

The lament of the virgin by Ephraem the Syrian

Authors: Willem Frederik Bakker, Dia Mary L. Philippides

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Ἐνθύμησις

ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ Μ. ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΑΚΗ

Ἐκδοτικὴ Ἐπιτροπὴ

Στέφανος Κακλαμάνης

Ἀθανάσιος Μαρχόπουλος

Γιάννης Μαυρομάτης

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΑΚΕΣ
ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ

ΒΙΚΕΛΑΙΑ ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΗ
ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΟΥ

THE LAMENT OF THE VIRGIN BY EPHRAEM THE SYRIAN

This article, dedicated to the memory of our good friend and colleague Nikos Panagiotakis (who, if still alive, would certainly have helped us with solving some of the many problems involved)¹, has as its subject a Lament of the Virgin handed down to us in Latin and traditionally attributed to Ephraem the Syrian (ca. 306-373). Its best-known version is to be found in the Ephraem-edition by Assemani²; it is entitled *Threni, i.e. Lamentationes gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae super Passione Domini*, and has as its *incipit*: *Stans iuxta crucem pura et immaculata Virgo*. Assemani may have borrowed the text from the Latin Ephraem-edition prepared (and for a great part translated) by Vossius³, although he does not acknowledge

¹ We have written this article in English, because we think that it might be of interest also to Western scholars outside the field of Medieval and Modern Greek studies; and, *not* coincidentally, don't we all remember that one of Nikos Panagiotakis' dearest wishes was to internationalize our field? We are very grateful to Prof. Margaret Alexiou for securing access for us to the wealth of the Widener and Houghton Libraries of Harvard University and to Ms. Margo McDonough of the Interlibrary Loan Division of O'Neill Library of Boston College for moving heaven and earth in order to get us photocopies of pages of editions by Lipomanus and Surius.

² Sancti Ephraem Syri, *Opera omnia quae exstant: graece, syriace, latine, in sex tomos distributa ad MSS. codices Vaticanos opere et studio Josephi Assemani*, Romae: J. M. H. Salvioni, 1732-46, vol. III, 574-575.

³ Sancti Ephraem Syri, *Opera omnia quotquot in insignioribus Italiae Bibliothecis, praecipue Romanis, Graece inveniri potuerunt, in tres tomos gesta, Nunc recent. Latinitate donata, Scholiisque illustrata, Interprete e Scholiaste Gerardo Vossio*. Ed. tertia, Coloniae: Arnoldus Quentelius, 1616 (3 parts in one vol.), Vol. III, 697-698 [Ed. prima: Romae: Iacobus Tornerius, Vol. I 1589, Vol. II 1593, Vol. III 1597; secunda: Coloniae: Arnoldus Quentelius, 1603-04 (3 t. in 1 vol.); the same publisher issued

this dependence in so many words⁴: at any rate, title and text are the same. Neither Vossius, nor Assemani tell us the source of the text they publish⁵. Vossius, however, must have known of (two) other versions of the text, but again, he does not say whether he saw them in manuscript or in published form⁶. And indeed,

an edition in 1619, and there is also another edition from Anvers in 1619 (1 vol.)). We ourselves have used the third edition described above. As far as at least as the *Threni* are concerned, the Rome-edition of 1597 was not the first. According to Jo. Albertus Fabricius (*Bibliotheca Graeca, Liberi XII*, Hamburgi: Christianus Liebezeit, 1712, Liber V, 334) Vossius published this text twice before: “Sermones aliquot ex eiusdem [= Vossii] interpretatione prodierant Romae 1582.4 et Ephraemus de passione Christi et Threni sanctissimae Virginis prope crucem stantis ibid. 1585.12”. See also Assemani I, p. XIII: “Ephraemus *de passione Christi, et Threni Sanctissimae Virginis prope Crucem stantis*, ex antiqua versione prodire Romae 1585 ... Prodiit deinceps Romae parvulus libellus eiusdem Ephraem Latinus factus, in *Passionem Domini nostri Jesu Christi*”. We have not been able yet to find these two booklets, but one may assume that they offer the same text as the big Ephraem-edition of a few years later. One can be sure that Vossius did not translate (from the Greek) the text of the *Lamentatio*, because in this case the phrase “Eodem Gerard. Vossio Interprete et Scholiaste”, which he always uses, is missing.

⁴ One may assume this from what Assemani says in Vol. III, pp. LIII-IV: “Syri tum Maronitae tum Jacobitae in officio Feriae VI. in Parasceve Ephraemianos B. Virginis Threnos canunt Syriace, e quibus hic Latinus videtur desumptus, quem Vossius edidit”.

⁵ Vossius does not say much about his sources (see “Ad lectorem” and Vol. III, 812); and, although Assemani mentions in his notes many (Roman) manuscripts with Latin texts attributed to Ephraem (Vol. I, pp. LXXXI-II, LXXXV; Vol. III, pp. LIII, LV), we have not been able to find the text of the *Threni* in the available catalogues of the libraries of Rome. Two specialists on the early Fathers whom we approached to help us with this problem, Père Michel Aubineau of Paris and Professor Sebastian Brock of Oxford, gave us all the advice they could, but were not able to tell us where to look. We thank them both for their kindness. A more recent edition of Ephraem’s *Lamentatio* (*Collectio selecta S.S. Ecclesiae Patrum, complectens exquisitissima opera tum dogmatica et moralia, tum apologetica et oratoria*; accurantibus A.B. Caillau ... una cum d. M.N.S. Guillon, Parisiis 1829-1842. Tomus XXXVII, 440-444) also does not mention the manuscript or manuscripts where this work can be found.

⁶ Vossius, Vol. III, 200: “Ad titulum sive inscriptionem huius orationis quod attinet, ea alia atque alia invenitur; nunc enim sic: ‘Eiusdem S. Patris nostri Ephraem Threni, idest, Lamentationes gloriosissimae Virginis Matris Mariae’ etc. ut hic reposuimus; nunc vero al. ita: ‘Lamentatio sanctissimae Dei genitricis stantis iuxta crucem Domini’, per eundem S. Patrem Ephraem; et nunc al. ‘Eiusdem S. Patris Ephraem Syri Threnus seu Lamentatio beatissimae Virginis Matris, quae ad sancta ac magna Parasceve dicitur”.

there is another version, different, though, from the ones mentioned by Vossius (at least as far as the title is concerned), published, not in an Ephraem-edition this time, but in a collection of Saints' lives, first by Lipomanus⁷, followed by Surius⁸, and finally by Combefisius⁹. Its title is *Lamentatio Sanctissimae Dei Genitricis prope crucem stantis per eundem divum Ephraem*, and its incipit: *Stans apud crucem purissima Virgo*.

