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HISTORY ON TELEVISION

Francis Cachia

The days are certainly over when in education or scholarship the whole emphasis in the study of History could be placed on mere catalogues of rulers and dates of events.[1]

The term "History" is therefore to be understood here in its broadest connotations. Now not only is the stress laid on the concatenation and causes of momentous happenings rather than on isolated facts and figures, but it is also recognized that the everyday life of people in particular epochs is no less epoch-making than are the doings and goings-on of particular historical personages. History includes people's ways of thinking as well as of acting, and how they expressed themselves in all kinds of literary and artistic achievements, both in higher forms of art produced by individual classical artists and authors and in folkloristic manifestations fostered by large groups. The presentation of history is quite rightly regarded as faulty if it does not give a good picture of the whole social and cultural background of people and peoples in a period under discussion.

FRANCIS CACHIA was born in Valletta in 1928. He pursued University studies in England, the U.S.A., Italy and Germany. He holds five degrees: Lic. Phil., Lic. Theol., B.A.(Hons.) in English Language and Literature at Oxford, M.A.(Oxon.), and Ph.D. at the University of the Ruhr, Bochum, W. Germany. He was trained in Television Production at the BBC, England. Among his publications are: *Mass Media – Unity and Advancement* (Rome 1971) and *Socio-political Novels to TV Plays* (Malta 1981). A number of his articles appeared in UNESCO reviews. Since 1973 he has been engaged in lecturing and broadcasting in The Federal Republic of Germany. Television Plays are his special field of interest and research. He has lectured at the University of the Ruhr, Germany, on Radio and Television Plays. A UNESCO Regional Meeting of Media Experts on "The Preservation and Revitalization of Cultural Heritage through the Communications Media", was held through his initiative at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta, in 1982.

1. The intimate relationship between history on the one hand and social and cultural anthropology on the other, though sharply contested in the past, has been increasingly recognized and emphasized by scholars in various disciplines. See particularly, Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale*, (Paris 1971) 28ff and the article "Anthropology and History" by E.E. Evans-Pritchard in *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*, (New York 1962) 172-191. Clearly enough, an interdisciplinary as well as a cross-cultural approach is necessary to do justice to the subject under study.

When all this is borne in mind, it is easy to understand why the presentation of history on television became the central issue at a Regional UNESCO Conference of Experts on the "Conservation and Revitalization of Cultural Heritage", which was held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre in Valletta, Malta under the auspices of the UNESCO Division of Cultural Development.(2)

The author of this article, who suggested the Conference and its theme in the first place and wrote many of the connected documents, now looks back in reflection and singles out for further study some points which he considers to be of particular cross-cultural significance.

It is often contented by media sociologists and by scholars in different fields of culture that the increasing role in life and leisure played by the audio-visual means of social communication has diminished people's interest in their cultural heritage. Museums, theatres and concert halls are less frequented than previously, it is said, and the cultural fare offered on the large screens of the cinema and on the small screens of television sets is either too light to be serious or too heavy to be popular. It was not the purpose of the experts at the Malta Conference either to confirm or to contest such claims. Their attitude was that since television, video-recorders and the other audio-visual techniques that are continually being further improved are bound to play an ever increasing role in life and leisure anyway, it would be far better to consider what could diminish the loss that might result and increase the gain that ought to be made, rather than concern themselves with developments beyond their control. They wished to consider in particular what the audio-visual treatment of historical themes could contribute to the appreciation, assimilation and revivification of cultural heritage.

1. The Living and the Dead

It is not self-evident that the revival of cultural heritage is of itself always desirable. By definition what is inherited must have once belonged to people who are now dead and gone. That is why cultural heritage often carries with it an aura of death or decay, however much it might be alive in the spirit of its inheritors. An undeniable advantage of the audio-visual

(2) The final report and full documents of the proceedings of the UNESCO Regional Conference of Experts on "Cultural Development through the Mass Media – Conservation and Revitalization of Cultural Heritage", which took place in Malta in October 1983 were sent out to participants with a covering letter on the 29th June 1984 by Mr. Godfrey DeMarco, Secretary of the Maltese National Commission for UNESCO. So the author has been able not only to recollect his thoughts and reminiscences in tranquillity but also to check them with the original talks and papers and take into consideration any new development in his further analysis and ponderings of the different points at issue.

treatment of historical themes is that it brings the past to the present, without necessarily taking the present back into the past. The dead are brought back to life as it were, without the living having to descent into the valley of death in order to meet them. On the screen, the people of the past move as though alive, they express their principles and their prejudices, they suffer their sorrows and enjoy their joys, they love and they hate, they create and they destroy in a world that is all their own. They live again, with a difference though; they live their lives in a world of dramatic illusion, for they move in a milieu and in a cultural background different from those of the living. The living can establish no physical contact with them, only spiritual communion.

The dead cannot be brought to life on the screen, unless they are surrounded with the objects they once possessed, the sights their eyes saw, and the sounds that met their ears. Conversely, works of art, literature and music – all that constitutes cultural heritage, in fact – cannot be properly understood except in a historical context. Since historical personages must be placed in the atmosphere and the environment with which they were familiar, producers cannot effectively resurrect the dead on the screen without also realistically recreating their cultural background. Only so can the viewers sitting comfortably at home enter into the spirit of their ancestors' lives. A true meeting with the dead takes place on their home ground, as it were. Though it happens in audio-visual terms, so that the living see what the dead once saw and hear what they once heard, the meeting is mental, not corporal, moral not physical. The viewers can grasp the minds of the dead, but cannot clasp their hands. They can be infected by their follies, but run no risk of contagion from their diseases. So long as the imaginative reliving of a past in the audio-visual media stops at observation or even empathy, it is a revitalization of cultural heritage that is all to the good.

There is another kind of revitalization though, that is not always an unmixed blessing. When revitalization of a dead culture passes from observation to inspiration, and from appreciation to imitation, as recent history both in Europe and elsewhere has painfully shown, the consequences can be more hurtful than helpful. If the faults of bygone generations are uncritically followed and repeated, the result is retardment rather than advancement, obcurantism rather than enlightment and the stifling rather than the stimulation of genuine cultural growth. In order to avoid such disasters, the appreciation of one's cultural heritage with the help of the audio-visual media must go hand in hand with a critical appraisal that shows what deserves to be reactivated in modern social life and what had better be left undisturbed in its resting place or kept alive only in memory as a dire warning.

2. Styles and Standards

Television programmes deal with history in a wide variety of ways, both in matter and form. Whatever concerns itself with the past on television is really a history programme. It may be a documentary about a very special aspect of life or art in a particular time, recent or remote, or a story – factual or fictional – that unfolds in another epoch. It may be a programme that was conceived from the start for television. On the other hand, it may have made its first appearance in book form. It may have been written originally for the theatre or the cinema. Whatever its origin, all that eventually finds its way to the television screen is for that very reason to be considered as a television programme in its own right. Shakespeare's plays, Goethe's *Egmont* and Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* as well as the colossal film *Cleopatra* all went on the air in the Federal Republic of Germany and are therefore to be considered as part of the television fare offered in that country. These programmes shared broadcasting space with lighter types, such as quizzes where questions were asked about historical persons or events. The cultural value of so-called "pure entertainment" should not be underrated. It cannot be forgotten that many classics made their first appearance as popular shows; Shakespeare's plays are among the best known examples.

Television programmes which deal with history in some form or other differ as much in standard as in approach. Historical films can easily be divided into two broad categories, those with a serious intent to explore and reproduce historical situations as objectively as possible and those where well-known historical heroes or happenings are simply exploited for sensation and spectacle. Prof. M. Verdone of Rome University gave numerous examples of both kinds from the Italian cinema.[3] The majority of films with historical themes fall between these two categories. They go down the whole scale from those that are careful not to depart from what can be conclusively documented to others that have nothing historical about them other than high sounding names and dazzling dresses. At their best, feature films and television serials dealing with history not only retrace and revive the past in sight and sound in a way that is accessible to the general public, but also perform the exploratory task of historical essays, making a genuine contribution to scholarly research.

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3. As a historian of the cinema, Prof. Verdone traced the beginning of a genuine historical treatment in film form to "The Battle of Sebastopol" produced in Russia in 1911. "Il est film historique qui essaye de reconstruire les événements, la stratégie même de la bataille, les épisodes principaux. Les réalisateurs ne négligent pas le conseil des militaires de l'époque et, cela est très curieux, à la fin du film on peut voir les survivants mêmes de la bataille, présentés au public comme s'il était un photo-souvenir".

Just as with standards, the division of styles into two broad categories is easy enough. It is where to put the majority of programmes that raises problems, for these usually lie somewhere in-between. There is an almost infinite gamut of shades and levels between the clear-cut cases. It used to be easy for instance, to separate dramas from documentaries as entirely different genres, as though the two had nothing in common with one another. Now, it is developing into an almost regular procedure for producers to insert documentary material in dramatic presentations, and on the other hand to use dramatic reconstructions of events in documentary films. Examples of this are: *Holocaust, Roots, Das Boot* and *From a Far Country*. They include biographical material at times of still living persons, documentary films and newsreels, together with fictional characters and situations. On the other hand, a documentary made in the Federal Republic of Germany to commemorate Karl Marx' centenary made much use of excerpts from feature films, most of them from the Soviet Union. There are also examples of what have been called "dramatized documentaries", where recent events or long past historical happenings are reconstructed in a dramatic way as though they were taking place here and now. It is indeed one of the basic qualities of television as a medium that it gives viewers the feeling of being actually present when an event appears quite independently of distances of place and time.

The dividing line between documentaries and dramatizations is perhaps at its thinnest in filmed biographies. The WDR's colourful production of 'Mozart' for instance, and the film 'Amadeus' that won the highest number of 1985 Oscars, both deal with the same historical person in a similar way: they achieve the visual and auditory appeal of the "colossal screen epics", but also stick closely to historical facts. There are many examples of filmed biographies of great artists like Van Gogh, scientists like Einstein and political figures like Eva Peron where full media appeal together with accuracy in historical reconstruction are striven for, as though the producers sought to combine the advantages of dramatizations with those of documentaries.

However thin the dividing line between documentaries and dramatizations may be in certain cases, it is right to consider they separately, since the contribution they make to the preservation and the revitalization of cultural heritage is specific to each of these broad divisions.

3. The Heroic and the Human

A history play would certainly be among the last places where a scholar concerned with absolute accuracy would look for source material. Even so, the history plays by Shakespeare and Schiller have always been valued for

their cultural worth and the insights they provide into the unfolding of human destiny. It is considered legitimate for such authors to sacrifice accuracy in particulars for the sake of a deeper understanding of human nature in general and a profounder psychological penetration into the minds of individuals who played a gigantic role in the shaping of human destiny. Though such works are more studies of humanity than of history and are concerned more with interpretation of why an event happened than with investigation into exactly how it happened, they deserve to be appreciated as valid contributions to the study of cultural anthropology.

The mixture of fictional characters with real people and of imagined situations with factual happenings that often occurs in dramatizations can provide valuable insights. When it is borne in mind that common people in a particular time are as important to the study of cultural anthropology as are historical and heroic personages, the presentation of typical fictional characters who exemplify, symbolize and stand for the ordinary individual in a given historical context is not only a valid procedure, but also a valuable contribution to the understanding of historical situations and of cultural heritage. This was already recognized by the dramatists of Ancient Greece. The *choruses* they used to comment what they showed spectators or to tell them what they did not but before their eyes, really expressed the views and sentiments of the ordinary people on the street about doings and destinies of royal personages in sumptuous palaces.

The value of historical dramatisations on the media from an anthropological and social point of view naturally depends on how genuinely the whole life and literature, leisure and work, figurative art and music, beliefs and customs of all sections of the population in a given period is put across. It is also conditioned by the way the chief characters in the drama are brought to life before a present day audience. Broadly speaking, the chief characters of historical films or TV serials fall into three classes: The shapers, the witnesses or the victims of history.

Films and TV Series that clearly belong to the first category are: *Lawrence of Arabia*, the remarkable Egyptian production *Saleh ed Din, Cleopatra, Marco Polo* and Sacha-Guitry's *Napoleon*, to mention but a few. In the feature films and television serials where the hero as a shaper of history strides across the screen like a Colussus, one notices that the emphasis is often placed not so much on heroic achievements as on the human side of the hero. Much depends on the producer's point of view. If the hero has become a national or a religious symbol of a particular culture, the kind of super human-aura with which tradition and official history have invested him cannot be entirely removed, but even so he is as it were embodied in the flesh and blood of the actor and seen to be basically a man like the rest of us, however much head and shoulders above us he may be.

Napoleon, for instance, in Sacha-Guitry's 1954 film is seen through the cynical eyes of the contemporary Tallyrand and is cut down to the size of a true mortal, even if an extraordinary one, who is eminently human, with rather more faults than virtues, in spite of all his genius and personal seal he stamped on history. This is the general trend when dealing with most shapers of history. In this way, a true service is rendered from the psychological and anthropological points of view by bringing the heroic and the human closer to one another, and therefore closer to the common people of today. It is a kind of twofold democracy reaching out into the past: great personages are seen principally as people like all others, and dead heroes come alive with all their very human vices and virtues.

Historical periods, rather than people come to the fore in the second class of dramatic media presentations, where the chief characters are spectators of an epoch rather than shapers of it. Examples of succuessful TV Series that clearly fall into the class are: *Upstairs-Downstairs* and *Backdoor to the White House*. This approach too, can be of considerable value from the psychological and anthropological views of cultural heritage. The chief characters in such productions correspond in practice to the *choruses* in Ancient Greek Drama even though their role and function in the story is in their case so much more important. They are to be taken as representatives of the common man. They can see all that concerns the civilization of a particular era in a more detatched way than the giants who shaped it, for they show us how great events affected simple, average people, resembling the ordinary folk of today. This too is a contribution to democratization of culture.[4]

The third kind of production like *Holocaust* and *Roots*, where the chief characters are victims of history, elevates the heroes of the series into symbols of successful resistance against attempts to stamp out a particular culture. They are therefore symbolic figures of the survival and of the later revival of the threatened culture for which they stand. So, in a paradoxical way, victims of history can turn out to be also, in the long run, the shapers of civilized living.

4. Scattered and Structured Information

Although dramatizations have a formidable impact on the viewing public, the information they impart about history and cultural heritage

4. It is true that in Ancient Greek tragedy, royal personages were the heroes at the centre of attention. This fact which was so strongly stressed by literary critics such as Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis* (Princeton, U.S.A. 1953), does not in any way invalidate the point here made that through the choruses the views and sentiments of ordinary people got a good airing.

reaches the receivers in a scattered, rather haphazard way: fictional characters rub shoulders with people who really existed, while imagined situations come across as forcefully as real happenings. It is only in documentaries that the items of knowledge that are presented to the public are structured beforehand, so that receivers can easily classify and codify them in their minds. Referring to *Holocaust* and some German dramatizations based on the Nazi persecution of the Jews, the Controller of Deutsche Welle, Herr Klaus Schütz, who represented the Federal Republic of Germany at the Malta Conference, pointed out how in his country the broadcasting authorities had previously put on the air a number of documantaries on the subject. However, it was only when the fictional story of *Holocaust* was shown on television that the population was shocked into the realization of the full horror of the real facts in this dark period of their history. The viewers were able to identify themselves with the Weiss family in *Holocaust* and with other victims of persecution in similar serials dealing with the same subject, such as the German productions of *The Oppermann Brothers* and *Ein Stück Himmel* ("A Bit of Sky"). As soon as the cords of human sympathy were struck, the way to deeper knowledge was effectively opened, whereas it had remained apparently closed as long as appeal had been made only to the intellect.

Dispassionate information given through documentaries sticking to proven facts often fails to achieve what an appeal to the whole personality can very well succeed in doing. Yet, though the heart has its valid reasons that contribute to the understanding of history, a systematic ordering of knowledge that sorts out fact from ficition, the mainly objective from the largely subjective and the emotional from the intellectual remains indispensable for a balanced judgement. A systematic appraisal of the actual sequence of events and of causes and effects can be given only in well planned and structured documentaries. If viewers are not to be left to their own resources in evaluating and ordering isolated items of knowledge into coherent patterns, however small the effectiveness of documentaries alone may be, they must continue to share viewing time with other types of programmes and go hand in hand with history plays. The loss to culture would be irreparable if too much concern with audience gratifications charts were to drive documentaries off the air altogether.

According to the findings of audience research, the general public consider dramas as more interesting than documentations. However, there is no reason why documentaries on the media should be regarded as being generally as dry as dust. Producers can call upon all the resources of recorded or reconstructed sounds and sights to bring to life the situations they are portraying and the facts they are analysing. A proof of this is the number of documentary series that have actually achieved an international

success that almost rivals that achieved by drama series. Examples of this are: Sir Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation*, Yehudi Menuhin's serial about Music and Dame Margot Fontaine's about the development of the Ballet. In all these documentaries, the producers made the most of the human interest behind big names and the visual and auditory charms that are inherent to the subjects and to the medium of television. Big names need not only be those of people, they can also belong to places: cities, museums and theatres for instance that are famous throughout the world. One also notes that in documentaries which have achieved world-wide success, the speakers make much use of anecdotes. However much historical analysis and theoretical discussion there may be, individual persons are never left out of the picture.

It is possible that new developments in the field of media technology will make extensive popular success unnecessary as a prerequisite for television productions. We seem to be already approaching the time when audio-visual productions for restricted groups will become as frequent as are publications of books for specialized classes at present. In countries where video-recorders and cameras ara accessible to large numbers, groups that feel they are denied a fair share of air time on the regular networks are producing their own video programmes. The French Delegate to the Conference, Monsieur Darbois from Paris, himself a producer of documentaries, called attention to new technical advances in video-discs which enable the storing of an enormous amount of information in a very restricted space. This could mean a new boost to documentaries, making them still more accessible for use in lecture halls, classrooms and at home. This availability of documentaries for small audiences however, can be no more than a consolation prize, for a wide general public will always remain something to strive for. It is to be hoped then, that big first prizes too, with large international audiences will never be lacking.

Another way of helping to win larger publics for documentaries should be looked into at this point. It is to make them part of the news, as it were. Current affairs cannot be entirely separated from what goes on the air. The BBC producer, Mr. Alan Shallcross, who represented the U.K. at the Malta UNESCO Conference, explained how in his country the national situation is reflected in all that goes on the air, and conversely whatever goes on the air is in its turn considered part of the news.[5] So documentaries about the

5. BBC-TV has two separate departments that produce plays and series based on Britain's literary and historical heritage. Alan Shallcross, refers for instance to the current plan at the BBC to do all of Shakespeare's 37 plays for television over a period of 7 years. See also the present author's article "Words into Images: Televising Stories from the Classics", *Cultures* (UNESCO, Paris 1978). Alan Shallcross stresses how in these plays based on English literature and history, English music and other elements from Britain's Cultural Heritage find a

past become indeed part of the present. Another example of this is how the 50th anniversary of Hitler's seizure of power was commemorated by the television networks of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1982. It was then that *Holocaust* was broadcast for the second time, *The Oppermann Brothers* for the first time, and with them several documentaries. This broadcasting event was widely discussed in the press. This "global approach" mobilizes dramas, documentaries and commemorations of anniversaries, so that all reinforce and further explain one another and all become themselves part of the news in a particular way.

The global approach in programming can be matched by a global approach in production, thanks to recent advances made in multimedia techniques and practices. Communication experts used to spend much time arguing about the relative advantages and disadvantages of books and "the box", the screen and the stage.[6] What could be put across in writing was compared and contrasted to what could be conveyed in audio-visual terms. Now, writing and audio-visual presentation need no longer be considered as competing with one another, but as complementing each other. In 1984 the encyclopaedia *"Die Grosse Bertelsmann Lexikotek"* was published in Germany which contains not only illustrated books but also "talking books". There are not only coloured pictures, but also pages with small plastic records that carry the voices of the prominent people mentioned in the particular articles. Only a relatively small technical step is needed before books will be able to carry moving pictures as well as voices and static illustrations. On the other hand, television sets already broadcast "Video Texts" in writing. We are on the threshold of a multimedia age where a global approach to communication techniques and practices will be the order of the day.

5. The Recent and the Remote

News and Current Affairs really deal with history. This is often forgotten when the presentation of history on television is discussed. It was a point that was stressed in the discussions at the Malta Conference on the Conservation and Revitalization of Cultural Heritage. Current Affairs, by definition, are taken to concern the present. On the other hand, philosophers rightly point out that by the time one takes note of the present

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prominent role. These TV productions are closely followed by the population almost like the daily news: "Television was a major cohesive force in society – it gave the people a common source of gossip."

6. The present author himself has gone into this issue in his article "Television and Culture: The Image and the Written Word", *Cultures* (UNESCO; Paris 1979).

it has already become the past. So Current Affairs are really recent history. They concern the recent past and are therefore already in a sense part of Cultural Heritage. What distinguishes stories about the present from accounts of past events is simply that the former deal with recent history whereas the latter deal with remoter times; it is just a question of more recent or more remote.

One need not have much journalistic experience to realise that a thorough report about a recent occurance or a present state of affairs is hardly possible without reaching out into remoter times. The roots of the recent past must be sought in history. A good news story has to be historical in perspective. Journalists are often accused of culpable bias when reporting events in foreign countries, particularly if these countries belong to a different cultural region. Such accusations of bad will are often quite unjustified. They fail to take into account the inevitable role of the imagination in reporting stories of every possible kind, whether they be true ones or simply invented ones, based fully or partly on fact or utterly fictious. It is in the nature of things that narrators have to rely on their imagination when selecting, structuring, exposing and explaining story material. It is equally inevitable that one's imagination is conditioned by one's cultural background, that is, one's cultural inheritance as well as one's personal perceptions and perspectives. Misunderstandings of the background to events in other countries and cultural areas are bound to occur when a reporter's historical perspective is not broad enough to guide the imagination in fashioning reports. That is why a good foreign correspondent must be a person of at least two cultures, that of the country of origin and that of the country of residence, the country that receives the reports and the country that occasions them.[7]

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7. What is here said about foreign correspondents applies equally forcefully to radio and television networks that prepare programmes for overseas. The Controller of Deutsche Welle, Herr Klaus Schütz, a former Ruling Mayor of Berlin and Ambassador with experience both of administration at home and diplomacy abroad, stressed how the cultural heritage of recipient countries is carefully taken into account by his network. He explained how the Deutsche Welle had invited stations in Latin America, Africa and Asia to participate in a workshop on international co-productions. It is his conviction that "any particular culture defines itself as a culture in that it is receptive to other cultures and other cultural influences, that it is prepared to enter a dialogue to exchange ideas and forms of expressions. This does not exclude the fact that cultures live from their origins and are fed and regenerated by them, that they also remain aware of these origins and always reassess them in the process of development". Prof. Edward Ille expressed similar views. "Objectivement, il n'y a aucun danger d'une influence négative d'un message qui serait tiré d'une diffusion de l'héritage culturel d'autrui étant donné que les receveurs du message le capte à travers le prisme de leurs propres normes. Par conséquent, on ne peut imposer un systéme de valeurs et de comportement qui s'opposeraient ouvertement à nos propres valeurs et cultures. Au contraire, on pourrait parler d'un enrichissement des diverses cultures à travers une connaissance réciproque."

A necessary condition for the appreciation of a country's culture is a thorough knowledge of its history. It can be doubted at times, however, whether delving into the remoter past is actually more of a help than a hindrance in fostering understanding between nations with different cultural heritages. Senor Marinas Otero, the Spanish Delegate, observed how history plays and films nearly always deal with wars. The Chairman of the Conference, Rev. Dionysius Mintoff, Director of the Peace Laboratory in Malta, joined in deploring this fact. If stressing cultural heritage is to result in stirring up traditional enmities one can well question the value of doing so. Whenever one delves into the more distant past, when both lines of communication and communication techniques between distant communities spread all over the world were little developed, one finds that individual cultures grew almost in isolation from one another, bearing their own special mark, with a separate way of life, local artistic and literary forms as well as individual institutional structures. The further you go into the past therefore, the less is the homogeneity of cultural development and the greater are the contrasts and contradictions. Often enough, the cultural differences led to fatal conflicts, so that the rare meetings of cultures often resulted in their colliding rather than in their combining.

The vast improvement in travelling facilities has led to the breakdown of isolation. So too have the mass media that provide means for armchair travelling both in the present and in the past. The Italian TV Serial about the celebrated traveller Marco Polo which won a deserved international success turned viewers into witnesses of a peaceful meeting of diverse cultures in the 13th century. It also showed how distrust between people living worlds apart and with vastly different cultures can be broken down when one does not confine oneself to reporting conflicts and wars, but tries instead to seek the basic human unity behind the diversity, indeed *in* the cultural diversity itself. Diversity does not imply divisiveness, nor should it lead to it. The meeting of West and 'Far' East that started with Marco Polo's voyages and journeys has enriched the cultural heritage of both East and West. It would be a false and fatal reading of history to conclude that one cannot love what is one's own without shunning or even hating what is somebody else's heritage. Cultural in-breeding can be as deforming as biological. Contrariwise, cross-fertilization of culture can be as fruitful as botanical.

