

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The title *Christus patiens* - or its Greek equivalent, viz. Χριστὸς πάσχων - is generally used by scholars when referring to the dramatic representation of the Passion of Christ, which is traditionally attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus. This title, however, is both unoriginal and incomplete. It does not occur in any of the manuscripts containing this play, but was first used by Antonius Bladus as the title of his edition of the text (published at Rome in 1542). The full title of this first printed edition reads Τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Ναζιανζηνοῦ τραγωδία Χριστὸς πάσχων. *Sancti Gregori Nazianzeni ... tragoedia Christus Patiens.*

In addition to indicating the author as Gregory of Nazianzus, Bladus defines the work as a tragedy. This definition occurs also in some of the manuscripts of the play, as attested by the title occurring in *codex Parisinus gr. 2875*: Γρηγορίου τοῦ θεολόγου, τραγωδία εἰς τὸ σωτήριον πάθος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. However, the definition of this work as ὑπόθεσις δραματικῆ occurs more frequently in the manuscript tradition, and is perhaps more descriptive. The earliest extant source of this definition is *Parisinus gr. 1220*, a manuscript dating from the first half of the 14th century. It contains the title Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Γρηγορίου τοῦ θεολόγου ὑπόθεσις δραματικῆ κατ' Εὐριπίδην περιέχουσα τὴν δι' ἡμᾶς γενομένην σάρκωσιν τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ κοσμοσωτήριον πάθος.

The definition of the *Christus patiens* as "tragedy" recurs in most printed editions, from that of Bladus (1542) to that of Tuilier (1969). In fact, the latter refers to it in phrases like "la tragédie de la Passion du Christ" (p.9), "centon tragique sur la Passion du Christ" (p.11), and "la tragédie chrétienne par excellence" (p.19), but also in phrases like "drame mystique et initiatique" (p.9), and simply "drame". It should be noted from the outset that the play is not necessarily a tragedy, even though it exhibits many of the characteristic features of classical Greek tragedy.

The phrase κατ' Εὐριπίδην which occurs in the title preserved in *Parisinus gr. 1220*, deserves some special attention. It refers to the centonic nature of the *Christus patiens*, which is composed - partly, at least - of lines of verse borrowed from different plays of Euripides. In fact, the origins of a small number of lines have been traced to the *Agamemnon* and the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, and to Lycophron's *Cassandra*; but the vast majority of lines which reveal influence from classical sources, are derived from Euripidean plays: mainly the *Bacchae*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, and *Rhesus*, while the *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Troades* are also represented.

The following example may serve to illustrate how lines and passages from the famous 5th century BC tragic poet have been adapted to an entirely new context:

Lines 101-115 of the *Christus patiens* constitute part of the dialogue between the mother of the Lord and a group of women from Galilee, who accompany her. They bring terrible news:

Πότνια, πότνα, σεμνοτάτα παρθένε·  
αἶ αἶ αἶ αἶ·  
Πολλὴ μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος  
ἀγνή κέκλησαι, τῆσδε γῆς ὅσοι πέδον  
ναίουσι, λαμπρὸν φῶς ὀρῶντες ἡλίου· 105  
τανῦν δὲ τάλαιν' ἡ πάλαι μακαρία.

*Lady, our Lady, most venerable Virgin,  
Alas! Alas!  
You are great and glorious among mortals,  
known as "the holy one" to all who inhabit this world  
- all who look upon the bright light of the sun; 105  
but wretched now, though formerly you were blest.*

She takes this to mean that she herself is in danger:

Τί δ' ἐστίν; ἢ πω τίς μ' ἀποκτεῖναι θέλει;  
*What does this mean? Is someone planning to kill me?*

Her companions try to correct this wrong impression:

Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ Παῖς θνήσκει σὸς ὑπ' ἀλαστόρων.  
*No, but your Son is being killed by a vindictive crowd.*

She is shaken by these words:

Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; ὡς μ' ἀπόλεσας, γύναι.

*Oh no! What do you mean? You have destroyed me, madam!*

But they insist:

Ἦς οὐκέτ' ὄντος Υἱέος φρόντιζε δῆ.

