365, before 21 July,[24] my reconstruction implies that the traditional date, shortly after October 368,[25] is preferable.

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[24] Cf. most recently G. Fatouros, T. Krischer and W. Portmann, *Libanios. Kaiserreden* (Stuttgart, 2002), 132–3.
[25] Cf. Sievers (n. 11) 253; J. Bidez, *La vie de l'empereur Julien* (Paris, 1965), 336; E. Bliembach, *Libanios. Oratio 18 (Epitaphios). Kommentar (Par. 111–308)* (Wurzburg, 1976), xliv.

HOMER, THE BIBLE AND BEYOND: A NOTE ON *CHR. PAT.* 83–7

The dramatic text known as *Christus Patiens* is still badly in need of a good edition and commentary;[1] recent research has demonstrated that, despite the unanimous manuscript attribution (followed amongst others by the latest editor[2]), it is not the work of Gregory of Nazianz, but rather a much later Byzantine product, perhaps dating from the eleventh or twelfth centuries.[3] Its author has often been charged with having composed a mechanical and tasteless cento of lines drawn from ancient tragedies, and only recently have some scholars rehabilitated him by highlighting some of his indisputable merits.[4] In this note, I shall point to one particular instance of pregnant and meaningful poetic reminiscence in the *Christus Patiens*.

Lines 1–90 of the drama are a long monologue in which the Virgin Mary, having a premonition of the Passion about to take place (we are in the night of Judas' treason), complains about the faults of mankind, about her son's fate and about her own suffering. Towards the end of this monologue, the Mother of God speaks about the Annunciation and recalls her reaction of joy as well as the 'sacrifice' she made on that occasion: she combines a long quotation from the words of Clytaemestra (ll. 79–82 are almost entirely drawn from the queen's *rhesis* in Aesch. *Ag.* 594–7)[5] with an

[1] A seminar work on this topic is currently being carried out at the Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa) under the direction of Glenn W. Most. This note grows out of a session of that seminar, and I am grateful to the participants for their suggestions.
[2] Grégoire de Nazianze, *La Passion du Christ,* ed. A. Tuilier (Paris, 1969).
[3] I believe the lexical arguments brought by W. Hörandner, *Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum Christos Paschon*, in E. Trapp (ed.), *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie* (Wien, 1988), 183–202, to be almost conclusive in this respect.
[4] I especially refer to two recent articles, which also give full bibliographic references to the debated issue of the date and authorship of this text: K. Pollmann, 'Jesus Christus und Dionysos. Überlegungen zu dem Euripides-Cento Christus Patiens', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997), 87–106; W. Puchner, 'Theaterwissenschaftliche und andere Anmerkungen zum "Christus Patiens"', *Anzeiger der Österr. Akad. der Wiss. – Phil.-hist. Klasse* 129 (1992), 93–143.
[5] Ll. 79–82: *ὅμως δ' ἔθυον καὶ γυναικείῳ νόμῳ / ψυχῆς τ' ἔπεμπον ἀλαλαγμὸν ἐκ μέσης, / λάσκουσ' ἀνευφημοῦσα τὴν ἀγγελίαν, / θυηφάγον φέρουσά τ' εὐώδη φλόγα*. The ἀλαλαγμὸς might be understood as a hint to the *Magnificat*, a prayer that immediately follows the Annunciation scene in the Gospel of Luke: see Luc. 1.26–38 and 46–55. I owe this point to Carlo Pernigotti.

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explicit, if hitherto unnoticed, reference to the Old Testament: in fact, the flame she carried after Gabriel's announcement was (ll. 83–6):

> *οἵαν θύειν φράζουσιν οἱ θεοπρόποι,*
> *ζῆλον ἔμπυρον, πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον,*
> *ἔρωτά τ'ἀκάθεκτον, ἔνθερμον λίαν,*
> *ἃ θυσίαν οἴδαμεν εὐφημουμένην.*

In Christian literature the term *θεοπρόπος* often designates divinely inspired people, especially the prophets of the Old Testament.[6] Now, the text alluded to is not strictly speaking a prophetic book, but the penitential Psalm 50: 18–19:

ὅτι εἰ ἠθέλησας θυσίαν, ἔδωκα ἄν· ὁλοκαυτώματα οὐκ εὐδοκήσεις. θυσία τῷ θεῷ πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον, καρδίαν συντετριμμένην καὶ τεταπεινωμένην ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐξουθενώσει.