⁷ Aloysius Lipomanus, *Sanctorum priscorum vitae*, Romae 1551-1558, tom. VIII, 14, republished under the title *Historiae ... de vitis sanctorum, cum scholiis eiusdem ...* Lovanii: apud Martinum Verhasselt, 1564 (2 vols in 1), and Lovanii: I. Bogardus, 1568 (2 vols in 1), and, finally, Venetiis 1581. As we have not yet seen any of these editions (microfilms arriving too late), one cannot be sure about which version is given by Lipomanus; Assemani (Vol. I, p. XV), however, assures us that it is the one published (a few years later) by Surius: "Usus fuit Lipomanus tum antiqui Anonymi tum Ambrosii Camaldulensis et Julii Clementis interpretatione. Et ex Anonymo quidem iste edidit: ... *Lamentatio* tom. 8. ... Laurentius Surius eosdem Ephraemi sermones ex Lipomano descripsit: *De vitis Sanctorum*, tom. 7 (1581)". See also Assemani, Vol. I, p. LXXXVII: "Sermones S. Ephr. Syri, quos Aloysius Lipomanus, primo Veronensis, postremo Bergomansis Episcopus edidit in *Vitae Sanctorum*, Tom. VIII, Romae 1560: 14 *Lamentatio: stans apud crucem purissima virgo salvatoremque in ligno suspensum suspiciens, plagas reputans, intuens et clavos ...*" which, indeed, is the text as given by Surius.

⁸ Laurentius Surius, *De probatis Sanctorum historiis, partim ex tomis Aloysii Lipomani ..., partim etiam ex egregiis manuscriptis codicibus, quarum permultae antehac nunquam in lucem prodire, ... collectis ... atque aliquot vitarum accessione auctis ...*, Coloniae Agrippinae: apud G. Calenium, 1576-1586, tom. VII: Martius: 205-207: *Lamentatio Sanctissimae Dei Genitricis prope Crucem stantis per eundem divum Ephraem*.

⁹ Franciscus Combefisius, *Bibliotheca Patrum Concionatoria a Dominica quarta Quadragesimae ad vesperum Sabbati sancti*, Parisiis 1662, Tom. III, 822 sub: Feria VI. in Parasceve: *Lamentatio sanctissimae Dei genitricis prope crucem stantis*. Ambrosio Camaldulensi interprete. *Stans apud crucem purissima virgo*. In attributing the translation to Ambrosius Camaldulensis, Combefisius is certainly mistaken: in three editions of homilies of Ephraem translated by Ambrosius (ca. 1500) the *Lamentatio* is not to be found (Sancti Ephraem Syri, *Sermones secundum traductionem venerabilis patris Ambrosii Camaldulensis*, Florentiae: per Antonium Bartholomaei Mischomini, 1481; Sancti Ephraem Syri, *Sermones De compunctione cordis, De iudicio Dei et resurrectione, De beatitudine animae, De poenitentia, De luctamine spirituali, De die iudicii*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Kilian Piscator, 1491; *Sermones ingenisissimi ac scitissimi patris Ephrem edissenne ecclesie dyaconi per fratrem Ambrosium Camaldulensi de Greco in Latinum Conversi*, [Paris] 1505). Moreover, when Assemani speaks about the translator of the *Lamentatio*, he says "anonymo antiquo interprete" (Vol. I, p. LXXXII) or "anonymo prisco interprete" (Vol. II, p. LVII).

In his research connected with the “*Thrinós*” of Falieros (a critical edition of which will be published by Arnold van Gemert and Wim Bakker), one of us became involved with many texts, among which was, of course, the text mentioned above but also the *Θρηῖνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ Δεσπότης Χριστοῦ*, which was published by Manousakas many years ago¹⁰.

At first view we observed that the one text is a translation of the other, but soon realized that this was not a new discovery of ours but (common?) knowledge to at least three scholars. In his description of the Greek *Θρηῖνος* found in the *Lugdunensis* B.P.G. 73A Meyier simply states that this text is identical with the Latin *Lamentatio* by Ephraem¹¹. In her illuminating article on the Lament of the Virgin, while discussing the *Θρηῖνος* published by Manousakas, Margaret Alexiou comments: “Our *Thrinós* shows closer parallels, both in motifs and phrases, to Ephraem’s *planctus* than to any other single text”¹². And, finally, in his well-known book on the same subject, Bouvier speaks of “le thrène attribué à Éphrem sous sa forme latine et dont M. Manoussacas a révéle la rédaction grecque en vers politiques ...”, as if this fact had been known for years¹³. None of the three, however, referred to a study where this would have been elucidated.

The present short (preliminary) study will engage just a few of the many questions connected with these two texts. There is no space here to treat the whole subject in a way concurring with its importance nor to give the texts of the many versions. That will be done in a separate and much longer study to be published later.

¹⁰ M. I. Μανούσακας, Ἑλληνικὰ ποιήματα γιὰ τὴ σταύρωση τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *Mélanges Octave et Melpo Merlier*, II, Ἀθήνα 1956, 49-60. The text of the *Θρηῖνος* is on pp. 65-69; its *incipit* is: Παρισταμένη τῷ σταυρῷ ἡ πάναγνος παρθένος. The edition is based upon two manuscripts, the Cod. Athon. 4655: Ἰβήρων 535 and the Cod. Athon. Lavras 1309 (K22), although at that time Manousakas already knew that there were more manuscripts (see his note 4 on p. 64). A few years ago he had the kindness to send us another manuscript of the text, the one from Montpellier. We thank him very much.

¹¹ K. A. de Meyier, *Codices bibliothecae publicae graeci*, Leiden 1965, 123.

¹² Margaret Alexiou, The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine literature and Modern Greek folk song, *BMGS* 1 (1975) 111-140, note 39.

¹³ B. Bouvier, *Le mirologue de la Vierge. Chansons et poèmes grecs sur la Passion du Christ. I: La chanson populaire du Vendredi Saint*. Avec une étude musicale par S. Baud-Bovy, Geneva 1976, 255.



The Greek text consists of 129 unrhymed versus politici, written in simple archaistic Greek (without the flourishes usual in “kanones” of the Byzantine poets), stemming probably from the 15th or even the 14th century¹⁴; it has been handed down to us in many manuscripts, seven of which have been tracked down (until now)¹⁵. The Latin text is in prose and in a sort of Latin that seems rather medieval than classical; it is known to us, not through manuscripts, but through editions, in two forms: the one of Lipomanus(?)–Surius–Combesius (E1), and the other of Vossius–Assemani (E2)¹⁶. The structure is simple: it begins with a short introduction (of 6 verses – i.e., in the Greek text) by a narrator, followed by the lament of the Virgin (110 vss.) (not interrupted by the narrator, as is usually done in Byzantine “kanones”), in which she addresses Christ (vss. 7-36), the Jews (vss. 37-47), Christ (vss. 48-57), Gabriel and Symeon (vss. 58-70), Christ (vss. 71-89), the *discipulae Domini* (vss. 90-91), the cross (vss. 92-102), and Christ (vss. 103-116); the end (vss. 117-129) constitutes an enkomion of the Virgin, followed by a prayer addressed to her by the narrator. The situation is as follows: the Virgin is standing at the foot of the cross, she is all alone (even

¹⁴ Μανούσακας, *op. cit.*, 64.

