at the Christian Holy Places in the Holy Land?' *Studia Patristica* 18.1 (1985), 105–109. See also Kenneth G. Holum, 'Hadrian and St Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, Ill., 1990), 66–81.

<sup>504</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38.

single altar made up of ‘rocks, uncut and unhewn’ and was ‘accepting neither cutting nor division’, it was a formidable and appropriate witness to ‘the indivisible Christ’. For Rufus, that particular holy place functioned as proof that Christ also is one and cannot be ‘cut’ or ‘hewn’ or ‘divided’ into a human nature and a divine nature.

The passage from the *Vita Petri Iberi* constitutes evidence that at least one anti-Chalcedonian thought of the holy places as physical proof of the truth of the anti-Chalcedonian doctrinal convictions. How many more would have shared his view cannot be determined, given the scarcity of anti-Chalcedonian sources from Palestine that are preserved. The larger number of witnesses illustrating such a theological interpretation of physical evidence come from the Chalcedonian side. Cyril of Scythopolis is the main source documenting the position.

Writing in the sixth century, Cyril told of a noteworthy event, at which the witness of the holy places was called upon to prove the theological correctness of the Chalcedonian position. In AD 511, the monk Sabas was present in Constantinople for a (second) interview with Emperor Anastasius. In response to the emperor’s declared intent of deposing Archbishop Elias of Jerusalem, Sabas defended Elias and encouraged Anastasius ‘to protect from annoyance the holy city of Jerusalem, in which the great mystery of piety was revealed’.<sup>505</sup> Such a protection, in Sabas’ view, included leaving the Jerusalem hierarchy undisturbed and not deposing Elias. Cyril emphasized that out of respect for Sabas, Anastasius complied with the monk’s request.

In another situation, which was even more critical for Sabas, when the emperor threatened John of Jerusalem with exile, both archimandrites, Theodosius and Sabas, ‘those captains of the monks, combatants for piety, and generals and champions of orthodoxy’,<sup>506</sup> as Cyril called them, gathered the monks of the desert and composed a petition to Anastasius.<sup>507</sup> In that petition they addressed the emperor as being entrusted by God

to bestow the great gift of peace . . . on all his most holy churches and in particular on the mother of the churches, Sion, in which the great mystery of piety for the salvation of the world was manifested and accomplished and

<sup>505</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 52 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 144.20–22; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 154).

<sup>506</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 152.16–17; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 162).

<sup>507</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 152.21–157.23; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 162).

then, beginning from Jerusalem, through the divine and evangelical preaching raised up the light of the truth to all the ends of the earth.<sup>508</sup>

Immediately following, the petition stated that all the inhabitants of the Holy Land were indebted to the holy places for the true confession and faith. It said that

of this venerable and extraordinary mystery of Christ, through the victorious and venerable Cross and the life-giving Resurrection and indeed all the holy and revered places, we the inhabitants of this holy land have all received, from the original beginning through the blessed and holy Apostles, the true and not illusory confession and faith.<sup>509</sup>

Here Cyril also took recourse to apostolic authority mediated and guaranteed through the authority of the holy places. By implication one can probably enlarge the picture and understand such an indebtedness to the holy places as fountains and guarantors of the true faith as pertaining to all of Christianity. Certainly the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in a unique situation since they 'touch[ed], as it were, with their own hands the truth each day through the venerable places in which was wrought the mystery of the incarnation of our great God and Saviour'.<sup>510</sup> Thus it could not be that 'more than five hundred years since the coming of Christ', the people 'of Jerusalem' would have 'to learn the faith' anew. 'The correction proposed now . . . to the earlier faith in Christ is the teaching not of the authentic Christ but of Antichrist.'<sup>511</sup> The 'originator and perpetrator' of all that turmoil and anarchy for Sabas and Theodosius and the monks with them clearly was the key-anti-Chalcedonian at the time, 'Severus [of Antioch], Acephalos and Aposchist from the original beginning.'<sup>512</sup> After the threat to the faith had thus been given a concrete name, the petition declared that maintaining the apostolic faith meant for the inhabitants of the Holy Land to be of one mind and one faith and to 'accept four holy councils equal in glory and bearing the venerable impress of the Gospels, . . . differing only in expression and not in meaning, like the image and meaning of the Gospels engraven by

<sup>508</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 152.28–153.6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 162).

<sup>509</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 153.6–12; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 162–163).

<sup>510</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 154.15–18; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 164 (modified)).

<sup>511</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 154.18–22; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 164).

<sup>512</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 154.26; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 164).

God'.<sup>513</sup> The petition ended with a clear rejection of any possibility of a union with the ἀποσχισταί<sup>514</sup> or of an acceptance of a forcible ordination of any of the Acephaloi.<sup>515</sup> Sabas, Theodosius, and the monks with them were willing to shed their blood for that cause and even threatened that all the holy places would be consumed by fire before such a thing would come to pass in the Holy City.<sup>516</sup> Obviously, that was an explicit threat that the monks should rather burn down the holy places before they could allow them to be turned over to the anti-Chalcedonians. They could not see any benefit 'in the bare title of the holy places if they are so ravaged and dishonoured'.<sup>517</sup>

With that last remark, Theodosius and Sabas, or rather Cyril, became vulnerable to criticism. One might ask how they were able, on the one hand, to hold the holy places in such high esteem as physical witnesses to the truth of their faith, but, on the other hand, to threaten to destroy those very proofs. It appears that in the end it was most important that the holy places would remain in the care of the right kind of people, not that they existed as holy places in the first place. Thus one might even conclude here that in the end doctrinal accuracy would have been allowed to triumph over physical realities.

Nevertheless, in Cyril's view, the holy places were of such importance for Sabas that toward the end of his life, after travelling to Caesarea and Scythopolis, where he met the young Cyril, Sabas returned to Jerusalem and venerated the holy places, even if only as if to say goodbye to them.<sup>518</sup>

### **In Conflict over the Holy Places**

Inasmuch as truth often lies in the middle, the healthiest approach towards pilgrimage to holy places seems to be one that does not reject any form of veneration of holy places, but that likewise does not turn

<sup>513</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 155.18–24; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 165).

<sup>514</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 157.9; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 166).

<sup>515</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 157.12; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 166).

<sup>516</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 157.16–17; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 166–167).

<sup>517</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 57 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 157.17–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 167).

<sup>518</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 76 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 182.5–6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 191).

it into 'a religious obligation'.<sup>519</sup> To find such a middle ground in practice is not easy. Rufus' work, insofar as it gives insight into the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonian attitude toward the holy places, illustrates some of the problems faced by dissident minorities in regard to that practice.

### Interconfessional Context

Although the interreligious context of the holy places is of greatest interest in modern times,<sup>520</sup> one also needs to look at the interconfessional context of holy places. These sites were and are visited and venerated by Christians of different confessional affiliations. The attitudes of anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine toward the veneration of holy places provides an opportunity to see to what extent confessional affiliations of Christians led to separation at specific holy places.

A peaceful coexistence of different groups was possible as long as no one 'rocked the boat'. As soon as zeal for asserting doctrinal and religious identity flared up, it became impossible to share sacred space with Christians who expressed their identities in different terminology. Just as theologians were debating the positive and negative aspects of pilgrimage to the Holy Land,<sup>521</sup> so too did anti-Chalcedonians in the Holy Land debate whether or not they could venerate holy places that were under the control of Chalcedonians. The following material, drawn mainly from Rufus' works, is a first

<sup>519</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage', English summary, 28, formulated that '[t]he heart of the issue regarding holy places revolves around the question, [S]hould one reject outright this model of religious behavior vis-à-vis those places associated with Jesus, or should one adopt it into Christianity and view it as a religious obligation?'

<sup>520</sup> Perrone, 'Christian Holy Places', 8, spoke of the 'interreligious context for the holy places of Palestine', at which Christians worship alongside pagans, Jews, and later on with Muslims at the same holy places. Mamre can be cited as a significant example of a holy place with interreligious potential. For studies of the site and its interreligious context, see, for example, Georg Kretschmar, 'Mambre: Von der "Basilika" zum "Martyrium"', in *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R. P. Dom Bernard Botte O.S.B.* (Louvain, 1972), 273–293; see also Kofsky, 'Mamre'. Other holy places could easily be added, not the least of which would be the Temple Mount, with the transconfessional interest it attracted. Jewish and Muslim interest in that holy place in Byzantine times and afterwards is self-evident. Christians showed their interest rather late in the period of the Crusades and with the establishment of the Templars, but it did exist earlier on in a negative sense, given the anxiety with which Christians were opposed to and were nervous about Julian's (AD 361–363) attempts at rebuilding the Temple. Murphy-O'Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land*, 82–83. The bibliography on the matter is extensive.

<sup>521</sup> See, for example, Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage', and more recently Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Attitudes of the Church Fathers towards Pilgrimage'.

step in responding to the need of an investigation of the vast body of relevant Christian literature extant in Syriac, with an eye towards clarifying ‘the complex position of the Monophysites vis-à-vis the holy places in Jerusalem’.<sup>522</sup>

### **The Anti-Chalcedonian Position towards the Holy Places**

After Juvenal’s return to his episcopal see, committed, or one might say, more radical, anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine found themselves in a difficult position. Anti-Chalcedonian attachment to holy places under Chalcedonian domination might lead to cooperation and a certain level of communion with Chalcedonians, their archenemies.<sup>523</sup>

The sincere anti-Chalcedonian living at a holy place had to choose between giving up his or her veneration of the holy place or accepting to share liturgical space and thus not being able to completely break communion with Chalcedonians in order to continue venerating at the holy places. That dilemma shows that the holy places had gained theological weight as proof for Christological doctrines.

#### *Peter’s Affirmation of the Value of Visiting the Holy Places*

The discussion of Peter’s understanding of pilgrimage showed that he was familiar with the typical pilgrim routes within the Holy City and thus was able to visit the main holy places.<sup>524</sup> At a time when anti-Chalcedonians had to define their position with regard to holy places in the hands of Chalcedonians, Peter demonstrated support for visiting the holy places, even if only at night and in spirit.<sup>525</sup> Peter’s more moderate anti-Chalcedonian followers showed irritation at his seemingly hesitant behaviour and behind his back uttered doubts and criticism against him, saying,

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 places, and especially the holy Golgotha and the life-giving Tomb?<sup>526</sup>

<sup>522</sup> Bitton-Ashkelony, ‘Pilgrimage’, English summary, 28.

<sup>523</sup> For a study of the special role of Peter the Iberian in the struggle concerning access to the holy places, see also Aryeh Kofsky, ‘פטרון האיברי ושאלת פטרון הקדושים [Peter the Iberian and the Question of the Holy Places]’, קתדרה [Katedrah le-toldot Erets Yisrael ve-Yishuvah] / *Cathedra* 91 (1999), 79–96.

<sup>524</sup> See also above, ch. 4, pp. 249–251.

<sup>525</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98–100.

<sup>526</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 98–99.

Yet Peter's revelation of his nightly prayer-tour through the Holy City in the company of a witness silenced their concerns and affirmed the value of visiting the holy places. By taking along a companion, he indicated that he did not fear that the soul of his anti-Chalcedonian brother could be harmed by a visit to holy places in Chalcedonian hands.

For anti-Chalcedonians, Peter's example gave clear guidance in an uncertain situation. It gave them a firm basis on which to justify their desire to be present at the holy places, at least in mind and spirit.<sup>527</sup>

Critics of pilgrimage and its practices had pointed out that one did not need to be in any particular place to worship God.<sup>528</sup> When it became increasingly difficult for anti-Chalcedonians to maintain their presence in the Holy Land, second-generation anti-Chalcedonians of a more radical calibre, including Rufus, also devised a way of shifting the principles Peter had established for the first generation. Instead of maintaining the value of presence in the spirit at the holy places, Rufus simply turned things around and showed that it was possible, and perhaps even more effective, for a holy man or woman to be spiritually present with the anti-Chalcedonian believer wherever he or she might be. The holy person came to be seen as the essential component of a holy place. That fundamental shift of perspective seems to be the basis for Rufus' proposed solution to the problem of anti-Chalcedonians in the holy places.

Events described in the *Plerophoriae* indicate that two major steps were involved in bringing about that shift. The first was the act of illustrating how Chalcedonians misused and neglected the holy places. The second was the task of collecting stories which were recounting how saints appeared to anti-Chalcedonians in visions and dreams and instructed them to leave the holy places while promising that the saints themselves would remain with them.

<sup>527</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 100. In analogy to Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:3–4 and Colossians 2:5, where the Apostle speaks of himself as being far away in the body, but close to his brothers and sisters in and through the Spirit, so Peter as a model for anti-Chalcedonians to be imitated taught that even though one may not be able to be present at the holy place in the body one can and should be there in the spirit.

<sup>528</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria and Evagrius Ponticus in the East and Augustine in the West rejected outright the idea of pilgrimage to physical holy places associated with Jesus' life. They preferred to spiritualize pilgrimage and saw the monastic lifestyle as the kind of pilgrimage to Jerusalem required of the Christian believer. See discussion in Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Pilgrimage', English summary, 16–23; most recently on Augustine's position, see Bitton-Ashkelony, 'Attitudes of the Church Fathers towards Pilgrimage', 189–194.

*Criticism of Chalcedonian Misuse and Neglect of Holy Places*

On the basis of one of Peter's eyewitness reports Rufus included in the *Plerophoriae* the story of a young reader from the Church of the Probatike. Early in the morning the reader had had a vision of Christ entering the church and finding the lights neglected and not burning properly, and then discovering that the holy vestments were dirty and lying in a disorderly fashion in the closets. Very skilfully Rufus expressed his criticism of the neglect of the sanctuary, which was in the hands of the Chalcedonians, by placing that criticism in Christ's mouth. Weaving in allusions to Christ's cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:13), Rufus quoted Christ as having said,

'What shall I do with these, with those upon whom I have bestowed such good things, both oil, wine, and the other necessities [of life]? Never are they in want of anything that thus they would have a reason to disregard and to neglect my service. Woe, Juvenal! He made my house a cave of robbers. He has filled it with fornicators, adulterers, and polluted ones.'<sup>529</sup>

The unfortunate young reader, who tried to hide in the face of such a harsh and stern judge, was discovered and threatened with expulsion from the sanctuary. He could only save himself by agreeing to repent and no longer neglect the details necessary for proper divine service. Anti-Chalcedonian criticism of Chalcedonian practices often cited seemingly minor details of the liturgical service or the vessels and their use. That helped to create a sense that anti-Chalcedonians were striving for utter perfection and could accept as orthodox only those who followed the same rules of purity and the same 'letter of the law'.<sup>530</sup>

Chalcedonian defilement of holy places was also revealed directly to holy people so that they could separate themselves from communion in advance, even before Chalcedon. Immediately following the incident involving the young reader, Rufus quoted Peter as saying about one of the anti-Chalcedonian holy men,

'I know this one, who, when he was in a vision during the days of Juvenal and saw the defilements which were taking place inside the sanctuary, from that day on was not willing to enter the church with him, nor to receive communion from his hand. Rather, he was taking [the Eucharist] in the sacristy by himself. For the transgression which was in Chalcedon had not yet occurred.'<sup>531</sup>

Because of the need of separation in view of 'the foulness of these [things] which had happened through Juvenal, his kindred, and his

<sup>529</sup> *Plerophoriae* 18.

<sup>531</sup> *Plerophoriae* 18.

<sup>530</sup> See also above, ch. 4, pp. 254–256 and 292–293.

cell-mates<sup>532</sup> and out of a concern not to give the wrong example to the many pilgrims, this unnamed saint chose to enclose himself in his cell and spent his time weeping and mourning before God.<sup>533</sup>

Rufus used another story to illustrate the defilement of the holy places by Juvenal's clerics. He knew of a deacon, who on 'the day of his service in [the Church of] the Holy Sepulchre' laid himself to rest 'according to custom in the holy place of Golgotha in an upper room'.<sup>534</sup> During the night all the doors of the church were shut. Yet the voice of the Lord could be heard, saying, 'Oh [with] how much defilement did Juvenal fill my house! They defiled it. Throw this filthy one outside!'<sup>535</sup> On the next morning the deacon woke up on his bed 'in the open place before the holy *martyrion*'.<sup>536</sup> Rufus characterized the deacon's fault as negligence, but from his version of the story it is not exactly clear what sort of negligence he had in mind. Rufus wrote that the deacon had had intercourse with a woman on 'the day of his service in [the Church of] the Holy Resurrection and the holy *martyrion*'.<sup>537</sup> This could mean that because of his intercourse the deacon actually had become ritually impure, yet had gone on to serve as deacon, thus violating the proper rules for his ministry. Or it could mean, perhaps less likely, that the deacon had taken a woman into the church and slept with her in the sanctuary, so that both of them would have been thrown out miraculously and awakened in the middle of the courtyard. It did not seem to be much of a concern for Rufus whether or not that woman was the deacon's wife, if he had one.<sup>538</sup> Thus both of the examples from the *Plerophoriae* are told in order to document and criticize a negligent attitude of Chalcedonians towards the holy places, independent of the question whether or not Chalcedonians had indeed neglected the sites.

#### *Anti-Chalcedonians Leaving the Holy Places Held by Chalcedonians*

Among themselves more radical anti-Chalcedonians told several stories in which their saints and martyrs warned anti-Chalcedonian believers to cease worshipping at holy places that were in the hands of Chalcedonians. According to Rufus' account in the *Plerophoriae*, Peter had been informed by two Cypriote monks, Cyriacus and Julius, that an unnamed martyr had appeared to people who were intending to visit his *martyrion* on Cyprus. The martyr had told them

<sup>532</sup> *Plerophoriae* 19.

<sup>533</sup> *Plerophoriae* 19.

<sup>534</sup> *Plerophoriae* 41.

<sup>535</sup> *Plerophoriae* 41.

<sup>536</sup> *Plerophoriae* 41.

<sup>537</sup> *Plerophoriae* 41.

<sup>538</sup> Rufus does not clearly specify whether or not the woman was the deacon's wife. If she was not his wife, the deacon would have committed fornication, a grave sin and as such also symbolical of apostasy in the Old Testament.

not to visit nor to be in communion with the Chalcedonians in charge of his shrine. The martyr left his own *martyrion* and intended not to appear there any more.<sup>539</sup>

Another incident occurred in Sebaste in Palestine, where the reliquary for the prophet Elisha and the body of John the Baptist were deposited.<sup>540</sup> Every night at vigil Constantine, the sacristan of the Church of Sebaste, entered the chapel, saluted John the Baptist's relics, arranged the lamps, and enjoyed the vision of the Baptist, who would appear sitting on a throne which Constantine had carefully prepared for him. Through his close contact with the saint, Constantine had gained great confidence in John the Baptist. At the time when Emperor Marcian expelled anti-Chalcedonian bishops whom the monk Theodosius had installed during his short tenure as bishop in Jerusalem, the sacristan Constantine faced a difficult choice: (a) if he fled from communion with the Chalcedonians, he also lost the intimacy with his favourite saint, John the Baptist; and (b) if he stayed at the sanctuary in Sebaste, he would not be true to his own anti-Chalcedonian confession. In this dilemma, Constantine saw John the Baptist in a vision, telling him, "Priest, do not destroy your soul because of me and apostatize from your faith, but go away and keep your faith without deviation".<sup>541</sup> Moreover, as a special promise John the Baptist assured him that he would be with him wherever he would go. Note that Rufus concluded the episode by saying,

And in this way, when he [that is, the sacristan Constantine] went out, he kept himself without fault on the pilgrimage (ἑλκεῖν τὴν ἁγίαν; *bakṣēnāyūtā*) in a holy life and in the orthodox faith until the end, while he fought the good fight and wove the crown of confessorship.<sup>542</sup>

With those last comments, Rufus once again masterfully combined into a coherent whole the themes of pilgrimage, holy places, and martyrdom. 'Pilgrimage' here seemed to be a metaphor for the whole of 'a holy life in the orthodox [namely, anti-Chalcedonian] faith'. In individual cases like that of Constantine, or that of Peter the Iberian, the anti-Chalcedonian may then find himself<sup>543</sup> exposed to

<sup>539</sup> *Plerophoriae* 28. Compare *Plerophoriae* 93, where basically the same story is told, concerning the martyr Marcellus 'in the land of the Thebaid'.

<sup>540</sup> *Plerophoriae* 29. Compare the almost identical account in *Plerophoriae* 91. For a further, related story where John the Baptist appears and exhorts anti-Chalcedonians not to go to his sanctuary any longer since it was taken over by the Chalcedonians, see *Plerophoriae* 90.

<sup>541</sup> *Plerophoriae* 29. <sup>542</sup> *Plerophoriae* 29.

<sup>543</sup> No examples of female anti-Chalcedonians, who were forced to live a life of constant moving about, seem to be preserved from that early period.

the dangers of a life of constant wandering.<sup>544</sup> However, through that lifestyle he or she also had the opportunity ‘to weave the crown of confessorship’ and thus to participate in the ultimate witness for the faith.<sup>545</sup> Anti-Chalcedonians did not volunteer to take up that pilgrimage, but rather were encouraged and exhorted to it by visions of saints, in the case of Constantine, the vision of John the Baptist.

A further example likewise is instructive. Zosimus the priest, a foreigner who had been dwelling in Rhaitou and on Mount Sinai, came to Jerusalem and began to look for a holy place at which to dwell in silence. He came to Bethel, where Jacob had seen the ladder leading up to heaven. The sacristan at the church in Bethel had invited him to stay, but he refused, saying that he had to flee from the communion with Chalcedonians, who were in possession of the holy place at Bethel. The sacristan, however, had taken a liking to Zosimus and tried to convince him to stay, suggesting that they would only chant together, which meant that they would not even celebrate the liturgy together. The Chalcedonian would even go so far as to let Zosimus be in charge of the holy place. Yet when Zosimus was about to accept the offer, as Rufus explained, he received divine help and protection. ‘He was esteemed worthy of such an assurance (Κινησθησά; *p<sup>o</sup>lerōfōrīyā*) and a vision’, that Zosimus

saw at night the patriarch Jacob, a man full of white hair, honourable, and revered, who was clothed in a mantle, held a staff, and thus was walking up and down in the place. He came near him and said, ‘How is it that, although you are orthodox and in communion with the orthodox, you seek to continue here? Do not transgress your faith because of me, but take care and flee from the communion with the apostates. You are not in need of anything good [from here], neither the place, nor any necessities.’<sup>546</sup>

Constantine had to choose between staying in a holy place and compromising his decisively anti-Chalcedonian stance or taking up a life of pilgrimage and travel. The patriarch Jacob only told Zosimus that he should pack his belongings and flee from the place. Yet Rufus’ description of Jacob in the proper outfit of a wanderer, complete with mantle, staff, and already in motion, suggests that Jacob was encouraging Zosimus to choose a life of pilgrimage. The doublet of that

<sup>544</sup> In Hebrews 11:13 Paul speaks of the patriarchs as testifying to their faith by acknowledging that here on earth they are only *ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι* (*peregrini et hospites* (Vulgate)), that is, that their life is a constant wandering in search of their eternal home with God. I am grateful to Prof. Dr David W. Johnson for calling the passage to my attention.

<sup>545</sup> For a more detailed study of the precise connection between martyrdom imagery and pilgrimage, see Horn, ‘Weaving the Pilgrim’s Crown’.

<sup>546</sup> *Plerophoriae* 30.

episode attempted to make a pronounced case that ‘through his flight until the end he [that is, Zosimus] was preserved in the orthodox faith’.<sup>547</sup> It might not have been the case that Zosimus was on the move for the rest of his life. The patriarch Jacob, indeed, had promised him that he would not suffer for want of a home. Yet it indicated that ‘flight’ was an appropriate way out of the dilemma for determined anti-Chalcedonians who on the one hand wanted to stay in the holy places, yet on the other hand could not compromise their anti-Chalcedonian confession by any communion with the Chalcedonians.

### *Breaking Communion with the Chalcedonians*

In several of the stories in the *Plerophoriae* the main point seemed to be the need of anti-Chalcedonians to break communion with the Chalcedonians, either at a holy place or independent of a connection with such a site. When doing so, they often acted upon the advice of a saint, who not infrequently was from among the highest saintly ranks.

Mary, the Mother of God, set the example. Rufus knew of Thamison, a priest of Alexandria, who under Timothy Salofaciolus was a deacon of the Church of Rhinocorura, in charge of the sacristy.<sup>548</sup> The Rhinocorurians appeared to have been anti-Chalcedonians, while their bishop was a Chalcedonian backed by Salofaciolus. When Thamison was pondering how he could get out of his miserable and tormenting situation, one night, while sleeping in the sacristy, he saw a crowd of saints and Mary, the Mother of God, packing their belongings and getting ready to leave the place. There may very well be included in part of the scene an allusion to the flight of the blessed family to Egypt, since Thamison saw ‘an ass which was beautifully and modestly covered and she [that is, Mary] seated herself upon it, while the saints lifted her up’.<sup>549</sup> In Thamison’s vision, when Mary was about to ride out of the church with the band of saints accompanying her, she noticed Thamison and waved him over. Then she told him to follow her example and leave the place. Eventually, Thamison obeyed and moved to Alexandria when Timothy Aelurus occupied the episcopal office.

Next in rank, the protomartyr Stephen also instructed the anti-Chalcedonians with regard to the holy places. The sister of a certain

<sup>547</sup> *Plerophoriae* 92.      <sup>548</sup> *Plerophoriae* 74.

<sup>549</sup> *Plerophoriae* 74. The scene could also allude to Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, as Robin D. Young suggested, although one might favour the ‘flight to Egypt’ scenario, given the overall tone of the setting.

Stephen, archdeacon of Jerusalem, frequently visited the *martyria* of Sts Stephen and John the Baptist in Jerusalem, even staying overnight. She conversed with the saints and even saw them in visions. Yet after the Chalcedonians took over her favourite sanctuaries, she hesitated to go there, attend services, and pray with them. Finally, a vision of St Stephen settled the issue, telling her that she should not go to the holy places any longer, but rather break communion with the Chalcedonians. St Stephen told her,

‘Go, stay in peace in your cell, and your conscience will not suffer loss. Do not be wearied as if you were separated from us. For wherever you are, there do we come and make [our] dwelling with you.’<sup>550</sup>

Thus, even the simplest cell of an anti-Chalcedonian ascetic could become a proper replacement for the loss of a holy place with biblical origins.

An episode from the *Plerophoriae* illustrates well the problem that anti-Chalcedonians faced when sharing holy places with Chalcedonians. A woman from Pamphylia and her daughters had come to live as ascetics on the Mount of Olives.<sup>551</sup> The woman intended to pray at the holy place of the Ascension, but had suddenly become caught in the midst of the building during a time when the Chalcedonians were having a liturgical assembly there. Since the doors of the church were locked, she could not leave. So she hid behind a pillar until the liturgical celebration was over. At the end of her life, however, when she faced her last judgement, she was accused of having consented to stay and watch the Chalcedonians conduct their liturgy. It did not matter to her heavenly judge that she had neither participated in the service nor taken communion. This episode was intended to state clearly the radical anti-Chalcedonian position: any form of contact with heretics would make anti-Chalcedonians impure and expose them to judgement.

The woman’s fortunes, however, turned into her favour, quite unexpectedly and only by an act of divine mercy, as Rufus indicated in the *Plerophoriae*. According to a vision given to her son, she received one last chance at God’s throne. Only after she had made the double confession that the Son of God was born from the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God—by which she proved that she was not a Nestorian—and that the Son of God was crucified and suffered for us—by which she indicated that she was in agreement with Peter the Fuller’s anti-Chalcedonian addition to the Trisagion—did she gain admission to heaven.<sup>552</sup> The centrality of the right relationship of the

<sup>550</sup> *Plerophoriae* 79.

<sup>551</sup> *Plerophoriae* 80.

<sup>552</sup> *Plerophoriae* 81. See also below, ch. 5, p. 395.

believer to the crucified Christ, an indispensable component of the anti-Chalcedonian position, will be discussed in the following chapter.

### *How to Resist the Pressure of the Masses*

Crowds of pilgrims came to the Holy Land and masses of Christian visitors flocked to the holy places, which overwhelmingly were in the hands of Chalcedonians. In the *Plerophoriae* there is a reference to the pressure exerted upon at least some of the anti-Chalcedonians by the crowds that visited Chalcedonian churches.

