

FESTAL HOMILIES AND FESTAL LITURGIES IN ANTIOCH AND  
CONSTANTINOPLE: INNOVATION AND CONVENTION IN JOHN  
CHRYSOSTOM AND SEVERIAN OF GABALA, WITH PARTICULAR  
ATTENTION TO THEIR EPIPHANY SERMONS

Harald BUCHINGER

John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala were both prolific preachers whose festal homilies are not only of literary interest as prominent examples of their genre; they also provide valuable historical information about the development of the various liturgical occasions and the festal cycles as such. John Chrysostom has long been famous as early witness, amongst others, for the introduction of Christmas in the East and for the early history of the celebration of the Ascension on the 40th day after Easter. Liturgical historians, however, have largely ignored Severian, although his homilies prove to be the first documents for many feasts in Constantinople and therefore should be considered as key sources for the late antique prehistory of what by the Middle Ages was to become the Byzantine rite. One looks in vain for references to Severian in the hortological standard works; his name is rarely mentioned even in specialised monographs on liturgical history. The few existing studies are not easily accessible: a Danish Festschrift article by Holger Villadsen on “The early pericope system in Constantinople according to Severian of Gabala”,<sup>1</sup> Sergey Kim’s overview of “Liturgical practices mentioned in the homilies of Severian of Gabala” in Russian,<sup>2</sup> and Gary Philippe Raczka’s unpublished dissertation on “The Lectionary at the Time of Saint John Chrysostom”<sup>3</sup>. In view of this somewhat wanting state of the question, the present article pursues a double goal: to combine a general assessment of the importance of the two preachers in their historical situation of liturgical development with a more specific view at a significant test case.

<sup>1</sup> H. VILLADSEN, *De tidlige perikopesystem i Konstantinopel ifølge Severian af Gabala*, in G. HALLONSTEN – S. HIDAL – S. RUBENSON (eds), *Florilegium patristicum: En festskrift till Per Beskow, Delsbo, 1991*, pp. 233-257 [repr. in IDEM, *Perikoper og kirkear i oldkirken. Jerusalem, Konstantinopel og Rom*, København, 2010, pp. 101-128]. The article summarises the main research results of the author’s unpublished dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> S. KIM, *Литургические обычаи в проповедях Севериана Гавальского [= Liturgical practices mentioned in the homilies of Severian of Gabala]*, in *Bulletin of the Ekaterinburg Theological Seminary*, 4(12) (2015), pp. 131-143.

<sup>3</sup> G. P. RACZKA, *The Lectionary at the Time of Saint John Chrysostom*, unpublished diss. University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 2015. I am deeply grateful to the author for granting me access to his work prior to its publication.

This article consists of three parts: after introductory remarks on the relevance of festal sermons for investigating the historical development and the theological exposition of the liturgical year in the century following Constantine, a brief overview sketches the general importance of John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala as festal preachers (deliberately omitting the Sanctorale<sup>4</sup>), before a final sounding inspects exemplary sermons on Epiphany, with preliminary side-glances at the material on Christmas.<sup>5</sup>

A comparative view is appropriate not only in view of the overarching theme of this volume, but also because both preachers are on the one hand connected by intricate biographical involvement (which is the object of other contributions to this volume); on the other hand, they provide the first testimonies of the feasts at hand in their respective domains and are therefore of particular interest for liturgical history (which is the topic of this investigation).

## 1. FESTAL PREACHING AND THE EMERGENCE OF FESTAL CYCLES IN THE LATER FOURTH CENTURY

### 1.1. Festal cycles as an innovation of the post-Constantinian church

It is well-known that the Christian festal cycles do not emerge before the second half of the 4th century.<sup>6</sup> Only the unitive Easter celebration as such with its preceding paschal fast can be traced back to the 2nd century, its subsequent 50 days of the Pentecost period at least to the beginning of the 3rd;<sup>7</sup> the annual celebration of local martyrs also comes up in the second half of the 2nd century and gains importance after the persecutions of the 3rd.<sup>8</sup> Although early roots have been claimed also for Christmas or Epiphany, clear attestations only come from the 4th century.<sup>9</sup> Series of feasts and cyclical or systematic conceptions

<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the wealth of sermons on various kinds of saints by John Chrysostom, there probably exist no homilies of Severian dedicated to post-biblical saints – which is possibly due to the lack of local martyrs and therefore respective feasts in Constantinople.

<sup>5</sup> My special thanks go to Professor S. J. Voicu for stimulating conversations and very substantial suggestions on the topic of this contribution. I am also obliged to John Nicholson for revising the English text.

<sup>6</sup> After the authoritative manual of H. AUF DER MAUR, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit*, vol. 1: *Herrenfeste in Woche und Jahr (Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft)*, 5), Regensburg, 1983, P. F. BRADSHAW – M. E. JOHNSON, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity (Alcuin Club Collections, 86)*, London – Collegeville, MN, 2011, give a critical update on important developments in recent research.

<sup>7</sup> H. BUCHINGER, *Pascha*, in *RAC*, 26 (2014), coll. 1033-1077; H. BUCHINGER – C. LEONHARD, *Pentekoste*, in *RAC*, 27 (2015), coll. 87-108.

<sup>8</sup> H. AUF DER MAUR, *Feste und Gedenktage der Heiligen*, in H. AUF DER MAUR – P. HARNONCOURT, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit II*, 1. *Der Kalender/Feste und Gedenktage der Heiligen (Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft)*, 6, 1), Regensburg, 1994, pp. 65-357.

<sup>9</sup> S. K. ROLL, *Toward the Origins of Christmas (Liturgia condenda, 5)*, Kampen, 1995; H. FÖRSTER, *Die Feier der Geburt Christi in der Alten Kirche. Beiträge zur Erforschung der*

of liturgical time in the rhythm of the year, however, appear as an innovation of the post-Constantinian era. While the pre-paschal Quadragesima emerges in the second quarter of the 4th century,<sup>10</sup> and the triad of Epiphany (as the celebration of Christ's Nativity), Pascha, and Pentecost (as individual feast, not as period) is documented at least from shortly after the mid-4th century,<sup>11</sup> fully fledged festal cycles are attested for the first time only in the last quarter of the 4th century and promptly appear in many regions of the Christian *oikoumene*. Of course the first extant evidence of a phenomenon is not to be mistaken for its historical origin, and only rarely can the introduction of a liturgical feast be palpably observed in late antiquity. Yet, most liturgical institutions of the post-Constantinian century erupt in a remarkably full-grown shape, the development of which seems to presuppose a certain period of latency. There is, however, good reason to assume that the development of diversified festal cycles took place in Jerusalem only in the third quarter of the 4th century, because Cyril's pre-baptismal catecheses, which are thought to have been delivered towards 350, appear to ignore the wealth of mimetic feasts which are first attested by Egeria in the early 380s.<sup>12</sup>

Liturgical developments rarely disclose their *raison d'être*; it is a matter of interpretation to explain the reasons for the occurrence of feasts and institutions.

*Anfänge des Epiphanie- und Weihnachtsfestes (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 4)*, Tübingen, 2000; IDEM, *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphany. Eine Anfrage an die Entstehungshypothesen (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 46)*, Tübingen, 2007, to be complemented, among others, by H. BUCHINGER, *Die vielleicht älteste erhaltene Predigt auf das Epiphaniest: Vier syrische Fragmente des Titus von Bostra (CPG 3578)*, in D. ATANASSOVA – T. CHRONZ (eds), *Σύναξις καθολική. Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd Brakmann zum 70. Geburtstag (Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica, 6)*, Wien, 2014, pp. 65-86.

<sup>10</sup> H. BUCHINGER, *On the Early History of Quadragesima. A New Look at an Old Problem and Some Proposed Solutions*, in H.-J. FEULNER (ed.), *Liturgies in East and West. Ecumenical Relevance of Early Liturgical Development. Acts of the International Symposium Vindobonense I, Vienna, November 17-20, 2007 (Österreichische Studien zur Liturgiewissenschaft und Sakramententheologie, 6)*, Wien, 2013, pp. 99-117; also in *Studia liturgica*, 43 (2013), pp. 321-341. An extensive critical review of earlier research is given by N. V. RUSSO, *The Origins of Lent*, unpublished diss. University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Ephraem, *De nativitate* 4, 57-61; 22, 8 (CSCO.S, 186 = CSCO.S, 82, pp. 30f; 100f / CSCO, 187 = CSCO.S, 83, pp. 28; 100 BECK), provides a *terminus ante quem* († 373). Whether the fragment of the Armenian Letter of Macarius transmitted by Ananias of Shirak (7th century), 284 (5) (A. TERIAN [ed.], *Macarius of Jerusalem. Letter to the Armenians, A.D. 335 [Avant, 4]*, Crestwood, NY, 2008, p. 82), which – unlike the version of the same letter in the Kanonagirk' – mentions the same triad, is to be attributed to Macarius I (bishop after 313-335/6 AD) of Jerusalem instead of II (552 and 563/564-574? AD), remains more than doubtful. For further witnesses from wider regions of the Levant, see BUCHINGER, *Predigt* [see note 9], p. 67, n. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. lastly, among others, N. V. RUSSO, *The Distribution of Cyril's Baptismal Catecheses and the Shape of the Catechumenate in Mid-Fourth-Century Jerusalem*, in D. A. PITT – S. ALEXOPOULOS – C. MCCONNELL (eds), *A Living Tradition. On the Intersection of Liturgical History and Pastoral Practice. Essays in Honor of Maxwell E. Johnson (A Pueblo Book)*, Collegeville, MN, 2012, pp. 75-100.