110

*Indeed you should think of your Son as dead already.*

Her reaction to these words reveal that she has not yet realized the full implications of her Son's mission:

Ἦ δεινὰ λέξασ', οὐχὶ συγκλείσεις στόμα  
καὶ πᾶν μεθήσεις ἀπρεπῆς ῥῆμ' ἐκφέρειν;  
Τὸν ὄντ' ἀεὶ γὰρ μηκέτ' εἶναι πῶς λέγεις;  
Εὖφημος ἴσθι, κἄν τί σοι χρεῖα λέγειν,  
λέγ' ὡς προσήκει, μηδ' ἀτιμάσης Θεόν.

115

*What horrors have you spoken of! Why not rather be quiet and stop uttering inappropriate words? How could you say that the eternal one is "dead already"? Speak reverently; and if you have to say something, say what is proper; do not dishonour God.*

115

With the exception of 106 and 113, all of these lines have been borrowed either from the *Hippolytus* or from the *Medea* of Euripides, and have been adapted in the following manner:

Πότνια, πότνια, σεμνοτάτα παρθένε (101) is evidently taken from the *Hippolytus*, line 61 (πότνια πότνια σεμνοτάτα). Note the Doric α in σεμνοτάτα - quite in place, since it belongs to the speech regarded as proper for the choruses of 5th century Tragedy. The chorus in the *Christus patiens*, however, speaks in iambic trimeters; thus the line had to be extended by adding παρθένε - a term which perfectly fits the new context, and which occurs also at line 66 of the *Hippolytus*, where Artemis is called καλλίστα πολὺ παρθένων.

The exclamation αἶ αἶ αἶ αἶ (102) equals - in sound, at any rate - the αἶαἶ ἔ ἔ occurring in line 595 of the *Hippolytus*. It seems that the author of the *Christus patiens* consciously resisted the temptation of adding to it the remainder of *Hippolytus* 595, viz. πρόδοτος ἐκ φίλων.

The next three lines (103-105) have been composed from the

first four lines of the *Hippolytus*. When comparing

Πολλὴ μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος  
ἀγνή κέκλησαι, τῆσδε γῆς ὅσοι πέδον  
ναίουσι, λαμπρὸν φῶς ὀρῶντες ἡλίου

to the opening lines of the Euripidean play –

Πολλὴ μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος  
θεὰ κέκλημαι Κύπρις, οὐρανοῦ τ' ἔσω·  
ὅσοι τε Πόντου θερμόνων τ' Ἀτλαντικῶν  
ναίουσιν εἴσω, φῶς ὀρῶντες ἡλίου

– the following changes are worth noting:

- 1) The phrase ἀγνή κέκλησαι (104) is a necessary substitute for θεὰ κέκλημαι in line 2 of the *Hippolytus*.
- 2) The relative phrase introduced by ὅσοι has βροτοῖσι as its antecedent in the *Christus patiens*, whereas in the *Hippolytus* it refers to the following lines, while forming part of a syntactic unit which is independent of the first two lines.

Though some may regard the application of phrases originally describing the goddess Aphrodite to the mother of the Lord as being offensive, the point of these lines is clarified by the antithesis of line 106 (πανῶν δὲ τάλαιν' ἢ πάλαι μακαρία). The adjective τάλαινα, which is the main focus of the entire passage, is contrasted to μακαρία – evidently a reference to Luke 1.48: ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μακαριοῦσίν με πᾶσαι αἱ γενεαί. It seems, then, that this notion of all generations calling the mother of the Lord "blessed" – μακαρία – led the author of the *Christus patiens* to apply to her the description which he borrowed, with the modification required, from the *Hippolytus*.

Lines 107–110 have been borrowed – with some modification – from the *Medea* (1308–1311), where Jason is informed by the chorus that his sons have been killed. He misinterprets their words as implying that Medea is planning to kill him too:

Jason: Τί δ' ἔστιν; ἦ που κάμ' ἀποκτεῖναι θέλει;

*What is it? Is she really trying to kill me too?*

Chorus: Παῖδες τεθνήσι χειρὶ μητρῶα σέθεν.