Rufus tried to supply his fellow believers with an answer to a common objection: 'The whole habitable earth is approaching the churches. Only you who are few are being separated, and you call yourselves orthodox and zealots of the truth.'<sup>553</sup> Rufus instructed his audience to counter such statements by pointing to the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt and their exile in Persia. In both cases, that of the Israelites and that of the anti-Chalcedonians, only those few who held on to the laws of God were justified.<sup>554</sup> Quoting the Book of Sirach, Rufus taught that a 'single one who is doing the will of the Lord is better than a thousand' (Ecclesiasticus 16:3).

### *Creating Anti-Chalcedonian Holy Places*

The present chapter noted a tendency on the part of the anti-Chalcedonians to create their own places for prayer and veneration of the saints as substitutes for holy places in Chalcedonian hands. The altar, which according to anti-Chalcedonian beliefs was consecrated by St Mark the Evangelist in Egypt for the Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians in the monastery of Peter in Maiuma, could be an important example.<sup>555</sup> The holy place of Golgotha had gained a special theological importance in Rufus' eyes, since even by its physical shape it witnessed to the accuracy of the anti-Chalcedonian formulation of the faith in the one nature of Christ.<sup>556</sup> When anti-Chalcedonians were no longer able to worship at the 'altar' of Golgotha, they had their own altar brought in from Egypt, where according to their tradition the apostle of the Egyptian Church himself had consecrated it,<sup>557</sup> and they set it up in Peter's monastery in Maiuma. According to Rufus, that altar was powerful and worked many miracles.<sup>558</sup> The

<sup>553</sup> *Plerophoriae* 55.

<sup>555</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 44.

<sup>557</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 44.

<sup>554</sup> Allusions are made to Exodus 23:2 and Daniel 2.

<sup>556</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38. See above, ch. 4, pp. 317–318.

<sup>558</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 43.

point was not that the anti-Chalcedonians would suddenly have denied the power of Golgotha. Rather, because Golgotha was outside of their own sphere of influence, they had to set up a powerful substitute, their own altar, their own holy place. The focus on the Suffering Lord, however, continued to be crucial.

## The Sign of Perfection: The Anti-Chalcedonian Ascetic as Bearer of the Cross

### INTRODUCTORY FRAMEWORK

The history of the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries, centring on the disputes and decisions of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451, is one of the most complicated chapters of early Christian theology. It is widely held that the central issue of dispute in those controversies was the question of the proper understanding of Christ's humanity in its relationship to his divinity. Such a view is able to account for much of the content of the debates, yet it is insufficient and has to be modified.

Ultimately Chalcedon adopted as its Christological statement the so-called two-natures formula, proposed and promoted in the *Tome* of Pope Leo the Great (AD 440–461), that is, the letter he had sent to Bishop Flavian of Constantinople (AD 446–449) on 13 June AD 449.<sup>1</sup> That formula stated that Christ was consubstantial with the Father in regard to his divinity, and that in regard to his humanity, he was consubstantial with us human beings. Thus Chalcedon declared that the one Christ was 'in two natures' (*ἐν δύο φύσεσιν*), while the union of these two natures was 'without confusion, without change, without division, [and] without separation' (*ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαίρετως ἀχωρίστως*).<sup>2</sup>

Chalcedon also condemned the teachings of the Constantinopolitan archimandrite Eutyches.<sup>3</sup> Historians of dogma see him as the

<sup>1</sup> See above, ch. 2, pp. 78–79.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Chalcedon, Actio 5, *Tractatio de definitione fidei* 34 (ed. Schwartz, *ACO* ii.i.ii, p. 129 (325), l. 31).

<sup>3</sup> See Council of Chalcedon, Actio 5, *Tractatio de definitione fidei* 34 (ed. Schwartz, *ACO* ii.i.ii, p. 129 (325), ll. 20–22). On Eutyches, see Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, tr. by John Bowden (London and Oxford, 2nd rev. edn. 1975), 523–539; Frend, *Rise of the*

main representative of 'real' or 'strict' monophysitism.<sup>4</sup> Based on a notion of *φύσις* as expressive of that which is common to all individuals of the same kind, strict monophysitism holds that the joining of the two natures, that is, of divinity and humanity, in Christ brought about a *tertium quid*, some third thing which is consubstantial neither with God nor with the human being. In contrast to this, one finds the theological position which by some is called 'verbal' or 'nominal' monophysitism.<sup>5</sup> Its representatives confessed that before the union Christ was 'from two natures' (*ἐκ δύο φύσεων*). Yet instead of describing the result of the union in the Incarnation with the two-natures formula of Chalcedon, adherents of so-called 'verbal' monophysitism preferred Cyril of Alexandria's formula, which emphasized the union of both natures by speaking of 'the one nature of God the Word made flesh (*μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*)'. The most important theologians of the fifth and sixth centuries, who held this position and whose works are, at least partially, preserved, are Timothy Aelurus (AD 457–460 and 475–477),<sup>6</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbogh (AD c.440–523),<sup>7</sup> Severus of Antioch

*Monophysite Movement*, 25, 30–35, and 41–49; F. Loofs, 'Eutyches und der Eutychnische Streit', in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, vol. v (Leipzig, 3rd edn. 1898), 635–647; Lionel R. Wickham, 'Eutyches /Eutychnischer Streit', in *TRE* 10 (1982), 558–565; G. May, 'Das Lehrverfahren gegen Eutyches im November des Jahres 448', *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 21 (1989), 1–61; P.-Th. Camelot, 'De Nestorius à Eutychés: l'opposition de deux christologies', in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. i (Würzburg, 1951), 213–242; R. Draguet, 'La christologie d'Eutychés d'après les actes du synode de Flavien, 448', *Byzantion* 6 (1931), 441–457; Eduard Schwartz, 'Der Prozeß des Eutyches', *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, fasc. 5 (Munich, 1929), 64–93; Devreesse, 'Les Premières Années du Monophysisme'; A. Van Roey, 'Eutychés', in *DHGE* 16 (1967), 87–91; G. Bardy, 'Eutychés' and 'Eutychnisme', in *Catholicisme* 4 (1956), 735–738 and 738–740; M. Jugie, 'Eutychés et eutychnisme', in *DThC* 5 (1913), 1582–1609; W. H. C. Frend, 'Eutyches', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 4 (1991), 1074–1076; and Hermann-Josef Sieben, 'Eutyches, Monophysit', in *LThK* 3 (1995), 1023–1024.

<sup>4</sup> For a good summary presentation of theological ideas and their holders customarily called 'Monophysites', see Pauline Allen, 'Monophysiten', in *TRE* 23 (1994), 219–233.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion see Joseph Lebon, *Le Monophysisme Sévérien* (Louvain, 1909), xxii–xxiv.

<sup>6</sup> See Alois Grillmeier (with the collaboration of Theresia Hainthaler), *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iv: *Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451* (Freiburg, 1990), 7–35. See also above, ch. 1, p. 25, n. 79; ch. 2, p. 96 with n. 223 and p. 102; ch. 3, pp. 177–178 and 184; and ch. 4, p. 240, 259 n. 156, 294, 328.

<sup>7</sup> For editions and translations of significant works of Philoxenus, see Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*; A. Vaschalde, ed. and tr., *Three Letters of Philoxenus of Mabbogh* (Rome, 1902); A. de Halleux, ed. and tr., *Philoxène, Lettre aux moines de Senoun* (CSCO 231–232, Script. Syr. 98–99 (Louvain, 1963)); Douglas J. Fox, *The 'Matthew–Luke Commentary' of Philoxenus: Text, Translation and Critical Analysis*

(AD c.465–538),<sup>8</sup> Jacob of Sarug AD c.451–521),<sup>9</sup> Julian of Halicarnass (d. after AD 527),<sup>10</sup> John Philoponos AD c.490–570s),<sup>11</sup> and possibly Abba Isaiah (d. AD 491).<sup>12</sup> The present chapter will show that Abba Isaiah and Philoxenus of Mabbugh were influential contributors to anti-Chalcedonian theological and ascetico-spiritual perspectives in Palestine and provided an immediate context for the theology and spirituality of Peter the Iberian, John Rufus, and their anti-Chalcedonian ascetic followers in the Gaza area. Yet before one may enter into a detailed discussion of the respective spirituality of that anti-Chalcedonian milieu in Palestine, it is necessary to com-

(Missoula, Mont., 1979). For Philoxenus' Christology, see most recently Tanios Bou Mansour, tr. and rev. by Theresia Hainthaler, 'Die Christologie des Philoxenus von Mabbugh', in Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii: *Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451 bis 600* (Freiburg, 2002), 500–569; Luise Abramowski, 'Aus dem Streit um das "Unus ex trinitate passus est": Der Protest des Habib gegen die Epistula dogmatica des Philoxenus an die Mönche', in *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii, pp. 570–647; and Theresia Hainthaler, 'Rückblick und Ausblick', in *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii, pp. 648–659, here 656–659. See also above, ch. 2, p. 109 and n. 284.

<sup>8</sup> See above, ch. 1, pp. 20 and 25–26 with nn. 50 and 79; and ch. 2, pp. 108–111. See also Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies*, 9–56; Alois Grillmeier (with the collaboration of Theresia Hainthaler), *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.ii: *Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, 1989), 19–185.

<sup>9</sup> For a helpful tool to access his work see Arthur Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mémre-Dichtung des Ja'qob von Serug* (CSCO 344–345 and 421–422, Subsidia tt. 39–40 and 60–61 (Louvain, 1973 and 1980)). On his Christology, see Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies*, 113–141; and, most recently, T. Bou Mansour, tr. and rev. by Theresia Hainthaler, 'Die Christologie des Jakob von Sarug', in *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii, pp. 449–499. See also J. M. Fiey, 'Jacques, évêque de Saroug', in *DHGE* 26, fasc. 152–153 (1996), 739–740.

<sup>10</sup> R. Dragnet, *Julien d'Halicarnasse et sa controverse avec Sévère d'Antioche sur l'incorruptibilité du corps du Christ* (Louvain, 1924); Robert Hespel, ed. and tr., *La polémique antijulianiste*, CSCO 244–245, 295–296, 301–302, and 318–319, Script. Syr., tt. 104–105, 124–125, 126–127, and 136–137 (Louvain, 1964–1971).

<sup>11</sup> See Th. Hermann, 'Ioannes Philoponus als Monophysit', *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 29 (1930), 209–264; Walter Böhm, 'Johannes Philoponos Grammatikos Christianos', in *BBKL* 3 (1992), 520–529; R. Aubert, 'Jean Philopon', in *DHGE* 27, fasc. 156–157 (1998), 446–447; Leslie MacCoull, 'A New Look at the Career of John Philoponus', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 47–60; Leslie MacCoull, 'The Monophysite Angelology of John Philoponus', *Byzantion* 65 (1995), 388–395; and, most recently, Uwe Michael Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century: A Study and Translation of the Arbitrator, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense* 47 (Leuven, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> The question of the 'monophysite' dimensions of Abba Isaiah's theology has not been settled completely, though it seems that he belonged to the moderate anti-Chalcedonian group. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii, pp. 95–105, '[d]ie Gegnerschaft zu Chalcedon, schon von der Freundschaft mit Petrus dem Iberer her zu erwarten, ist also erkennbar' (p. 100), would probably agree.

ment first on the central relevance of one particular aspect of the controversy over Chalcedon that as of yet has only been minimally explored.

### **Centrality of the Question of God's Impassibility or Passibility for Understanding Chalcedon and the Opposition to Chalcedon**

Recent scholarship has concluded that what was at stake in the Christological controversies of the fifth century cannot sufficiently be explained if one focuses solely on the question of the humanity and divinity in Christ. O'Keefe argued that what was at 'the heart of the controversy' was the 'concern about God's impassibility'.<sup>13</sup> Refining O'Keefe's thoughts, Dunn formulated that the Christological controversy focused on 'the humanity of Jesus in relation to his divinity and impassibility'.<sup>14</sup> Thus the question arises of how central the problem of God's passibility or impassibility was for the controversies over Chalcedon.

Whether or not God suffers is certainly not a new question for theological debates. The keywords 'Patripassianism' and 'Theopaschite Controversy' suffice as pointers to lively debates in early Christianity regarding that issue.<sup>15</sup> They also provide a larger framework in which to situate historically the relevance of the present discussion. 'Patripassianism', known mostly by way of the chastising reports in Tertullian's works, names the heresy according to which God the Father suffered death on the Cross. Yet that heresy had died out by the early third century.<sup>16</sup> The term 'Theopaschite,' literally 'what pertains to God's suffering', and the Theopaschite Controversy as such do not describe a heresy. Quite to the contrary. After significant controversy in Syria over whether 'one of the Trinity had suffered',<sup>17</sup> the debates moved to the north-east. The Theopaschite

<sup>13</sup> John J. O'Keefe, 'Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-Century Christology', *Theological Studies* 58.1 (1997), 39–60, here 41.

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey D. Dunn, 'Divine Impassibility and Christology in the Christmas Homilies of Leo the Great', *Theological Studies* 62 (2001), 71–85, here p. 72, n. 4.

<sup>15</sup> See also Marcel Sarot, 'Patripassianism, Theopaschitism and the Suffering of God: Some Historical and Systematic Consideration', *Religious Studies* 26 (1990), 363–375.

<sup>16</sup> See Michael Slusser, 'The Scope of Patripassianism', *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982), 169–175; see also Michael Slusser, 'Theopaschite Expressions in Second-Century Christianity as Reflected in the Writings of Justin, Melito, Celsus and Irenaeus' (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1975).

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the controversy between Philoxenus and Habib in the 480s. See Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Dissertationes decem de uno e sancta trinitate incorporato et*

formula, which affirmed that ‘one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh’, was advanced by John Maxentius and the Scythian Monks in AD c.519.<sup>18</sup> The essentially orthodox formulation, which had its theological foundation in the last of Cyril’s Twelve Anathemas,<sup>19</sup> first met with resistance in the West from Pope Hormisdas (AD 514–523).<sup>20</sup> Yet through the sustained imperial support of Emperor Justinian I (AD 482–565) and the episcopal support of Fulgentius of Ruspe (AD c.467–533),<sup>21</sup> the formula finally was accepted by Pope John II in AD 533, as well as by his successor, Agapet I in

*passo* (ed. and tr. M. Brière and F. Graffin, *Sancti Philoxeni episcopi Mabbugensis dissertationes decem de uno e sancta trinitate incorporato et passo*, PO 15.4 (1920) *memrē* I–II, PO 38.3 (1977) *memrē* III–V, PO 39.4 (1979) *memrē* VI–VIII, PO 40.2 (1980) *memrē* IX–X, and PO 41.1 (1982) appendices). See also de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*, 31–39, 189–203, and 225–240; André de Halleux, ‘Le *Mamlelā* de “Ḥabbīb” contre Aksenāyā. Aspects textuels d’une polémique christologique dans l’Église syriaque de la première génération post-chalcedonienne’, in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Albert Van Roey* (Leuven, 1985), 67–82; and Abramowski, ‘Aus dem Streit um das “Unus ex trinitate passus est”’.

<sup>18</sup> The works are edited in F. Glorie, *Maxentii aliorumque Scytharum monachorum necnon Ioannis Tomitanae Urbis Episcopi Opuscula*, CCSL 85A (Turnhout, 1978), 1–239. For relevant literature, see W. Elert, ‘Die Theopaschitische Formel’, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 75.4–5 (1950), 195–206; John A. McGuckin, ‘The “Theopaschite Confession” (Text and Historical Context): A Study in the Cyrilline Re-interpretation of Chalcedon’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35.2 (1984), 239–255; É. Amann, ‘Scythes (Moines)’, in *DThC* 14.2 (1941), 1746–1753; É. Amann, ‘Théopaschite (Controverse)’, in *DThC* 15.1 (1946), 505–512; B. Altaner, ‘Der griechische Mönch Leontius und Leontius der skythische Mönch’, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 127 (1947), 147–165; Berthold Altaner, ‘Zum Schrifttum der “skythischen” (gotischen) Mönche: Quellenkritische und literaturhistorische Untersuchungen’, *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 72 (1952), 568–581; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. ii, pt. ii, pp. 317–343; Michael P. McHugh, ‘Theopaschite Formula’, in *EEC* (1998), 1121–1122; A.-G. Hamman, ‘Théopaschisme’, *Catholicisme* 14 (1996), 1101; Basil Studer, ‘Theopaschites’, in *EECh* 2 (1992), 831; Roland Faber, ‘Theopaschismus’, in *LThK* 9 (1993), 1464–1465; R. Aubert, ‘Jean Maxence’, in *DHGE* 27, fasc. 156–157 (1998), 280–281; Franz-Bernhard Stammkötter, ‘Johannes Maxentius’, in *LThK* 5 (1993), 935.

<sup>19</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, ‘Third Letter to Nestorius’, in *Select Letters*, ed. and tr. by Lionel Ralph Wickham (Oxford, 1983), 12–33, here 28–33.

<sup>20</sup> See Hormisdas, *Epistulae* 231 and 236 (ed. Otto Guenther, *Epistulae Imperatorum Pontificum Aliorum inde ab a. CCCLXVII usque ad a. DLIII datae Avellana quae dicitur Collectio*, CSEL 35.2 (Prague, Vienna, and Leipzig, 1898), 696–700 and 716–722). On Hormisdas, see S. C. Kessler, ‘Hormisdas of Rome’, in *DECL* (2000), 292.

<sup>21</sup> For Fulgentius’ view on the question of Christ’s suffering, see, for example, the correspondence between him and Ferrandus in Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Letters* 13.2 and 14.15–24 (ed. J. Fraipont, *Sancti Fulgentii Episcopi Ruspensis Opera*, CCL 91 (Turnhout, 1968), 385–387 and 387–444, here 385 and 402–416; tr. Robert B. Eno, *Fulgentius: Selected Works*, FOTC 95 (Washington, DC, 1997), 497–499 and 499–565, here 497 and 517–534). On Fulgentius, see G. G. Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence*

AD 536.<sup>22</sup> The Church at large confirmed the formula's orthodoxy at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in AD 553, when it declared in canon 10 of the anathemas against the Three Chapters: 'If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, *who was crucified in the flesh*, is true God and Lord of glory and one of the holy Trinity, let him be anathema.'<sup>23</sup>

More recently a discussion has arisen among systematic theologians and systematically oriented historical theologians concerning the treatment in the Fathers of the question of God's suffering and its relevance. In his book *The Descent of God* Joseph Hallman shows that significant strands of early Christian theology, although numerically less well represented, allow for and support a notion of the validity and even necessity of suffering in God.<sup>24</sup> Thomas Weinandy in his study *Does God Suffer?* takes the other side and holds that throughout the patristic tradition, the orthodox perspective on this soteriological question has been to emphasize God's impassibility.<sup>25</sup> Paul Gavrilyuk has taken up that challenge to demonstrate that it is essential for a full understanding of the first 400 years of early Christian theology, and, especially, for an accurate understanding of Cyril's theology of the Incarnation, to allow for a God who suffers.<sup>26</sup>

*de Ruspe: Un évêque catholique africain sous la domination vandale* (Paris, 1929); P. Langlois, 'Fulgentius', in *RAC* 8 (1972), 632–661, especially 643; and H. Schneider, 'Fulgentius of Ruspe', in *DECL* (2000), 242–244.

<sup>22</sup> See also Milton V. Anastos, 'Justinian's Despotism: Control over the Church as Illustrated by his Edicts on the Theopaschite Formula and his Letter to Pope John II in 533', in *Mélanges Georg Ostrosky*, vol. ii (Belgrade, 1964), 1–11.

<sup>23</sup> *Constantinopolitanum II, Actio VIII, canon X: ACO* iv.i, p. 218 (Latin), *ACO* iv.i, p. 242 (Greek). For the translation see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. ii, pt. ii, p. 341. Emphasis in Grillmeier.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph M. Hallmann, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis, 1991); Joseph M. Hallmann, 'The Seed of Fire: Divine Suffering in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5.3 (1997), 369–391; Joseph M. Hallmann, 'Divine Suffering Among the "Monophysites": Severus of Antioch and Philoxenus of Mabbug', in *Oriente Lumen: Australasia and Oceania: 2000 Proceedings*, ed. by Lawrence Cross and Edward Morgan (Melbourne: Australian Catholic University; Fairfax, Va., 2000), 173–188. See also Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, 2000). Yet see the comments by Theodor Damian, 'Edward T. Oakes, Theodor Damian, and Thomas G. Weinandy, "A Suffering God"', *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (February 2002), 5–6, here 5.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Gavrilyuk, 'Divine Suffering /Impassibility in Patristic Theology with Special Reference to Cyril of Alexandria's Doctrine of the Incarnation' (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 2001), published as *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford and New York, 2004). He summarized his argument also recently in Paul Gavrilyuk, 'Theopatheaia: Nestorius's Main Charge against Cyril of Alexandria', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56.2 (2003), 190–206.

The presently submitted reconstruction of the history, theology, social conditions, and cultural matrix of the movement of resistance against the Council of Chalcedon and its leading figure Peter the Iberian in fifth-century Palestine has shown thus far that a discussion of the natures of Christ does not sufficiently explain the basis of the opposition, especially from the side of the monks, to the Council of Chalcedon. Rather, that opposition also was fuelled decisively by questions of ascetic spirituality, authority, estrangement, political manoeuvring, and patronage. On the basis of the writings of John Rufus one can show that ascetic self-identity and the desire and need to perfectly imitate Christ moved many Christians in the East who gathered around ascetic leaders to oppose a conciliar decision that appeared to distinguish too sharply with its two-natures formula between the human and the divine natures of Christ. While Chalcedonians intended to solve the problem of guarding the philosophically necessary impassibility of God by ascribing all aspects of pain and suffering in Jesus to his human nature, anti-Chalcedonians rejected such a two-nature formula because it jeopardized salvation. Only a God who had fully become one with human nature by being subject even to the horrors of crucifixion was a God to whom a human being, who imitated that crucifixion in many if not all the aspects of his or her own life, could become alike and through whom that human being ultimately could be saved. The principle that what is not assumed is not saved also applied here. This final chapter will present evidence for the claim that the heart of anti-Chalcedonian ascetic spirituality in Palestine centred on the intimate imitation of the Crucified One. Thus, spirituality laid the foundations for key theological positions, which, in turn, were formulated with increasing clarity in the course of the Theopaschite Controversy.

THE THEME OF THE CROSS IN SELECTED LITERARY  
ANTI-CHALCEDONIAN SOURCES OF THE LATE  
FIFTH AND EARLY SIXTH CENTURIES

**Centrality of the Image of the Cross and the Monk as  
'Bearer of the Cross' in Rufus' View of Anti-Chalcedonians  
in Palestine**

One of the remarkable features of Rufus' writings is his repeated use of language and imagery that is related to the Cross of Christ. At first this may not seem unusual for an ascetic writer. From the times of the

pioneers of asceticism onwards, the life of a monk stood under the sign of the Cross. The *Apophthegmata Patrum* record that in Egypt, at the occasion of founding a new monastery, one first planted a cross. Discussing how to deal with the increase in the number of ascetics, Abba Anthony and Abba Amoun 'went out into the desert and they walked until sunset and then Abba Anthony said, "Let us pray and plant the cross here, so that those who wish to do so may build here"'.<sup>27</sup> The monks also wore the sign of the cross directly on their bodies in the form of their habit. When explaining the 'meaning of the holy habit' of the monks in his letter to Anatolius,<sup>28</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, one of the most influential early monk-theologians,<sup>29</sup> stated that '[t]he scapular which has the form of a cross and which covers the shoulders of the monks is a symbol of faith in Christ which raises up the meek, removes obstacles and provides for free, untrammelled activity'.<sup>30</sup> Imbued with the word of God, ascetics desired to follow the Gospel's commands to crucify the old man, according to Galatians 5:24 and Colossians 3:9–10, and to take up their cross, as Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, and Luke 9:23 admonish the believers. Zachariah Rhetor recorded that such an emphasis on wanting to take up Christ's Cross was a key feature of the early followers of Peter the Iberian. Zachariah knew of Theodore of Ashkelon, who in his desire to follow the monastic life in Peter's community 'sold . . . all

<sup>27</sup> *Apophthegmata Patrum*, sayings concerning Anthony the Great, 34, in Benedicta Ward, tr., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, 1975), 8. See also Timothy J. Cornell and Wolfgang Speyer, 'Gründer', in *RAC* 12 (1983), cols. 1107–1171, here col. 1156. On *σταυροπηγία* see F. Thelamon, *Paiens et chrétiens au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1981), 91, 93, 119–120, and 392.

<sup>28</sup> In the Greek textual tradition this letter usually precedes the *Praktikos*. In the Syriac tradition it precedes either the *Antirrheticos*, *Protrepticos*, or *Paraneticos*. See John Eudes Bamberger, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer* (Kalamazoo, 1981), 12 n. 1.

<sup>29</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 123 and n. 34; ch. 4, p. 262 and n. 179. The literature on Evagrius of Pontus has been steadily increasing over the last years. Antoine Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique et l'Histoire de l'Origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens* (Paris, 1962), studied the place of his writings in the Origenist controversy. See also pp. 128–133 for the conditions in Palestine in the fifth and sixth centuries. Gabriel Bunge, *Geistliche Vaterschaft: Christliche Gnosis bei Evagrius Pontikos* (Regensburg, 1988), and more recently, Robin D. Young, 'Evagrius the Iconographer: Monastic Pedagogy in the Gnostikos', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.1 (2001), 53–71, have explored ways of perfection the ascetic guided by Evagrius might pursue.

<sup>30</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, *Praktikos*, prologue (introductory letter to Anatolius), sect. 4 (ed. Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, *Évagre le Pontique: Traité Pratique ou Le Moine, Tome II*, Sch 171 (Paris, 1971), 488, lines 29–33; tr. Bamberger, *Evagrius Ponticus: Praktikos*, 13–14).

his possessions, which belonged to him and [which] he had in Ashkelon, . . . gave . . . the price to the poor, as that divine law commanded. And . . . he took the cross of Christ and followed him, as it is written.<sup>31</sup>

One observes a heightened interest in and veneration directed towards the Cross in the course of the fifth century within and beyond ascetic circles. Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III issued an edict in AD 427 that prohibited the use of the *signum salvatoris Christi*, that is, the Cross as the sign of Christ the Redeemer, in depictions on the ground, which for the most part consisted of mosaic pavements,<sup>32</sup> in order 'to avoid [that people would] tread[.] on symbols sacred to Christianity, and thus to avoid desecration'.<sup>33</sup> Such imperial protection witnesses to an increased respect for the central sign of Christian identity in the first half of the fifth century.

Throughout the *Vita Petri Iberi* and in the *Plerophoriae* the theme of the Cross of Christ recurs frequently. The focus of anti-Chalcedonian devotion, especially ascetic devotion as exemplified in Rufus' writings, was centred on this key symbol of the Christian faith. This focus extended mainly to two aspects. First, certain elements in stories or whole episodes reveal the centrality of the veneration of relics of the True Cross, on which Jesus Christ died for the salvation of mankind. Second, when Rufus spoke of anti-Chalcedonian ascetics he repeatedly employed the epithet 'bearers of the cross'. A comparison of Rufus' works with Cyril of Scythopolis' *Lives of the Monks of Palestine* reveals a difference of emphasis between the Chalcedonian and the anti-Chalcedonian focus on and centrality of the Cross. Written in the middle of the sixth century and constituting the main Chalcedonian ascetic source for events from the same period as the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae*,<sup>34</sup> Cyril's *Lives* sporadically employs the motives of the veneration of the cross,<sup>35</sup> miracles attributed

<sup>31</sup> Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 87 (ed. Kugener, 'Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique', p. 87). On Theodore of Ashkelon, see also above, ch. 1, p. 34 with n. III; 210–211; ch. 3, pp. 213–214, and 225; and ch. 4, pp. 309–310.

