




Thomas Daiber (Giessen)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4185-294X>

## GALEN, BODY AND SOUL IN *VITA CYRILLI XI*, 13–20

**Abstract.** The paper points to a hitherto not recognized quotation from Galen in the Old Church Slavonic Life of S. Cyril of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (chapter XI, 15) which demonstrates the Galenic maxim “*contraria contrariis curentur*”. The Galenic argument is brought forth by the Christian philosopher Cyril in a discussion with Jewish theologians. The paper firstly demonstrates that the author of VC does not only enrich Cyril’s speech with allusions to Biblical formulations but makes also the Jewish interlocutors use a direct quotation from Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians. The Christian and Jewish arguments complement each other leading to the ultimate Christian answer that Christ is the real physician to heal body and soul. In contextualizing the findings and pointing to another passage of *Vita Cyrilli* the paper shows, that the metaphor of “Christ, the physician” both times occurs in a context, where the Original sin is the main topic. Finally, the paper is concerned with the rhetoric of the metaphor and the limits of what can be possibly expressed by it. The ultimate healing in a Christian sense is expressed in the faith into bodily resurrection and thus transcends the comparison with concrete physical therapy. In contrast to concrete bodily health the qualities of a “body of the resurrection” cannot be positively named and thus are designated by the metaphor of “enjoying the fruit” in the heavens.

**Keywords:** Vita Constantini-Cyrilli, Galen, Christ as physician, original sin, bodily resurrection

### Allusions

Besides casual remarks about physical conditions the Old Church Slavonic (OCS) Vita of Constantine-Cyril (VC) contains two passages which directly address the domain of physical therapy. Our article will comment on both passages, but the first allows for better contextualization<sup>1</sup>, so we will focus on it. In VC chapter XI, 13–20 the author of the Vita refers a discussion between Constantine-Cyril and Jewish interlocutors in the course of which Cyril is directly pointing to a medical principle. The sentences VC XI, 13–20<sup>2</sup> suffer from reading variants,

<sup>1</sup> Reasons see footnote 26 beneath.

<sup>2</sup> VC is quoted after *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes*, ed. F. GRIVEC, F. TOMŠIČ, Zagreb 1960 [= RStI, 4] (cetera: CONSTANTINUS), p. 123 (text) and p. 125 (apparatus).

which are a consequence of the saturation of VC with grecisms<sup>3</sup>. The reading variants<sup>4</sup> are basically not problematic, because they do not alter the logic of

<sup>3</sup> T. DAIBER, *Variant reading and reconstruction. Grecisms in the Life of Constantine-Cyril*, [in:] *Гуманитарное образование и наука в техническом вузе*, ed. В.А. БАРАНОВ, Ижевск 2017, p. 377–382; IDEM, *Gräzismen in der Vita des hl. Kyrill*, [in:] *Deutsche Beiträge zum 16. Internationalen Slavistenkongress*, ed. S. KEMPGEN, M. WINGENDER, L. UDOLPH, Wiesbaden 2018 [= WS, 63], p. 111–116M; IDEM, *Vita Cyrilli X: 75–81: Jewish and Christian Polemics on Abraham, Esau, and Jacob (Vita Constantini-Cyrilli X: 75–81)*, [in:] *Translations of Patristic Literature in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. L. TASEVA, R. MARTI, Brăila 2020, p. 43–58; IDEM, *Еще раз к “русским буквам” в Житии Константина-Кирилла*, [in:] *Sub specie aeternitatis. Сборник научных статей к 60-летию В.В. Крысько*, ed. М.А. ПУЗИНА, Москва 2021, p. 311–320; IDEM, *The Vita Constantini-Cyrilli XII:1–6 and its Greek Original*, [in:] *Studien zum frühen Slavischen und zu älteren slavischen Texten*, ed. J. FUCHSBAUER, E. KLOTZ, Berlin 2021 [= SST, 14], p. 115–129. There is no doubt anymore, that VC had originally been written in Greek and we possess only a more or less meticulous translation into OCS.