*Your sons have been killed by their mother's hand.*

Jason: Οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; ὥς μ' ἀπόλεσας, γύναι. 1310

*Oh no! What do you mean? You have killed me, madam!*

Chorus: Ὡς οὐκέτ' ὄντων σῶν τέκνων φρόντιζε δῆ.

*Think but of your sons as not living any more.*

The changes which the author of the *Christus patiens* has made to these lines, are merely those required by the difference in context:

- 1) The phrase καὶ μ' ἀποκτεῖναι of *Medea* 1308 has been changed to τις μ' ἀποκτεῖναι, since a point of reference for *me too* – like the killing of Creon and his daughter in the *Medea* – does not exist in the *Christus patiens*.
- 2) Line 108 (οὐκ, ἀλλὰ Παῖς θνήσκει σὸς ὑπ' ἀλαστόρων) is the result of considerable modification: Apart from a change in number (from παῖδες...σέθεν to παῖς...σός), and the change in agent, the perfect tense had to be made present, and a corrective formula (οὐκ, ἀλλά ...) had to be inserted before the blunt statement παῖς θνήσκει σός.
- 3) Line 1310 of the *Medea* could be used *verbatim* as line 109 of the *Christus patiens*.
- 4) Line 110 has the singular form οὐκέτ' ὄντος Υἱέος for the plural οὐκέτ' ὄντων σῶν τέκνων of *Medea* 1311.

For lines 111-115, the author of the *Christus patiens* took two lines from the *Hippolytus* (498-9) and two from the *Medea* (1319-20), and joined them to a single line of his own:

ὦ δεινὰ λέξασ', οὐχὶ συγκλείσεις στόμα (Ἡίρρ. 498)  
καὶ πᾶν μεθήσεις ἀπρεπὲς ῥῆμ' ἐκφέρειν; (499, modified)  
Τὸν ὄντ' αἰεὶ γὰρ μηκέτ' εἶναι πῶς λέγεις;  
Εὐφημος ἴσθι, κἄν τί σοι χρεῖα λέγειν, (Med. 1319-20,  
λέγ' ὡς προσήκει, μηδ' ἀτιμάσης Θεόν. modified)

Note the result of this process, in terms of the rhetorical structure of the passage. On the phonological, syntactical, and semantic levels, it shows a fine balancing of elements, and a striking interplay of opposites. The chiasmus of lines 111-2 (λέξασα – συγκλείσεις στόμα – μεθήσεις – ῥῆμ' ἐκφέρειν) is reflected in an inverse chiastic pattern in lines 114-5: εὐφημος ἴσθι – χρεῖα λέγειν – λέγε – μηδ' ἀτιμάσης. Together these lines form a concentric pattern around line 113, which contains a powerful *oxymoron*: ὄντ(α) – αἰεὶ – μηκέτι – εἶναι. This line is indeed the focal point of the passage, which is developed into an emphatic claim that Jesus is Θεός.

Yet this passage remains a compound of verses, of which the greater part is not the author's own, "original" work.

To the question whether this type of composition represents – or does not represent – acceptable literary practice, the answers of critics would probably greatly vary. The relevant question, however, is whether the author of the cento himself regarded it as a commendable literary product. The answer to this is to be found in the introductory words of the ὑπόθεσις or argument of the play:

Ἐπεὶ δ' ἀκούσας εὐσεβῶς ποιημάτων  
ποιητικῶς νῦν εὐσεβῆ κλύειν θέλεις,  
πρόφρων ἄκουε· νῦν τε κατ' Εὐριπίδην  
τὸ κοσμοσωτήριον ἐξερω πάθος, etc.

*Since – having listened respectfully to poetry – you now want to hear of the revered things in poetic fashion, listen attentively; and in the manner of Euripides I will now tell you of the Passion which saved the world ...*

These programmatic words plainly indicate that the author is aware of, or at the least is assuming, a need, on the part of his reader(s), for a poetic version or presentation of the events relating to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Note the specific meaning of ἀκούω in this context: it signifies listening to poetry which is being read aloud, as it was the normal practice in ancient times. (This verifies the opinion of scholars like K. Mitsakis and others, that the text of the *Christus patiens* was meant to be read rather than performed.) The semantic parallelism in the references to the way in which the reader has listened to poetry and should now listen to this cento (ἀκούσας εὐσεβῶς – πρόφρων ἄκουε), suggests that the author regarded the need of a poetic version of the Passion as sufficient reason to imitate the tragic poet.