<sup>32</sup> Justinianus, *Codex Justinianus* I. 8. 1 (ed. Paulus Krueger, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. II (Berlin, 1929), 61): *signum salvatoris Christi nemini licere vel in solo vel in silice vel in marmoribus humi positus insculpere vel pingere, sed quodcumque reperitur tolli: gravissima poena multando eo, si quis contrarium statutis nostris temptaverit, specialiter imperamus.*

<sup>33</sup> Ruth and Asher Ovadiah, *Mosaic Pavements in Israel: Hellenistic, Roman, and early Byzantine*, Bibliotheca Archaeologica 6 (Rome, 1987), 162.

<sup>34</sup> See also above, ch. 2, p. III.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 6, 25, 48, and 49 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 14.5, 38.12–13, 69.3–10, and 72.1–2; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 9, 34, 66, and 69); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Ioanni Hesychasti* 15 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 213.6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 232).

to making the sign of the cross in prayers for healing, or the use of oil from the Holy Cross.<sup>36</sup> The focus on the theme of the Cross of Christ is more prevalent in the anti-Chalcedonian sources.<sup>37</sup>

The second aspect in particular, the focus on the ascetic as a ‘bearer of the cross’, appears as an important element in the emergence of a formulation of anti-Chalcedonian self-understanding. The language and imagery used in Rufus’ texts highlight that anti-Chalcedonian ascetics, who saw themselves as imitating Christ in their own life of asceticism, were able to translate the death of Christ on the Cross into their daily lives. While that kind of imitation in ascetics’ daily lives certainly is not exclusive to anti-Chalcedonian spirituality, anti-Chalcedonians’ interpretation of their experience of certain actions of Chalcedonians as persecution embodied Christ’s suffering on the Cross. The anti-Chalcedonian monk who suffered hardship, exile, and persecution at the hands of Chalcedonians became a living embodiment of Christ on his way to the Cross.

The Syriac text of the *Vita Petri Iberi* often employs the expression ‘bearers of the cross’ (ܩܝܠܝܐܝܢܐܝܬܐ; *qīlay slībā*) to describe the male or female anti-Chalcedonian ascetics.<sup>38</sup> To provide an appropriate context, it is helpful to look first at representative examples of ascetic literature from the fifth- and sixth-century anti-Chalcedonian milieu. Two authors, Abba Isaiah and Philoxenus of Mabbugh, seem to provide the best source, given that it is likely that Peter and John Rufus had first-hand information about them. Peter and Abba Isaiah were close personal friends. For several years the two lived in immediate proximity to one another in their respective monasteries and exchanged gifts and prayers.<sup>39</sup> Although a connection between Rufus and Philoxenus is not documented explicitly, it is likely that from his years in Antioch Rufus knew Philoxenus or at least knew of him. In addition, Rufus knew personally or knew of Abba Isaiah, at least

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 10, 18, 19, and 23 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 20.23–26, 29.18–20, 31.21–25, and 36.4–6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 16, 25, 27, and 32); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 5, 12, 27, 45, 48, 63, and 68 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 89.25, 95.22–23, 110.10–13, 136.16–17, 138.14–16, 164.14–20, and 171.3–4; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 98, 104, 119, 146, 148, 174, and 180); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Ioanni Hesychasti* 5 and 21 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 204.17–19 and 218.6–9; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 223 and 237); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Cyriaci* 9 and 10 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 228.7, 228.13–14, and 228.22–23; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 251); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theognii* (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 242.34–243.6; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 270).

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 39, 41, 43, 49, 53, 67, 77, 113, 115, 119, 123, and 127; *Plerophoriae* 7, 11, 14, 19, 31, 35, 37, 50, 61, and 81.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, *Vita Petri Iberi* 53 and 115.

<sup>39</sup> See above, ch. 3, pp. 152–170.

through Peter. It is likely that through Rufus Peter could also have gained knowledge of Philoxenus of Mabbugh. Rufus may even have read Philoxenus' *Letter to the Monks of Palestine*, written shortly after AD 509.<sup>40</sup> Between these key figures a net of influential spiritual connections was woven.

In the writings of Abba Isaiah and Philoxenus of Mabbugh, 'carrying the cross' and 'ascending the cross' emerge as descriptions of the most perfect forms of *imitatio Christi*, forms of life that can be taken up only by those who have mastered and climbed all previous steps on the ladder of ascetic ascent. One who has reached a state of perfection through extraordinary moral and ascetical labours has become a 'bearer of the cross'. Through such a perfect imitation of Christ, the 'bearer of the cross' implicitly also has become a guarantor for the truth of the faith that he or she defends by embodying that truth. While an in-depth study of the use of the symbol of the Cross in the writings of Abba Isaiah and Philoxenus of Mabbugh is beyond the scope of the present study, a brief discussion in the following sections will provide the reader at least with a sense of the importance of the Cross in the spiritual theology of these two teachers and leaders.

### The Place of the Cross in the Spirituality of Peter's Friend Abba Isaiah

Chapter 3 of the present study has demonstrated the importance of the friendship between Abba Isaiah and Peter the Iberian. The possible influence of Abba Isaiah's teaching on anti-Chalcedonians in general and on Peter in particular can be examined by focusing on his Cross-related spirituality.

As discussed above, Isaiah is known as the author of spiritual writings. His extant works consist of 29 *logoi* or *Ascetic Discourses*,<sup>41</sup> usually grouped together under the title *Asceticon*, forming a handbook of monastic spirituality.<sup>42</sup> Although Draguet, the editor and

<sup>40</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, 'Letter to the Monks of Palestine' (ed. and tr. in André de Halleux, 'Nouveaux textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabbog: I: Lettre aux moines de Palestine—Lettre liminaire au *Synodicon* d'Éphèse', *Le Muséon* 75 (1962), 31–62, here 33–39 (Syriac) and 40–44 (French)). For the dating of the letter, see de Halleux, 'Nouveaux textes', 56–60.

<sup>41</sup> See the title chosen for the English translation by Chryssavgis and Penkett.

<sup>42</sup> For the Greek text see the edition by Augoustinos, *Τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀββᾶ Ἰσαΐου λόγοι κθ* (Jerusalem, 1911; 2nd edn. Volos, 1962). In 1956, Guillaumont published the Sahidic fragments in Antoine Guillaumont, *L'Asceticon Copte de l'Abbé Isaïe*, Bibliothèque d'études Coptes 5 (Cairo, 1956). Thus he provided access to the way in which the Coptic-speaking monastic community would have encountered Abba Isaiah. In 1968, Draguet published an edition of the Syriac recension of

translator of the Syriac recension of the *Asceticon*, rejected Isaiah of Gaza, the subject of the Zachariah's *Vita Isaiaë*,<sup>43</sup> as author of the work, arguing that the hagiographical nature of the *Vita Isaiaë* negated its historical value, subsequent scholars did not follow this assessment. It is generally accepted that Abba Isaiah, Peter's friend and spiritual companion during the Georgian's second period in the Gaza area, can safely be regarded as the author of the *Asceticon*. One cautionary remark is in place, though, in so far as the written version may not originate from Isaiah's pen directly, but rather from that of Isaiah's disciple, also named Peter, who put his master's teaching on paper during the later half of the fifth century.<sup>44</sup> In this form, Abba Isaiah's thoughts spread in and beyond the Gaza area among monastic communities and laypeople alike.

In several of Isaiah's 29 *Ascetic Discourses* one can find elaborated thought on the importance and relevance of 'ascending the cross', performed both by Christ himself and by the one who follows Christ. Bacht seems to have been the first to claim that following the crucified Christ was the very centre of Abba Isaiah's piety and spirituality.<sup>45</sup>

At the outset of the *Asceticon*, Isaiah invited those who wished to share his way of life and live in close community with him, to sit in the solitude of their cell and listen attentively to the name of God while being guided by the fear of God. Isaiah recommended manual labour in fulfilment of God's commandment. Yet he encouraged his disciples to focus on meditation and continuous prayer more than on work. These were the primary ways of guarding the heart and the spirit against vain thoughts about other human beings or worldly

the *Asceticon* together with a French translation in CSCO 289, 290, 293, and 294. In 1976, the monks of Solesmes published a French translation of the *Asceticon* on the basis of Augoustinos' Greek text, which they improved somewhat on the basis of additional manuscripts. See *Abbé Isaïe: Recueil Ascétique*, intro. Dom L. Regnault, tr. Dom Hervé de Broc, (monks of Solesmes), 2nd edn. with index, Spiritualité Orientale 7 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Maine-et-Loire, 1976). This French translation provides cross-references to the Syriac recension. Recently, John Chryssavgis and Pachomios (Robert) Penkett's English translation of the *Asceticon*, based on Augoustinos' text, appeared as volume 150 in the series Cistercian Studies. In the seventh century, Dadisho' of Beth Qatraya composed a commentary on the *Asceticon* in Syriac (see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 226–227; Sebastian Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Bakerhill, Kottayam, India, 1997), 56 and 226–229). That commentary has been critically edited and translated into French in René Draguet, *Commentaire du livre d'Abba Isaïe (logoi I–XV) par Dadišo Qatraya (VII<sup>e</sup>.)* (Louvain, 1972).

<sup>43</sup> See above, ch. I, p. 34, n. III.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, very clearly the headline to the 26th of the *Ascetic Discourses* at Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 211.

<sup>45</sup> Bacht, 'Isaiaes', 782.

matters. In the effort to examine one's faults and to strive to correct them, God's pardon and help are of vital importance. Isaiah described this effort as 'the pain of the heart, tears, and mortification'.<sup>46</sup> He continued by saying,

Every day keep death before your eyes, be restless about how you will depart from this body, how you will escape the powers of darkness that will meet you in the air, and how you will encounter God without hindrance, foreseeing the terrible day of judgement and the reward for all the deeds, words and thoughts of each one of you. *For all is uncovered before the eyes of Him to whom we have to give account* (Hebrews 4:13).<sup>47</sup>

Note the central place that death holds here. For the monks, being ready every day for their departure to life after death and to meet the Lord was a great help in their struggle to live more perfect lives on earth.

Isaiah saw the condition of the human being before the coming of Christ the Saviour as that of a creature bound by blindness, dumbness, paralysis, deafness, leprosy, and lameness. The human being was bound to die because all his or her defects worked against his or her real nature. Yet Jesus became man for the sake of humankind. Isaiah saw Christ's resurrecting the dead, making the lame walk, giving sight to the eyes of the blind and speech to the mouth of the dumb, and enabling the deaf to hear as deeds of mercy. What Christ performed when he was on earth were effective expressions of his desire to heal the afflictions of men. This was, indeed, the necessary condition preceding the last step, namely, saving man completely from death by ascending the Cross. As Abba Isaiah put it, 'If our Lord Jesus Christ had not first healed all the passions of man for whom he came into the world, he would not have ascended the Cross.'<sup>48</sup> Isaiah also knew of another reason why Christ ascended the Cross. Performing miracles and healings would not have been enough to rescue man completely. Christ had to ascend the Cross in order to 'resurrect the new man' and set him 'free of all illness'.<sup>49</sup>

Isaiah gave an interesting explanation of the passage in Luke's passion account which describes Christ hanging on the Cross between two thieves, one to the right and one to the left. According to Luke,

<sup>46</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion I VIII 1, 4 (tr. based on Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 43).

<sup>47</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion I VIII 1, 4-5 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 40, modified on the basis of Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 43).

<sup>48</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 55 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 97-98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 88).

<sup>49</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 55 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 97-98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 88).

the thief on the right asked Christ to remember him when he would come into his kingdom, while the thief on the left did not know any better than to blaspheme Christ.<sup>50</sup> Isaiah extracted a spiritual message from the event, seeing it as an illustration of the different stages of the human spirit as it passed from negligence to awareness. Initially, the spirit of man is seen as being bound up in negligence and ignorance and thus as siding with God's adversary. Yet once Christ has freed the spirit from negligence, it is able to see and discern all things. Only then can it 'ascend the cross'.<sup>51</sup>

Once the spirit has ascended the cross, it is still not immune to the attacks of the adversary who will continue to distract it by uttering harmful and blaspheming words. The adversary has the goal of bringing the spirit to a point at which it would be weakened and would abandon its labour, only to fall back into its original state of negligence. This struggle between the spirit that has ascended the cross and the adversary who persists in tempting the spirit Isaiah saw depicted in the scene of the two thieves on their crosses, on the right and on the left hand side of Christ. The two thieves represented to him the two possible answers which man's spirit could give in response to the adversary's temptations. The thief at Christ's left hand represents the spirit that gives in to blasphemous temptations and abandons hope in God. The thief at Christ's right hand, however, resists the adversary's ensnaring words and continues to hope in God. In the end he is not disappointed. Moreover, Isaiah found another spiritual interpretation of the scene. The thief on the left could also represent the very person of the adversary, or at least he acted in full accord with the adversary. In doing so he became the tool with which the adversary tried to trap Christ himself. For Isaiah, the thief who insulted Christ did so, 'in order, perhaps, to make him [that is, Christ] renounce his hope',<sup>52</sup> and eternally separate himself from God.

The final promise to the thief on the right was that on the very day of his death he would be in Paradise with the Lord.<sup>53</sup> The key term 'Paradise' opened up for Isaiah a whole field of imagery relating to heavenly and spiritual realities. For Isaiah, the crucified thief who persisted in his hope in the Lord was at the same time one who 'had

<sup>50</sup> Luke 23:39–43, in contrast see Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32.

<sup>51</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 55 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 97–98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 88).

<sup>52</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 55 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 97–98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 89 (modified)).

<sup>53</sup> See Luke 22:43. Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 55 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 97–98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 89).

flown up to Paradise' and who 'had eaten of the Tree of Life'.<sup>54</sup> The image of the soul or the spirit flying upwards in a state of spiritual elevation is familiar from Syriac Christian texts. Ephraem the Syrian (AD c.306–373),<sup>55</sup> for example, employed the language of 'flying' more than once when he spoke of man's spirit.<sup>56</sup> To think of Paradise as located on an elevated area, in fact on a hill at the top of which one can find the Tree of Life, is a truly Semitic conception.<sup>57</sup> Early Christian Fathers had no difficulties in seeing an immediate connection between the Tree of Life and the Cross of Golgotha, on which Christ died for the salvation of mankind.<sup>58</sup> When Rufus portrayed Peter as ascending Mount Nebo and receiving instruction from the Egyptian ascetic on top of the mountain on which Moses had died,<sup>59</sup> Rufus' audience may have understood the scene on one level as an exhortation to ascetics to ascend a spiritual mountain that would be both the 'height' of the cross on which they were to die with Christ and the Mountain of Paradise that they hoped to ascend.

In *Ascetic Discourse* 8, immediately following the comment on the Good Thief, who 'had eaten from the Tree of Life', Isaiah turned to the Eucharist, which he called 'holy communion', understanding it as 'union with God'. This union was possible only when one was not won over by wrath, jealousy, desire for human recognition, vainglory, hatred or other passions which separated human beings from God.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 56 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 98). Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 89, translate the first phrase as 'the latter "stole" his way into paradise'.

<sup>55</sup> The literature on Ephraem the Syrian is so enormous, that most recently a separate bibliography exclusively concerned with listing the primary and secondary works by and concerning Ephraem has been published to ease the researcher's toil. Reference to Kees den Biesen, *Bibliography of Ephrem the Syrian* (Umbria, 2002), has to suffice in the present context.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on Faith* 2.5 and 37.9 (ed. Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO 154–155, Script. Syr. 73–74 (Louvain, 1955), 6 and 122 (Syriac), and 5 and 100 (German)); and Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Church* 4.10 (ed. Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ecclesia*, CSCO 198–199, Script. Syr. 84–85 (Louvain, 1960), 11 (Syriac) and 11 (German)).

<sup>57</sup> See the study of Ephraem's notion of paradise in Nicolas Séd, 'Les Hymnes sur le Paradis de Saint Ephrem et les traditions Juives', *Le Muséon* 81 (1968), 455–501.

<sup>58</sup> Some Fathers, like Ephraem, were able to see the Cross almost everywhere in nature. See, for example, the studies by P. Yousif, 'Le symbolisme de la croix dans la nature chez S. Éphrem de Nisibe', *OCA* 205 (1978), 207–227; and P. Youssif, 'St. Ephrem on Symbols in Nature: Faith, the Trinity and the Cross (Hymns on Faith no 18)', *Eastern Churches Review* 10 (1978), 52–60.

<sup>59</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 85. See Deuteronomy 32:30.

<sup>60</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8 XXV 57 (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 98; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 89).

From such observations a picture emerges that is full of potential for spiritual meditation and inspiration. Imbued with such food for reflection, anti-Chalcedonian authors conceived of the human spirit as being able to ascend the cross and remain there in imitation of Christ's death. Ascending the cross and dying on the cross, that is, remaining on the cross up to the end of one's life, corresponded to the spiritual notion of entering Paradise, of reaching the very heights of Paradise, where one can participate in God in the fullest union possible to man. Consider also the language of 'eating of the Tree of Life' and of 'holy communion' as references to the Eucharist. Isaiah's disciples might very well have understood him as saying that the spiritual experiences and achievements of those who 'ascend the cross' are equivalent to participating in the Eucharistic celebrations of the Christian community.<sup>61</sup> Whether Isaiah would have gone so far as to suggest that the actual participation in the Eucharist therefore is superfluous, or at least not necessary for those 'on the cross' is not clear and deserves further study. Anti-Chalcedonian ascetics from among Peter's and Rufus' followers who disagreed with their local Chalcedonian bishops and consequently avoided participating in their respectively assigned bishops' Eucharist certainly would have felt encouraged to continue such a practice.<sup>62</sup>

### **Ascending the Cross: The Stage of Perfection in Philoxenus of Mabbugh**

Rufus frequently described ascetics in Peter's entourage as 'bearers of the cross'. He understood 'carrying the cross' as a form of imitation of Christ on his way to his crucifixion on Golgotha. Rufus saw the 'carrying of the cross' as the ascetic's most perfect participation in Christ's 'ascending the Cross'.

One can already note elements of this sense of perfect imitation of Christ's death in Abba Isaiah. According to him, much preparation was necessary if someone who intended to ascend the cross was going to be successful. At one point in *Ascetic Discourse* 8, in a section only extant in the Greek text, Isaiah warned that the spirit who ascends the cross before its senses have been cured of passions will attract the wrath of God.<sup>63</sup> Ascending the cross with unhealed, impure senses is a work completely beyond the power of the human spirit.

<sup>61</sup> This possibility ought to be seen in the context of the discussion in Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology'.

<sup>62</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10, 58, 65, 70, 71, 77, 78, and 86. See also above, ch. 2, pp. 82–83 and 88–91; and ch. 3, p. 208 n. 482 and pp. 223–225.

<sup>63</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Logion 8–68 *bis* (*bis* does not exist in the Syriac) (French tr. Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 104; tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 94).

Even a cursory reading of Philoxenus' works suggests a connection between his thought and that of Abba Isaiah. Philoxenus shared Isaiah's idea that the human being first had to reach a supreme level of spiritual awareness, before she or he could even consider making the final step of ascending the cross.<sup>64</sup>

Philoxenus, better known to his Syriac-speaking followers as Akhsenāyā, is famous not only as ardent anti-Chalcedonian and influential bishop of the city of Mabbugh, Syria. He also represents the finest synthesis of Greek and Syriac intellectual tradition of his time. He was both a skilled interpreter of Scripture and a powerful preacher. In Homily 9, *On Poverty*, Philoxenus taught that unless one left the world completely, one could not become a perfect disciple of Christ. Before elaborating on the individual steps in detail, Philoxenus listed them as follows:

Now therefore Jesus laid down in these commandments the restrictions for conduct in life: first, a man must depart from evil and restrain himself from the service of all abominable things; secondly, he must do the things which are laid down under the fear of the law; thirdly, the service of good things, which is above the fear of the law; fourthly, he must set out on the path of the discipleship of Christ, which is the perfect going forth from the world; fifthly, he must bear labours and sufferings, with which we may make the old man sick; and sixthly, we must bear the cross upon our shoulders, and we shall arrive at the fullness of the perfection of Christ.<sup>65</sup>

He addressed this discourse to the disciple who like a foetus had left the womb of the world and was making progress on the path to perfection.<sup>66</sup> It is of greatest interest that Philoxenus saw the sixth

<sup>64</sup> A thorough study of Philoxenus of Mabbugh's homilies promises to yield much fruit in this regard, even though it cannot be carried out in the present context.

<sup>65</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 334, ll. 10–19 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 319–320 (English) (modified)).

<sup>66</sup> See for the following also Eugène Lemoine, *Philoxène de Mabboug: Homélie*, introduction, SCh 44 (Paris, 1956), 218–220. While striving for perfection, one has to be concerned about the distinction between the justice of the law and the justice of perfection (Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, pp. 329–342 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 315–327 (English)). First, Philoxenus is dealing with the justice of the law in the form of the three degrees: (a) avoiding evil through the fear of the law; (b) doing what is good because of the fear of the law; and (c) doing good voluntarily and through a love which is still subject to the fear of saddening God otherwise (Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, pp. 329–336 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 315–321 (English)). Then he shows the higher justice of perfection also in the form of three degrees (Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, pp. 336–342 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 321–327 (English)). Staying for a while with the imagery of the path of the foetus, Philoxenus compares the first degree, the renunciation of the world and of worldly goods, to the passage of the spiritual foetus through the *vulva* into the world. The second degree, Philoxenus thinks, is the overcoming of the works and hardships of the world, the

and final necessary step as that of carrying the Cross of Christ in order to reach the fullness of Christ's perfection.

For Philoxenus, all of the path of righteousness was characterized by 'the rule of life', namely, 'that a man should take up his cross and go forth after Jesus'.<sup>67</sup> However, following Jesus by giving away all of one's possessions was not yet the same as fulfilling the commandment of taking up the cross and following him. While Philoxenus spoke of the renouncing of possessions and the giving to the poor as 'the belly from which is born out of the old womb the new creation'<sup>68</sup> and as 'that door through which he [that is, the foetus] goes forth from one world to the other',<sup>69</sup> the way of perfection, as he saw it, was determined by 'that commandment, "Take up your cross and come after Me," [which] belongs to the perfect rule and conduct, and . . . [which] is the path of spiritual life'.<sup>70</sup> This last step goes beyond human nature. Philoxenus could compare it to the difference between ordinary death as a matter of nature and dying for God's sake in martyrdom.<sup>71</sup>

Philoxenus gave a good explanation of what it means for a man or a woman to bear the cross of Christ. As he continued *Homily 9*, he said:

[T]he perfect, like the lords of the country and citizens, receive the righteous strangers who go into their world, because they are sons of the inheritance of Christ, and heirs of the Father Who is in heaven, even as Paul said, concerning them, 'Heirs of God, and joint heirs of Jesus Christ' (Romans 8:7); . . . making known why those who bore the cross of Christ have arrived at this measure, he says, 'If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him' (Romans 8:17). . . . [T]he participation in the sufferings of Christ [consists] not in a man giving alms, and in showing his loving-kindness unto those who are needy, but in his dying wholly and entirely to the world, and to the body, and to the lusts, and to the passions, and in a man crucifying his old man with all the lusts thereof, even as Paul also spoke concerning himself, 'I am crucified unto the world' (Galatians 6:14). . . . [T]he whole

passions of the world. That stage is comparable to the cutting of the membrane in which the foetus is wrapped up right after delivery and which the baby has to leave behind to go out of the inner part into the real world.

<sup>67</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 337, ll. 15–16 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 322 (English)).

<sup>68</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 338, ll. 4–5 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 323 (English)).

<sup>69</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 338, ll. 5–6 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 323 (English)).

<sup>70</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 338, ll. 6–8 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 323 (English)).

<sup>71</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 338, ll. 22–23 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 324 (English)).

feeling of the world was annulled in him, after the manner in which it is annulled in those who are dead in nature, for as the dead body does not feel any one thing which is brought near to it, even so in that man, who has been crucified with Christ, and who has put to death in himself all the old man, is there no perception of anything which is in the world; and for this reason also Paul calls 'dead' those who stand in this rule of perfection.<sup>72</sup>

Philoxenus suggested here that a man could eventually arrive at the rule of life, that is, carrying the cross and dying for Christ, but only 'after he has stripped himself of his possessions, and begins to work good deeds in the members of his person'.<sup>73</sup> Natural strength and power only allow the human being to reach the gate of the spiritual life. Thus Philoxenus stated clearly that taking up the cross was necessary for anyone who wished to engage in the spiritual life, and thus reach perfection:

[F]or poverty is the end of the path of the righteousness which can be wrought in this world; but the words, 'Take your cross, and follow Me,' are the beginning of the path of the spiritual life.<sup>74</sup>

While the precise relationship and historical line of influence between Abba Isaiah, Peter the Iberian, John Rufus, and Philoxenus of Mabbugh requires further research, significant sections from Isaiah's and Philoxenus' writings suggest that within the wider ascetic anti-Chalcedonian milieu at the turn of the fifth to the sixth century at the latest, the spiritual focus was on the Cross. The following discussion will show how Peter the Iberian's life's experience was a concrete example of a monk living out this very spirituality. Moreover, it will become clear how his biographer, Rufus, was able to make use of elements of such a Cross-centred spirituality in his fight on behalf of the anti-Chalcedonian party claiming the possession of theological truth.

### **Using the Cross in Support of Claims of Possessing the Right Faith**

In the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon both its supporters and its opponents made strong claims to the possession of theological truth. Scholars have recognized that in the course of the continuing

<sup>72</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 347, ll. 1–21 (Syriac), and vol. ii, pp. 331–332 (English) (modified)).

<sup>73</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 348, ll. 10–12 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 332 (English), emphasis added).

<sup>74</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Discourses. Homily 9: On Poverty* (ed. and tr. Budge, *Discourses of Philoxenus*, vol. i, p. 349, ll. 16–18 (Syriac), and vol. ii, p. 334 (English)).

Christological controversies in later decades, the Chalcedonian side used the possession of relics of the True Cross as well as miracles related to it as arguments in favour of the truth of the Chalcedonian faith.<sup>75</sup> One may add that also in the realm of iconography conscious parallels were drawn between Marcian and Pulcheria, rulers at the time of the Council of Chalcedon, and Constantine and Helena, the first Byzantine emperor and his mother, the latter of whom, according to tradition, found the wood of the True Cross in Jerusalem.<sup>76</sup> Records of the Council of Chalcedon include acclamations at the meeting in the basilica of St Euphemia hailing Marcian as 'new Constantine, a new David', and Pulcheria as 'new Helena', stating that as 'Helena found the Cross of Christ; Pulcheria defended it and safeguarded it'.<sup>77</sup> Links to the triumphal imagery of Constantine were not uncommon at the councils. Echoes could be heard again at the Second Council of Nicaea in AD 787, when Constantine VI and Irene were hailed as the new Constantine and Helena.<sup>78</sup>

What has seemingly gone unnoticed is that the anti-Chalcedonian party in Palestine was also aware of the importance of the relics of the True Cross as evidence of God's favour for those who possessed them, as testimonies to the salvation of mankind, and as an inspiring symbol. As has become obvious in the examples of the thought of Abba Isaiah and Philoxenus discussed above, already early on anti-Chalcedonians developed a strong spirituality centred on following Christ to the Cross as a way to perfection. Thus, in addition to the relics of the True Cross, also the person who lived as a 'bearer of the cross' could be the guarantor of the true faith, all the more so if that 'bearer of the cross' suffered physical persecution, as Palestinian anti-Chalcedonians felt they did.<sup>79</sup> Limiting the focus on Palestinian asceticism and given the chronological priority of Peter to the monk Sabas, as well as the priority of Rufus' work to that of Cyril of Scythopolis, the following discussion will show that anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine recognized the impact of the symbol of the Cross and utilized the relics of the True Cross as evidence of the truth of their theological position earlier than Chalcedonians in Palestine.

<sup>75</sup> For some discussion of this point see Griffith, 'The Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy', 159–160.

<sup>76</sup> For a more recent study of that tradition, see Jan Willem Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross* (Leiden and New York, 1992).

<sup>77</sup> See Christopher Walter, *L'Iconographie des Conciles dans la Tradition Byzantine* (Paris, 1970), 139.

<sup>78</sup> Walter, *L'Iconographie des Conciles*, 230–232 (on the triumph of the Cross).