<sup>4</sup> I) Sentence XI, 13 has *ѡдоу* (?) against all other mss. having the participle preterite active *ѡдѡшоу*, which nicely corresponds to the following participle *пивѡшу*, so the form *ѡдоу* seems to be a scribal error. II) X, 13 ends with a form *исцѣлѣки*, which resembles an imperative form, but could well be a defective writing of *исцѣлѣши* (2<sup>nd</sup> ps sg), as the majority of copies display. Because the majority reading is parallel to a second *исцѣлѣши* in the next sentence XI, 14, which occurs in the same speech act with analogical semantics, the form *исцѣлѣши* is preferable. III) XI, 15 consists of two prescriptions of the doctor (1: ‘drinking something bitter...’, 2: ‘drinking something warm...’), which both have problems with their last word (1: ‘... go on a diet’, 2: ‘... you will warm yourself up’). In the first prescription the imperative *постисѣ* ‘fast = go on a diet’ cannot be easily rejected, because the two forgoing sentences 13 and 14 also have direct (figurative) speech from the doctor to his patient. However, instead of the imperative the majority reading displays an infinitive (*поститисѣ*) with two obviously not meaningful variations *противитисѣ* (‘to refuse’) and *проститисѣ* (‘to apologize’). The majority infinitive reading would have the advantage to sound more generically like a recipe, and, additionally, it seems to me, that nowhere else in VC direct speech occurs without an introducing *verbum dicendi*. Considering the alternation between imperative and connected to it direct speech (‘go on a diet’) or infinitive and connected to it recipe-like style (‘to go on a diet’) the majority reading again seems to be right. Support comes from the second prescription of XI, 15, whose last word is also posing a reading problem because of a recipe-like generic formulation. In the second prescription of XI, 15 we have the choice between several participles (*гореще* vs. 11 times *горѣщесѣ*, 3 *горѣщисѣ*, 2 *гореще*), which go back to either *горѣти* ‘to burn’ (P.M. ЦЕЙТЛИН, Р. ВЕЧЕРКИ, Э. БЛАГОВОЙ, *Старославянский словарь (по рукописям X–XI веков)*, Москва 1994, p. 175, no reflexive form mentioned) or to *горѣтисѣ* ‘to worm oneself up’ (*ibidem*, p. 180). The latter meaning is, of course, the intended. A simple infinitive *горѣтисѣ* – expectable in analogy to assumed original infinitive *поститисѣ* in the first prescription of XI, 15 – should not cause much reading problems. Because none of the mss. has conserved an infinitive, it must be assumed, that OCS translates a Greek participle, which can substitute a finite verb out of stylistic reasons (B.L. GILDERSLEEVE, *On the Stylistic Effect of the Greek Participle*, AJP 9, 1888, p. 137–157; F. SAAUMAN, *Conjunctions in Classical Greek Syntax*, AClas 33, 1990, p. 91–102; M.E. HAYES, *An Analysis of the Attributive Participle and the Relative Clause in the Greek New Testament*, Frankfurt am Main 2018 [= SBG, 18]). Note also, that the conjunction *и* ‘and’ is superfluous before a participle which serves in the position of a finite verb, and that the superfluous conjunction may well indicate the non-canonical use of the ‘finite’ participle in Slavic; also in Greek a conjunction may introduce the ‘participle-sentence’ (K. BENTEIN, *Verbal Periphrasis in Ancient Greek. A State of the Art*, RBPH 90, 2012, p. 43), but I know of no Greek

the argument. In citing the passage the suggested reading (none not documented by variants) is inferred in brackets:

13. философъ же рече: “то аще боудеть кому пакость медь падоу или стоуденоу водѣ пивъшу, пришьде врачъ глаголетъ юмѣ: ‘юще мнѡгъ медь пады исцѣлѣни (= исцѣлѣши)’. 14. а иже боудеть водѣ пивъ, томоу глаголетъ: ‘стоудени се воды напивъ нагъ на мразѣ ставъ исцѣлѣши.’ 15. Дроугы же врачъ не тако глаголетъ, нъ противно врачей’ство заповѣдають: ‘въ меда мѣсто гор’кою пиюще постисе (= поститисѣ), а въ стоуденаго мѣсто топлою и гореще (= грѣющисѣ).’ 16. которыи оубо шть овою хытрѣю врачюють?” 17. штвещаше в’си: “иже противнаа врачьствѣ (= врачьства) заповѣдають. 18. горестію во житіа сего похотноу сласти (= похотноу сласть) достонть оумръвити и смѣреніемъ грьдость, против’ными противнаа врачююще.

19. а мы бо глаголемъ, тако дрѣво, иже прѣвѣю трънь сътворить, то послѣди слад’къ плодъ приплодитъ.” 20. (Add. in initio 16 mss.: Паки же отвѣща философъ: “Добрѣ рекосте/ркетс): “Христовъ во законъ остроотоу (= острооту) навлѣаетъ вожїа житїа, по томъ же въ вѣчныхъ жилищахъ стократичею плодъ приноситъ.”

13. The Philosopher then said: “And if harm were to befall someone who ate honey or drank cold water, and a doctor comes and says to him: ‘Eat more honey and you will recover’. 14. And to the one who will have drunk the water he says: ‘Drink your fill of cold water and stand naked in the frost’ and you will recover’. 15. But another doctor speaks otherwise and prescribes the opposite treatment: ‘Instead of honey drink something bitter and fast; and instead of cold drink something tepid and warm yourself’. 16. Thus, which of these two treats more skillfully?” 17. They all answered: “The one who prescribes the opposite treatment<sup>6</sup>. 18. For it is fitting to destroy lustful sweetness with the bitterness of life<sup>7</sup>, and pride with humility, treating everything with its opposite”.

example using *каѣ* as the expected source for OCS *и*. The syntactic construction, found in OCS (like here) and in Old Russian (Л.А. Булаховский, *Исторический комментарий к литературному русскому языку*, <sup>5</sup>Киев 1958, p. 401, examples from the 14<sup>th</sup> c.), which introduces participles with a conjunction, when the participle functions as a finite verb, remains to be explained. IV) In X, 17 a doubtful *противнаа врачьствѣ* [dat sg] = “the opposite to the treatment” is corrected in analogy to X, 15 *противно врачев’ство* [nom sg] = “the opposite treatment” into *противнаа врачьства* (acc pl like in 9 mss.) = “the opposite treatments”, which is in accordance with the overall line of argumentation. V) X, 18 displays the gen sg *похотноу сласти*, changed in many mss. to *похотноу сласть* (acc sg), which gives a smooth syntactic reading. Maybe we deal originally with a gr. gen. partitivus in distributive meaning, which does not change the meaning very much. VI) The quotative sentence is most probably not a later addition but missing in the edited ms of CONSTANTINUS. – X, 20 *остроту* (instr sg) should be changed with many mss to *остроту* (acc sg), constructed as direct object to *навлѣати* in the sense of *δεικνύσαι* (P.M. ЦЕЙТЛИН, P. ВЕЧЕРКИ, Э. БЛАГОВОЙ, *Старославянский...*, p. 65).