¹⁵ They are: the two used by Manousakas for his edition, the Athon. 4655: Ἰβήρων 535, ff. 279^v-282^v of the sixteenth century (I) (118 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας* and the Athon. Lavras 1309 (K22), ff. 48^r-53^r of 1696 (Λ) (123 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ δεσπότη Χριστοῦ*); and, further, the Barrocianus 216, ff. 371^v-372^r of ca. 1600 (B) (42 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς Θεοτόκου*), the Lugdunensis B.P.G. 73A, ff. 28^r-32^r of the 17th century (L) (129 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου λεγόμενος τῇ ἀγία καὶ μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ*), the Montepessulanus H 405, 44^r-48^r of the 15th-16th centuries (M) (100 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου λεγόμενος τῇ ἀγία καὶ μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ εἰς τὸν ἐπιτάφιον*), and the Μετέωρα Μεταμόρφωσις 50, 213^r-220^r of 1621 (μ) (131 vss.; title: *Θρηῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου ὅταν ἑώρακεν τὸν Κύριον κρεμáμενον ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ*; we are very grateful to Mr. K. D. Sofianos and Ms. Pinelopi Stathi of the Institute of Medieval Studies of the Academy of Athens for kindly sending us photographs of the Ms). The Parisinus gr. 1595, 156^r-158^v of the 15th century will be taken into account later: the microfilm came in too late. We have not yet been able to locate the Vaticanus in which, according to Mercati, there should be a version of the *Θρηῆνος* (see Μανούσακας, *op. cit.*, 64, note 4).

¹⁶ For the titles and the dates of publication of E1 and E2 see the first section of this study.

John and Mary Magdalene are not there)¹⁷; Christ is hanging on the cross and has died. This *θρῆνος* is static, not dramatic; nothing really happens, nobody responds to what the Virgin says; she does not move, the only movement being internal, when, at the end of her monologue (vss. 103-116) she addresses Christ again and makes her *peripeteia*: “Mary passes beyond the human anguish, protest and death-wish, to a comprehension of what his death signifies”, as Dronke says¹⁸.



The first question to be addressed is: Does the Latin text represent a lyrical homily of Ephraem? In other words, is it a Latin translation of a Greek text, which in its turn is a translation of an original Syriac text¹⁹? (a) Neither Assemani and Vossius, nor Lipomanus, Surius and Combefisius voice any doubt as to this text being one of the works of Ephraem, although Assemani has to admit: “Ex quibus autem codicibus Graecis an Syriacis hae primum preces in Latinum conversae fuerint, mihi non constat; neque illas Syriace vel Graece reperire potui in tot ac tantis manuscriptis²⁰.” Of the more recent scholars some just follow

¹⁷ The apostrophe to the *discipulae Domini* in vss. 90-91 should, we believe, be considered as traditional, rhetorical.

¹⁸ For a fuller description of the contents see P. Dronke, *Laments of the Maries: From the Beginnings to the Mystery Plays, Idee – Gestalt – Geschichte. Festschrift Klaus von See. Studien zur europäischen Kulturtradition* (ed. G. W. Weber), Odense 1988, 89-116 (especially 99-102), and K. Chr. J. W. de Vries, *De Mariaklachten*, Zwolle [1964], 39-44 (Zwolve Drukken en Herdrukken voor de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden, 48).

¹⁹ If this were true, the Greek text known to us, the one in *versus politici*, would be secondary and either an adaptation of a Greek text unknown to us or a translation of the Latin text.

²⁰ Assemani, *op. cit.*, II, p. LVII. A strong point, of course, is what he observes in his Vol. III, p. LIV: “Syri tum Maronitae tum Jacobitae in officio Ferae VI. in Parasceve Ephraemianos B. Virginis Threnos canunt Syriace, e quibus hic Latinus videtur desumptus, quem Vossius edidit.” Being a Syrian himself, he must have known the traditions of the Syrian churches very well. It is important, however, to note that he is speaking here of the customs prevailing in the 18th century. And although one has to admit that it is quite plausible that at the time a lament of the Virgin was sung during the liturgy of Good Friday, one wonders whether it was exactly this text that was sung and whether it was actually the creation of Ephraem.

Assemani, apparently without any doubts²¹, others seem to have reservations and are inclined not to ascribe the *Lamentatio* any longer to Ephraem²². The majority, however, even those who give long lists of dubious and spurious texts attributed to Ephraem, are silent about this text²³. But Hemmerdinger-Iliadou, at least, gives a general verdict about the contents of the third volume of Assemani's edition (part of which is the *Lamentatio*): "Au total dans le tome III d'Assemani sont réunis des textes qui sans aucun doute ne sont pas éphrémiens. L'Ephrem slave ignore la plupart de ces textes²⁴." (b) Ephraem is one of the Fathers who has written of the Virgin more than anyone else²⁵, so it is quite plausible that the *Lamentatio* is his. It is strange, however, that in his (authentic) hymns and homilies on the sufferings of Christ he does not say one word about the *compassio* of the Virgin. Usually the *mater dolorosa* is not even mentioned by him²⁶! (c) In

²¹ See, e.g., F. Ermini, *Lo Stabat Mater e i pianti della Vergine nella lirica del Medio Evo*, Città di Castello 1916, 55; M. Geerard, *CPG* II, Turnhout 1974, 447 (no. 4085); N. A. Λιβαδάρας, Ρωμανοῦ τοῦ Μελωδοῦ Ὕμνος εἰς τὸ πάθος τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν θρήνον τῆς Θεοτόκου, *Ρωμανοῦ τοῦ Μελωδοῦ, Ὕμνοι, ἐκδιδομένοι ἐκ πατριάρχων κωδίκων μετὰ προλεγομένων ὑπὸ Ν. Β. Τωμαδάκη*, τόμ. Β', Athens 1954, 152-155; A. C. Mahr, *Relations of Passion Plays to St. Ephrem the Syrian*, Ohio State University, Graduate School Studies etc., Languages and Literature, no. 9, 1942; G. G. Meersseman O.P., *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, 2 vols., Freiburg (Sw.) 1958-1960, II. Anhang; S. Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*. Translated by J. R. Berrigan, Athens GA 1988, 35-37; de Vries, *op. cit.*, 37.