<sup>79</sup> Note the discussion of the close relationship between the notion of pilgrimage and martyrdom in Rufus' works in Horn, 'Weaving the Pilgrim's Crown'.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE: JERUSALEM AND THE CROSS

The city of Jerusalem had and has significance as the place in which Christ died and rose from the dead. Rufus spoke of this reality by saying that Jerusalem was ‘the city . . . in which the mystery of the salvation of the whole earth was wrought by the manifestation of Our God and Saviour, Christ’.<sup>80</sup> For Rufus the wood of the Cross was instrumental in this mystery of salvation. When he alluded to Queen Helena’s discovery of the Cross, he said that what she found was ‘the saving wood of the precious Cross’.<sup>81</sup> Rufus understood that in order for the wood of the Cross to continue to be salvific for the faithful, Helena ‘set it up for worship and for healing of soul and body for all the earth, for which He also had been nailed [to it]’.<sup>82</sup>

Rufus revisited the traditional account of Helena’s contribution to the erection of churches that marked the various holy places in Jerusalem, in particular the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at the site still identified in the collective memory of the local population as Golgotha, the rock on which once stood Christ’s Cross.<sup>83</sup> Christ’s tomb was located in the immediate vicinity of Golgotha. Rufus’ treatment of that material allows for valuable insights into the importance of the site of Golgotha for anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. Rufus assigned the epithets ‘worshipful’, ‘true Holy of Holies’, and ‘true Altar’ to the holy place of Golgotha.<sup>84</sup> For him, Golgotha was identical with the Holy of Holies of the ancient Jewish Temple, and with the altar about which Moses had mysteriously prophesied.<sup>85</sup> Since the rock of Golgotha was not hewn nor cut but rather was prepared solely by nature,<sup>86</sup> this

<sup>80</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 37.

<sup>81</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38.

<sup>82</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38.

<sup>83</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini* bk. 3, chs. 41–43 (ed. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, GCS Eusebius 1.1 (Berlin, 1975), 101–102; rev. tr. E. Cushing Richardson, NPNF 2nd ser. 1 (Hartford and New York, 1890), 530–531) informs his audience that Constantine was responsible for building the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to honour ‘the memory of his mother’, while Helena was responsible for building the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives.

<sup>84</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38.

<sup>85</sup> See Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 27:5; and Joshua 8:30–31.

<sup>86</sup> See *Vita Petri Iberi* 38. This kind of language is familiar from other early Christian writers, for example, when they talked about Christ’s birth from the Virgin and described Mary in both her virginity and her motherhood as a rock that was not cut, or cut without hands. See, for example, Ephraem the Syrian (pseudonymous), *Commentary on Daniel* 2.43 (ed. and tr. Joseph A. Assemani, *Sancti Patris Nostri Ephraem Syri Opera Omnia quae exstant graece, syriace, latine, in sex tomos distributa*,

rock as an undivided whole was to be seen as providing a parallel witness to the indivisibility of Christ.

For Rufus, Golgotha was the altar on which Christ, the ‘true Lamb of God . . . , who carries the sin of the world’,<sup>87</sup> was slaughtered for the salvation of humankind. Since the altar was only one, uncut and unhewn, the Lamb slaughtered on it also could only be one, uncut and undivided. From the physical description of Golgotha, a specific holy place, Rufus derived a line of reasoning that proved the correctness of his belief and its theological formulation beyond any doubt. Rufus appears not to have intended to enter into discussions over the terms ‘person’ or ‘nature’ of Christ. He viewed Christ, the whole of Christ, simply as one.

While only one place could be the location of Christ’s death and, therefore, a holy place that celebrated the mystery of the Cross and provided food for reflections based on its symbolism, relics of the True Cross could be and were more numerous. Their greater number made it possible to extend claims to theological truth in connection with the Cross to a wider geographical area. Since anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine were in effect not able to take possession of the holy place of Golgotha, relics of the True Cross, and the spirituality surrounding it, gained significance as more practical tools to be used as a proof for the validity of theological opposition to Chalcedon.

From the middle of the fourth century, and well beyond the fifth and sixth centuries, the practice of obtaining and venerating relics of the True Cross spread widely in the Empire. The following discussion will first present evidence of the worldwide spread of relics of the Cross and the veneration those relics inspired. Subsequently, the discussion will focus on the examples of the less well-known evidence for relics of the True Cross that involve the anti-Chalcedonian tradition. It will be shown how anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine in the fifth century used such relics for their own purposes.

## PRACTICES OF PILGRIMS AND ASCETICS BUILT AROUND THE CROSS

### **The Relics of the Cross and Their Veneration in Early Christian History: The Most Significant Evidence**

Ever since Queen Helena, according to tradition, found the Cross in the fourth century, small pieces or splinters were peeled off from the sacred wood and sent to churches or to important individuals for the

vol. ii (Rome, 1740), 203–233, here 206). A critical edition and an English translation of this text are in progress.

<sup>87</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 38.

purposes of veneration. The Latin terminology used for these pieces is *particulae* or *reliquiae sanctae crucis*.<sup>88</sup> Evidence for the existence and the veneration of such pieces exists from the middle of the fourth century onwards.

Cyril of Jerusalem, who died in AD 386, became bishop of the Holy City in AD 351. Between AD 347 and 351 he preached a series of homilies, catechizing Christian initiates. In his fourth catechesis Cyril claimed that pieces of the Holy Cross were distributed all over the catholic world: *καὶ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ σταυροῦ πᾶσα λοιπὸν ἡ οἰκουμένη κατὰ μέρος ἐπληρώθη*.<sup>89</sup>

In 1889, an inscription was discovered in Tixter, Africa, in the area of Setif, along the railway from Algiers to Constantine, which indicated that an altar or a sacred monument with relics of holy martyrs stood at the site, perhaps already before, probably from around AD 359 onwards.<sup>90</sup> Relics of Cyprian of Carthage were among them as well as a relic from the wood of the True Cross, which had come from the Holy Land. The inscription spoke of the relic of the True Cross as coming *de lignu cruces, de ter[r]a promis[s]ionis, ube natus est C[h]ristus*.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> S. Bäumer, 'Kreuzpartikel', in *Wetzer und Welte's Kirchenlexikon*, vol. vii (1891), 1126.

<sup>89</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4.10 (ed. Antonius Augustinus Touttaeus (Paris, 1720), reprinted in PG 33.331–1180, here 469: 'and by the remaining part of the wood of the Cross the whole world has been filled' (my translation)). See also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 10.19 (ed. PG 33.685–86): *τὸ ξύλον τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ σταυροῦ μαρτυρεῖ, μέχρι σήμερον παρ' ἡμῖν φαινόμενον, καὶ διὰ τῶν κατὰ πίστιν ἐξ αὐτοῦ λαμβανόντων, ἐντεῦθεν τὴν οἰκουμένην πᾶσαν σχεδὸν ἤδη πληρώσαν*. 'The holy wood of the Cross bears witness, seen among us until this day, and through the ones who in accord with faith take [pieces] from it, it is here already filling almost the whole world' (my translation); and Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 13.4 (ed. PG 33.776): *ἐλέγχει με τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸ ξύλον, τὸ κατὰ μικρὸν ἐντεῦθεν πάση τῇ οἰκουμένην λοιπὸν διαδοθέν*. 'The wood of the Cross confutes me, the rest of which was distributed by way of small [pieces] from here to all the world' (my translation). For an accessible translation, see Edwin Hamilton Gifford, *The Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, NPNF 2nd ser. 7 (New York, Oxford, and London, 1894), 21, 63, and 83.

<sup>90</sup> See also Bäumer, 'Kreuzpartikel', 1126.

<sup>91</sup> See the discussion in Franz Joseph Dölger, 'Das Anhängerkreuzchen der hl. Makrina und ihr Ring mit der Kreuzpartikel. Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde des 4. Jahrhunderts nach der *Vita Macrinae* des Gregor von Nyssa', in *Antike und Christentum*. Kultur- und Religionsgeschichtliche Studien 3 (Münster, 1932), 81–116, here 103 (transcription of inscription) and pp. 102–104 (discussion). Note the cautionary remarks of Stefan Heid (review of J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta. Waarheid en legende*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 33 (1990), 253–256), on p. 254: 'Der zweite Teil beginnt mit einer Darstellung der Verehrung der Kreuzessplitter (S. 86/101). D[r]ijvers] bietet die bekannten Belege, zuweilen jedoch unkritisch. So wird die Inschrift der Tixter-Mensa zwar seit A. Audollent (1890) immer wieder als frühester Beleg für die Aussagen Kyrills um 348/50 über die weltweite Verbreitung

In the same province of North Africa, in Rusgunia, an inscription from the year AD 350 indicated that a noble couple had built a small church or basilica at the place as a depository for a piece of the True Cross. Part of the inscription reads as follows: *sancto ligno Salvatoris adlato ADQ (=atque) hic sito Basilicam promissam . . . dedicavit.*<sup>92</sup>

In his book *Quod Christus sit Deus*, written against Jews and pagans no later than AD 387, John Chrysostom commented that everyone was anxious to see and venerate the holy wood on which the Lord had hung. Chrysostom testified that people kept particles of the Holy Cross in golden capsules or cases and that both women and men wore them around their necks or on their chests.<sup>93</sup>

Egeria reported exhaustively about her pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which may well have taken place in the early fifth century.<sup>94</sup> According to her, the Christian population of Jerusalem performed a ceremonial act of venerating the relic of the True Cross on Good Friday.<sup>95</sup> Throughout the year the relic was locked in a gilded silver casket (*loculus argenteus deauratus*).<sup>96</sup>

der Kreuzpartikel angeführt (S. 96), sie beweist aber nichts, weil die entscheidende Zeile nachträglich (nach 359, aber wann?) hinzugefügt ist (Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae* [Rom 1982] 331/7).’ According to the article ‘Kreuz’, in *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst*, vol. v (1995), 15 (with references to further literature), the addition may have been made not much later. The article also reports that the altar with inscription is preserved in the Louvre.

<sup>92</sup> See Louis Duchesne’s report in *Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (Paris, 6 December 1889). M. G. Ledos, ed., in *Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres: Comptes Rendus des Séances, Table des Années 1857–1900* (Paris, 1906), noted on p. 69 under the name of Mgr. Louis Duchesne that he published an article under the title ‘*Memoria des martyrs Victorinus et Miggis, découverte à Setif par Letaille et Audollent*’, xxxiii, p. 417, and on p. 70 remarked that Duchesne published the titles ‘*les basiliques chrétiennes*’, xxxvii, p. 66, and ‘*l’inscription chrétienne de Tixeret*’, xxxiv, p. 176.

<sup>93</sup> John Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos et Gentiles Demonstratio, quod Christus sit Deus*, ch. 10 (ed. PG 48.826–827): *Αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ξύλον ἐκεῖνο, ἔνθα τὸ ἅγιον ἐτάθη σῶμα καὶ ἀνεσκολπίσθη, πῶς ἐστι περιμάχητον ἅπασιν; καὶ μικρόν τι λαμβάνοντες ἐξ ἐκείνου πολλοί, καὶ χρυσῷ κατακλείοντες, καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες τῶν τραχήλων ἐξαρτῶσι τῶν ἑαυτῶν καλλωπιζόμενοι, καίτοι καταδίκης σύμβολον τὸ ξύλον ἦν, καίτοι τιμωρίας.* A well-known example of that practice is the little Cross-medallion that was in Macrina’s possession in Asia Minor. See the discussion in Dölger, ‘Das Anhängerkreuzchen der hl. Makrina’.

<sup>94</sup> For a discussion of the dating of the pilgrimage and *Diary* see Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 12–15.

<sup>95</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 37.3 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘*Itinerarium Egeriae*’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 81, lines 19–22; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 111): *Omnis populis transit unus et unus toti acclinantes se, primum de fronte, sic de oculis tangentes crucem et titulum, et sic osculantes crucem pertranseunt, manum autem nemo mittit ad tangendum.*

<sup>96</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 37.1 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘*Itinerarium Egeriae*’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 80; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 111).

An older redaction of the *Liber Pontificalis* stated that at the time of Pope Silvester (AD 335), Emperor Constantine built the Basilica Sessoriana (S. Croce in Gerusalemme). In it he enclosed a piece of the True Cross: (*partem*) *de ligno sanctae crucis D. N. J. Chr. auro et gemmis conclusit*.<sup>97</sup>

The letter of Paulinus of Nola to Sulpicius Severus may be the first literary testimony among the Latin Fathers to pieces of the True Cross. Together with the letter, Paulinus of Nola sent Sulpicius a small piece of the True Cross in AD 403. He wrote: *Accipite magnum in modico munus et in segmento pene atomo hastulae brevis sumite munitum praesentis et pignus aeternae salutis*.<sup>98</sup>

On his pilgrimage from Constantinople to Jerusalem Peter the Iberian brought along a golden box with bones of several martyrs and a copy of the Gospel of John, in which was fastened—probably in the binding—‘a part of the wood of the holy, precious, and saving Cross’.<sup>99</sup> Rufus claimed that this piece protected Peter and his companion John on their journey. God worked many signs through it, endowing it with a gentle but effective power for strengthening and consoling the two pilgrims. For a whole week that particular relic of the Cross emitted oil with which the two pilgrims anointed themselves so that they were strengthened in their spirit. Whether or not Cyril of Scythopolis borrowed directly from Rufus’ *Vita Petri Iberi*, it is noteworthy that Cyril stated that when the monk Sabas was staying in Enthemaneith he healed a young girl who was possessed by a spirit ‘with oil from the holy [C]ross’.<sup>100</sup>

According to manuscripts of Pope Leo the Great’s letters, Juvenal, the reinstated Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, sent a piece of the True Cross to the Pope, for which the Pope thanked him.<sup>101</sup> The

<sup>97</sup> Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis* (Paris, 1886), 80; compare also pp. 78, and 178, 179 and 195.

<sup>98</sup> Paulinus of Nola, *Epistulae* 31.1 (ed. Wilhelm Hartel, CSEL 29 (1894), 268, lines 13–15).

<sup>99</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>100</sup> See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 63 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 164.11–20; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 174). Also Patrìch, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, 281, pointed to that incident. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 45 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 136.15–19; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 146) recorded at least one further similar instance, when oil from the Cross worked a healing miracle, namely the cure of Gerontius. Since miracles worked through the Cross are not the immediate topic in the present study, the mentioning of those two instances has to suffice. For a related discussion see also Griffith’s article ‘The Signs and Wonders of Orthodoxy’.

<sup>101</sup> Leo the Great, *Epistula* 139 (ed. ACO ii. iv, p. 93): *Particulam dominicae crucis cum eulogiis tuae dilectionis veneranter accepi*. Schwartz places this text in square brackets and notes in the critical apparatus that mss. P, Pl, and I carry this sentence,

*Liber Pontificalis* reports that Pope Hilarius (AD 461–468) and Pope Symmachus (AD 498–514) had oratories erected in honour of the Holy Cross. They inserted a piece of the *lignum Dominicum*<sup>102</sup> in the altar of a particular oratory. Around the year AD 500, Avitus, bishop of Vienne since AD 490, wrote to Pope Symmachus and to the bishop of Jerusalem. He asked Symmachus for a piece of the Holy Cross and thanked the bishop of Jerusalem when he received it.<sup>103</sup>

Around the year AD 569, Radegund, queen of the Franks, asked Emperor Justin II for a piece of the Holy Cross.<sup>104</sup> For the procession that took place at the ceremonial translation of the relic, Venantius Fortunatus composed his famous hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt*.<sup>105</sup>

Pope Gregory the Great sent a precious Gospel manuscript together with a crucifix (*encolpium*), containing a piece of the True Cross, to Theodelinde, queen of the Lombards.<sup>106</sup> He sent a similar gift to King Reccared in Spain.<sup>107</sup>

while mss. G, E, Q, L, H, and Γ omit it. See also PL 54.1108, note j. Dom Remy Ceillier, *Histoire Générale des Auteurs Sacrés et Ecclésiastiques*, vol. x (Paris, 1861), 232, had noted already: ‘Selon quelques éditions, saint Léon remerciait Juvénal de lui avoir envoyé des eulogies avec un petit morceau de la vraie croix. On a retranché cet endroit dans la dernière, parce qu’il ne se lit point dans presque tous les manuscrits’.

<sup>102</sup> Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* I. 241–242, 261–262.

<sup>103</sup> Avitus of Vienne, *Epistulae* 20 (18) and 25 (23) (ed. Rudolf Peiper, in MGH.aa 6.2 (Berlin, 1883, repr. 1961), 53, ll. 22–23, and pp. 56–57; see also PL 59.236 (Ep. 18) and 59.239–240 (Ep. 23)).

<sup>104</sup> See Venantius Fortunatus, *Sanctae Radegundis Reginae Vita*, 2.18 and 2.19 (ed. PL 72.673–674): *lignum crucis Domini . . . obtinuit . . . auro et gemmis ornatum . . .* However, this section is not contained in the more recent critical edition of the work in Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sanctae Radegundis* (ed. Bruno Krusch, *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati Presbyteri Italici: Opera Pedestria*, in MGH.aa IV.2 (Berlin, 1885), 38–49). Yet see in support of Fortunatus’ knowledge concerning Radegund’s possession of a relic of the Cross his *Carmen ad Iustinum et Sophiam Augustos* (ed. F. Leo, MGH.aa IV.1 (Berlin, 1881), 275–278, here 277), lines 57–60: *regina poscente sibi Radegunde Thoringa /praebuit optatae munera sacra crucis, /qua Christus dignans adsumpta in carne pependit /atque cruore suo vulnera nostra lavit.*

<sup>105</sup> Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, lib. 2, carmen 6. In *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati Presbyteri Italici: Opera Poetica* (ed. Friedrich Leo (Berlin, 1881), 34–35). See also Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum X* (also known as *Historia Francorum*), bk. 9, ch. 40 (ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH.SRM, t. 1, pars 1 (Hanover, 1951), 464). In 1891, when Bäumer published his article, in which he listed many of the known literary and archaeological references to the spread of the particles of the True Cross across the Christian world, that particular relic was still preserved in the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross at Poitiers, France.

<sup>106</sup> Gregory the Great, *Epistulae*, bk. 14, letter 12 (ed. Paul Ewald and Ludwig M. Hartmann, in MGH.Epistolarum, vol. ii (Berlin, 1899), 431, line 27): *crucem cum ligno sanctae crucis Domini*. See also PL 77.1316C.

<sup>107</sup> Gregory the Great, *Epistulae*, bk. 9, letter 228 (ed. Ewald and Hartmann, in MGH.Epistolarum, vol. ii (Berlin, 1899), 225, line 2): *lignum dominicae crucis*. See also Gregory the Great, *Epistulae*, bk. 9, letter 122 (ed. PL 77.1055C).

Around AD 690, at the time of Pope Sergius I, one of the chapels of St Peter's Basilica in Rome housed a silver capsule with a remarkably large piece of the Cross, surrounded by precious stones. Emperor Justin II had given this to Pope John III (AD 560–574).<sup>108</sup>

While the evidence attesting to the spread of particles of the True Cross and their veneration during the time between the seventh and the fifteenth centuries is not exhausted, it would go far beyond the chronological framework relevant for the present study to list the contributions in detail. Yet the point has been demonstrated sufficiently: from the middle of the fourth century and well beyond the sixth century, the practice of obtaining and venerating relics of the True Cross spread widely in the Empire. The role of the veneration of relics of the True Cross and of a Cross-centred spirituality in the life and career of Peter the Iberian, and the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic community that gathered around him, are the subject of the following discussion.

### **Stories Involving the Relics of the Cross in the *Vita Petri Iberi***

#### *Veneration of the Relic of the Cross*

#### **In Constantinople**

The *Vita Petri Iberi* gives an account of the great respect that Peter showed for a relic of the Cross that had come into his possession.<sup>109</sup> During his years at the court in Constantinople, he had received a piece of the Cross from clerics who had come from Jerusalem. Those clerics, desiring to honour the emperor, had brought along with them *εὐλογίαι* (*eulogiaî*) from the Holy Land. The Greek word *εὐλογία* (*eulogia*) means 'blessing' or 'benediction' and commonly refers to consecrated gifts or bread that was used at the Eucharistic liturgy, both the consecrated bread, which the communicants received, or blessed bread that would be distributed to the faithful after the liturgical service.<sup>110</sup> The term 'blessing' also took on a wider meaning, referring to a blessing that one received by coming in contact with a holy person, place, or object, especially in a context of

<sup>108</sup> See Beda, *Martyrologium*, under 9 September, referenced in Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis (in vita Sergii)*, vol. i, pp. 371–376; compare notes 28–30. See also Stefano Borgia, *De cruce Vaticana: ex dono Iustini Augusti in parasceve maioris hebdomadae publicae venerationi exhiberi solita commentarius; cui accedit ritus salutationis crucis in Ecclesia antiochena syrorum servatus* (Rome: Sacrae Congregationis [de Propaganda Fide], 1779), 63, which I could not consult.

<sup>109</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 39.

<sup>110</sup> See Gary Vikan, 'Eulogia', in *ODB* 2 (1991), 745.

pilgrimage.<sup>111</sup> In the *Vita Petri Iberi* the clerics from Jerusalem presented a relic of the True Cross to the emperor in Constantinople as indeed a very special *εὐλογία*. If the story is not fictitious, and it does not have to be since other instances are known in which relics of the True Cross were brought as *εὐλογίαι* from Jerusalem to the imperial court in Constantinople,<sup>112</sup> it suggests that Theodosius II must have been very fond of the young Peter.

What Peter did with his relic of the True Cross is noteworthy. First, he covered the fragment with wax. Then he put it in a piece of clean cloth. Finally he enclosed it in a golden container, wanting to store his treasure with great care and honour. Once he had set up a special place for the relic in his room, he did not leave it unattended. Rather, on a weekly schedule, that is, every Saturday and also on high feasts as Rufus specifies, Peter took the precious relic, fell on his face in front of it, blessed himself with it, kissed it, and put it aside.<sup>113</sup>

Certain elements in the description of the ceremony, which Peter reportedly conducted, recall other accounts in early Christian literature of a specific ceremony for the veneration of the True Cross. In her *Diary* Egeria gave an account of the early stages in the development of the liturgical cult of the veneration of the Holy Cross on Good Friday in Jerusalem. On Golgotha, a special chapel had been constructed to house the precious relic. On Good Friday the bishop of Jerusalem would take up his seat on Golgotha and the relic of the True Cross, together with the Title, which Helena also had found, was taken out of its box and set up on a special table. Egeria's account shows that both in Jerusalem and in Peter's private room in Constantinople, the relics of the True Cross were normally kept in a special box or container.

According to Egeria, pilgrims to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre kissed the relic of the True Cross in order to show their veneration. The description of that specific act of devotion has amused already many a student of early Christianity, given that Egeria reported that the pious zeal and appetite of certain pilgrims led them to bite into the wood when kissing it and take away a splinter of the holy relic. To avoid running the risk of allowing the relic to be diminished

<sup>111</sup> See Vikan, 'Eulogia', 745. See also below, ch. 5, p. 364 and n. 129.

<sup>112</sup> Basing their argument on canon 36 of the First Council of Laodicea (c.360–390) (for the text of the canon, see Mansi, vol. ii, pp. 536–574, here 570) and Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Macrina* 30 (ed. and tr. Maraval, *Grégoire de Nyse: Vie de Sainte Macrine* (Paris, 1971), 240, ll. 10–11 and p. 241 with n. 2), Robert F. Taft and Alexander Kazhdan, 'Cross, Cult of the', in *ODB* I (1991), 551–553, here 551, state that '[b]y the second half of the 4th C. relics of the Cross, used as amulets . . . had spread from Jerusalem to Antioch, Cappadocia, and Constantinople'.

<sup>113</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 39.

completely through such misuse, deacons had to be set up as guards to protect the Cross-relic.<sup>114</sup> One wonders whether the office of *σταυροφύλαξ* (*staurophylax*), or, ‘guardian of the Cross’,<sup>115</sup> which seems specific and exclusive to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was not originally linked to that special task and occasion.<sup>116</sup>

Egeria, on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, described the way the faithful venerated the Cross: ‘All the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the [C]ross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the [C]ross, they move on. No one, however, puts out his hand to touch the [C]ross.’<sup>117</sup> The different elements of this ritual are very similar to what Peter did when he venerated the relic of the Cross in his room in the palace in Constantinople. When Rufus told of Peter ‘falling on his face’, the young man’s action corresponded to the pilgrims in

<sup>114</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 37.1–3 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘Itinerarium Egeriae’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 80–81; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 110–111) said, ‘After this, following the dismissal from the Cross, which occurs before sunrise, everyone now stirred up goes immediately to Sion to pray at the pillar where the Lord was whipped. Returning from there then, everyone rests for a short time in his own house, and soon all are ready. A throne is set up for the bishop on Golgotha behind the Cross, which now stands there. The bishop sits on his throne, a table covered with a linen cloth is set before him, and the deacons stand around the table. The gilded silver casket containing the sacred wood of the [C]ross is brought in and opened. Both the wood of the [C]ross and the inscription are taken out and placed on the table. As soon as they have been placed on the table, the bishop, remaining seated, grips the ends of the sacred wood with his hands, while the deacons, who are standing about, keep watch over it. There is a reason why it is guarded in this manner. It is the practice here for all the people to come forth one by one, the faithful as well as the catechumens, to bow down before the table, kiss the holy wood, and then move on. It is said that someone (I do not know when) took a bite and stole a piece of the [H]oly [C]ross. Therefore, it is now guarded by the deacons standing around, lest there be anyone who would dare come and do that again’.

<sup>115</sup> See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexikon* (Oxford, 1961), 1255. See also Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 37 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 55.21–23; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 52); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 19 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 104.3; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 113); and John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* 49 (ed. PG 87.2851–3112, here 2904C; tr. John Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos* (Kalamazoo, 1992), 40).

<sup>116</sup> *Ἀθανάσιος Παπαδόπουλου-Κεραμέως, Ανάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμικῆς σταχυολογίας ἢ συλλογῆ ἀνεκδότων*, vol. ii (*ἐν Πετρόπολει*, 1894; repr. Brussels, 1963), 99 and 102, refers to a *σκευοφυλακείον*, but in neither of the five volumes discusses a corresponding *σταυροφυλακείον*. Yet according to Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 22 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 35.3–10; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 30–31) the offices of *skeuophylax* and *staurophylax* were once clearly different offices.

<sup>117</sup> Egeria, *Diary* 37.4 (ed. Franceschini and Weber, ‘Itinerarium Egeriae’, in *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 81; tr. Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York, and Paramus, NJ, 1970), 111).

Jerusalem bowing down before the relic of the Cross. Where the *Vita Petri Iberi* stated in rather cryptic terms that Peter ‘blessed himself with it’, namely, with the relic of the Cross, Egeria’s report elaborated how the people touched the Cross first with their foreheads and then with their eyes. Immediately following the episode in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, one of Peter’s chamberlains tried to touch the relic of the Cross with his face, in the same way in which the faithful in Jerusalem conducted their veneration.<sup>118</sup> In both the *Vita Petri Iberi* as well as in Egeria’s *Diary* the concluding element of the ritual ceremony was the kissing of the relic of the True Cross.

The close comparison of the *adoratio crucis* in both accounts shows that Peter did not develop his own, private ritual for venerating the relic of the True Cross, but, rather, at least in Rufus’ reconstruction of the scene, intentionally followed the Jerusalemite ritual. Perhaps the clerics from Jerusalem, who had given the relic to the emperor as a gift, also had communicated to the recipient how the veneration of the Cross took place in the Holy City on Good Friday. Or perhaps Melania may have shared information about ritual practices at the holy places, including the practices on Good Friday, at the time of her visit to Constantinople. It is important to note here that Rufus portrayed Peter as one who chose to make the veneration of the Cross a central element of his spiritual practice, using a model in accord with the practices of the Church in Jerusalem.

Rufus also recounted an event that happened one day while Peter was venerating his relic of the True Cross in the way described above.<sup>119</sup> One of Peter’s chamberlains was a believer and a good friend of the young Georgian prince. Peter wished that the chamberlain would also venerate the relic of the True Cross. Yet when his friend set out to do so by placing his face on the relic of the Cross, which was covered with wax and cloth, and which Peter held in his hands, the chamberlain could not receive the blessing by way of physical contact with the relic: the Cross-relic turned into a white dove. The dove flew off, fluttering all throughout the house, and escaped through an open window. As hard as they tried, Peter and the chamberlain could not catch it.