This passage was very popular among Byzantine writers of iambic poetry.[7] In our context, the Virgin Mary means that by accepting happily the announcement of the unexpected childbirth she sacrificed to God her own 'contrite soul'. The meaning and the cultural frame of Clytaemestra's offering of the *φλόξ* in the *Agamemnon* are thus radically transformed.

As for the rest of the sentence, other signs of the continuous co-penetration of Christian and pagan wording are the following:

l. 84 *ζῆλον ἔμπυρον*, a metaphor certainly elicited by the *φλόξ* in l. 82, implies a use of *ζῆλος* as 'ardent enthusiasm' that is almost entirely foreign to the Biblical tradition[8] and might be reminiscent of a passage of Romanus the Melode;[9]

l. 85 *ἔρως ἀκάθεκτος* is anything but a pious expression: its direct source is Ps.-Phocylides' wise admonition (*sent.* 193) *μηδ' ἐς ἔρωτα γυναικὸς ἅπας ῥεύσῃς ἀκάθεκτον*, a *tournure* that was picked up—in a less equivocal but no less religiously heterodox context—by Michael Psellus in his *Autobiography*;[10]

[6] Philo (*ebr.* 85, *conf. ling.* 29 and *de fug.* 139) applies it to Moses; minor prophets are meant in Did. Caec. *comm. in Zach*. 2.8, 6 and 3.273, 7; Hsch. *θ* 293 Latte and Phot. *lex. θ* 103 Theodoridis (in the wake of a long tradition) gloss *θεοπρόπος* with the two synonyms *μάντις* and *προφήτης*. The term is even used for Christ in Nonn. *par.* 4.29 and for Caiaphas in *par.* 11.51. In the *Christus patiens* the word occurs in the sense of 'prophets of the Old Testament' in ll. 589, 735 (paraphrasing Luc. 18.31 *προφῆται*), 1401 (paraphrasing Matth. 12.39–40), 1688, 1729, 1761; in ll. 1599–1600 Jerusalem is described first as *Δαυΐδου χθών* and then as *θαλάμευμα τῶν πάλαι θεοπρόπων*.

[7] See e.g. Theod. Stud. *iamb.* 45.2–3 *ἴθι, προσοῖσον πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον / καὶ τοῦτο θῦμα δεκτόν ἐστι Κυρίῳ* (see also *iamb.* 94.9 Speck). Joh. Geom. *An. Oxon.* IV, 362, 18–19 Cramer *ἀλλ' ἀντὶ πολλῶν ταῦτα θυμάτων δέχου / ψυχὴν ταπεινήν, πνεῦμα συντετριμμένον*. Nicol. Muzalon *Parait.* 1023–4 *τὴν καθαρὰν θύοιτε Χριστῷ καρδίαν / καὶ πνεῦμα προσφέροιτε συντετριμμένον*. All of these writers, with the possible exception of the last (early 12th century) are prior in date to the *Christus Patiens*.

[8] See the article *ζῆλος* by A. Stumpff, in G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Grande lessico del nuovo testamento* (Ital. revised edn ed. by F. Montagnini, G. Scarpat and O. Soffritti) (Brescia, 1967), 3.1485–1501.

[9] Rom. Mel. *cant. dub.* 81 stroph. 4, 6 *ἔμπυρον ἔχων ζῆλον ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀληθείας γενναίως ἠγωνίζετο*; on Romanus as a source for *Christus Patiens* see the review of Tuilier's edition (quoted above n. 2) by J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1972), 363–72 at 366–71. The same *iunctura* occurs, however, in Greg. Naz. *carm. mor.* 2.10, 710 (*PG* 37.731); Jo. Dam. *Homil. in transfig. Dom.*, in *PG* 96.556, 3. And *ζῆλος διάπυρος* is a frequent expression in Byzantine authors.

