

Makarios/Symeon
in östlicher Überlieferung

Macarius/Symeon
in Eastern Tradition

Beiträge des VIII. Makarios-Symposiums,
Bergvik 2014

Herausgegeben von/Edited by
Martin Tamcke

GÖTTINGER ORIENTFORSCHUNGEN
SYRIACA

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Vorwort

Vom 21.–24. August 2014 tagte die finnisch-deutsche Theologentagung zu Makarios auf Einladung der finnischen Partner Gunnar af Hallström und Jouko Martikainen in Bergvik, einem lutherisch-ökumenischen Zentrum, das auf das Wirken des im lutherisch-erwecklichen Geist arbeitenden Professors für orientalische Literatur an der Universität Helsinki, Weele Aapeli Saarisalo, zurückgeht, der zugleich christlicher Archäologe und Theologe war und zahlreiche Exkursionen in den Orient unternahm. Die Eigenart dieses Zentrums trägt der langen Tradition der Makarios-Symposia Rechnung, die stets für ihre wissenschaftliche Arbeit auch sich um einen spirituellen Rahmen bemühten. Die Entscheidung für den an einem See in herrlicher Waldlandschaft gelegenen Ort ging wieder auf eine Initiative des Kollegen Martikainen zurück, der von Anfang an ein wichtiger Ideengeber bei den Treffen war. Martikainen hat selbst in seinen Werken sein wissenschaftliches Interesse stets so betrieben, das dessen spirituelle Dimension mit zum Tragen kam. Die Druckfassung erarbeitete dankenswerter Weise Julius Burghardt unter Mitarbeit weiterer Mitarbeiter am Göttinger Lehrstuhl.

Er hat dieses Mal selbst keinen Beitrag zur Konferenz abgeliefert, doch liefen bei ihm viele der Fäden zusammen, die dieser Konferenz wieder einen einzigartigen Charakter gaben. Mittlerweile begeht der Kollege Martikainen seinen 80. Geburtstag. Aus diesem Grunde widmen wir seitens der an der Herausgabe beteiligten Mitarbeiter des Instituts für Ökumenische Theologie und Orientalische Kirchen- und Missionsgeschichte an der Theologischen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität zu Göttingen (an der Martikainen von 1978–1981 forschte und ab 1984 bis zu seinem Ruhestand 2001 lehrte) ihm diesen Band in Dankbarkeit für seine Arbeit und beständige Art, der es zu verdanken ist, dass das Symposium bis heute weitergeführt wurde und so klar Impulse aufnahm, die sich aus seiner Person erklären. Die meisten der langjährigen Mitglieder des Symposiums sind persönliche Freunde des Jubilars. Es fügt sich gut, dass der Band in der von Martikainen einige Zeit betreuten Reihe der Göttinger Orientforschungen SYRIACA erscheint, die sein Vorgänger und langjähriger Vorgesetzter Werner Strothmann gegründet hatte und die von ihm bis 2001 fortgeführt worden war.

Martin Tamcke,
Göttingen 2015

The Appeal to the Fathers Exemplified through Macarius

Gunnar af Hällström

Introduction

In the best-known patrologies the Church Fathers are described or defined by using a number of characteristics. The almost legendary “Patrologie” by *Berthold Altaner* and *Alfred Stuiber*, published in many editions and translated into many languages, declares that though “*pater*” means a bishop or at least a priest in general, these had to meet with four requirements in order to qualify as Church Fathers: *doctrina orthodoxa*, *sanctitas vitae*, *approbation ecclesiae*, and *antiquitas*. Concerning orthodoxy it is stated that it should be understood “nicht im Sinne völliger Irrtumsfreiheit, sondern treuer Lehrgemeinschaft mit der rechtgläubigen Kirche.”¹ Let’s note that orthodoxy is not just mentioned, it is mentioned first of all. The classical handbook in the English-speaking world is and was *Johannes Quasten*’s “Patrology”. Here we meet the same four requirements, strictly applied. Early Christian authors not meeting the conditions well enough are classified as *ecclesiae scriptores* or *scriptores ecclesiastici*. Again, orthodoxy is mentioned as the first requirement. Patrology has, naturally, always been an important topic among Orthodox theologians, in Finland as elsewhere. For decades, Finnish Orthodox students used to read the “Patrologia” of *Aari Surakka*. The definition of a Church Father does not change when moving from western to eastern Christianity. The same four requirements mentioned by Altaner-Stuiber and Quasten are presented again and accepted. *Doctrina orthodoxa* is also here the first requirement but with the addition that “erroneous subjectivism” may occur. The fact that Surakka’s book is an elaboration of *Gerhard Rauschen*’s “Grundriss der Patrologie” lacks importance here: orthodoxy is the first requirement in all these patrologies.