The sudden change of the Cross-relic into a dove made for a good story, but the narrative effect was not the only reason for the inclusion of the event. Religious literature, notably in Jewish and Christian contexts, often uses the motif of a white dove both as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and as a symbol of perfect purity. One only needs to look into the Bible to find in Matthew 3:16 that when Jesus was baptized, ‘suddenly the sky opened and he saw the Spirit of God

<sup>118</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 39.

<sup>119</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 39–40.

descend like a dove and hover over him.<sup>120</sup> In the Song of Songs one can see that the dove symbolized beauty, perfection, innocence, and purity.<sup>121</sup> The later usage of the dove, and especially of the white dove, as a symbol of perfection and purity seemed to have been the main motif in the present story. Rufus said that in a subsequent vision Peter learned why the relic of the True Cross changed into a dove and flew away, thus avoiding contact with Peter's friend. The chamberlain was not worthy to touch it, because he was not free of impurities.<sup>122</sup> What the chamberlain's impurities were is not revealed. By implication, then, Peter, who had been handling the relic, was presented as the perfectly worthy and pure holy man. Rufus thus elevated his hero considerably in the eyes of his audience and showed that it required a very high level of spiritual purity to express devotion to the Cross.<sup>123</sup>

### On the Way to Jerusalem: In Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine

When Peter and John the Eunuch set out on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they took two significant items along with them: a golden box containing the relics of Persian martyrs and a copy of the Scriptures, most likely the Gospel of John.<sup>124</sup> Rufus did not specify which of John the Evangelist's texts they were carrying with them. The text only speaks of 'the little book of the evangelist John'.<sup>125</sup> This could refer to the Johannine letters or perhaps even to Revelations, if one gives weight to the adjective 'little' in this context. However, it seems more likely that they had chosen one of the Gospels—a small codex with the text of the Gospel of John.

<sup>120</sup> For Jewish sources speaking about the spirit of God in the form of a dove, see Tosefta Hagigah 2.5; Talmud Yerushalmi 2, 77a; Talmud Babli 15a; and Bereshit Rabba 2.4. See also Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. v, p. 7, on n. 15.

<sup>121</sup> See Song of Songs 1:15 and 5:2. See also Jehuda Feliks, 'Dove', in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6 (1982), 184.

<sup>122</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40. For references to a discussion of the appropriateness of depicting the Holy Spirit under the form of a dove in anti-Chalcedonian circles see Honigmann, *Évêques et Évêchés Monophysites*, CSCO 127, Subsidia t. 2 (Louvain, 1951), 23–24 and n. 4.

<sup>123</sup> B. Bagatti, 'Nuova Ceramica del Monte Nebo (Siyagha)', *Liber Annuus* 35 (1985), 277, sect. 8, described the find of a head-shaped ornament signed with a cross. He also admitted the difficulties imposed upon any interpretations of such objects. Moreover, he referred to similar items preserved at the Museum of the White Fathers in Jerusalem, which, quite interestingly, are decorated with a dove and a cross. Unfortunately, I have not been able to inspect these objects in person. While both motives certainly are not uncommon, the combination of the two, given the ancient testimony of the miracles as recounted in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, is remarkable nevertheless.

<sup>124</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>125</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

Furthermore, Rufus informed the reader that a piece of the True Cross was inserted into the manuscript. This seems to constitute evidence that what they carried was a copy of the Gospel of John in the form of a codex, with the relic inserted into the hard cover of the binding. A careful look at details can shed light on the concrete historical circumstances of Peter's and John's pilgrimage journey, thus aiding the understanding of how physical realities may have influenced their devotional practices. Of fundamental significance is the fact that the two pilgrims actually possessed a relic of the True Cross. According to Rufus, and at the same time reflecting Rufus' own evaluation of the relic as 'holy, precious, and saving',<sup>126</sup> it seems that the pilgrims held that precious relic in highest esteem. The last of the three adjectives in the description is at the very heart of the veneration of the True Cross for early Christian believers and indeed for all Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem. The cross, which had been an instrument of death, was turned into a saving and life-giving instrument by Christ's action. Death was overcome and was turned into salvation. By contact with the relic of the Cross, one could share in that salvation.

The relic of the True Cross is a relic of extraordinary power because it is the physical object that was in closest contact with the Saviour at the moment when he obtained salvation for humankind through his suffering and death. Believers are able to obtain bones, or other body parts, from martyrs or other saints. In the case of Christ such relics are impossible because Christ rose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven. To explore the function of the transformed Eucharistic elements in comparison with the function of relics of saints though would be an interesting topic to be pursued in a separate study.

Given that inner link to salvation as the central concern in Rufus' work with regard to the relic of the Cross, it is significant that in the *Vita Petri Iberi* the relic of the True Cross repeatedly demonstrated its salvific function for the two pilgrims, Peter and John. The Cross protected them from harm on their way, strengthened them, and consoled them.<sup>127</sup>

One of the ways in which Christ manifested his power through the Cross to Peter and John was by letting an abundant stream of oil flow out from the relic. Rufus emphasized that for a whole week so much oil was pouring out from the piece of the Cross that the two pilgrims could anoint their faces and bodies with it, and there was still oil left over.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>128</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24.

<sup>127</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23–24.

Pilgrim narratives from the later sixth century, recorded by the Piacenza Pilgrim, preserve the description of the pilgrim practice of filling small flasks with oil and bringing those bottles in contact with the relic of the True Cross.<sup>129</sup> Thus the oil and the whole flask as such would become a powerful *εὐλογία*. Some oil flasks carried an inscription labelling their content, for example, ‘Oil of the Wood of Life, that guides [us] by land and sea’, on a flask featuring the veneration of the Cross.<sup>130</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis says that Sabas and other monks used the oil of the True Cross in exorcisms.<sup>131</sup> These later examples use ‘oil of the True Cross’ to refer to oil that has come into contact with the relic. In contrast, Rufus made the point that the oil with which Peter and John anointed themselves flowed directly from the True Cross, making it a substance of a unique nature.

Several special occasions of anointing come to mind. First, athletes used to anoint their bodies before entering a contest. The second context is the pre-baptismal or post-baptismal anointings that took place in the sacrament of baptism.<sup>132</sup> For Christians, the Anointed One *par excellence* is Jesus Christ himself.<sup>133</sup> Yet also the Old

<sup>129</sup> See Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 20 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 139); see also Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium, rec. alt.* 20 (ed. Geyer, *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 164). See also Hahn, ‘Loca Sancta Souvenirs’. For full-page depictions of the collections of such holy oil flasks from the Holy Land in the collections of Monza and Bobbio, see the 56 plates in André Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza—Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958).

<sup>130</sup> The Greek text reads (+EA)A(I)ON Ε(ΥΛΟΝ Ζ)ΩΗΣ (Ο)ΔΗΓΟ... ΕΝ Ε (ΙΡ)Α ΚΑΙ ΘΑ(Α)[ΑΣΣΗ]. See Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza—Bobbio)*, 33 and plate XXXII (Bobbio no.1). See Vikan, ‘Eulogia’, 754. See also Ousterhout, ed., *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, illustrations, no. 19, a pilgrim ampulla from Palestine, depicting the Adoration of the Cross below a scene showing Christ in the midst of the Good Thief and the Bad Thief.

<sup>131</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 27 and 63 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 110.9–13 and 164.14–18; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 119 and 174); *Vita Joanni Hesychasti* 21 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 218.4–9; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 237); and perhaps also *Vita Cyriaci* 9 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 228.11–14; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 251).

<sup>132</sup> For a study of the different anointings as witnessed in eastern and western patristic writings, see, for example, Hugh M. Riley, *Christian Initiation: A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Mystagogical Writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Ambrose of Milan* (Washington, DC, 1974), 104–117, 189–211, and 358–412.

<sup>133</sup> The name *Christ*, based on the Greek verb *χρίω* (Walter Bauer, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd edn. (1958), 887), or *Messiah* from the Hebrew *מָשִׁיחַ* (*m<sup>š</sup>īāḥ*), already spells out that idea. In Luke 4:18 Christ applied that epithet to himself when he said, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for this He has anointed me’. Peter testified to the same by

Testament notion of the anointing of a king, for example, King David, who through anointing became both the secular and the spiritual leader of the people of God, is significant. Given such an interpretative context, the fact that Peter was anointed with oil from the relic of the True Cross functioned as an identification of the precise nature of the source of authority on which ultimately his authority as spiritual leader of the anti-Chalcedonian movement rested, namely not on his priestly and episcopal ordination at the hands of Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, as important as that may be, but rather on the authority of the crucified God, who anointed him directly.

Rufus seemed to perceive an intimate connection between the relic of the True Cross and the Holy Spirit. He called the oil that flowed from the relic 'oil of rejoicing' and understood the flow of oil as an act of God's grace and of the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>134</sup> Already in Isaiah 61:3, the expression of joy is identified as one of the gifts of the Spirit, and various texts of early Christian baptismal literature make the same connection.<sup>135</sup> The oil flowing from the Cross is seen as an expression of joy on the part of the Holy Spirit. For Raabe, 'power of the cross' is the power of 'attraction'.<sup>136</sup> Rufus saw that this power was inherent in Christ's Cross, which motivated Peter and John to follow Christ by bearing his cross and 'cleav[ing] to the God who was crucified'.<sup>137</sup> By working miracles to strengthen and console Peter and John, the Spirit ensured that the two pilgrims would not turn away from 'bearing the cross', but rather would continue on joyfully. Rufus emphasized that the golden box with the relics of the Persian martyrs was the only other object that Peter had brought on his pilgrimage journey, suggesting that Peter saw himself as one who carried the cross and was ready to die for the true faith.

As seen through the eyes of his biographer, Peter understood his life and that of other anti-Chalcedonian ascetics as one of bearing the cross. One could bear the cross literally, as Peter did by carrying the relic on the journey. One could bear it in a life of asceticism, the importance of which has been shown in a previous chapter. Bearing the cross could be acted out in a life of constant pilgrimage and wandering, substitutes for a martyrdom suffered at the hands of

confessing, 'God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power' (Acts 10:38). For the Christian believer therefore, being anointed is a form of expressing his or her desire to imitate Christ.

<sup>134</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24.

<sup>135</sup> See, for example, Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on Virginity* IV.7–8 (ed. and tr. Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Virginitate*, CSCO 223–224, Script. Syr. tt. 94–95 (Louvain, 1962), 14–15 (Syriac) and 14 (German)).

<sup>136</sup> Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 30.

<sup>137</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24.

pagan emperors. Bearing the cross and suffering death might become unavoidable in the persecutions that anti-Chalcedonians felt they were enduring at the hands of Chalcedonians. Such instances also appear to have forged links between anti-Chalcedonian Christians and other minority groups, like the Samaritans,<sup>138</sup> in the Holy Land.<sup>139</sup>

*The Relic of the Cross and the Rod of Moses:* Rufus employed various literary details that suggested that, upon leaving Constantinople and marching on his pilgrimage route to Jerusalem, Peter paralleled Moses, who led the Jewish people out of the land of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.<sup>140</sup> He said that God 'led and guarded' Peter on his flight 'with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, through signs and wonders, as he once snatched Israel from the tyranny of the Egyptians, and brought [them] into the Land of the Promise, which is flowing with milk and honey'.<sup>141</sup> The relics of the martyrs played an important role in Peter's flight. The two pilgrims carried the martyrs' venerable bones in a golden box 'as the great Moses [carried] the Ark of God with the cherubim'.<sup>142</sup> Although not following the Old Testament witness very closely according to which the Levites carried the Ark (Deuteronomy 10:8 and 1 Chronicles 15:2), Rufus next mentioned that they, who resembled Moses—and perhaps also Aaron—were carrying with them 'the little book of John the Evangelist, in which was fastened a part of the wood of the holy, precious, and saving Cross, through which they were guarded', and through which 'Our Lord showed many signs and not a few powerful

<sup>138</sup> The Samaritan expectation of the coming of the Taheb (תהבה) (תהבה), the Restorer, Converter, or Returner) might have led some to see in Peter the Iberian the expected 'Prophet like Moses', especially if Rufus' persistent depiction of Peter the Iberian as paralleling Moses was also a way in which other followers of Peter talked about their leader to people they met. On the Samaritan expectations, see also Katherine Adshead, 'Procopius and the Samaritans', in *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?* (Brisbane, 1996), 35–41, here 35–36.

<sup>139</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10, which tells of a blind Samaritan who finds healing through the blood of slain anti-Chalcedonian monks. This event is described as having happened 'at the time of the apostasy', that is, most likely during the years of Juvenal's second return to Jerusalem, perhaps already in the immediate context of AD 453, possibly later. How much later, though, is unclear. It is possible, but less likely that these anti-Chalcedonian monks fell victim to the Samaritan uprising in AD 484 or the one in the 490s. Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* 5.7 (ed. Haury, re-ed. and tr. Dewing and Glanville, *Procopius: Buildings*, LCL (Cambridge, Mass., and London, repr. 1954), 348–354). See also Adshead, 'Procopius and the Samaritans', 38–39. Anti-Chalcedonian presence in the vicinity of Neapolis, specifically at Sebaste, is also documented in *Plerophoriae* 29 and 91 (Constantine the sacristan) and *Plerophoriae* 72 (Gaianus the governor).

<sup>140</sup> See also above, ch. 3, pp. 181–184 and ch. 4, pp. 238–244.

<sup>141</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 21.

<sup>142</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

deeds'.<sup>143</sup> Looking to the Exodus account for comparison one notices that the rod of Moses and that of Aaron worked numerous signs and miracles, both in Egypt and during the wandering in the desert.<sup>144</sup>

In early Christian literary sources it is not uncommon to find explicit parallels drawn between the rod of Moses and the Cross of Christ.<sup>145</sup> Ancient catechists saw the consecration of the baptismal waters as prefigured by Moses' gesture of throwing his rod into the bitter waters of Mara (Exodus 15:25). As the waters became sweet through contact with the rod, so the baptismal waters were made life-giving through the cross.<sup>146</sup> Like Tertullian, Didymus the Blind said explicitly that 'Moses, when sweetening the bitter water with his rod... was the figure of Christ, his rod [was the figure] of the Cross, the bitter water [the figure] of the consecrated water of the font, which seems useless to the unbelievers, but in which is found all refreshment by the believers.'<sup>147</sup> For Ambrose it was important to add that the Cross worked through the word of the priest: 'As Moses has thrown the wood into that spring in as much as he was a prophet, likewise in the case of this [our] fountain the priest gives the preaching of the Cross of the Lord [Christ] and the water becomes sweet in order to give the grace.'<sup>148</sup>

In early Christian texts it is not uncommon that elements from the life of Moses are seen as clear prefigurations of the mystery of the Cross of Christ. In John 3:14–15, the evangelist compared the Cross to the serpent made of brass. Early Christian catechesis associated the image of the Cross with the memory of Moses preaching with outstretched arms while Joshua was fighting (Exodus 17:8–13). Tertullian reunited the two figures, that of Moses in prayer and that of

<sup>143</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 23.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, Exodus 4:1–5, 17; 7:8–12, 15, 17, 19–20; 8:1, 12–13; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5, 9; and Numbers 20:8–11.

<sup>145</sup> The following examples are derived from Michel Olphe-Galliard, 'Croix (Mystère de la)', in *DSP* 2.2 (1953), 2616–2617.

<sup>146</sup> Olphe-Galliard, 'Croix', 2616, refers to P. Lundberg, *La typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église* (Leipzig, 1942), 178–187.

<sup>147</sup> Didymus the Blind, *De Trinitate*, bk. 2, ch. 14 (ed. PG 39.269–992, here 697A): *Μωϋσῆς δὲ, τῇ ῥάβδῳ τὸ πικρὸν ὕδωρ χρήσιμον ποιήσας, . . . Ἀπότὸς γὰρ τύπον ἔφερεν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ἡ δὲ ῥάβδος, τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸ δὲ πικρὸν ὕδωρ, τοῦ εὐλογηθέντος ὕδατος τῆς κολυμβήθρας. τοῦ δυσχρήστου μὲν ποτε φανέντος τοῖς ἀπίστοις, εὐρεθέντος δὲ τοῖς πιστοῖς εἰς πάσαν ἀνάψυξιν.* Ingrid Seiler, ed. *Didymus der Blinde: De trinitate, Buch 2, Kapitel 1–7* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1975) does not cover that part of the text.

<sup>148</sup> Ambrose, *De mysteriis* 3.14 (ed. Otto Faller, *Sancti Ambrosii Opera Pars VII*, CSEL 73 (Vienna, 1955), 94–95): *Sicut ergo in illum fontem Moyses lignum misit, hoc est propheta, et in hunc fontem sacerdos praedicationem Dominicae crucis mittit et aqua fit ad gratiam dulcis.* See also PL 16.393B.

the serpent 'placed on wood in the way of a man stretched out'. '[W]here the name of the Lord [in the figure of Joshua], when called upon to combat against the demon, engaged in combat, the form of the cross was necessary, by which Jesus was to gain victory.' In like manner, healing was brought to those bitten by snakes in the desert, because Moses was 'asserting the power of the Cross of the Lord, by which the serpent was denounced as devil'.<sup>149</sup>

The rod of Moses was interpreted as a figure of the Cross since it let water come forth from the rock. That event allowed for two possible interpretations: Paul's in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, who thinks of the Eucharist; and that of John in the Gospel at John 7:37-39, who sees the water of baptism and the Spirit, who is communicated through it.<sup>150</sup> Theodoret of Cyrrihus stated very decisively that the Cross was prefigured by the rod of Moses.<sup>151</sup> Many more references could be added.

It is likely that Rufus saw a connection between the rod of Moses and the Cross of Christ.<sup>152</sup> If he did not come up with the parallel on his own, Peter may have assisted his imagination. From his years in

<sup>149</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3.18.6-7 (ed. René Braun, *Tertullien: Contre Marcion, Tome III (Livre III)*, SCH 399 (Paris, 1994), 164; my own translation; see also ed. and tr. Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 1972), 226-227): 6) *Iam vero Moyses, quid utique tunc tantum, cum Iesus adversus Amalech proeliabatur, expansis manibus orabat residens, quando in rebus tam attonitis magis utique genibus depositis et manibus caedentibus pectus et facie humi volutante orationem commedare debuisset, nisi quia illic, ubi nomen domini dimicabat dimicaturi quandoque adversus diabolum, crucis quoque erat habitus necessarius, per quam Iesus victoriam esset relaturus?* 7) *Idem rursus Moyses, post interdictam omnis rei similitudinem, cur aereum serpentem ligno impositum pendentis habitu in spectaculum salutare proposuit? An et hic dominicae crucis vim intentabat, qua serpens diabolus publicatur, et laeso cuique a spiritalibus colubris, intuenti tamen et credenti in eam, sanitas morsuum peccatorum et salus exinde praedicabatur?*

<sup>150</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Apostolicum dictum*: 'Nolo vos ignorare, fratres, quod patres nostri omnes sub nube fuerunt, et omnes per mare transierunt (1 Cor 10:1)' (ed. and tr. PG 51.241-252, here 246-248), preaching in the course of the Easter vigil, makes allusion to two sacraments.

<sup>151</sup> Theodoret of Cyrrihus, *Quaestiones in Exodum* 27 (ed. PG. 225-297, here col. 257A; also ed. Natalio Fernández Marcos and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *Theodoretus Cyrensis Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, Textos y estudios 'Cardenal Cisneros' 17 (Madrid, 1979), 100-152, here 122).

<sup>152</sup> Possibly more is going on here also in the sense that the rod or staff of Moses can be seen as a prefiguration of the staff that was an important element of the monastic habit. On the basis of this connection one might find more with regard to the monks leaning on their staff as leaning on the Cross of Christ. More research on this issue is needed. Also, one wonders to what extent Rufus was saying that Peter the Iberian was like Moses, but through the dimension of contact with the Cross, this Moses was superseded and had found his fulfilment in Christ, whom Peter likewise imitated.

Constantinople, Peter would have been familiar with panegyric literature in the line of Eusebius which elevated and lauded the Christian emperor by comparing him to Moses and Christ. Stemming from the tenth century, but preserving sources from the early seventh century, the *Book of Ceremonies* testified to the fact that a relic of the rod of Moses was preserved in the palace in the chapel of St Theodore in the Chrysochlinium.<sup>153</sup> At the occasion of imperial processions, this relic of the rod of Moses was carried around together with the cross of Constantine.<sup>154</sup> It cannot be excluded that elements of such a cult centring on the rod of Moses and connecting it to the Cross could have been around prior to the seventh century, and possibly as early as the fifth century, in which case they could have had some influence on Peter and Rufus writing about him.

### In Fifth-Century Jerusalem

The special veneration of the symbol of the Cross played a substantial and important part in the piety of the people in Jerusalem, and this was so not only in connection with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. One day, the great cross in the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives burned in a sudden fire. The whole populace was deeply saddened and petitioned Empress Eudocia to restore the cross. Eudocia, whom Rufus described as ‘God-fearing’, responded to the petitions by having a huge brass cross, weighing six thousand pounds, erected in the place of the one burned.<sup>155</sup> Eudocia’s action served Rufus’ polemical purposes very well. The empress who acted in support of an aspect of veneration of Christ’s Cross, was also known for sympathizing with the anti-Chalcedonians.<sup>156</sup> Thus Rufus managed to claim anti-Chalcedonian involvement in the manner in which the cult of the veneration of the Cross was directed in Jerusalem.

<sup>153</sup> See Antonio Carile, ‘Fonti vicino-orientali dell’immaginario imperiale costantinopolitano’, *Corso di Cultura sull’Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 41 (1994), 267–277.

<sup>154</sup> *De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae* I.1 and II.40 (ed. J. Reiske (Bonn, 1829), vol. i, p. 6, line 24 to p. 7, line 1; p. 10, lines 20–21; p. 640, lines 6 ff.). For a discussion with useful hints to relevant literature see Claudia Rapp, ‘Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as “Bishop”’, *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 49.2 (October 1998), 685–695. Ioli Kalavrezou has further investigated the role of the relic of the rod of Moses at Constantinople. See Ioli Kalavrezou, ‘The Rod of Moses in Byzantine Court Ceremonial’, *Byzantine Studies Conference Abstracts* 22 (1996), 29.

<sup>155</sup> *Plerophoriae* 11.

<sup>156</sup> See Horn, ‘Empress Eudocia’.

In the first half of the fifth century, Hesychius held the office of *didaskalos* (teacher) at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.<sup>157</sup> Before he came to the Holy City, he had lived as a monk near the Egyptian border.<sup>158</sup> According to Theophanes, by AD 412 Hesychius had gained a wide reputation as presbyter and preacher.<sup>159</sup> Juvenal of Jerusalem esteemed him very highly. At the occasion of the consecration of the Church of the *lavra* of Euthymius on 7 May AD 429, Juvenal took Hesychius along with him. In that context Cyril of Scythopolis described both Passarion and Hesychius as ‘celebrated luminaries, resplendent in the whole world’,<sup>160</sup> while Heyer translated Cyril as saying that Hesychius was a ‘torch that lights up the world’.<sup>161</sup> The Byzantine tradition acclaims Hesychius for having written a commentary on the whole Bible, and the many scattered fragments of his works, which were translated into Latin, Armenian, and Georgian, testify to his enormous exegetical endeavours.<sup>162</sup> Hesychius followed the Alexandrian theological tradition not only in his employment of a mostly allegorical method of exegesis, but also in his adherence to the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria. What is to be made of the accusation of sympathy with ‘Monophysitism’,<sup>163</sup> which was raised against him by Bishop John of Maiuma and later by Pope Pelagius I (AD 555–561),<sup>164</sup> is not

<sup>157</sup> On Hesychius, also see the comments above in ch. 2, p. 73; ch. 3, p. 152; and ch. 4, pp. 279 and 281–282. For a helpful overview of Hesychius’ life and work see G. Röwekamp, ‘Hesychius of Jerusalem’, *DECL* (New York, 2000), 280–281. See also Michel Aubineau, *Chrysostome, Sévérien, Proclus, Hésychius et alii: patristique et hagiographie grecques: inventaire des manuscrits, textes inédits, traductions, études* (London, 1988). Most recently, see also Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, vol. ii.iii, pp. 50–65.

<sup>158</sup> See Barry Baldwin, ‘Hesychios of Jerusalem’, in *ODB* 2 (1991), 925.

<sup>159</sup> Theophanes has an entry on Hesychius for the year AM 5907, that is, AD 414/415. See Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5907 (AD 414/15) (ed. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographyia*, vol. i (Leipzig, 1883), 83.6–7; tr. Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford, 1997), 129). See also Baldwin, ‘Hesychios’, 925.

<sup>160</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 27.1–2; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

<sup>161</sup> Heyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, 88. For comments on Hesychius’ life, see Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* 16 (ed. Schwartz, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 26.19–20; tr. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, 22).

<sup>162</sup> *CPG* 6550–6596. See the convenient list in Röwekamp, ‘Hesychius von Jerusalem’. See also Marcus Stark, ‘Hesychius von Jerusalem, Scholien zum Propheten Joel’, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 37 (1994), 37–44; Joseph Reuss, ‘Studien zur Lukas-Erklärung des Presbyters Hesychius von Jerusalem’, *Biblica* 59.4 (1978), 562–571; Joseph Reuss, ‘Ein unbekannter Kommentar zum 1. Kapitel des Lukas-Evangeliums’, *Biblica* 58.2 (1977), 224–230.

<sup>163</sup> Jüssen, *Die dogmatischen Anschauungen des Hesychius von Jerusalem*, vol. i, pp. 153–155.

<sup>164</sup> See Baldwin, ‘Hesychios’, 925; and Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. iii, p. 489.

clear.<sup>165</sup> It seems most likely that Hesychius maintained a Christology in line with Cyril of Alexandria, which would have agreed with the anti-Chalcedonians after A.D. 451, but not with the exaggerations of Eutyches.<sup>166</sup> Hesychius also produced historical works.<sup>167</sup> He supposedly composed 'a history of the Council of Chalcedon in four books',<sup>168</sup> and a *Church History*, lost except for the text of one chapter read at the Council of Constantinople in AD 553.<sup>169</sup>

Besides exegetical and historical works, Hesychius is, perhaps, most famous for his homilies.<sup>170</sup> In his function as *didaskalos* at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the immediate vicinity of Peter's monastery near the Tower of David, Hesychius influenced the thinking of the monks, nuns, and lay people, who came to the Holy Sepulchre and heard his sermons and homilies. It is very likely that Peter would have listened to him many times.

Hesychius' important tasks included the delivery of the Easter homily at the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>171</sup> The Easter homily of the first night service begins as follows:

<sup>165</sup> See above, ch. 2, p. 73. See also J. Getcha, 'The Unity of the Mystery of Salvation according to the Festal Homilies of Hesychius of Jerusalem', *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001), 472–476; and Hervé Savon, 'Les "Homélie festales" d'Hésychius de Jérusalem', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 197 (1980), 429–450. Savon emphasizes Hesychius' affinity with 'monophysite' ideas and spirituality.

<sup>166</sup> See also Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. iii, p. 489.

<sup>167</sup> A list of works of Hesychius of Jerusalem is provided in Jean Kirchemeyer, 'Hésychius de Jérusalem (sainte)', in *DSP* 7 (1969), 399–408.

<sup>168</sup> Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, 129.

<sup>169</sup> Baldwin, 'Hesychios', 925 (modified): 'he wrote a *Church History*, lost except for the Latin translation of an anti-Nestorian chapter read at the Council of Constantinople in 553 in denunciation of Theodore of Mopsuestia'. Some doubt that Hesychius ever wrote that *Church History*.

<sup>170</sup> For editions, tools, and studies see Charles Renoux and Charles Mercier, ed. and tr., *Homélie sur Job: version arménienne*, PO 42.1–2 (Turnhout, 1983); Michel Aubineau, *Index verborum Homiliarum Festalium Hesychii Hierosolymitani* (Hildesheim and New York, 1983); Michel van Esbroeck, 'Hesychius de Jérusalem "Sur les coryphées" en version slavonne (CPG 6577)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 48.2 (1982), 371–405; L. Gladyszewski, 'Die Marienhomilien des Hesychius von Jerusalem', *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982), 93–96; Michel Aubineau, 'Textes nouveaux d'Hésychius de Jérusalem: bilan et méthodes', *Studia Patristica* 17.1 (1982), 345–351; Michel Aubineau, '"Hesychius redivivus": un predicateur hierosolymitain de la première moitié du 5<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 28 (1981), 253–270; Savon, 'Les "Homélie festales" d'Hésychius'; Michel Aubineau, *Les homélie festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1978–1980); Robert S. Pittman, 'The Marian Homilies of Hesychius of Jerusalem' (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1974); and Michel Aubineau, *Homélie pascales (cinq homélie inédites)*, SCh 187 (Paris, 1972).