The *Christus patiens* follows its Euripidean models in more respects than simply copying, either *verbatim* or in adapted form, a certain number of iambic trimeter lines. This will be illustrated in the chapters dealing with the exposition of specific parts of the text. Let it suffice to say, at this stage, that the Euripidean influence is clearly exhibited in the plot construction, the characterization, and also in the rhetorical structure of every set speech in this cento.

### **Manuscripts and editions:**

The Greek text of the *Christus patiens* is extant in 25 manuscripts which antedate the first printed edition. All of these date from the middle of the 13th to the first half of the 16th century. For a detailed discussion of the manuscript tradition of this play, the reader is referred to A. Tuilier (1969) pp. 75-116. As far as the text in print is concerned, the *editio princeps* - the text published by A. Bladus in 1542 - was followed by a large number of editions, many of which simply reprinted the text of their predecessors. Critical editions of the text were published by F. Dübner (1846), by J. G. Brambs (1885, in the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*), and by A. Tuilier (1969; no. 149 of the series *Sources Chrétiennes*). All quotations from the *Christus patiens* in this study, are according to Tuilier's text.

### **Translations:**

During the course of the past four centuries, the *Christus patiens* has been posing a challenge to the interpretative skills, and even the poetic talents, of many translators. The earliest attempt to be recorded, is a translation into Latin verse, by Claudio Roillet. This translation must have been made some time before 1642, and it accompanies the Greek text in volume 38 of J. P. Migne's *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, where it is printed in the bottom margin. The Benedictine monks of St. Maur did not hesitate to produce their own Latin prose translation, which is also printed in Migne (1862). The edition of Dübner (1846) contains a Latin prose translation of unidentified origin. It reads rather like an emended copy of the Benedictine version, which may have been available to Dübner in the edition of the works of Gregory of Nazianzus published by A. B. Caillau (1840).

Besides these Latin versions, the *Christus patiens* has also been translated into some modern European languages, viz. French, German, modern Greek and Italian. All of the existing German versions are verse translations: Hugo Grotius (1748), A. Ellissen (1855), and E. A. Pullig (1893) attempted to reproduce in their own language not only the content, but

also the poetic character of the Greek text. This aim is clearly stated on the title pages of these publications: cf. Ellissen's phrase "in metrischer Verdeutschung", and Pullig's "übersetzt im Versmasse der Urschrift".

In France, interest in the study of the *Christus patiens* was revived by the middle of the 19th century, mainly due to the publication, in Paris, of the editions by Caillau (1840) and Dübner (1846). This led to the publication of translations of the play in the French language. The mere extracts translated by J. A. Lalanne (1852) were soon followed by a complete French prose translation, done by Douhet (1854) and published in the *Nouvelle Encyclopédie Théologique*. Even after the publication of Brambs' edition of the Greek text in 1885, M. de la Rousselière (1895) still preferred to base his French translation on the Caillau edition. It would be another seven decades before the publication of a French translation based upon a good textcritical edition of the *Christus patiens* - that of A. Tuilier (1969).

In Athens, Panagiotēs Soutsos (1839) published an adaptation of the *Christus patiens* in Greek verse: 'Ο Μεσσίας ἢ τὰ πάθη Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ... κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Ναζιανζηνοῦ ποιήσαντος τὸν Χριστὸν πάσχοντα.