<sup>5</sup> OCS could also be translated: “on the ice”.

<sup>6</sup> Literal “the opposite treatments” (pl), and indeed, it is spoken about two prescriptions of the doctor.

<sup>7</sup> Literal “of this life”; there is not only a temporal, but also a local meaning to the demonstrative pronoun, designating the life on “this” side of the *koiné*, while on the other side lies the paradise. The local expression “this side” occurs in VC IX, 11 (cf. T. DAIBER, „Wenn einer den Abendmahlskelch zerbricht...” – VC XV:10–11 und das irische Thema der Slavenmission, Cyr, in print). Cyril’s concept fits into the common Medieval geographical ideas.

19. And we also say: “The tree which is first to put forth a thorn will be last to bear sweet fruit”. 20. And again the Philosopher answered: “Well spoken. For Christs law reveals the austerity of a godly life which later, in the eternal dwellings, brings hundred-fold fruit”<sup>8</sup>.

The passage is full of quotations from the New Testament, which are found in Cyril’s speech and – surprisingly – also in the speech of the Jews. In general, both Cyril and his Jewish interlocutors assure the validity of the medical maxim “*contraria contrariis curentur*” “the opposite will be cured by its opposite” – a maxim of physical treatment, which usually is seen as the main maxim of the Greek physician Galen of Pergamon<sup>9</sup>. VC does not allude to this principle by hear-saying. Already the pair “cold – warm” is typical for Galen’s humoural theory<sup>10</sup>, but the connection of the pair “cold – warm” with the pair “honey – bitter” brings directly to mind a prescribe of Galen from his writing *On the Powers of Foods* regarding honey and a “hot body”:

For the honey... turns to bile easily in a hot body. It is more suited to a cold body, whether it is so disposed through age, illness or nature<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, sentences XI, 13–15 are recapitulating a specific prescription of Galen and may give evidence of the presence of Galen’s work in 9<sup>th</sup> c. Byzantium. The sense of the passage, of course, does not consist in showcasing Cyril’s broad erudition,

<sup>8</sup> The English translation of VC in this paper is taken from *The Vita of Constantine and The Vita of Methodius*, trans. et ed. M. KANTOR, R.S. WHITE, Michigan 1976 [= MSM, 1], here p. 37 and p. 39 with sentence numbering added according to CONSTANTINUS. If I find it necessary to alter the English translation, I will indicate the change, but nevertheless try to stay as close as possible to the wording of *The Vita of Constantine...* (trans. M. KANTOR, R. WHITE). – In this passage a line break was inserted after XI, 18, while the breaks after XI, 16 and XI, 19 had been removed. – Biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version of the English Bible.

<sup>9</sup> Hippocrates also declares, that remedy should be achieved *in contradiction to the cause of the disease* (*Die Heilung aber hat man der Ursache der Krankheit entgegengesetzt zu bewerkstelligen*, quoted after G. PREISER, *Allgemeine Krankheitsbezeichnungen im Corpus Hippocraticum. Gebrauch und Bedeutung von Nousos und Nosema*, Berlin–New York 1976, p. 58), who was together with Galen one of the pillars of ancient medical education (cf. P. BOURAS-VALLIANATOS, *Reading Galen in Byzantium. The Fate of Therapeutics to Glaucon*, [in:] *Greek Medical Literature and its Readers. From Hippocrates to Islam and Byzantium*, ed. P. BOURAS-VALLIANATOS, S. XENOPHONTOS, London–New York 2018 [= PCHS, 20], p. 188: *Students followed a medical curriculum consisting of Hippocratic and Galenic texts*. P. Bouras-Vallianatos’s description of medical education in Alexandria after the 6<sup>th</sup> c. surely is also true for Constantinople). Hippocrates and Galen differ not so much in their views on medical problems but are representing different stages in the development of medicine as a rational science (D.A. BALALYKIN, N.P. SHOK, *The Apodictic Method in the Tradition of Ancient Greek Rational Medicine: Hippocrates, Aristotle, Galen*, HM.RJ 3, 2016, p. 377–391). On Galen’s frequent use of the writings of Hippocrates cf. the detailed index in GALEN, *Works on Human Nature*, vol. I, *Mixtures (De Temperamentis)*, ed. et trans. P.N. SINGER, P.J. VAN DER EIJK, Cambridge 2018, p. 265.

<sup>10</sup> J.M. SCHMIDT, *Samuel Hahnemann und das Ähnlichkeitsprinzip*, MedGG 29, 2010, p. 153 (“humoral-pathologische Qualitäten”).

<sup>11</sup> *Galen on Food and Diet*, ed. M. GRANT, London–New York 2000, p. 187.

who instead of offering theological arguments seems now to lecture about medical treatments<sup>12</sup>. In the end, Jesus Christ is the one healer for body and soul<sup>13</sup>, and concepts of physical treatment within a theological context are common in early Christian theology. Every reader of a theological treatise in the 9<sup>th</sup> century expected, that asking for a ‘skillful doctor’ will lead to Jesus as the ultimate physician.