<sup>171</sup> For study of the joy of Easter in the preaching of Hesychius, see also Augustin A. Hevia-Ballina, 'Alegria y Salvación, un esperanzador mensaje de la predicación pasual', *Studia Patristica* 15.1 (1984), 321–327.

Brightly lit is heaven by the choir of the stars, still brighter the earth, when the morning star is rising. Yet this night is enlightened less by the splendour of the stars and more through the joy about the victory of our God and Saviour. Do not worry, he is calling out to us, 'I have conquered the world.' Through this victory of God over the invisible enemy, we very certainly gain the victory over the demons. Let us therefore hold on very closely to the saving Cross, so that we will gain the very first-fruits of the gifts of Jesus!<sup>172</sup>

Then Hesychius addressed the relic of the Cross, around which the members of the congregation had gathered, by saying,

O wood, greatly more worthy than the heaven and surpassing the heights of heaven, o three times blessed wood, which is leading our souls to heaven! O wood, which gains salvation for the world, and which has driven away the demonic army! O wood, which in a moment has carried the Good Thief into Paradise and made him dance with Christ!<sup>173</sup>

These two quotes from Hesychius' preaching suffice to illustrate that the complete attention of the pilgrims to the Holy City and of the pious visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the fifth century was claimed by devotion to the Cross of Christ. On his presumably frequent visits to the Holy Sepulchre for prayer, Peter had abundant opportunity to become imbued with this devotion.<sup>174</sup>

The veneration of the Cross of Christ even had some impact on the annual Christian calendar. In a passing reference in the *Vita Petri Iberi* Rufus stated that in the latter half of the fifth century, towards the end of Peter's life, it had become customary to date events with regard to whether they took place before or after the annual celebration of the feast of the consecration of the Cross.<sup>175</sup> At least in anti-Chalcedonian circles, but probably beyond that, one seemed to have followed this custom.

### *The Importance of Cross-Related Holy Places*

It seems that various pilgrims to the Holy Land conceived of a specific desire for following Christ by carrying his Cross. Pilgrims may have been drawn to this act of piety by the presence of certain holy places in Jerusalem, that were the sites of Christ's crucifixion and death, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and, specifi-

<sup>172</sup> Hesychius of Jerusalem, 'Easter Homilies: First Paschal Homily', 1 (ed. Michel Aubineau, *Homélie Pascales (cinq homélie inédites)*, SCh 187 (Paris, 1972), 62, lines 1-9; my translation).

<sup>173</sup> Hesychius of Jerusalem, 'Easter Homilies: First Paschal Homily', 4 (ed. Michel Aubineau, *Homélie Pascales (cinq homélie inédites)*, SCh 187 (Paris, 1972), 64, para. 4, lines 1-6; my translation).

<sup>174</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27, 40, and 99.

<sup>175</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 123.

cally, the rock of Golgotha. Several passages in the *Vita Petri Iberi* illustrate the phenomenon very well.

When Rufus spoke of Empress Eudocia and her pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he described her as a royal pilgrim from Constantinople who had been inspired by Melania's zeal. Like Melania, Eudocia wished to come to the Holy City and find a peaceful dwelling-place. She wanted 'to be close to and worship in person the saving passions for our sake of Christ, the King of Glory'.<sup>176</sup>

Rufus emphasized that when Peter and John the Eunuch approached Jerusalem on their pilgrimage, the first church they saw from afar was the Church of the Resurrection,<sup>177</sup> which contained the precious relic of the True Cross. Rufus mentioned that the high rooftops of the Church of the Resurrection, or, the *Anastasis*, and of the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives could be seen from a great distance.<sup>178</sup> When Peter and John entered the walls of the Holy City, they first went into the Church of the Resurrection and 'embraced the foot of the venerable Cross . . . the holy Golgotha'.<sup>179</sup> Through their physical contact with the holy place, they were transported into a state of ecstasy, crying out, praising and glorifying God, and rejoicing in their love, as if they had met Jesus in person and were already in heaven with him. Encounter with the site of the Cross is portrayed as the ultimate goal of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The encounter with the Cross, in its turn, apparently paved the way for the encounter with Christ.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Peter was welcomed by Melania and stayed for a while at one of her monasteries on the Mount of Olives.<sup>180</sup> Rufus praised Melania and Pinianus because they 'gird[ed] themselves lovingly with the Cross of Our Lord' and 'came to the Holy City to adore it'.<sup>181</sup> Once they were established in Jerusalem, they wanted to hold on to 'the approved yoke of the crucifixion with Christ'.<sup>182</sup> Both of them worked with their own hands to earn a living: Melania was preparing wool, and Pinianus went into the desert to gather wood and carry it on his shoulders to the market in Jerusalem. Note the symbolism of both occupations. That 'wool' may refer to asceticism was indicated already.<sup>183</sup> When Rufus described Pinianus as 'carry[ing] sticks on his shoulders from the far desert',<sup>184</sup> his ascetic endeavours became a form of 'carrying his cross'.<sup>185</sup>

<sup>176</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 48.

<sup>179</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 27.

<sup>182</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.

<sup>184</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.

<sup>177</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26.

<sup>180</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 29.

<sup>183</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 140 and n. 115.

<sup>178</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 26.

<sup>181</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 28.

<sup>185</sup> The *Vita S. Melaniae Iunioris* does not seem to mention the word *σταυρός* at all, as a check of the Greek index in Gorce, *Vie de Mélanie*, indicates. There are at least

It is interesting to look more closely at what Rufus said about Gerontius taking the monastic habit and Peter's and John the Eunuch's receiving the monastic habit from Gerontius' hands.<sup>186</sup> Gerontius, the later abbot of Melania's monasteries on the Mount of Olives and staunch opponent of Chalcedon had grown up under Melania's and Pinianus' care. Rufus stressed that the couple had provided what was necessary for the support of the young boy Gerontius. When Melania and Pinianus realized that Gerontius was mature enough and worthy to receive the monastic habit, they took him 'to the Holy Sepulchre of Our Saviour',<sup>187</sup> choosing the burial place of Christ for the ceremony of introducing Gerontius into the monastic life. In early Christian literature the pursuit of the ascetic life is not infrequently paralleled to baptism and a life expressive of the baptismal state.<sup>188</sup> Monasticism thus became a kind of 'second baptism'. Paul had already set the tone by explaining baptism as a participation in the death of Christ.<sup>189</sup>

When Melania and Pinianus took Gerontius to Golgotha for his monastic initiation, they first placed the various pieces of cloth that made up the monastic habit on the rock of Christ's tomb. The cloth of the habit touched the rock of the tomb before it touched Gerontius' body. This established a physical point of contact between Christ in his death and the new monk. Melania and Pinianus, who in Rufus' words both represented Christ, then clothed Gerontius with the habit and prayed that he would receive three gifts: orthodox faith, holiness, and tears. The gift of 'orthodox faith' meant 'the anti-Chalcedonian faith' to Rufus, who thus could guarantee that when his hero Peter received the monastic habit from Gerontius, also Peter and subsequently all his disciples, including Rufus himself, were likewise introduced into that orthodox line of monastic tradition,

two possible explanations for why Melania's biographer may have omitted such an aspect of her and Pinianus' spirituality. The anti-Chalcedonian abbot Gerontius, being of Jerusalemite descent and having lived in the Holy City all his life, may have been too familiar with the sites and the impact they could have on people's imagination and spirituality to think of it as necessary to mention it explicitly. However, it is also possible that Rufus himself may have added the motif of the Cross and indicative allusions to his version of the account of Melania's and Pinianus' lives in order to provide a motivating force, an interpretative key for Melania's and Pinianus' pilgrim- and ascetic endeavours. The motif seems to be one that was very dear to Rufus.

<sup>186</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31. See above, ch. 3, pp. 142–145.

<sup>187</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31.

<sup>188</sup> For close associations of baptism with the requirements of ascetic life, see e.g. Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourses 13, 21, 22, and 25 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 105–106, 158, 166–167, and 185–186).

<sup>189</sup> Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27.

namely the anti-Chalcedonian one. The second gift, that of holiness, represented the virtue of perfection for which the zealous monk Peter and his anti-Chalcedonian friends would strive from then on.<sup>190</sup>

The gift of tears in early Christian literature has attracted the attention of several scholars.<sup>191</sup> Tears often functioned as an outward expression of an inner contrition of the monk. Uthemann pointed out that 'in Byz[antine] spirituality, [contrition] is the remorseful heart or the gift of tears, whereby one mourns not only for one's own sins and the sins of the world, but also for the suffering of Christ'.<sup>192</sup> When praying for Gerontius to receive the gift of tears, Melania and Pinianus may also have hoped that Gerontius would be better enabled to 'bear the cross' and weep over Christ crucified. Saying that Gerontius was the one who gave the monastic habit to Peter and John the Eunuch, Rufus implied that both young men were influenced not only by Gerontius' 'orthodoxy', but also by his spirituality. This is all the more likely since Gerontius, once made a priest, moved whole congregations of worshippers to contrition when tears were pouring from his eyes throughout the Eucharistic services.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourse 23 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 173–179) as a whole is entitled, 'On Perfection'. Also the concern for purity is strong in Isaiah's teachings, which influenced both Peter and John Rufus. See, for example, Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, Discourses 5 and 6 (tr. Chryssavgis and Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*, 72 and 78–79).

<sup>191</sup> See, for example, Irénée Hausherr, *Penthos: La doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient chrétien*, OCA 132 (Rome, 1944); M. Lot-Borodine, 'Le mystère du "don des larmes" dans l'Orient chrétien', *La Vie Spirituelle*, suppl. 48 (1936), 65–110. Hausherr, *Penthos*, 65–66, quotes in full the *Vita Petri Iberi* with the example of the gift of tears of Gerontius, as an illustration of the need of prayer for the gift of tears. However, he does not discuss the text. On the 'gift of tears' in the literature of the Desert Fathers, see more recently Barbara Müller, 'Die Tränen der Wüstenväter: Das Penthos in den *Apophthegmata Patrum*', *Ostkirchliche Studien* 46.4 (1997), 281–313. Also see the dissertation by the same author, published as *Der Weg des Weinens: die Tradition des Penthos' in den Apophthegmata Patrum* (Göttingen, 2000). I am grateful to Theresia Hainthaler for having brought this dissertation to my attention.

<sup>192</sup> Karl-Heinz Uthemann, 'Contrition', in *ODB* 1 (1991), 528. The practice of weeping tears over the death of Christ is illustrated well in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Abba Isaac, for example, wished to obtain the gift of being able to weep continuously as Mary did under the Cross (PG 65.357B). Abba John the Dwarf thought it best for a man to 'live by the cross, in warfare, in poverty of spirit, in voluntary spiritual asceticism, in fasting, penitence and tears, in discernment, in purity of soul, taking hold of that which is good' (*Apophthegmata Patrum*, sayings concerning John the Dwarf, 34, tr. Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, 1975), 92).

<sup>193</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 31–32.

One of the messages being communicated to the audience in the scene when Gerontius received the monastic habit was that one who entered into the monastic life imitated very closely the suffering and death of Christ, even to the point of dying to the world. Gerontius' example illustrates well that the presence at the holy place of Christ's Tomb added substantial intensity to that experience.

An archaeological discovery made at the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo suggests that monks saw a connection between their monastic habit and their intentions of carrying Christ's Cross in their lives. A curious ornament attached to a terracotta vase was found below the mosaic floor of the *cella trichora* in the Memorial of Moses.<sup>194</sup> The ornament has the shape of a head of a bearded man. Bagatti identified a hood, signed with a cross, and suggested that the man was a monk, but I only saw the head of a man with a cross signed directly on the forehead.<sup>195</sup> While the identification of the man as a monk has to remain tentative, the location of the find would favour it.<sup>196</sup> Against the background of that surprising find, one may recall that Peter went on a short pilgrimage journey to Moses' sanctuary on Mount Nebo soon after arriving in Jerusalem.<sup>197</sup> There he had a formative encounter with an Egyptian monk who had settled on Mount Nebo after having had to flee from the Maziks' attack on the monks of Scetis.<sup>198</sup> Apparently some time after his return from Mount Nebo, Peter received the monastic habit from Gerontius' hands. Combining that find and Rufus' testimony concerning Peter's activities, one may assume that Peter and his anti-Chalcedonian ascetic followers could have received some of their inspiration

<sup>194</sup> Bagatti, 'Nuova Ceramica', 277, no. 8. See also *Liber Annuus* 35 (1985), table 35, picture 25. Michele Piccirillo, 'The Monastic Presence', in *Mount Nebo: New Archaeological Excavations 1967–1997*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, 1998), 197. The terracotta ornament is depicted in at least four publications. Besides the two just cited, one may also find it in 'Objects from Mount Nebo', in *Mount Nebo: New Archaeological Excavations 1967–1997*, ed. Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, 1998), 548, no. 3 with caption on p. 549, and in Michele Piccirillo, *Mount Nebo*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum: Guide Books 2 (Jerusalem, 1987), 44. I am grateful to Hanswulf Bloedhorn for his kind assistance in locating and finding three of the four publications.

<sup>195</sup> So also Piccirillo, 'The Monastic Presence', 197.

<sup>196</sup> See also Josef Engeman, 'Das Kreuz auf spätantiken Kopfbedeckungen (Cuculla—Diadem—Maphorion)', in *Theologia Crucis—Signum Crucis: Festschrift für Erich Dinkler zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1979), 137–153.

<sup>197</sup> See the discussion above, ch. 3, pp. 181–184.

<sup>198</sup> See above, ch. 4, pp. 306–307 and n. 457.

through the influence of ascetics who came from Egypt, lived on Mount Nebo, and were signed with the Cross.<sup>199</sup>

Rufus set the scene with details recalling John 20. There the apostles Peter and John went to the tomb of Christ in distress and sadness, saw the shroud, and believed. In the *Vita Petri Iberi* another Peter and John went to Golgotha, a place connected with the death of Christ, while one of them, John, was still in sadness and suffering. They came to the rock and witnessed a healing miracle.

Immediately after the story of the relic of the True Cross changing into a dove, Rufus recounted a healing miracle which illustrated the power of Golgotha.<sup>200</sup> A severe skin disease had appeared on John the Eunuch's face, causing great sadness and suffering for both Peter and John, because it distorted John's face and made him feel too ashamed to appear in public. Peter's first reaction at the sight of the disease was sadness. Yet divine aid allowed Peter first to regain his strength and to be 'fervent in spirit and divine fervour',<sup>201</sup> and then enabled him to lead John at night to the Church of the Resurrection and in it to the place of Golgotha. At a quiet and hidden spot to the north of Golgotha both fell on their knees and prayed with bitter tears and sighs.<sup>202</sup> When they drew closer to venerate the rock of Golgotha, John saw something like a hand emerging from the rock. It approached him, wiped his face, and on the following morning his face was free from the disease. Rufus stated explicitly that this healing happened as proof of the divine power of the Cross and to strengthen his hope and that of his audience.<sup>203</sup>

Taken together, these examples show that Jerusalem, as the place of the death of Christ, inspired in visitors a spirituality that focused on the Cross. God's power was perceived as particularly active at Golgotha, the place of Christ's death. For Rufus and his audience, the Cross was not a magical piece of wood, but rather represented the Lord's divine power, which brought about the salvation of humankind. By carrying one's cross and following Christ this resource of divine power became available. The *Vita Petri Iberi* focuses specifically on one motif: the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic as follower of the crucified Christ.

<sup>199</sup> For a useful study of the connections between the cultural, ascetic, and monastic traditions of Egypt and Palestine, see Rubenson, 'The Egyptian Relations'. See also Steppa, *John Rufus*, 24–33, for a discussion of the idea of 'Egypt' as guardian of orthodoxy in the minds of anti-Chalcedonians.

<sup>200</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40.

<sup>201</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 40.

<sup>202</sup> One does wonder if the place had to be a hidden one because John did not want his distorted face to be seen by anyone or whether one encounters here again an element of anti-Chalcedonians having to remain in hiding.

<sup>203</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 41.

## THE IMPACT OF THE CROSS ON ANTI- CHALCEDONIAN ASCETIC SPIRITUALITY

### **The Monk as ‘Bearer of the Cross of Christ’**

In Rufus’ characterization of the young Peter he stated that through education and the good example of his parents Peter became a worthy and useful vessel for the Lord.<sup>204</sup> The good deeds for which Peter was prepared included bearing the name of Christ, preaching the orthodox faith in front of all, and being a disciple and true imitator of the apostles. Peter was enabled to gain many followers for Christ and the Gospel. Rufus also clearly pointed to the Apostle Paul as the one whose words inspired Peter to a life of carrying the cross.

A cross and a pillar are somewhat similar in appearance. Thus, although the title ‘pillar of the orthodox faith’, by which Rufus described Peter, could have its origins in Galatians 2:9 and 1 Timothy 3:15, it still is tempting to see here a connection between ‘pillar’ and at least the vertical beam of the cross.<sup>205</sup> The title ‘pillar of the orthodox faith’ is mentioned very soon after Rufus spoke of Peter as a bearer of the cross.<sup>206</sup>

Rufus saw a connection between the carrying and bearing of the cross and of life in the manner of Christ’s obedience to the Father—an obedience which in the end led the Son to death on the Cross—on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the state of being filled with the Spirit and living a virtuous life. He maintained that through the Cross and through life in accord with the Spirit many could be gained for the right, which meant for him the anti-Chalcedonian faith.

In his perception of the ideal monk, Rufus almost identified the monk and the crucified and resurrected Christ. This is suggested by a vision which Peter once saw in Constantinople. One day, while Peter was advising his followers concerning the proper ascetic lifestyle and

<sup>204</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 14–15.

<sup>205</sup> Although Georgian hagiographical traditions were not necessarily a direct source of inspiration for Rufus’ literary work, it is worth pointing out that in the accounts of St Nino’s missionary activities among the Georgians one finds her miraculously setting up the central physical pillar of the first Christian church building on Georgian soil through her prayers as much as one finds her treasured and loved for having established the Cross over Georgia.

<sup>206</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 13. Thinking boldly one may even wonder whether the pillar of the flagellation, according to tradition preserved in the Church of Zion, could be significant, since Peter’s monastery in the Old City was in relatively close proximity to the Church of Zion.

concerning the question of what was necessary for their salvation, he suddenly had a vision of Christ.<sup>207</sup> The Lord appeared to him wearing the habit of a Nazirite,<sup>208</sup> that is, a monk. According to Rufus, Peter was the only one who saw Jesus. He fell down on his knees and touched Jesus' feet. As a key element Rufus recorded the words Peter spoke to Jesus: 'My Lord and my God'.<sup>209</sup> These were the very same words that the apostle Thomas had addressed to Christ when he saw him after the resurrection. According to John 20:28, Thomas was instructed to put his hand on Christ's side and his fingers into the wounds in Christ's hands. Whether or not he actually did so the text leaves open. What Peter saw was for Rufus comparable to a vision of the resurrected Christ bearing the signs of the crucifixion. Yet now, in addition, Christ was dressed like a monk. By enabling his audience with such allusions to meditate on the respective connections, Rufus ingeniously created the perfect image of what his fellow anti-Chalcedonian monks might achieve.

At the time when Peter had the vision just mentioned, he lived an ascetic life in Constantinople, but was not yet an initiated monk. The vision helped to prepare many of his followers in Constantinople to take up the monastic life as soon as Peter himself took that step. Among those followers, Rufus picked out only three whose names he recorded: 'Theodotus and his brothers Proclus and Sophronius, illustrious in office, architects and stewards of the royal estate.'<sup>210</sup> Theodotus he identified as 'the God-clad monk'.<sup>211</sup>

Rufus reported that at the time when Peter first joined the monastery between Gaza and Maiuma the community there 'was full of monks who were carrying their cross'.<sup>212</sup> According to Rufus, divine providence had sent Peter to that place, because God had chosen him to become the bishop of the Christians of Maiuma. In Rufus' view, Peter was especially suited for the office. Not only was he 'a helper of the fear of God',<sup>213</sup> a preacher, and a 'guardian of the orthodox faith',<sup>214</sup> one who had great freedom with God when interceding for others, but he also was one who, in Paul's words to the Hebrews, would be 'able to suffer for [the people's] weakness, in that he always makes supplication for [them]'.<sup>215</sup>

Peter had become one of the monks in Maiuma who was able to carry the Cross of Christ.<sup>216</sup> Rufus was full of praise of the care, zeal,

<sup>207</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>208</sup> The Syriac has ܢܙܝܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>209</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19.

<sup>210</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 19–20.

<sup>211</sup> See Romans 13:14; Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *Syriac Dictionary*, 235.

<sup>212</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49.

<sup>213</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49.

<sup>214</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 49. 'Orthodox faith' refers to the faith that was in accord with the convictions of anti-Chalcedonians.

<sup>215</sup> See Hebrews 4:15 and 5:7. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 49.

<sup>216</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 53.

and apostolic faith that motivated the new Jerusalemite Bishop Theodosius, whom the monks had installed in the course of their rebellion against Juvenal. When Theodosius began to ordain new bishops for various dioceses, he made his selection from among the holy men who were 'cross-bearing monks'.<sup>217</sup> As such they were certified as being blameless in everything pertaining to evangelical conduct and faith.<sup>218</sup> As a member of the Maiuma monastic community of 'bearers of the cross', Peter could qualify as a candidate.

Occasionally Rufus evoked parallels between events in which anti-Chalcedonian monks were portrayed as bearing their cross, and scriptural scenes connected to Christ's betrayal and death. In the aftermath of Bishop Timothy Aelurus' ordination, the populace in Alexandria and especially the monks in the city, whom Rufus also characterized by the epithet 'cross-bearing',<sup>219</sup> were first full of joy. However, they quickly were made to suffer by Proterius, the rejected bishop, and the leader of the soldiers, the *stratelates* Dionysius. Taking the epithet 'cross-bearing' as interpretative key, a scene of public uproar happening at the time in Alexandria illustrates what it meant for ascetics who held on to the anti-Chalcedonian faith to be 'bearers of the cross'. Rufus described how the soldiers, who were hired by Proterius, forced their way into the church, murdered many lay people and monks, and even took Bishop Timothy captive while he was celebrating the baptismal liturgy, the liturgical event *par excellence* in which the ones to be baptized die sacramentally with Christ.<sup>220</sup> Rufus mentioned money, introduced a crowd of wild soldiers, and said that Bishop Timothy was taken captive 'like a rebel' and imprisoned.<sup>221</sup> The similarity between the scene in Alexandria and Judas' betrayal of Jesus, followed by Jesus' being taken captive by the soldiers and led away to the high priest's house, is striking.<sup>222</sup> That Timothy was imprisoned in Taposiris, once a fortress and Roman military camp, only supports that parallel.<sup>223</sup> Given that the soldiers were committing acts of murder and violence, Rufus stated that the Alexandrian population was 'inflamed by a martyr's zeal'.<sup>224</sup> Regrettably, however, this meant that civil war broke out with blood being shed on both sides.

<sup>217</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 53.

<sup>218</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 53.

<sup>219</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 67.

<sup>220</sup> See Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 222–298.

<sup>221</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 67.

<sup>222</sup> See Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 18.

<sup>223</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 67; Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, bk. 4, ch. 1 (ed. Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 83, p. 117, l. 17; tr. Hamilton and Brooks, *Zachariah Rhetor: Chronicle*, 65). See also Peter Grossmann, 'Abūšīr', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 1 (1991), 34–36.

<sup>224</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 68.

When Peter returned from Egypt to Palestine, he had gained new confidence in his anti-Chalcedonian convictions. He visited Ashkelon first, then the nearby village of Palaea,<sup>225</sup> where his monastic friends received him joyfully. The news of his return spread quickly and people flocked to him from all sides. His main activity was to preach the anti-Chalcedonian faith and convert people. He also selected certain people from his audience and encouraged them to renounce the world and strive for perfection, to distribute their property among the poor, and to 'take up the Cross of Christ [and] cleave to Him alone'.<sup>226</sup> Among the young men whom Peter recruited for such an intense form of *imitatio Christi* were Procopius, an honourable man and a 'man of God',<sup>227</sup> Cyril, called the 'sheep of Christ',<sup>228</sup> and Theodore, the lawyer, who later on would become one of Peter's heirs in the leadership of the Maiuma monastery.<sup>229</sup> When Rufus stated that Peter attracted not only those but also many others, men and women, 'to the army of Christ' and 'urged them to take up the sweet yoke of virginity',<sup>230</sup> he alluded to the Gospel<sup>231</sup> and allowed his audience to see the similarity between the wooden beam of a yoke and that of a cross.

During Peter's times of wandering along the Phoenician coast, when he was in Tripoli getting ready to move on toward the south, he received a vision from God that he should stop in Beirut and recruit young men from among the lawyers-to-be, who were studying in the marketplaces.<sup>232</sup> He should prepare them for the service of God in the anti-Chalcedonian confession of the faith. The language used in the vision stated that these men should become spiritual sacrifices, whole-offerings, and bearers and followers of the cross.<sup>233</sup> In doing this the future lawyers were understood to follow the examples set by Basil [of Caesarea], Gregory,<sup>234</sup> John [Chrysostom?], Arsenius, and others like them.<sup>235</sup>

Wandering again further south from Beirut, Peter stayed for a while in Tyre, where he preached fervently and, according to

<sup>225</sup> See also above, ch. 2, p. 101 and n. 246. <sup>226</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 77.

<sup>227</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 77. <sup>228</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 77-78.

<sup>229</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78. Theodore the lawyer is to be taken as being identical with Theodore of Ashkelon. On Theodore, also see above, ch. 1, p. 34 and n. 111.

<sup>230</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 78. <sup>231</sup> Matthew 11:30.

<sup>232</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 224 and n. 569. <sup>233</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 113.

<sup>234</sup> This could refer to either Gregory of Nyssa or Gregory Nazianzen, or perhaps to both.

<sup>235</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 113. Raabe's footnote describes Arsenius as the teacher of Arcadius, a prince in Constantinople, whose pride and zeal were hurt by Arsenius and who for this reason wanted to kill his teacher Arsenius. Arsenius fled into the Egyptian desert and lived there as a hermit until his death. See also *Apophthegmata Patrum* under the name Arsenius (tr. Ward, *Sayings*, 9-19).

Rufus, gained many for the anti-Chalcedonian confession.<sup>236</sup> In Tyre, certain people were set aflame by Peter's preaching to put on the monastic habit, while others who were already living in orthodox, that is, anti-Chalcedonian monasteries became even more fervent in their faith. To describe these people, Rufus again used the phrase 'bearers of the cross'.<sup>237</sup> These fervent 'bearers of the cross' included both men and women.

A specific and elaborately described example of a female 'bearer of the cross' from Tyre was the young virgin Eugenia.<sup>238</sup> Rufus stated that

she also trod underfoot all high-standing, opulence, glory, splendour of race, and the beauty of [her] body. [These] she shook off like dust. All she had in soul and body she committed to Christ, a spotless bride, a bearer of the cross and an ascetic, and one of the number of those five wise virgins.<sup>239</sup>

'Carrying the cross' was a way of following Christ, a way that was not limited only to ascetics in well-established monasteries. In the *Plerophoriae*, Rufus gave the example of Heliodorus, a shepherd, who left the world in order to live on the highest mountains and in the forests of the Taurus and Cilicia.<sup>240</sup> Heliodorus lived withdrawn from any human contact, surrounded by wild animals. He ate raw food from branches of trees and wild plants, quite similar to the way 'grazers'<sup>241</sup> obtained their nourishment. According to Rufus and the traditions he recounted, Heliodorus wore nothing except his long hair as covering for his body, so that hunters, taking him for a wild animal, tried to catch him with a net. Eventually Heliodorus was placed in a monastery, of which he finally became the abbot. Rufus

<sup>236</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 115.

