

УДК 27-144.896-317.5

DOI: 10.18523/2617-1678.2025.15.33-41

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THE PERSON AND ACTIVITIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MONASTIC LIVES AND WRITINGS OF LATE ANTIQUITY

The doctrine of the Trinity, which was fiercely debated during the fourth century, is one of the key teachings of the Christian Church. Researchers have mostly focused on the theoretical tenets and historical development of this dogma. However, according to Christian believers, God is alive—and not just a concept, but a person. Thus, it is interesting to see how this theoretical idea of God was perceived and realised in practical life, especially in the lives of holy individuals, who were believed to have closer contact with God—and particularly with the Holy Spirit, who became more present and active in the life of the Church after Pentecost. In this paper, I examine perceptions of the third Person of the Trinity and His role in the lives of ascetics as reflected in Greek-language writings such as the anonymous History of the Monks of Egypt (400), the Lausiac History (419/420) by Palladius, and The History of the Monks of Syria (440) by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. I explore how these authors described the lives of ascetics and their relationships with the Spirit, as well as how the monks themselves understood these interactions. In particular, I examine the role of the Spirit's grace in the supernatural lives of ascetics; how God “used” ascetics as instruments for the salvation of all people; the relationship between divine grace and human actions in the process of salvation; and ascetics' treatment of heretics and pagans. Even though we discovered that they approached the Spirit as a living Person rather than a mere concept, it remains of interest to examine whether doctrines concerning the Spirit made their way into the literary “lives” of the saints—and, if so, in what manner.

Keywords: Holy Spirit, grace, gifts, history, activities, miracles, ascetics, patristics, asceticism.

Introduction

While previous scholarship has focused on the Christological inspiration behind early Christian asceticism, few scholars have explored the role of the Holy Spirit in this context. After fierce debates that lasted for much of the century, the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381) affirmed the divine nature of the Holy Spirit. Although discussions on the nature of the Spirit and His relationship to the Father and the Son waned after the Council—reappearing only in the seventh and eighth centuries in the filioque debates—the presence of the third Person of the Trinity in monastic lives and writings never vanished and continued to play a

vital role. Investigating the role of the Spirit in the lives of ascetics is important because it allows us to better “understand” the Christian God and to see how personal relationships between humans and God are made possible. In this article, I explore the role of the Holy Spirit in writings that describe the lives of monks in Egypt and Syria. Although the primary purpose of these authors was to edify readers by providing examples of high morality and spirituality (Katos, 2012, p. 124; Harmless, 2004, p. 155), I sought to identify the role and activity of the person of the Spirit in the lives of the ascetics. Monks were often referred to as *pneumatophores* (Rapp, 2005, p. 60), bearing witness to the Spirit's work in their lives—even when the third Person was

not explicitly mentioned. As the authors of the works under consideration state—and as we will see—these ascetics could not perform miracles or achieve feats of asceticism without being supported by divine power or grace, which can, in turn, be identified with the person of the Spirit. As will become clear in what follows, the Spirit is not always mentioned directly; however, references to divine grace and gifts are frequently associated with the Spirit's activities. The study focuses on three works: the anonymous *History of the Monks of Egypt* (400) (hereafter *THMA*), based on a pilgrimage of seven monks from a monastery on the Mount of Olives to Egypt in the 390s, possibly in 394; the *Lausiac History* (419/420) by Palladius (363/364–420/430) (*TLH*), also based on a pilgrimage occurring between 388 and 404; and *The History of the Monks of Syria*, written by Theodoret of Cyrrhus (386/393–457/466) (*THMS*) in 440 or 444.

There are several questions that arose during the examination of the aforementioned works and were considered here. Since this (from the event of Pentecost) is the era of the Spirit, as St Gregory of Nazianzus explained (*On God and Christ*, 2002), it is worth asking how the activities and presence of the Spirit are made perceptible in the lives of ascetics. One may also wonder: What is the role of human effort in salvation, and what is its relationship with the power of the Spirit? Is there a place for human feats and achievements, or are all gifts and grace given by God and to be accepted with humility? (This question was also debated by Augustine and Pelagius around the same time.) Moreover, this article aims to trace the attitude of ascetics to heretics, pagans, and non-believers in terms of true faith and divine grace.