It seems obvious that pilgrim spirituality played a pivotal role in the rise of celebrations “according to time and place”.<sup>13</sup> The identification of biblical sites, the building programme begun under Constantine almost immediately after his accession to rulership over the East, and the pilgrimage movement boosted not least by his mother Helena may have triggered the motivation to celebrate the events that were connected with the holy places according to a chronology likewise derived from the Bible.<sup>14</sup> Jerusalem therefore takes pride of place and a key position in the development of the liturgical year. Pilgrim spirituality may however not be the universal key: Wolfram Kinzig has suggestively argued that doctrinal concerns may have contributed to the amazingly quick creation and diffusion of the Christological festal cycles. Indeed, feasts centred on the basics of the Christian creed may have been a powerful tool for conveying exactly these rudiments of faith to the newly-baptised (and certainly not always deeply converted) masses in the century after the Constantinian Turn and to root them in their collective consciousness by annual celebration.<sup>15</sup> It may be no mere coincidence that at the same time similar topics were introduced into the “oratio Christologica” of the Eucharistic prayer and thus into the core text of the most important weekly service.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The classical formulation comes from Egeria, *Itinerarium*, 47, 5 (G. RÖWEKAMP [ed.], *Egeria, Itinerarium [Fontes Christiani, 20]*, Freiburg, 1995, pp. 302-304 and passim since *ibidem*, 29, 5 (*ibidem*, p. 254).

<sup>14</sup> H. BUCHINGER, *Heilige Zeiten? Christliche Feste zwischen Mimesis und Anamnesis am Beispiel der Jerusalemer Liturgie der Spätantike*, in P. GEMEINHARDT – K. HEYDEN (eds), *Heilige, Heiliges und Heiligkeit in spätantiken Religionskulturen (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, 61)*, Berlin, 2012, pp. 283-323. The innovative style of celebrating biblical events according to the biblical chronology and in a manner which uses or, in other places, represents biblical topography is generally referred to as “mimetic” in liturgical discourses; cf., for example, I. SCICOLONE (ed.), *La celebrazione del Triduo Pasquale. Anamnesis e mimesis. Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia. Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 9-13 Maggio 1988 (Studia Anselmiana, 102 = Analecta Liturgica, 14)*, Roma, 1990. A schematic typology is provided by K. STEVENSON, *Jerusalem Revisited. The Liturgical Meaning of Holy Week*, Portland, OR, 1988, pp. 9f.; a material overview in ecumenical breadth can be found in A. G. KOLLAMPARAMPIL (ed.), *Hebdomadae Sanctae Celebratio. Conspectus Historicus Comparativus. The Celebration of Holy Week in Ancient Jerusalem and its Development in the Rites of East and West. L'antica celebrazione della Settimana Santa a Gerusalemme e il suo sviluppo nei riti dell'Oriente e dell'Occidente (Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae. Subsidia, 93)*, Roma, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> W. KINZIG, *Glaubensbekenntnis und Entwicklung des Kirchenjahres*, in W. KINZIG – U. VOLP – J. SCHMIDT (eds), *Liturgie und Ritual in der Alten Kirche. Patristische Beiträge zum Studium der gottesdienstlichen Quellen der Alten Kirche (Studien der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 11)*, Leuven, 2011, pp. 3-41.

<sup>16</sup> P. F. BRADSHAW, *Eucharistic Origins (Alcuin Club Collections, 80)*, London, 2004, p. 140, was perhaps the first to argue “that the gradual introduction of the institution narrative into eucharistic prayers themselves, which we can see happening in the latter half of the 4th century, was motivated by a desire to remind worshippers of the grounds and meaning of the liturgical rite being celebrated.” The catechetical aspect is more than the “heilsgeschichtliche Perspektive ... im größeren Kontext eines insgesamt erwachenden Geschichtsbewusstseins” described, for example, by A. BUDDÉ, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora. Text – Kommentar – Geschichte (Jerusalemer*

The rapid spread of the new liturgical style and the astonishingly quick diffusion of the various feasts are remarkable examples of the transregional mobility and the tendency towards liturgical standardisation in the Imperial Church. In view of the diversity that emerges wherever early sources abound (Northern Italy being a prominent example in the Latin West, as is Cappadocia in the Greek East<sup>17</sup>), it nevertheless remains a fascinating and still largely outstanding task to trace the lines of transmission and to chart the diverse developments in the various regions of the Ancient Christian world. Liturgical handbooks are of little help beyond the few incessantly reiterated principal examples.<sup>18</sup> Wolfram Kinzig's regionally differentiated table of "oldest proofs for the major feasts of the Lord"<sup>19</sup> is more useful, although even this valuable resource has to be complemented or corrected in a number of cases, notably Severian's Constantinople.

Festal homilies are the most important sources for the dissemination of the liturgical year. In fact, beyond Egeria's invaluable account of the liturgy of Jerusalem and a small number of historical notices, they often remain the only ones. As is generally known, liturgico-historical research essentially struggles with two major methodological difficulties. Firstly, notorious questions of authenticity and attribution impede a precise historical assessment, and the controversial discussions of patristic scholars occasionally leave the liturgical historian almost in despair; this is exceptionally true for most preachers active in late antique Constantinople (from John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala through Proclus to Leontius ...). In some cases – particularly John Chrysostom – the place of delivery of the sermons remains dubious too. Secondly, the assignment of certain sermons to specific feasts may be secondary, especially when homilies are transmitted in medieval liturgical collections. For example: without unequivocal indications in the text, a homily on the Thomas pericope from *John*, 20 need not stem from a celebration of the Easter octave even if it is transmitted in medieval manuscripts for that day, as is the case with expositions of the raising of Lazarus from *John* 11 and Saturday before Palm Sunday.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, other exegetical homilies could secondarily

*theologisches Forum*, 7), Münster, 2004, pp. 276f., or the "Historisierende Tendenz" noted by M. WALLRAFF, *Christliche Liturgie als religiöse Innovation in der Spätantike*, in KINZIG – VOLP – SCHMIDT, *Liturgie und Ritual* [see note 15], pp. 69-97 (85-88).

<sup>17</sup> Cf., for example, M. CONNELL, *The Liturgical Year in Northern Italy (365-450)*, unpublished diss. University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 1994; H. BUCHINGER, *The Easter Cycle in Late Antique Cappadocia. Revisiting Some Well-Known Witnesses*, in *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, 3a serie, 11 (2014), pp. 45-77.

<sup>18</sup> Unlike John Chrysostom, Severian of Gabala seems to be totally neglected by heortological handbooks; not even T. TALLEY, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, Collegeville, MN, <sup>2</sup>1991 [<sup>1</sup>1986], though often meticulously detecting lesser known sources, mentions Severian – maybe because his main interest is more in the absolute origins of feasts than in their spread once they had been established.

<sup>19</sup> KINZIG, *Glaubensbekenntnis* [see note 15], pp. 32-39.

<sup>20</sup> Some clearness can only be gained if connection is made to the liturgical occasion, as is the case in the homily CPG 4322: *In quadriduanum Lazarum*, 1 (A.-M. MALINGREY [ed.], *Jean*

have been integrated in liturgical collections at feasts where the respective pericopes were employed.

## 1.2. Festal sermons as homiletic response to the new liturgical challenge

Patristic festal sermons, however, do not only pose historical problems for modern research; they also disclose how their authors dealt with the theological challenges posed by the categorical innovation of mimetic festal liturgies.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.2.1. Rhetorical construction of festal contents

The study of patristic festal sermons has flourished in recent decades,<sup>22</sup> generating profitable methodological questions: investigating (1) liturgical elements, (2) especially the use of Scripture not only in the selection of readings, which would ultimately lead to the codification of lectionaries, but also in biblical types and proof texts.<sup>23</sup> Studying (3) instruments of rhetorical art, and (4) not least, doctrinal issues and polemical agenda; finally, (5), traces of the preacher-audience-relation, of the congregant's behaviour and popular habits may provide valuable hints at the relevance and meaning of festal liturgies beyond their clerical conceptions.<sup>24</sup> Two remarks may suffice in the present context:

The first and basic step in the rhetorical construction of many festal homilies is the identification and definition of a “content-matter of the feast” (“ὕποθεσις τῆς ἑορτῆς”), often in the exordium – and not infrequently in the opening

*Chrysostome, Sur l'égalité du Père et du Fils: Contre les Anoméens, homélies VII-XII* [SC, 396], Paris, 1994, p. 212: “σήμερον ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγειρόμενος ὁ Λάζαρος ...”) attributed to John Chrysostom – but considered undoubtedly spurious by S. J. VOICU, *Pseudo-Giovanni Crisostomo: I confini del corpus*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 39 (1996), pp. 105-115 (107).

<sup>21</sup> Feasts and liturgical elements that take up the biblical narrative are terminologically referred to as “mimetic” in liturgiological discourses; cf. ch. 1.1 with n. 14.

<sup>22</sup> After M. B. CUNNINGHAM – P. ALLEN (eds), *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics (A New History of the Sermon)*, 1, Leiden – Boston – Köln, 1998, the exemplary study of J. REXER, *Die Festtheologie Gregors von Nyssa. Ein Beispiel der reichskirchlichen Heortologie (Patrologia: Beiträge zum Studium der Kirchenväter)*, 8, Frankfurt, 2002, see the numerous studies, among others, by P. Allen, W. Mayer, and J. Leemans, who belong to the first to tackle the Sanctorale, which had been culpably neglected by liturgical historians out of theological prejudice and interests: J. LEEMANS – W. MAYER – P. ALLEN – B. DEHANDSCHUTTER (eds), “Let us die that we may live”. *Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria (c. AD 350-AD 450)*, London, 2003. The methodological agenda outlined in this paper owe much to conversations with Johan Leemans.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the forthcoming Regensburg 2015 Novum Testamentum Patristicum conference volume on *The Liturgical Reception of the Bible*, forthcoming in the series *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte* at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.

<sup>24</sup> Sensitivity to messages between the lines has grown, not least in the wake of R. MACMULLEN, *The Second Church. Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400 (Society of Biblical Literature: Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series)*, 1, Atlanta, 2009.

sentences – of a respective sermon. After multiple employments of this terminology in Gregory of Nyssa and especially John Chrysostom,<sup>25</sup> only few instances are attested in later patristic literature, mostly with a different function.<sup>26</sup> Defining and promoting “festal contents” as such therefore appears to have been a task fulfilled and in a sense completed by the first generation of festal preachers.