<sup>237</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 115.

<sup>238</sup> For a discussion of Eugenia's role as a double convert, to anti-Chalcedonian Christianity and to asceticism, see Horn, 'Eugenia, a Fifth-Century Jewish Convert', and more fully developed in Cornelia Horn, 'Anti-Jewish Polemic and Conversion of Jews to Anti-Chalcedonian Asceticism in the Holy Land: The Case of Eugenia of Tyre', *ARAM* (forthcoming). For a study of Eugenia that is especially interested in her Jewish background, see Baruch Rosen, 'משמרת מצור בארץ-ישראל בתהילת' [A Convert from Tyre in the Land of Israel at the Beginning of the Sixth Century AD], *קתדרה* [*Katedrah le-toldot Erets Yisrael ve-Yishuvah*] / *Cathedra* 16 (1991), 54–66.

<sup>239</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 115. The reference to the beauty of her body, which Eugenia despises, shows her as imitating the ascetic example of Peter the Iberian, who likewise had rejected the beauty of his body by casting it in dry skin and bones. See *Vita Petri Iberi* 34.

<sup>240</sup> *Plerophoriae* 31.

<sup>241</sup> Or 'boskoi'. For this phenomenon among ascetics see, for example, Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, vol. ii: *Early Monasticism in Mesopotamia and Syria*, CSCO 197, Subsidia t. 17 (Louvain, 1960), 25–26.

characterized Heliodorus' former wild, independent mountain life as a life of self-denial and as a way of following the cross.<sup>242</sup>

Recounting another episode in the *Plerophoriae* Rufus informed his audience that the Cross of Christ had played an important part in the spirituality of a certain Basil from Antioch who had been instrumental in setting aflame Peter's desire for the monastic life. Leaving the world, Basil embraced the Cross of Christ and attached himself to it. He spent thirty-five years as a hermit in the desert of the Thebaid. Then, led by a divine voice, he settled for twelve years in a cave on the coast in Lycia, living a wild and independent ascetic life. Eventually, Basil too was forced to live in a more organized form of monastic life. In the end he founded two monasteries, one for men and one for women. His life came to Peter's attention, most likely at the time when Basil came to Constantinople to preach against Nestorius, then bishop of Constantinople.<sup>243</sup>

Anti-Chalcedonian lay people were also able to become 'bearers of the cross'. During Peter's sojourn in Ptolemais, modern-day Akko,<sup>244</sup> he stayed for a while with a certain Aaron, who held a respectable position in the community and was financially well-off. Aaron was the supervisor of the salt-mines and focused his attention on the acquisition of wealth and the business of the world.<sup>245</sup> Rufus presented Aaron as an anti-Chalcedonian believer and a loyal friend of anti-Chalcedonians. Based on Rufus, who reported that Peter blessed Aaron 'and his house',<sup>246</sup> it is reasonable to assume that Aaron had a family of his own, holding a position equivalent to that of the *paterfamilias*.<sup>247</sup> Peter's presence in Aaron's house had a

<sup>242</sup> *Plerophoriae* 31. The immediate historical value of this story is somewhat doubtful, since the story is found also in a Coptic source, the anonymous *Life of Aphu* (ed. Francesco Rossi, *Trascrizione di tre manoscritti copti del Museo Egizio di Torino*, Memoriale Accademia Scienze Torino 2.37 (Turin, 1885); partial translation in E. Drioton, 'La discussion d'un moine anthropomorphite audien avec le patriarche Théophile d'Alexandrie en l'année 399', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 2nd ser. 10 (1915), 92–100 and 113–128; Italian tr. in T. Orlandi and A. Campagnano, *Vite di monaci copti*, Collana di Testi Patristici 41 (Rome, 1984), 55–65). I wish to thank Janet Timbie for alerting me to the parallel. On Abba Aphu, see also Tito Orlandi, 'Aphu', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 1 (1991), 154–155. Most recently, Dimitrij Bumazhnov, whose doctoral work focused on Aphu of Pemje, questions whether Aphu can rightly be classified as anthropomorphite. See also Dimitrij Bumazhnov, 'Zur Interpretation der *Vita des seligen Aphu von Pemdje*', in *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition* (Leuven, 2003), 987–993.

<sup>243</sup> *Plerophoriae* 35 and 36.

<sup>244</sup> For references, see above, ch. 4, p. 294, n. 379.

<sup>245</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 119. <sup>246</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 119.

<sup>247</sup> The phrase 'and his house' usually refers first to a man's wife and children, and then also to all other members of the household, including servants and slaves. A few lines later, Rufus indeed mentioned Aaron's children. For a discussion of the

recognizable impact on Aaron. The positive impression he made grew stronger as time passed, and reached a climax when Peter was about to leave. Rufus claimed that Peter's presence filled Aaron's heart with burning love for Christ. This burning love moved Aaron so much that he felt wounded by love.<sup>248</sup> Rufus noted that once Aaron was wounded with such love, he decided to take up the monastic life, and so was 'taking up the Cross of Christ'.<sup>249</sup> For Aaron, carrying the cross meant moving to a monastery of holy men, taking the monastic habit, and from then following other monks on the path of asceticism. For Rufus this path was a blessed one, leading up to heaven.

At least three points in this episode deserve emphasis. First, Rufus saw monasticism as a path that leads to heaven. Secondly, taking the habit was not something which one could choose according to personal preference. Rather, one had to be worthy of it. Most importantly, when choosing this kind of life, the monk-to-be explicitly decided to follow the 'way of the Cross', taking up the cross at the very beginning of the monastic life.

At several places in early Christian literature monastic asceticism was represented as a participation by the monk in the mystery of the Cross.<sup>250</sup> From the fourth century AD onwards the cult of the Cross seemed to have played an increasingly important role in the act of consecration to the monastic life. Initially, making the monastic profession was seen as a 'second baptism' and as a substitute for martyrdom.<sup>251</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the anti-Chalcedonian context of whose writings is widely assumed and who in the eyes of some could be identified with Rufus or even with Peter the Iberian,<sup>252</sup> spoke in his tract *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* of the monastic consecration as a 'mystery'.<sup>253</sup> The change of clothes from secular

concept of *paterfamilias*, see Barry Nicholas and Susan M. Treggiari, 'Patria potestas', in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford and New York, 1996), 1122–1123.

<sup>248</sup> Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer*, 112 n. 1, saw in 'wounded by love' an allusion to Plato's *Convivium* 219a, where Amor's arrow inflicted the wound. A Christian author and audience may have been inclined to see in a scene of visitation and hospitality—including situations of common meals—in which the language of being 'wounded by love' is employed, an allusion to the Last Supper, at which Jesus announced to his disciples his death, the ultimate connection between suffering and love.

<sup>249</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 119.

<sup>250</sup> Olphe-Galliard, 'Croix', 2617–2618, provided valuable pointers for the investigation of this matter.

<sup>251</sup> The classic study on the connection between asceticism and martyrdom is by Edward Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr*. See also above, ch. 5, p. 374.

<sup>252</sup> See above, ch. 3, p. 167 and n. 269.

<sup>253</sup> (Pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 6 (ed. Balthasar Corderius, *S. Dionysii Areopagitae Opera Omnia quae exstant*, PG 3, part 1 (Paris,

attire to monastic habit, which was understood to be equivalent to baptismal immersion as an expression of dying with Christ, brought the one who was to be initiated into the monastic life into very close contact with the mystery of the Cross.<sup>254</sup>

Changing clothes had a double significance. On the one hand, it expressed the poverty of the monk. On the other hand, it signified the identification of the monk with Christ as the one who died and was resurrected. The habit, which was received at the gate of the monastery, was regarded as the symbol of death to the world and the new angelic life which the monk embraced. For Cassian, the linen cloth, from which the habit of the monk was made, was comparable to the shroud in which Christ's body was wrapped. Cassian also believed that Paul's concept of the union of the Christian with the crucified Christ found concrete expression in this symbolic garment.<sup>255</sup>

In his polemic against ecclesiastical powers, namely, against the Chalcedonian bishops, and against doctrinal opponents such as Nestorius, Rufus employed the language of the crucified Christ quite pointedly. In the *Plerophoriae* Rufus recorded how prior to Chalcedon Christ himself appeared in the form of a little child, spoke with Abba Andrew in a vision, and told him that 'the bishops [had] crucified [him] again and . . . [had] decided to steal [his] glory from [him]'.<sup>256</sup> Rufus' attack on the Nestorians included reproaching them for being 'sick with the sickness of the Jews, when they were saying that the one who had been crucified was only and simply a man and in no way the incarnate God'.<sup>257</sup>

To a certain extent the image of the monk, nun, or ascetic in general as a 'bearer of the cross' as Rufus presented it in the *Vita Petri Iberi* and the *Plerophoriae* carried political or polemical overtones. Rufus built upon a tradition that saw the sign of the Cross in connection to the Byzantine emperor.<sup>258</sup> Once Constantine had

1857), here PG 3.533B–C; tr. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, CWS (Mahwah, NJ, 1987), 245–246). Building upon this expression, Casel developed the idea that one is dealing here, if not with a sacrament as such, then at least with a very specific rite that attracted divine grace for the one who submitted to such a consecration. See Odo Casel, 'Die Mönchsweihe', in *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 5 (1925), 1–47, here 3 and 6–9.

<sup>254</sup> Olphe-Galliard, 'Croix', 2617, also mentioned the formula spoken at the consecration as another element. He thought that, perhaps, originally the change of dress was the only act that marked the entry into the monastic state.

<sup>255</sup> John Cassian, *Institutiones* 1.5 (ed. and tr. Jean-Claude Guy, *Jean Cassien: Institutions Cénobitiques*, SCh 109 (Paris, 1965), 44–47; also tr. Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Institutes*, ACW 58 (New York, and Mahwah, NJ, 2000), 24).

<sup>256</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14. <sup>257</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14.

<sup>258</sup> See, for example, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Letter to the Emperor Constantius* (ed. PG 33.1165–1176, especially cols. 1169–1172; critical edition in Ernest Bihain, 'L'épître

conquered his enemies with the help of the sign of the Cross, it became a symbol of the power of the Byzantine Empire. In the course of the fourth century, imperial forces made efforts to connect the Cross to ancient symbols of sovereignty by making the Cross the supreme trophy. The Cross was not only an image affirming the presence of God. Through its depiction in the churches, on the vestments of the clergy, the tombs of the dead, and on public buildings, and in its close connection with imperial insignia, it also proclaimed the presence of the emperor. In the course of time, the Cross became the most 'legitimate of the imperial images and insignia, because it is at the same time a relic and a symbol'.<sup>259</sup> Already 'towards the end of the fourth century it had become the rule to honour at the same time the cross and the emperor with the rite of prostration (*proskynesis*)'.<sup>260</sup> In what sense then would a Byzantine audience have understood the title of 'bearers of the cross' when applied to ascetics? While a Chalcedonian audience may have seen the title, at least in part, as connecting ascetics to the power of the emperor, such an understanding would have seemed objectionable to the anti-Chalcedonian side.

Rufus accepted the idea that Chalcedonian ascetics as well could claim the title of 'bearers of the cross'. They also described themselves and their struggle for orthodoxy with imagery related to Christ's death on the Cross. A rather dramatic vision by Abba Pior recounted in the *Plerophoriae* illustrated this very well. According to Rufus, '[i]n a vision, [Pior] saw an assembly of monks who were carrying a great cross on their shoulders, at both of its ends'.<sup>261</sup> Yet

de Cyrille de Jérusalem à Constance sur la vision de la croix (*BHG*<sup>3</sup> 413): Tradition manuscrite et édition critique', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), 264–296). In this letter, which is to be dated to the beginning of his episcopate (AD 350 or 351), Cyril spoke of the apparition of a shining cross in Jerusalem, which inspired the inhabitants of the Holy City to pray for the emperor. Cyril does not mention the legend of the cross in this letter. For an Armenian version of that letter, see the edition and translation in V. Inglisian, 'Der Brief Kyrills von Jerusalem an Kaiser Konstantius: Untersuchung und Text', *Handes Ansorya* 78 (1964), 289–300 and 449–458; 79 (1965), 1–16 (Armenian). A Syriac version with English translation was published by J. F. Coakley, 'A Syriac Version of the Letter of Cyril of Jerusalem on the Vision of the Cross', *Analecta Bollandiana* 102 (1984), 71–84. See also Alain Ducellier, *L'Église byzantine: Entre Pouvoir et Esprit (313–1204)*, Bibliothèque d'Histoire du Christianisme 21 (Paris, 1990), 60; and G. Röwekamp, 'Cyril of Jerusalem', in *DECL* (2000), 157–158.

<sup>259</sup> Ducellier, *L'Église byzantine*, 60. That '[i]ts wood is the most exceptional treasure of the imperial palace', became obvious in later years when in AD 629 Emperor Heraclius brought back to the Holy City 'the fragments of the True Cross, which the Sassanids had robbed'. Yet the importance of the connection was clear all throughout.

<sup>260</sup> See Ducellier, *L'Église byzantine*, 60.

<sup>261</sup> *Plerophoriae* 50.

the tragedy in this scenario became clear, when Rufus said that ‘they were turning their back against each other, . . . some . . . were pulling hither, some . . . to the opposite side and the ones who were hindering one another were also being hindered by one another’.<sup>262</sup> The vision was ‘indicating the schism, which is at present in the controversy and the fight of the Egyptian and of the Palestinian orthodox monks’;<sup>263</sup> nevertheless, ‘both sides were fighting because of great zeal and accuracy on behalf of the truth’.<sup>264</sup> While apparently every ascetic was called ‘to witness on behalf of Christ and orthodoxy’ through his or her life as a ‘bearer of the cross’, as a result of the schism over the Council of Chalcedon, ascetics following Chalcedon and ascetics opposing it could no longer ‘[be] in communion with one another’.<sup>265</sup>

When anti-Chalcedonian monks were in the minority in Palestine, Rufus inspired them with the encouraging example of Egyptian ascetics as ideal ‘bearers of the cross’. Rufus had recourse to the biblical model of Simon of Cyrene. In the *Plerophoriae* Abba Andrew saw in a vision Bishop Dioscorus, the hero of anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt.<sup>266</sup> The Christ-child himself testified that only Dioscorus had not participated in the bishops’ evils at Chalcedon. Moreover, Christ guaranteed that ‘[s]ince Simon of Cyrene has carried my Cross—and Cyrene is in a part of Egypt<sup>267</sup>—since then have I foreseen and foretold that Egypt, of which [the city of] Cyrene, situated in Libya,

<sup>262</sup> *Plerophoriae* 50.

<sup>263</sup> What different factions of ‘orthodox’ monks the author had in mind here is difficult to determine. Neither can it be excluded that Rufus may have thought of instances of internal strife among different factions of anti-Chalcedonian monks. In such a case, the present passage would not provide evidence for his reconciliatory spirit towards Chalcedonians, a spirit which here is understood to display itself by allowing for the possibility that also Chalcedonians could be ‘bearers of the cross.’

<sup>264</sup> *Plerophoriae* 50. <sup>265</sup> *Plerophoriae* 50.

<sup>266</sup> Appreciation of Dioscorus manifested itself in a variety of ways, including the composition of a *Vita Dioscori*, which is preserved completely only in Syriac. See F. N. Nau, ‘Histoire de Dioscore, patriarche d’Alexandrie, écrite par son disciple Théopiste’, *Journal Asiatique* ser. 10, no. 1 (1903), 5–108 and 241–310. This Syriac *Life of Dioscorus* shows traces of the influence of Rufus’ *Plerophoriae*, while the Coptic seems to be derived from the Greek original. I am grateful to Christian Lange (Bamberg) for discussing aspects of the Syriac *Life of Dioscorus* with me. On Dioscorus, see also N. Charlier, ‘Dioscore I<sup>er</sup>, patriarche d’Alexandrie’, in *DHGE* 14 (1960), 508–514; Martiniano P. Roncaglia, ‘Dioscorus I’, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 3 (1991), 912–915; and Peter Bruns, ‘Dioscorus of Alexandria’, in *DECL* (2000), 183.

<sup>267</sup> More precisely, Cyrene is located in modern-day Libya, but was under Alexandria’s jurisdiction.

is a part, will carry my cross until the end, will attach itself to me, and sign its zeal for me unto death.<sup>268</sup>

### The Cross as the Sign of Identification at the Second Coming of the Lord

From an anti-Chalcedonian perspective, the Council of Chalcedon was the pinnacle of evil and offence against God. On many earlier occasions, in Rufus' view, God had unleashed his wrath on the transgressors in signs such as a rain of objects, similar to hailstones, over all the Holy Land, causing blindness for all who applied those objects to their eyes.<sup>269</sup> In view of such cases, Rufus acquainted his audience with the signs preceding the end of the world and the Lord's Second Coming.

Yet for Rufus, the Second Coming of the Lord could also be seen as a beautiful and awesome event. In recounting a vision that had lasted three days and towards the end of his life confirmed John the Eunuch as a gifted visionary,<sup>270</sup> Rufus paraded the heavenly host in front of the eyes of his audience in the imagery of the Second Coming. Rufus attested that

the blessed John . . . was seeing the fearful and glorious Second Coming of Our Lord, the heavens suddenly being opened (Rev. 4:1, Mark 1:10, Acts 7:56, Ezek. 1:1), and the horns summoning (Rev. 4:1), the quakings of the earth (Joel 2:10), the transformation of the elements (Joel 2:10), that is, the transfiguration, everything full of light and the perturbation of confusion and trembling and commotion, angels immediately preceding and the first orders of the heavenly hosts, angels, archangels, powers, dominions, glories (Rom. 8:38, Eph. 6:12, Col. 1:16); the orders of the holy apostles (see 1 Cor. 15:3–8), the prophets, the martyrs, [and] the righteous; cherubim, seraphim, and after all of them the worshipful and saving sign of the Cross of the Lord;<sup>271</sup> and the Lord Himself, Saviour and Christ, raised up and coming with the Father's glory (Rom. 6:4) and ineffable power; thrones prepared (Rev. 20:4), and the divine and fearful tribunal, which from of old and many times was preached to us beforehand as a testimony (1 Cor. 2:1) through the holy prophets and by the Judge and Saviour Himself.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>268</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14. Although all four Gospels attest to Simon of Cyrene's forced act of mercy (see Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26, and John 19:17), no author among the Church Fathers seems to have attended to this motif at any great length. It may well be that Rufus is the only one who made appropriate use of the example of Simon of Cyrene as one bearing the cross.

<sup>269</sup> *Plerophoriae* 10. The text is not very clear. The objects that are rained down seem to have been similar in shape to stones, and are described as resembling items that were manufactured regularly.

<sup>270</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 43.

<sup>271</sup> The Syriac here uses the adjective ܠܘܘܢܐܘܢܐ.

<sup>272</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 42–43.

In this tumultuous scene of the end-times, clear order is provided by ‘the worshipful and saving sign of the Cross of the Lord’, which separated the created realm and the divine realm and functioned as the means of identification for Christ. Significant for Rufus, of course, was the fact that John the Eunuch saw all this happening while only one altar remained on the earth, one which was ‘in everything like the one which still to this moment we keep, at which both of them [that is, Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch] were serving’.<sup>273</sup> In the vision, the holy monks surrounding the altar, that is, anti-Chalcedonian monks who were Peter’s followers, were snatched away to their encounter with Christ. They would then meet face to face with Christ and the Cross, which they were trying to bear throughout their life and, in particular, by their defence of the orthodox, that is, the anti-Chalcedonian faith.

### Allusions to Christ’s Suffering on His Way to the Cross

When reading and rereading Rufus’ texts, and thus experiencing the same repeated renditions of Peter’s *Vita* as the monks in his monastery in Maiuma did, one develops a certain sensitivity for Rufus’ language and choice of imagery. His special interest in themes derived from the biblical accounts of Christ’s passion and death is apparent. At several instances in his works one can see him make direct or indirect allusions to episodes from Christ’s condemnation and crucifixion.

Early on in the process of the construction of Peter’s monastery in the Holy City, tensions arose between Peter and John as monks, on the one hand, and a well-known Jerusalem cleric, their neighbour, on the other hand.<sup>274</sup> As the dispute between the two parties became worse, that neighbour, as Rufus said, ‘mightily struck the blessed one [namely, John] upon his cheek, being like the servant of Caiaphas’.<sup>275</sup> Implicitly, Rufus compared John the Eunuch to Jesus. Although Jesus had defended himself at least verbally against one of the guards of the high priest who had hit him,<sup>276</sup> John the Eunuch did not say anything to the neighbour; instead he turned to Peter and reported to him. Peter and John ‘knelt down and praised Our Lord with thanksgiving that He had deigned them worthy of participation in His blows’,<sup>277</sup> thus explicitly identifying themselves with Christ’s

<sup>273</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 43.

<sup>274</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

<sup>275</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45. See Matthew 26:67–68, Mark 14:65, Luke 22:64, and John 18:22.

<sup>276</sup> See John 18:23.

<sup>277</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 45.

sufferings at the hands of the servant of the high priest.<sup>278</sup> That this was not a position of weakness became clear from the fact that on the next morning the cleric was dead, struck down, as Rufus suggested, by ‘God the Judge’.<sup>279</sup>

Rufus used imagery related to Christ’s passion in polemical contexts to heighten either the negative or the positive side. Noteworthy on the negative side are occasions in which Rufus spoke of those who were responsible for what he thought was the heinous crime of Chalcedon. In polemical fashion he compared Chalcedonian arch-enemies, such as Juvenal or Proterius, to biblical enemies of Christ, such as Judas or Caiaphas.<sup>280</sup> Very effectively, however, he also used imagery related to Christ’s death to elevate anti-Chalcedonian heroes. Rufus reported that when a serious disturbance had broken out at the Kaisarion in Alexandria and the crowds, demanding Proterius’ death, were themselves threatened and attacked by imperial soldiers, Peter celebrated the liturgy and ‘in [a state of] amazement, he saw many souls who were led by angels and were being raised up to heaven’.<sup>281</sup> It turned out that the number of the dead in the stadium and the number of souls Peter saw were the same. Alluding to the Good Thief who was crucified at the right side of Christ, Rufus explained that

[i]n the likeness of that thief to whom the blessing was granted (Luke 23:40–43), in that moment those 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.<sup>282</sup>

The whole of the preceding presentation of Rufus’ use of themes relating to the Cross has shown that it was a motive he perceived to be central to Peter’s life and career. The last few examples demonstrated the direct relationship of Peter’s experience to scenes taken from the passion narratives in the Gospels and to situations at the end of one’s life or at the end of the world. These examples also show that Rufus’ world of thought and usage of the Cross fit in well with Abba Isaiah’s and Philoxenus of Mabbugh’s teaching on the spirituality of the Cross as a sign of a monk reaching the final stages of perfection. For a monk and spiritual leader like Peter, relating to and even identifying with Christ as the crucified One could become an effective form of giving witness in a situation of persecution. For the biographer of such a monk and spiritual leader, that relationship between the story’s hero

<sup>278</sup> See John 18:22.

<sup>279</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 46.

<sup>280</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 52 and 58.

<sup>281</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 59.

<sup>282</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 59.

and the crucified One could become a powerful symbol to be used to rally anti-Chalcedonian followers to the common cause of resisting outside oppressors. In the larger context of anti-Chalcedonian history in Syria-Palestine in the fifth and sixth centuries, siding with the crucified One became significant in a historically graspable and explicit way in what is known as the *Trisagion* Controversy, and slightly later in the so-called Theopaschite Controversy. While it is neither desirable nor possible to discuss the details of those controversies in detail here, the following remarks will locate Peter's and Rufus' taking cognizance of and contributing to those controversies, especially that over the *trisagion*. A study of both of those controversies that is sensitive to the dimensions of anti-Chalcedonian spirituality and experience is much needed.<sup>283</sup>

### THEOLOGICAL REPERCUSSIONS: THE *TRISAGION* CONTROVERSY

Philoxenus, 'truly a theologian of the Incarnation',<sup>284</sup> had a good sense of how the reality of Christ's suffering and passion supported the belief that his death on the Cross was that of a man, who was the human being in whom the Word had come to be. In his *Commentary on the Prologue of John*, for example, Philoxenus said:

In the way of confirming the fact that when [the Word] came to be he did not change, [the Fathers] have employed by way of proof this word which the same divine Paul has said: 'The Christ has freed us from the curse of the Law by becoming for us a curse.' The curse which Christ came to be is well-known to be this: the pain of the Cross which he received for us and the passions and the death and all the tribulation which he underwent according to the flesh because of us. These things he did not only take upon himself because of us but he also came to be in them. Because it is in truth and in actuality that he was crucified and suffered and died.<sup>285</sup>

This quote illustrates that the confession of Christ as the crucified One was a key issue in the Chalcedonian /anti-Chalcedonian controversy becoming manifest in particular in the so-called *Trisagion* Controversy.

<sup>283</sup> I plan to address this issue in future work.

<sup>284</sup> Hallmann, 'Divine Suffering', 179.

<sup>285</sup> Philoxenus of Mabbugh, *Commentary on the Prologue to the Gospel of John* (ed. André de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog, Commentaire du prologue johannique* (Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14, 534), CSCO 380-381, Script. Syr., tt. 165-166 (Louvain, 1977), 60 (Syriac) and 59 (French)).

*Trisagion* (τρισάγιον), literally meaning ‘thrice-holy’, is the name given to the liturgical acclamation Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, ἅγιος Ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος Ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, or, ‘Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us’, which is based on the biblical *Sanctus* (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8)<sup>286</sup> and which is used at different places in the services in the liturgies in the East and, although less frequently, also in the West.<sup>287</sup> It was sung in the *Anaphora*, that is, at the beginning of the Eucharist proper, in all services in the East.<sup>288</sup>

Between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, the origins of the *Trisagion* as well as the proper interpretation of its referent were highly disputed.<sup>289</sup> The records of the Council of Chalcedon attest to its use as acclamation by the bishops from the region of Antioch.<sup>290</sup> At Chalcedon it seemed to have been employed in reaction against attempts to mix the natures of Christ, that is, against perceived ‘Monophysite’ tendencies.<sup>291</sup> Anti-Chalcedonians, especially Severus of Antioch, claimed that the *Trisagion* originated in Antioch.<sup>292</sup> The Chalcedonian side spread and often repeated the legend that the *Trisagion* could be traced back to the example set by angels in heaven and revealed in a vision at the time of Bishop Proclus of

<sup>286</sup> For a study of the use of the *Sanctus* in the liturgy of the eastern Christian churches primarily see recently Gabriele Winkler, *Das Sanctus: Über den Ursprung und die Anfänge des Sanctus und sein Fortwirken*, OCA 267 (Rome, 2002).

<sup>287</sup> For a recent study of the *Trisagion* from a comparative liturgical perspective, see Sebastia Janeras, ‘Le Trisagion: Une formule brève en liturgie comparée’, in *Acts of the International Congress ‘Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1949)’ Rome, 25–29 September 1998*, ed. by Robert F. Taft and Gabriele Winkler, OCA 265 (Rome, 2001), 495–562. In the Latin rite it is used at the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, in the oriental rites before or between the readings and regularly in the course of the Liturgy of the Hours. See H.-J. Schulz, ‘Trishagion’, in *LThK* 10 (1965), 365. See also H. Leclercq, ‘Trisagion’, in *DACL* 15.2 (1953), 2797–2798. See also Peter Plank, ‘Trishagion’, in *LThK* 10 (1993), 262–263; and Peter Plank, ‘Das Trishagion: Gotteslob der Engel und Zankapfel der Menschen’, *Kirche im Osten* 35 (1992), 111–126.

<sup>288</sup> See R. F. Taft, ‘Trisagion’, in *ODB* 3 (1991), 2121. According to Taft, the *Trisagion* is attested to ‘as a processional chant . . . in 438/9’. It became ‘a frequently used processional *troparion* in Constantinople’, and ‘by the 6th C. it had become a permanent part of the service’.

<sup>289</sup> Taft, ‘Trisagion’, 2121.

<sup>290</sup> Council of Chalcedon, Actio I (ed. Schwartz, *ACO* ii.i, p. 195, l. 30); see also Schulz, ‘Trishagion’, 365; and Taft, ‘Trisagion’, 2121.