²² See, e.g., P. Dronke, *op. cit.*, 91, note 4; D. Pallas, *Passion und Bestattung Christi* [Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, II], Munich 1965, 52.

²³ We give only a few examples: O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Friburg (Br.) 1924, Vol. IV, 342-375; E. Dekkers, *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, Steenbrugge 1951, 373-376: no. 1143-52: 6. Scriptores incertae originis: Ephraem Latinus; Democratia Hemmerdinger-Iliadou, Ephrem. Versions grecque, latine et slave. Addenda et corrigenda, *EEBS* 42 (1975-1976) [1977] 320-373; I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca*, Rome 1958, 52-77; A. Siegmund, *Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum 12. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1949, 67-71; M. Viller S. J., F. Cavallera, J. de Guibert S. J., *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, Paris 1932-1994, vol. IV, col. 788-799 (E. Beck) and 800-819 (Hemmerdinger-Iliadou).

²⁴ Hemmerdinger-Iliadou, *op. cit.*, 343.

²⁵ G. Bosio, *Iniziazione ai padri*. Vol. II La dottrina della chiesa negli scritti dei padri postniceni, Turin 1964, 188; E. Perniola, *Sant' Efreim Siro. Dottore della Chiesa e Cantore di Maria*, Santeramo in Colle (Bari) 1989, 183-352: Il Cantore di Maria.

²⁶ Cf. E. Beck, *Des hl. Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen*, Louvain 1964 (Corpus Scripto-

the *Lamentatio* the Virgin addresses Christ, while he is dead on the cross. Representations of the dead Christ on the cross (and not the *Christus triumphans*) are not found until the 9th century, either in representational arts or in literature²⁷. Thus it is not to be expected that Ephraem, however a great poet he was, could have used this theme in a text of his. (d) Setting aside for the moment the *Lamentatio* and the B-version of the *Acta Pilati* (a text of a rather hazy origin, to which we'll have to return later), the theme of a lament of the Virgin addressed to Christ on the cross is not found until Joseph Hymnographos and George of Nicomedia in the 9th cent²⁸. The same applies to the liturgy of the Orthodox

rum Christianorum Orientalium, 248-249; Scriptores Syri, 108-109), and Sancti Ephraem Syri, *Hymni et sermones*, 4 vol. Edidit Ioseph Lamy, Mechliniae 1882-1902, t. I, col. 637-714 Hymni VIII *de Crucifixione*: no reference to the *mater dolorosa*; col. 339-566 Sermones VIII *de Salvatoris Nostri Passione et Resurrectione*: in no. VI on the Crucifixion the Virgin is not even mentioned; t. II, col. 517-642: Mariale: venti inni De beata Maria: nothing about the *mater dolorosa*.

²⁷ Cf. Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Bd. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ. Translated by Janet Seligman, Greenwich, CN 1971/1972, 96: "Apart from arguments against the Monophysites, reference to the physical Death of Christ was important also to the opponents of Iconoclasm during the Iconoclastic Controversy (726-843) as a means of justifying images of Christ. They saw his physical Death as parallel to his Incarnation, which they regarded as the reason and motive for the visual representation of Christ. This is why, soon after the end of the Iconoclastic Controversy, illustrations to psalters, which originated in iconodule monasteries, began to depict Christ dead rather than alive on the Cross". With regard to literature, see the "kanones" of Joseph Hymnographos (9th cent.), the homily on Mary of George of Nicomedia (9th cent.), and the lament of the Virgin in Constantine the Rhodian's description of the mosaics in the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople (10th cent.). See also H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, Princeton 1981, 91 and 97, and J. R. Martin, The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art, *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr.* in: Kurt Weitzmann (ed.), Princeton 1955.

²⁸ Romanos' Kontakion which is found under the rather unfortunate title "Mary at the Cross" as no. 19 in P. Maas - C. A. Trypanis, *S. Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina*, Oxford 1963, treats an altogether different subject: the dialogue between the Virgin and Christ takes place on the way towards the cross (α' 1-4 Τὸν ἴδιον ἄρνα ἀμνάς θεωροῦσα | πρὸς σφαγὴν ἐλκόμενον ἠκολούθει ἡ Μαρία ... βοῶσα: | Ποῦ πορεύῃ, τέκνον; τίνας χάριν τὸν ταχὺν δρόμον τελείεις; 7-8 συνέλθω σοι, τέκνον, ἢ μείνω σε μᾶλλον; | δός μοι λόγον. Λόγε· μὴ σιγῶν παρέλθῃς με. γ' 1 Ὑπάγεις, ὦ τέκνον, πρὸς ἄδικον φόνον...). This choice of treatment of the subject may not have been without reason: in Romanos' days one was not yet able to visualize the reaction of the Virgin

Church²⁹. In the West one has to wait until the 12th century to meet texts of this kind. (e) The *Lamentatio* contains many motifs and formulas which do not occur in “Laments of the Virgin” until (much) later. We give only a few examples:

- (1) vs. 8 Πῶς ὑπομένεις τὸν σταυρόν, υἱέ μου καὶ Θεέ μου³⁰;
quomodo Crucem sustines? Mi fili et mi Deus E1
quo modo Crucem istam portas? Mi fili et mi Deus E2³¹

The formula «υἱέ μου καὶ Θεέ μου» / “Mi fili et mi Deus”, which is repeated several times, occurs in the East for the first time as a refrain in Romanos’ “kontakion” 19.4 etc.: «ὁ υἱὸς καὶ Θεός μου»³². It appears again much later in vs. 105 of the Cypriot *Θρηῆνος τῆς Παναγίας*, published by Πηλαβιάκης: «υἱέ μου καὶ Θεέ μου³³». In the West we find it in the *Liber Responsalis: Offici Gregoriani* (8th-9th cent.): *Ufficio del venerdì santo*, II, *Notturmo*: “Et nullus de illis, sed tu solus duceres, qui immaculatam me conservasti, filius et Deus meus³⁴”.

- (2) vs. 14 ὁ περιβάλλον οὐρανὸν τοῖς νέφεσιν,
υἱέ μου B8 I13 L14 M14 μ15³⁵
Τὸ περιβάλλον οὐρανὸν τοῖς νέφεσιν καλύπτων Λ14
mi fili, qui coelum nubibus contegis E1
mi fili, qui coelum nubibus tegis E2³⁶

to her Son’s sufferings on the cross. Of the other Kontakia, no. 20 “On the Passion of Christ” indeed treats the subject of the Passion, but pays no special attention to Christ’s sufferings and death on the cross; instead, the text centers on the weakness of Pilate, the ingratitude of the Jews, and, especially, the victory of Christ. Nos. 21 “On the Crucifixion”, 22 “On the Victory of the Cross”, and 23 “On the Adoration at the Cross” do not refer at all to the sufferings of Christ, but rather to the defeat of Satan and the victory of Christ. In nos. 20-23 there is no mention of the Virgin Mary.