It is our task to reconstruct the context, which specifically evokes the comparison between healing the body and healing the soul or evokes the metaphor of Christ as physician. At least, in VC the context is specific. Cyril is arguing with the Jewish Khazars about the problem, which religion would give the best guideline in order to re-enter paradise. The Jews relativize Cyril’s Christian point of view in stating, that *surely each considers his own council best, the Saracens too, and others theirs* (XI, 7–8<sup>14</sup>; trans. M. Kantor, R. White, p. 37), but Cyril replies in pointing to methodology: *through reason man distinguishes a lie from the truth*<sup>15</sup>. In the next sentence Cyril and his interlocutors agree, that the expulsion from paradise had happened because of the Original sin *beholding the sweet fruit as well as craving divinity*<sup>16</sup>. Now, as the cause of man’s misery on earth is known, the remedy to it should be determined, and here Cyril comes up with Galen: If one wants to defeat a wrong desire, the desire’s opposite as its remedy should be applied. If the Original sin of man is to be cured, then what is its opposite? It is, expectable, the “Son of man”, who is not touched by it.

Not so much the outcome of the argument surprises us, but the formulations of the interlocutors. The use of Galen’s *maxim* as the leading principle in answering the question, how the Original Sin could be cured, lets one expect the worst, namely, that the Jews (like the Moslems before<sup>17</sup>) are put into the position of an *advocatus diaboli* by promoting dull morality, while the Christian orator wisely points to philosophy. But the author of VC acts more reconcilably and concedes the Jews be on the right way and the Christians just additionally be in possession of the ultimate solution. To perform this task, the author of VC lets the Jews speak

<sup>12</sup> By the way, Galen is at the same time physician and philosopher, so reading his works is by no means out of the scope of a Greek philosopher in the 9<sup>th</sup> c. Cf. Galen himself: *What reason, then, remains why the doctor, who practises the Art in a manner worthy of Hippocrates, should not be a philosopher? For since, in order to discover the nature of the body, and the distinctions between diseases, and the indications for remedies, he must exercise his mind in rational thought, and since, so that he may persevere laboriously in the practice of these things, he must despise riches and exercise temperance* (P. BRAIN, *Galen on the Ideal of the Physician*, ASMJ 52, 1977, p. 937). This fits very well to the quoted passage of VC with its plea for moderation and rationality.

<sup>13</sup> M. DÖRNEMANN, *Einer ist Arzt, Christus. Medizinales Verständnis von Erlösung in der Theologie der griechischen Kirchenväter des zweiten bis vierten Jahrhunderts*, ZAC 17, 2013, p. 102–124.

<sup>14</sup> 7: свои бо съвѣтъ къждо добръкъшии творить. 8: Врацины такождѣ и инѣи инѣ (CONSTANTINUS, p. 123).

<sup>15</sup> 10: чловѣкъ оумомъ штебѣкають лъжѣ ште истины (CONSTANTINUS, p. 123).

<sup>16</sup> 11: ште видѣнѣа ли и плода слад’каго и похотѣнѣа на божество (CONSTANTINUS, p. 123).

<sup>17</sup> VI, 22: ...нѣсть вѣстегноудъ гнѣва и похоти, нѣ попоустилъ = Mohammed *restrained not your anger and lust, but allowed it* (trans. M. KANTOR, R. WHITE, p. 15sqq).

in a nearly Christian manner when they propose to *destroy lustful sweetness with the bitterness of life* (XI, 18). The verb “destroy” should better be literally translated as “putting to death” (οὐ μὴ ὀφθῆναι) in order to not obscure the allusion to Col 3: 5 (Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν<sup>18</sup> τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς... = *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth*), which makes the Jews sound like the apostle Paul. Paul’s epistle to the Colossians could well have served as inspiration for the quoted passage of VC. At least, the topic and the manner of speaking are similar in Col 3 and our passage of VC. Col 3: 11 states, that in renewing the original image of man the differences between Greek, Jews, Barbarians and other identities will wane, which is (one-sidedly) performed by VC in letting the Jewish interlocutors speak in a Paulinian manner. Cyril’s final hint to Christ (XI, 20) as the ultimate image of man also is an allusion to Col 3: 11 (πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν χριστός = *Christ is all, and in all*). And as Cyril and his interlocutors basically follow the same Biblical passage, their statements are not so much contradicting arguments, but evolve one from another, and at the end Cyril will give the polyauthorial discourse a distinct Christian interpretation by use of Galen’s principle: To cure the Original Sin you not only have to constrain your wrong desires (‘as you Jews say’), but you have to free yourself from wrong desires, at all, by following the One, who is free from wrong desires (‘as we Christians know’). F. Grivec and F. Tomšič (CONSTANTINUS, p. 195) point in this context to Homily 32 (*In Evangelia*, lib. II) of Gregory the Great: *Dominus noster contraria opposuit praedicamenta peccatis...* (PL, vol. LXXVI, col. 1232sq<sup>19</sup>).

In the course of the author’s attempt to place Jews and Christians on a developmental line, as if the Jewish interlocutors would already argue towards the final Christian truth, also sentence X, 19 has its place. The Jews put forth a pedagogical maxim in form of a botanical analogy “first thorn – then fruit”. If we won’t assume an allusion to Christ’s thorny crown or the tree of the cross (which would sound really odd in Jewish speech), this could be an allusion to the botanical genus *Rhamnus*, categorizing hundreds of trees which grow in the Middle East, best known among them the thorny and fruity *Ziziphus spina Christi*, known or even respected, albeit out of different reasons, by Jews, Christians and Moslems alike<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The possessive pronoun is only extant in Byzantine reading.

<sup>19</sup> In going through some examples for curing a vice with its opposite, Gregory mentions “elatis praeciperet humilitatem” (*The Vita of Constantine...*, trans. M. KANTOR, R. WHITE, p. 15sq), which recalls the Jewish speech from XI, 18 as if the passage from VC were a compilation from Paul’s letter to the Colossians and Gregory’s homily.