The main aim of this article is to show that in the lives of the ancient ascetics, the Spirit is a Person—a living reality, not merely a speculative doctrine. Despite the ascetics dwelling in different geographical and cultural regions, the Holy Spirit worked equally actively in their lives in a variety of ways. In addition to the activities and gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the Apostle Paul's First Epistle to Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:8–10)—such as guidance in wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, spiritual discernment, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues—we also read in these ascetic writings that the grace of the Spirit attracts non-believers to faith, is given for hospitality, supports the human body in extreme ascetic practices and climatic conditions, helps to build monasteries, and even extends over wild animals. We find concepts such as “light of grace”, “grace and humility”, “grace and divine orders”,

“grace and Communion”, and “gift of endurance,” among others. Thus, we see that the sphere of the Spirit's activities was perceived as much wider and more diverse than what is described in the above-mentioned Epistle.

I argued in this article that the lives of the monks described in these ascetic writings expand our understanding of the Person of the Spirit and how He works in the lives of Christians. We can learn much about how Christians acquire the grace of the Spirit and how human effort and divine grace cooperate in the work of salvation. I also showed that, although monks were often unaware of the intricacies of theological debates—and some monks were illiterate—they nevertheless fought against heretical movements and worked diligently for peace in the Church (though this may well be due to interpolations by the authors of these ascetic works (Cain, 2016, p. 194)).

Due to space constraints, I focused on only a few themes in this article. I first showed how the authors of ascetic writings explained the monks' extraordinary powers and provided Biblical justification. I then demonstrated the special relationship of the ascetics with God and their role as spiritual leaders. Afterwards, I focused on the dynamics of the relationship between grace and human effort in salvation. Finally, I showed how ascetics dealt with turmoil and heretics in the Church.

Extraordinary Powers of the Ascetics

First, I examined how these ascetic writers explained the extraordinary powers of those whose lives they described. We find several passages throughout *THMS* where the author explains the source of spiritual gifts and divine grace. Ascetics do not perform miracles based on their human nature, which is full of sinful passions; rather, it happens because of “their resolve, attracting divine grace” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 5). Theodoret begins the prologue of his work by stating that he will not compose “a single eulogy for all together, for different graces were given them from God”, and that the source of all these is “one and the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8–11) (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 7). Thus, he directly states that it is the Spirit who gives diverse gifts to people. Furthermore, Theodoret warns his readers “not to disbelieve what is said if they hear something beyond their own power, nor to measure the virtue of these men by themselves, but to recognize clearly that God is wont to measure the gifts of the all-holy Spirit by the resolve of the pious, and that He gives greater gifts to those with more perfect resolve”. He

continues, “the initiates of the sanctuary of the Spirit know the generosity of the Spirit and what miracles He works in men through the agency of men, drawing the faithless to a knowledge of God by the mighty working of miracles”. Thus, we see direct mentions of the Spirit and how He distributes gifts according to people’s desires and efforts. In the same manner, Theodoret finishes his work with the words: “If no other men have been able to hold out against such labours, it is clearly desire for God that made them surpass the limits of nature” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 192). Therefore, it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts, and He distributes different charisms to various people according to the strength of their determination and will. It is the Spirit who performs supernatural actions in ascetics, not their own nature.

Similarly, the author of *THMA* writes that he met numerous ascetics in Egypt who led “an angelic life as they advanced steadily in the imitation of our divine Saviour.” “I saw the prophets who had attained a Godlike state of fulfilment through their inspired, wonderful and virtuous way of life” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 49). This passage reveals Christocentric themes. He proceeds by describing the many wondrous things they did: “They have slain wild beasts. They have performed cures, miracles, and acts of power like those that the holy prophets and apostles worked. The Saviour performs miracles through them in the same manner. Indeed, it is clear to all who dwell there that the world is sustained through them, and that human life is both preserved and honoured by God... “And the people depend on the prayers of these monks as if on God himself” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 50). These powerful words testify that ascetics receive divine gifts from Christ, and through them the world continues to exist. The author also writes: “One would not believe their ascetic practices, which surpass human capability. To this day they raise the dead and walk on water, just like Peter” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 118). Thus, we again see that the monks perform various miracles not by their own human capacity, but because Christ works through them. Here too, the ascetics function as ‘instruments’ of divine power. Thus, both works highlight the idea that ascetics perform miracles beyond human ability. However, they differ in their emphasis on the source of this power—whether it is attributed to the Spirit or to Christ (though both are understood as manifestations of the one God).