The spiritual journeying with one's imagination from recent past to remoter past that is facilitated especially by the audio-visual media has the advantage of putting a particular historical epoch and the culture inextricably bound up with it into proper perspective. Human relationships, institutional set-ups, social and economic structures as well as art and literature are seen in better proportions when viewed from the perspective

of a time distance. This brings out and stresses their relativity: the foe of a few years ago was the friend of some centuries ago and the other way round. One can witness the progressive breaking down of isolation between cultures that has been leading gradually to the emergence of an overall worldwide culture that can be shared equally by different classes, nationalities, races and religions without necessarily implying the imposition of uniformity. The human oneness behind the cultural variety is what stands out most, but the realization of this does not demand the giving up of even one jot of one's own cultural heritage.

The producers of such series as *Marco Polo* show news reporters how to perform their tasks of breaking down barriers between countries and building bridges between cultures. The way a reporter sees an event inevitably determines the angle from which it is reported. The story-slant is often no more than the reporter's historical perspective. News reporters are products of their own inherited culture where the view of foreigners is unfortunately more often than not deeply influenced by clichès, stereotypes and other generalizations instilled from early childhood. Here, the foreign correspondent should take a leaf out of the anthropologist's book and as it used to be said "go native". The better one gets to know the language, the customs, institutions, art and literature, all the cultural manifestations in fact, of the country one is reporting about, the better is one able to understand the distant background of recent events and of present situations there. On the other hand, one must not cease to belong to the cultural group for whom one is reporting, if one does not wish to cease to be understood over there.

6. The Inherited and the Borrowed

It is precisely in the new ease of communication and communications that facilitates the bridging of cultures, and in the resulting incipient emergence of an overall cross-cultural framework in which all can participate with the advantages that this implies, where many see also one great disadvantage: an imminent danger of the loss of one's cultural identity. Is a uniform culture emerging that will leave no room for local variations and stamp out all that is particular, so that no culture can have a character of its own? This is a question that loomed large in the discussions at the Regional UNESCO Experts' Conference.

Malta was not an inappropriate land where to raise such a question, nor was the Valletta Mediterranean Conference Centre an inappropriate place for a thorough discussion of it. The meeting place of the Conference symbolized the question and also suggested some answers. Malta has preserved its own cultural identity throughout centuries when it was ruled by

outsiders. On the other hand, not only has it not scorned to learn from these outsiders but it has integrated their cultures into its own. Malta has remained Maltese without ceasing to be also thoroughly European and Mediterranean in its outlook and its outward looks.

In his opening address, the then Minister of Education and Chairman of the Maltese National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici referred to the building in which the Delegates were meeting. It was built by the Knights of Malta in 1574 to become one of the best equipped and most efficiently run hospitals in Europe at the time, though it would not be able to meet the requirements of medical science today. Now, it has been turned into a Conference Centre with all the required modern facilities to fulfil its new functions. Here was a part of Malta's ancient heritage continuing to serve human needs, even while changes were necessary to adapt it for its new role. Similarly, traditional artistic material and forms can be adapted to suit the communications media of today without losing thereby their original force or doing violence to the particular qualities of the media. Thus, cultural identity can be not only preserved but also injected with new life through appropriate changes. Dr. Ladislav Gaulik, Director of the Institute of Research and Culture in Prague, the Delegate to the Valletta Conference from Czechoslovakia took up this theme and showed how even the most ancient literary works, such as epics, can be suitably adapted to the new electronic media. Mr. Iván Vitányi, Director of the Institute for Culture in Budapest, who was the Hungarian Delegate, pointed out how this adaptability applied not only to classical "high art" but also to folklore, which was more closely bound up with national identity as it arose from the people of a particular place. When the traditional arts are reinserted into present living expressions, a creative process is set afoot that results into what can be termed "a new generative culture" which duly preserved cultural identity.

Prof. Edward Ille called the Delegates' attention to the numerous linguistic groups in his country, Yugoslavia, and asked what chances there were for the survival of the cultural identity of these groups in the face of competition from media organizations backed by much larger cultural entities. This problem in a country with numerous cultural minorities like Yugoslavia was a reflection on the national scale of the gigantic difficulties in the international sphere where super-multinational commercial concerns dominated the field, threatening to stamp out local cultural identity. Television productions, particularly "Television Sagas" – long serials about powerful families – came up for discussion. Their worldwide dominance of the field of television broadcasting at the expense of local productions was extensively examined. Then the secret of their appeal was analysed. The suggestion was put forward that commercial television series

such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty* have really rediscovered and revived ancient sources of story material and old formulas for story construction: the family feud and the struggle for succession to high office. Indeed, the very title of *Dynasty* implies this, as it calls to mind the struggles in royal families of kings and tribal chiefs. Such serials were also something like fairy tales in a 20th century setting, with oil millionaires replacing princes and princesses. The average viewer is as far removed from the world of multimillionaires and directors of multinational companies as the child is from the world of wicked step-mothers, witches and good fairies. Adult viewers no less than children enjoy the escapism of day-dreaming and love to see their everyday problems magnified and blown out of all proper proportions. They imagine themselves in the place of their social betters, but at the same time they are glad to observe that the great ones of this world have no fewer problems than ordinary folk like themselves.

If it is true that television producers of supernational commercial enterprises have rediscovered themes and treatments of stories from the world of myths and primitive social institutions, then it is surely possible to reverse the process and return these stories to their original settings. In the cultural heritage of almost every linguistic group for instance, family feuds and clashes between clans, prehistoric myths and fairy tales are to be found and these can be exploited suitably as material for television productions.

7. Cultural Identity and Development

Though in theory, source material for effective television can undoubtedly be found in a particular country's own cultural heritage, in practice, financial considerations[8] among other problems often stand in the way. It is usually both easier and cheaper simply to take over ready-made programmes offered by the large international networks, than to make one's own, unless one has not only the technical know-how and studio facilities but also the necessary financial backing. In the field of the mass media no less than in the world of industry in general, mass production is more economical than individual treatment. On the other hand, here too, unity gives strength. It was suggested at the Valletta Conference that the smaller countries and cultural groups should pool their resources and create banks of material in order to prevent being swamped by productions from the wealthier countries and to be able to safeguard their own cultural identity. In his concluding address to the Conference, the former Minister

8. Senor Marinas Otero, a newspaper owner and publisher, devoted an entire paper to the study of the economic aspects of the case.

for Foreign Affairs and Culture, Dr. Alex Sceberras Trigona stressed the need for taking the initiative and for regional co-operation between smaller nations in making, storing and broadcasting productions that reflect their individual cultural identity.

In the course of the debates during the Conference, the many-sided problems involved in inserting elements from cultural heritage into new productions got a good airing. Primitive artistic forms and ethical standards taken from a particular country's past can be even more foreign to the present day population of that country than those imported from abroad. The average Italian has more in common in his outlook with a North or South American than with an Ancient Roman. It would be truly madness if on the pretext of reviving the cultural heritage of Ancient Rome one were to return to the building methods of that age, remarkable as they were for the times, or worse still is one were to suggest the restoration of the power of life and death over wife and children that the head of a Roman family, the *pater familias*, once enjoyed. Technical solutions and ethical standards that have been discarded as faulty in the course of the evolution of human thinking and technology are not to be reinstated with all their shortcomings, simply on the score of reviving elements taken from one's cultural heritage.

One can be lost in admiration for the achievements of the Ancient Romans in building and legislation, without in any way wishing to advocate a return to their out-moded methods of construction or their overhauled legal system. Yet, it should be clear that a place must be allocated to these in television productions that deal with Roman times. When intending to reinject elements from cultural heritage into the mainstream of present-day culture a reverse process must be followed from that to be followed when the purpose is careful observation and deeper understanding. The proper analysis of the various components of cultural heritage requires that the parts be considered in conjunction with the whole, now on the contrary, when it comes to reworking them into a new production, various elements of substance and form must be detached from the rest in order to be given a new life in a new setting.

An example of how this works out in practice can be taken from a recognized 20th century artistic masterpiece, Igor Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring* (1911-13), which was inspired by man's primordial attempt to come to terms with the forces of nature through ritual and worship. The fertility rites which are at the roots of the composer's inspiration are obviously not reenacted in their primeval, cruel reality when they were embedded in the whole culture of a time before the ethical values that forbid human sacrifice had firmly established themselves in the consciousness of mankind. Nor did the composer confine himself to the use of musical instruments and styles that prevailed at such a period, but on the

contrary he availed himself of all the resources of musical composition and instrumentalization that were at his command. This reevocation in dance form of a primordial rite, based as it is on an element of cultural heritage probably common to the whole of mankind, has the great anthropological value of showing something that lies deep at the roots of human nature. One sees then, hown Stravinsky detached factors belonging to cultural heritage from their original situation in life in order to rework them under his overriding inspiration into a completely new entity in a new medium and with a new social function. When Stravinsky's ballet is recorded for television, still more factors with even newer techniques come into play and have to be harmoniously integrated into the final production under the overall planning and guidance of the director.

Another Stravinsky ballet, *Pulcinella*, also with a subject taken from cultural heritage though not so universal or so ancient, the Italian "Comedia dell'Arte" that has left its mark on the culture of many lands, was recently televized in Germany. The full mobility of television cameras was used together with all the technical resources at the director's command to weld together all the different, and previously disparate elements, both old and new, into one artistic whole for the viewer's benefit.

Together with these examples from the "high art" of classical ballet, one could consider another from folk-dance, in order to throw more light on the relationship between cultural identity and cultural development. In Hungary, a spontaneous movement among young people led to the establishment of "Dance Houses".[9] Here, traditional Hungarian folk-dances are performed instead of the usual fashionable ones. Television broadcasting is part of the movement, for it does not simply record the dances for the viewers at home, but encourages, stimulates and inspires the dancers themselves.

Cultural heritage is of different kinds: that with its deep roots in the human nature common to all, that with an extensive regional character and that with a strongly local flavour. All these kinds deserve to find a prominent place in the modern media to which they are well suited. The result will be considerable enrichment of media content and vigorous

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9. The author of this article was among the Delegates to the UNESCO Regional Conference of Experts held in Budapest in 1979, who were given an opportunity to see for themselves how these "Dance Houses" function. Mr. Iván Vitányi referred to dance houses in his talk at the Valletta Conference: "The evolution of a new folklore is more than wishful thinking, as is shown for instance, by a renaissance of folklore in many parts of the world and more so, by endeavours to reinstate folklore in daily life instead of preserving it merely in the framework of museums and stages. As an example is the dance house movement in Hungary, prompting the urban youth to sing, dance and reproduce folklore in music for their own entertainment in daily costumes and under everyday circumstances".

revitalization of cultural heritage. The building where the Malta Conference took place is a concrete embodiment and synthesis of the points made during the discussions there. "Dar il-Mediterran" to name it by its Maltese name, is a symbol of how cultural heritage can not only be preserved in its own full identity, but also revitalized to become part of the mainstream of present-day life and culture.

8. The Debate Continues

The success of a Conference is not measured solely by the answers it gives to ever-recurring questions, as these answers must of necessity be in the main only partial and provisional. Rather, it should be measured by the discussions it stimulated and by the points of reference and the directions for further studies that it indicated. On this score, the Regional UNESCO Conference of Experts held in Malta deserves to be considered a success, but the debate must continue. Several points that emerged in the course of the discussions are of vital interest everywhere, for they touch matters that require deeper investigation and must be tackled again and again in different times, in different places and in different ways, going as they do to the roots of cultural heritage and cross-cultural communication.

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THE TWELVE
Another Perspective: John 6, 67-71

Raymond F. Collins

Almost from the beginning of Christian history it has been recognized that the fourth gospel is radically different from the other three gospels in the New Testament. During Patristic times, the difference was epitomized in the characterization of the fourth gospel as "the spiritual gospel" and the choice of the eagle as a symbol to represent its author who was, as it were, considered capable of soaring to the heights of heaven.

In the early years of the historical critical era, the difference between the fourth gospel and the others was summed up in the characterization of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as "the synoptic gospels," a category from which the fourth gospel was obviously – and for good reason – excluded. The difference between the Synoptics and the fourth gospel received symbolic expression in the printed synopses, beginning with Griesbach's work in 1774, which contained only the first three of the canonical gospels.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the difference between the fourth gospel and the Synoptics was summed up in the views of radical critics, such as Alfred Loisy, who considered that only the Synoptics provided material useful for historical investigation into the life of Jesus and relegated the fourth gospel to the status of an imaginative theological exposition on a Jesus who had become virtually a myth.

In popular piety, the difference between the fourth gospel and the synoptics is symbolized in the choice of "John the Divine" to identify its author, while the authorship of the Synoptic gospels is simply attributed to Matthew, Mark, and Luke or, at best, Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke.

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As historical-critical scholarship has continued to probe the fourth gospel during the past four decades, these views of earlier times have been virtually abandoned. It is now almost universally recognized that the fourth gospel also has its roots in the historical ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Published synopses of the gospels now commonly print in parallel columns Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These names are generally considered to be but symbols designating whoever the author of the respective texts might have been. With regard to the fourth gospel, there is a wide consensus of opinion that it was not written by John, at least, not by the John who was the son of Zebedee.

Despite the fact that contemporary biblical scholarship is now accustomed to treat the fourth gospel in the same way, and for the same purposes, that it examines the other three canonical gospels, contemporary biblical scholarship shares with the older ecclesiastical, critical, and pious views the conviction that the fourth gospel is quite different from the Synoptics. The difference, quite obvious when the plan of the fourth gospel is compared to that of the Synoptics, is a difference that goes down to small details and extends to a wide variety of viewpoints. As a case in point, this essay will briefly consider the appearance of "The Twelve" in the New Testament.

The Synoptics

Christians commonly speak and write about "the twelve apostles" and Jesus' "twelve disciples." Whenever they do so, they are, in fact, echoing the language of the Synoptic gospels. To speak about the twelve apostles or Jesus' twelve disciples is a manner of speaking that is foreign to the tradition of the fourth gospel.

Mark

The earliest of the gospels to mention "The Twelve" is Mark, the first of the gospels. He does so on only one occasion, that is, when he lists the names of twelve men, Simon, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot whom Jesus appointed to be with him, to go out to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons (Mark 3, 14-19a).

A Textual Problem

Although the three-fold mission of the twelve is clearly described in Mark 3, 14b-15, the status of Mark's presentation formula (Mark 3, 14a) is

not so clear. "And he appointed twelve" *(kai epoièsen dòdeka)* is the simple formula used by the *RSV* to introduce the mission statement of vv. 14b-15. However, many editions of the *RSV* offer a footnote to the effect that in v. 14a "other ancient authorities add *whom also he named apostles*."[1] Similarly, many of these same editions provide for v. 16 a footnote which reads "So he appointed the twelve."

In fact, the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle-Aland includes *hous kai apostolousònomasen* ("whom also he named apostles") in 3, 14a as a bracketed part of the Greek text. The editors have included the disputed words because of the weight of the manuscript tradition (including the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Ephraemi Rescriptus codices). However, they have given the disputed words only a C rating[2] and opine that the clause is most likely an interpolation into the Markan text brought about because of the influence of Luke 6, 13.[3]

At the beginning of v. 16, a bracketed *kai epoièsen tous dòkeka* ("So he appointed the twelve") appears in N-A[26]. With the inclusion of these words, a neat *inclusio* is formed around the triple mission statement of Mark 3, 14b-15. However, the editors once again offer but a C rating for the bracketed clause, opining that the words have come into the text as a result of scribal dittography.[4]

The revised edition of the *NAB*, following N-A[26], includes both sets of disputed words in brackets. In contrast, most of the principal recent English-language editions of the NT do not admit the disputed words of v. 14.[5] Generally, however, they do incorporate the disputed words of v. 16 into the English-language text.[6]

A group of twelve

Mark does not particularly speculate on the significance[7] attached to the fact that this group of Jesus' special companions, appointed by him to share in his ministry of preaching and exorcism, were twelve[8] in number.

1. For example, Nestle-Aland, *Greek-English New Testament* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart[2] 1985) 96.
2. Meaning that there is "a considerable amount of doubt".
3. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies; London/New York 1971) 80.
4. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 80-81.
5. In addition to the *RSV, JB, NEB, NAB,* and *NJB* do not include the disputed words, while the *NIV* does include the words in the text of v. 14.
6. The *JB, NEB, NIV, NJB, NAB* include the words, while the *RSV* does not.
7. Similarly, the evangelist does not speculate on the significance of the enigmatic names "Peter" and "Boanerges", notwithstanding the fact that he does translate the latter expression into Greek.
8. Cf. Ernest Best, "Mark's Use of the Twelve," *ZNW* 69 (1978) 32, 34. Best holds that "the twelve" is an element of the tradition that has come down to Mark.

However, given the eschatological nature of their mission it is likely that their being twelve in number had some eschatological significance.[9]

Indeed, other texts in the New Testament suggest that "twelve" is symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel and therefore points to the eschatological nature of the mission to which these twelve were appointed. Matthew and Luke (Matt 19, 28 = Luke 22, 30) have taken a logion on the Son of Man and the twelve tribes of Israel from their Q source and incorporated it into a short discourse on discipleship. Horsley suggests that that this saying of Jesus on the twelve thrones evokes a concrete social context.[10] If so, the Q-logion is concerned with a concrete manifestation of the "reign of God," a powerful eschatological symbol in the apocalyptic context within which Jesus spoke. In any event, the Son of Man is patently an eschatological quantity, as in the notion of the judgment to come. Applied to the disciples in Matthew and Luke, the Q-logion highlights their eschatological role.[11]

Similarly, within a single, relatively short passage (Rev 21, 12-14), the book of Revelation speaks of the twelve tribes of Israel and mentions the names of the twelve apostles, without, however, citing each of the names in turn.

While Mark does not explicitly exploit the eschatological significance of the twelve, it is clear that "the twelve" has qualitative significance for his gospel.[12] In his narrative of Jesus' feeding the five thousand, Mark indicated that the pieces of the broken bread and the fish that had been gathered up after the meal filled twelve baskets (Mark 6, 43), apparently in reference to the appointed group of twelve (see Mark 6, 37. 41). The

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9. The point is emphasized by Jean Giblet, "Les douze, histoire et théologie," in J. Giblet, *et al., Aux origines de l'Eglise.* (RechBib, 7; Desclée de Brouwer; Bruges 1965) 61-64. In this article Giblet strongly defends the view that the twelve were, in fact, a group which was gathered together during Jesus' historical ministry – a view rejected by many modern critics. Since the present essay is dealing with the way in which the different evangelists treat of the tradition about the twelve, we will not enter here a discussion of the relationship between the tradition and the Sitz-im-Leben Jesu.

10. See Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Harper & Row; San Francisco 1987) 201-202.

11. Trilling correctly notes that this does not necessarily imply that the logion was originally addressed to a group of twelve. Cf. W. Trilling, "Zur Entstehung des Zwölferkreises: Eine geschichtskritische Überlegung," in R. Schnackenburg, ed., *Die Kirche des Anfangs. Fs. H. Schürmann* (St. Benno; Leipzig 1977) 213-222.

12. Since Rigaux' 1960 study it has become common for commentators to note that Mark's mention of the twelve is frequently found in the redactional verses of the gospel. The redactional insertion of the twelve does not take away from the fact that "the twelve" is an element of the tradition received by Mark. See B. Rigaux, "Die 'Zwölf' in Geschichte und Kerygma," in H. Ristow and K. Matthiae, eds., *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus: Beiträge zum Christusverständnis in Forschung und Verkundigung* (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt; Berlin 1960) 468-486.

Markan Jesus subsequently draws attention to those twelve baskets (Mark 8, 19) as he confronts the disciples' lack of understanding.[13]

Moreover, in the Passion narrative, Mark identifies Judas three times as "one of the twelve" (Mark 14, 10. 20. 43), thereby underscoring the heinousness of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Mark's group of twelve are portrayed as having been Jesus' special companions (Mark 3, 14; 4, 10). They were the group with whom Jesus celebrated his final Paschal meal (11, 11). To the twelve Jesus gave particular instructions. In fact, Mark emphasizes that Jesus specifically chose the twelve for this instruction (Mark 9, 35; 10, 32).[14] Finally, the twelve were sent out, in pairs, as an extension of Jesus' ministry of exorcising (Mark 6, 7).

For Mark, the twelve are a group of special companions of Jesus,[15] who were especially taught by him and who were sent out into mission by him. From this perspective, the Markan resumé which serves as an introduction to the list of the names of the twelve in Mark 3, 14-16 provides a sketch of the image of the twelve which is then fleshed out in the remainder of the gospel.

Matthew and Luke

Mark's portrayal of "the twelve" is substantially reflected in Matthew and Luke, the canonical gospels clearly dependent on Mark. Despite their general similarity with Mark, each of these later gospels portray the twelve with nuances that are specific to the respective evangelists. The purpose of the present essay does not allow for an in-depth study of "the twelve" in Matthew or Luke. However, it might be useful to identify a few traits which differentiate the understanding of the twelve in Matthew and Luke from that found in Mark.

Twelve

To begin, although Matthew (5 times) and Luke (7 times) explicitly mention "the twelve" *(dòdeka)* less frequently than does Mark (10 times), each of these evangelists patently portrays "the twelve" as representing a

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13. The discussion is not found in Luke. It is present in Matthew, but Matthew's syncopated version of the confrontation (Matt 16, 8-12), is focused more on the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees than on the disciples' misunderstanding *per se*. In abbreviating the dialogue, Matthew has omitted any explicit reference to *the twelve* baskets in v. 9.
14. See also Mark 4, 10.
15. Best, however, states that "although the twelve are commissioned to be with Jesus this does not imply a special relation between them and Jesus", Best, "Mark's Use", 34.

full complement. Unlike Mark,[16] both Matthew and Luke identify the group as "the eleven" after Jesus' passion and death (Matt 28, 16; Luke 24, 9. 33). Judas was one of the twelve (Matt 26, 47; Luke 22, 47). Because of his defection the group was not up to its full complement; they were only eleven in number.[17]

At the beginning of the second part of his two-part work, Luke tells the story of the choice of Matthias as the group is brought up to its full numerical strength. Then, after the mission-enabling gift of the Spirit, Peter, standing with the eleven (Acts 2, 14) utters his speech at Pentecost, the paradigm of Acts' kerygmatic (missionary) speeches. According to Luke the twelve continue to enjoy a leadership function within the church of Jerusalem (Acts 6, 21).[18]

Disciples and Apostles

Matthew and Luke identify the twelve as disciples and apostles (Matt 10, 1-2; Luke 6, 13). The similarity stops, however, with the nomenclature. Each of the two evangelists has a particular view of the relationship between discipleship and apostleship.

Matthew's list of the twelve (Matt 10, 2b-4) is formally introduced with the statement: "The names of the twelve apostles are these" (Matt 10, 2a). This is the only place in the New Testament where the expression "twelve apostles" *(dòdeka apostoloi)* occurs;[19] and it is the only time that Matthew writes about the "apostles." Matthew, however, clearly identifies these twelve apostles with the disciples of Jesus. In his vision of Jesus' ministry, there are (only) twelve disciples (Matt 10, 1)[20] and these twelve are identified as the twelve apostles of Matt 10, 1-4.

While formally acknowledging that the twelve are disciples, Luke states that the twelve have been chosen from among the disciples. It is only the select group of twelve that are named apostles (Luke 10, 13). Luke has highlighted the importance of Jesus' selection of the twelve by presenting Jesus at prayer during the night before he made his choice (v. 12).

In sum, Mark's significant group, identified as "the twelve," have become Matthew's "twelve disciples" and Luke's (twelve) "apostles." The

16. See, however, Mark 16, 14. This verse belongs to the canonical gospel but textual critics generally hold that the entire passage (Mark 16, 9-20) was not part of the original gospel text.
17. Significantly, these passages (Matt 28, 16; Luke 24, 9. 33) along with Acts 1, 26 and 2, 14 (+ Mark 16, 14) are the only places in the NT where the numerical adjective "eleven" *(endeka)* is to be found.
18. Where "twelve" *(dòdeka)* is a hapax occurrence in Acts.
19. See, however, "the eleven apostles" *(hoi endeka apostoloi)* in Acts 1, 26.
20. Cf. Matt 11, 1; 20, 17; 26, 20.

difference of terminology is apparent in the three evangelists' description of Jesus' passover meal. While Mark tells that Jesus came with "the twelve" (Mark 14, 17), Matthew states that Jesus sat at table with "the twelve disciples" (Matt 26, 20) and Luke states that Jesus sat at table with "the apostles" (Luke 22, 14).

Matthew, of course, has his own view of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, emphasizing the point that the disciples are those who have been particularly formed by Jesus much in the same way that a Jewish rabbi shaped his disciples by the teaching which he imparted. On the other hand, Luke has a particular understanding of apostleship, one that he "unpacks" throughout the Acts of the Apostles.[21]

The Names in Matthew

The names of the twelve appear somewhat differently in Matthew and Luke from the way that they are given in Mark. According to N-A[26], Matthew's roster of "the names of the twelve apostles" (Matt 10, 2-4) includes the twelve names found in Mark 3, 16-19a. However, some ancient manuscripts read "Lebbaeus,"[22] "Lebbaeus called Thaddaeus,"[23] or "Judas the Zealot"[24] in Matt 10, 3. By listing "Lebbaeus" as the tenth name on Matthew's rota, the King James Version and the NEB attest to the confusion present in the manuscript tradition.

A comparison of Matthew's list with that of Mark shows that the name of Andrew appears in second rather than in the fourth place and that the sequence of the names of Matthew and Thomas (the seventh and eighth names) has been inverted. Matthew has also omitted the enigmatic Boanerges as an epithet for the sons of Zebedee and has qualified Matthew[25] as "the tax collector".