<sup>20</sup> The only tree in the Middle East that can be regarded as close to ‘holy tree’ is *Ziziphus spina christi*, which is mentioned in the Quran. Individual trees of this species are highly respected by Muslims, but are worshipped only in connection with a saintly person, and not per se. The Druzes treat this species at the same manner, but it is still regarded as a ‘blessed’ tree (A. DAFNI, *On the Typology and the Worship Status of Sacred Trees with a Special Reference to the Middle East*, JEE 2, 2006) and *In Israel Ziziphus spina christi is especially respected because of its red sap, which looks like blood; it appears when the tree is hurt* (IDEM, *The Supernatural Characters and Powers of Sacred Trees in the Holy Land*, JEE 3, 2007).



Not only the Paul-like manner of speaking, also the hint to the tree can be seen as a strategy of the author of VC, to connect the Jewish and the Christian rhetoric conceptualization of the world as aspects of a common development, especially, if we consider, that the alleged Jewish saying can be contextualized by metaphors in the New Testament, as well<sup>21</sup>. But the “thorn” is not only part of a botanical comparison, as the Jewish speakers put it, or part of Biblical metaphoric, as a reader of the Gospels would understand, but can be recognized in a specific Patristic sense.

In his answer XI, 20, Cyril takes up the Jewish speech in affirming it (“well spoken”) and tops the Jewish argument by pointing to Christ: The term “the law of Christ” is taken from Gal 6: 2 *Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*. Fulfilling Christ’s law will bring a “hundred-fold fruit”, which makes the transition to Matth 19: 29: *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold (ἑκατονταπλασίονα), and shall inherit everlasting life*. It should be noted, that Ambrose – likely one of Cyril’s favourite authors<sup>22</sup> – teaches, how to estimate the relationship between body and soul in lib. II, chap. 2 of his work *On the duties of the clergy*. Ambrose introduces Matth 19: 29 with the comment, *that eternal life rests on a knowledge of divine things and on the fruit of good works*<sup>23</sup>, and while the fruit of the good works will be harvested after death, in this life a “thorn” (taken by Ambrose from Jes Sir 28: 24sq. *Hedge thy possession about with thorns...*) is needed to preserve the Christian vocation, the “inner life”:

Hedge in, then, this possession of thine, enclose it with thought, guard it with thorns, that is, with pious care, lest the fierce passions of the flesh should rush upon it and lead it captive, lest strong emotions should assault it, and, overstepping their bounds, carry off its vintage (*ibidem*, lib. I, chap. 3 = AMBROSE, p. 3).

<sup>21</sup> I cannot exclude that the hint to a thorny and fruitbearing tree is another allusion to Galen, in whose gigantic work on pharmacy many plants are mentioned. Indeed, as Professor John Wilkins (University of Exeter) kindly points out to me, the *Ziziphus spina Christi* actually appears in Galen (C. GALENUS, *Opera Omnia*, vol. XII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1826, [repr. Oxford 2011] (cetera GALENUS), p. 93; under the tribe name “Paliureae”, but Galen does not mention a botanical saying about fruit and thorns. Παλιούρος is attested in koiné-Greek and may designate Christ’s thorn (W. BAUER, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, ed. K. ALAND, B. ALAND, Berlin–Boston 1988, p. 1228). Besides *Ziziphus spina Christi* also ράχος (“Blackberry”; *ibidem*, p. 1470) qualifies as thorny and fruity, but does not belong to trees. – Particularly fitting to the Jewish saying in the given context of “fruits” and “thorns” is Matth 7: 16: *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Given this context, the alleged Jewish saying is understandable to a reader of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. as mere paraphrase of a saying of Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> T. DAIBER, *Vita Cyrilli X*: 75–81..., p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> *St. Ambrose*, ed. P. SCHAFF, H. WACE, Oxford–London–New York 1894 [= Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of Christian Church. Second Series, 10] (cetera: AMBROSE), p. 44.

So, in the end Cyril accepts the truth of the alleged Jewish saying by giving it a special Christian meaning. As the author of VC already made the Jewish interlocutors speak in the manner of the apostle Paul and made them utter a botanical analogy, which resembles the metaphors of the New Testament, the “thorn” can ultimately be turned into the “thorn in the flesh” of Paul (2 Cor 12: 17). “Thorn” is not, as we would have thought in the context of a botanical analogy, a thread to bodily integrity, but is in Paulinian and Patristic contextualization a help to preserve mental integrity. Thorn is not, like in the botanical analogy, the opposite of the fruit, but from a Christian point of view rather the condition, which helps to produce the fruit. The “thorn in the flesh” is a life-long reminder of the possibility of bodily sins, which, if not explicitly brought to consciousness by a thorn, would detract the subject from producing and finally enjoying his eternal fruits<sup>24</sup>.

So far, we tried to recapitulate the rhetoric of VC, which show – at least in VC XI, 13–20 – that the Christian and the Jewish arguments are not presented as contradictory, but rather as complementary arguments, which are open for a final Christian meaning. The Jews produce a clear Paulinian formulation and also a botanical analogy, which can be assigned a Christian interpretation, and the ‘body part’ of the comparison “thorn – fruit” turns in the end to be no contradiction to the “soul part” “fruit”, but rather a help to producing the “fruit”. There is some dialectic movement in the arguments, which brings the “thorn” in close relation to “fruit” and which does not come up by chance, but is resulting from the overall context of comparisons between body and soul – the Original sin.