Related to the designation of the “content-matter” is the account of what happened at the liturgical “today” (“σήμερον”/hodie), which recurs in innumerable festal sermons throughout history. While 20th-century liturgical renewal has made much of this rhetorical topos to envision a patristic theology of liturgical anamnesis,<sup>27</sup> it may have originated as a theologically much less demanding rhetorical tool for popularising the central topics of newly established feasts,<sup>28</sup> the message of which may simply not have been rooted in the audience

<sup>25</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In sanctum pascha* (A. VAN HECK – E. GEBHARDT ET AL. [eds], *Sermones. Pars 1* [GNO, 9], Leiden, 1967, p. 253, l. 15; CPG 3174); *In diem natalem salvatoris* (G. RHEIN ET AL. [eds], *Sermones. Pars 3* [GNO, 10, 2], Leiden, 1996, p. 236, ll. 6f.; CPG 3194); *In sanctam Pentecosten* (*ibidem*, p. 287, l. 3; p. 288, l. 22; CPG 3191); *Epistula 4*, 1 (G. PASQUALI [ed.], *Epistulae* [GNO, 8, 2], Leiden, 1959, p. 28, ll. 7f.; CPG 3167); John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, 2 (PG, 49, col. 365; CPG 4335); *In ascensionem*, 1 (N. RAMBAULT [ed.], *Homélie sur la résurrection, l'ascension et la pentecôte, tome 2* [SC, 562], Paris, 2014, p. 158, ll. 96f.; CPG 4342); John Chrysostom, *De sancta Pentecoste* 1, l. 2. 5 (*ibidem*, p. 208, ll. 59f.; l. 62.; l. 68f.; p. 210, ll. 80f.; p. 214, ll. 24f.; p. 242, ll. 1f.; CPG 4343); cf. *De sanctis martyribus*, 1 (PG, 50, col. 647, of martyrs' feasts; CPG 4357); cf. *De proditiōe Iudae*, 1, 4 (PG, 49, col. 379, of biblical Passover; CPG 4336); cf. *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae*, 3, 4 (PG, 47, col. 354, of biblical Passover; CPG 4307); of course there are multiple further occurrences of “ὑπόθεσις” alone in hortological contexts. Beyond festal homiletics, cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia in Psalmum*, 59, 2 (PG, 29, col. 461 B, of Old Testament feasts; CPG 2836), and, in a more remote sense, John Chrysostom, *In Genesim homilia*, 62, 3 (PG, 54, col., 536; CPG 4409); *Expositio in Psalmum*, 121, 2 (PG, 55, col. 349, more generally of Old Testament feasts; CPG 4413).

<sup>26</sup> A certain cumulation is to be noticed in Theodotus of Ancyra and in homilies more or less confidently contributed to his contemporary Proclus: Theodotus of Ancyra, *Homilia 1* and 2 *In die nativitatē Domini* (ACO, 1, 1, 2, p. 73; 74; 80 SCHWARTZ; CPG 6125f.); Proclus, *Homilia 4 In natalem diem Domini*, 1 (N. CONSTAS, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* [Supplements to VigChr, 66], Leiden, 2003, p. 226; CPG 5803, reuses Theodotus, *Homilia 1*); Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In ascensionem 4* (PG, 52, col. 799; CPG 4534; Proclus?); cf. also Proclus, *Homilia 1 de laudibus s. Mariae*, 1 (ACO, 1, 1, p. 103; CPG 5800); furthermore: Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In annuntiationem sanctissimae Deiparae* (PG, 60, col. 756; CPG 4628); *De cognitione Dei et in s. Theophania* (PG, 62, col. 44; CPG 4703); *In catenas s. Petri*, 2. 5 (*Chrysostomika*, 3, p. 978; 980; CPG 4745); *In Pascha*, 5 (PG, 59, col. 733, of Greek feasts; CPG 4610); Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Genesim sermo*, 3, 1 (PG, 54, col. 527, only indirectly hortological; CPG 4562; Proclus?); cf. also Theodoret, *Epistula*, 5 (Y. AZÉMA, *Theodoret de Cyr, Correspondance, vol. 2* [SC, 98], Paris, 1964, p. 30, l. 15). Derivatives of the hortological use can be seen in Basil of Seleucia (?), *Vita sanctae Theclae*, 11 (G. DAGRON, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle* [SH, 62], Bruxelles, 1978, p. 214, l. 56), and an anonymous catena fragment on *Lk*, 15, 24 (CRAMER 2, p. 120, l. 7). A glance in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* shows that the term becomes popular again only after a certain gap in Byzantine authors of the Middle Ages.

<sup>27</sup> Cf., for example, J. J. FLORES ARCAS, *El Hodie en los escritos de Odo Casel*, in *Ecclesia orans*, 16 (1999), pp. 53–62.

<sup>28</sup> WALLRAFF, *Liturgie* [see note 16], p. 87.

and therefore had to be summarised at crucial moments of the exposition to inculcate it in the minds of the listeners. The theologically more or less sophisticated way in which preachers and liturgies represented and thus realised the anamnestic content of the respective feast constitutes the core of festal theology.

### 1.2.2. *Justifications of liturgical feasts as such*

Some representatives of the first generation of festal preachers occasionally expressed a certain uneasiness with regard to the existence of Christian feasts as such. In so doing, they probably show an awareness of the simple fact that the liturgical innovation was not self-evident, but needed justification. Since Christians neither continued to celebrate Jewish feasts (with the notable exception of the profoundly transformed celebration of Pascha), nor shared the festivities of the Greco-Roman world, they had learned to distance themselves from public feasts for more than three centuries. This attitude may not have changed everywhere immediately when new festal cycles were introduced in the later 4th century. The lengthy introduction to John Chrysostom's Pentecost sermon (CPG 4343) is a beautiful example of the persistence of the old apologetic motif that Christians should celebrate "always" and thus in a metaphorical way instead of indulging in rare festivities.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND SEVERIAN OF GABALA AS FESTAL PREACHERS

### 2.1. John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom attests a quite fully-fledged liturgical year and even a number of biblical readings;<sup>30</sup> unfortunately, the notorious ambiguity about the localisation of many homilies affects their historical significance. It is therefore not beyond doubt that the sermons on a remarkably developed Holy Week and

<sup>29</sup> John Chrysostom, *De sancta Pentecoste*, 1, 1f. (RAMBAULT, *Homélie sur la résurrection, l'ascension et la pentecôte*, tome 2, pp. 202-214). The argument is a bit paradoxical: in view of the good attendance of the festal liturgy, the preacher laments – as oftentimes; cf. N. RAMBAULT, *ibidem*, p. 203 – a disproportionate ordinary practice; in contrast to the three feasts prescribed to the Jews (cf. *Ex*, 23, 17), Christians should celebrate "always", which, however, can only be fulfilled metaphorically and therefore has to exceed the paraenetical goal of exhorting the audience to more regular church attendance. The appeal to 1 *Cor*, 5, 8 (*ibidem*, p. 212) is theologically sensitive and the metaphorical point in line with the Pauline argument; ascribing the celebration of rare feasts to "Jewish mind" (*ibidem*, p. 206) in order to motivate Christians to continuous presence in church is an old polemical topos, going back at least to Origen, *In Genesim homilia*, 10, 3 (W. A. BAEHRENS [ed.], *Origenes Werke. 6: Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung* [GCS, 6], Leipzig, 1920, p. 97, l. 4).

<sup>30</sup> RACZKA, *Lectionary* [see note 3]; some information on the Easter cycle has been collected by H. AUF DER MAUR, *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche (Liturgica oenipontana, 2)*, Münster, 2003, pp. 178-180.



other feasts of the Easter cycle belong to Antioch, as is often, if not generally, assumed.<sup>31</sup> In any case, they do not show distinct signs of commenting a very recent development. Indeed, such a celebration may have been traditional in Antioch, and John may have inherited the custom of consecutive sermons from his mentor Meletius (360-381 AD) if the Georgian homilies attributed to Meletius on various moments of Holy Week (*CPG* 3425) are authentic and their division as well as their liturgical assignation original.<sup>32</sup> In that case a celebration of the Passion according to the biblical chronology would be attested in Antioch not only before the period of John Chrysostom's activity (386-397 AD), but also before Egeria's visit as first witness to that development in Jerusalem (381-384 AD), thus opening questions of the origin and early history of a mimetic liturgical year as such.

In any case, John Chrysostom's sermons reveal a strong sense of liturgical mimesis. The existence of a Palm Sunday cortège is dubious: when the exordium to the homily on *Ps.*, 145 (*CPG* 4415; traditionally – but not reliably – localised in Antioch because of its referral to monks who live on the mountains<sup>33</sup>) states that “we do not go out from one city to meet Christ today, and not only from Jerusalem, but from all around the whole world the Churches go forth with thousands of people to meet Jesus, not holding and shaking palm branches, but offering charity and philanthropy and virtue and fasting and tears and prayers and vigils and every piety to the Lord Jesus”,<sup>34</sup> it does not become clear whether this *occursus* was rhetorical imagination or liturgical reality. It is at any rate remarkable that John Chrysostom presupposes the chronological harmonisation of the gospels of *John*, 12, 1 and 12 and *Matthew*, 21 that underlies

<sup>31</sup> The list W. MAYER, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom – Provenance. Reshaping the Foundations* (*OCA*, 273), Roma, 2005, p. 469, gives of “The status of homilies individually assigned provenance” (cf. also *ibidem*, p. 511: “Homilies of certain provenance”) maintains certainly Antiochene provenance only for *CPG* 4343 *De sancta Pentecoste*, reduces the degree of certainty to “probably” in the cases of *CPG* 4334 *In diem natalem* and *CPG* 4342 *In ascensionem*, and passes over *CPG* 4335 *De baptismo Christi* (Epiphany) and the Holy Week and Easter sermons *CPG* 4336-4340 altogether. W. MAYER – P. ALLEN, *John Chrysostom (The Early Church Fathers)*, London, 2000, p. 19, however, appear to take for granted the assignment of the homily *De coemeterio et cruce* on Good Friday and *In ascensionem* (*CPG* 4337; 4342, cf. below, n. 36-38) to Antioch.