²⁹ See Pallas, *op. cit.*, 56.

³⁰ If no manuscripts are mentioned by name, they all give the same text.

³¹ Additions are underlined.

³² Maas-Trypanis, *op.cit.*

³³ K. Πηλαβιάκης, Ὁ Θρηῆνος τῆς Παναγίας, 312 στ., *Κυπριακά Χρονικά* 5 (1927) 72-82.

³⁴ V. de Bartholomaeis, *Origini della poesia drammatica italiana*, Torino 1952², 96. See also de Vries, *op. cit.*, 68-69, Dronke, *op. cit.*, 106, and F. Doglio, *Il teatro acomparso. Testi e spettacoli fra il X e il XVIII secolo*, Rome 1990, 40.

³⁵ The spaced characters indicate what, according to us, is the correct text.

³⁶ “mi” is lacking in the Assemani-edition, but present in the text as published by Vossius.

We find a variation on this motif in a homily of Patriarch Germanos II (13th cent.): «Ὁ ἐνδύων νέφεσιν οὐρανὸν πῶς γυμνὸς καθορᾷ³⁷». It also occurs in the liturgy of Good Friday³⁸: «Ψευδῆ πορφύραν περιβάλλεται ὁ περιβάλλων τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν νεφέλαις» (p. 1094), and «καὶ τὴν χλαῖναν χλευαζόμενος ἐφόρεσας, ὁ νεφέλαις περιβάλλων τὸ στερέωμα...» (p. 1026), and in the *Παρακλητικῆ*³⁹: «Σὲ τὸν περιβάλλοντα τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν νεφέλαις...» (p. 111). The motif does not occur in Western texts.

(3) vs. 43

<i>ἀντὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν πρᾶττεῖς τὰ ἐναντία</i>	I29 L43 M43
<i>ἀντὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν τὰ ἐναντία πρᾶττει</i>	μ45
<i>ἀντὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν τὰ ἐναντία φέρεις</i>	A43
<i>pro commodis et bonis contraria reponis</i>	E1
<i>pro beneficiis maleficia, pro bonis et commodis mala atque contraria rependis</i>	E2

The Virgin addresses here the Jewish people. We meet this motif, borrowed from Ierem. 18.20, which also became a part of the Good Friday service in the *Improperia*, for the first time in Melito of Sardis (ca. 160)⁴⁰: «κακὰ ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν» (pp. 72 and 90), but in this text it is the preacher who says these words, not the Virgin Mary (who is not even mentioned). We meet it again, but this time in the Virgin's lament, in a homily of Symeon Metaphrastes (10th cent.)⁴¹: 217B «Ἀπέ-

³⁷ Λόγος εἰς τὴν θεόσωμον ταφὴν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, PG 98, 269C.

³⁸ Μέγας καὶ ἱερός συνέκδημος Ὀρθοδόξου Χριστιανοῦ περιέχων ἅπασαν τὴν τάξιν προσευχῶν καὶ ἀκολουθιῶν τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, πάντων τῶν ἀγίων καὶ πασῶν τῶν ἑορτῶν, κινητῶν καὶ ἀκινήτων, Athens 1966: Ἀκολουθία τῶν ἀγίων καὶ ἀχράντων παθῶν, Μεγάλη Παρασκευή, 1068-1160.

³⁹ Παρακλητικὴ ἦτοι Ὀκτώηχος ἡ μεγάλη περιέχουσα ἅπασαν τὴν ἀνήκουσαν αὐτῇ ἀκολουθίαν, Ἀθήναι: Οἶκος Μιχαὴλ Σαλιβέρου, χ.χ.

⁴⁰ C. Bonner, *The Homily on the Passion by Melito of Sardis* (Studies and Documents 12) London-Philadelphia 1940.

⁴¹ Λόγος εἰς τὸν θρόνον τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου, ὅτε περιεπλάκη τὸ τίμιον σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, PG 114, co. 209-218, or rather in the edition by Hörandner, who is inclined to attribute the text to Basilakes (12th cent.): W. Hörandner, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, Vienna 1981, 98-104: Νικη-

δωκέ σοι πονηρὰ ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν ἢ μοιχαλὶς γενεά», and also in the *Acta Pilati* B X.2 (but only in Ms. C)⁴²: «ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν κακὰ ἔλαβες⁴³». The motif appears also in the West, e.g., in a *Planctus Mariae* of the beginning of the 14th century⁴⁴: vs. 63 “quia pro bono redditur malum”, vss. 243-244 “et modo volunt reddere tibi malum pro bono”, and vss. 385-386 “et vos, ingrattissimi, redditis sibi mala pro bonis”; and in the *Compassio Virginis* by Giovanni d’Aquila (15th cent.), 39⁴⁵: “O Iudei, numquid redditur pro bono malum?”

(4) vss. 58-60

Ὡ Γαβριήλ ἀρχάγγελε, καὶ λειτουργεῖ Κυρίου,	I-A-L58 M58 μ60
<i>O Gabriel Archangele et minister Domini,</i>	E1
<i>O Gabriel Archangele et minister Dei,</i>	E2 ⁴⁶
Ὡ Γαβριήλ ἀρχάγγελε, δεῦρο δικάσασθαί σοι·	L59 μ61
Ὡ Γαβριήλ ἀρχάγγελε, δεῦρο δικάσωμέν σοι·	I44
Ὡ Γαβριήλ ἀρχάγγελε, δεῦρο δικάσασθαί μοι·	M59
<i>O Gabriel Archangele, age, causam tuere.</i>	E1
<i>O Gabriel Archangele, age iam et tuere causam.</i>	E2
ποῦ μοι τὸ «χαῖρε», ἄγγελε, ποῦ τὸ «εὐλογημένη»;	L60 M60 μ62
πού μοι τὸ «χαῖρε», ἔλεγε, ποῦ τὸ «εὐλογημένη».	I45
Ὡ Γαβριήλ ἀρχάγγελε, ποῦ τὸ «εὐλογημένη»;	Λ58 ⁴⁷

φόρος Βασιλάκης (12ος αἰ.) oder Συμεὼν Μεταφραστής (10ος αἰ.): *Τίνας ἂν εἴπη ἢ Θεοτόκος περιπλακείσα κηδευομένη τῷ ταύτης νιῷ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Σωτῆρι Χριστῷ*, par. 149.

⁴² C. Tischendorf, *Εὐαγγέλια ἀπόκρυφα: Acta Pilati B*, cap. X-XI, Leipzig 1853.