The call to discipleship of a tax collector named Levi is narrated in Mark 2, 13-17 and Luke 5, 27-32. A similar story, obviously based on Mark, appears in Matt 9, 9-13, but here the tax collector appears as a man named Matthew. Since it is quite unlikely that a Semite would have had two Semitic names, it is probable that the evangelist changed the name of Levi to that of Matthew in Matt 9, 9.[26] The change of name was influenced by the

21. The word *apostolos* occurs twenty-eight times in Acts. This is the highest concentration of the term in the entire New Testament.
22. Thus, the fifth-century Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, as well as Origen.
23. Thus, the Codex Koridethi, the minuscules of the Lake family, and the majority of the medieval Greek manuscripts.
24. Thus, some Old Latin manuscripts.
25. The traditional patronym for the gospel.
26. See Rudolf Pesch, "Levi-Matthäus (Mc 2, 14/Mt 9, 9; 10, 3): Ein Beitrag zur Lösung eines alten Problems," *ZNW* 59 (1968) 40-56.

evangelist's theory of discipleship. He identifies the disciples of Jesus with the twelve. The tax collector was obviously called to discipleship.[27] His name ought, therefore, to appear on the list of the twelve. Yet it did not appear on Mark's list of the twelve. So the evangelist, known to tradition as Matthew, substituted the name of the relatively obscure Matthew[28] for the traditional name of Levi in the story of the call of the tax collector. He completed his editorial work by identifying Matthew as a tax collector on the roster of the twelve, the only one of the twelve to be identified by a reference to a profession.

The Names in Luke

As Matthew did, so Luke lists Andrew in second place among the twelve, but otherwise his sequence of the first nine names (Luke 6, 14-15) is similar to that found in Mark. Luke has, however, deleted the name of Thaddaeus from the tenth position. Thaddaeus' place on the list is taken by Simon, whom Luke identifies as a Zealot rather than as a Cananaean (Luke 6, 15). A Judas, the son of James, who appears neither on the Matthaean nor on the Markan list, occupies the eleventh position on Luke's list of "the twelve." All three Synoptic authors, of course, place the name of Judas at the end of their lists of the twelve.

In Acts 1, 13, Luke offers another list of the names of the group, understandably without the name of Judas. Although the names are the same as those which appear in Luke 6, 14-16, their order is quite different. Peter and John appear at the head of the list, a position which reflects their leadership role in the Jerusalem church. Subsequently, the names of James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew occur in a sequence which is reproduced at no other place in the New Testament. The three final names on the list, James, Simon, and Judas appear in the same order as they do in Luke 6, 15-16.

The Mission

By and large,[29] both Matthew and Luke have omitted Mark's mission statement from their respective introductions to the list of the twelve. However, Matthew, apparently making use of a Q tradition,[30] has placed a

27. Cf. "follow me" *(akolouthei moi)* in Matt 9, 9; Mark 2, 14; Luke 5, 27.
28. No particular function is attributed to Matthew in the canonical NT.
29. Matt 10, 1 makes reference to the twelve's power to exorcise, but does not highlight the twelve's companionship with Jesus, nor their mission to preach. Luke 6, 13 does not specifically cite any aspect of the triple mission which Mark assigns to the twelve.
30. Cf. John S. Klobbenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes and Concordance.* Foundations & Facets (Polebridge; Sonoma, CA 1987) 72.

mission statement after the listing of the twelve. That mission discourse focuses on preaching (Matt 10, 7), but contains, nonetheless, an incidental reference to exorcisms. Luke has a mission statement parallel to Matt 10, 5-14 in 9, 1-6, where it is clearly addressed to "the twelve" (Luke 9, 1).

Each of these later evangelists, writing from perspectives that are different from that of Mark, have, moreover, yet another vision of the ultimate mission of the twelve. This perspective appears in the Matthean scene of the great commissioning (Matt 28, 16-20) and the first two chapters of Luke's Acts of the Apostles. The great commission and the promise of the empowering Spirit (Acts 1, 8) articulate the major mission of the twelve according to the views of the later Synoptists. Luke-Acts particularly insists upon the role of the twelve in the origins of the church.

The Fourth Gospel

In contrast with the many references to the value in the three gospels of the synoptic tradition, there are only four explicit references to the twelve in the fourth gospel – and one in the rest of the Johannine corpus. Three of these references are in one small pericope, namely, John 6, 66-71. The fourth mention of the twelve is in John 20, 24.

Names

The fourth gospel provides no list of the names of the twelve. It's most complete listing of the names of the disciples of Jesus is found in the epilogue to the gospel, where seven individuals are cited, namely, Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others, whose names are not identified (John 21, 2). The gathering of Jesus' disciples into a group of seven reflects the evangelist's predilection for the number seven and may well be another instance of the way in which the author of the epilogue imitates the style of the gospel itself.[31]

Nathanael's name does not appear in the synoptic gospels. According to the tradition of the fourth gospel, however, Nathanael is clearly a disciple of Jesus. Indeed, in many respects Nathanael serves as a paradigm of discipleship (John 1, 45-51).[32] Christian tradition has often identified Nathanael with Bartholomew,[33] most likely under the influence of the Matthaean theory on the twelve, but there is no historical evidence to

31. See my "Proverbial Sayings in St. John's Gospel", *Melita Theologica* 37 (1986) 45.
32. See my "Representative Figures in the Fourth Gospel", *DR* 94 (1976) 34-36, and *John and His Witness*. Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament (Glazier; Wilmington, DE 1989).
33. See my "Nathanael", in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, forthcoming.

suggest that the fourth gospel's Nathanael and the Bartholomew of the synoptic tradition are one and the same individual. In any event, the fourth evangelist does not identify Nathanael as one of the twelve.[34]

The fourth gospel does, however, specifically identify Judas as one of the twelve (John 6, 71).[35] His name, obviously, is omitted from the group of seven to whom the risen Jesus revealed himself (John 21, 2). In its explicit identification of Judas as "one of the twelve," the fourth gospel concurs with the Synoptic tradition. Unlike Matthew and Luke who focus upon the twelve as a paradigmatic complement and who specifically treat of the death of Judas (Matt 27, 3-10; Acts 1, 18-19), the fourth gospel does not mention the death of Judas.[36] His name occurs for the last time in the fourth gospel at John 18, 5.

The fourth gospel also identifies Thomas as "one of the twelve" (*heis ek tòn dòdeka*; John 20, 24), the designation attributed only to Judas in the Synoptic gospels. The fourth evangelist also makes mention of some, but not all, of the other individuals whose names[37] appear on the Synoptic lists of the twelve. These are Simon Peter,[38] Andrew,[39] and Philip.[40] These three names,[41] of course, appear on all three Synoptic lists of the twelve.[42] Since these are the only names mentioned, recourse to the fourth gospel does not provide any solution for the identification problems that arise from the comparison of the Synoptics' lists of the names of the twelve with one another.

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34. Raymond Brown, nonetheless, opines that, since there was no standard list of "the twelve" in first century Christianity (see above), "Nathanael may have been counted in the never-given list of the Twelve accepted in Johannine tradition." See R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (Paulist; New York 1979) 81, n. 149.
35. Cf. John 12, 4.
36. Cf. John 17, 12.
37. The aforementioned reference to the sons of Zebedee occurs in John 21, 2, but the names of the brothers are not given. This reference to the sons of Zebedee is hapax in the fourth gospel. Elsewhere, the fourth gospel does not mention the name of either James or John.
38. John 1, 40. 42. 44; 6, 8. 68; 13, 6. 8. 9. 24. 36. 37; 18, 10. 11. 15. 16 (2x). 17. 18. 25. 26. 27; 20, 2. 3. 4. 6. Cf. John 21, 2. 3. 7 (2x). 11. 15. 17. 20. 21.
39. John 1, 40. 44; 6, 8; 12, 22. Andrew is not cited in the epilogue's group of seven (John 21, 2).
40. John 1, 43. 44. 45. 46. 48; 6, 5. 7; 12, 21. 22; 14, 8. 9. Since Philip is likewise not mentioned in 21, 2, it is reasonable to assume that the author of the epilogue had Andrew and Philip in mind when he wrote about "two others of his disciples."
41. Gunther has suggested that the Judas (not Iscariot) of John 14, 22 is a brother of the Lord and one of the twelve (cf. Luke 4, 16). See John J. Gunther, "The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve", *TZ* 37 (1981) 129-148. In my judgment the suggestion is without merit.
42. Four, if the list of Acts 1, 13 is to be included.

John 6, 67-71

The fourth evangelist's views on the twelve are summed up in a small pericope, which has been structured into a single unit of material by a kind of *inclusio*: John 6, 67-71. *Dòdeka*, "twelve", is the only term that appears in both verses 67 and 71, but a verb of saying appears in each verse, and, in each case, the subject is Jesus (expressed in v. 67, implied in v. 71). The entire unit, which has no direct parallel in the Synoptic gospels, is stamped with elements of Johannine style. Among its Johannine features are the use of dialogue, Jesus' initiative in the dialogue, the use of interrogation,[43] the name of Simon Peter, the name of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, and the expressions "eternal life", "believe", and "know".

The Johannine character of this unit, coupled with the absence of a parallel narrative in the Synoptic gospels, leads to the ready conclusion that John 6, 67-71 is a Johannine construction. The theme of the pericope is the twelve *(dòdeka)*, the framing term and a vocable which also appears in v. 70. That three of the four Johannine uses of this term appear in this single pericope makes it all the more clear that it is in John 6, 67-71 that the evangelist has chosen to formally treat the tradition about the twelve.

The fourth evangelist is familiar with the existence of the twelve. He speaks of them collectively and mentions the fact that they have been chosen (v. 70).[44] He does not, however, explain the circumstances of their call[45] nor does he explain how they came to be assembled as a group of twelve. As a matter of fact, although the fourth evangelist narrates the call of some of those cited in the Synoptics as belonging to the group of twelve,[46] he does not tell about the call of either of the two individuals who is specifically identified as "one of the twelve."

The setting which the evangelist has provided for his reflection on the twelve in John 6, 67-71 is the crisis which developed among Jesus' would-be disciples because of the teaching on the bread of life. As the evangelist portrays the scene, the defection of some disciples prompts Jesus to ask the twelve about their own intentions. Apparently the twelve represent a special group among Jewish Christians.[47]

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43. This, and the following characteristics, are among the fifteen characteristics of Johannine style which Boismard and Lamouille have identified in the five verses of the pericope. See M. – E. Boismard – A. Lamouille, *Synopse des quatre évangiles en francais,* 3: *L'évangile de Jean* (Cerf; Paris 1977) 520.
44. Cf. John 13, 18; 15, 16. 19.
45. Cf. Brown, *Community,* 187, n. 331.
46. That is, Andrew in John 1, 35-41, Simon Peter in John 1, 41-42, and Philip in John 1, 43-46.
47. See Brown, *Community,* 74, 82.

Although Jesus' question is addressed to the twelve as a group,[48] it is Simon Peter who responds. In a manner similar to that in which Peter functions as a spokesperson for the twelve in the Synoptic tradition,[49] Simon Peter functions as a spokesperson for the twelve in the fourth gospel. In fact, Simon Peter represents[50] the twelve insofar as he serves as their spokesperson.[51]

As Peter made a confession of faith in response to a query addressed by Jesus in Mark 8, 29 (= Matt 16, 15-16, Luke 9, 20), the Simon Peter of the fourth gospel responds with a confession of faith to a question coming from Jesus. Simon Peter's confession of faith (John 6, 68-69) is, however, formulated in characteristically Johannine terms. Rather than confess Jesus to be the Messiah, as did the Peter of Mark 8, 29, the Andrew of John 1, 41, and the Martha of John 11, 27, Simon Peter confesses Jesus to be the sole revealer. This point of view expresses the faith conviction of the evangelist and his faith community.[52] Both the function of Jesus as Revealer and his uniqueness in that regard are convictions that are repeatedly promoted throughout the gospel.[53] Thus Simon Peter, as the spokesperson for the twelve, is presented as one whose confession of faith is at one with that of the Johannine community itself.

Simon Peter's confession is then epitomized in the affirmation that Jesus is the Holy One of God *(ho hagios tou theou)*. In some ways the Petrine confession anticipates Jesus' description of himself as "the one whom the Father consecrated" *(hon ho patèr hègiasen)* and sent into the world" (John 10, 36). To underscore the importance of this unique titular confession, the evangelist uses a formal lemma, "we have believed", with its emphatic "we" *(hèmeis)* and a verb in the perfect tense *(pepisteukamen)* which indicates that the confession formulated in the past continues to have validity for the present. A verbal hendiadys, "we have believed and have come to know" *(pepisteukamen kai egnòkamen)*[54] further highlights the Petrine confession of faith.

As the only titular confession of faith placed on the lips of Simon Peter in the fourth gospel, the affirmation that Jesus is the Holy One of God

48. Note the use of the second person plural, and the use of an emphatic *humeis,* "you", in the Greek text.
49. Cf. Mark 8, 29 and parallels.
50. See Collins, "Representative Figures", 126-129.
51. Cf. John 13, 22-24; comp. John 21, 10-11.
52. Note the presence of the Johannine "we" in vv. 68 and 69. The "we" of these verses are among the thirteen instances in the fourth gospel where a first person plural is used to express the point of view of the Johannine community with the affirmation being attributed to some character in the story. See Godfrey C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema.* (SBLDS, 63; Scholars; Chico CA 1983) 31.
53. See John 3, 13-14, etc.
54. See John 17, 8; 1 John 4, 16.

represents the Johannine version of Peter's traditional confession of faith.[55] Elsewhere in the canonical gospels, however, the confession that Jesus is the Holy One of God is found only as the baited utterance of the unclean spirit who had taken possession of the man in the synagogue of Capernaum (Mark 1, 24; Luke 4, 34).[56]

Simon Peter's confession does not earn the response of Jesus' self-revelation.[57] Rather Jesus' responds by speaking about his betrayal.[58] The response indicates that the faith of those for whom Peter serves as spokesperson is not all that it ought to be. From the standpoint of the fourth gospel, the corporate faith of the twelve is somehow inadequate.[59]

The words of Jesus in John 6, 70-71 focus on the less than adequate faith of the twelve. It is true that it is only Judas who is identified as a betrayer. That is in keeping with the Synoptic tradition and corresponds to the historicity of the events of Jesus' life. Nonetheless, one of the literary characteristics of the fourth gospel is its introduction of individual characters in the gospel story. On the narrative level, these individuals serve the needs of Johannine dramatization. Beyond that, however, the various characters also serve a representative function.

In John 6, 70-71, Judas somehow represents the twelve. He is clearly identified as "one of you" *(ex humòn heis)* and as "one of the twelve" *(heis ek tòn dòdeka)*. Judas has even assumed Peter's satanic function: Jesus

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55. Maynard opines that the title is "obviously Messianic," while Schnackenburg notes its connection in the history of tradition with Peter's confession of Jesus' messiahship. See Arthur H. Maynard, "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel", *NTS* 30 (1984) 534; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John,* 2. (Seabury; New York 1980) 76.
56. Cf. Luke 1, 35.
57. Compare John 1, 49-51.
58. A comparison with the Synoptic scene at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16, 13-23; Mark 8, 27-33; Luke 9, 18-22), to which John 6, 67-71 is a parallel [see R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, I-XII.* (AB, 29: Doubleday; Garden City, NY 1966) 301-302; A. H. Maynard, "The Role of Peter", 533-534] proves enlightening at this point. In the Johannine narrative, Simon Peter does not specifically confess Jesus to be the Messiah. Moreover, Jesus' rejoinder does not introduce a new christological title into the dialogue. Jesus' response focuses on his "passion", not, however, in the passive voice as it is in the Synoptics. Rather, the "passion" is clearly identified as the result of a betrayal and one of the twelve is said to be responsible for the betrayal. In the Synoptics, Peter, as the spokesperson for the twelve, fails to understand that Jesus' messiahship involves the passion; in the fourth gospel, one of the twelve is humanly responsible for the passion.
59. Nicholson characterizes Peter's confession as a "halting and inadequate statement of belief". See Nicholson, *Death as Departure,* 42. Brown, however, suggests that the disciples who drew back from Jesus (John 6, 66) represent the Jewish Christian churches of inadequate faith, while in vv. 68-69 "we are hearing.... the voice of Christians of a more adequate faith for whom Peter and the Twelve are appropriate symbols." See Brown, *Community,* 82. I would contend that although the faith of the twelve, represented by Simon Peter, is clearly more adequate than that of the defectors, it is not presented as a fully adequate faith according to the standards of the evangelist and his community.

calls him a devil.[60] While the affirmation that Judas is "one of you" has been placed by the evangelist on the lips of Jesus, the affirmation that Judas is "one of the twelve" is a reflective comment on the part of the evangelist himself.[61] The presence of this patent Johannine note serves as a clear indication that the evangelist is pondering the significance of "the twelve" in vv. 67-71. Clearly, the betrayal of Judas indicates that the corporate faith of the twelve is to be found wanting.

John 20, 24

The third representative of the twelve is Thomas, identified in John 20, 24 as "one of the twelve." In accordance with the dramatic techniques of Johannine composition, Thomas represents[62] the doubt entertained by the disciples with regard to Jesus' resurrection.[63] Alone he is made to bear the burden of their corporate disbelief. The demands of Johannine dramatization, however, set Thomas over and against the "other disciples."[64]

Confronted by the risen Lord, Thomas comes to full belief in the Risen One. "My Lord and my God" appears upon his lips as a full confession of faith. This may well be the confession of faith with the highest level of christology in the entire fourth gospel. In this respect, Thomas is fully a believer. Nonetheless, and despite the relative fullness of his faith, Thomas the believer pales in comparison with those who have not seen and yet believe (John 20, 28). It is for them, rather than for Thomas, that the Lord reserves the pronouncement of beatitude.

Conclusion

Although a thorough study of "The Twelve" in the fourth gospel, let alone in the entire NT, would require far more textual analysis than the limited scope of the present essay allows, the portrayal of the understanding of the twelve which has been sketched with such broad strokes readily lends itself to the conclusion that the understanding of the twelve entertained in

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60. Cf. Matt 16, 23; Mark 8, 33. In the Synoptic tradition there is some interchangeability between "the devil" *(ho diabolos)* and "Satan" *(ho Satanas)*. Cf. Mark 1, 13 ("Satan") in comparison with its parallels, Matt 4, 1 and Luke 4, 1 ("the devil") and Matt 4, 1. 5. 8 ("the devil") in comparison with Matt 4, 10 ("Satan", cf. Matt 16, 23).
61. See Gilbert van Belle, *Les parenthèses dans l'évangile de Jean: Aperçu historique et classification. Texte grec de Jean.* (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia, 11: University Press; Louvain 1985) 78. Van Belle draws attention to the number of modern commentators who identify v. 71 as a redactional notation by the evangelist.
62. See my "Representative Figures", 124-126.
63. Cf. Matt 28, 17; Luke 24, 36-43; comp. Mark 16, 11. 14.
64. See John 20, 25. 26.

the fourth gospel is quite different from that developed in the Synoptic gospels.

The fourth gospel shares with the first, that is, Mark, a tradition that has been handed down. Both evangelists write about the twelve as an element of the Jesus tradition with which they have to deal. Both writers refuse to speculate on the significance of the number itself. Both evangelists share a common tradition as to the names of some individuals who belong to the twelve and that (Simon) Peter served as spokesperson for the group.

Subsequently their ways of handling this traditional topic differ. While Mark develops the role of the twelve with regard to their mission, a role greatly expanded by Matthew and Luke, especially by the latter who emphasizes the role of the twelve in the origins of the church, the fourth gospel fails to attribute such a paramount significance to the group. While recognizing that the twelve were disciples,[65] the author fails to make of this group the paradigm of discipleship and does not attribute the title of apostle[66] to the group or to any of its members.

From the standpoint of the fourth gospel, the twelve represent a faithful group of Jewish-Christian disciples. Although they recognized Jesus as the revealer, and shared this faith conviction with the evangelist and his community, their faith in Jesus is shown to be somehow deficient in comparison with that of the evangelist's own faith community. Judas and Thomas graphically represent the inadequacy of the twelve before the death and resurrection of Jesus. The spokesperson for the twelve is Simon Peter, a truly round and ambiguous figure in the fourth gospel. His faith is authentic – indeed, he represents the authenticity of their faith – yet even his faith is not on a par with that of the Beloved Disciple, the real hero in faith of the fourth gospel.

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65. Cf. John 6, 66-67, "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also *(kai humeis)* wish to go away?'"; John 20, 24-25, "Now Thomas, one of the twelve was not with them (i.e., the disciples, cf. v. 19) when Jesus came. So the other disciples *(hoi alloi nathètai)* told him,...."

66. *Apostolos* is hapax in the fourth gospel, namely, at John 13, 36. Nonetheless, the harmonized reading of the gospels which has characterized ecclesiastical tradition through the centuries tends to describe those who heard the (Johannine) farewell discourse as apostles. This harmonized reading has entered into the church's liturgical tradition. See, for example, the order of Mass in the Roman Catholic Roman rite: "Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your *apostles:* I leave you peace, my peace I give you" (my emphasis; cf. John 14, 27).

MALTESE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF STEALING, CRUELTY, AND LYING IN SCHOOLCHILDREN

Mark G. Borg
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Introduction

In April 1988 the present authors conducted a questionnaire survey among all primary school teachers in state schools in Malta and Gozo on various aspects of occupational stress in teaching (cf Borg and Falzon[1, 2, 3]). The study also delved in some detail into the type of pupil problem behaviour which normally constitutes one of the major sources of stress for the teacher.

That part of the questionnaire relevant to this article surveyed the teachers' perception of the seriousness of each of 16 problem behaviours

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1. BORG, M.G. & FALZON, J.M. "Stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Malta", *Educational Review*, 41/3 (1989) 271-279.
2. BORG, M.G. & FALZON, J.M. "Coping actions used by Maltese primary school teachers", *Educational Research*, 32/1 (1990).
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when manifested in children. The complete list of selected behaviours is set out in Table 1. It is here apposite to mention that the list of behaviours was based on similar lists from several studies reported in foreign learned journals (e.g. Wickman[4], Sparks[5], Ziv[6]). An additional criterion for the selection of problem behaviours for the present list was that the type of behaviour would be of the kind that is occasionally or regularly manifested in the primary school years (i.e. between ages 5 and 11), and with which primary school teachers would be familiar.

Of the 1074 questionnaires distributed, 844 properly completed questionnaires were returned to the authors by post (a response rate of 78.6 per cent). Of the anonymous respondents, 610 were women and 234 men making up 81.4 per cent and 72 per cent of the sex-group population figures respectively.

The 16 selected behaviours fall naturally into the following three categories:

(a) those which are associated with the moral code (i.e. morally undesirable) namely *stealing, cruelty/bullying*, and *lying*;

(b) those which tend to disrupt class-discipline such as *talkative, disobedience,* and *rudeness*;

(c) those behaviours which teachers regard as being symptomatic of some degeee of emotional maladjustment or personality disorders such as *unhappy/depressed, suspiciousness,* and *fearful/easily frightened.*

Teachers were asked to rate each of the 16 listed problem behaviours by answering two questions: "If one of your BOY pupils shows this behaviour, how serious a problem would you consider it to be?" and "If one of your GIRL pupils shows this behaviour, how serious a problem would you consider it to be?" The rating was on a five-point scale labelled *not serious, fairly serious, serious, very serious*, and *extremely serious*. Responses were scored from 0 *(not serious)* to 4 *(extremely serious)* to yield a measure of the seriousness of each of the 16 listed behaviours. (For more precise details of the research methodology, see Borg & Falzon[7, 8]).

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4. WICKMAN, E.K. "Teachers' list of undesirable forms of behaviour". In *Children's Behaviour and Teacher's Attitudes* (Commonwealth Fund; New York 1928). (Reprinted in WILLIAMS, P. (Ed.) *Behaviour Problems in School* (University of London Press; London 1974).

5. SPARKS, J.N. "Teachers' attitudes toward the behaviour problems of children", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 43 (1952) 284-291.

6. ZIV, A. "Children's behaviour problems as viewed by teachers, psychologists and children", *Child Development*, 41 (1970) 871-879. (Reprinted in WILLIAMS, P. (Ed.) *Behaviour Problems in School* (University of London Press; London 1974).

7. BORG, M.G. & FALZON, J.M. "Primary school teachers' perception of pupils' undesirable behaviours", *Educational Studies*, 15/3/6 (1989) 251-260.

8. BORG, M.G. & FALZON, J.M. "Teachers' perception of primary schoolchildren's

Most serious behaviours

Although this paper is concerned exclusively with investigating the teachers' perception of the seriousness of problem behaviours associated with moral values (i.e. *stealing, cruelty/bullying*, and *lying*), a look at Table 1, where the behaviours are ranked in order of seriousness as perceived by primary school teachers, will immediately reveal that these three behaviours are ranked among the five most serious problems, with *stealing* being ranked as the *most serious* of all the 16 behaviours.