<sup>32</sup> W. HUBER, *Passa und Ostern. Untersuchungen zur Osterfeier der alten Kirche (Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche)*, 35), Berlin, 1969, pp. 203-205; M. VAN ESBROECK, *Les plus anciens homéliaires géorgiens. Étude descriptive et historique (Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain)*, 10), Louvain, 1975, pp. 310-312: “Même s'il n'y a pas lieu de tenir pour authentiques les longueurs précises de chaque homélie comme nous les lisons aujourd'hui, ... il n'y a vraiment aucune raison d'en refuser la paternité à Méléce d'Antioche.” (p. 312)

<sup>33</sup> MAYER, *Homilies* [see note 31], p. 93; on the difficulty of this criterion, see *ibidem*, pp. 426-434. Her own lists *ibidem*, p. 470; 511f. therefore do not concede certainty or even probability to the localisation.

<sup>34</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Psalmum*, 145, 1 (*PG*, 55, col. 520).

the chronological structure of any Jerusalem-type Holy Week.<sup>35</sup> Mimesis is, however, not limited to liturgical time. Conspicuous is also the place of the celebration of Good Friday out of town, explicitly interpreted in the homily on the day (CPG 4337) as a mimetic reference to the crucifixion “out of town”<sup>36</sup> – a feature which must have been developed directly from the Bible, since Golgotha was situated in the middle of the town in late antique Jerusalem. As in contemporary Jerusalem, the day has a vigil (although the full eucharistic celebration attested by the same sermon remains erratic).<sup>37</sup> Similarly being celebrated out of town, the feast of the Ascension displays the same strong mimetic imprint in its topographic code.<sup>38</sup> This is all the more noticeable given that Chrysostom’s Ascension homily (CPG 4342) has a good chance of being the first extant attestation at all of that feast,<sup>39</sup> and particularly antedates its attestation in Jerusalem. As Chrysostom’s homily comes decades before the Armenian Lectionary, conserving the liturgical status of 417-439 AD and providing the first attestation of a celebration of the Ascension on the 40th day in Jerusalem,<sup>40</sup> formidable questions about the origin and early history of that

<sup>35</sup> Only the gospel of John provides a chronological framework for the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Joh, 12, 1 and 12); the mention of the raising of Lazarus (*In Psalmum*, 145, 1 [PG, 55, coll. 519f.]) and the idea of “going out to meet” (cf. Joh, 12, 13) condense the Johannine reference-system.

<sup>36</sup> *De coemeterio et de cruce*, 1 (PG, 49, col. 393); the concrete choice of the so-called “κοιμητήριο” is motivated with reference to the descent of Jesus to the dead on Good Friday.

<sup>37</sup> *De coemeterio et de cruce*, 3 (PG, 49, col. 398; coll. 397f.: full eucharistic celebration); cf. S. JANERAS, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine. Structure et histoire de ses offices* (*Studia Anselmiana*, 99 = *Analecta liturgica*, 13), Roma, 1988, pp. 386f. The dubious, if not spurious homily *In proditionem Iudae* (PG, 50, coll. 715f.; CPG 4511), calls the grove of Daphne an “image of the garden ... in which the betrayal of the Saviour was undertaken”, thus perhaps alluding to a mimetic service in the evening of Holy Thursday or the vigil of Good Friday somehow similar to the one celebrated in Jerusalem according to Egeria, *Peregrinatio*, 23, 2-36, 4 (RÖWEKAMP, *Egeria, Itinerarium*, pp. 266-270), and the *Armenian Lectionary*, n° 39ter-42 (PO, 36, 2 = 168, pp. 268 [130]-280 [142]). Holy Thursday is the “day of the betrayal” not only according to the authentic homily *De proditione Iudae*, 1, 1 (PG, 49, col. 373; CPG 4336), but also *In Genesisim homilia*, 33, 1 (PG, 53, col. 305).

<sup>38</sup> *In ascensionem*, 1 (RAMBAULT, *Homélie sur la résurrection, l’ascension et la pentecôte*, tome 2, p. 148); Chrysostom himself nevertheless speaks of “honouring the martyrs”. On the identification of the church, see W. MAYER – P. ALLEN, *The Churches of Syrian Antioch (300-638 CE)* (*Late Antique History and Religion*, 5), Leuven, 2012, pp. 97f.; 187f.; C. SALIOU, *À propos de quelques églises d’Antioche sur l’Oronte*, in *Topoi*, 19 (2014), pp. 628-661, esp. pp. 638-645.

<sup>39</sup> H. BUCHINGER, *Pentekoste, Pfingsten und Himmelfahrt. Grunddaten und Fragen zur Frühgeschichte*, in R. W. BISHOP ET AL. (eds), *Preaching after Easter. Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity* (*Supplements to VigChr*, 136), Leiden, 2016, pp. 15-84, esp. pp. 81f.; N. RAMBAULT, *La fête de l’Ascension à Antioche d’après l’homélie de Jean Chrysostome* *In Ascensionem Christi*, in BISHOP ET AL., *Preaching after Easter*, pp. 141-157, esp. p. 141; S. J. VOICU, *Evidence of Authenticity. Severian of Gabala*, *In ascensionem Domini* (CPG 5028), in BISHOP ET AL., *Preaching after Easter*, pp. 407-424, stresses that the sermon does not imply that the feast was an innovation and suggests “that the Feast of the Ascension appeared first in Antioch ... and from there spread to other places.” (p. 422)

<sup>40</sup> *Armenian Lectionary*, n° 57 (A. RENOUX, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem*, 121, vol. 2: *Édition comparée du texte et de deux autres manuscrits* [PO, 36, 2 = 168], Turnhout, 1971, pp. 336 [198]-338 [200]).

feast arise. Since Egeria does not yet observe the feast of the Ascension in Jerusalem in 381-384 AD, it must either have originated there a very short time after and spread instantly to Antioch, or the highly mimetic celebration on the 40th day and out of town must have been invented in Antioch. The question where the feast of the Ascension was first celebrated is not merely of historical interest, but of fundamental importance. It would challenge general models of liturgical development if such a mimetic celebration originated in a different place from the Holy City with its surrounding biblical landscape, which is generally thought to have inspired the development of the mimetic festal cycles.

Not least, John Chrysostom is famous for the introduction of Christmas to Antioch, thus completing the canon of feasts as concisely recapitulated in his homily *De beato Philogonio* (CPG 4319) (with its archaic association of the Cross with Pascha, which cannot be discussed exhaustively in the present context).<sup>41</sup>

## 2.2. Severian of Gabala

In view of the doubtful localisation of John Chrysostom's respective homilies, Severian is one of the first somewhat precisely fixable witnesses of a developed Passion Week as such beyond Jerusalem<sup>42</sup> and definitely the first secure one in Constantinople.<sup>43</sup> Particularly remarkable is the homily *De lotione pedum* (CPG 4216): although Severian does not mention a mimetic re-enactment of "the awe-inspiring mystery that happened today: ... the Saviour washes the feet of

<sup>41</sup> See below, ch. 3.1.1. The association of the Cross with Pascha hints at a pristine paschal theology, which does not yet divide or even oppose Passion and resurrection. It is also disputed whether the reading of the Passion "at the general feast, when men and women are present with the whole multitude, and simply all in the great evening of Pascha" according to *In Matthaemum homilia*, 87 (88), 1 (PG, 58, col. 770; CPG 4424; the localisation is uncertain), refers to Good Friday (as assumed by JANERAS, *Vendredi-Saint* [see note 37], pp. 350f., followed by RACZKA, *Lectionary* [see note 3], p. 67) or rather to the paschal vigil (as accepted by AUF DER MAUR, *Osterfeier* [see note 30], p. 179, and plausible to the present author). The assumption of a reading of the Passion both, on Good Friday and in the paschal vigil, is bolstered by *In principium Actorum homilia*, 4, 5 (PG, 51, col. 104; CPG 4371, of undetermined localisation, since a connection with the Antiochene homilies 1f. *In principium Actorum* cannot be proven according to W. MAYER, *The Sequence and Provenance of John Chrysostom's Homilies* In illud: si esurierit inimicus [CPG 4375], De mutatione nominum [CPG 4372] and In principium actorum [CPG 4371], in *Augustinianum*, 46 [2006], pp. 169-186): "At the day of the cross we read everything about the cross; again on the Great Sabbath".

<sup>42</sup> The attribution of the Good Friday homily *De cruce et latrone* (CPG 4728) to Severian by A. WENGER, *Le sermon LXXX de la collection augustinienne de Mai restituée à Sévérien de Gabala*, in *Augustinus Magister. Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 Septembre 1954. Communications*, Paris, 1954, pp. 175-185, is uncertain; cf. S. J. VOICU, *Sévérien de Gabala*, in *DSp*, 14 (1990), coll. 752-763, here col. 758. The Holy Thursday homily mentioned below, however, suffices to prove a developed celebration of Passion Week.

<sup>43</sup> Despite the fact that MAYER, *Homilies* [see note 31], does not explicitly support the localisation of Chrysostom's Holy Week sermons CPG 4336-4340 in Antioch, no serious proposal appears to have been made to assign them to Constantinople.

the disciples”,<sup>44</sup> he concentrates on an element of the day which was to become ritually productive a little later in Jerusalem,<sup>45</sup> and he applies current sacramental language to it. The whole Easter cycle appears to be just as highly developed as in John Chrysostom’s Antioch: Severian attests the convention of reading Genesis and Job in Lent<sup>46</sup> as well as the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost.<sup>47</sup> The efforts his sermon on the Ascension makes to advocate that feast and emphasise the dating of the biblical event on the 40th day may, however, reflect the possibility of that date not having been long established in Constantinople in his time and still needing promotion among the audience.<sup>48</sup> The celebration of the Ascension on the “mount of Olives” opposite the town is a noteworthy

<sup>44</sup> A. WENGER, *Une homélie inédite de Sévérien de Gabala sur le lavement des pieds*, in *REB*, 25 (1967), pp. 219-234, quotation p. 227, § 12; § 13 elaborates on the language of fear and awe.