[10] Mich. Ps. *enc. in matrem* 1802–5 Criscuolo (his thoughts after his taking monastic vows): *ἔδει μὲν οὖν μόνῳ σχολάζειν Θεῷ καὶ μάλιστα νῦν ὁπότε μοι ὁ κόσμος ἀπείρηται, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα, ἀλλ' ὁ περὶ πᾶσαν γνῶσιν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀκάθεκτος ἔρως, ἀλλ' ἡ παρὰ τῶν ὁμιλούντων ἀνάγκη πεπείκασι καὶ τούτος ἐμφιλοχωρεῖν*.

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l. 86 *εὐφημουμένην* recalls the use of the same verb in l. 81 *λάσκουσ' ἀνευφημοῦσα τὴν ἀγγελίαν* (and its source Aesch. *Ag.* 596), but is also probably influenced by the use of the verb *εὐδοκέω* in the sense of 'receive with pleasure, value highly (a sacrifice)' in Psalm 50: 18 and 21 (*τότε εὐδοκήσεις θυσίαν δικαιοσύνης*), the same Psalm Mary is expressly quoting in these lines.

Yet, the best sample of the working methods of the anonymous author of our drama is the Virgin's exclamation in l. 87:

καὶ πῶς στροβεῖ μου σπλάγχνα νῦν δριμὺ βέλος;

Mary is evidently complaining about the absurdity of her present suffering in relation to Gabriel's happy and glorious announcement; but the form of this complaint is very peculiar indeed. First of all, the verb *στροβεῖ* comes somewhat unexpected in this context. An arrow or a spear would rather prick or wound someone's bowels than whirl them about: I believe the choice of this verb is determined by its occurrence in the fifth of the eleven remaining lines of a probably spurious prologue of the (Pseudo-) Euripidean *Rhesus* (*trag. adesp.* fr. 8l K.-Sn. = Eur. *Rhes.* test. Ia K. = fr. dub. 1109 N.[2]):

λόγχῃ βιαίως Ἕκτορος στροβούμενοι

(such is the condition of the Greek army in Hera's words to Zeus). This derivation is likely both because the association of the verb *στροβέω* with a pointed object is relatively rare,[11] and because the *Rhesus* is a capital source for the animated night scene in *Chr. Pat.* 88–99.[12] If this is true, it means that our author perused not only the *Rhesus* itself, but also its argument (*hyp.* III Jouan), the only source that preserves the aforementioned lines of the prologue, even if it formulates serious doubts about their authenticity.

Even more meaningful is the wording of the second hemistich of l. 87. *δριμὺ βέλος* is first of all a reference to Mary's suffering as described by Symeon in the Gospel of Luke (2:35 *καὶ σοῦ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία*), a passage already paraphrased in *Chr. Pat.* 27–30 (esp. 29 *καὶ καρδίαν δίεισιν ὡς ῥόπτρον μέγα*).[13]

But *δριμὺ βέλος* conceals much more than a Biblical background: in fact, it is an expression unknown to Greek poetry but for one Iliadic passage, which must thus be regarded as the direct source of our line. In 11.269–72 Homer describes Agamemnon's pain after he has been wounded by Koon and the blood has coagulated on his wound, and he compares it to women's labour pains:

[11] It might still be useful to point to two occurrences in crucial tragic scenes: Aesch. *Agam.* 1215–16 (at the beginning of Cassandra's monologue) *ὑπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος / στροβεῖ ταράσσων φροιμίοις* <x – ˘ –> and Aesch. *Cho.* 1051–2 (the chorus asks Orestes) *τίνες σε δόξαι, φίλτατ' ἀνθρώπων πατρί, / στροβοῦσιν;*

[12] See F. Jouan, 'L'utilisation du Rhésos euripidéen par l'auteur du *Christos Paschon*', in U. Criscuolo -R. Maisano (ed.), *Synodia. Studio, humanitatis Antonio Garzya septuagenario ab amicis atque discipulis dicata* (Napoli, 1997), 495–509, esp. 498–500. Ibid., *Euripide. Tragedies VII/2. Rhésos* (Paris, 2004), esp. lxxv–lxxvi. The relevant passages of *Rhesos* are all collected in Tuilier's apparatus to ll. 88–99, with the only exception of *Rhes.* 17 *Μῶν τις λόχος ἐκ νυκτῶν;* that justifies *λόχος* in *Chr. Pat.* 94, and of *Rhes.* 501 *ἔννυχος μολών* that may be recalled by *Chr. Pat.* 88 *ἔννυχος δραμεῖν*.