It is interesting to look more closely at each of the three morally undesirable behaviours in terms of the seriousness with which they are perceived by teachers. For each of these behaviours, data analysis was carried out in terms of the following five moderating variables:

(a) **teacher sex** (i.e. the seriousness of behaviours as perceived by female and male teachers);

(b) **teaching experience** (i.e. the seriousness of behaviours as perceived by teachers with less than 11 years experience and teachers with over 20 years experience);

(c) **pupil sex** (i.e. the seriousness of behaviours as perceived by teachers when manifesed by a boy and by a girl);

(d) **pupil age** (i.e. the seriousness of behaviours as perceived by teachers of 'young pupils' (those in Years I to III, age 5 to 8) and teachers of 'old pupils' (those in Years IV to VI, age 8 to 11);

(e) **ability stream** (i.e. the seriousness of behaviours as perceived by teachers of above average/average (stream A and B) pupils and teachers of below average (stream C) pupils.

Stealing

Table 2 shows the distributions of responses, means and standard deviations of the seriousness of *stealing* as perceived by teachers classified by each of the five moderating variables. Results show that in each of the ten subgroups more than 67 per cent(i.e. more than two out of three teachers) consider *stealing* in children as being *very/extremely serious*. Similarly, only about one or two teachers out of every hundred perceive this morally undesirable behaviour as being *not serious*. These results imply that irrespective of the characteristic of the teacher subgroup the manifestation of this behaviour in children is always seen by the majority of the subgroup as constituting a high degree of seriousness. A look at the mean ratings reveals

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undesirable behaviours: the effects of teaching experience, pupils' age, sex and ability stream", *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, (1990) in press.

that of the subgroups of teachers, those who teach 'young' pupils are the ones who perceive *stealing* as being the least serious whereas it is perceived to be most serious by teachers with less than 11 years experience. To test whether the difference between any pair of mean ratings is statistically significant at the 0.05 level or higher the t-test for independent samples was used. Results of this analysis shows that whereas the difference is significant for teacher sex, teaching experience, and pupil age, differences between means are not significant for pupil sex and ability stream. The implications of these results are:

(a) *stealing* in children is perceived to be significantly more serious by male than female teachers;

(b) teachers with less than 11 years experience consider this behaviour to be significantly more serious in children than their colleagues with over 20 years teaching experience;

(c) teachers consider *stealing* to be serious to the same degree irrespective of whether it is manifested by a boy or a girl;

(d) this behaviour is perceived to be significantly more serious by teachers of 'old' pupils than by teachers of 'young' pupils;

(e) irrespective of ability stream taught teachers perceive this behaviour to be serious to the same extent.

Cruelty/Bullying

The distributions of responses for each of the five moderating variables, together with the mean ratings and standard deviations of the perceived seriousness of *cruelty/bullying* are set out in Table 3. At least one out of every two teachers in each of the ten teacher subgroups perceive this behaviour in children *very/extremely serious*. The highest mean rating is that assigned by teachers of 'old' pupils and by teachers who teach stream A/B; the lowest rating is assigned by teachers of 'young' pupils. T-test analysis reveals significant differences between the mean ratings for teacher sex, pupil sex, and pupil age.

These findings imply that:

(a) *cruelty/bullying* is perceived to be significantly more serious in children by male than female teachers;

(b) irrespective of length of teaching experience this behaviour is perceived by teachers to be serious to the same extent;

(c) *cruelty/bullying* is considered to be significantly more serious if manifested by a boy than by a girl;

(d) this behaviour is perceived to be significantly more serious by teachers of 'old' pupils than by teachers of 'young' pupils;

(e) teachers of pupils in different ability streams consider this

problem behaviour to be serious to the same degree.

Lying

Table 4 shows the distributions of responses, means and standard deviations of the perceived seriousness of *lying* by teachers classified according to each of the five moderating variables. At least one out of every three teachers in each of the ten subgroups consider this problem behaviour *very/extremely serious*. On the other hand, three to five teachers out of every hundred rate *lying* in children *not serious*. The highest mean rating of this behaviour is that assigned by teachers of pupils in stream A/B, whereas the lowest rating is made by teachers of 'young' pupils. It seems that children in stream A/B are expected to behave more maturely than their peers in stream C: they are 'older' and "more intelligent" and therefore they are expected not to manifest this undesirable behaviour. The results of the t-test analysis shows that statistical significance between means is attained only for pupil sex and pupil age. This means that:

(a) irrespective of the teacher's sex *lying* in children is perceived to be serious to the same degree;

(b) teachers with under 11 years experience and their colleagues with over 20 years experience perceive this problem behaviour to be serious to the same extent;

(c) *lying* is perceived to be significantly more serious when manifested by girls than by boys;

(d) this behaviour is perceived to be significally more serious in 'old' pupils than in 'young' pupils;

(e) *lying* is considered to be serious to the same degree by both teachers of stream A/B as well as by their colleagues who teach stream C.

Discussion

One can now look at each of the five moderating variables considered in this study as possibly influencing the degree of seriousness with which each of the three morally reprehensible behaviours is perceived by teachers.

Teacher sex

Results show that male teachers tend to take a more serious view of each of the three behaviours studied than their female colleagues. This may imply that male teachers are less tolerant of these behaviours in children than female teachers. In a study on job satisfaction and occupational stress among Maltese primary school teachers, Borg & Falzon[1] found that male

teachers are significantly less satisfied with teaching than their female colleagues; moreover, male teachers find teaching more stressful than female teachers. Hence, it could well be the case that the greater stress experienced by male teachers together with their lower job satisfaction make them less tolerant of problem behaviours in children. Consequently, the present three behaviours are perceived to be more serious by the males.

Teaching experience

Other things being equal, the more experienced the teacher, the less serious is the view taken of the child's moral misdemeanours. Perhaps as suggested in Borg & Falzon[2], the more experienced teachers have learnt more coping skills in dealing with children's problem behaviours and therefore they feel more confident in controlling such behaviours. As a result of this they tend to be more lenient in their judgement of morally undesirable behaviours in children.

Pupil sex

In the case of *stealing*, teachers possibly consider this form of behaviour so serious that the degree of seriousness with which this is perceived is not influenced by whether the perpetrator was a boy or a girl. But when it comes to *lying*, teachers consider it to be more serious when girls manifest it. This is probably due to one of the current sex stereotypes: girls are expected to be more honest and therefore any lapse on their part in this type of conduct is considered to be a more serious failing. *Cruelty/bullying*, on the other hand, is considered to be more serious in boys. This may be due to the fact that, as described by various developmental psychologists (e.g. Gesell & Ilg[9]), bullying and cruelty in boys often takes the form of physical violence whereas girls tend to manifest the verbal variety. The effects of boys' *cruelty/bullying* is therefore more likely to be associated with demonstrable harm.

Pupil age

The present study has shown that all the three morally undesirable behaviours (i.e. *lying, stealing, cruelty/bullying*) are considered to be more serious when manifested by older children. This seems to be in line with

9. GESELL, A. & ILG, F.L. *The Child From Five To Ten* (Hamish Hamilton; London 1946. [3]1965).

current thinking on child development: the older child's greater awareness and understanding of the consequences of his/her behaviour makes that behaviour more serious. Developmental psychologists would certainly agree with the teachers' view; the classic study by Piaget[10] gives the typical standpoint of developmental psychologists in the moral judgement area.

Ability stream

Brightness, intelligence, higher educational attainment and similar characteristics do not appear to be seen as being relevant in influencing the teacher's perception of the seriousness of each of the three morally reprehensible behaviours here considered. It seems that to the present sample of primary school teachers moral correctness is not influenced by cognitive characteristics.

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TABLE 1

Undesirable behaviour: means, standard deviations and rank orders of the behaviours for the total teacher sample

Undesirable behaviour	Mean+ (N=844)	SD	Rank Order
*stealing	3.06	1.00	1
*cruelty/bullying	2.74	1.10	2
rudeness/impertinence	2.55	1.06	3
unhappy/depressed	2.49	1.13	4
*lying	2.23	1.08	5
disobedience	2.22	1.11	6
careless/untidy in work	1.66	1.01	7
fearful/easily frightened	1.63	1.07	8
easily discouraged	1.60	0.95	9
suspiciousness	1.55	1.01	10
restlessness	1.33	0.99	11
untidy in personal appearance	1.31	1.03	12
attention-seeking	1.26	1.04	13
talkative	1.15	1.01	14
shyness	1.11	0.98	15
weepy	1.09	1.04	16
Overall mean and SD	1.81	1.21	

* Morally undesirable behaviour
\+ Not serious = 0; Fairly serious = 1; Serious = 2; Very serious = 3; Extremely serious = 4

10. PIAGET, J. *The Moral Judgement Of The Child* (Routledge & Kegan Paul; London 1932).

TABLE 2

STEALING: distributions of responses, means and standard deviations by teacher sex, teaching experience, pupil sex, pupil age, and ability stream

VARIABLE Subgroup	N	Not serious	Fairly serious	Serious	Very serious	Extremely serious	Mean+	SD
TEACHER SEX*								
Female Teachers	610	12 (2.0%)	33 (5.4%)	142 (23.3%)	175 (28.7%)	248 (40.6%)	3.01	1.02
Male Teachers	234	2 (0.9%)	9 (3.8%)	41 (17.5%)	72 (30.8%)	110 (47.0%)	3.19	0.92
Total	844	14 (1.6%)	42 (5.0%)	183 (21.7%)	247 (29.3%)	358 (42.4%)	3.06	1.00
TEACHING EXPERIENCE**								
Under 11 Years	298	3 (1.0%)	11 (3.7%)	57 (19.1%)	75 (25.2%)	152 (51.0%)	3.21	0.96
Over 20 Years	324	7 (2.2%)	22 (6.8%)	75 (23.1%)	92 (28.4%)	128 (39.5%)	2.96	1.05
Total	622	10 (1.6%)	33 (5.3%)	132 (21.2%)	167 (26.9%)	280 (45.0%)	3.08	1.01
PUPIL SEX								
Boy Pupils	844	14 (1.6%)	43 (5.1%)	175 (20.7%)	252 (30.0%)	360 (42.6%)	3.07	0.99
Girl Pupils	844	14 (1.6%)	42 (5.0%)	189 (22.4%)	243 (28.8%)	356 (42.2%)	3.05	1.00
Total	1688	28 (1.6%)	85 (5.1%)	364 (21.6%)	495 (29.3%)	716 (42.4%)	3.06	1.00
PUPIL AGE**								
Young Pupils	393	6 (1.5%)	30 (7.6%)	95 (24.2%)	112 (28.5%)	150 (38.2%)	2.94	1.03
Old Pupils	451	8 (1.8%)	12 (2.6%)	88 (19.5%)	135 (29.9%)	208 (46.1%)	3.16	0.95
Total	844	14 (1.6%)	42 (5.0%)	183 (21.7%)	247 (29.3%)	358 (42.4%)	3.06	1.00
ABILITY STREAM								
Stream A/B	266	4 (1.5%)	9 (3.4%)	50 (18.8%)	81 (30.4%)	122 (45.9%)	3.16	0.95
Stream C	185	4 (2.2%)	3 (1.6%)	38 (20.5%)	54 (29.2%)	86 (46.5%)	3.16	0.95
Total	451	8 (1.8%)	12 (2.7%)	88 (19.5%)	135 (29.9%)	208 (46.1%)	3.16	0.95

+ Not serious = 0; Fairly serious = 1; Serious = 2; Very serious = 3; Extremely serious = 4

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

TABLE 3

CRUELTY/BULLYING: distributions of responses, means and standard deviations by teacher sex, teaching experience, pupil sex, pupil age, and ability stream

VARIABLE Subgroup	N	Not serious	Fairly serious	Serious	Very serious	Extremely serious	Mean+	SD
TEACHER SEX**								
Female Teachers	610	21 (3.4%)	69 (11.3%)	179 (29.4%)	163 (26.7%)	178 (29.2%)	2.67	1.11
Male Teachers	234	3 (1.3%)	23 (9.8%)	49 (21.0%)	74 (31.6%)	85 (36.3%)	2.92	1.05
Total	844	24 (2.8%)	92 (10.9%)	228 (27.0%)	237 (28.1%)	263 (31.2%)	2.74	1.10
TEACHING EXPERIENCE								
Under 11 Years	298	6 (2.0%)	31 (10.4%)	79 (26.5%)	75 (25.2%)	107 (35.9%)	2.83	1.09
Over 20 Years	324	12 (3.7%)	38 (11.7%)	84 (25.9%)	97 (30.0%)	93 (28.7%)	2.68	1.12
Total	622	18 (2.9%)	69 (11.1%)	163 (26.2%)	172 (27.7%)	200 (32.1%)	2.75	1.10
PUPIL SEX***								
Boy Pupils	844	17 (2.0%)	82 (9.7%)	227 (26.9%)	233 (27.6%)	285 (33.8%)	2.81	1.07
Girl Pupils	844	32 (3.8%)	101 (12.0%)	229 (27.1%)	242 (28.7%)	240 (28.4%)	2.66	1.12
Total	1688	49 (2.9%)	183 (10.9%)	456 (27.0%)	475 (28.1%)	525 (31.1%)	2.74	1.10
PUPIL AGE***								
Young Pupils	393	11 (2.8%)	51 (13.0%)	125 (31.8%)	102 (26.0%)	104 (26.4%)	2.60	1.10
Old Pupils	451	13 (2.9%)	41 (9.1%)	103 (22.8%)	135 (29.9%)	159 (35.3%)	2.86	1.09
Total	844	24 (2.8%)	92 (10.9%)	228 (27.0%)	237 (28.1%)	263 (31.2%)	2.74	1.10
ABILITY STREAM								
Stream A/B	266	8 (3.0%)	25 (9.4%)	59 (22.2%)	79 (29.7%)	95 (35.7%)	2.86	1.11
Stream C	185	5 (2.7%)	16 (8.6%)	44 (23.8%)	56 (30.3%)	64 (34.6%)	2.85	1.08
Total	451	13 (2.9%)	41 (9.1%)	103 (22.8%)	135 (29.9%)	159 (35.3%)	2.86	1.09

\+ Not serious = 0; Fairly serious = 1; Serious = 2; Very serious = 3; Extremely serious = 4

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

TABLE 4

LYING: distributions of responses, means and standard deviations by teacher sex, teaching experience, pupil sex, pupil age, and ability stream

VARIABLE Subgroup	N	Not serious	Fairly serious	Serious	Very serious	Extremely serious	Mean+	SD
TEACHER SEX								
Female Teachers	610	31 (5.1%)	128 (21.0%)	221 (23.6%)	144 (23.6%)	86 (14.1%)	2.21	1.08
Male Teachers	234	7 (3.0%)	51 (21.8%)	73 (30.8%)	72 (30.8%)	31 (13.2%)	2.29	1.06
Total	844	38 (4.5%)	179 (21.2%)	294 (34.8%)	216 (25.6%)	117 (13.9%)	2.23	1.08
TEACHING EXPERIENCE								
Under 11 Years	298	9 (3.0%)	58 (19.5%)	105 (35.2%)	80 (26.9%)	46 (15.4%)	2.32	1.05
Over 20 Years	324	14 (4.3%)	78 (24.1%)	108 (33.3%)	81 (25.0%)	43 (13.3%)	2.19	1.08
Total	622	23 (3.7%)	136 (21.9%)	213 (34.2%)	161 (25.9%)	89 (14.3%)	2.25	1.06
PUPIL SEX***								
Boy Pupils	844	39 (4.6%)	189 (22.4%)	302 (35.8%)	209 (24.8%)	105 (12.4%)	2.18	1.06
Girl Pupils	844	39 (4.6%)	168 (19.9%)	287 (34.0%)	221 (26.2%)	129 (15.3%)	2.28	1.09
Total	1688	78 (4.6%)	357 (21.1%)	589 (34.9%)	430 (25.5%)	234 (13.9%)	2.23	1.07
PUPIL AGE***								
Young Pupils	393	24 (6.1%)	90 (22.9%)	145 (36.9%)	93 (23.7%)	41 (10.4%)	2.09	1.06
Old Pupils	451	14 (3.1%)	89 (19.7%)	149 (33.0%)	123 (27.3%)	76 (16.9%)	2.35	1.07
Total	844	38 (4.5%)	179 (21.2%)	294 (34.8%)	216 (25.6%)	117 (13.9%)	2.23	1.08
ABILITY STREAM								
Stream A/B	266	8 (3.0%)	50 (18.8%)	82 (30.8%)	74 (27.8%)	52 (19.6%)	2.42	1.10
Stream C	185	6 (3.2%)	39 (21.1%)	67 (36.2%)	49 (26.5%)	24 (13.0%)	2.25	1.05
Total	451	14 (3.1%)	89 (19.7%)	149 (33.0%)	123 (27.3%)	76 (16.9%)	2.35	1.07

\+ Not serious = 0; Fairly serious = 1; Serious = 2; Very serious = 3; Extremely serious = 4

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

NUOVI ESEMPI DI TEOLOGIA SISTEMATICA TRINITARIA

Nicola Ciola*

La letteratura teologica contemporanea rimane, tutto sommato, abbastanza povera di trattazioni sistematiche riguardo la Trinità. Le motivazioni sono disparate e complesse al tempo stesso. Certamente la crisi della manualistica che sottintendeva la crisi del teismo classico (filosofico-teologico) come mina vagante permanente, non è stato l'unico motivo del dissesto architettonico del modo di concepire la trattazione teologica su Dio Uno e Trino.

Ma a ben vedere è stato il modo stesso di concepire la teologia dogmatica nei rapporti reciproci dei misteri *in quanto eventi di salvezza* a provocare tutto un modo nuovo e non certo facile o concluso di intendere i legami delle singole trattazioni.

In questo senso si dovrebbe dire perciò, parafrasando con Balthasar a proposito dell'escatologia e allargando il suo detto alla teologia trinitaria, che "questo ufficio teologico non solo fa ore straordinarie", ma si è riorganizzato con criteri diversi, funzionali e dinamici.

La novità reale della trattazione sistematica trinitaria sta nel fatto di riflettere più decisamente e radicalmente sul Dio cristiano in quanto Trinità, avendo il coraggio di affrontare criticamente il rapporto tra il concetto filosofico di Dio e il Dio della Rivelazione dando a quest'ultimo il primato che gli spetta, stabilendo cioè una volta per tutte che il Dio cristiano trascendente si è identificato in un frammento ella storia, cioè in Gesù di Nazaret che ci ha donato lo Spirito e che questo è il luogo proprio per parlare di Dio.

La 'pretesa' del cristianesimo va poi ancora oltre ed è quella di affermare che questo Dio si è identificato con la sofferenza e la Croce e che da allora Dio e la sofferenza non sono più in contradizione.

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Alla domanda se è davvero *nuova* questa prospettiva teologica rispetto al passato, bisogna rispondere che non è nuova la domanda ma è nuova la metodologia, l'approccio al tema, il suo tentativo di soluzione. Nuovo è lo spirito con cui si affrontano le questioni dopo una crisi, benefica per alcuni, distruttiva per altri, in cui di fatto la trattazione sistematica rischiava di non corrispondere più alle esigenze attuali della fede nel mondo di oggi, presentando una attrezzatura più filosofico-formale, che biblico-storico-salvifica, una mentalità più monoteistico-filosofica, che monoteistico-trinitaria.

È in questo senso che affermiamo convinti che tra tutte le trattazioni sistematiche, quella trinitaria ha ancora molto strada da fare e che la sua struttura ha ancora bisogno di crescita.

Non vogliamo certo respingere *vetera* per agganciare *nova* senza la sapienza che fa discernere, ma ci chiediamo se talvolta è proprio *vetera* nel senso della grande tradizione ecclesiale, che si è valorizzato e compreso!

Non è allora affatto temerario affermare che occorre cristianizzare sempre più la trattazione sistematica sul mistero di Dio Uno e Trino, infatti analizzando una certa produzione passata si aveva l'impressione che emergesse ancora poco la confessione misterica-trinitaria a tutto beneficio di una concezione più filosofica di Dio, sballottata tra il trattato di teodicea e il trattato teologico sul 'de Deo Uno' che appariva spesso quasi una ripetizione del primo.

In questo senso sono da quardarsi con estremo interesse quei lavori che hanno il coraggio di affrontare con vero spirito rinnovato la teologia trinitaria. È quanto ha fatto JOHN J. O'DONNELL nel suo saggio *The Mystery of the Triune God*, frutto del suo insegnamento alla Pontificia Università Gregoriana.[1]

Riteniamo che il lavoro del professore della Gregoriana possa leggersi secondo due prospettive di fondo: la prima come *riflessione teologica* sul mistero trinitario, la seconda come evidenziazione *spirituale-esistenziale-ecclesiale* del dinamismo trinitario dell'evento cristiano.

E come premessa a queste due dimensioni architettoniche del suo saggio che cercheremo di illustrare in dettaglio, sta una questione iniziale che forse poteva essere maggiormente sviluppata: *Il dilemma del pensiero contemporaneo su Dio*.

Pensiamo che poteva essere maggiormente sviluppata proprio per una certa attuale reticenza ad affrontare il pensiero classico e moderno su Dio nell'ambito della trattazione sul Dio trinitario, non solo limitandosi a denunciare le antinomie del teismo o dell'ateismo, cosa che del resto fa

1. (Sheed-Ward; London 1988) [tr. it. *Il Mistero della Trinità* (PUG-PIEMME; Roma 1989).

O'Donnell, ma soprattutto evolvendo una parte propositiva dove la sintesi del rapporto potesse apparire più evidente. Tra gli autori contemporanei W. Kasper nel suo ormai noto lavoro *Der Gott Iesu Christi*,[2] ha tentato un approccio del genere ma anche il suo è ancora un tentativo che è di auspicio, una promessa, sebbene una promessa coraggiosa, come quando ha l'ardire di affermare che Dio non può più essere pensato nel senso della Sostanza: "Assistiamo ad una rivoluzione nel modo d'intendere l'essere. La realtà ultima e suprema non è quella della sostanza bensì quella della relazione. Per Aristotele la relazione appartiene agli accidenti che vengono ad aggiungersi alla sostanza.... Ma se Dio stesso si manifesta come il Dio dell'alleanza e del dialogo, e il suo nome significa 'per noi' e 'con noi', la relazione non viene dopo la sostanza ma prima.... Il senso dell'essere non è quindi la sostanza in se stessa bensì l'amore che si comunica".[3]

Ad un attenta lettura del testo di W. Kasper ci si accorge che il suo tentativo, come promessa in parte attuata, in parte ancora da sviluppare, si scontra contro una difficoltà che è oggettiva in se stessa, infatti essa dipende dal modo di intendere il rapporto tra l'approccio filosofico a Dio e l'evento irrompente della Rivelazione.

Ritornando al nostro autore e ad una lettura un pò smaliziata del suo testo, non può certo sfuggire la domanda se il silenzio del nostro autore su una questione così importante sia intenzionale oppure constretto. Onestamente ci pare che O'Donnell esaurendo la questione in quel primo capitolo sia abbastanza coerente e coraggioso, infatti la sua non è solo una denuncia severa come quando afferma che "il concetto classico di Dio.... comporta seri problemi per un credende.... e che le antinomie presenti in questo modo di intendere Dio hanno contribuito alla situazione di diffuso ateismo",[4] ma la sua risposta rimanda all'impalcatura globale del suo trattato sistematico. È lì che si gioca tutta la proposta di O'Donnell, lì si intravvede il superamento delle antinomie di tutto un certo teismo. E allora, quando alla fine del 1 cap. si afferma che il "concetto classico di Dio.... comporta seri problemi per un credente" e che le antinomie "di un certo modo di intendere Dio hanno contribuito alla situazione di diffuso ateismo[5] che cosa in verità si vuole dire? Non certo demonizzare il passato, ma andare oltre, e all'interno della confessione trinitaria di fede,[6] far emergere di più che l'*Ipsum Esse Subsistens* non è solo l'essere perfetto separato dalla

2. (Grunewal; Mainz 1982) |tr. it. *Il Dio di Gesù Cristo* (Quieriniana; Brescia 1984).
3. KASPER, *Dio di Gesù Cristo*, 214.
4. O'DONNELL, *Il Mistero della Trinità*, 21.
5. ibid.
6. L'autore gioca a carte scoperte affermando fin dall'inizio del suo lavoro che: "questo libro è scritto da uno che pensa, vive e prega all'interno della tradizione cattolica romana. Questa tradizione mi ha dato l'aria teologica che io respiro" (p. 6).

storia e impassibile. Si tratta cioè di contenutizzare maggiormente l'esperienza di Dio che si è identificato con la storia di Gesù di Nazaret.

Il dilemma del pensiero contemporaneo su Dio risulterà allora l'evidenziazione del paradosso del Dio cristiano, la domanda fondamentale e conclusiva sarà; "cosa c'è nell'autorivelazione di Dio in Gesù Cristo che ci fa pensare Dio in modo nuovo, e come mai per il cristianesimo questo modo nuovo si presenta assolutamente trinitario, cosicchè ciò che si intende con la parola Dio è il Padre, il Figlio, e lo Spirito Santo?"[7]

Una certa parsimonia nell'evolvere la sezione del 'de Deo Uno' in O'Donnell, alla fin fine non è casuale e si giustifica precisamente nella impostazione metodologica del suo discorso che ora vogliamo discutere criticamente.

I. LA RIFLESSIONE SUL MISTERO TRINITARIO

Certamente la duplice chiave di lettura del saggio di O'Donnell può apparire come stratagemma schematico di chi scrive, ma non ci sembra di allontanarci dal vero, infatti la lettura dell'opera nasconde una grande ansia che è teologica e pastorale insieme: riflettere nella fede, in compagnia della tradizione, con l'intelligenza da una parte; annunciare, vivere e interpretare il mondo e la storia trinitariamente, come conseguenza coerente. E proprio nell'ambito della riflessione sul mistero trinitario si possono scorgere, a nostro avviso tre prospettive che si richiamano e si intersecano vicendevolmente.