Furthermore, we find continuity in grace between the holy figures of the Old and New Testaments and the ascetics of later times: the same grace

operates in the prophets, apostles, and ascetics alike. Cain, a modern specialist in the Greek and Latin literature of Late Antiquity, supports this point: “[The ascetics] are the successors to the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles. Angels, for instance, provide the monks with food, convey messages from God, and rescue them from peril—just as they did for the prophets and apostles of the Bible” (Cain, 2016, p. 183).

Let us examine some examples. To begin with, Theodoret refers to James as an “inspired man, whom they [the people] knew to shine with apostolic charisms” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 17). He also describes one of the Symeon’s miracles, “offering it as an image of the way he worked miracles like the Apostles and Prophets” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, pp. 64–65). Among others possessing such power, he includes Peter and Leminaeus. Moreover, Theodoret writes: “The grace that worked in those men [Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha] is the same grace that, through these [ascetics], has performed what it has performed. Grace is ever-flowing: it elects the worthy and, through them—like springs—pours forth the streams of beneficence” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 8). Here, grace personifies God, Christ, or the Spirit, distributing the same power to all virtuous people regardless of when they lived.

Likewise, the author of *THMA* recounts a compelling story that illustrates the ascetics’ own beliefs regarding their supernatural powers. During a famine in the Thebaid, when people heard that Apollo’s community “was often fed in a miraculous way”, they came to seek help. The father gave each person enough food for one day. When only three baskets of bread remained and the famine still persisted, he ordered that the baskets of bread, which the brethren intended to eat, be brought out, and said, “Is the hand of the Lord not strong enough to multiply these loaves? For the Holy Spirit says, ‘The bread from these baskets shall not be consumed until we have all been satisfied with new wheat.’” Ultimately, the bread lasted for four months. Apollo repeated this miracle with oil and wheat. Then Satan tempted him, saying, “Are you not Elijah, or one of the other prophets or apostles, that you have the confidence to do these things?” But the father replied, “Why do you say that? Were not the holy prophets and apostles, who handed down to us the power to do such things, also men? Or was God present then but is now away on a journey? God can always do these things, for with Him nothing is impossible (Lk 1:37)” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, pp. 76–77). Thus, we see a clear allusion to the Gospel story of the multiplication of bread and fish by

Christ, and reference to Elijah and other prophets and apostles. Apollo himself affirms that he performs miracles through the same power as the apostles, and that God continues to work through holy people even today. As Cain aptly observes, “What he [the author of *THMA*] leads readers to believe they found there was a land full of divine wonder, a place where the Holy Spirit’s power was intensely focalized, so that Egypt seemed like a contemporary land of the Bible” (Cain, 2016, p. 5). Interestingly, Apollo refers to the Scriptures but explicitly names the Holy Spirit.

We also read about Apollo: “He was renowned in the Thebaid, and great works were ascribed to him; the Lord performed many deeds of power through him, and a multitude of signs were accomplished at his hands. He lived, then, in the desert adjoining the settled region, empowered by the Spirit, performing signs and wonderful miracles of healing. They were so astounding that they defy description, according to what we heard from the old men who were with him” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 70). Here, we find a direct mention of the Spirit. As Harmless, a scholar in the history and theology of early Christianity, comments, “The emphasis in this passage—and elsewhere in the text—is not on nature or overturning natural laws, but rather on power and its meaning. Abba Apollo became renowned for his deeds of power, but those deeds pointed not to his own strength, but beyond him—to God. These deeds were “signs” of divine presence—of “the power of the Spirit” (Harmless, 2004, p. 293). These stories clearly show that the ascetics were in direct contact with the Spirit, received instructions from Him, and worked miracles through the same power as the prophets and apostles.