In the following, requirement number one, doctrinal orthodoxy, will be critically discussed. The principle is certainly understandable but not without its problems. I will illustrate this by three examples, the last one being Macarius. The presentation will be more personal than scholarly articles usually are, since I follow the chronology of my own research in the patristic field.

1 Altaner-Stuiber, *Patrologie*, p. 4.

1. Origen of Alexandria

The first early ecclesiastic writer I encountered as a young Master of Theology after switching from modern Swiss theologians to the Church Fathers was Clement of Alexandria. Guided by Heikki Koskenniemi, the inspiring professor of Greek language at the University of Turku, a small patristic study group used to translate together texts about Christian behaviour at dinner parties, correct dress and pious ways of laughing (that is, gentle smiling). I was stunned! But it was Clement's so called successor Origen who interested me most. When suggesting him as the target for my doctoral research my supervisor countered me with the question "Do you know he was a heretic?" Thus the principle number one, orthodox doctrine, met me from my first patristic moment. The incipient patrologist kept his head and started reading Adamantius, but admittedly the situation was a problematic one. A number of Origen's central thoughts were condemned in a decree by emperor Justinian in 543 and by the fifth ecumenical council in 553. His books were ordered to be burned. *Decretum Gelasianum* put his books among the forbidden ones. But the appeal to Origen never came to a complete end. In the latter half of the 20th century the references to this great Alexandrian flooded. Origen was impossible to stop. In fact, his popularity overthrew that of most so-called Orthodox Church Fathers. All this seems to have been the result of a new understanding of Origen, initiated by the work of Walther Völker in 1931. In his study "Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes" Origen was understood as the father of mysticism. There was and still is a strong demand for this kind of spirituality, also among scholarly theologians. If so, should the old maxim "*lex orandi legem credendi statuat*" be interpreted afresh? The legacy of Origen seems to indicate that one should say "*lex orandi superior quam lex credendi*". In order to avoid such a conclusion modern theologians have brought forward a number of scholarly arguments,² but references to Origen were possible even in the early church, in spite of Origen's presumed heterodoxy. This was made possible in the following way:

First, Origen's numerous and influential friends, not least the Cappadocian fathers, promoted Origen's theology. Where reference to Origen was unacceptable, reference to his famous successors was perfectly possible. E. M. Harding has put this fact nicely: Origen's legacy had already, when the doctrinal quarrels began, been safely digested into the theological macrostructure of Christianity in general ... and Byzantine religious thought in particular.³ Appeals to Origen were rare because he was suspect, but he lived anonymously in the "Christian macrostructure." Let's take an example from the early Lutheran tradition. Luther was no friend of Origen, rather the opposite. He could criticize his allegorical interpretations vehemently. But

2 The most popular arguments go as follows: 1) The opinions condemned in 553 were those of Origen's followers rather than those of the master himself. 2) Origen presented theories and alternative solutions but these were later taken for dogmas.

3 McGuckin, *The SCM Press A-Z Dictionary of Origen*, p. 163.

when Origen, obviously as the first one, interpreted the inn used by the good Samaritan to be the church (Luke 10:14), Luther did not shrink from using the same allegory – but without a reference to Origen. The reference to Origen was neither deliberate nor explicit, but Origen's interpretation was already digested into the church's teaching.

Second, books known to be by Origen were read in secret, or read in censored versions. According to Basil Studer the whole western Christendom was familiar with Origen's works at the turn of the 4th and 5th century,⁴ a period already vexed by the controversies concerning Origen. This did not prevent people from reading him, it prevented only public reading. The homilies were the most popular works read this way. 279 homilies are extant today, and, significantly, the major part in Latin.⁵ In the homilies Origen's pastoral attitude is displayed, as well as his internalized interpretation of biblical events. Historical events become psychologized and spiritualized, though the biblical and historical event seldom is denied. Also, Origen's book on dogmatics, *De Principiis*, was read in the monasteries but equipped with warnings in the margins! This was one way of safeguarding the *doctrina orthodoxa*. Another way was, when speaking about western Christendom, to translate Origen into Latin in a doctrinally modified form.⁶ Jerome had a quarrel with Rufinus of Aquileia concerning the correctness of publishing such censored versions of Origen.