<sup>45</sup> Unequivocal evidence for ritual footwashing on Holy Thursday first comes from the *Georgian Lectionary* § 641 (M. TARCHNISCHVILI, *Le grand lectionnaire de l’Eglise de Jérusalem* [CSCO, 188 = CSCO.I, 9, p. 115 / CSCO, 189 = CSCO.I, 10, p. 92], Louvain, 1960, documenting the liturgical development in Jerusalem between the 5th and the 7th century. Perhaps already Hesychius of Jerusalem, *In Job homilia*, 5, Prologue (C. RENOUX, *Homélie sur Job: version arménienne* [PO, 42,1], Turnhout, 1983, p. 150, with nn. 12f. *ibidem*, p. 151; CPG 6551), alludes to a liturgical ceremony around the middle of the 5th century when Sion is rhetorically addressed: “Betimes you offer the basin and bring the foot towel”, since references to further anamnestic contents of Holy Week are to follow. The Georgian Lectionary does not, however, give a hint at the venue of the rite, which follows after the Mass held in the “katholike” (i.e. basilica) of the Anastasis complex. Hesychius’s appeal to Sion refers in the first place to the biblical Cenacle.

<sup>46</sup> *Homilies on the Creation of the World*, 1, 3. 7; 2, 1 (PG, 56, coll. 432; 437; 439; CPG 4194); cf. VILLADSEN, *Perikopesystem* [see note 1], p. 237. The series may have continued according to RACZKA, *Lectionary* [see note 3], pp. 259; 281-283, following C. DATEMA, *Towards a Critical Edition of the Greek Homilies of Severian of Gabala*, in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 19 (1988), pp. 107-115, esp. pp. 110f., with reference to a number of further homilies on Genesis, of which *De Noe et de arca* (K. H. UTHEMANN – R. F. REGTUIT – J. M. TEVEL [eds], *Homiliae pseudo-chrysostomicae*, Turnhout, 1994, pp. 146-153, here p. 146; CPG 4271 = 4236 [4]) mentions to be held in the middle of Lent. On the *In Iob sermones*, 2f. (PG, 56, col. 567-582; J. J. OOSTERHUIS-DEN OTTER, *Four Pseudo-Chrysostomian Homilies on Job* [CPG 4564, BHG 939d-g]. *Transmission, Critical Edition, and Translation*, Amsterdam, 2015; CPG 4564), see OOSTERHUIS-DEN OTTER, *ibidem*, p. 2, and S. J. VOICU, *Nuove restituzioni a Severiano di Gabala*, in *RBSN*, 20-21 (30-31) (1983-1984), pp. 3-24, with reference especially to *In Iob sermo*, 3, 4 (PG, 56, col. 576 / OOSTERHUIS-DEN OTTER, *Homilies on Job*, p. 254, l. 331).

<sup>47</sup> S. J. VOICU, *Pentecost According to Severian of Gabala*, in BISHOP ET AL., *Preaching after Easter* [see note 39], pp. 293-303; IDEM, *Evidence of Authenticity* [see note 39].

<sup>48</sup> *In ascensionem DNJC et in principium Actorum*, 8 (PG, 52, col. 782, n. b; CPG 4187): “On the 50th/at Pentecost was not the Assumption (sc. Ascension), but the visit of the Holy Spirit.” Cf. BUCHINGER, *Pentekoste* [see note 39], pp. 46f., n. 158, reporting the suggestion of R. W. Bishop that this variant reading is to be considered original. Some 20 years earlier (379-381 AD), Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 41, 5 (C. MORESCHINI – P. GALLAY, *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours* 38-41 [SC, 358], Paris, 1990, p. 324; CPG 3010), preached in Constantinople, associated not only the manifestation of the Spirit but also the termination of the bodily presence of Christ with the feast of Pentecost, thus making the assumption of a separate feast of the Ascension on the 40th day improbable; cf. BUCHINGER, *Easter Cycle* [see note 17], pp. 55f.

mimetic feature;<sup>49</sup> the choice of *Joh.*, 20, 19(-27) as gospel of the day may hint at an archaic state of the Eastertide lectionary.<sup>50</sup>

It is striking that Severian repeatedly preached on days after the respective feast. This would not be peculiar during the Easter octave (*CPG* 4243),<sup>51</sup> and the Ascension sermon (*CPG* 4187) mentions that the celebration was shifted two days because of bad weather.<sup>52</sup> In the case of Pentecost, however, the second sermon *De spiritu sancto* (*CPG* 4188)<sup>53</sup> would either point to a Pentecost octave not otherwise attested that early beyond the erratic testimony of the Apostolic Constitutions,<sup>54</sup> or to – rather – non-eucharistic services, in which the presider could chose the content of his discourses more freely. Continuing to expound the subjects of preceding days would have to be considered as *Sitz im Leben* of this and possibly other post-festal sermons.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. EXEMPLARY SOUNDINGS IN EPIPHANY SERMONS, WITH PRELIMINARY SIDE-GLANCES AT CHRISTMAS

The first – and probably original – celebration of Christ's Nativity in the Christian East was Epiphany on January 6th, clearly attested as such by Ephraem († 373).<sup>56</sup> Jerusalem is famous for sticking to that tradition until the 6th century,<sup>57</sup> and fragments of a homily on Epiphany (*CPG* 3578) by Titus of Bostra (bishop

<sup>49</sup> *In ascensionem DNJC et in principium Actorum*, 2 and 7 (*PG*, 52, coll. 775; 780). The location is confirmed by the historian Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7, 26, 2 (G. C. HANSEN [ed.], *Socrates Scholasticus, Historia ecclesiastica* [GCS, N. F., 1], Berlin, 1995, p. 375; *CPG* 6028); cf. C. MANGO, *Constantinople's Mount of Olives and Pseudo-Dorotheus of Tyre*, in *Nea Rhome*, 6 (2009), pp. 157-170.

<sup>50</sup> *In ascensionem DNJC et in principium Actorum*, 3 (*PG*, 52, col. 775). The Thomas pericope may have been part of a course reading of the gospel of John during the Pentecost season and not yet assigned to the octave day of Easter in Constantinople in that period.

<sup>51</sup> *Homilia 5 De pascha deque catharis* (J. B. AUCHER [ed.], *Severiani sive Seberiani Gaborum episcopi Emesensis homiliae*, Venetiis, 1827, pp. 180; 188).

<sup>52</sup> *In ascensionem DNJC et in principium Actorum*, 2; 8 (*PG*, 52, coll. 775; 782, n. b).

<sup>53</sup> *De spiritu sancto*, 1 (*PG*, 52, col. 813).

<sup>54</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions*, 5, 20, 14 (M. METZGER, *Les constitutions apostoliques, tome 2: livres III-VI* [SC, 329], Paris, 1986, p. 282).

<sup>55</sup> In addition to *De spiritu sancto* on the day after Pentecost [see note 53], the homily *In illud: Genimina viperarum* (*CPG* 4947) was preached at some date shortly after Pentecost: VOICU, *Pentecost* [see note 47], p. 297.

<sup>56</sup> See above, note 11, and, explicit about the date, *De nativitate*, 5, 13 (E. BECK [ed.], *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen de Nativitate [Epiphania]* [CSCO, 186 = CSCO.S, 82], Leuven, 1959, p. 48 / E. BECK [trans.], *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen De Nativitate [Epiphania]* [CSCO, 187 = CSCO.S, 83], Leuven, 1959, p. 41), which is confirmed by Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51, 22, 7 (A. HOLL – J. DUMMER [eds], *Epiphanius Werke. 2: Panarion haer.* 34-64, 2nd ed., [GCS, 31], Berlin, 1980, pp. 284f.); cf. most recently G. ROUWHORST, *The Feast of Epiphany in Early Syriac Tradition*, lecture at the congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Holy Etchmiadzin, September 2016, forthcoming in the conference volume.

<sup>57</sup> The ample dossier of sources cannot and need not be reiterated in the present context; cf. the literature quoted in note 9 and 60.

under emperor Julian 361-363 AD and deceased before 378 AD) demonstrate its early observance in the periphery of the Holy City.<sup>58</sup> The extant evidence does not reveal where the feast originated in the first place, although a growing consensus opts for Jerusalem or, more precisely, Bethlehem<sup>59</sup> – at any rate a plausible choice for a celebration “fitting to time and place”, although contesting traditions of Christ’s birthday remained virulent in the period of liturgical creativity.<sup>60</sup> That the church of Jerusalem resisted the introduction of Christmas perhaps even twice<sup>61</sup> may not only be a sign of conservatism, but also of historical self-consciousness as the “mother of all churches”<sup>62</sup> who had given to the Christian world a good number of the most prominent liturgical identity-markers, perhaps including the annual celebration of the Lord’s birth as such.

Only the introduction of Christmas on December 25th as the Western date of Christ’s Nativity (literarily, not necessarily liturgically documented at the latest 354 AD in the famous calendar of Philocalus<sup>63</sup>) allowed the old Eastern feast to assume a new content and to concentrate on Christ’s Baptism. When and how exactly these two developments happened is shrouded in mystery; indisputable evidence comes only from the last quarter of the 4th century.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> BUCHINGER, *Predigt* [see note 9]. The Palestinian-born Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51, 16, 1; 22, 3-18; 24, 1; 27, 4f.; 29, 4-7 (HOLL – DUMMER, *Epiphanius Werke*. 2), pp. 270; 284-288; 292f.; 298; 300f.) stresses January 5/6 as the date of Christ’s birth.

<sup>59</sup> FÖRSTER, *Anfänge* [see note 9], pp. 121; 306f.; cf. ROUWHORST, *Feast* [see note 56].

<sup>60</sup> FÖRSTER, *Feier*; IDEM, *Anfänge* [see note 9]. The most prominent proponents of Christmas are Jerome, *Homilia de nativitate Domini* (G. MORIN ET AL. [eds], *Hieronymus. Tractatus sive homiliae in psalmos. In Marci evangelium. Alia varia argumenta* [CCSL, 78], Turnhout, 1958, pp. 527f., ll. 111-160); cf. *In Hiezechielem*, 1, 3 (F. GLORIE [ed.], *Hieronymus, Commentariorum in Hiezechielem libri XIV* [CCSL, 75], Turnhout, 1964, p. 6f.), who opposed the local tradition of Bethlehem to the Western feast, and John Chrysostom’s famous Christmas homily mentioned below, ch. 3.1.1).