⁴³ The motif also occurs, in somewhat different wording, in Joseph Hymnographos (9th cent.) (*Mariale: Eἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον κανών*, PG 105, 1346D-1348B) 1349A, in George of Nicomedia (9th cent.) (*Ὁμιλία εἰς Μαρίαν*, PG 100, 1457-1489) 1472A, in the Orthodox Good Friday service, *op. cit.*, 1088-1089, in the *Παρακλητική*, *op. cit.*, 156 and 483, and in Plousiadinos (ca. 1450) (Π. Βασιλείου, Ὁ αὐτόγραφος «Θρῆνος τῆς Θεοτόκου» τοῦ Ἰωάννη Πλουσιαδηνοῦ, *Ἑλληνικά* 32 [1980] 267-287), vss. 56-57.

⁴⁴ G. Cremaschi, *Planctus Marie*. Nuovi testi inediti, *Aevum* 29 (1955) 393-468 (no. II).

⁴⁵ G. Farris, *La "Compassio Virginis" nel sec. XV (Giovanni d' Aquila O.P.)*, Savona 1980.

⁴⁶ Text in cursive characters: a somewhat different rendering as compared to the other texts.

⁴⁷ It is clear that Λ58 is a combination of the vss. 59 and 60.

⁴⁸ *Eἰς τὸν προφήτην Συμεῶνα ...*, PG 86.1, 237-251. This is a lament of the Virgin, not

Ubi nunc illud Ave? Ubi benedictum Ave quod mihi dixisti,
Angele? E1

Ubi illud nunc Ave, o Angele? Ubi Ave illud benedictum,
quod ad me dixisti, o nuncie? E2

The first time we meet this address by the Virgin to the angel, who once brought her the great news of the coming birth of Christ, is in a homily by Timotheos Presbyteros of Jerusalem (6th-8th cent.)⁴⁸: 249: «Ποῦ τοῦ Γαβριήλ ὁ ἀσπασμός; ... ὅτε βασιλεύειν προσεδόκησα, τότε πτωχεία κατέσχεν με». The first instance of this motif actually occurring in a lament of the Virgin at the cross is in Constantine Rhodios (10th cent.)⁴⁹: vs. 950 «Ποῦ Γαβριήλ ρημάτων ὑποσχέσεις;» Another instance belonging to the 10th century, and in wording quite close to our *Θρηῆνος*, is found in a “kanon” of Symeon Metaphrastes⁵⁰: vs. 25 «Γαβριήλ, ποῦ τὰ εὐαγγέλια, ποῦ μου τὸ χαῖρε, ποῦ τὸ εὐλογημένη;» Nicolaos Grammatikos, Patriarch of Constantinople in the 11th century, used the motif again in a «kanon⁵¹»: Z' 1-2 «Πῶς ... τὰ εὐαγγέλια ἃ Γαβριήλ μοι ἔλεγε;». One of the most interesting instances, which shows that there must be a closer relation between our text and this one, is *Acta Pilati* B X.4 (date unknown): «᾿Ω Γαβριήλ, ποῦ εἶ ἵνα δικάσομαι μετὰ σοῦ; ποῦ μοι τὸ χαῖρε ὃ ἔφης⁵²;» The oldest example

however at the crucifixion, but at the presentation of Christ, when he is a young boy, at the temple. For the authorship and date of this homily see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Munich 1959, 400, and Maguire, *op. cit.*, 97.

⁴⁹ É. Legrand, Description des œuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints-Apôtres de Constantinople, *Revue des Études Grecques* 9 (1896) 36-65.

⁵⁰ Anonymus, Un' ufficiatura perduta del Venerdì Santo [Canon on the Lament of the Virgin], *Roma e l'Oriente* 5 (1913) 302-313.

⁵¹ *Κανὼν θρηνητικὸς τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου ἐν τῇ σταυρώσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ*, I. Pitra, *Spicilegium solesmense complectens sanctorum patrum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum anecdota hactenus opera*, selecta e graecis orientalibusque et latinis codicibus, publici juris facta curante Domno J. B. Pitra, Parisiis: F. Didot fratres, 1852-1858: vol. IV, 491-495.

⁵² Tischendorf, *op. cit.* There are many more instances of this very popular motif. We mention a few: Basilakes (12th cent.), *op. cit.*, 8-9; *Χριστὸς πάσχων* (12th cent.; *pace* Tuilier) (A. Tuilier, *Grégoire de Nazianze: La Passion du Christ, tragédie* [Sources chrétiennes, 149], Paris 1969), vss. 72-74; Lapithes (14th cent.) (Fr. Tinnefeld,

we find in the West is in the *sequens Moestae parentis Christi Mariae*, probably written by Adamus de Sancto Victore (ca 1190)⁵³: “Est istane gratia, quam mihi retulisti, Gabriel, / Sunt mihi contraria, quae prius promisisti”. Two other instances are from the 14th century: *Planto de la Verzene Maria*, vss. 1121-22⁵⁴: “Poi me lamento, o agnol Gabriele, che me dizesti parole suave ...”, and *Planctus Marie*, vs. 683⁵⁵: “O angele Gabriel, tu dixisti: Ave gratia plena⁵⁶!”

(5) vs. 85 Σύ μου πατήρ καὶ μήτηρ μου καὶ ἀδελφὸς καὶ τέκνον

Tu mihi pater, tu mater, tu frater, tu filius

E1

Tu mihi es pater, [], tu frater, tu filius.

E2⁵⁷

The motif through which the Virgin expresses that her Son is everything to her occurs only in Lapithes (14th cent.)⁵⁸: 9.11-12 «Σύ μοι καὶ ἀνὴρ ... καὶ υἱὸς ... καὶ πατήρ». In Western Europe we find it for the first time in Pseudo-Bernardus of Clervaux's *Tractatus*⁵⁹: “Tu michi pater ... sponsus ... filius” (p. 45). We find

Georgios Lapithes *Eine Ethopoiie auf Maria unter dem Kreuz Christi*, *Orth. Forum* 1 [1987] 33-59), 9-15; K. Γιαγκουλής, Τὸ τραγούδιον τῆς Σανταφιάσης, *Κυπριακαὶ Σπουδαὶ* 31 (1967) 183-205, vss. 136-137; B. Τατάκης, *Θρῆνος τῆς Παναγίας*, 184 στ., *Κυπριακὰ Χρονικὰ* 5 (1927) 65-72, vss. 9-10. See also Bouvier, *op. cit.*, 247-248.

⁵³ See E. Wechssler, *Die romanischen Marienklagen; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Dramas im Mittelalter*, Halle 1893, 12. For the text see: H. A. Daniel, *Thesaurus hymnologicus sive hymnorum, canticorum, sequentiarum circa annum MD usitatarum collectio amplissima*, Leipzig 1855: vol. V n. 410 (pp. 187-189), vss. 9-10.