### Exercise

It is easy to see, why the author of VC lets Christians and Jews speak in much the same way by using complementary arguments. Both already stand on common ground in acknowledging the Original sin to be the cause of man’s misery on earth, but only the Christians, of course, point to Jesus as the ultimate remedy against sins and the ultimate answer to the question, how to reenter paradise. Arguing about the Original sin is the specific context in VC to evoke a comparison with medical treatment. In the second passage of VC (IX, 30–33) to display a metaphor from the domain of physical treatment, the question of the Original sin is the topic, too:

<sup>24</sup> There is another domain of metaphoric meaning, modelled around the “thorn of sins” – *pars pro toto*, cf. Gregory of Nyssa, ed. P. SCHAFF, H. WACE, Oxford–London–New York 1893 [= NPFC. SS, 5], p. 349 (= *On Virginity*, chap. 4) – which in the scheme “first thorn – then fruit as reward” would bring out a frivolous sense. The two metaphors “thorn in the flesh as reminder of the possibility to sin” and “thorn of bodily sins” are connected by their shared concept “body”, but the latter meaning of “thorn” cannot be (directly) applied to the passage of VC.



30. чловѣчскѣс оубо родѣ на истлѣнїе пришѣдѣшѣ, оуть кого би пакы оовновленїе принель, аще не оуть самого творца. 31. оувѣщанте ли, аще врачъ хоте приложити пластырь болецїи, приложитъ ли дрѣвѣ или камени? 32. и оавит ли оуть сего чловѣка исцѣлѣв'ша?

From whom can mankind, having come to perdition, further await to receive renewal if not from the very Creator himself? Answer me, if a doctor wishes<sup>25</sup> to apply a plaster<sup>26</sup> to the sick, would he or would he not apply it to a tree or to a stone? And appears from that, that the man is now healed?<sup>27</sup>

Cyril argues, that physical treatment, to be effective, cannot be applied to phenomena, which are not connected with the disease. Applying a plaster has only sense if it is applied to the body part, which is experiencing illness. And so – if we follow literally the comparison – healing the Original Sin is only possibly if the body part, which is experiencing the disease, comes in connection with Christ as the healing “plaster”. Now we would say, that the comparison is somehow misleading, because there is no “body part”, experiencing sin – it is the soul, who does. But exactly that may not be the prevalent idea of the connection between body and soul in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

The connection between body and soul from a Christian point of view is not the concept of a container (body) and a contained (soul). Body and soul both interact, to the detriment of the body (*the wages of sin is death*, Rom 6: 23) and to the

<sup>25</sup> Grecism: Participle in the function of a finite verb (see footnote 4: III).

<sup>26</sup> The “plaster” occurs in The Old Testament twice (Jes 38: 21; 2 Kings 20: 7), but these *loci* do not serve as a specific reference in regard to VC; likewise an allusion to Galen can only be speculated: *Every noted physician and pharmacologist before Galen seems to have invented a special plaster, and the Galenic corpus contains an enormous collection of references* (GALENUS, vol. XX, Leipzig 1833, p. 219–222) *to the plasters of Asclepiades, Andromachus, Philoxenus, Criton, Diophantus, Hicesius, Herodotus, Tryphon, etc., as well as some that Galen apparently concocted on his own* (J. SCARBOROUGH, *The Galenic Question*, SAr 65, 1981, p. 7, footnote 32). – VC IX, 30–33 is somehow irritating, because nobody seriously expects a pharmaceutical plaster to become an efficient therapeutical means, if not applied to a sick body, but to a “tree” or “stone”. The context, Cyril and his interlocutors are arguing, could be some dispute over magical topics, as reported by I. GRIMM-STADELMANN, *Untersuchungen zur Iatromagie in der byzantinischen Zeit. Zur Tradierung gräkoägyptischer und spätantiker iatromagischer Motive*, Berlin–Boston 2020 [= BArchiv. Series Medica, 1], p. 428, who quotes a formula to be recited in applying a plaster with the invocation ἐπὶ κορυφᾶς δένδρων (“by the treetops”). Maybe there is some Iudaeo-Christian folklore in the background, which cannot be reconstructed by the wording as reported of VC.

<sup>27</sup> *The Vita of Constantine...* (trans. M. KANTOR, R. WHITE) (following another manuscript than CONSTANTINUS) translates very differently and does not get it right with the Grecism in the last sentence: transitive use of OCS *явити* (P.M. ЦЕЙТЛИН, Р. ВЕЧЕРКИ, Э. БЛАГОВОЙ, *Старославянский...*, p. 64) translates Gr. φαμεροῦν ‘to let appear’ (W. VAUER, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch...*, p. 1700), which is the matrix sentence, followed by a *genetivus absolutus* as its object sentence (compare similar constructions in F. BLASS, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Göttingen 1896, p. 245sqq).

detriment of the soul alike (*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, Matth 26: 41). The interaction between body and soul is not in full equality, because the flesh would by itself tend to sin, if not hindered by the soul, but the soul is reminded to guard the desires of the flesh by feeling the thorn in the flesh. The specific interaction between body and soul is also affecting the way of healing – both – soul and body.