Ascetics as Instruments of God’s Salvation for Humankind

We also encounter the idea that ascetics serve as instruments of God in the salvation of humanity. As seen in *THMA*, the world continues to exist thanks to the ascetics and their prayers. Moreover, Theodoret writes, “It is the Master who, through His servants, performed these miracles too; and now likewise, it is by the use of His name that the godly Symeon performs his innumerable gifts” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 168). This further affirms that ascetics are the instruments of divine power and actions. Furthermore, when Or became an ascetic, an angel appeared to him and said, “You will become a great nation, (Gen. 46:3) and a numerous people will be entrusted to you. Ten myriads of people will be saved through you. For as many people as you

win in this world, so many you will lead in the age to come. Do not hesitate at all. As long as you call upon God, you will never lack anything you need for the rest of your life” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 63). These words are striking in their boldness, as they directly state that this ascetic will bring people to salvation.

We come across the same ideas in *THMA*. Once again, we encounter Abba Apollo, who headed a monastery of five hundred monks. God performed great miracles and signs through him. At the age of fifteen, he withdrew from the world and spent forty years in the desert. “Then he seemed to hear the voice of God saying to him, ‘Apollo, Apollo, through you I will destroy the wisdom of the wise men of Egypt, and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent pagans... And now make your way to the inhabited region, for you will bear Me ‘a peculiar people, zealous for good works (Tit. 2:14)’... Go, for whatever you ask, you will receive from God.’” His food was provided miraculously by God—brought to him by an angel. “He dwelt... living in the power of the Spirit and performing signs and wonderful miracles of healing” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, pp. 70–71). The life of this ascetic closely resembles that of Or mentioned above: both received a divine calling and were promised that they would convert many people and never lack anything.

There is another story about the same Apollo, who once went down to restore peace between two villages. The opposing party refused to be persuaded because they put their trust in a brigand chief. Apollo said to him, “If you obey me, my friend, I shall ask my Master to forgive your sins”. When the brigand heard this, he did not hesitate and clasped the saint’s knees (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, pp. 74–75). This demonstrates the great power he possessed. We see the boldness of Apollo and how close he was to God, such that he could make such a significant request. As Cain remarks, “The Egyptian monks are key figures in the unfolding drama of salvation history, acting as divinely appointed emissaries through whom God redeems the souls of the lost” (Cain, 2016, p. 7). From these lengthy quotations, we can observe that certain ascetics were entrusted with a special mission: bringing people to faith. They could do this as instruments of divine power.

Role of Grace and Human Works in the Process of Salvation

Reading the lives of these holy ascetics, one may also wonder: what is the role of human effort in sal-

vation and its relationship with the power of the Spirit? Is there a place for human feats and achievements, or are all gifts and grace given solely by God and meant to be accepted with humility? Some answers can be found here. Palladius, in *TLH*, writes about Paul who “was very simple, and grace cooperated with him... He was deemed worthy of the grace over demons and passions” (Palladius, 1965, pp. 79–80). It is evident that there is a form of cooperation between an ascetic and divine grace, which refers to the power of God, the Spirit. The same author also tells a story that conveys the idea that holy people should not trust in themselves but in Christ. One ascetic, Pachon, recounted how demons attacked him with desires of concupiscence. At his lowest point, we read about his feelings: “I suspected that God had abandoned me, and I felt so oppressed that I made up my mind to die in an irrational way rather than give in to bodily passion” (Palladius, 1965, p. 82). He purposefully went to a cave where a hyena lived, and later to a place where asps were, so that they might kill him, but they did not. He heard a divine voice say, “Depart, Pachon! Keep up the fight! It is for this reason that I left you to be depressed, so that you might not become haughty as a strong person, but rather might know your own weakness, and that you might not trust in your own way of life, but rather come running to God for help” (Palladius, 1965, p. 83). This seems like a very hard temptation. However, as we find in the Bible, God never gives anyone more difficulties than they can bear. In addition, it is a bit paradoxical: Pachon exerted all his human effort to fight against passions, but in the end gave up due to overwhelming pressure, and then heard that God was near, yet had allowed him to struggle so that he might recognize his human limitations and ask for divine help. This shows that no matter how strong one may become, salvation is impossible without divine help.