<sup>61</sup> When Christmas first spread to the East towards the end of the 4th century, Jerusalem stuck to Epiphany as date of Christ’s Nativity. If the dubious (Pseudo-?) Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio*, 41: *Laudatio s. protomartyris Stephani* (PG, 85, col. 469 B; CPG 6656) is – regardless of its contested authenticity – trustworthy in crediting bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem (422-458 AD) with introducing Christmas in mid-5th-century, its observance must have fallen into disuse quickly, before Christmas was again forcedly and definitively implemented a century later by Justinian I († 565); cf. M. VAN ESBRÖECK, *La lettre de l’empereur Justinien sur l’Annonciation et la Noël en 561*, in *AB*, 86 (1968), pp. 351-371; IDEM, *Encore la lettre de Justinien. Sa date: 560 et non 561*, in *AB*, 87 (1969), pp. 442-444. Nevertheless, the homily of Antipater of Bostra (around 457/458 AD) *In epiphaniam* (E. MALKI, *Die syrische Handschrift Berlin Sachau 220* [Heidelberger Orientalistische Studien, 6], Frankfurt, 1984, pp. 205-212; CPG 6685), by commenting on the Baptism of Christ on the feast of the Epiphany insinuates that the celebration of Christmas was adopted in the Transjordan province shortly after Juvenal (Antipater’s four homilies *De nativitate* [CPG 6695-6698] transmitted in Armenian are inedited); cf. BUCHINGER, *Predigt* [see note 9], p. 78.

<sup>62</sup> Anaphora of the Liturgy of St James (B. C. MERCIER, *La Liturgie de Saint Jacques* [PO, 26, 2 = 126], Turnhout, 1947, repr. 1997, p. 206 [92], l. 27).

<sup>63</sup> The notice *VIII kal. Ian natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae* marks the beginning of the *depositio martirum* (T. MOMMSEN [ed.], *Chronica minora saec. IV, V, VI, VII* [MGH. *Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, 1], München, 1981, p. 71). The immense bibliography on the source cannot be reported here; FÖRSTER, *Feier* [see note 9], pp. 100-103, even argued that the whole entry is an interpolation made after 525 AD.

<sup>64</sup> On the complex dossier of sources and their controversial interpretation see once more the bibliography quoted in note 9.

According to Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphany, the “day of lights”, was well-established in Constantinople in 379-381 AD as celebration of Christ’s Baptism in addition to the Nativity on December 25th.<sup>65</sup> This was also the case in Cappadocia when Gregory of Nyssa preached his respective homilies, mostly, though not unanimously dated to 383 AD and 386.<sup>66</sup> Antioch, however, appears to have been a little more tardy in embracing the Western customs.

### 3.1. John Chrysostom

#### 3.1.1. *Christmas*

John Chrysostom’s only authentic homily *In diem natalem* (CPG 4334) is the oft-treated key witness for the adoption of the Western celebration of Christmas in Antioch (or, rather, at least in Flavian’s Meletian congregation); it definitely post-dates the Golden Mouth’s presbyteral ordination (386 AD).<sup>67</sup> The preacher states that “it is not yet the 10th year” since he had become aware of the date<sup>68</sup> (which would, it may be noted, exclude a localisation in Constantinople, where the feast is documented already by Gregory of Nazianzus’ Christmas homily held in 379-381 AD and thus more than 10 years before John’s relocation to the capital in 398 AD). It has been widely assumed though not coercively demonstrated that the sermon stems from the very first celebration of Christmas in Antioch. The certain reluctance to introduce the new feast in Antioch suggests that this old and powerful liturgical centre may have been more conservative than at least some communities in the adjacent region of Cappadocia and than the capital of the Eastern Empire itself.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Oratio*, 38 and 39 (MORESCHINI – GALLAY, *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours* 38-41; CPG 3010).

<sup>66</sup> *In diem luminum* (VAN HECK – GEBHARDT ET AL. [eds], *Sermones. Pars* 1, pp. 221-242; CPG 3173); *In diem natalem Salvatoris* (RHEIN ET AL. [eds], *Sermones. Pars* 3, pp. 235-269; CPG 3194); on the date of the former in 383 AD and the latter in 386 AD, cf. REXER, *Festtheologie* [see note 22], pp. 97; 88.

<sup>67</sup> The rich and complex history of research on the date is referenced by MAYER, *Homilies* [see note 31], index p. 530, and tables pp. 162; 261; nevertheless – and in spite of the reference of *In diem natalem*, 6 (PG, 49, col. 358) to a subsequent preacher, probably the bishop; cf. MAYER, *Homilies*, pp. 323; 341; 345; 354; 465f. – she reduces the degree of certainty about Antiochene provenance of the homily to probability (MAYER, *Homilies*, p. 469). Most recent considerations come from FÖRSTER, *Feier* [see note 9], pp. 161-179, who argues that the congregation of Paulinus began to celebrate Christmas around 375 AD under the influence of Jerome.

<sup>68</sup> John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*, 1 (PG, 49, col. 351).

<sup>69</sup> Constantinople, while generally being liturgically dependent from Antioch, belonged to the periphery of its liturgical realm before it became a successful liturgical centre in its own right, spreading its liturgy as what later was to become the Byzantine rite. In addition to its Antiochene pedigree and the influence from nearby Cappadocia, personified by the bishops John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus, the Byzantine rite is the product of a repeated give-and-take of the capital especially with Palestine, happening well after the Golden Age of patristic preaching: R. F. TAFT, *The Byzantine Rite. A Short History* (*American Essays in Liturgy*), Collegetown, MN, 1992.

Be that as it may, other homilies undoubtedly preached in Antioch confirm the insertion of Christmas in the festal calendar of the Orontes metropolis. Most notably, the sermon *De beato Philogonio*, 3-4 (CPG 4319) distinguishes the Nativity, which he emphatically calls “the most venerable and awe-inspiring of all feasts, which one would not fail to address as the metropolis of all feasts”, from Christ’s “Baptism, which is the Theophany”. The hyperbolic language and the persuasive case the preacher makes in the following to show that all other feasts – namely Pascha, Ascension, and Pentecost along with Epiphany – “took their content-matter (‘ὑπόθεσις’)” from Christ’s Nativity may be taken as an indication that the celebration was still not deeply rooted in his audience.<sup>70</sup> More difficult is the case of *De sancta Pentecoste*, 1, 1 (CPG 4343), where Chrysostom enumerates the content-matters of three feasts, beginning with “our first feast”, Epiphany; “what, then, is the content-matter of the feast? That God ‘has appeared on earth and sojourned with the humans’ (*Bar*, 3, 38)”.<sup>71</sup> From this, it has often been concluded that Christmas had not been introduced when the Pentecost homily was delivered;<sup>72</sup> indeed, John Chrysostom uses the same biblical proof text here for the content of Epiphany as in the exordium of his Christmas homily,<sup>73</sup> which could insinuate a shift of festal contents from the former to the latter feast. Nathalie Rambault, however, has recently argued that Chrysostom may have referred to the old triad of Christian feasts in order to offer a polemical counterpart to the “three feasts” of the Jews according to *Exod.*, 23, 17,<sup>74</sup> and that Christmas was at any rate known to him at the point when he preached on Pentecost;<sup>75</sup> furthermore, the description of the festal content may refer to Christ’s Baptism as well as to his Nativity.<sup>76</sup> A definite decision appears difficult.

Corroborative evidence comes from the lists of feasts in the Apostolic Constitutions;<sup>77</sup> although they are generally thought to have been redacted in the Antiochian realm in the last quarter of the 4th century, they are not to be used for historical questions without a certain danger of circular reasoning.

<sup>70</sup> PG, 48, col. 752f.

<sup>71</sup> RAMBAULT, *Homélie sur la résurrection, l’ascension et la pentecôte*, tome 2, p. 208, ll. 61-63.

<sup>72</sup> Most recently, cf. FÖRSTER, *Anfänge* [see note 9], p. 125.

<sup>73</sup> John Chrysostom, *In diem natalem*, 1 (PG, 49, col. 351).

<sup>74</sup> *De sancta Pentecoste* 1, 1 (RAMBAULT, *Homélie sur la résurrection, l’ascension et la pentecôte*, tome 2, p. 206).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the “ten years” mentioned in John Chrysostom’s *In diem natalem*, 1 (PG, 49, col. 351).

<sup>76</sup> N. RAMBAULT, Introduction to her *Homélie sur la résurrection, l’ascension et la pentecôte*, p. 64 and p. 209, n. 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions*, 5, 13, 1f. (METZGER, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, tome 2, p. 246) distinguishes the feast of the Nativity on Dec. 25th from the feast of Epiphany “on which the Lord made for us a demonstration of his divinity”, on Jan. 6th (according to *Apostolic Constitutions*, 7, 36, 2 [M. METZGER [ed.], *Les constitutions apostoliques* tome 3, *Livres VII et VIII* (SC, 336), Paris, 1987, p. 82], which does not refer to the festal calendar, “he demonstrated himself as God in the baptism”); *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8, 33, 6f. (METZGER, *Les constitutions apostoliques*, tome 3, p. 242) repeats the terminology and explicitly refers to Christ’s baptism.