Towards the end of his Homilia in Matth. 74 (PG, vol. LVIII, col. 679pp.) Chrysostom – profound in using the physician metaphor<sup>28</sup> – makes several times use of the comparison “like a physician..., so also the teachings...” in respect to prophets, apostles and their head Jesus Christ<sup>29</sup>. Christ, who compares himself with a doctor (Matth 9: 12) and is mocked to be unable to help himself (Luke 4: 23 Ἰατρὲ, θεράπευσον σεαυτὸν – “Physician, heal thyself”) will treat the “wicked” not by their opposite (Matth 21: 41 Κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς – “malos male perdet”<sup>30</sup>), but instead call the faithful to “return”, to exert the opposite by themselves.

The important point is “exertion”. There is a difference between healing on earth and healing in the heavens and we should pay attention as to which extend the comparison “treatment of the body is like treatment of the soul” can possibly be hold up. Chrysostom in his homily remarks:

Let us also then, while in sickness, send for physicians, and lay out money, and exert unceasing diligence, that having risen up from our affliction, we may depart hence in health (trans.: LFHCC, 34, p. 989)

= καὶ σπουδῆν διηνεκῆ εἰσφέρωμεν, ἵνα ἀναστάντες ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας, ὑγιεῖς ἐντεῦθεν ἀπέλωμεν (PG, vol. LVIII, col. 683)

= literally: ...and let us bring in eagerness without respite, that we may rise up from these evils...

While one may rise up from a bodily disease and henceforth live healthy, the cure from the Original sin is only achieved after having risen up to eternal life and Chrysostom obviously is playing with the double meaning of the Greek verb “anastasein”. The pair “thorn – fruit” noticed in the reading of VC XI is ready to be positioned as antagonism along an axis “earth – haven”: either bodily existence suffering the thorn in the flesh and the bitterness of life or resurrected subjects in heaven enjoying the freedom of the soul and the sweet fruits of eternal life. Under such transcendental view one can have only one side of the pair: living on

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the lemma “medicus” in the index to JOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *Tomus primus omnium Operum, locis pene innumeris ad collationem exemplarium utriusque linguae...*, Paris: S. Nivellius, 1581.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *The Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, pars 3, *Hom. LIX–XC*, Oxford 1851 [= LFHCC, 34], p. 990.

<sup>30</sup> The play with words is not heard in KJV: *He will miserably destroy those wicked men.*

earth means thorn, living in heaven means fruit. But note, that principally this is the Pagan view on body and soul:

When the body is awake the soul is its servant, and is never its own mistress, but divides her attention among many things, assigning a part of it to each faculty of the body [...] But when the body is at rest, the soul, being set in motion and awake, administers her own household, and of herself performs all the acts of the body<sup>31</sup>.

No wonder, that the Byzantines called sleep a “death”<sup>32</sup>, if death is the state when the immortal soul is free from the body, fully integrated with herself and fully attentive to all impressions, unobstructed by mortal instruments of perception. But the plain contradiction “immortal soul – mortal body”<sup>33</sup> is not the theological Christian concept of the connection between body and soul: In Christianity, the soul is not helplessly enslaved to the body, but may learn to master him, and therefore she has also no need to flee body’s imprisonment after death. The axis “earth = thorn, heaven = fruit” is too simple to catch the meaning of Cyril’s (or Chrysostom’s) argument. The pair “thorn – fruit” has to be aligned along the axis “earthly exercise – heavenly reward”, where it is dialectically positioned: on earth the bodily thorn is the condition which reminds the soul to eagerly behave pleasing in the sight of God and after having risen up to heaven body and soul are both restored to integrity. In his homily Chrysostom plays with this double perspective. In one perspective he is speaking about the antagonism between health and sickness on earth: the patient is either sick or may rise up from his bed and live healthy. In another perspective Chrysostom is speaking about the dialectical condition to be always in the state of bodily and mental sickness on earth, but uninterrupted “eager” exertion will bring, after resurrection from death, health in heaven to both body and soul. This transcendental meaning is clearly seen also in the words of Cyril in XI, 20: “later, in the eternal dwellings” will the actual healing happen, here, on earth, healing is only a limited affair and bodily pains have to be endured. Christ’s suffering is the way to be exerted by his followers towards healing<sup>34</sup>. Exerting “diligence” or “eagerness”, as the quotation from Chrysostom

<sup>31</sup> S.M. OBERHELMAN, *The Diagnostic Dream in Ancient Medical Theory and Practice*, BHM 61, 1987, p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> Which is used by the author of VC as the medium of Cyril’s heavenly marriage with Christ (T. DAIBER, *Vita Cyrilli III:1–8. Wer ist die Sophia?*, ZSP 77, 2021, p. 49).

<sup>33</sup> The depreciation of the body in favour of “higher” mental-psychical activities is typical for Pre-Christian philosophy. D.C. YOUNG, *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano? Body and Mind in Ancient Greece*, IJHS 22, 2005, p. 25: *In actual ancient Greek texts, I cannot find a word that would support, even in the abstract, the supposed concept of the well-rounded elite athlete-scholar. All the evidence suggests that in Greek society the foremost athletes and the foremost intellectuals were as clearly divided as in American society today.*

<sup>34</sup> D. DE MOULIN (*A Historical-Phenomenological Study of Bodily Pain in Western Man*, BHM 48, 1974, p. 540–570) offers an informed survey about behaviour towards bodily pain through the ages;

calls it, does not only mean suffering bodily pain (the “thorn”), but also to learn how to work towards restoration in heaven (the “fruit”). This is the point, where the comparison between a human physician and Christ, the ultimate physician, breaks up, and here the Christian authors would have to become more concrete in speaking about the restored body in heaven in comparison to the known state of a healthy body on earth. Because the restored body in heaven could only be metaphorically imagined, the quotations cover it under the metaphor of – “fruit”.