After the year 553 references to Origen had to be done cautiously or indirectly, but they were nonetheless made. The doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father could be defended as genuine Christianity, but it was not wise to emphasize that the doctrine was formulated by Origen. Today the situation is different. Origen is called, in spite of earlier doubts, “le génie du christianisme”⁷, and “der einflussreichste Theologe der griechischen Kirche,” (Waltrand Grosse). He is “undoubtedly the greatest genius the early church ever produced.”⁸ This is to some extent so also within Protestant circles, though St. Augustin remains the “genie” most referred to. Reformed theologians have no problems with referring to Origen in debating the Eucharist. Among defenders of infant baptism Origen is explicitly quoted for support.

My patristic research continued with Justin Martyr and Tertullian. *Doctrina orthodoxa* applies better to them than to Origen. Both of them are frequently referred to, but neither of them is officially a Church Father. True enough, they were not bishops.

4 See B. Studer, *Zur Frage der westlichen origenismus* (1966, in TU 94).

5 McGuckin, *The SCM Press A–Z Dictionary of Origen*, p. 25.

6 One of the early translators of Origen, Rufinus of Aquileia, explicitly admits that he corrected Origen's text: “Sicubi ergo nos in libris eius (Origenis) aliquid contra id invenimus, quod ab ipso in ceteris locis pie de trinitate fuerat definitum, velut adulteratum hoc et alienum aut praetermisimus aut secundum eam regulam protulimus, quam ab ipso frequenter invenimus adfirmatam.” Rufinus' Praefatio 3 to Origen's *De Principiis*.

7 This is the title of the book on Origen by Jean Daniélou (1948).

8 McGuckin, *The SCM Press A–Z Dictionary of Origen*, p. 25.

2. Dionysius, the so-called Areopagite

For a couple of years Dionysius, the so-called Areopagite, was in the focus of my interest. In a number of ways he reminds us about Origen, in spite of the fact that we know almost nothing about him but a lot about Adamantius. It is, therefore, impossible to say anything about *sanctitas vitae* in the case of the former. One of the conditions for the status of a Church Father is totally missing.

Dionysius came to common knowledge within the body of Christians during the discussions on monophysitism in Constantinople in 532/533. The monophysitist delegation ("Severiani") appealed to his writings in order to support their doctrinal position but were rejected by the orthodox party with the remark that his writings were not necessarily genuine, that is, written by St. Paul's disciple in Athens. "*Testimonia quae vos beati Dionysii Ariopagitae dicits, unde potestis ostendere vera esse, sicut suspicamini?*" Neither Athanasius nor Cyrill of Alexandria knew those writings, the orthodox side argued, therefore they were perhaps not genuine. But when the *Corpus Areopagiticum* became generally known, both parties appealed with equal confidence to him and his authority. As the disciple of a great apostle his authority was guaranteed. No traces of a monophysite theology in the *Corpus* was noticed by the great names of Orthodoxy, such as Leontius of Byzantium, Maximus Confessor or John of Damascus. It was perfectly possible to read the Areopagite as an orthodox thinker, and this way he is still read in Orthodoxy. In my opinion, Dionysius was a great ecumenical thinker. When asked to choose between A (dyophysitism) and B (monophysitism) his choice was C, a "*tertium comparationis*." Such an ecumenical method is still worth considering.

References to the Areopagite were possible because of a number of reasons. The presumed apostolic background and authority is one such reason. The doubts concerning his apostolicity were soon forgotten after the talks in Constantinople. When a person is considered apostolic, he is *a priori* orthodox, and must be interpreted in accordance with orthodoxy. There is goodwill and readiness to understand and interpret such a person the best possible way. In our days, the so-called hermeneutics of suspicion is often discussed: it means that a person is beforehand suspicious about a text and interprets it in accordance with this mistrust. *Corpus Areopagiticum* met the opposite phenomenon, a hermeneutics of trust and reverence in front of a disciple of St. Paul. During the 20th century even Greek scholars slowly abandoned the claim for apostolicity and a new situation arose. Among ordinary Greek churchgoers however, the *Corpus* is still a piece of work of St. Paul's disciple, written in the first century and enjoying apostolic respect.

The Dionysian Corpus was translated into Latin by abbot Hilduin and thirty years later by Johannes Scotus Eriugena. In 827 a copy of the latter translation was presented as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor Michael II to the Monastery of St. Denys in the vicinity of Paris. The text soon enjoyed apostolic authority in the West as well as in the East. The translation was done well enough to meet the require-