Further, we read about an ascetic, Sarapion, who sold himself to Greek actors and, after some time, converted them and brought them to Christianity. He told these actors, who later became his friends, “Since God worked grace in your souls and saved you, I may tell you the secrets of my business. I had compassion on your souls. I am a free man, and an Egyptian ascetic, and I sold myself for your sakes so that you might be saved.” “He also sold himself to one of the leading men of Lacedemonia, who, together with his whole family, was Manichean but righteous in every other aspect. Within two years, he converted this man and his family from heresy to the Church” (Palladius, 1965, p. 107). Thus, we see that although Sarapion himself worked diligently to

convert non-Christians, pagans, and Manicheans, he perceived their salvation as purely the work of divine grace. It is surprising to read about his voluntary decision to become a servant in order to bring others to the faith he believed to be true.

Moreover, we also find that grace attracted ascetics to the faith and to the founding of ascetic schools. Palladius tells us of Diocles, who first received an education in grammar, then in philosophy, and finally was attracted by the grace of God to the heavenly knowledge and “he joined himself to Christ” (Palladius, 1965, p. 139). Here we see how grace operates in people, converting them to the true faith. Furthermore, we read about Julian Saba: “Illumined in his soul by divine grace, he foresaw quite clearly the perfection that the young man would attain. And he, a long time later, was called by divine grace to train many others in the same virtue, and established his ascetic wrestling school in the district around Gindarus, a very large village under the jurisdiction of Antioch” (Palladius, 1965, p. 28). Here illuminating grace acts on behalf of God, attracting Christians to the faith, ascetic life, and the founding of monasteries. As a scholar of Palladius of Helenopolis, Katos writes concerning *TLH* and its doctrinal allegiances: “What we find is a Christian tradition that cherished the capacity of individuals to cultivate virtue and strive toward contemplation of God. It was a tradition that rested upon strong optimism regarding human self-determination and free will” (Katos, 2012, p. 9). He also states that Palladius’ ideal ascetic programme “rested upon one of Origen’s most foundational warrants—the belief that the human person is truly free and capable of cooperating with God’s providential care” (Katos, 2012, p. 155). Thus, grace does not annihilate human free will or efforts toward achieving union with God. Sometimes grace initiates the work of salvation and motivates people to act independently.

Importantly, we see how grace is linked to human virtues. Theodoret writes about James: “The more he acquired the wealth of virtue, the more he enjoyed the grace of the all-holy Spirit” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 15). He similarly mentions Maron: “The Greatest Judge measured out grace according to his [Maron’s] labours” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 117). Macedonius also drew divine grace by his labours (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 107). This all shows that God sends grace after humans put forth the effort into the work of salvation, and the Spirit helps them in greater measure as they progress spiritually. Clearly, synergy—cooperation of human and divine powers—is at work here.

Moreover, the author of *THMA* mentions that he saw many ascetics in Egypt “who have attained a Godlike state of fulfilment by their inspired, wonderful, and virtuous way of life” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 49). Thus, virtues enabled some ascetics to approach God. In the same work, we read about the above-mentioned Or, who was skilled in organizing the construction of new cells for new monks and would provide all necessary items to the newcomers. On one occasion, he spiritually discerned and reproved a monk who had hidden his garment in order to receive another. “Such was the powerful charisma he came to possess as a result of the number and quality of his virtues” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 64). Thus, grace arises as a result of a holy life and the acquisition of virtues.

The author of *THMA* also clarifies the relationship between passions, virtues, and the grace of God. Apollo used to say, “Let it be a sign to you of progress in virtues, when you have acquired mastery over passions and appetites. For these are the beginnings of the charisms of God” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 72). Thus, one should not only work on acquiring virtues, but first get control over passions. Interestingly, “Abba Helle often carried fire to his neighbouring brethren in the fold of his tunic, encouraging them to advance to the point of performing miracles, saying, ‘If you practise true asceticism, then show the supernatural signs of virtue’” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 90). Therefore, one can perform miracles only if they practise a genuine ascetic life, a point discussed further below.