## Resume

It would be unreasonable to burden the passage VC XI, 13–20 with more theological context than the text demands for its understanding. The greater theological context would inevitably have to discuss the Christian faith in bodily resurrection<sup>35</sup> as the ultimate healing of body and soul, which comes as a consequence of the metaphor ‘Christ the ultimate physician’, because the two natures of Christ

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although at all times men have differently reacted to pain, patiently suffering has always been regarded as the sign of noble souls. The topic “suffering” prominently appears in VC XII, 3 (T. DAIBER, *The Vita Constantini-Cyrelli XII:1–6...*), where suffering becomes possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. And being silent about details of Cyril’s illness VC lets him speak on his deathbed about the “teeth of the invisible enemies” (XVIII, 3), which he is now escaping. Using the common formulation for Satan and his demons may nevertheless be a conscious choice in the given context as a hint to the pain, Cyril actually was suffering like a true philosopher (keeping the soul free from bodily influence seems to be the maxim where Stoicism and Early Christianity are in closest proximity). Suffering is also the concept, where the antique physician and Christ as the metaphorical physician have their best point of comparison: *The righteous doctor suffered together with his patients and carried his share of sorrow, looking upon the suffering of the others as his own concern. One patient might bear his pain with more resignation than another, but one must practically be a saint to bear the violent pain of a surgical operation without complaint* (D. DE MOULIN, *A Historical-Phenomenological Study...*, p. 564).

<sup>35</sup> C.W. BYNUM (*Bodily Miracles and the Resurrection of the Body in the High Middle Ages*, [in:] *Belief in History. Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion*, ed. T. KSELMAN, Notre Dame 1991, p. 94, footnote 43) finds Ambrose’s definition of the connection between body and soul “strictly Platonic” as an exception to the rule, that regularly in Early Christianity man is seen as an “entity composed of body and soul”. The quoted passage from Ambrose (*PL*, vol. XVI, col. 1377sq) indeed uses the Platonic image, that the soul will part from the body, leaving all earthly beneath by flying up like an eagle towards God. But the forgoing passage is speaking about the beauty of the body and Ambrose is looking forward to see his spouse (this is Christ) in heaven (*Tenetur in coelo sponsio mea, etsi non tenetur in terris, ibidem*), which is not much a Platonic expectation of the after-life. I would not say, that Ambrose’s vision of body and soul is purely Platonic, but that he leaves open the question, which body indeed will resurrect and be unified with Christ, who also is risen up in the body. Is the temporal body also the one to resurrect or will there be a radical transformation of the temporal body into a luminous one, as J.R. DOUGLASS (“*This Flesh Will Rise Again*”: *Retrieving Early Christian Faith in Bodily Resurrection*, Pittsburg 2007 (PhD Theses), p. 54) reports the view of apostle Mark? Because VC does not comment on this special questions we cannot but point to problem, that the metaphor of Christ the Physician, who has bodily risen, ultimately leads to the concept, that not only the soul, but also the body will be restored to health.

and His own bodily resurrection let the faithful expect to be resurrected in their physical nature, too<sup>36</sup>. While the problem of bodily resurrection respectively the question, how the “body of resurrection” would look like, is clearly out of the scope of our paper, it was, however, necessary to not only point to a possible quotation from Galen, but to consider the rhetorics and context it is embedded in:

1. Comparisons of physical treatment with spiritual treatment are two times (IX, 30–33; XI, 13–20) displayed in VC, and both passages are embedded within the overall topic “Original sin”<sup>37</sup>.
2. Curing the Original sin means from a Christian point of view a radical renewal of the “image of man”, therefore the renewal of body and soul includes the eschatological perspective of “bodily resurrection”.
3. The concept of bodily resurrection is transcending the realistic domain of “physical treatment”. This seems to be the reason, that the author of VC (and Chrysostom, as well) tend to use formulations, which appear to have a double meaning. One meaning can be located within the concrete domain of medical treatment (sickness can be healed), but the second, Christian meaning is located in the abstract-theological domain (body and soul will be restored) and metaphorically addressed as “fruit”, left open for the reader to elaborate on.

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<sup>36</sup> Note, that belief in bodily resurrection is already present before the First Nicean Council (325), e.g. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 34, 3, ed. M. MARCOVICH, Berlin–New York 1986 [= PTS, 25], p. 416: ...ἔξει δὲ ἀθάνατον τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἀφθαρτον ἄμα (τῆ) ψυχῆ. Cf.: Hippolytus, *Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*, ed. A. ROBERTS, J. DONALDSON, *American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition*, ed. A. CLEVELAND COXE, Buffalo 1886 [= ANF, 5], p. 153: *And thou shalt possess an immortal body, even one placed beyond the possibility of corruption, just like the soul.*

<sup>37</sup> In his analysis of sermons on penance already A. HARNACK (*Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, vol. I, *Die Mission in Wort und Tat*, Leipzig 1906, p. 98) noted, that it would be the overall tendency in these texts to compare medical treatment with the “metanoia”, the “return” to a renewed Christian life (*Am häufigsten aber wird das Bußverfahren mit dem Heilverfahren verglichen...*).

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**Thomas Daiber**

Justus Liebig University Giessen  
Department of Slavistik  
Otto-Behaghel-Strasse 10 D  
D-35394 Gießen, Germany  
[thomas.daiber@slavistik.uni-giessen.de](mailto:thomas.daiber@slavistik.uni-giessen.de)