1. Criterio metodologico: rapporto Trinità-Rivelazione

È proprio nel capitolo II del suo saggio che O'Donnell dà la risposta fondamentale alle antinomie espresse nella questione sul dilemma del pensiero su Dio oggi. Cioè parlare su Dio significa parlare della Rivelazione di Dio agli uomini e *a partire da questa Rivelazione*. Non si tratta solo di cosa ovvia, tanto è vero che per la metodologia teologica tra il Vaticano I e il Vaticano II non fu poi così ovvia; ma di un criterio imprescindibile che fa rivedere quindi tutta la sistematica teologica. Infatti i confini tra teologia fondamentale, ispirazione biblica, trattato su Dio (De Deo Uno et Trino), non possono più essere quelli di un tempo. Se infatti Rivelazione è parlare di Dio e della sua autocomunicazione, questo è già parlare della Trinità. E parlare della Trinità è parlare dell'autorivelazione e dei suoi modi.

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7. O'DONNELL, *Il Mistero della Trinità*, 21.

Il nostro autore mette bene a fuoco questo principio, che a nostro avviso è come la premessa e la chiave metodologica del suo lavoro e allo stesso tempo risposta alle tante domande critiche accennate all'inizio, vale a dire: è nella Autorivelazione di Dio che si trova il Dio cristiano, cioè il Dio trinitario: il Padre che è Donatore, il Figlio che è Dono e lo Spirito Santo Fondamento dell'accettazione del Dono!

Egli richiama giustamente e in dettaglio la vicenda storica di Karl Barth che primo fra tutti in questo secolo si è adoperato per ricentrare cristologicamente e quindi trinitariamente la Rivelazione divina.[8]

Noi non evidenziamo qui la vicenda, del resto abbastanza nota, le critiche ad essa mosse soprattutto da Moltmann, o rilevate dallo stesso O'Donnell.[9] Come pure non vogliamo esporre in dettaglio le proposte di Peter Knauer sulla relazione reale di Dio al mondo,[10] ancor più la spiegazione rahneriana della Trinità come "origine trascendente della salvezza".[11]

Ciò che pare veramente centrale nell' esposizione di O'Donnell è l'opzione (questa sì di ispirazione rahneriana con i suoi personali

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8. La vicenda è ricostruita alle p. 24-29 da O'Donnell sottolineando che in K. Barth la rivelazione della Signoria di Dio ricorre in una triplice ripetizione. "Ciò che vediamo nel fatto della rivelazione è l'esistenza di una triplice distinzione fra Dio il Rivelatore, Dio la Rivelazione, e l'essere rivelato o l'impartizione di questa rivelazione" (p. 27).

9. Di fatto Moltmann rimprovera a Barth una teologia della Signoria di Dio che è troppo poco una teologia trinitaria (p. 27 del testo di O'Donnell). Il nostro autore del resto è ugualmente critico verso Barth quando afferma che: "Egli cerca di essere pienamente coerente nello sviluppare la sua dottrina su Dio esclusivamente sulla base della Rivelazione. Secondo il punto di vista di Barth, la rivelazione esige che il credente faccia delle distinzioni in Dio. Senza queste distinzioni non ci è possibile dare un resoconto adeguato della nostra esperienza di Dio sulla base della sua Parola" (p. 29).

10. Peter Knauer vorrebbe rispondere all'antinomia dell'idea classica di Dio ponendo una relazione 'reale' di Dio con il mondo, mediante un modo diverso di intendere l'incarnazione, proponendo una sua tesi sulla umanità di Cristo come umanità *anipostatica* del Logos divino. O'Donnell presenta la tesi di Knauer come un tentativo di superare le antinomie denunciate e appare obiettivo quando valuta la tesi del Knauer dicendo che nel suo pensiero "Dio mi parla in modo da farmi entrare in relazione con il Dio che si rivolge a me. In questo senso la fede è resa possibile dal dono di Dio stesso. In termini teologici, ciò significa che la fede è l'opera delle Spirito Santo" (p. 32).

11. O'Donnell espone egregiamente il pensiero di Rahner, mostrando come appunto è a partire dalla sua concezione della storia della salvezza che Rahner dà ragione della SS. Trinità in se stessa e nella storia salvifica. Ecco come si esprime il nostro autore a proposito di Rahner: "se è vero che Dio ha comunicato se stesso nella nostra storia della salvezza, cioè se l'unico Mistero Santo ha comunicato se stesso (e non qualcosa di diverso da sè) nell'incarnazione e nella grazia, allora ne segue, come mostra Rahner, che Dio nella sua stessa vita deve esistere secondo questi tre modi di essere. Se Dio ha dato se stesso senza riserva nella sua rivelazione, allora Dio è nella sua vita divina così com'è nella sua rivelazione. Se Dio nella sua rivelazione è trino, allora Dio nel suo Essere Infinito è il Mistero trinitario. Ne segue la tesi che logicamente è diventata un luogo comune da quando Rahner ha cominciato a scrivere sulla teologia trinitaria, cioè che la Trinità economica è la Trinità immanente, e viceversa", *Il Mistero della Trinità*, 39.

'distinguo') per un discorso della Trinità che provenga dalla Rivelazione e sia l'autorivelazione di Dio al mondo.[12] Ed è proprio il rapporto equilibrato tra Trinità economica e immanente che alla fin fine sta alla base dell'impostazione di O'Donnell, il quale si appoggia a W. Kasper per un discernimento critico a Rahner sia in positivo che in negativo.[13]

Mettere al centro del discorso su Dio la Rivelazione, ha portato ad evidenziare come la comprensione cristiana di Dio ha rivelato una struttura trinitaria, infatti Dio e Colui che si manifesta in Cristo e Cristo è Colui che nello Spirito rivela la struttura trinitaria della Rivelazione,[14] ma ciò va verificato nella vicenda stessa di Gesù di Nazaret Crocifisso e Risorto.

2. *Dimensione strutturale della riflessione sul Dio trinitario.*

Sul principio metodologico di base è chiaro che si viene evolvendo la trattazione sistematica di O'Donnell e questo avviene quasi in un *trittico* ben disposto: cioè la struttura trinitaria della nostra fede ci è data dalla vicenda stessa di Gesù come Colui che è *Figlio del Padre, Donatore dello Spirito*, esperienze queste verificate e confermate *nel mistero pasquale*.

L'originalità della trattazione trinitaria di O'Donnell che noi qui chiamiamo *strutturale* sta proprio nella *saldatura tra cristologia e dottrina trinitaria*. Si attua cioè una forma di *pericoresis* tra Gesù e il Dio trinitario. Gesù è Dio proprio perché Dio è Trinità. Dio è per noi Trinità proprio perché Gesù è Dio e si automanifesta come Dio.[15]

L'esposto di O'Donnell per presentarci Gesù come Figlio e donatore dello Spirito scorre gradevole, ma non è su questo che vogliamo insistere. La sua dottrina si presenta ordinata e per certi versi (ci si comprenda bene) consueta, cioè dottrina abbastanza recepita oggi. Non la vogliamo qui descrivere solo per ragioni di spazio (essendo questa una nota critica che stimola la nostra riflessione) non certo per altri motivi.

Le rilevanze sulla 'cristologia implicita' ed 'esplicita', sulla 'teologia dell'Abbà', sul senso della 'teologia dell'Amen', gli stessi autori citati, da

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12. ibid., 39.
13. ibid., 40-41.
14. ibid., 42.
15. "Grave problema del discorso cristiano su Dio è rappresentato proprio dalla necessità di una integrazione in Dio delle dimensioni cristologica e trinitaria; l'insufficienza, dal punto di vista cristiano, si rivela proprio nel mancato riferimento alla Trinità: di qui resta compromesso il discorso biblico sulla 'missione', sulla 'ubbidienza', sul 'dato per noi', sulla *proexistentia* di Cristo.... Gesù rinvia al Dio trinitario; Gesù è Dio solo in quanto Dio è Trinità. Dio ci appare come Trinità solo sul fondamento del fatto che Gesù è e ci si rivela come Dio. Gesù è Dio, nella pienezza della sua verità, come Dio ipostaticamente unito al mondo e all'uomo, nella realtà singolare che è l'esistenza di Gesù; e nella forma della pericoresi",.GP. BOF, "Dire Dio", in *Pensare e dire Dio oggi*, a cura di RENZO GERARDI, (Roma 1989) 152-153.

Martin Hengel, a Dunn, Schillebeeckx, Jeremias, Brown formano un concerto di linee convergenti e di andamento omogeneo, non nel senso che tutto o tutte le opinioni sono uguali, ma come patrimonio critico ormai consueto.

Lo stesso dicasi per l'interpretazione dell'identità e missione di Gesù nel suo rapporto con lo Spirito.

Le esemplificazioni problematiche e propositive di Gesù come profeta, Uomo delle Spirito, come Esorcista perché ripieno di Spirito Santo, come Colui che è il Re Unto per l'insediamento nel suo ufficio regale di Messia al momento del battesimo, conducono tutte al centro della singolare vocazione di Gesù, all'obbedienza che lo avrebbe portato alla Croce.

Ed è qui che si dischiude e si reinterpreta tutto il significato trinitario di Gesù di Nazaret nel suo passaggio dalla morde alla gloria, cioè *il mistero pasquale*.

Ed è a questo punto che O'Donnell sviluppa, sembrerebbe come riassuntivamente, ma non nel senso materiale, bensì come continuità nell'assoluta novità dell'evento, un capitolo (il 4°), dedicato a *Trinità e mistero pasquale*, dove Morte e Risurrezione vengono viste come *storia trinitaria* di Dio, *eventi trinitari*.

Certamente questa impostazione metodologica non è nuova e O'Donnell si rifà a varie fonti con opportuni discernimenti e prese di distanza critiche, (così Moltmann, Peterson, L. Keck) oppure con simpatie dichiarate ad esempio per Von Balthasar il quale vede l'origine della missione di Gesù realizzatasi sulla croce, nella Trinità eterna.

Le riflessioni di O'Donnell ci sembra portino un contributo in questa materia così attuale nella teologia odierna.

La domanda davvero importante è che cosa significhi l'evento della croce, la sofferenza e la morte del Figlio per il Padre. È il problema cioè della croce come evento trinitario al quale O'Donnell risponde in modo soddisfacente "che la croce distrugge le nostre idee su Dio, ci spinge ad affrontare uno dei più profondi problemi teologici la sofferenza di Dio".[16]

La croce non è l'imposizione di una obbedienza alienante, ma è vedere questo dramma dentro l'eterno dramma trinitario. La croce è come una separazione tra il Padre e il Figlio; "la drammatica cesura che strazia il cuore di Dio sul calvario è già stata abbracciata da tutta l'eternità dalla Trinità divina. Dall'eternità e per l'eternità il Padre ha donato se stesso al Figlio, ha rischiato il suo essere nel Figlio, e dall'eternità il Figlio è stato un sì al Padre, nel completo ed obbediente abbandono a Lui; così il rischiare se stesso del Padre verso il Figlio crea uno spazio per il Figlio. Il Padre separa

16. O'DONNELL, *Il Mistero della Trinità*, 65.

se stesso da se stesso, affinché possa esistere il Figlio. Questa separazione è però collegata nell'eternità dallo Spirito Santo, la comunione di amore del Padre e del Figlio.[17]

Direi che veramente qui O'Donnell fa centro nell'esprimere *il mistero pasquale come mistero trinitario*, quando scrive che "la più profonda ermeneutica della croce non può che essere un'ermeneutica propriamente teologica, che la croce cioè può essere compresa adeguatamente soltanto se è vista come un evento tra Dio e Dio, tra Padre e Figlio, un evento che è il compiersi nella storia del dramma originario che si svolge tra il Padre e il Figlio, i quali dall'eternità rischiano il loro essere l'uno verso l'altro e così sono distinti ma ancora una cosa sola nello Spirito Santo che è il loro vincolo di comunione".[18]

Egli conclude coerentemente la sua esposizione per cui ciò che seguirà nei paragrafi: "Dalla teologia del Venerdì Santo alla teologia del Sabato Santo",[19] "Trinità e Redenzione",[20] non sarà che portare avanti queste benefiche intuizioni con alcuni meriti particolari soprattutto quando egli valorizza la tradizionale dottrina della redenzione non come qualcosa che implichi una punizione estrinseca di Dio. Lo schema che O'Donnell propone merita veramente di essere riprodotto. Il processo di creazione e redenzione (in senso trinitario) potrebbe essere il seguente:

1. Siamo creati nel Figlio.
2. Il peccato è il No all'offerta della figliolanza divina; esso va ad occupare il posto del Figlio.
3. Sulla croce Gesù prende il posto del peccato e ne porta su di sè tutto il peso. Ma nel caricarsi di questo peccato con amore sofferente Egli lo trasforma. La croce è la negazione della negazione.
4. Finalmente, per mezzo di questa espiazione, siamo ristabiliti nella nostra figliolanza in Cristo. Il mistero pasquale fa possibile una nuova creazione.[21]

Dio Padre è così grande che supera il peccato dell'uomo assumendolo in sè nella sua propria vita, perché nella sua propria vita Egli è *scambio di amore con il Figlio*. Il Padre in quanto amore libero manda il Figlio nel mondo e il Figlio accetta di identificarsi con noi fino a morire in croce.

Il "propter nos homines. et propter nostram salutem" è fondato dunque sullo sconfinato amore delle persone divine le quali sono Dono e

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17. O'DONNELL, ibid., 66.
18. Ibid., 67.
19. Ibid., 67-70.
18. ibid., 67.
19. ibid., 67-70.
20. ibid., 70-73.
21. L'autore espone e giustifica in modo trinitario questo schema a p. 72-73.

Altruismo reciproco; non solo il Dono e l'Altruismo del Padre e del Figlio ma anche ciò che nella Morte-Resurrezione è il loro vincolo, cioè lo Spirito Santo che li unisce nel momento della loro massima separazione, cioè la Croce.

Lo Spirito Santo che unisce Padre e Figlio nel momento della loro massima separazione apre la vita divina al di fuori, Egli è il *lato più esterno di Dio*, cosicché lo Spirito Santo "completa il circolo della vita divina, che però non è un circolo chiuso, bensì aperto. Nello stesso modo, dall'evento della Croce, dall'evento nel quale Dio si identifica totalmente con l'umanità abbandonata, lo Spirito è riversato sul mondo, quale spirito di salvezza e di riconciliazione."[22]

In questo modo il peccato del mondo e il dolore toccano il cuore divino e così le Persone trinitarie sono coinvolte nella sofferenza e la redimono.

Ed è a questo punto che è svelato pienamente il nome di Dio, l'attributo degli attributi. Dio è Colui che viene colto nella nostra esperienza cristiana come Colui che noi conosciamo in Gesù Cristo, nel culmine della nostra esperienza di Gesù e del suo mistero pasquale noi sappiamo che è Dio, cioè l'Amore. Un Dio che può uscire da se stesso, che si espone al peccato e all'abbandono, un Dio Signore che è servo di tutti. Questo Dio è paradossale, un Dio che può uscire da se stesso fino ad esporsi al peccato, all'abbandono, il nome e l'essenza di questo Dio è quella di essere *Puro Amore Illimitato*.[23]

3. *Strumenti speculativo-concettuali della riflessione trinitaria*

Una volta messo al centro *il mistero pasquale in quanto evento-mistero trinitario* nella sua descrittività che ne rivela al tempo stesso la profondità ontologica, si apre nel trattato sistematico un'altra dimensione (ad essere esatti O'Donnell evolve la materia in tre cap. 5, 6, 7) che è quella *speculativa*, o noi diremo con ancor più precisione gli *strumenti speculativi* che permettono a livello teologico la riflessione sul mistero pasquale in quanto evento trinitario. Non che le precedenti riflessioni non fossero di per se stesse speculative già all'interno dell'esposto,[24] ma in questi capitoli (5, 6,

22. ibid., 74.
23. ibid., 75.
24. Una caratteristica a nostro avviso importante nello sviluppo dell'opera di O'Donnell è quella di *tener presenti insieme* le dimensioni richieste da OT 16 per quanto riguarda l'insegnamento della teologia dogmatica. L'autore non espone separatamenti le varie dimensioni (biblica, patristica, storica....) preferisce piuttosto tematizzare gli argomenti tenendo presenti le suddette dimensioni in modo *sinergico*. È certamente un modo nuovo e originale che sta predendo piede nella letteratura sistematica, anche se si potrebbe obiettare che alcune dimensioni vengono un pò sacrificate, come per es. quella patristica; ma d'altra parte c'è da chiedersi se veramente alcune trattazioni post-conciliari che rispettavano le dimensioni

7, 9), il nostro autore fornisce come gli 'ingredienti' della riflessione speculativa soprattutto mediandosi con la tradizione.

Egli parla del mistero trinitario utilizzando *vetera et nova*, e quando si impiega *nova* ne dà una dimostrazione che parte già da uno 'status quaestionis' abbastanza recepito in teologia.

A noi sembra che gli strumenti concettuali della riflessione trinitaria, qui offerti, siano quelli fondamentali e corrispondono di fatto ai capitoli dell'opera di O'Donnell.

3.1. Il primo e più originale sembra essere quello di una riflessione a se stante sullo Spirito Santo, una *teologia dello Spirito Santo*. Vogliamo intenderci su questo 'a se stante'. Non si tratta di una riflessione autonoma sullo Spirito Santo, quasi che la pneumatologia sia da considerarsi separatamente dal trattato 'De Deo Uno et Trino'. E neppure vogliamo qui entrare nella discussione metodoligica sul posto del trattato di pneumatologia all'interno dell'intera teologia dogmatica.[25]

A nostro avviso la riflessione speculativa sullo Spirito Santo *nella Uni-Trinità* si impone oggi come strumento speculativo perché il trattato sistematico sulla Trinità ritrovi il suo equilibrio. E ciò non tanto e non solo a livello formale ma ancor più per tutta una serie di questioni teologiche profonde che di fatto avevano squilibrato il 'De Deo Uno et Trino', rendendolo (ci si passi l'espressione) molto 'De Deo Uno' e poco 'Trino'! La riflessione sull'identità dello Spirito Santo all'interno del mistero trinitario come riflessione speculativa in se stessa, mostra come una sana pneumatologia sia di fatto la cartina di tornasole per una concezione equilibrata di tutto il Mistero del Dio Cristiano e della teologia cristiana stessa.

Anche qui noi non vogliamo scendere nella descrizione di O'Donnell, perché il nostro intento, lo abbiamo già detto, è quello di far risaltare la *valenza metodologica* della trattazione sistematica trinitaria.

Quanto il nostro autore espone sulla concezione latina od orientale dello Spirito Santo,[26] sulla sua riscoperta contemporanea sia cattolica che protestante,[27] poteva anche essere disposto diversamente. Ad es. il rapporto

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richieste da OT 16 non cadevano nei difetti di tanta letteratura manualistica! Il saggio di O'Donnell a noi sembra presentarsi complessivamente come *riflessione sistematica globale-sintetica* sul mistero trinitario.

25. Queste questioni metodologiche della pneumatologia rispetto alle altre discipline teologiche e il rapporto della pneumatologia nel trattato sistematico trinitario sono state ben spiegate da F. LAMBIASI, *Lo Spirito Santo: mistero e presenza. Per una sintesi di pneumatologia*, (Bologna 1987) 18-26.

26. O'DONNELL, ibid., 78, 95-97.

27. Gli autori citati da O'Donnell sono ormai classici; nel mondo cattolico: Congar, Mühlen, Balthasar, Kasper; nel mondo protestante soprattutto Moltmann con le sue due opere: *La Chiesa nella forza dello Spirito* (Brescia 1976); *Trinità e Regno di Dio* (Brescia 1983).

tra Gesù e lo Spirito,[28] lo Spirito Santo nella Chiesa,[29] potevano trovare migliore collocazione non in questa parte, bensì in quello che noi abbiamo descritto il trittico di O'Donnell (Gesù il Figlio, portatore dello Spirito e il mistero pasquale come mistero trinitario).[30] Ma non è questo che conta, perché si tratta sempre di questioni opinibili. Ciò che invece è importante è che senza una riflessione speculativa pneumatologica non si può fare teologia trinitaria e O'Donnell evolve bene questa dimensione illustrando l'identità dello Spirito Santo nella sua funzione *neotica* e *ontologica*.

Lo Spirito Santo è anzitutto la *condizione di possibilità* del credere e del fare esperienza del Dio cristiano, è come l'aspetto *soggettivo* della rivelazione. A causa dello Spirito Santo la Rivelazione di Dio ci fa noi stessi evento di rivelazione, noi diventiamo l'evento dell'autocomunicazione dell'amore di Dio. È questa anzitutto la funzione *noetica* dello Spirito. Ma accanto a questa ve n'è una *ontologica*. Cioè lo Spirito Santo ci rende capaci di vedere Cristo, Egli forma Cristo nella profondità del credente.[31]

In tutte queste concezioni O'Donnell attinge a piene mani da autori come Kilian McDonnell, Jurgen Moltmann, Walter Kasper, Heribert Mulhen, per citare solo alcuni nomi, ma sempre per dialogare con essi, proponendo una sua personale spiegazione speculativa che, come dicevamo contribuisce creativamente a formare gli strumenti concettuali-speculativi della riflessione sistematica.

Soprattutto mi riferisco all'equilibrio del nostro autore nel vedere come la concezione dello Spirito Santo in oriente e in occidente determinino il modo di intendere il Dio trinitario. L'equilibrio del nostro autore, e il suo presentarsi come 'teologo cattolico romano' gli fanno esprimere giudizi saggi sulle debolezze e sui pregi delle concezioni sia latine che orientali. Così come quando afferma che "c'è un pericolo nel modello occidentale dovuta alla priorità che esso dà alla natura divina sulla monarchia del Padre. Questo può condurre ad una concezione astratta di Dio e alla separazione della dottrina filosofica di Dio dal Dio reale che la fede confessa, ossia il Padre, il Figlio e lo Spirito Santo".[32] È vero che teologi come Lossky vedono nella tradizione latina il pericolo di cristomonismo che si ripercuote anche secondo lui in una concezione troppo autoritaria in ecclesiologia, ma il nostro autore ritiene che la teologia latina è stata consapevole di tale pericolo. "Così ad esempio, anche Agostino accentuava il fatto che lo

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28. O'DONNELL, ibid., 82-86.
29. ibid., 86-89.
30. Praticamente ciò è stato svilippato nei cap. 4 e 5 dell'opera.
31. O'DONNELL, ibid., 80.
32. ibid., 96.

Spirito procede *principalmente* dal Padre, e, per superare la paura degli orientali di compromettere l'unità divina, la tradizione latina insegnava che lo Spirito procede dal Padre e dal Figlio come da un unico principio".[33]

Così pure mentre riconosce i meriti dell'oriente nell'accentuazione della 'monarchia' del Padre, di una visione più carismatica della chiesa, non ha problemi a indicare che "la principale debolezza dell'oriente è la mancanza di chiarezza nel definire la relazione tra Figlio e Spirito. Il Figlio non deve essere assente nella processione dello Spirito Santo se è vero che lo Spirito, nell'economia salvifica, è sempre Spirito del Figlio".[34]

3.2 Un secondo strumento concettuale indispensabile per pensare in modo riflesso la Trinità è tradizionalmente racchiuso in ciò che sia semanticamente che teologicamente è compreso nella formula "una natura, tre persone". Evidentemente non è tanto la storia delle controversie, l'ingresso delle formule linguistiche, la forza negatrice delle eresie che interessa evidenziare,[35] *bensì l'importanza del concetto di persona in teologia trinitaria*. Anche qui ci richiamiamo come a dei sondaggi rapidi. Soprattutto O'Donnell è preoccupato di mettere a confronto il pensiero classico e i problemi posti dalla filosofia moderna. E il confronto diventa subito problematico e perdente.... Come si può coniugare il concetto classico di Persona in Dio quando per il pensiero moderno 'persona' significa autocoscienza, centro autonomo d'azione che può disporre di sè nella libertà?

O'Donnell passa in rassegna il pensiero di Barth, di Rahner con la loro critica serrata al concetto classico e moderno di persona,[36] la proposta di una immagine comunitaria della Trinità esposta da altri teologi come Joseph Bracken,[37] o J. Moltmann il quale ritiene si debba partire per pensare la Trinità *più dalla pluralità che dall'unità*.