### 3.1.2. Epiphany

Chrysostom's *De beato Philogonio* and the earlier evidence from Gregory of Nazianzus's Constantinople both demonstrate that the Baptism of Christ had quickly become the content of Epiphany after the introduction of Christmas in both cities, Antioch and Constantinople. John Chrysostom's sermon *De baptismo Christi* (CPG 4335), which cannot be localised confidently,<sup>78</sup> confirms this shift. After a long complaint about the meagre participation of his audience in the Sunday services "once the feast has passed",<sup>79</sup> he straightforwardly identifies the content-matter of Epiphany, which – other than the name of the feast – was overtly not known to many, as "the day, on which he was baptised", in contrast to "the day when he was born". He quotes *Tit.*, 2, 11-13 as the reading of the day (which was to become the choice of the medieval Byzantine liturgy<sup>80</sup>) and muses about the two appearances of Christ: "one this present one, which has already happened, the other one, which is yet to come and to happen at the end in glory".<sup>81</sup> Since by his being baptised Christ "hallowed the nature of the waters ..., also at midnight at this feast all people, having drawn water, stow the waters away at home and keep it for the whole year, that is the waters which have been hallowed today";<sup>82</sup> with this hint, the sermon provides the first description of what was to be ritualised as the solemn water blessing in oriental liturgies.<sup>83</sup> Subsequently, Chrysostom distinguishes Christ's Baptism from both, the Baptisms – i.e., lustratory ablutions – of the Jews and the Christian Baptism, which forgives sins and bestows the Spirit, and ponders on his fulfilment of righteousness (*Matt.*, 3, 15).<sup>84</sup> He concludes the sermon with an admonition to the "many among you, who approach this holy table because of the habit of the feast", affording valuable insights into eucharistic practice and piety as well as into the popular bad habit of leaving before the final song of thanksgiving, whilst others still were communicating.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Earlier research as summarised by MAYER, *Homilies* [see note 31], index p. 520; tables pp. 162; 255; 261, opted for Antioch, but without convincing proof; MAYER's lists of provenance *Homilies*, pp. 469; 511, therefore omit the sermon.

<sup>79</sup> John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, 1 (PG, 49, col. 363).

<sup>80</sup> J. MATEOS, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église. Ms. Saint-Croix n° 40, X<sup>e</sup> siècle. Tome I: Le cycle des douze mois* (OCA, 165), Roma, 1962, p. 187.

<sup>81</sup> John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, 2 (PG, 49, col. 365).

<sup>82</sup> John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, 2 (PG, 49, coll. 365f.).

<sup>83</sup> N. DENYSENKO, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany: The Eastern Liturgical Tradition (Liturgy, Worship and Society)*, Farnham, 2012.

<sup>84</sup> John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi*, 3f. (PG, 49, coll. 366-369).

<sup>85</sup> *De baptismo Christi*, 4 (PG, 49, coll. 369-372), alluding to the chant of the Sanctus and mentioning the closing of the doors as well as post-communion "songs of thanksgiving" and a "last prayer after the sacrifice"; the passage is therefore an important source of F. VAN DE PAVERD, *Zur Geschichte der Messliturgie in Antiocheia und Konstantinopel gegen Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts. Analyse der Quellen bei Johannes Chrysostomos* (OCA, 187), Roma, 1970, index p. 563.

For the sake of completeness, two more texts from the Chrysostomic corpus can be added here to the dossier, though their provenance is impossible to determine. The first is a homily on *Tit.*, 2, 11 (CPG 4456). The text is not only transmitted in a liturgical manuscript for Epiphany, but also assigned to that feast by its editor, Antoine Wenger,<sup>86</sup> although it commences as part of a consecutive series of exegetical homilies on different biblical texts<sup>87</sup> and does not give a clear hint at a festal context (or, for that matter, at the Baptism of Christ, although it mentions in passing Christian baptism). Finally, there is Chrysostom's *In Matthaeum homilia*, 12 (CPG 4424) on the baptismal episode *Matt.*, 3, 13-17.<sup>88</sup> This text was apparently also transmitted on the occasion of Epiphany and adapted for that purpose with some appropriate opening words.<sup>89</sup> As neither of these texts can be localised, they cannot be inserted into an overall reconstruction of the feast's earliest developments.

### 3.2. Severian of Gabala

From the sermons preached by Gregory of Nazianzus in his short tenure as bishop of Constantinople (379-381 AD) it is clear that December 25th was introduced into the festal calendar of the capital decades before Severian's activity (in the first years of the 5th century, before 408 AD). Gregory attests Christmas as feast of Christ's Nativity, which maintained the name of Theophany<sup>90</sup> but left January 6th as the "Day of Lights" vacant to attract the Baptism of Jesus as the festal content of the day.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> A. WENGER, *Une homélie inédite de Jean Chrysostome sur l'Épiphanie*, in *REB*, 29 (1971), pp. 117-135. *Sinai gr.*, 491 (8-9th century), foll. 116-129, is a liturgical collection. Whereas [pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr](http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr) (accessed December 2016) does not mention the homily in its index of the other manuscript used by Wenger, *Paris gr.*, 700, foll. 136-166 (obviously not a liturgical collection), it does register another non-liturgical manuscript, *Mount Athos, Iviron*, 255 (14th century), foll. 237-240. To MAYER, *Homilies* [see note 31], p. 26, "the style and vocabulary seem ... to be sufficiently alien to Chrysostom to raise doubts."

<sup>87</sup> According to the opening lines, the lection of the preceding day was *Matt.*, 5, 28 – not a particularly suitable choice for the Christmas/Epiphany season.

<sup>88</sup> *PG*, 57, coll. 191-208.

<sup>89</sup> WENGER, *Homélie* [see note 86], p. 117, with reference to *Sinai gr.*, 491 [cf. note 86], foll. 72-87v, confirmed by the *Pinakes*-database. The introduction of *In Matthaeum homilia*, 12, 1 (*PG*, 57, coll. 201f.) integrates the baptism of Christ into the context of his incarnation and crucifixion; its corpus # 3 (*PG*, 57, col. 206) reflects on the effect the baptism of Jesus has on Jewish and Christian baptisms: "by fulfilling the Jewish baptism, he opened the door for the one of the Church ... in one stream at the same time describing the shadow and adding the truth."

<sup>90</sup> *Oratio* 38, 3 (MORESCHINI – GALLAY [eds], *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours* 38-41, p. 108) debates the terminology of "Θεοφάνια ... εἴτουσιν Γενέθλια".

<sup>91</sup> See above, note 65.

### 3.2.1. *Christmas*

There is an extensive dossier of sermons on the Nativity of Christ attributed to Severian transmitted in several languages, although none of them can unequivocally be identified as an authentic Christmas homily. Because the feast was well established in Constantinople at his time, it may suffice to simply list (1) a Greek sermon *In incarnationem Domini* (CPG 4204) edited critically by Remco F. Regtuit and held, at best (if at all) some time after Christmas,<sup>92</sup> (2) the Syriac homily *De nativitate* (CPG 4260) edited by Cyril Moss (with supplementary fragments contained in a florilège of John Maron), which comes from a series of dogmatic homilies rather than a festal context,<sup>93</sup> (3) the Armenian homily *De incarnatione* (CPG 4240), equally unlikely to be a festal homily for Christmas,<sup>94</sup> and (4) an unedited Arabic sermon *De epiphania et de nativitate* (CPG 4290) identified by Joseph-Marie Sauget in a Melkite manuscript.<sup>95</sup> (5) The exordium of two Coptic fragments *In natalem Domini* (CPG 4282) edited by Enzo Lucchesi makes unambiguously clear that they belong to a festal homily on Christmas, although its corpus deals at length with the annunciation by Gabriel; but unfortunately they are of disputed authenticity.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> R. F. REGTUIT, *Severian of Gabala. Homily on the Incarnation of Christ* (CPG 4204). *Text, Translation and Introduction*, Amsterdam, 1992. The homily opens with an allusion to *Tit*, 2, 11 (REGTUIT, *Severian of Gabala. Homily on the Incarnation of Christ*, p. 234, l. 1; the reading is attested in John Chrysostom's Epiphany homily and adopted as epistle of that Feast in the Byzantine liturgy; cf. above, ch. 3.1.2) with n. 80) and concludes with *Joh*, 1, 14 and *Bar*, 3, 38 (*ibidem*, p. 286, ll. 744f.); the intention to "meet our debt" to "speak about Christ" (*ibidem*, p. 234, ll. 22; 25f.; cf. p. 284, l. 738), however, suggests that if any connection to Christmas were to be made, the homily would come after the feast (as do several others of Severian's; cf. above, ch. 2.2 with n. 51-55).

<sup>93</sup> C. MOSS, *Homily on the Nativity of our Lord by Severian, Bishop of Gabala*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 12 (1947-1948), pp. 555-566; fragments in M. BREYDY (ed.), *Jean Maron. Exposé de la foi et autres opuscules* (CSCO, 497 = CSCO.S, 209 / CSCO, 498 = CSCO.S, 210), Leuven, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 68f.; vol. 2, pp. 30f., n° 44f. The introduction refers back to a homily on the previous Sunday "against the Jews" about the basic articles of Christology.

<sup>94</sup> *Homilia 2 De incarnatione* (AUCHER, *Severiani sive Seberiani Gabalorum episcopi Emesensis homiliae*, pp. 16-55). Nothing points to a festal context, and *Joh*, 10, 32f. as "today's reading" (*ibidem*, p. 34) would be a strange choice at Christmas.

<sup>95</sup> J. M. SAUGET, *Un homélie melkite bipartite: Le manuscrit Beyrouth, Bibliothèque Orientale* 510, in *Mus*, 101 (1988), pp. 231-290, here pp. 286f., n° 49. The text begins with an allusion to *Tit*, 2, 11 [cf. also above, note 92], and the continuation of the first sentence makes it clear that the sermon was held at a feast of Christ.

<sup>96</sup> E. LUCCHESI, *Un sermon copte de Sévérien de Gabala sur la Nativité du Christ (attribué aussi à Proclus de Constantinople)*, in *AB*, 97 (1979), pp. 111-127; exordium p. 117. While M. AUBINEAU, *Un traité inédit de christologie de Sévérien de Gabala In centurionem et contra Manichaeos et Apollinaristas* (*Cahiers d'Orientalisme*, 5), Genève, 1983, p. 21, accepts the authenticity, S. J. VOICU, *Sévérien* [see note 42], col. 758; S. J. VOICU, *Fogli copti di Severiano di Gabala, De serpente* (CPG 4196), in *Augustinianum*, 34 (1994), pp. 471-474, here p. 474, considers the fragments as spurious.