⁵⁴ A. Linder, *Plainte de la Vierge en vieux vénitien*. Texte critique précédé d'une introduction linguistique et littéraire, Uppsala 1898.

⁵⁵ Cremaschi, *op. cit.* (no. I).

⁵⁶ There is another example, in the *Planctus Mariae* of Cividale (De Bartholomaeis, *op. cit.*, 482-486) of the 14th century, where the author strangely enough confuses the message of the angel with the prophecy of Symeon (another, very popular, motif in laments of the Virgin): “Hoc est quod dixerat, quod prophetaverat (*Hic ostendat Angelum*) ille prenunciatus. Hic ille gladius qui me transverberat” (p. 484).

⁵⁷ We have the suspicion that either a copyist or the first editor of E2, who is, as far as we know, Gerardus Vossius, has omitted the word “mater”, thinking it a bit odd.

⁵⁸ Tinnefeld, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ W. Mushacke, *Altprovenzalische Marienklage des XIII. Jahrhunderts*, Halle 1890 (pp. 41-50: “Tractatus Beati Bernardi de planctu Beatae Mariae”). The actual author of the *Tractatus* seems to be Ogerio di Trino (Vercelli) of ca. 1205; cf. H. Barré, Le ‘Planctus Mariae’ attribué à Saint Bernard, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 28 (1952)

it again in the famous *Donna de paradiso* by Iacopone da Todi (1236-1306)⁶⁰: vss. 45-46 “figlio, pate e marito;/ figlio chi t'è ferito”, and in the *Planto della Verzene*, of the 14th century, published by Linder⁶¹: vss. 1309-10 “Questo è el mio fiol e la vita mia; mio Dio, mio padre, mio sposo”.

(6) vs. 91	<i>Κλῖνον, σταυρὲ πανάγιε, ξύλον εὐλογημένον</i>	A87 L92 M91 μ93
	<i>Κλῖνον, σταυρὲ πανάγιε, κλῖνον τὴν κορυφὴν σου,</i>	177
	<i>σταυρὲ παναγιώτατε, ξύλον εὐλογημένον</i>	178 ⁶²
	<i>Decumbe, Crux sanctissima, lignum benedictum</i>	E1
	<i>Tu mihi iam, Crux sanctissima lignumque benedictum, decumbe</i>	E2

On the Greek side, the apostrophe to the cross by the Virgin is a motif that one finds either in “late” texts (15th cent. and after) or in a text of unknown date, i.e. the *Acta Pilati*⁶³: B X.4 «κλῖνον, σταυρὲ ... κλῖνον, σταυρὲ, βουλομένη τῷ φιλιτάτῳ μου υἱῷ περιπλακῆναι». For the rest, we find the motif only in texts which probably underwent Western influences: in the *Στίχοι θρηνητικοὶ τραγωδηθέντες ἐν τῇ εἰρκτῇ Λεονάρδου Τελλαμπόρτα ἀδόμειοι εἰς τὸν Ἐπιτάφιον Θρηνηνον* (1403-1411)⁶⁴: vs. 519 «Σταυρὲ μου ... πάραυτα συγκατέβη», in the *Παλαιὰ καὶ Νέα Διαθήκη* (1500-1550)⁶⁵: vs. 3826 «Σταυρὲ, χαμήλωσε ἔς ἐμένα τὴν κορυφὴ σου», and, finally, in the Cypriot *Θρηνος τῆς Παναγίας*, published by Πηλαβάκης⁶⁶: vss. 172-83 «Σταυρὲ μου, ξύλον ἅγιον, ξύλον χαριτωμένον... Σχύψε σταυρὲ νὰ δυνηθῶ νὰ σὲ καταφιλήσω». From the Western texts we can give only a few

243-266.

⁶⁰ E. Monaci, *Crestomazia italiana dei primei secoli*, Rome 1955 (Nuova ed.), 532-533.

⁶¹ Linder, *op. cit.*

⁶² It is clear that Ms. I has made a double verse out of one.

⁶³ Tischendorf, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ M. I. Μανούσασκας, *Λεονάρδου Ντελλαπόρτα ποιήματα (1403/1411)*, Athens 1995, 335-363.

⁶⁵ A few years ago our dear friend Nikos Panagiotakis had the kindness to send us the text of the edition he was preparing; it will soon be published. See also N. M. Παναγιωτάκης, *Ἡ Παλαιὰ καὶ Νέα Διαθήκη ποίημα προγενέστερο τοῦ 17ου αἰῶνα*, *Origini della letteratura Neograeca* (a cura di N. M. Panayotakis, vol. II, Venice 1993), 242-277.

⁶⁶ Πηλαβάκης, *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ Linder, *op. cit.*

examples out of the many. The motif, probably inspired by the famous poem of Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 600) *Flecte ramos, arbor alta*, which was even included in the Roman-Catholic Good Friday service (“Flecte ramos, arbor alta. Tensa laxa viscera, et rigor lentescat ille, quem dedit nativitas. Et superni membra regis tende miti stipite”), became very popular: we find it in the *Planto de la Verzene Maria* of the 14th century⁶⁷: vss. 576-77 “deflecte ramos, arbor alta, ch’io posa tochar un puocho el fiol mio”, in the *Cantare sulla Passione di N.S. Gesù Cristo* by Niccolò di Mino Cicerchia (1364)⁶⁸: vs. 212 “O croce, li tuo ram’ inclina./ o arbor alta”, and in the *Compassio Virginis* (14th cent.) by Giovanni d’Aquila⁶⁹: “flecte ramos, ut saltem de meis lachrymis possim dulcissimo filio meo aliquid refrigerium prestare” (p. 42)⁷⁰.



We all know that many texts have been lost to us and, therefore, that the picture we have of the developments is rather hazy and incomplete. Still, it is rather difficult to explain why a lament such as the *Lamentatio* would have been written in the 4th century and why we then have to wait until the 9th century to find new endeavours in that direction; it is even more difficult to understand why many of the occurring motifs, notwithstanding the great fame of Ephraem, have not been used by the other poets and homily writers of the Byzantine period and that in some cases one has to wait until the 15th century to find them again⁷¹. We must, then, conclude that the *Lamentatio* cannot be dated back to the 4th century and that, consequently, it cannot have been written by Ephraem⁷².

⁶⁸ L. Razzolini, *Passione di N.S. Gesù Cristo*, Bologna 1878.

⁶⁹ Farris, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ For this motif see also M. Alexiou, *op. cit.*, 126, note 31.