In addition, we learn about the relationship between divine grace and human sinful nature in the following story. There was a priest called Eulogius who, when he served the Eucharist, received “so great a gift of knowledge” that he knew the spiritual state of each monk who approached the altar. One brother “had reflected inwardly that it makes no difference whether he approaches the grace of God as a sinner or as a righteous man. Another had doubts about the sacrifice, saying, ‘I wonder if it will sanctify me if I approach it?’ Abstain for a while from the sacred Mysteries and repent with all your soul, that you may win forgiveness for your sins and become worthy of the Communion of Christ. If you do not first purify your thoughts, you may not approach the grace of God” (The Lives of the Desert Fathers, 1981, p. 100). Therefore, one has to overcome passions and sinful thoughts before approaching divine grace and God. From all these stories, it becomes clear—and we find answers to our initial questions—that grace is given in response to human ef-

forts and helps in overcoming passions and acquiring virtues. Both grace and human actions are necessary for salvation. Grace attracts people to faith and encourages them to set up monasteries. More grace is given when an ascetic strives with full effort and acquires more virtues. This relationship is dynamic and very personal. Even though, the phrase “the grace of the all-holy-Spirit” is mentioned only once in these stories, it is implicitly present throughout.

Ascetics and other non-Orthodox believers

Moreover, the aim of this article is to trace the attitude of ascetics toward the Other, whether heretics, pagans, or non-believers. We are reading Orthodox sources, so all those who do not subscribe to the Nicene Creed or hold differing beliefs are considered heretics. Although monks were not usually engaged in theological debates, some stories in these ascetic works show how they dealt with heretics. In *TLH*, we find a description of the life of Melania the Elder, where we read that “they [Melania and Rufinus] edified all their visitors and united the four hundred monks of the Pauline schism by persuading every heretic who denied the Holy Spirit, and so brought them back to the Church” (Palladius, 1965, pp. 124–125). As modern scholar Meyer explains, this heresy claimed that the Holy Spirit was only an angel of the first order (Palladius, 1965, p. 206). At that time, there were disagreements concerning the nature of the Spirit. We also read stories about Copres, who rebuked pagans in his village by saying that worshipping idols was futile. The villagers gave up their beliefs and became his disciples. In addition, through Paternuthius’ prayers, the sun stood still for several hours, and, impressed by such a miracle, the villagers renounced their cult and became Christians. Apollonius also used his words and performed miracles, leading numerous pagans to embrace the Christian faith (Palladius, 1965, pp. 82–87, 103–104). As Cain comments, “On one level of the narrative, these and other conversion stories enrich Anon.’s representation of the monks as divinely appointed ministers of salvation, but on another level their cumulative effect is to illustrate the variety of ways in which the monks preserve ‘true religion’” (Cain, 2016, p. 184). He later adds that, “Anon. also succeeds in using these many episodes to make his own sweeping criticisms, albeit voiced by the Egyptian monks, of whole classes of people who, in his view, embrace forms of religiosity that are futile and inefficacious and therefore the antithesis of the stylized spirituality practiced by the Egyptian monks” (Cain, 2016,

p. 194). Thus, ascetics performed divine miracles to convert others to the true faith.

Furthermore, in *THMS*, we read that after the Council of Nicaea, some followers of Arius asked Bishop Alexander to have pity on Arius, who had been excommunicated. "Some others from among the deeply naïve people enumerated many pretexts for compassion, saying that this also delights the God of the universe. While the great Alexander called this unjustified compassion toward one man a form of inhumanity harmful to the majority, and said it would injure all the flocks, the divine James urged them all to mortify themselves with fasting and, simultaneously for seven days, to beseech God to grant what would benefit the churches" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 17). When the appointed day arrived, and everyone expected the heretic's reconciliation, he died a terrible death. As Theodoret concludes, "The tongue sufficed for James in place of a sword and spear when he destroyed the impious man to prevent him from beholding the glory of God" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 18). Thus, we see how the ascetic dealt with the heretic and how his actions were perceived by the author. James did not judge or excommunicate Arius, but instead prayed. Theodoret uses explicitly military language when referring to "enemies", whereas James himself showed more discernment and asked God for help.