The rendering of the *Christus patiens* in the Italian language is an interesting field of study on its own. The earliest verse translation, intended for performance at the *Collegio dei Nobili* at Parma, was done by C. Martirano (circa 1786). However, at least two other (unpublished) translations into Italian have been made before the end of the 18th century. In the *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale* in Firenze, there is a 16th century manuscript containing a translation of the *Christus patiens* by Giovanni di Nicolò da Falgano; and the library of the University of Bologna is in possession of an 18th century manuscript titled "S. Gregorio Nazianzeno, *Cristo piangente*, Tragedia trasportata dalla lingua greca nella volgare fedelmente da Antonio Cavallerino". The 20th century has seen two more attempts to bring the *Christus patiens* to the Italian stage: O. Prosciutti (1949) translated the play into Italian



prose, and R. Cantarella (1953) published a "traduzione e adattamento scenico", drastically reducing the 2602 verses of the original to 971 lines in the adapted version.

As far as the present author knows, no English translation of the *Christus patiens* has yet been published.

### **Contents of the play:**

The main characters of the *Christus patiens* are the mother of Jesus (indicated in the *didascalia* as θεοτόκος), the disciple whom Jesus loved (nowhere identified by the name John - he is referred to as ἐπιστήθιος or παρθένος in the text; θεολόγος in the *didascalia*), and a χορός of young women who accompany and support the Virgin in her moments of anguish. The minor characters are: Christ, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, two different angels and five different messengers. In addition to these, the Jewish High Priests, the guard, and Pilate are introduced, in a scene which is developed out of a messenger speech occurring in the third part of the play.

The "action" commences just before dawn, on the day Jesus is to be crucified. The prologue - a quite lengthy monologue - is spoken by the mother of the Lord. The play is subdivided into three parts, comprising the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. It is concluded by a hymnic prayer to the Saviour, and an invocation to the Virgin, in which she is begged - as πρέσβις εὐπρόσδεκτος to her Son - for protection against evils both visible and invisible.

The following summary is intended, not as a literary analysis of any sort, but simply as an introduction to the plot, and a handy reference guide to the text itself:

#### **First part: The Crucifixion:**

- 1-90: The θεοτόκος speaks about her role in the divine mystery of the incarnation and redemption, and of the anguish which it causes her to hear that her Son is brought to trial. She is anxious to see what

- is happening to him, but her companions (the χορός) have persuaded her to wait until dawn.
- 91-97: The χορός warns the θεοτόκος of an armed crowd rushing through the city, carrying torches.
- 98-110: The θεοτόκος sees a messenger approaching, and the χορός tells her the content of his report: her son is about to be killed.
- 111-119: The θεοτόκος finds it unthinkable that the immortal could be killed.
- 120-123: The χορός confirms that Jesus is going to die.
- 124-129: The χορός announces the arrival of a messenger: one of the disciples.
- 130-139: The messenger announces that Jesus has been betrayed, not by an enemy, but by one regarded as a friend.
- 140-146: The traitor is identified as the treasurer of the disciples. The θεοτόκος is shocked, and inquires about his motives.
- 147-180: The messenger tells of Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives, and of the betrayal in the garden.
- 181-182: The θεοτόκος interrupts the report, asking what Jesus has answered the traitor.
- 183-266: The messenger tells of Jesus' answer, of the arrest and of the disciples who fled. Then he reports the words of someone - an angel or a human being - whom he heard addressing and scornfully accusing the traitor.
- 267-357: The θεοτόκος reacts to the news of Judas' treason, in a speech which contrasts the baseness of his actions to the universally acknowledged goodness of Jesus. She wishes death for the traitor, but expects to see her Son still alive.
- 358-368: The χορός announces the arrival of a second messenger, who reports that the death sentence has been pronounced on Jesus by the Council.
- 369-375: To the θεοτόκος this means almost as much as her own death; but she rapidly recovers and asks the messenger for a more detailed report.
- 376-418: The messenger tells how he arrived in the city, and witnessed the trial of Jesus before Pilate: The