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33. ibid.
34. ibid.
35. A dire il vero O'Donnell non si diffonde neppure lungamente su tutto ciò, ne parla in poche pag., esattamente (pp. 101-103).
36. Il nostro autore valuta criticamente le posizioni di Barth e Rahner assai note in materia, servendosi anche del pensiero di Ratzinger: "un dubbio più profondo rimane in quanto Barth e Rahner mancano di dare un'attenzione adeguata ad un aspetto significativo della tradizione, vale a dire l'aspetto della reciprocità e della relazionalità. Josepf Ratzinger fa notare, per es.che non possiamo pensare Dio semplicemente come un IO assoluto. La realtà assoluta non è un mero IO interamente opposto al TU umano. Questo trascura l'intera dimensione del Noi.... Per i cristiani l'Assoluto è comunione. L'uno include anche il Noi. La dottrina cristiana di Dio ci costringe a pensare la molteplicità dentro l'unità" (p. 105).
37. Bracken intoduce nuove categorie ontologiche secondo le quali *l'essere è in se stesso un processo dinamico e inoltre un essere-in-relazione*. Secondo lui quindi la metafisica della *persona in comunione* è superiore a quella della sostanza individuale. L'unità in Dio secondo Bracken non è data dall'unità della sostanza, ma dall'unità della comunità. Date queste premesse la tesi centrale di Bracken sulla Trinità riportata da O'Connell è consequenziale, ma è

Moltmann concepisce le persone come relazione e allora la Santa Trinità è *la comunità divina di persone in relazione*. Moltmann riprende il concetto classico di 'perichoresis', e afferma che "l'essere delle persone è la loro relazionalità. Le persone della Trinità sono così intimamente vincolate l'una con l'altra che inabitano l'una nell'altra. Sulla base di questa comprensione di 'perichoresis', si può capire la Trinità come 'koinonia' divina piuttosto che come sostanza divina".[38]

Ma ciò che più conta è ancora il tentativo di sintesi che il nostro autore si sforza di presentare. E lo fa cercando di coniugare il senso psicologico moderno di persona con l'approccio metafisico classico. Egli sulla scia di s. Tommaso e di autori moderni come Hill, Bourassa, Lonergan, Kasper, distingue tra *atti essenziali e atti personali* nella Trinità.

Dicendo atti essenziali si dice l'assoluta unità di Dio, il monoteismo cristiano, ma tale radicale unità non è incompatibile con la pluralità. In Dio ci sono tre Persone ma ciascuna di esse è identica a Dio stesso. Ciascuna delle tre persone è Dio. Come si può integrare, si domanda O'Donnell, la moderna comprensione psicologica di persona nella teologia trinitaria? Il nostro autore si appoggia a Hill, il quale ritiene si possa parlare di tutto ciò solo in senso analogico: "si può dire che nella Trinità ci sono soggetti distinti di atti personali. Per esempio solo il Padre genera il Figlio. Solo il Figlio è la Parola del Padre. E solo lo Spirito Santo è il vincolo di comunione tra il Padre e il Figlio. Quindi possiamo parlare di tre soggetti e della loro reciprocità. Per meglio dire dovremmo parlare di una *koinonia*, ma tale linguaggio è analogico".[39] La grande differenza tra la nostra esperienza umana del soggetto e ciò che è in se stessa la Trinità, è che nella nostra esperienza umana il soggetto è sempre condizionato socialmente, la sua relazione alla comunità dipende da una opzione che resta sempre libera. Il soggetto umano *tende ad una vocazione sociale* che cerca di realizzare. La grande differenza con la realtà trinitaria di Dio sta proprio qui: che *mentre nella nostra esperienza comunità e persona non coincidono, in Dio sì!*

Così pure nella questione della conscienza in Dio, O'Donnell mostra grande equilibrio; infatti tenendo ben ferma la distinzione tra *atti essenziali e personali* nella Trinità, sostiene appunto che si debba parlare di *coscienza essenziale e personale* nella Trinità. "L'unica coscienza divina è una

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valutata criticamente dal nostro autore. Ecco le parole di Bracken riportate a p. 107 "La natura o essenza di Dio consiste nell'essere un processo interpersonale, cioè una comunità di tre persone divine che crescono costantemente nella conoscenza e nell'amore reciproco e che sono in questo modo esse stesse in sviluppo, proprio mentre costituiscono la comunità divina come uno specifico processo sociale".

38. O'DONNELL, ibid., 108.
39. ibid., 110.

coscienza condivisa, condivisa dalle tre persone".[40] L'unica e medesima coscienza è condivisa e posseduta in modi differenti dai Tre della Trinità.

Per quanto riguarda la coscienza delle Tre Persone nella loro personale distinzione, O'Donnell fa sue le tesi di Bourassa, secondo cui riguardo *l'essenzialità* ciascuna persona è cosciente di se stessa nella pienezza della divinità, riguardo la *personalità* ciascuna persona è cosciente della propria differenza dalle altre persone, ma al tempo stesso la coscienza personale di ciascuna persona è fonte di totale comunicazione, di reciprocità, amore, donazione.[41]

3.3 Un terzo strumento concettuale forse quello più fondativo e primordiale per fare buona teologia trinitaria è la questione che di fatto permette (almeno in un prospettiva cattolica) il fare teologia speculativa stessa, vale a dire il discorso sull'*analogia dell'essere e l'analogia della fede*. Ma a ben vedere si tratta del discorso stesso sulla possibilità o meno di parlare di Dio, la questione si direbbe meglio oggi della *dicibilità di Dio*, non solo come problema linguistico in se stesso ma come dimensione di un linguaggio che implica un movimento di trascendenza. Infatti il problema del linguaggio che voglia affrontare il tema di Dio, si trova sul suo terreno stesso di fronte alla *anticipazione di un senso globale della realtà espresso in* parabole e metafore.[42]

In altre parole O'Donnell presenta il problema dell'analogia non tanto o non solo come si faceva un tempo, come il problema del linguaggio umano capace o meno di esprimere Dio trascendente, egli va oltre e si pone il problema di come il linguaggio umano può dire Dio-Trinità.

Ed era chiaro allora che il punto di partenza non poteva che essere la corrispondenza tra il *vestigium trinitatis* presente nell'uomo e la sua corrispondenza in Dio-Trinità. Anche qui ribadiamo ancora che vogliamo solo operare dei sondaggi e non certo scendere in campo per riportare le argomentazioni del nostro autore che quasi sempre riscuotono il nostro assenso. Come ad esempio non dargli atto della precisione nell'esporre con rigore la dottrina barthiana contro l'analogia? Ma soprattutto, e ancor più, come non dargli ragione nel discernimento critico nei confronti di Barth, corretto da Balthasar?[43] Come pure, come non rallegrarsi (per lo meno nella

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40. ibid., 111.
41. Bourassa citato da O'Donnell esprime succintamente questa tesi dicendo che: "La coscienza in Dio è dunque, sia un atto essenziale di conoscenza e di amore comune alle tre persone, che una coscienza personale, esercitata da ciascuna persona come coscienza di sè, secondo la propria azione personale infinitamente cosciente e libera, come lo zampillare d'amore in perfettissima reciprocità" (p. 111).
42. KASPER, *Il Dio di Gesù Cristo*, 133.
43. O'DONNELL, ibid., 114-115. L'autore afferma con decisione che "Balthasar sostiene dunque che non ci dovrebbe essere contraddizione fra analogia dell'essere e analogia della

prospettiva di chi scrive), nel suo cogliere lo spirito migliore della dottrina tomistica della analogia come quando afferma che (per Tommaso) "la base di queste analogie di proporzionalità è l'analogia di attribuzione. L'analogia di attribuzione, a sua volta, ha senso nell'ambito della dottrina metafisica della partecipazione. Poiché tutto l'essere finito partecipa in Dio come origine ultima dell'esistenza e pioché c'è una similitudine, deve essere possibile predicare le perfezioni finite riferendole a Dio una volta che esse siano state purificate dalle loro limitazione finite"?[44]

Ma oltre tutto questo ci sembra, sempre da un punto di vista metodologico, che la dottrina dell'*analogia entis et fidei* sia utilizzata nel suo 'superamento', se almeno interpretiamo bene, cioè nel suo principio *cristocentrico*.

Per spiegarci meglio, è solo *l'evento Cristo come evento trinitario* che può dare senso alla dottrina dell'analogia entis et fidei come strumento speculativo-concettuale della sistematica trinitaria.

Fa bene O'Donnell a valorizzare Jungel in ciò che da un punto di vista cattolico è accettabile,[45] infatti la dottrina dell'analogia dell'essere trova il suo correlativo nell'analogia fidei e quindi ci si rende conto che *la storia di Gesù di Nazaret è la vera parabola di Dio per l'uomo*.

Certamente si potrebbe obiettare che noi incontriamo Gesù non senza alcuna nozione previa su Dio. Ma è pur vero "che nella nostra attesa di Dio, spesso elaboriamo un concetto di Dio derivato da quel che a noi piacerebbe essere: omnipotenti, invulnerabili, non colpiti dalle sofferenze nè dai dolori: sulla croce tutte queste attese vengono frantumate. Dio non viene in aiuto di Gesù, Gesù che è stato solidale con gli abbandonati da Dio, diviene egli stesso il Dio abbandonato".[46]

La storia di Gesù di Nazaret diventa allora la vera *parabola-analogia* dell'essere di Dio e ciò che tradizionalmente è stato lo strumento speculativo per parlare di Dio, l'analogia appunto, è perfezionato oggi per lo meno da un punto di vista metodologico, dal suo *radicamento cristocentrico*; infatti oggi "la migliore teologia sostiene che il momento filosofico si trova all'interno del momento teologico stesso, e non è una base ad esso

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fede. L'analogia dell'essere, radicata nella creazione, esiste nell'ambito dell'analogia della fede. Un cristocentrismo come quello di Barth non necessariamente è in opposizione ai risultati migliori della tradizione cattolica classica, e si può dire che Balthasar sostiene un'analogia dell'essere fondata cristologicamente" (p. 116).

44. ibid., 119.

45. In sostanza si apprezza in Jungel il fatto che l'identificazione di Dio con la croce, ci rende capaci di percepire Dio come amore, "la dottrina filosofica dell'analogia ci rende capaci solo di dire cosa Dio non è. La dottrina teologica dell'analogia ci mette in grado di dire cosa Dio è. L'analogia della fede ci dà la possibilità di rendere giustizia all'affermazione biblica che Dio è amore" (p. 122).

46. ibid., 124.

propeduetica",[47] ciò vuol dire che il motivo di comprensività intrinseco di ogni discorso analogico è Gesù Cristo. O'Donnell è arrivato a questi risultati valorizzando da una parte la tradizione cattolica, ma nello stesso tempo chiarendo con vigore che la nostra conoscenza analogica di Dio è radicata nel mistero pasquale. Se l'uomo e il mondo sono 'vestigium trinitatis', e lo sono realmente, è perchè Gesù di Nazaret è la parola perfetta del Padre o come direbbe von Balthasar "l'analogia dell'essere in persona".

Il contributo che il saggio in questione dà a quello che noi chiamiamo uno *strumento concettuale* fondamentale per la sistematica trinitaria, quello appunto dell'analogia (entis et fidei), risulta così di grande buon senso. Infatti dall'esposto del nostro autore risulta che l'analogia non è un prodotto del pensiero umano, che lo sforzo umano del concetto non è vano, che il linguaggio analogico è linguaggio di rivelazione e nascondimento, che porta ad arrenderci di fronte al Mistero. Ora proprio perché l'analogia dell'essere lascia che Dio sia Dio, mai catturabile, risulterà anche la sua insufficienza, infatti se questo Dio si è fatto vicino a noi in Cristo, se si è fatto uomo ed è giunto ad esprimersi in una vita umana, è evidente che è soltanto da un incontro sinergico di analogia entis et fidei che si può fondare un discorso trinitario.

II. PROSPETTIVE TRINITARIE DELL'ESISTENZA CRISTIANA

1. Il tema della prassi in senso trinitario

Abbiamo dato questo titolo agli ultimi tre cap. (8, 9, 10) del trattato sistematico di O'Donnell perché ci sembrava che essi rappresentassero un *secondo nucleo tematico* importante e per certi versi inedito nella sistematica trinitaria, *il rapporto cioè tra Trinità ed esistenza cristiana*.[48]

La provocazione kantina dell'astrattezza della dottrina trinitaria[49] potrebbe essere un motivo, ma non certo l'unico, nè quello principale, per lo svilupparsi di questa dimensione.

Così pure la provocazione marxista può avere influito nel reclamare dal cristianesimo il suo carattere di *prassi*. Ma ciò non tocca ancora il nocciolo

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47. ibid., 115.
48. A dire il vero questa sensibilità per il mistero trinitario nel suo rapporto alle altre dimensioni dell'esistenza cristiana è sentito fortemente dalla teologia odierna anche a livello di sistematica trinitaria: B. FORTE, *Trinità come storia. Saggio sul Dio cristiano* (Milano 1985) soprattutto la quarta parte; utili riferimenti anche nel n.monografico "La santa Trinità. Il mistero del Dio cristiano", di *Credere oggi*, VI (1986).
49. "Dalla dottrina trinitaria presa alla lettera non si può ricavare assolutamente nulla di pratico se si crede di capirla ed ancor meno se ci si accorge che essa trascende ogni nostro concetto" (cit. di Kant in O'Donnell, ibid., 129).

del problema: il rapporto si deve porre tra *dottrina su Dio in quanto Trinità e prassi*. E allora dobbiamo ammettere che il rinnovamento della metodologia in proposito ci viene da una *istanza cristologica*, cioè è la *prassi del Cristo* in quanto Figlio del Padre e donatore dello Spirito che genera la prassi del discepolo. È Gesù in quanto Persona della Trinità a provocare già all'interno della problematica teologica il problema della prassi. Si può dire quindi che: *la fede trinitaria genera una prassi cristiana trinitaria*

L'agire del cristiano in quanto singolo e comunità è scandito trinitariamente, poiché è proprio la storia trinitaria di Gesù Cristo ad essere paradigma continuo di confronto.

Le problematiche moderne presentate da Metz il qualche parla di *memoria pericolosa* di Gesù di Nazaret perché Colui che interviene nelle vicende umane dalla parte del povero, del reietto, dell'abbandonato da Dio,[50] oppure quelle così forti e provocatrici della teologia della liberazione,[51] non sono che stimolazioni per una messa a tema di una problematica già latente della teologia e della fede cristiana: il cristianesimo infatti o è monoteismo trinitario fin nelle sue conseguenze esistenziali – storiche o non è cristianesimo![52]

E ancora, se questo monoteismo non provoca nulla nella prassi del cristianesimo, perde il suo naturale riferimento ontologico al suo paradigma supremo: il mistero pasquale. Infatti la morte di Gesù non è stata la morte di uno tra i tanti martiri, ma la morte del Figlio di Dio fatto uomo, il quale si è identificato con i peccatori e ha fatto sua la condizione di "abbandonato da Dio". Se la morte di Cristo è stata la morte espiatrice di un Uomo risuscitato da Dio Padre, allora Gesù stesso è Dio, appartiene a Dio Trinità e la sorte dell'uomo, la sua lotta per la giustizia, la pace, la liberazione... sono scritte e vivono nella Trinità. "La resurrezione del Cristo crocifisso ci suggerisce la trasformazione della nostra comprensione di Dio. Perché se Gesù è risorto, allora Dio non lo ha abbandonato, piuttosto Dio era al suo fianco e prese le sue difese. Ma questo implica una comprensione più radicale del Dio dell'alleanza: Sulla croce noi vediamo in profondità il significato dell'identificazione di Dio con il povero, l'esiliato, il rifiutato, l'abbandonato da Dio. Ma se Dio si è identificato con il Cristo povero e rifiutato, questa identificazione ha implicazioni radicali per la nostra prassi di discepoli."[53]

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50. Le tesi di Metz vengono richiamate da O'Donnell a p. 130.
51. ibid., 131-137.
52. Chi ha ben sviluppato l'istanza del cristianesimo come *monoteismo trinitario* a confronto con gli altri monoteismi è stato A. MANARANCHE, *Le monothéisme chrètien* (Paris 1985) l'opera del quale è stata da me discussa criticamente anche nelle sue problematiche in possibile sviluppo nel saggio "Monoteismo cristiano come monoteismo trinitario", *Luteranum*, LV (1989) 208-257.
53. O'DONNELL, ibid., 133.

È evidente che il nostro autore non può a questo punto sottrarsi al confronto con le problematiche contemporanee generate prima dalla teologia politica, della speranza e poi della liberazione[54] e neppure da quelle problematiche proposte da Peterson sul *monoteismo come problema politico*,[55] sulle quali neanche noi vogliamo entrare non perché non siano importanti (o appetibili per un appassionato dibattito teologico!), ma seguendo sempre il taglio metodologico del nostro esposto, vogliamo evidenziare l'apporto personale di O'Donnell al tema. Per cui riteniamo importante richiamare qui, quei principi di prassi cristiana nella loro relazione a Dio che si rivelano nel mistero pasquale. Essi sono come il rispecchiamento e il vestigio del loro 'analogatum princeps', il mistero trinitario appunto. Li elenchiamo riassuntivamente.

– Anzitutto il primo di questi principi è *il valore trascendente della persona*. Se il modello è Dio-Trinità, mistero di comunione e di pienezza di vita, l'uomo come persona umana ha per vocazione e destino la salvezza integrale del suo essere che consiste nella salvezza definitiva, trascendente ed escatologica della comunione con la Trinità.

– Il secondo principio è la *socialità della persona umana*. Ciò che nel rapporto delle persone trinitarie è per essenza, qui lo è ancora per vocazione, è vissuto come tensione. L'annuncio trinitario della fede è la sconfitta di un certo illuminismo e borchesismo privatistico: la persona umana è essenzialmente *soggetto sociale*. Teologicamente parlando la ragione sta nel fatto che l'uomo è creato a immagine della Trinità, che è comunità perfetta dove le Tre divine Persone sono reciproca ed eterna autodonazione.

– Il terzo principio del personalismo trinitario conduce alla *prassi della solidarietà* sulla quale O'Donnell pone alcuni chiarimenti per non cadere negli equivoci di possibili interpretazioni marxiste.

– Così pure il quarto principio da lui enunciato con chiarezza che cioè l'impegno per la giustizia è intrinseco alla fede cristiana, riesce sempre ad essere spiegato correttamente. Infatti è concepire la giustizia non in senso privato o individualistico, ma incarnata in quelle strutture sociali che oggi causano le più gravi ingiustizie. Ma ancor più, l'icona della Trinità nella prassi per la giustizia va cercato nel "carattere trascendente della carità (che) indica che lo spirito umano da cui deriva la giustizia contiene risorse

54. Alle p. 134-136 si presentano più che altro le istanze della teologie della liberazione senza entrare di fatto in un discernimento critico della stesse.
55. Sono interessanti le valutazioni critiche di O'Donnell alle tesi ormai famose di Peterson (pp. 136-137); esse trovano consenso anche presso altri autori come abbiamo esposto nel nostro "Monoteismo cristiano come monoteismo trinitario", pp. 235-237.

di umanità ancor più profonde".[56] Ora "la trascendenza della carità" cos'altro è se non la sovrabbondanza dell'amore delle Tre Persone divine?

2. *Fede trinitaria e preghiera trinitaria*

Abbiamo interpretato il cap. 9 sulla *preghiera trinitaria* dell'opera in esame, nell'ambito di quello che noi abbiamo definito "Prospettive trinitarie dell'esistenza cristiana", perché ci sembra che esso ben si innesti nell'impianto strutturale di ciò che rappresenta la prassi cristiana. Infatti la preghiera è la *fede esplicitata* dove tutte le facoltà intellettuali, affettive, interiori ed esteriori si esprimono. È una novità che va salutata con piacere, che si parli di *struttura trinitaria della preghiera* in un trattato dogmatico sulla Trinità. Infatti è proprio nella preghiera che in modo primigenio noi scopriamo e viviamo la fede trinitaria. Dal punto di vista poi della spiritualità soprattutto degli ultimi secoli, è ben noto quanto sia stata carente l'educazione alla preghiera trinitaria nel popolo di Dio.

Qui si vuole illustrare la dinamica trinitaria della preghiera la quale è *rivolgersi al Padre, per il Figlio, nello Spirito*.

Così è la preghiera perché così è la dinamica della divina rivelazione, perché così è la vita del cristiano, infatti la vita del cristiano nel mondo non è altro che un orientarsi al Padre, ttraverso il Figlio, nello Spirito Santo.

O'Donnell fonda le sue argomentazioni nell'analisi (sempre analogica si intende) dell'essere di Dio in se stesso. Nella Trinità immanente il Padre è il puro rivolgersi, è *l'Archè espansivo* che si esprime nella *Parola* cioè nel Figlio, che è a sua volta il TU perfetto rivolto all'IO, che è appunto il Padre.

Il mondo, l'umanità, la persona singola, fanno parte di un grande viaggio al Padre che è sempre mediato dal Figlio nella sua umanità. L'umanità del Cristo è il sacramento che ci conduce al Padre. L'uomo attraverso la preghiera entra vitalmente nel Sacramento-Cristo che è Parola del Padre, attraverso la Scrittura e ciò che essa ci ispira. L'essenza del pregare consiste allora nell'*essere recettivi alla Parola*, aprire il cuore alla Parola come Maria,[57] e aprirsi alla mozione interiore dello *Spirito Santo il quale è la condizione di possibilità di ogni preghiera che sia cristiana, perciò trinitaria*.

Lo Spirito Santo ha una duplice funazione nella preghiera. Egli si rivolge a noi perché ci fa conoscere *in modo pneumatico* il Cristo e nello

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56. ibid., 143.
57. È importante la precisazione di O'Donnell che la vera vita mistica si fonda sulla Parola di Dio. Una vita di preghiera che trascuri la Parola non è preghiera cristiana e quindi non è preghiera trinitaria: "il cristianesimo è una fede fondata sulla incarnazione e perciò qualsiasi preghiera che pensa di trascurare la Parola di Dio non è autentica" (p. 149).

stesso tempo lo Spirito Santo è Colui che *rende possibile dentro di noi la nostra risposta alla Parola*. Lo spirito Santo ci schiude le profondità della vita divina e nello stesso tempo suscita in noi la nostra apertura nei confronti della Parola.

Ma c'è di più. Lo Spirito Santo è Colui che ci fa entrare nel *circuito stesso della vita trinitaria*, cioè nella grande circolazione di amore tra il Figlio e il Padre nello Spirito.

La nostra preghiera è così icona e conseguenza della "grande preghiera" che 'ab aeterno' si svolge nella Trinità Santa, è *partecipazione* dell'Amore del Padre verso il Figlio, sua Parola, che diventa vivente in noi per mezzo dello Spirito.

Il 'pellegrinaggio della preghiera' come lo chiama O'Donnell,[58] conduce sempre alla esperienza trinitaria della preghiera anche quando il punto di riferimento è la preghiera sacerdotale di Gesù (Gv 17), dove la dossologia è sì pregare e glorificare il Padre; ma la mutua immanenza del discepolo in Gesù e di Gesù nel Padre non è semplice *binitarismo*, perché è sempre lo Spirito ad essere la condizione di possibilità della presenza di Gesù in noi. Nel discorso dell'Ultima Cena lo Spirito non è mai assente perché tutta la seconda parte del Vangelo di Giovanni parla del Paraclito e il rimanere in Cristo e nel Padre è legato alla presenza dello Spirito dentro di noi.[59]

Anche la preghiera per eccellenza che è l'Eucharestia è *evento trinitario*, e in questo senso è inquadrata dal nostro autore: "Il fine della Santa Comunione non è solo un condividere in senso fisico il corpo di Cristo. Lo scopo è la divinizzazione del credente, l'unione del credente con il Padre attraverso Cristo e l'unione dei credenti tra loro. Il frutto dell'Eucarestia è l'unione del corpo mistico. L'Eucarestica può produrre tutti questi effetti desiderati solo attraverso l'azione dello Spirito Santo."[60]

3. *Il mondo visto trinitariamente*

Una delle dimensioni che non possono essere disattese nella sistematica trinitaria è quella del rapporto tra mondo e Trinità.

È difficile dire se questa sia tra le prime o ultime dimensioni da evolvere. In fondo abbiamo visto in questo nostro studio che questo problema è anche quello iniziale, soprattutto quando l'approccio al tema

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58. Egli descrive alcune tappe della preghiera (preghiera orale, dell'intelletto, della vita, del silenzio, del cuore...) alle pp. 150-151 così come altri autori contemporanei. Si tratta di modi multiformi e spesso convergenti di presentare gli itinerari di preghiera!
59. ibid., 153.
60. ibid., 157.

era visto sotto il segno del teismo filosofico, esso era più semplicemente titolato come rapporto mondo-Dio. Ma la prospettiva del teismo filosofico è insufficiente in una trattazione sistematica trinitaria, infatti il mondo va inteso come *creazione e Dio come il Dio cristiano trinitario*, non solo come Entità Unipersonale. Se il mondo non è inteso come creazione e Dio come l'Amore del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo, difficilmente si può intendere il *mondo come dono e gratuità*.[61] A ben vedere questa era anche la prospettiva di s.Bonaventura e di s.Tommaso, il quale concepiva la creazione come causata dalle processioni della persone divine. Il luogo della creazione è la vita trinitaria stessa. "Non c'è un 'fuori' rispetto alla Trinità. Non c'è nulla di esterno alla vita trinitaria. Così il luogo della creazione deve essere inquadrato nelle relazioni intratrinitarie.... Padre e Figlio esistono in una perfetta 'diastasis'. Comunque dal momento che l'offerta del Padre è perfettamente accettata dal Figlio, la 'diastasis' è superata dallo Spirito Santo. Lo Spirito Santo come legame di amore, svolge il ruolo di tenere distinti e collegare i termini della diastasis tra il Padre e il Figlio. Proprio questa 'diastasis' è il luogo della creazione".[62]

4. *Conclusioni:... e punti fermi*

Alla fine del suo studio O'Donnell non poteva non toccare alcuni punti di grande attualità. La nostra personale impressione e la nostra valutazione globale è che il nostro autore si sia sforzato in tutta la sua opera di dimostrare come il trattato sistematico di teologia trinitaria debba saper *superare sempre i blocchi di una visione ancora poco cristiana e trinitaria di Dio*. Egli, e non è certo un gioco di parole(!), ha voluto cristianizzare sempre più l'immagine di Dio mostrando le debolezze di un certo teismo filosofico nel quale Dio non è di fatto toccato dal mondo e dalle grandi sofferenze. È per questo che il suo studio si chiude con la questione posta da Jungel, Baltahasar e tanti altri *riguardo l'essere e il divenire in Dio*.