### 3.2.2. Epiphany

The sermon *In theophaniam* (CPG 4212, still partly unpublished<sup>97</sup>) commences with the old Constantinopolitan – and Cappadocian – notion of the “Day of Light”,<sup>98</sup> and hails the advent (“παρουσία”) of Christ before tying up with the “refrain which we sang”, *Ps.*, 79(80), 8 = 20 (a verse which contains the cue word “ἐπιφάνων”<sup>99</sup> and returns as Prokeimenon after the 9th reading of the Epiphany vigil in the medieval Byzantine liturgy),<sup>100</sup> and commenting on the opening verses of that psalm which can be assumed to have been sung in its entirety.<sup>101</sup> The actualisation of the benefactions of God in Christ’s Epiphany is then concretised in the ranks of the Church (prophet, apostle, priest, deacon, reader, and emperor).<sup>102</sup> The conception that “John baptised in the rank of a priest and Christ was baptised in the rank of a lay-person” builds the bridge to the Gospel of the day and a reference to the obviously traditional notion that Christ “bestowed holiness to the waters”. In this context, the preacher touches the old baptismal terminology of “enlightening” and describes the action of the Spirit at Christ’s Baptism in the sacramental terms of “mystagogy” and “sealing”.<sup>103</sup> It would not be Severian if he had missed the opportunity of a side blow at unspecified “heretics, who did not fear the voice ‘This is my Son, the beloved; listen to him’ (continuing *Matt*, 3, 17 with *Matt*, 17, 15)”, expounding Christ as “fulfilling of the law” (conflating *Rom*, 13, 10 with *Matt*, 5, 17).<sup>104</sup> After considerations about the fulfilment of *Is*, 35, 2,<sup>105</sup> the sermon concludes with a retrospect to a full vigil “from evening on” with “hymns and words about God” and reiterating the initial motif of light.<sup>106</sup> A fragment published by Antoine Wenger and thought to stem from the peroration of this homily likewise expounds on the motif of light and continues with political allusions to the emperor, which obviously were dropped in the history of textual transmission.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>97</sup> VOICU, *Sévérien de Gabala* [see note 42], col. 756; S. J. VOICU, *Due sermoni pseudo-agostiniani tradotti dal greco*, in *Augustinianum*, 19 (1979), pp. 517-519, has identified the (pseudo-) Augustinian *Sermo*, 138 (*PL*, 39, coll. 2017f.) as a Latin version of this text.

<sup>98</sup> See above, introduction to ch. 3, with nn. 65f.

<sup>99</sup> “ἐπιφανεῖν” first appeared in § 1 for describing the “apparition of the truth” (*PL*, 39, col. 16 A).

<sup>100</sup> ΜΑΤΕΟΣ, *typicon* [see note 80], vol. 1, p. 179.

<sup>101</sup> *In theophaniam*, 1-5 (*PG*, 65, coll. 16 A-20 A). Although the preacher first speaks of the “ἡμέρα φωτός” (*PG*, 65, col. 16 A) and about Christ’s “παρουσία”, § 5 (*PG*, 65, col. 20 A) also mentions the “ἐπιφάνεια”, and the respective verb “ἐπιφανεῖν” is prominent in both, the sermon and the liturgy it comments upon; cf. n. 99 and the importance of *Ps.*, 79(80), 8 = 20.

<sup>102</sup> *In theophaniam*, 6 (*PG*, 65, col. 20 A-B).

<sup>103</sup> *In theophaniam*, 7f. (*PG*, 65, col. 20 C-21 C).

<sup>104</sup> *In theophaniam*, 9f. (*PG*, 65, col. 21 C-24 C).

<sup>105</sup> *In theophaniam*, 10f. (*PG*, 65, col. 24 B-26 A).

<sup>106</sup> *In theophaniam*, 12 (*PG*, 65, col. 25 A-B).

<sup>107</sup> A. WENGER, *Notes inédites sur les empereurs Théodose I, Arcadius, Théodose II, Léon I*, in *REB*, 10 (1952), pp. 47-59, here p. 48f.

Contested by its editor and plainly rejected by Sever Voicu is the attribution to Severian of the pseudo-chrysostomic festal sermon *De epiphania* (CPG 4882),<sup>108</sup> which deals with the Baptism of Christ as narrated by *Matt*, 3 as manifestation (Epiphany) of Christ.

### 3.3. Epilogue: The pseudo-chrysostomic homily *In sancta lumina vel In baptismum et tentationem* (CPG 4735)

A brief concluding remark shall be devoted to the pseudo-chrysostomic homily *In sancta lumina* or rather *In baptismum et tentationem* (CPG 4735), critically edited by Karl-Heinz Uthemann.<sup>109</sup> It is attributed to Severian with caution by Antoine Wenger and Judit Kecskéméti,<sup>110</sup> to John Chrysostom himself by Thomas Halton,<sup>111</sup> and to an anonymous preacher educated in Antioch but probably active before 415 AD in Constantinople by Sever Voicu.<sup>112</sup> The multifaceted sermon does not disclose its precise liturgical context: it explicitly links up with a sermon given the day before, probably on the exordium of Paul's epistle to the Romans or Corinthians,<sup>113</sup> and refers to *Gal*, 1, 1 as point of departure of the present homily.<sup>114</sup> Afterwards, it moves on to expound Jesus's Baptism,<sup>115</sup> in passing polemicizing against Christological heresies attributed to "Markionites and Manichaeans"<sup>116</sup> and defending a non-arian understanding of *Matt*, 3, 17, "you are my son, in whom I have been well pleased".<sup>117</sup> Having stressed from the outset that "the devil did not know what happened from the

<sup>108</sup> A. WENGER, *Une homélie inédite (de Sévérien de Gabala?) sur l'Épiphanie*, in *AB*, 95 (1977), pp. 73-90; cf. VOICU, *Sévérien de Gabala* [see note 42], col. 759, following AUBINEAU, *Un traité inédit de christologie de Sévérien de Gabala* [see note 96], pp. 20f. The homily comes from the liturgical collection *Sinai gr.*, 491, foll. 103-115v [cf. notes 86 and 89].

<sup>109</sup> K. H. UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem* (BHG 1936m; CPG 4735). *Kritische Edition mit Einleitung (Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 1994, 3), Heidelberg, 1994.

<sup>110</sup> A. WENGER, *La tradition des œuvres de saint Jean Chrysostome. I. catéchèses inconnues et homélies peu connues*, in *REB*, 14 (1956), pp. 5-47, here p. 46: "elle semble devoir revenir à Sévérien de Gabala"; J. KECSKEMÉTI, *Sévérien de Gabala: exégète et théologien antiochien méconnu*, in *Euphrosyne, N.S.*, 24 (1996), pp. 99-126, here p. 122.

<sup>111</sup> T. HALTON, *Two Newly-Edited Homilies of John Chrysostom*, in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 43 (1976), pp. 133-138.

<sup>112</sup> S. J. VOICU, *Une nomenclature pour les anonymes du corpus pseudo-chrysostomien*, in *Byz.*, 51 (1981), pp. 297-305, here p. 302; S. J. VOICU, *Sévérien de Gabala* [see note 42], col. 759.

<sup>113</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 1, 3; 2, 1 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, pp. 122; 124).

<sup>114</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 3, 4 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 125).

<sup>115</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 4 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, pp. 128-132).

<sup>116</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 3, 7 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 127).

<sup>117</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 4, 6, 3 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 132).

beginning”,<sup>118</sup> although “the devil was present and saw what happened” already at the Baptism,<sup>119</sup> the preacher continues to comment on the Temptation by the same devil (*Matt*, 4, 1-11).<sup>120</sup> The notice that the latter “entered into the soul of Judas (cf. *Luk*, 22, 3), so that he would betray him (sc. Jesus; *Joh*, 13, 2)” provides a bridge to continue the sermon with the crucifixion. Especially the Lukan anecdote of the Good Thief (*Luk*, 23, 40-43), which he likewise develops as an argument with and against the devil. The opening of the tombs (*Matt*, 27, 52f.) and the descent into Hades conclude the contest between Christ, who is demonstrated to be God, and the devil.<sup>121</sup>

Although the sermon was transmitted by most manuscript witnesses in liturgical collections for Epiphany,<sup>122</sup> it is implausible that the sermon originally belongs to a celebration of that feast. The homily departs not from the festal contents of Epiphany, but from Pauline scriptural passages; in the complex contents of its corpus, the Baptism plays an important, but not dominant role.<sup>123</sup> Not least references of the introduction not only to two subsequent days of preaching, but also to the “synaxis on the Lord’s day” with its “rest of/from the bodily things, so that there be work of the intellectual things”, and the opposition between the “two days, (which is) about intellectual contents, in which is salvation” and “the whole week, (which is) about affairs, in which is envy”,<sup>124</sup> virtually preclude a dating of the sermon on the variable weekday of January 6th.

To conclude: few significant commonalities can be identified between John Chrysostom’s and Severian’s Epiphany sermons, but both authors do offer significant insights into the early celebration and understanding of one of the most complex and fascinating feasts of the Christian calendar. Apart from their documentary value, they also shed light on processes of liturgical development in a period of intensive exchange between various liturgical centres, especially Antioch and Constantinople, but also Jerusalem and, in the case of Christmas, the West.

<sup>118</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 4, 1 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 128, l. 1).

<sup>119</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 4, 4 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 128, l. 39).

<sup>120</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 5 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, pp. 132-134).

<sup>121</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 6f. (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, pp. 134-137).

<sup>122</sup> UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem* [see note 109], p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> The quotation of *Matt*, 4, 4 links the exordium *In baptismum et tentationem*, 2, 3 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 124, l. 43) with the corpus of the homily; *Matt*, 4, 3 returns in the final part *In baptismum et tentationem*, 6, 5, 1 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, p. 136).

<sup>124</sup> *In baptismum et tentationem*, 2, 3 (UTHEMANN, *Die Pseudo-Chrysostomische Predigt In Baptismum et Tentationem*, pp. 124f.).