[13] The choice of the word *ῥόπτρον* in l. 29 must be connected with the *Δίκης . . . ῥόπτρον* in Eur. *Hipp.* 1171–2 (a line that will be echoed in *Chr. Pat.* 1436 as well): this is certified by the fact that schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 1172 (p. 124, 11 Schwartz) glosses *ῥόπτρον* precisely with *ῥομφαία*. I also remark *en passant* that *Chr. Pat.* 27 *ἄτερ δαλῶν* is a smart reminiscence of Hes. *op.* 705 *εὖει ἄτερ δαλοῖο*.

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ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ὠδίνουσαν ἔχῃ βέλος ὀξὺ γυναῖκα
δριμύ, τό τε προΐεισι μογοστόκοι Εἰλείθυιαι
Ἥρης θυγατέρες πικρὰς ὠδῖνας ἔχουσαι
ὣς ὀξεῖ' ὀδύναι δῦνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαο.

This passage was so highly praised in antiquity for its ἐνάργεια, that women believed it could not have possibly been written by a man: as Plutarch (*De Am. Prol.* 496d) puts it,

ταῦτ' οὐχ Ὅμηρον αἱ γυναῖκες ἀλλ' Ὁμηρίδα γράψαι λέγουσι τεκοῦσαν ἢ τίκτουσαν ἔτι καὶ τὸ νύγμα τῆς ἀλγηδόνος ὁμοῦ πικρὸν καὶ ὀξὺ γινόμενον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἔχουσαν.

It is possible that σπλάγχνα in our line is indebted to this passage of Plutarch or to an earlier, analogous piece of Homeric exegesis (the idea can be found in schol. bT *Λ* 269/71, p. 175, 34–5 Erbse). But what is more important, the allusion to the Homeric passage has a very strong contextual value, because in her monologue the Virgin Mary focuses precisely on the opposition between her present suffering and her previous painless pregnancy and delivery: see especially ll. 64 τόκους φυγοῦσα καὶ φθορὰν νῦν καὶ πάλαι and 70 πόνους φυγοῦσα πῶς ὀδυνῶμαι κέαρ;

The allusion we have just detected displays a sort of Alexandrian refinement: the two words δριμὺ βέλος (without the help of any other textual evidence) allude simultaneously to an evangelic passage and to a famous Homeric simile: via the latter, they subtly refer to the paradox of Mary's childbirth, which had been the main object of the Virgin's monologue in the foregoing lines of the drama.

Dubbio a posteriori:
i veri grandi poeti
sono i 'poeti minori'? (Giorgio Caproni).

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A CONJECTURE IN BENVENUTO CAMPESANI'S *VERSUS DE RESURRECTIONE CATULLI*

Ad patriam venio longis a finibus exul;
causa mei reditus compatriota fuit,
scilicet a calamis tribuit cui Francia nomen
quique notat turbae praetereuntis iter.
quo licet ingenio vestrum celebrate Catullum,
cuius sub modio clausa papirus erat.[1]

The discussion on this obscure poem has been dominated by the question of the identity of the unknown *compatriota Catulli* who brought about the return of the poet to his native town.[2] Perhaps the least debated passage was the fifth verse, where

[1] The text is quoted after Mynors' OCT (1958).
[2] See G. Billanovich, 'Il Catullo della cattedrale di Verona', in S. Krämer and M. Bernhard (edd.), *Scire litteras. Forschungen zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben* (Munich, 1988), 35–57, at 48–9.

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