Vorremmo, a mò di sintesi, quasi a tesi schematiche, presentare alcuni *punti fermi* sui quali assentire ed anche.... *andare oltre per contribuire alla metodologia della sistematica trinitaria*. Abbiamo dato molto rilievo al lavoro di O'Donnell perché esso ci ha fornito l'occasione di mettere in luce molte esigenze della odierna trattazione sistematica.

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61. Rimanendo anche in una prospettiva filosofica di ispirazione tomista, ma aperta, riteniamo questo discorso ancor più valido. Se infatti l'essere del mondo viene concepito nella sua *relazionalità* non necessitata, esso è inteso come *dono e gratiutà* e invoca quindi il suo radicamento in ciò che non è necessitato da nessuno, ma è capace di effondersi nel dono senza misura. Non si capisce perciò l'ostinazione di chi non ammetta che questo discorso filosofico è già di fatto implicitamente cristiano, infatti esso trova il suo significato più pieno solo perché fecondato dal cristianesimo! Evidentemente dire "effusione di dono senza misura" è già invocare ed anelare a ciò che di fatto la Rivelazione ci ha detto: cioè il Dio Unico e Trinità.
62. ibid., 160.

– Da un punto di vista *metodologico strutturale* il presente lavoro ha messo in evidenza che la trattazione sistematica trinitaria va evoluta come *sintesi organica* della fede della Chiesa sul mistero centrale del cristianesimo e questo sia dal punto di vista del sapere teologico che della prassi credente.

– Considerando le questioni più centrali in riferimento soprattutto al superamento di una concezione di Dio nel senso della Sostanza, risultano alcuni *punti fermi* molto importanti: Dio va pensato sempre alla luce del mistero pasquale dove Egli si identifica con la vita, morte e resurrezione di Gesù. Dio quindi si identifica con un evento temporale. L'essere di Dio è perciò in relazione con la storia. Non si può di fatto pensare Dio separatamente dall'essere storico di Gesù Cristo, il quale al tempo stesso appartiene all'essere eterno di Dio. Nello stesso tempo....

– Il mistero pasquale non è evento storico nel senso di una misurazione nel tempo dell'essere della Trinità: se noi affermassimo questo, di fatto scadremmo in una interpretazione hegeliana-dialettica dell'essere della Trinità. Dire che la Trinità è la chiave ermeneutica per comprendere il mistero della croce e quindi il mistero di Dio non significa quantizzare l'essere di Dio, ma significa dire che a livello 'economico' avviene ciò che (per analogia) noi diciamo avviene nella Trinità, cioè che "l'essere di Dio deve essere compreso come movimento, come venuta da Dio, a Dio, come Dio, ossia come movimento dal Padre al Figlio nello Spirito Santo. Questo movimento eterno, o venuta, costituisce il fondamento della venuta di Dio a noi, e per questo la fede cristiana osa dire che l'essere di Dio è storico. Nell'atto libero e gratuito della rivelazione, l'essere di Dio è divenuto 'l'evento' della nostra salvezza".[63]

– La relazione del mondo rispetto a Dio non si gioca in termini quantitativi. Il mondo e l'uomo non aggiungono niente all'essere di Dio, ma quando la creazione si lascia partecipare della libertà e della potenza di Dio, anch'essa vive in quel circolo dinamico di amore tra il Padre e il Figlio nello Spirito che è ricchezza sempre inesauribile e crescente, e allora come giustamente conclude O'Donnell ciò che Dio riceve dal mondo non può dirsi secondo una risposta proveniente dal teismo filosofico, ma va cercata nel Dio cristiano, Dio-Amore: il mondo restituisce, in un certo senso, alla Trinità quanto di divino come gratuità e Amore, ma anche qui sempre nel segno della donazione spontanea e feconda.

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63. ibid., 169.

OUTLINES OF THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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Part two: Grammatical exegesis and christology in St. Augustine

Part one analysed Augustine's knowledge and usage of the word *persona* and its connections to the grammatical exegesis, which eventually led up to the surmise, that this technique could well have shaped his christology and notion of the *una persona Christi*. Part two will try to prove the accuracy of this assumption by analysing a number of texts, which show the development of Augustine's theology from the grammatical notion of *persona* to the formula *Christus una persona*, and then demonstrate, how the newly found formula became the cardinal point for all his future christology.

1. The transition of *persona* from its grammatical meaning to a term of identity

a. Sermo 288

The first text is taken from Augustine's homily 288, pronounced on June 24th, 401, on the feast of St. John the Baptist.[67] Augustine explains there the relationship of John the Baptist to Jesus Christ, starting from the following linguistic argument. Any word, that man is about to utter, exists before being spoken as a notion in his mind. Only afterwards it will be

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67. *S* 288, 4-5 (*PL* 38, 1306-1307). Cf. Geerlings (note 2) 101-103.

expressed by means of the voice and thus become audible. When a man therefore speaks, the word itself precedes the voice. Regarding the audience it is just the other way. They hear the voice first and then comprehend the word. The relation between John and Christ, says Augustine, can be compared to the relation of word and voice. John is the voice, Christ the word. Being the word, Christ existed in God before John came into being. But in relation to men (as audience) Christ the word came after John the voice. John, Augustine explains further by means of the grammatical exegesis, took upon himself the person of all voices before him, which already had proclaimed the coming of the word ("personam gerebat Ioannes vocis in sacramento"). John is the voice in person, which is a *sacramentum*, a mystery and a representation at the same time.

The expression *personam gerere* is clearly a formula of identification. John is not only speaking, he is not only using his voice, he himself is the voice of all the prophets up to him in person. This is no longer a purely exegetical use of *persona*, but rather a metaphysical one. And Augustine continues: "O what a great and wonderful mystery! Behold the person of the voice, in which all those voices were represented and that said about the person of the Word: He must increase, but I must decrease." Here the parallel of John the voice and Christ the Word is extended to John the person of the voice and consequently Christ the person of the word. At this point, however, "person of the Word" is no longer an exegetical term, but a theological, christological one.

The development of the word *persona* from an exegetical meaning to the concept of identity and unity begins by using the expression *personam gerere* not only as an exegetical term but by applying it to John the Baptist representing the voice in his person. This meaning is consequently transferred to Christ the Word, wherefore *persona Verbi* becomes there an expression of identity, too. Augustine does not yet arrive at using the term *persona* in the sense of describing the unity of manhood and deity in Christ, but he has already got the elements to do so, as the following context shows.

He continues to discuss nothing else if not the problem of the unity of God and man in Christ. The Word of God, he says, was with God in the beginning (cf. *Jn* 1,1) and God equal in form (*forma dei* – cf. *Ph* 2,6). This Word revealed himself to mankind in the form of a slave (*forma servi* – *Ph* 2,7). Nevertheless he stays identical with himself and loses nothing of his similarity to his Father, so that in Christ the Father, too, is manifest (*Jn* 14,8-9). Augustine here discusses the problem of the unity of God and man in Christ and his permanent godhead and similarity to the Father, i.e. the identity of Christ and the preexisting Son of God, not yet using the term persona to solve this problem, but already in the context of *persona* as a

notion of unity and identity. And he resumes this passage: "John, therefore, is the person of all voices, the person of the Word is Christ".

b. *De trinitate* 12

The second text that makes clear how the exegetical term *persona* became a metaphysical one, is to be found in book 12 of *De trinitate*.[68] It cannot be established with certainty, if this passage as preserved was compiled before or after 411, as books 1-12 were published before 412, while the entire Treatise on the Trinity was not however, edited until 420.[69]

Augustine explains *Gn* 1,26 f. "Let us make man in our own image and likeness (ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram). So God created man in the image of God" and states above all the simple grammatical fact, that the plural *nostram* indicates clearly, that man is not created only in the image of one of the persons of the Trinity, but of the entire Trinity.[70] "It would certainly be incorrect to say 'our', because it is a plural number, if man were made in the image of one person, whether of the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit." It is fairly evident here that the use of *persona* passes from grammar to theology. If one disentangles the different steps made by St. Augustine, he states at first that *nostram* is a plural number. From this he concludes that there is expressed a plural number of subjects, of grammatical persons. Finally he asks who are the subjects (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and calls them the "persons of the Trinity". This last step, calling them persons of the Trinity, leaves behind the grammatical meaning of *persona* and takes up a rather theological one. Here it becomes quite clear, how grammatical and theological use of *persona* are intimately connected.

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68. *Trin* 12, 6, 6-7 (*CChr.SL* 50, 360, 1-362, 62). Translation by S. McKenna: *FaCh* 45 (1970 = 1963) 347-350.

69. For the dating of *De trinitate* cf. *Sant'Agostino, La Trinità. Introduzione* (A. Trapè e M. F. Sciacca), (traduzione G. Beschin) (= Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana 4; Rome 1973) XVI-XVIII; A. Trapè, *S. Agostino: Patrologia*, vol. III, *Dal Concilio di Nicea (325) al Concilio di Calcedonia* (451). *I Padri latini* (a cura di A. di Berardino con una presentazione di J. Quasten) (Rome 1978) 351; H. J. Frede, *Kirchenschriftsteller. Verzeichnis der Sigel* (= VL 1/1) (Freiburg ^{3}1981) 156; W. J. Mountain/Fr. Glorie: *CChr.SL* 50 (1968) LXXXIII: M. Mellet/Th. Camelot, note 2: BAug 15 (1955) 557-566.

70. Cf. a similar passage in *Gn litt* 3, 19 (*CSEL* 28/1, 85, 16-86, 4 Zycha). For Augustine's theology of man as the image of God cf. M. Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des Hl. Augustinus* (= *MBTh* 11), (München 1927) 195-200; E. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin* (= EPhM 11), (Paris ^{3}1949) 286-298; G. Bardy, note 51: *BAug* 10 (1952) 730 f.; H. Merki, "Ebenbildlichkeit": *RAC* 4 (1959) 475; R. A. Markus, "'Imago' et 'similitudo' in Augustine": *REAug* 10 (1964) 125-143; A. Solignac, "Image et ressemblance", II. B, "Dans la patristique latine": *DSp* 7/2 (1971) 1418-1420; P. Agaësse, notes 15-16: *BAug* 48 (1972) 622-633; A. Trapè/M. Sciacca: *NBA* 4 (1973) XXXVIII-XL.

It is indeed a trinitarian example, but we shall soon see that for Augustine, especially as regards the terminological development, Trinity and christology are inseparable. For he goes on to reject the current opinion that "in the image of God" should mean "in the image of the Son", as "God" is explicitly repeated: "God created man in the image of God" (*Gn* 1,27 LXX). Otherwise one would have said: "in his own image".[71] Augustine shows instead, that even when the Scriptures obviously speak of one person of the Trinity only, the forms of address can vary in the very same sentence. E.g. *Ps* 17,30 "by thee I can crush a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall" or *Ps* 44,6 "in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you". Eventually he draws upon testimonies of the New Testament and cites *Rm* 1,3 f.: "Concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." This passage induces Augustine to embark on a systematic explanation of the one Lord Jesus Christ: "For what is the Son of God, predestinated by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, if not the same Jesus Christ who was predestinated the Son of God in power? Therefore, just as when we hear here: "The Son of God in the power of Jesus Christ', or 'The Son of God according to the spirit of sanctification of Jesus Christ', or 'The Son of God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead', when he could have said in the customary way 'in his power', or 'according to the spirit of His sanctification', or 'by the resurrection from His death', or 'from their dead'. we are not compelled to understand another person (*intellegere aliam personam*), but the one and the same person (*sed unam eandemque*), the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ; so when we hear: 'God made man to the image of God', although it could have been said, according to the more common usage, 'to His image', yet we are not compelled to understand another person in the Trinity (*aliam personam intellegere in trinitate*), but the one and the same Trinity itself, who is the one God, and to whose image man has been made."

Here again we have the same double meaning of *persona* both in a trinitarian context and in a christological context. Would it be surprising then, if St. Augustine did pass from this clearly grammatical statement that the different sons Paul speaks of form only one subject, to the statement that the two Sons, begotten by the Father before the aeons and the Son born

71. Augustine argues e. g. against Philo of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Athanasius. Cf. Merki (note 70) 466 f. He himself, however, supported the same view in earlier writings: *diu qu* 51, 4 (*CCL* 44 A, 81, 70-72 Mutzenbecher): "neque inscite distinguitur, quod aliud sit imago et similitudo dei, qui etiam filius dicitur, aliud ad imaginem et similitudinem dei, sicut hominem factum accipimus." Cf. Schmaus (note 70) 197; Merki (note 70) 467.

by Mary are one and the same subject, one and the same person, *una persona*?

c. *Enchiridion*

The third text that carries the development even further was written roughly ten years later: ch. 14 of the *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate*, compiled between 421 and 423.[72] Augustine explains there *Ps* 2,7 in connection with the baptism of Christ in the Jordan: "Hence, too, those words of the Father spoken over Him at His baptism: *This day have I begotten thee*, pointed not to that one day in time on which He was baptized, but to that of changeless eternity, to show us that this man was identical with the person of the Only-Begotten (ad unigeniti personam pertinere monstraret)". *Ad personam pertinere* is clearly a term of the grammatical exegesis,[73] but here it obviously expresses the metaphysical unity of the man Jesus with the only begotten Son of God. The exegetical and the christological meaning of *ad personam pertinere* merge into one another.

d. *Contra Maximinum*

This surmised transition is confirmed by a text in *Contra Maximinum*, written another five years later (427/28).[74] It discusses one of the vital issues of the Arian controversy, the relationship of Father and Son, i.e. their equality resp. subordination. Maximinus refers to two quotations from the book of Psalms in order to proof the subordination of the Son under the Father, using himself the means of grammatical exegesis: *Ps* 21,11: from my mother's womb you have been my God" (the Son addressing the Father) and *Ps* 109,3: "from the womb before the drawn I have begotten thee" (said by the Father to the Son).

Augustine argues against this exegesis that in *Ps* 21,11 it is not the Son who is speaking (non enim est Filii persona dicentis) as the substance of the begetter and the begotten is always the same. Therefore the Son must be equally God as he was begotten by God Father and he is man at the same time because he was born by Mary. Regarding *Ps* 109,3 Augustine concedes that this verse could be attributed to God Father, but "either the prophet speaks himself (*ex persona sua*) or he speaks on behalf of the Father (*ex persona Patris ad Filium*)". If so, one must nevertheless avoid applying

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72. *Ench* 14, 49 (*CChr.SL* 46, 76, 14-17). Translation by L. A. Arand: *ACW* 3 (1947) 54.
73. Cf. e. g. *b coniug* 10, 11 (*CSEL* 41, 203, 7 Zycha); *b uid* 1, 1 (*CSEL* 41, 305, 12 Zycha).
74. *C Max* 1, 7 (*PL* 42, 749 f.).

human conceptions to the "womb of God". For as the Father is immaterial the Son must be immaterial, too, as he was begotten from the substance of the Father.

This text shows quite clearly that even a few years before the death of St. Augustine the notion of *persona* in christology is still conceived both in its grammatical and metaphysical meaning at the same time. Determining the persons speaking in the Psalms citied the basic question of grammatical exegesis is answered: "Who speak? (quis dicit?)". The application of the expressions *persona Filii* and *persona Patris* to the problem of the two natures (substances) in Christ, however, transfers the terminology to a metaphysical context.

2. *Christus una persona*

So far we have tried to discover how the grammatical exegesis influenced the development of the new christological formula of the *una persona* and could even show quite exactly how the transition from an exegetical notion of *persona* to a metaphysical one was operated. We will now see what effects this new detection had on the christology of St. Augustine, which problems he is not able to solve, in which contexts he used the formula, and understand perhaps, whi this new conception became thus important up to the present day. I should like to do that again by means of a few key-texts of his from the *Epistula* 137, *Sermo* 186, *Contra sermonem Arianorum*, the *Enchiridion* and *De dono perseverantiae*.

a. *Epistula* 137

St. Augustine became a bishop in 392, and then at the latest he began to think theologically and think about the person and work of Christ. It took him, however, not less than twenty years to arrive at the *una persona*. The first time he mentions it is in his Letter 137, addressed to the proconsul of Africa, Volusianus, in the year 411/12.[75] The proconsul asked Augustine to teach him the Christian faith and Augustine answered by this letter, above

75. *Ep* 137, 9-11 (*CSEL* 44, 108, 13-110, 11). Rufius Antonius Agrypnius Volusianus was proconsul of Africa before 412, *Quaestor sacri palatii* before 412, 411/12 he stayed in Carthage, November 417 till the middle of 418 he was *Praefectus urbis Romae*, 428-429 *Praefecuts praetorio Italiae et Africae*, in 436 he travelled to Constantinople, where he was baptised at the beginning of 437 and died on January 6th, 437. Cf. Martindale (note 13) II 1184 f.; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétiene (303-533)*, II (= *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, 1), (Paris 1982) 1228.

all, of course, explaining the mystery of Christ. Christ, he says, appeared as mediator between God and man in this way, that he united in his personal unity both natures (in unitate personae copulans utramque naturam). These two natures, however are not of the same rank, so that there was operated a parallel process of mutual approach from each side. The natural part, i.e. manhood, is elevated by the supernatural. But in an opposite movement the supernatural part, i.e. divinity, is mitigated by the natural ("ut solita sublimaret insolitis et insolita solitis temperaret"). With this explanation the basic problem of how those different natures can be united is touched upon. For it is not sufficient to find a new formula and be able to state the fact of the unity of manhood and deity in Christ. One will ask as a consequence, how this unity could be achieved. Above all Augustine presupposes that the Word remained unaltered from the beginning and was not turned into flesh. The changeable man is allowed to approach the unchangeable God, but God does not part with his very essence ("homo quippe deo accessit, non deus a se recessit"). In order to make clear the mode of unity, Augustine uses the comparison of the unity of body and soul in man for the first time, which he most probably adopted from the neoplatonist Porphyrios.[76] God and man are joined in one person like soul and body, so that man is called one person ("does homini permixtus sit, ut una fieret persona Christi, ... quo modo misceatur anima corpori, ut una persona fiat hominis"). The relationship of both parts is described as "making use of": in Christ God makes use of man, in man the soul makes use of the body. In this mixture, however, both parts do not lose their specific characteristics like in a mixture of two liquids, but stay themselves like light and air, when the sun shines.

The comparison of soul and body to deity and manhood in Christ, which is taken from neoplatonic doctrine, is in so far a very suitable choice as already there the soul was considered pre-eminent over the body as the godhead is over the manhood. Nonetheless Augustine will not repeat this model very often (only three times),[77] which shows the rather small

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76. Cf. E. L. Fortin, *Christianisme et culture philosophique au cinquième siècle. La querelle de l'âme humaine en occident*, (Paris 1959) 113-128; Newton, *Thesis* (note 7) 72-75, 84 f., 89, 102, 108 f. and *passim*; id., "The Importance of Augustine's use of the Neoplatonic Doctrine of Hypostatic Union for the Development of Christology": *AugSt* 2 (1971)3.

77. *Ep* 169, 2, 8 (*CSEL* 44, 617, 14-17), *gr nou t* 4, 12 (*CSEL* 44, 164, 10-13); *Io eu tr* 19, 15 (*CChr.SL* 36, 199, 25-31). Cf. van Bavel (note 3) 30-32; T. J. van Bavel/B. Bruning, "Die Einheit des 'Totus Christus' bei Augustinus": *Scientia Augustiniana. Studien über Augustinus, den Augustinismus und den Augustinerorden* (Festschrift A. Zumkeller), (ed. C. P. Mayer and W. Eckermann), (= Cassiciacum 30), (Würzburg 1975) 46-55; A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, (London-Oxford ²1975) 409-413.

influence of neo-platonic doctrine on his christology. He will never again use the vocabulary of mixture and intermingling either, nor that of the "making use" of the body resp. manhood. It seems to have been clear to him that this first attempt of describing the unity in Christ run too great a risk of misinterpretation. What he will keep is the *una persona*, the theology of the soul as mediator between God and man and the concept of unity on the basis of the natures of Christ.

In fact, from 411 on, the *una persona* appears like a magic formula to all the christological problems Augustine has to cope with. This might be made apparent by the four following texts, which progressively display St. Augustine's christology after 411.

b. *Sermo* 186

The Christmas Sermon in the Augustinian Corpus numbered 186, was held virtually in the same year 411/12 when Letter 137 was written.[78] At the very beginning of the sermon Augustine speaks about the virgin birth of Christ: "Abiding with His Father, He made for Himself a mother; and when he was made in the womb of His mother, He remained in the heart of His Father. ... Precisely so, because the Word was made flesh, the Word did not become flesh by ceasing to be; on the contrary, the flesh, lest it should cease to be, was joined to the Word, so that, just as man is body and soul, Christ might be God and man. The very same who is God is man, too, and the very same who is man is God, too, not in confusion of nature, but in the unity of a person ("idem Deus qui homo, et qui Deus idem homo: non confusione naturae, sed unitate personae"). In short, it was one and the same who from all time and forever is the Son of God begotten of the Father, who began to be the Son of man by His birth of the Virgin. And thus, too, was human nature added to the Son's divine nature. Yet the result was not a quaternity of persons, but the Trinity remains."[79]

Four theological problems surrounding christology is Augustine able to solve here by the *una persona*:

1) The question, how the Son of God in his incarnation both stays with the Father, being God himself, and abides on earth, being true man, without dividing himself into two Sons: namely by the unity of person.

2) To explain, how this incarnation is operated, Augustine quotes *Jn* 1,14 "Verbum caro factum est", but the flesh is lifted up to the word in the unity of person.

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78. Cf. P.-P. Verbraken, *Études critiques sur les sermons authentiques de saint Augustin* (= TP 12), (Steenbrugge 1976) 98.
79. *S* 186, 1, 1 (*PL* 38, 999). Translation by Th. C. Lawler: *ACW* 15 (1952) 80 f.

3) Christ is coeternal to the Father being the Son of God and has a beginning in time being Son of man, but as these two sons represent not two persons, but two natures, the one person of Christ is not endangered.

4) Therefore the manhood of Christ is not added to the Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a fourth person, as it forms a single person with the Son.

The basic problem, that has to be solved is the safeguarding of the reality and integrity of the double nature of Christ, without dividing him into two separate sons. This must be maintained above all against the Arians.

c. *Contra sermonem Arianorum*

Partly the same, partly new problems are dealt with in the *Contra sermonem Arianorum*.[80] Augustine there refutes a *Sermo Arianorum*[81] passage after passage and eventually arrives at the exegesis of *Jn* 6,38 "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me". This quotation, Augustine explains, reflects the two natures of Christ. Being God Christ has the same will as the Father, but being man and mediator he does the will of the Father. "Because he is a double substance, but one person, the 'I have come down from heaven' points to the majesty of God, the 'not to do my own will', however, to the obedience as man. For Christ is both, God and man." Here we have got the same problem of the double nature, but under the new aspect of the double and yet unique will of Christ.

Ro 5,19: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" leads again to the question of the two sons. Because here obviously "man" must mean two different persons. The first man is Adam, the second Christ. If the notion of "man" would be the same, Christ would be only a sinner like Adam. Therefore Augustine distinguishes: "The one and the same Christ is Son of God by nature, and Son of man by his grace. And his manhood has not been created first and then accepted, but by his very acceptance it was created. Therefore, because of the unity of person in two natures it can be said that the Son of man descended from heaven, though he was born of the Virgin. And it can be said, that the Son of God was crucified and buried, though he did not suffer according to his deity, but in the weakness of his human nature". This position is confirmed by *Jn* 3,13 "No one has

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80. *C s Arian* 7-9 (*PL 42, 688-690*).
81. *PL* 42, 677-684.

ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven" and *1 Co* 2,8 "None of the masters of this age have ever known Him; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory".

Here it is again the problem of the two sons, but again under new aspects. Christ is Son of God by nature, Son of man through his own grace. He creates the man Jesus by accepting him into the personal unity with his godhead and because of this initial and inseparable unity the *communicatio idiomatum* is necessary.

d. *Enchiridion*

In the *Enchiridion*, the manual of Christian Faith, Hope, and Charity, compiled about ten years after the original discovery of the formula *una persona*, Augustine's christological language and concepts are more precise and dense than ever before.[82] For in the *Enchiridion* his task is not the defence against heretical attacks, but rather the concise and systematical display of the positive Catholic faith. Before entering into christology, Augustine had treated the creation and fall of mankind. Then he spoke about Christ as mediator between God and man, and then he consequently goes on to explain the double nature of Christ in one person: "Wherefore, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is both God and man. He is God before all ages, man in our own time. He is God because He is the Word of God, for *the Word was God* (*Jn* 1,1). But He is man because in His own Person there were joined to the Word a rational soul and a body ("homo autem quia in unitatem personae accessit verbo anima rationalis et caro"). Therefore, so far as He is God, He and the Father are one; but so far as He is man, the Father is greater than He. Since he was the only Son of God, not by grace but by nature, in order that He should also be full of grace. He became likewise the son of man; one and the selfsame Christ results from the union of both. For, *being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be* what He was by nature, that is, *equal with God; but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant* (*Ph* 2,6 f.), neither losing nor diminishing the form of God. And thus He became less and still remained equal, being both in one, as has been said. In the one instance this was because He was the Word; in the other, because He became man. As the Word He is equal to the Father; as man He is less. The one Son of God, He is at the same time Son of man; the one Son of man, he is at the same time Son of God. Being

82. *Ench* 10, 35-11, 36 (*CChr.SL* 46, 69, 48-70, 30). Translation by L. A. Arand: *ACW* 3 (1947) 43.