⁷¹ See also A. Luis, *Evolutia historica doctrinae de compassione B. Mariae Virginis, Marianum. Ephemerides Mariologiae* V. Fasc. IV (1943) 261-285, especially 266-267: “Quoad Compassionem B. Mariae Virginis S. Ephraem non in hac prima periodo [he means the 3d-10th cent.] ..., sed in saeculo XIII scripsisse videtur certum est eius scripta nullum exercuisse influxum in hac prima periodo... et tantum saeculis posterioribus (XI et XII praesertim) invenire est quaedam principia quae cum eius testimoniis conferri possint”.

⁷² The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the B-version of the *Acta Pilati*. Out of all the motifs occurring in this text, if only one takes into account the motif of the apostrophe to the cross, one must concede that a date like the 6th century, which

The reader, although he has seen only a few fragments of the texts, may also have come to the conclusion that the so-called *Lamentatio* of “Ephraem” and the Greek *Θρῆνος* are one and the same text. The question which of the two is the original cannot be answered within the scope of this (preliminary) study: if one wants to answer it in a satisfactory manner, one needs the complete text in front of oneself. If we just look at the motifs used in this text (and limit ourselves to the ones treated in this study), we see some which make their appearance in both worlds, in the East usually earlier (in Greek texts the Virgin’s lament at the cross becomes a theme from the 9th century onwards; in the West it has to wait until the great changes in religious thinking —or should one say “feeling”?— which start in the 12th century and come to an actual outburst in the 13th in the Franciscan movement). Other motifs seem to be exclusively Greek, as, e.g., the one which we treated under no. 2. And then, finally, there are motifs like the Virgin’s apostrophe to the cross, which seem to have a Western origin. Here, however, one has to tread lightly. Certainly, during the Crusades and after, the East has been influenced by the West. But, just as, after (or perhaps rather “through”) Anselmus, Bernardus, and especially Franciscus, the voice of the people starts being heard in the West⁷³, so it must have happened in the East. When the time is ripe, apparently a bit later than in the West, we start finding “half-learned” and vernacular *Θρῆνοι*, full of elements (like, for instance, the Virgin’s apostrophe to the cross) which occur in Western texts, but also appear in the Greek folk tradition (and not in the “learned” Byzantine texts)⁷⁴. In such

still can be found in recent publications, is quite impossible. Since the text we have is based upon manuscripts stemming from the 15th and 16th (?) centuries (see Tischendorf, *op. cit.*, L XXII-L XXIII), we may assume that the text, from the time when it came into being in the 5th century (see E. Hennecke – W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*. Revised edition. English translation edited by R. McL. Wilson. 2 vols., Louisville, Kentucky, 1992, 503) has undergone quite a development, especially in the part that treats the Passion (cf. also M. Alexiou, *op. cit.*, 125). In a future study, we shall return to this subject.

⁷³ Cf. W. Lipphardt, Studien zu den Marienklagen. Marienklage und germanische Todenklage, *Beitrage zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 58 (1934) 390-444, especially 396-398.

⁷⁴ For the presence of the motif of the Virgin’s apostrophe to the cross in Greek folk-song see Bouvier, *op. cit.*, 253-255.

⁷⁵ Cf. M. Alexiou, *op. cit.*, 134-140.

cases one cannot be completely sure whether to base one's ideas upon datable texts or to take into account also the quite undatable "texts" handed down from mouth to mouth through the centuries⁷⁵.

Our *θρήνος*, i.e. "Ephraem's" *Lamentatio* and the Greek text originally published by Manousakas, appears to be such a "half-learned" text, with Byzantine as well as Western elements, which, however, might actually trace their origin back to the Greek folk tradition. Later, we may be able to prove exactly what it is and where it comes from. Whatever the case may be, the date of the 14th or maybe the beginning of the 15th century, proposed by Manousakas, might not be far off the mark⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ It is certainly ironic to read in Vossius' "scholia" on Ephraem's homily how well he placed this text in its actual period: "Cuius quoque generis atque argumenti esse videtur Tractatus S. Bernardi ... et sic inchoatur: "Quis dabit capite meo aqua". Quo etiam spectant quae S. Bonaventura in 2. parte tom. 1 de laudibus B. Mariae Virginis ac de corona et compassione eiusdem in medium adducit. Respondetque planctus ille ... : "Stabat mater dolorosa, iuxta Crucem lachrymosa dum pendeat filius" etc... quae Oratio tota rhythmica est et threnetica ac pathetica, ut etiam haec nostri Auctoris" (Vossius, *op. cit.*, 698-699).

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ὁ Θρῆνος τῆς Παναγίας τοῦ Ἐφραΐμ τοῦ Σύρου

Τὸ κείμενο αὐτοῦ τοῦ θρῆνου — μὲ τίτλο: *Threni, i.e. Lamentationes gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae super Passione Domini*— βρίσκεται, στὰ Λατινικά, στὴ γνωστὴ ἔκδοση τῶν ἔργων τοῦ Ἐφραΐμ τοῦ Σύρου ἀπὸ τὸν Assemani (Romae, 1732-46) καὶ θεωρεῖται μία ἀπὸ τὶς λυρικές ὁμιλίες τοῦ μεγάλου Σύρου ποιητῆ (περ. 306-373). Μία παραλλαγή τοῦ κειμένου αὐτοῦ, λίγο πιὸ ἀπλὴ ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη, ἀπαντᾷ σὲ μία συλλογὴ συναξαρίων ποὺ ἐκδόθηκε γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ ἀπὸ τὸν Lipomanus (Romae, 1551-58).

Ἰπάρχει ὅμως καὶ ὁ *Θρῆνος τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ Δεσπότη Χριστοῦ*, ποὺ ἐκδόθηκε τὸ 1956 ἀπὸ τὸν Μανούσακα καὶ ἀνάγεται, κατὰ τὸν ἐκδότη, στὸν 14ο ἢ 15ο αἰώνα. Συγκρίνοντας τὰ δύο κείμενα, τὸ λατινικὸ καὶ τὸ ἑλληνικὸ, ἀντιλαμβάνεται κανεὶς ἀμέσως ὅτι τὸ ἓνα ἀποτελεῖ μετάφραση τοῦ ἄλλου.

Στὴ μελέτη αὐτῇ (λόγω ἐλλείψεως χώρου) δὲν πραγματευόμαστε τὸ ζήτημα τῆς προτεραιότητος τοῦ ἑνὸς ἢ τοῦ ἄλλου κειμένου, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἂν τὸ κείμενο, μὲ τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ ποὺ ἔχει, μπορεῖ νὰ εἶναι ἔργο τοῦ Ἐφραΐμ. Τὸ συμπέρασμα τῆς μελέτης εἶναι ὅτι ὁ θρῆνος αὐτὸς δὲν γράφτηκε ἀπὸ τὸν Σύρο ποιητῆ.