In addition, Theodoret writes about Marcianus. He admired "his strictness regarding the divine doctrines. For he abhorred the madness of Arius... abominated the folly of Apollinarius; he fought nobly against those of Sabellius's persuasion, who lump three hypostases into one; and he utterly rejected those called Euchites, who hide under a monastic disguise the disease of the Manichees". The author continues, "So fervent was his zeal for the doctrines of the Church that he engaged in a just battle with a man who was wonderful and godly" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 44). This man, Abraham, had continued to celebrate Easter in ignorance of the rule laid down by the fathers at Nicaea. Marcianus tried to persuade him to adopt the new manner of celebration, but the old man Abraham was obstinate, and Marcianus publicly separated himself from communion with him. Later, "that inspired man cast off this reproach and embraced the harmony of the divine festival... And this was the achievement of the great Marcianus" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 45). Thus, we see how Theodoret credits Marcianus with the conversion of other ascetics and highlights his awareness of and resistance to all major heresies of his time.

Moreover, Theodoret describes how Valens was persecuting Christians and driving them out of

every church, mountain, riverbank, and military area. Despite this, Flavian and Diodore, leaders of the Church, continued to glorify God everywhere. The author continues, "But the wisest Aphrahat leapt into these combats as a volunteer. Though he had been reared in solitude and had chosen to live on his own—sitting quietly outside the range of rockets, as the saying goes—when he observed the fierceness of the war, he did not prioritize his own safety, but bidding farewell to solitude for a time, became a champion in the army of the pious, delivering blows by means of his life, words, and miracles, but never receiving a blow himself" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, pp. 75–76). We see that some zealous monks even left their solitary lives in order to defend faith and Church. This was one of the commonly accepted justifications among monks for interrupting the life of solitude—alongside missionary activities and severe illness. Once again, we encountered military metaphors used to describe spiritual "wars."

Later, Theodoret asked James "to beg the God of the universe to make the crop clear of weeds and free it altogether from the seeds of heresy, for I was utterly tormented by the terror of the abominable Marcion's having such a strong hold" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 140). James replied that he does not need anyone's intercession because John the Baptist constantly transmitted this prayer to God. Thus, we see that this ascetic could rely on the intercession of John the Baptist. Theodoret further writes about this ascetic, "Although engaged in these activities and performing them all, he does not neglect care of the holy churches—now fighting pagan impiety, now defeating the insolence of the Jews, at other times scattering the bands of the heretics, sometimes sending instructions on these matters to the emperor, sometimes rousing the governors to divine zeal, and at other times charging the very shepherds of the churches to take still greater care of their flocks" (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 171). It is clear that James was one of the ascetics engaged in the "inter-religious dialogue" and actively defended his faith.

Theodoret also writes about Paternuthius, who resurrected a brother. He interceded for a sick brother who was close to death, and Christ granted him an additional three years of life in response to Paternuthius's prayers. "It is said that he often stepped out onto the Nile and crossed over to the other side with the water only up to his knees... Frequently, if there was somewhere he wished to be, he suddenly found himself there... he was taken up in a vision into the heavens... He had also been transported physically to paradise... and had seen a vast com-

pany of saints.” (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, pp. 84–85). Once, this father came across a certain Manichean, “who was leading the common people astray.” As he was unable to persuade him through public debate, he suggested lighting a great pyre so that both of them enter into flames, and whoever emerged unharmed would be revealed as the one holding the true faith. Paternuthius went in first; the flames parted on both sides, and he remained unharmed for half an hour. The Manichean was afraid to enter the fire; the mob thrust him into it, he was badly burned, and was driven from the city by the mob with disgrace (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, 1985, p. 86). It is clear that Paternuthius possessed numerous spiritual gifts and established the performance of miracles as the criterion for true faith—. Overall, we see how the author of *THMA*, *TLH*, and *THMS*—Palladius and Theodoret—describe ascetics in their relationship with heretics such as Manicheans, Sabellius, Apollinarius, Arius, and pagans. These authors show that ascetics converted them through true ascetical practice, prayer, and authentic faith. Ascetics abandoned their lives of quietude in order to confront false beliefs. They believed that true asceticism was a sign of genuine faith.