God and man did not make Him two sons of God, but one Son of God: God without beginning, man with a definite beginning – our Lord Jesus Christ."

To this very concise exposition of the two sons, the two natures, their attributes and the new argument of the *kenosis*, Augustine adds in ch. 36 a completely new kind of question, which was prompted by a new heresy he had to cope with: Pelagianism. How did mankind earn the grace of the incarnation of the Lord as one person in two natures. Pelagius and his followers considered the merits of each man as earning the grace of God and the consequent salvation of this man. Augustine refutes this position referring to the example of Christ himself. If Pelagius was right, there would have to have been the man Jesus first, who by his extraordinary merits deserved to be united to the Son of God. If, however, we accept the personal unity of both, they can't ever have been separated, but the man Jesus must have been united to the Son of God at his very creation. And then man is united to God only through the overwhelming and undeserved grace of God, granted freely without any merits on the part of man. This position is certainly right in so far it explains the reason for the incarnation of the Lord, but it will lead Augustine into severe problems with the monks of Hadrumetum and Marsiglia and eventually to Semipelagianism, as the rôle of human merits in the achievement of his salvation is not clearly defined because of the sole intention to combat Pelagianism.

Here, however, we notice again, that Augustine's theology and especially his christology never was an academical subject to him, but always developed on the grounds of practical needs: to defend his community against heretical doctrines. This becomes even clearer in the last text we are going to consider.

e. *De dono perseverantiae*

In this relatively short text Augustine explicitly mentions the heretics he is fighting: Arianism, Apolinarianism, Manichaeism and Photianism.[83] "For we do not say that Christ is God only, as the heretical Manichaeans do; nor man only, as the heretical Photinians; nor man in such a manner that He lacks something which is essential to human nature, that is, either the soul, or the rational faculty in that soul ... as the heretical Apolinarists." Augustine does not mention the Arians by name, but as he continues to

83. *Perseu* 24, 67 (*PL* 45, 1033 f.). Translation by M. A. Lesousky, *The De Dono Perseverantiae of Saint Augustine. A Translation with an Introduction and a Commentary* (= *PatSt* 91), (Washington D.C. 1956) 213-215.

show the equality of the Son of God with the Father, and his inequality being man, he clearly aims at Arianism. I.e. the newly found formula puts Augustine into a position to define the Catholic faith against all heteredox sects. The concept of the *una persona* makes it possible to think of two complete substances (natures) being genuinely united, as the unity is not achieved on the level of natures, but in one person.

Conclusion

With these texts the most important features of Augustine's *persona* christology have been mentioned, though a large number of similar texts could be adduced:

- *Jn* 1,14: *Verbum caro factum est* = *verbum homo factum est*.
- Unity of person of the two sons of God and man (*Jn* 3,13 no one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man).
- *Communicatio idiomatum*.
- *Christus mediator*.
- The relationship of Father and Son.
- The problem of a quaternity.

That this new concept would offer the solutions to the problems of christology which will be generally accepted in the future, Augustine could already sense himself towards the end of his life in the controversy about the Gallian monk Leporius. This, however, I shall reserve for the conclusion of the third part of this article as an outlook after the exposition of christological concepts prior and contemporary to St. Augustine, which might help to understand how he eventually arrived at his formula *Christus una persona*.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph FARRUGIA, *The Church and the Muslims. The Church's Consideration of Islam and the Muslims in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council* (Media Centre; Malta 1988) 88 pp.

Next year will see the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the conciliar document *Nostra Aetate,* the Catholic Church's first ever official statement on relations with the followers of other religions. Fr Farrugia's study is therefore very timely. He has extracted for publication three chapters of the doctoral dissertation that he successfully presented to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He wisely does not confine himself to an examination of *Nostra Aetate,* but considers this text in relationship with other conciliar documents, particularly the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *(Lumen Gentium),* but also the Pastoral Constitution *(Gaudium et Spes),* the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *(Ad Gentes),* and others. On the other hand, as the title indicates, the focus of his book is relationship with Muslims.

The author proceeds by way of three careful steps. He first makes clear the theological framework in which the Council's affirmations on Islam are to be seen. The Council's understanding of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation points to the larger reality of God's universal salvific will, and God's activity in the world, and thus also in peoples and cultures, through Word and Spirit. Nevertheless, because sin is as it were interwoven into the texture of this world, values that can be perceived stand in need of redemption and elevation, and will only reach their perfection in eschatological fulness. In a final paragraph the author sums up this chapter with what he terms "a brief conciliar statement on Muslims", in other words an application of the principles to the case of Islam. "Muslims are embraced by God's salvific grace... They are enriched with values of truth and holiness, but these values... are in need of redemption and elevation." This is why the Church feels bound "'to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life' (N.A.2)" (p. 32).

There follows a closer examination of what the Council actually said about Islam and Muslims. The Introduction had already explained briefly how the Council came to tackle this theme in the first place. The most solemn document, *Lumen Gentium,* states that Muslims "acknowledge the Creator... (and) together with us they adore the one, merciful God (L.G. 16).

Fr Farrugia is right to insist, following R. Caspar, on the importance of the little words *together with us.* Even today one can find people who say that Muslims worship another god, and so to join with

them in prayer, in whatever way, is tantamount to being unfaithful to our God. The Council states without any ambiguity that Christians and Muslims worship the *same* God, the one, true God, though they differ in their understanding of God and their approach to Him. The author then elucidates, with the help of sound commentators, the Council's statements on God, on the reference to Abraham, on Jesus and Mary, on future life, and on moral attitudes.

The final chapter goes over this material once again, but this time in order to make absolutely clear what the Council said and what it did not say. So reference is made to the silence about Muhammad, the lack of mention of pilgrimage as an important feature in Islamic worship, the rather general treatment of moral life. Recourse to the Council records helps to explain the choices made and how the final text was arrived at. The full importance of what is stated is clearly brought out.

Perhaps the main criticism one could level at this study is its tendency to concentrate on the dogmatic at the expense of the pastoral. *Nostra Aetate* has an important passage where Christians and Muslims are exhorted to strive for "mutual understanding". This is mentioned by the author, but is perhaps not given sufficient weight. The task of building up "mutual understanding" has been taken up, by many people of good will on both sides. Efforts are by no means confined to the Catholic Church. The World Council of Churches has also been to the fore in this field. Yet there is still much to do. Situations differ from place to place, so it is dangerous to generalize. Yet one can say that history still lies like a heavy weight on mutual relations in some places. In others new tensions arise. What is certain is that in today's world Christians and Muslims are more frequently in contact than ever. Fr Farrugia's useful study can help Catholics to return to the documents of Vatican II, so that they may live these contacts and enter into these relationships in the true spirit of the Council.

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Nicola CIOLA, *Introduzione alla cristologia*. (Queriniana; Brescia 1986) 136 pp.

While during the decade immediately following the close of the Second Vatican Council we have witnessed a concentration of theological reflection upon topics having to do with ecclesiology, the attention of theologians during the past decade has shown a marked focus on Christology and related topics. And this was, in a way, to be expected. The Church herself cannot possibly be understood, even after the many elucidations offered us by the Council, unless one

reflects upon its mystery in the light of Christ himself, who prolongs his presence in her and gives her life.

A valuable contribution to theological reflection in this regard is the present publication by Nicola Ciola, a lecturer of Christology at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and author of a number of other works.

What the author here actually proposes to do is to identify the main problems connected with the study of Christology and then suggest in each case the methological approach that, in his view, would help for their solution. These problems, according to him, are the following: the problem of the historical Jesus and of the Christ of faith, the relationship between trinitarian theology and Christology, the anthropological significance of Christology, the place of Christology in the ecclesial tradition.

These problems, which are no doubt among the main ones in Christology, are carefully and very clearly described. While the author does not offer the reader an exhaustive solution to any of them, he does refer to the opinions of leading theologians and to the way they have attempted to solve them.

The book is richly annotated and provides the reader with a most useful bibliography and provides the reader with a most useful bibliography, a sure guide through such a dense and rich proliferation of literature on the subject of Christology in recent years.

Although the work is meant by the author to be only introductory, in many ways it is very much more than that; for it leads the reader right into the whole subject of Christology, gives him a birds-eye-view of the panorama as it appears from the heights of the long ecclesial tradition, and at the same time allures him to come down to grips with the mysterious reality itself and explore its various facets.

The author, modestly enough, does not promise much to the reader, but he certainly gives much more than he promises. With its limitations, mostly due to the length of the treatise, the book can be indeed a valuable help for the study of Christology. Any reader, whether student or scholar, is bound to enjoy it and derive much profit from it.

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Carmel TABONE, *The Secularization of the Family in Changing Malta* (Dominican Publication; Malta 1987) pp. xx + 268.

The family is generally regarded as a fundamental institution of Maltese society not only because it provides, until now, the only legitimate form of procreation but also as a focal point for many other activities. It socializes the young, teaching

basic behaviour patterns and developing appropriate attitudes which constitute the basic ingredients for the various roles and relations of later life. For these reasons, it attracts the attention both of those interested in preserving or in bringing about fundamental changes in such societies. It is equally interesting for sociologists who seek to explain the forces of social continuity and change.

Tabone's study adopts a classical sociological perspective yet it is clearly intended to identify the main areas where the traditional family is threatened. Efforts to preserve the family may thus be concentrated on such 'problem' areas.

The author makes a very rigorous attempt to study the family as a major institution in Maltese society – which many see as undergoing a rapid rate of social change. The perspective of secularization is adopted since religion is regarded as the major unifying force behind all traditional institutions in this society. Yet, religion itself is currently in danger of being swept away by the powerful wave of change processes. In this context, Tabone's study provides a serious, comprehensive attempt to analyze these changes and to interpret them in the light of sociological theory.

The first part of the study presents a wide-ranging review of sociological studies about the family, social change and secularization. Here the main concepts used are clearly defined and traced back to their historical antecedents.

The second part deals with the secularization of the Maltese family from a micro-sociological aspect. Here the Maltese family is analyzed as an institution with a number of functions and interactions among its members which are governed by established values and norms. The impact of secularization upon these norms and relationships is explored both internally and externally.

The third part of the study examines systematically the external factors and institutions affecting the secularization of the Maltese family from a macro-sociological aspect. These factors include the other major institutions of society namely the economy, politics, religion and education as well as the media of mass communication and migration/tourism as important contemporary phenomena which affect the secularization of the Maltese family.

The outcome of this analysis is summarized very competently in a general concluding chapter. Finally the study includes an appendix where the questionnaire used and some complementary statistical findings are presented in tabular form. There is also a short bibliography which lists the references consulted.

The analysis is based mainly on the empirical evidence gathered from a structured questionnaire administered on a sample of 400 Maltese adults randomly selected and geographically spread out over all geographical areas of Malta. The

analysis is based upon standard statistical techniques which are handled quite competently by the author.

In the course of presenting his study, Tabone has put together a very valid body of data which should be of interest to anyone concerned with the study of Maltese society, social policy and particularly with the welfare of the family from a traditionalist point of view. Such serious studies unfortunately only appear rarely in print and therefore this one adds significantly to our knowledge of an important aspect of Maltese society.

I now turn to the limitations of the study which, I hasten to add by no means outweigh the significant positive values which have been stated above.

The theoretical approach used throughout the study leads to an analysis of the Maltese family as a 'social system' within a structural – functionalist framework. This approach – best developed by Talcott Parsons and others – leaves much to be desired as exposed by many critics during the past three decades. It particularly leads to an idealized harmonious view of social relations within a system where change and conflict are generally introduced as a result of contact with the world outside. Such systems are often portrayed as threatened by outside factors. As a result of this approach, the internal conflicts *within* the Maltese, traditional family tend to be played down if not completely ignored. For instance, the current tensions between generations for the educational achievement of the children sometimes boarding on the level of a national obsession for academic qualifications as a means to upward mobility between generations, the current resort to drugs and the frantic efforts to build bigger and more luxurious houses as the Maltese families get smaller and smaller. These indicate serious *social* problems within families which are barely touched upon within this study. Religion may sometimes even contribute to these symptoms.

The study is largely addressed to an audience concerned with maintaining the traditional model of the Maltese family. Thus its main appeal is more likely to be among ecclesiastical and like minded quarters than among those eager to promote radical changes in this central institution. This view of the author appears in an occasional statement like 'the relationship between parents and children is also satisfactory'. There is an assumed model of the traditional family of the past as a point of departure which is not empirically substantiated. Overall the general tone of the study as proposed in the Introduction, is 'apologetic' in a philosophical – theological sense.

Finally the style used throughout the study may be more appropriate for presentation as an academic thesis than as a book for a wider readership.

Nevertheless, as stated above,

these are relatively minor points, when compared to the great intrinsic worth which the data presented has for those who, for different reasons, are interested in the dynamics of change in our society.

That the Maltese family – like the whole of society – is changing is not for one moment in doubt. Indeed if both the family and its host society are to survive at all, they must change and develop in the right directions. Tabone's study shows the directions which social policy must take in order to ensure such development.

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Patrick W. SKEHAN/Alexander A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Anchor Bible 39, Doubleday; New York 1987) XXIII. 620 pp.

There are various reasons for welcoming this new volume in the Anchor Bible series. First of all interest in Jewish literature of the intertestamental period has been on the increase during the last few decades, and the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* offers a prominent representative of this literature. Besides, the problem of the Old Testament canon of the Christian Church is again attracting attention, especially in the context of ecumenical dialogue – cfr P. Grech, *Biblica* 68 (1987) 286-289; and this wisdom book seems to have been the earliest of the 'apocrypha' or, for the catholic tradition, 'deuterocanonicals', to find itself left out of the Jewish canon. These two reasons would suffice to explain why the scholarly world should be grateful to Doubleday for including the work of Yeshua ben Eleazar ben Sira (Sir 50, 27) in their AB series.

But the present volume has the added value of being the result of efforts from two leading scholars, Patrick W. Skehan (PWS) and Alexander A. Di Lella (AADL). Unfortunately these efforts ran parallel as Professor Skehan died on September 9, 1980, before the two authors could have the occasion to "discuss a few disputed matters" (Preface, p. X). To this volume PWS contributed the translation and notes of the greater part of the text (excluding Sir 38, 24-34; 39, 1-11; 40, 1-43, 33 and 51, 13-30); AADL completed the translation and compiled the notes of the pericopes left unfinished by PWS, following "Skehan's procedure of adopting and revising the *New American Bible* translation of Sirach" (ibid), and wrote the Introduction, the General Bibliography, and the Commentary to the entire book. The misfortune of PWS's death, and the generous treatment of his translation and notes by AADL ensured that in this volume we have two scholarly views not

one, even though "the occasional differences of opinion" may not be perceptible to the general reader.

In format and procedure this volume follows in the wake of its brothers in the series: a good introduction to the biblical book (pp. 3-92) precedes its translation and exegesis through notes and commentaries (pp. 131-580). Thirty-six pages of bibliography, divided according to six areas of relevant research, follows the general introduction (pp. 93-127), while thirty-seven pages of indexes covering author and subject-matter items (one for scriptural citations would have been useful indeed), come after the commentary itself (pp. 583-620). The preface by AADL explaining the volume's genesis as well as the numbering system adopted (pp. IX-XI) is important to read.

AADL provides quite a good introductory treatise to the study of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira (WBS)*. This introduction is made up of ten chapters which are worth going through. The present reviewer means to consider some of the questions this treatise raises.

AADL starts with identifying the title and contents of *WBS* (chapter I, pp. 3-7). The complex redactional and textual history of this *biblion* (as Ben Sira's grandson suggests in his Prologue we should consider this scripture) makes the reconstruction of the book's title necessary; while the fact that "the book manifests no particular order of subject matter or obvious coherence" (p. 4) makes the thematic list of contents a must. AADL's classification of pericopes by themes shall prove very useful for the general reader who would approach Ben Sira's spring of fresh water about "almost every major topic with regard to religious and secular wisdom and personal behaviour" (p. 6).

In the second chapter (pp. 8-16) we find background information about Ben Sira and his times. The professional reader will hardly escape the impression of schematism and superficiality in this section of the Introduction. "During this period little is known of the fortunes of the Jews", states AADL (p. 13). And while details about the general political framework are furnished, little or nothing is said about the social macrocosm as well as microcosm. This is unfortunate since *WBS* was mainly addressed to specific situations and concrete *modi vivendi* which were causing concern (one should read the Prologue and Sir 33, 16-18 among others). In *WBS* we have not a theoretical exercise in wisdom writing by some having-nothing-to-do intellectual, but a counter cultural resonse to a foreign-inspired hellenization onslaught which was threatening to obliterate the specifics of the Jewish cultural identity. If this third/second century writer drew heavily from tradition (Scriptures in general, but especially from the Book of Proverbs) for inspiration and thought categories with which to judge, and dialogue with, contem-

porary behaviour trends, this means that he was dissatisfied with current developments and with the solutions proposed for the perennial social and personal problems. How were the Jews of the period, both as an ethnic reality and as individuals, responding to the hellenization policy as to solicit the writing of this anthology of wisdom poems and exhortations?

The canonicity of *WBS* and its place within the canon form the subject matter of chapter III (pp. 17-20) AADL's perspective is obviously Catholic and fits well within that current of canonical studies in the United States represented by A.C. Sundberg. In his well-known monograph *The Old Testament of the Early Church* and in other minor studies – cfr Bibliography p. 125 for details – Sundberg proved that by the turn of the Christian Era, the whole issue of the canon as a *numerus clausus* was still vague. Unfortunately AADL makes no use of (or reference to) another important monograph published in 1985 in England, Roger Beckwith's *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*, which offers quite a different interpretation of both Ben Sira's grandson's prologue as it relates to the matter of the canon, as well as of rabbinic literature in its treatment of this deuterocanonical. One leaves this third chapter with the conviction that it has not said the last word as to how Ben Sira's writing found itself within the OT canon of the Christian Church.

What literary forms has Ben Sira employed in his book? The answer to this question is given in chapter IV (pp. 21-30). Among the literary types Ben Sira found in tradition and adoperated to express his thoughts we find: the *mashal* the hymn of praise, prayer of petition, autobiographical narratives, lists or onomastica, and didactive narrative. AADL offers a brief description and discussion on each of these forms; one would not quarrel with the way AADL treats these genres except for one detail: his classification of the *meshalîm* is thematic rather than form-critical: his adopting R.B.Y. Scott's seven categories of proverb described in his Anchor Bible (no. 18) commentary on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (pp. 5-8). (Details of this volume are no where to be found in this Introduction) prove this point.

In chapter V (pp. 31-39) AADL turns to the wisdom traditions in the OT. He distinguishes two basic types of wisdom, 'recipe' wisdom, by which he means the pre-theoretical or practical wisdom, and 'existential' wisdom "that attempts to provide some answers to man's perennial quest for meaning for such anomic phenomena such as suffering, moral evil and untimely death". The author examines also the hermeneutical implications of both types of wisdom, in other words, what meaning can a book like this have for a modern reader.

The next two chapters, VI (pp. 40-45) and VII (pp. 46-50) are devoted to an examination of *WBS*'s relationship to its sources, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The "other books of the Old Testament" couldn't but have influenced the writer "who had devoted himself for a long time to the study of the Law, the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors, and developed a thorough familiarity with them" (Prologue). According to AADL Ben Sira's creative spirit was not directed towards forming new literary genres or to offering novel solutions to man's eternal problems of his existence. Rather, his contribution consisted in having contextualized the scriptures in order to render them understandable to his contemporaries (cfr p. 40).

But here a quesion arises. Beckwith (*Old Testament Canon*, p. 111 and passim) contends that Ben Sira's intention to interpret the Scriptures would necessarily exclude his book from liability to enter the canon. For within the canon were admitted only these books intending to convey revelation. *WBS* meant to offer only commentary. A possible answer to this objection is by refering to the fact that text and commentary within the same biblical book, or the text in one book and the commentary in another is not exclusive to Ben Sira's work. One has to distinguish sharply between revelation and inspiration: to be inspired and hence canonical does not necessarily imply to offer new revelatory material. On the other hand, to be inspired and canonical means to be revelation.

In the following chapter AADL reviews the undeniable "dependence of Ben Sira on several non-Jewish writings" (p. 49), mostly of Egyptian and Hellenistic origin. In drawing from these non-Jewish sources our sage integrated his borrowings within Jewish thought categories. His drinking from foreign springs reflects rather a pastoral strategy: "....he made use of these foreign sources, not because he has caught up in the spirit of compromise and syncretism that was rampant at the time, but because he felt he had to show others how the best of Gentile thought is no danger to the faith but could be incorporated into an authentically Jewish work, the purpose of which was to encourage fidelity to their ancestral practices.

Herein lies the religious genius and literary skill of Ben Sira" (p. 50). "The original Hebrew text and Ancient Versions" is the title of the eighth chapter of the Introduction. The textual and reductional history of this deuterocanonical has been very complex, so that reading this chapter is essential in order to comprehend the textual criticism our scholars carried out before they gave us this commentary. History complicated matters for *WBS*. Before the Jews' decision that this 'scripture' does not 'make the hands unclean' and had therefore to be 'stored away' – cfr Beckwith, *Old*

Testament Canon, pp. 278-286. 388-380, *WBS* enjoyed huge popularity with the Jews. But when it was left out of their canon for dogmatic reasons – they decided that prophecy (and scriptural inspiration) dried out with the termination of the Persian Period (c. 332 BC); one rabbinic writing stated: "With the death of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the latter prophets, the Holy Spirit ceased out of Israel" – cfr Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 369-376 – this popularity subsided among Jewish readers. Its sustained use within the Christian communities, as to become 'Ecclesiasticus', did not help either to avert the cruel fate of the Hebrew text, since Christians read the scriptures in their Greek version. The Hebrew text finished with being disused, forgotten and lost.

It was only in AD 1896 that fragments from this Hebrew text began to be discovered and to be taken into consideration for the reconstruction of *WBS* 'original' text. In this chapter AADL provides us with an up-dated list of all extant Hebrew fragments – one has to add his article: Alexander A. Di Lella, "The Newly Discovered Sixth Manuscript of Ben Sira from the Cairo Geniza" *Biblica* 69 (1988) 226-238: this manuscript AADL has been unable to use (p. 52) – together with a brief evaluation of all existing Hebrew, Greek, Old Latin and Syriac witnesses. In the text variants from the various MSS are offered, so that reading chapter VIII is essential for whoever would like to use this commentary.

'Form' and 'Matter' may be said to be the subject matter of the last two chapters. In chapter IX (pp. 63-74) the poetry of Ben Sira is examined; AADL works mostly on the Hebrew fragments and several literary procedures are briefly discussed: assonance, alliteration, rhyme, chiasmus, inclusio, and the alphabetic acrostics. One comment: AADL assumes that the Hebrew text beneath present-day Greek version of Sir 1, 11-30 must have been one such alphabetic acrostic, originally meant to form an *inclusio* with the twenty-three line alphabetic poem at the end of the book, 51, 13-30 (p. 74). This may have been the case, but as (i) we do not possess the Hebrew original of 1, 11-30 and (ii) Ben Sira's work resembles an anthology rather than a well structured literary unity – cfr pp. 4-6 – one should be more cautious and less dogmatic both as to the nature and function of 1, 11-30 as to the integrity and authenticity of *WBS* as a whole: for AADL the inclusio between 1, 11-30 and 51, 13-30 would prove "that the book was planned in the form in which we have it by a single compiler, namely Ben Sira himself" (p. 74). Which sounds rather as an overstatement.

In the concluding chapter X.(pp. 75-92) AADL passes under review the 'teaching of Ben Sira' without pretending to be exhaustive or strictly systematic (p. 75). Before examining some of the teaching items

he selects AADL comments briefly on Ben Sira's doctrine as being "above all traditional or conservative" reflecting the teaching of Israel's scriptures on basic themes. He labels 'deuteronomic' Ben Sira's pervading outlook.

As already seen, the bulk of this volume is taken by the translation, exegesis and commentary of *WBS*. Ben Sira's work is divided into eight parts and a conclusion (besides his grandson's Prologue). In turn, each part is subdivided into units, taking into consideration the literary integrity of each unit. In this way 63 literary units have been identified. This division of the text into micro-units facilities its study and use especially by the general reader. Each micro-unit contains the translation of the text (with variant reading offered at the bottom of the page), short linguistic notes, and commentary. The translation is based on the Septuagint Greek text while variants come from later editions of this text or from the Hebrew fragments. The approach to the text is 'concordantial'. In the commentary references are usually made to parallel passages, possible sources, literary procedures employed, the thoelogical significance of each passage, and to the textual criticism involved.

A valid contribution indeed to the study of Ben Sira's wisdom writing.

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