<sup>291</sup> Schulz, ‘Trishagion’, 365.

<sup>292</sup> Severus of Antioch, *Cathedral Homilies*, Homily 125 (ed. Maurice Brière, *Les ‘Homiliae Cathedralae’ de Sévère d’Antioche; Traduction Syriaque de Jacques d’Édessa (Homélies CXX à CXXV)*, PO 29.1 (Paris, 1932), here 246–247).

Constantinople (AD 434–446).<sup>293</sup> For them, Proclus coined the famous theopaschite formula *Unus e trinitate passus*,<sup>294</sup> even if the exact formulation cannot be traced in his works. Yet whether he indeed was the one who introduced the *Trisagion* into the liturgy with such a formulation is contested.<sup>295</sup> Medieval Syriac-speaking theologians and commentators on the liturgy like Moses bar Kepha and Dionysios of Amida dated that vision back to the time of Christ's burial.<sup>296</sup>

The dispute concerning the proper interpretation of the *Trisagion* depended on whether it was understood as addressed simply to God or to the Trinity. The anti-Chalcedonian side applied the troparion to Christ alone. Peter the Fuller's addition of the words *ὁ σταυρωθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς*, or, 'who was crucified for us', which he inserted into the troparion after the word *ἀθάνατος*, or, 'immortal one', between AD 468 and 470,<sup>297</sup> found greatest support in anti-Chalcedonian circles, almost developing into a distinguishing characteristic.<sup>298</sup> In the manner of the best of Old Syriac poetry, Isaac of Antioch would later on even write a fine *memrā* on the parrot that had learned to sing the *Trisagion* according to Peter the Fuller's

<sup>293</sup> Schulz, 'Trishagion', 365; Taft, 'Trisagion', 2121; see Brian Croke, 'Two Early Byzantine Earthquakes and Their Liturgical Commemoration', *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 122–147, here 127–131; and Marcel Richard, 'Proclus de Constantinople et le théopaschisme', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 38 (1942), 303–331 (reprinted in Marcel Richard, *Opera minora*, vol. ii (Turnhout, 1977), no. 52).

<sup>294</sup> Proclus of Constantinople, *Epistula Quarta ad Iohannem Antiochenum* (ed. PG 65:876–877): *Dicentes autem iterum passibilem Deum, id est, Christum, confitemur eum non esse possum eo quod est, sed eo quod factum est, id est, propria carne. Et ita praedicantes nullo modo fallimur: quoniam quidem et unum ex Trinitate secundum carnem crucifixum fatemur, et divinitatem passibilem minime blasphemamus.* See also his discussions in his famous *Tomus ad Armenos* (ed. PG 65:855–874; also ed. Eduard Schwartz, *Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum sub Iustiniano habitum*, ACO iv.ii, pp. 187–195). For an analysis of the Syriac translations of the *Tomus ad Armenos*, see Lucas van Rompay, 'Proclus of Constantinople's 'Tomus ad Armenos' in the post-Chalcedonian Tradition', in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 18 (Leuven, 1985), 425–449.

<sup>295</sup> Beate Regina Suchla, 'Proclus of Constantinople', in *DECL* (2000), 500–501, here 500.

<sup>296</sup> Schulz, 'Trishagion', 365.

<sup>297</sup> Schulz, 'Trishagion', 365; and Taft, 'Trisagion', 2121.

<sup>298</sup> See *CIG* iv. 8918, for 'an inscription found near Antioch' containing Peter the Fuller's formula in its Christological application. See also Taft, 'Trisagion', 2121; and V.-S. Janeras, 'Les byzantins et le trisagion christologique', in *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di sua eminenza il Cardinale Giacomo Lercaro*, vol. ii (Rome, 1967), 469–499.

addition.<sup>299</sup> Yet Chalcedonian theologians, applying the *Trisagion* to the Trinity, rejected the insertion as heretical.<sup>300</sup>

Peter the Fuller, Severus of Antioch, and Philoxenus of Mabbugh were all significant anti-Chalcedonian participants in the *Trisagion* Controversy.<sup>301</sup> Many of the earlier spiritual and ascetical roots of the controversy remain to be located. Some may be discernible in the self-understanding and experiences of Peter the Iberian and his disciples, which may have provided inspiration for the formulation ‘who was crucified for us’. Likewise, Rufus’ attempts to strengthen the anti-Chalcedonian position that emphasized the view of Christ as the crucified One need to be given appropriate attention.

In a key passage in the *Vita Petri Iberi*, Rufus characterized Peter’s pilgrimage path to the Holy Land as one that was guided and sustained miraculously by ‘the grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, who rejoices and exults in the power of the Cross’, and as one on which the two ‘saints [namely, Peter and John the Eunuch] set out to carry [the Cross]’.<sup>302</sup> With a programmatic emphasis, and thus an identification of Christ as the crucified One, Rufus proclaimed that Peter and John ‘cheerfully cleaved to the God who was crucified’.<sup>303</sup>

<sup>299</sup> Isaac of Antioch’s *memrā* on the parrot was first edited by Gustav Bickell, *S. Isaaci Antiocheni doctoris Syrorum Opera Omnia*, vol. i (Giessen, 1873), 84–174. It was edited also by P. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci Syri Antiocheni* (Paris and Leipzig, 1903), 737–788. For a study of the poem, which analyses the structure of the text and sets it in its historical and spiritual context, see Michel van Esbroeck, ‘The Memra on the Parrot by Isaac of Antioch’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 47 (1996), 464–476. For a recent index to Isaac’s works, see Edward G. Mathews Jr., ‘The Works Attributed to Isaac of Antioch: A[nother] Preliminary Checklist’, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 6.1 (2003) (<http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol6No1/HV6N1Mathews.html>).

<sup>300</sup> Schulz, ‘Trishagion’, 365. Taft, ‘Trisagion’, 2121, notes that the Byzantine tradition as expressed in the ‘Prayer of the Trisagion’ could also interpret the *Trisagion* ‘as addressed simply to God without distinguishing the persons’.

<sup>301</sup> See, for example, chapters 1, 4, and 5 in Edith Klum-Böhmer, *Das Trishagion als Versöhnungsformel der Christenheit: Kontroverstheologie im V. und VI. Jahrhundert* (Munich and Vienna, 1979). See also Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Severi* 114–115 (ed. Kugener, ‘Vie de Sévère par Zacharie le Scholastique’, 114–115).

<sup>302</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24.

<sup>303</sup> *Vita Petri Iberi* 24. Early Christian spirituality was capable of responding to the perception of Christ’s dying on the Cross in two seemingly opposed ways. In contrast to the cheerful response, one that gained strength and encouragement from the knowledge of Christ’s salvific death for mankind, as Rufus speaks of it here, some ascetics found reason to weep in sorrow with Christ, most likely over the injustice done to him as a victim put to death without guilt. See, for example, *Apophthegmata Patrum*, sayings concerning Poemen, 144: ‘Abba Joseph related that Abba Isaac said, “I was sitting with Abba Poemen one day and I saw him in ecstasy and I was on terms of great freedom of speech with him, I prostrated myself before him and begged him, saying, “Tell me where you were.” He was forced to answer and said, “My thought was with Saint Mary, the Mother of God, as she wept

Peter had every reason to trust in Christ, the crucified God, without any hesitation. Already during his childhood years in Constantinople, while he ‘was living in the way of an ascetic’, he had pondered various questions about the mystery of the Trinity and had received an illuminating answer in the form of a vision.<sup>304</sup> In three identical wheels of light Peter saw the Father, the Son, that is, Christ ‘our Lord [who] was being depicted [as] a Nazarene’,<sup>305</sup> and the Holy Spirit. In his explanation to Rufus, Peter stated specifically that ‘while the three are unapproachable, only that one in the middle is like to one who has the look of a Nazarene man, in order to demonstrate that this one who was crucified is one of the holy Trinity and not another one’.<sup>306</sup> In another episode in the *Plerophoriae*, Rufus attacked the bishops responsible for the decisions of Chalcedon by way of presenting Christ as accusing the bishops of crucifying him again, and as ‘saying that the one who has been crucified, was only and simply a man, and in no way the incarnate God’.<sup>307</sup>

In order to underline the decisiveness for final salvation or condemnation of properly confessing Christ as the crucified One, Rufus recounted the experience of an anti-Chalcedonian woman from Pamphylia.<sup>308</sup> When she saw herself in a vision approaching God’s throne of judgement, the two decisive questions she was asked were meant to reveal whether or not she (a) was a Nestorian, and (b) acknowledged Christ’s suffering and death for mankind as that of the Son of God. Specifically, the question addressed to her was, ‘Do you confess that the Son of God has been crucified and has suffered for us?’<sup>309</sup> It is clear that such a question was significant for anti-Chalcedonians in the context of the controversy over Peter the Fuller’s addition to the *Trisagion*. In reporting the woman’s vision and assuring his audience that only ‘after having made this [double] confession [was she] . . . received and . . . [did] she obtain[.] for her part a good welcome [in heaven],’<sup>310</sup> Rufus tried to persuade his audience that only the one who sided with anti-Chalcedonians in the *Trisagion* Controversy and thus only the one who confessed as God the ‘One who was crucified for us’ could hope to find in God a merciful judge and eternal salvation.

by the cross of the Saviour. I wish I could always weep like that ’’’ (tr. Ward, *Sayings*, 187). See also Bousset, *Apophthegmata*, 86.

<sup>304</sup> *Plerophoriae* 37. <sup>305</sup> *Plerophoriae* 37.

<sup>306</sup> *Plerophoriae* 37. See also above, ch. 3, p. 192. <sup>307</sup> *Plerophoriae* 14.

<sup>308</sup> *Plerophoriae* 80. See Horn, ‘Towards a Feminist Ecumenical Reconstruction’.

<sup>309</sup> *Plerophoriae* 81. <sup>310</sup> *Plerophoriae* 81.

## Conclusions

This study used as primary sources the *Vita Petri Iberi* (extant in Syriac, translated into German), the *Plerophoriae* (extant in Syriac, translated into French), and the *De obitu Theodosii* (extant in Syriac, translated into Latin), all of which can reasonably be ascribed to John Rufus, the anti-Chalcedonian biographer and likely successor of Peter the Iberian. This study made these sources the focus of enquiry and subjected them to in-depth examination. In the course of the work, these ancient sources were translated afresh from Syriac into English. The separate publication of these English translations, to appear under different covers, will make available the complete body of John Rufus' works to a wider modern-day audience. Difficulties that had to be kept in mind in the course of the study consisted in the fact that the Syriac versions are translations from texts that originally had been composed in Greek. Thus the available text increases the distance by yet another step between what really happened and what is accessible to the researcher. Yet those hindrances had to be overcome, given that these sources are as far as we know the core material for the study of the beginning and early history of anti-Chalcedonian asceticism in Palestine as seen from an authentic and contemporary anti-Chalcedonian perspective.

Based on these texts as well as on supplementary literary, historical, and archaeological sources, this book explored new territory mainly in so far as it brought into focus the figure of Peter the Iberian, a figure that until recently had been thoroughly neglected. Certainly no attempt was made to deny to systematic theological reflection its share of input in the development of the Christological controversies. Yet in the end the significance of that contribution of theology has to remain open for debate, at least in the setting of early Byzantine Palestine. Given that theological discussions played an important role in the theological controversies in the fourth century, for example, in disputes with Christians who were identified as Arians, it is astonishing to note how little philosophical and systematic theological discussion was to be detected in the works about ascetics

who were the key activists in the fight against Chalcedon in Palestine in the fifth and early sixth centuries. Rufus' presentation of Peter's career is not confined and not even primarily determined by the characteristics of dogmatic disputes.

Peter played a pivotal role at the very centre of the resistance of the Palestinian ascetic community against Juvenal of Jerusalem, and with him against the definitions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon. Yet in his discussion of Peter, Rufus did not witness to Peter's engagement in independent detailed theological refutations of Chalcedon. The discussion of dogmatic formulations is not prominent in the sources. One could assume therefore that while the credal statement as such was important for Peter and his anti-Chalcedonian followers, the theological rationale was, at the most, of subordinate importance.

As shown in the course of this study, the concerns of Peter and his followers, as presented through Rufus' lens, were not to engage in a thorough discussion of theology based on hermeneutical or philosophical categories to apologize for and to defend themselves and to prove all else was heresy. Rather, according to Rufus their aim was to live out their belief in their own life, no matter what forms of hardships that would require. More extreme forms of commitment such as strict ascetic practices and lifelong pilgrimage were easily and willingly embraced. One fruit of this practice which Rufus clearly emphasized, the phenomenon of visions, only enhanced the anti-Chalcedonians' sense of divine justification of their cause. They strengthened anti-Chalcedonians when they had to suffer for the sake of holding on to their chosen confession. The identification of the key tenets of that Christian confession, as expressed by ascetics, was an important factor at a time when the ascetic and the monk as heirs of the martyr were seen as the examples of the highest form of Christian life. In short, the vision becomes the manifestation of holiness that asceticism confers corresponding to the blood and death of martyrdom.

Probably not different from any of the other pilgrims who came to the Holy Land, anti-Chalcedonians had to come to grips with the fascination Palestine exerted on Christians by virtue of its unique character as being the 'holy place' *par excellence*. Their relationship to this 'holy space' shaped anti-Chalcedonian activities. The possession of 'holy space' came to be an object of contention not only between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, but also among anti-Chalcedonians themselves who had to find a way of dealing with their self-imposed withdrawal from access to that 'holy space'. Redefining spatial boundaries in accord with the concrete requirements of their given situation and thereby redefining the dependence of ascetic authority on 'place' and 'holy space' eventually set

anti-Chalcedonians free to claim space for themselves and for their right to existence in new ways. In this process of redefinition of sacred space, anti-Chalcedonians also availed themselves of the potential of the recognized and valued ascetic to determine the concrete location of 'holy space'. Anti-Chalcedonians freely employed asceticism as a hermeneutical tool in the service of their needs and purposes. The influence of their setting in the land of the Bible and thus in the midst of a milieu of Jewish influence perhaps inspired Rufus to develop models of the ascetic life, for example, that of the Nazirite, more fully than other historians of asceticism had done. As evidenced in the material studied in this book, the experience of pilgrimage as a constant 'being on the move' appropriate for a follower of Christ also empowered anti-Chalcedonians to respond creatively to the situations of repression they experienced. Ascetic authority enabled them to carry through with that response.

One cannot avoid the impression that these early anti-Chalcedonian ascetics in Palestine lived and behaved the way they did precisely because they were in Palestine. This impression is borne out not only by characteristics of the ascetic life which anti-Chalcedonians developed. Palestine was both the 'Holy Land' as such and also the site of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. A spirituality of identifying with the suffering and crucified Christ, to which anti-Chalcedonians certainly did not have an exclusive claim, nevertheless could function for them also as an emblem of their concrete situation. The more detailed elaboration of theological reflections on the impact which this spirituality had on Christological thought appears to have been left to slightly later anti-Chalcedonian theologians who had come in touch with anti-Chalcedonians in or from Palestine, like, for example, Severus of Antioch and possibly also Philoxenus of Mabbugh. A further study of the connection between the lived experience of early anti-Chalcedonians in Palestine and how their experience was reflected in later theological writing in the movement would be of interest.

On the question of ethnicity as a motivating factor in the earliest phases of the anti-Chalcedonian movement, this study showed that, in the Palestinian context, at least in its beginning phases, the anti-Chalcedonian position did not coincide with any noticeable emphasis on ethnic identity or with a request for conformity based on any shared ethnic identification. Rather, what constituted the inner links in the anti-Chalcedonian community were bonds of shared experiences of practical piety, like pilgrimage and veneration of holy places, convictions concerning the validity of miraculous and visionary experiences, and adherence to persons of a high ascetical profile with clearly recognized, outstanding ascetical achievements.

All of this implies that while the credal statement was important and carried considerable weight, theological positions were held on the basis of a shared lifestyle, a shared mindset, and a shared approach to the devotional and spiritual life. Given the testimony of the sources studied here, these factors backed up the choice of doctrinal formulation and adherence, probably more so than the proper theological penetration of such formulations and their implications. The practical spirituality of the anti-Chalcedonian ascetic as a 'bearer of the cross' seems to have had concrete implications for doctrinal matters in the *Trisagion* Controversy. Further research should investigate the precise connection between the rising anti-Chalcedonian movement and the Theopaschite Controversy in the middle of the sixth century.

Beyond theological motivations, the early anti-Chalcedonian movement in Palestine and to a certain extent also in Egypt, in so far as ascetics from Palestine were involved there, was influenced by practical and spiritual concerns that shaped and encompassed theological thinking. John Rufus as the biographer and historiographer of the early Palestinian anti-Chalcedonian movement also pursued polemical and political goals. Primarily, however, he seems to have composed his literary portrait of Peter the Iberian in order to show to his fellow anti-Chalcedonian monks who had come to the Holy Land that and how asceticism and the preservation of the ascetic line of heritage not only preserved, but advanced the anti-Chalcedonian cause and identity.

## APPENDIX

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# Chronology of People, Events, and Circumstances Mentioned

c.300–311	Peter of Alexandria
c.306–373	Ephraem the Syrian
330	Emperor Constantine the Great founds the university in Constantinople
335	Pope Silvester
c.345–410	Rufinus of Aquileia
347–351	Cyril of Jerusalem preaches <i>Catechetical Homilies</i>
c.351–386	Episcopacy of Cyril of Jerusalem
c.360–390	1st Council of Laodicea
361/2–440	Lifetime of Mesrop Mashtots', the inventor of the Armenian and Georgian alphabet and script
c.370–440	Lifetime of Isidore of Pelusium
382	Birth of Melania the Younger
384	Constantine finishes construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem
c.395	Birth of Abba Gerontius of Jerusalem
395	Rufinus of Aquileia meets his Georgian informant Bakurios in Jerusalem
395–408	Reign of Emperor Arcadius
403	Paulinus of Nola writes to Severus, which is the first literary testimony among the Latin Fathers to relics of the True Cross
406–425	Atticus of Constantinople, contemporary of the monk Dios, a native of Antioch and founder of the Dios monastery in Constantinople
407–492	Lifetime of Moses of Khoren
from 412 onwards	Hesychius gains reputation as presbyter and preacher of the Church in Jerusalem
c.413/417–491	Lifetime of Peter the Iberian
417	Melania the Younger arrives in Jerusalem
422–432	Reign of King Arčil of Georgia
422–458	Episcopacy of Juvenal of Jerusalem
425	Theodosius II develops a new organizational structure for the university of Constantinople

- 427 Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III issue edict that prohibits the sign of the Cross from being depicted on the ground
- 428 Passarion is made *chorepiscopus* and archimandrite of the monks in Jerusalem
- winter 428/29 or 429/30 Death of Passarion
- 428–431 Episcopacy of Nestorius of Constantinople
- 429 At the age of 12, 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
- 430–518 Aeneas of Gaza
- 431 Council of Ephesus
- 437 Upon Theodosius II's invitation, Melania the Younger visits Constantinople where she may have also met Peter the Iberian
- 437, Feb. Melania returns to Jerusalem from her visit to Constantinople
- 437, 29 Oct. Wedding of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia
- 437 Peter the Iberian, now aged 20, and his friend John the Eunuch escape from Constantinople and go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; once there, they enter Melania's monastery on the Mount of Olives
- 438 Empress Eudocia's first pilgrimage to Jerusalem
- 438, 15 Mar. Empress Eudocia had 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 deposits 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 which Peter had brought from Constantinople are deposited
- 439 Death of Melania the Younger
- 440–446 Episcopacy of Pope Leo the Great
- 440–468 Episcopacy of Basil of Seleucia
- 440–521 Lifetime of Philoxenus of Mabbugh
- 441–442 Empress Eudocia settles at Jerusalem while Peter avoids 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 six-volume work against Nestorius
- 446–449 Episcopacy of Flavian of Constantinople
- 446 Death of Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople; displaying an anti-Nestorian theological mindset; coined the Theopaschite formula *unus e Trinitate passus*

- 448 Synod of Constantinople
- 449, 13 June Pope Leo the Great writes *Tome* to Flavian of Constantinople
- 449 Second Council of Ephesus (“the Robber council”), at which Juvenal of Jerusalem and 21 Palestinian bishops supported Dioscorus, Cyril of Alexandria’s successor
- 450, Apr. Bishop Flavian of Constantinople dies in consequence of beatings at the ‘Robber council’ of Ephesus; Anatolius becomes bishop of Constantinople
- 450, 16 Jul. *Tome of Leo* sent to Anatolius of Constantinople
- 450, 28 Jul. Emperor Theodosius II dies
- 450, 25 Aug., to 457 Marcian, as husband of Pulcheria, rules as Emperor of Eastern Roman Empire
- 450, 21 Oct. Anatolius of Constantinople signs the *Tome of Leo*
- 451 Council of Chalcedon, at which Jerusalem is granted the status of patriarchate; the Chalcedonian Martyrius flees from Egypt to the Judaean Desert; rejection of Council of Chalcedon by some in the Holy Land against the position taken by Juvenal of Jerusalem
- after 451 Death of Hesychius of Jerusalem
- 451–453 Theodosius functions as anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem
- 451–521 Lifetime of Jacob of Sarug
- 452–453 Juvenal of Jerusalem cast out from his see; gathers forces in Constantinople; beginnings of anti-Chalcedonian Church in Palestine
- 452/453 Peter the Iberian consecrated as bishop, begins his priestly activities only after his ‘re’ordination to the priesthood also at the hands of Theodosius of Jerusalem
- 452, 25 Nov. Pope Leo writes *Letter* 109 to Bishop Julian of Cos concerning the rebellious monks in Palestine
- 453, 15 June Pope Leo writes *Letter* 123 to Empress Eudocia concerning the rebellious monks in Palestine
- 453, Aug. Chalcedonian Bishop Juvenal returns to Jerusalem with army to crush the anti-Chalcedonian rebellion
- 453 For a brief time, Jerusalem has two functioning bishops—the anti-Chalcedonian Juvenal and the Chalcedonian Theodosius
- sometime between 453 and 457 Theodosius of Jerusalem captured at Antioch, taken to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Marcian; imprisoned in Dios monastery; eventually dies there
- 454, 4 Sept. Pope Leo writes *Letter* 139 to Juvenal of Jerusalem concerning the practice in holy places
- 455 Peter the Iberian leaves for Egypt
- 456 Beginning of the influx of monks from Cappadocia into Palestine, among them the famous monk Sabas
- 457–474 Reign of Emperor Leo; champion of Chalcedon

- 457 Anti-Chalcedonian Theodosius of Jerusalem leaves his exile in Egypt and heads to Antioch in order to solve a dispute there; afterwards captured at Antioch and taken to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Marcian
- 457–460 and 475–477 Episcopacy of Timothy Aelurus
- 457–474 Reign of Emperor Leo, Chalcedonian champion
- 459–478 Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem, Chalcedonian, but under Emperor Basiliscus subscribes to *Encyclical*, therefore is repudiated under new Emperor Zeno
- 460, 20 Oct. Death of anti-Chalcedonian Empress Eudocia
- 461–468 Episcopacy of Pope Hilarius
- 465–538 Lifetime of Severus of Antioch
- 467–533 Lifetime of Fulgentius of Ruspe, who supported ‘Theopaschitism’
- 468–470 Peter the Fuller’s insertion of the words ‘who was crucified for us’ into the *Trisagion* troparion
- 474–475 and 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 re-established Timothy Aelurus as anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria
- 475–476 Basiliscus issues *Encyclical* which annuls the decisions of Chalcedon
- 475 Peter returns to the Holy Land at Ashkelon
- 475–before Aug. 476 Time during which John Rufus is ordained as a priest in Antioch
- 476 Zeno overthrows Basiliscus and annuls his *Encyclical*
- 476 Peter the Fuller, anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, just returned from exile, and as a consequence of Emperor Zeno’s policy, has 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 Calendon as bishop of Antioch, a Chalcedonian supporter
- 479 Martyrius, the new patriarch of Jerusalem, achieves a union between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian sides in Palestine; reconciled with some anti-Chalcedonians; is successful by way of compromise
- 480–485 Death of Abba Gerontius
- 481 Zeno invites Peter the Iberian and Abba Isaiah to Constantinople in order to ‘convert’ them; Peter flees to regions of *Palaestina*, *Arabia*, *Phoenicia*
- 482/484, 13 Dec. Martyrdom of Shushanik, Georgian princess

- 482 Zeno issues *Henotikon* as a document of reconciliation between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians
- 482–565 Lifetime of Emperor Justinian I, supporter of ‘Theopaschitism’
- after 484 Aeneas of Gaza composes his work *Theophrastus*
- 485 Peter the Fuller regains the patriarchate of Antioch
- 485–488 Peter the Iberian dwells in close proximity to Abba Isaiah’s monastery in Beth Daltha in the village of Magdal Tutha
- 486 Severus, monk and future anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, starts law studies in Beirut
- 488 Severus of Antioch is baptized in *martyrion* of Leontius of Tripoli in Phoenicia
- c.490 Biography of Peter the Iberian may have been composed by Zacharias Rhetor/Scholasticus
- 490–570s Lifetime of John Philoponos
- 490 Severus of Antioch visits Jerusalem, comes under influence of Peter’s ascetic heritage, founds an anti-Chalcedonian monastery near that of Peter
- 491, 11 Aug. Death of Abba Isaiah
- 491, November 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 A new movement of Chalcedonian defenders champion their cause in the Holy Land
- 492 By a common vote monks Sabas and Theodosius—both Chalcedonians—elected as archimandrites for the *lavrae* and *coenobiae*
- 494 Election of Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem
- 494–513 Patriarchate of Elias of Jerusalem
- 495 Foundation of a guest-house of Mar Sabas’ *lavra* in Jerusalem
- 498–514 Pope Symmachus of Rome
- c.500 Rufus writes *The Vita Petri Iberi*
- 505–516 Synod of Dvin, at which the majority of the Georgian bishops join the Armenian bishops in condemning Chalcedon
- 508 Chalcedonian patriarch Elias of Jerusalem commissions the former anti-Chalcedonian but now ‘converted’ monk Nephalius to expel the anti-Chalcedonian monks from Palestinian monasteries
- after 509 Philoxenus of Mabbugh writes his *Letter to the Monks of Palestine*
- 510 Emperor Anastasius sends out a ‘dogmatic encyclical’ to the archimandrites of anti-Chalcedonian monasteries

- 510–511 Severus of Antioch presses Anastasius to issue the *Typos*, elevating to law the anti-Chalcedonian interpretation of the *Henotikon*
- 511 The monk Sabas is present in Constantinople for the second interview with Emperor Anastasius
- 512 Flavian, Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, deposed for not agreeing with the anti-Chalcedonian Emperor Anastasius' *Typos*
- 512, 8/16 Nov.–518 Severus rules as anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch instead of the deposed Flavian
- 512–518 Anti-Chalcedonian triumph in Palestine
- 514–523 Episcopate of Pope Hormisdas, who resisted 'Theopaschite' doctrine
- c.515 Approximate time when Rufus composed the *Plerophoriae*
- 516 Elias, Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, deposed for not agreeing with anti-Chalcedonian Emperor Athanasius' *Typos*
- after 527 Death of Julian of Halicarnassus
- 533 Pope John II accepts Theopaschite formula
- 536 Pope Agapet I, successor of John II, accepts Theopaschite formula
- 538 Death of Procopius of Gaza
- before 553 Death of Zachariah Rhetor/Scholasticus/of Mitylene
- 553 Fifth Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople
- 555–561 Papacy of Pope Pelagius I
- 572 *Terminus post quem* for the existence of the *Plerophoriae* in almost complete form in Syriac translation
- 608 Georgian church under Bishop Kyrion II reverses its position: accepts Chalcedon and separates from the Armenian church
- 614 Sassanian conquest of Jerusalem
- 741 Date of MS Sachau 321 that includes the *Vita Petri Iberi*
- 787 Second Council of Nicaea (Seventh Ecumenical Council)
- 875 Date of writing of MS BM Add. 14,650, which contains Syriac text of *Plerophoriae*
- 9th–10th cent. Time during which MS BM Add. 14,631, which preserves the *Plerophoriae*, is copied
- 1197 Completion of MS BM Add. 12,174, which contains the Syriac text of the *Vita Petri Iberi*

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