Conclusion

Upon examining these three ascetic writings—*THMA*, *TLH* and *THMS*—we can conclude that they all agree in ascribing the cause of the monks’ miracles to the power of God, and more specifically, to the grace of the Spirit. Having examined the ascetic stories, we see how the Holy Spirit manifests himself in the lives of the ascetics. This occurs through gifts, divine grace, or the supernatural power of the Spirit, as seen in miracles, visions, and other activities. Most references to the grace and gifts of the Spirit are found in *THMS*, followed by *THMA*, and lastly *TLH*. We found many similarities in the descriptions of the Spirit’s grace in *THMS* and

THMA, such as the connection between virtuous life and grace, the portrayal of miracles as apostolic and prophetic charisms, and ascetics receiving the ‘favour from God’ for the benefit and salvation of all people. Palladius, in *TLH*, uniquely among the works, mentions that grace cooperates with human effort (although other authors describe this more implicitly); grace works within individuals and brings them to conversion from other faiths or to Christianity. In *THMS*, we find unique statements suggesting that divine grace is measured by resolve, and that grace calls certain ascetics to establish ascetic schools and monasteries. *THMA* presents the idea that true *asceticism* enables miracle-working. Significant emphasis is placed on human efforts in the work of salvation (such as mastering passions before acquiring virtues and receiving grace, and purifying thoughts before approaching grace in Communion).

In terms of relationship between human effort and the power of the Spirit in the process of salvation, we observed that both are important and complementary. From these writings, we discover that sin does not exert the same power over ascetics as it does over common people, and that they dare to ask God on behalf of others and receive whatever is needed for life. This also indicates that they have made considerable progress throughout their lives in acquiring virtues and approaching God. Regarding the ascetics’ attitude to heretics (Manicheans, Arius, Sabellius, Apollinarius), pagans, and non-believers, it is clear in their worldview that without true faith, no miracles are genuine and salvific. Only the harmony of true faith and authentic ascetic practice can advance one’s salvation. These writings show how ascetics halted pagan processions through their prayers and led participants to conversion. They also demonstrated the truth of faith through miracles. Thus, we see that the grace of the Holy Spirit permeated every step of the ascetics’ lives, enabling progress in spiritual life and wonder-working acts bringing all humanity to salvation.

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ОСОБА І ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ СВЯТОГО ДУХА В МОНАШОМУ ЖИТТІ І ТВОРАХ ПІЗНЬОЇ АНТИЧНОСТІ

Доктрина Трійці, щодо якої точилися запеклі дискусії протягом IV століття, є одним із ключових учень християнської церкви. Дослідники здебільшого зосереджуються на теоретичних положеннях та історичному розвитку цього догмату. Однак, на думку християн, Бог є живим і є не просто поняттям, а Особою. Тож було цікаво побачити, як цю теоретичну ідею Бога розуміли та реалізовували у практичному житті, у житті святих людей, які в ідеалі мають тісний контакт із Богом і особливо зі Святим Духом, який став більш присутнім і активним у житті церкви після П'ятидесятниці. У цій статті досліджено сприйняття третьої Особи Трійці та Його ролі в житті аскетів у таких грекомовних творах, як анонімна «Історія єгипетських ченців» (400), «Історія Лаузіака» (419/420) Палладія та «Історія сирійських ченців» (440) Феодорита Кирського. Тут розглянуто, як ці автори описували життя подвижників і їхні стосунки зі Святим Духом і як ці стосунки розуміли самі ченці. Зокрема, було досліджено роль благодаті Духа в надприродному житті подвижників, як Бог «використовував» подвижників як знаряддя спасіння всіх людей, зв'язок між благодаттю Духа та діями людини в процесі спасіння і ставлення подвижників до єретиків і язичників. Незважаючи на те, що, як ми виявили, вони підходили до Святого Духа як до живої Особи, а не як до раціональної концепції, було досліджено, чи вчення про Духа «просочилися» в літературні життєписи святих і яким способом.

Ключові слова: Святий Дух, благодать, дари Святого Духа, історія, діяльність, чудеса, подвижники, патристика, аскетика.

Матеріал надійшов 07.02.2025



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