- governor did not find any guilt in the accused, but the crowd insisted that he had to be crucified. He will be taken out of the city gates at dawn.
- 419-436: The θεοτόκος sees this as a great calamity – to the Hebrew people, who will be punished for planning to kill a divine person.
- 437-443: The χορός tries to convince the θεοτόκος that her Son is going to die, which she does not accept.
- 444-450: For the first time the θεοτόκος sees her Son in the hands of his captors. This is not what she has been expecting.
- 451-452: The χορός reminds her that Jesus himself has said before, that he would suffer by the hands of a vindictive people (ἀλάστορες).
- 453-477: In a passage of deep *pathos*, the θεοτόκος begs her Son not to go away from her without a word. She then calls on the χορός to follow Jesus.
- 478-500: The χορός advises her to follow the procession at a safe distance, to which she agrees.
- 501-559: After retiring to a safe lookout, the θεοτόκος realizes that there is really no point in avoiding the angry crowd; for her life means nothing to her, if she is deprived of the hope she has in her Son. This hope is based on her knowledge that He is the Word Incarnate, to whom she has given birth in a miraculous way. On this she dwells at length.
- 560-567: The χορός shares her trust in the divinity of Jesus, of which they cite the following evidence: the midwife's report (*cf.* the *Protevangelium* of James, 19-20), the Archangel's message, and the divine deeds which Jesus has done.
- 568-597: The θεοτόκος explains to them the divine plan of redemption, which she understands by grace of the Word who has resided in her, and which fills her with joyous hope. Yet at the moment she is grief-stricken.
- 598-604: The χορός acknowledges her superior understanding of the present events and of their outcome.
- 605-616: Despite this, the θεοτόκος is overwhelmed by grief.
- 617-638: The χορός divides itself into two ἡμιχόρια. The

first of these is confused by the oscillation between fear and hope on the part of the θεοτόκος, while the second intends passively to ride out the tide of grief, leaving it to the θεοτόκος to remain confident.

- 639-651: A messenger arrives, who has difficulty telling the θεοτόκος that her son is about to die.
- 652-656: The θεοτόκος asks how he is dying – Christ, the Son of the immortal Father, whom she has believed to be the immortal saviour of Israel.
- 657-681: The messenger reports the events of the crucifixion.
- 682-726: The θεοτόκος discards her fear of the crowd, and approaches the scene of the crucifixion. She sees her Son (695 ff.), whose features are distorted almost beyond recognition. Though she understands the redeeming purpose of these events, she finds the sight unbearable.
- 727-737: Christ entrusts her to the care of John (cf. Jn 19) and comforts her with encouraging words.
- 738-760: The θεοτόκος voices her concern for the Jewish people, who are bound to be punished for what they have done. She dreads the prospect of being left behind by her Son.
- 761-766: Christ encourages her with the promise of future blessings.
- 767-795: Again the θεοτόκος begs her Son not to leave her behind. She pleads with him to have mercy on the descendants of the Jews.
- 796-801: Christ confirms that her requests will be granted.
- 802-819: The θεοτόκος praises his εὐγένεια and προμήθεια. Then she pleads on behalf of Peter, whose backstage cries of anguish she has heard.
- 820-828: Christ forgives Peter, saying that he grants his mother's request because of her εὐσέβεια and her φρῆν ἀγαθή. He asks her also to forgive those who have nailed him to the cross.
- 829-833: The θεοτόκος praises the φρῆν εὐμενεστάτη of Jesus.
- 834-837: He prompts her to retire from the angry crowd (the δυσμενεῖς), assuring her that he will see to all her requests.

- 838-847: About to leave, the θεοτόκος hears Jesus cry out that he is thirsty. The χορός also is disturbed at hearing this.
- 848-931: In a lengthy monologue, the θεοτόκος now reacts to the death of her Son. She has a profound insight in the purpose and meaning of his death, but is deeply moved by the personal loss which it means to her. (Cf. especially lines 876-7.)
- 932-982: St. John (the θεολόγος) encourages her, and focuses her attention on the day of the resurrection, while interpreting the events of the Passion in terms of what Jesus himself has said about it beforehand.
- 983-997: The θεοτόκος expresses her appreciation of the filial concern shown to her by the θεολόγος, in a passage which reflects the themes of 848-931.
- 998-1007: The θεολόγος reaffirms his sympathy, but also his faith in the promise of the resurrection.
- 1008-1018: Though yearning for the third day, the θεοτόκος is yet unable to free herself from her present grief.
- 1019-1041: The χορός again divides itself into two ἡμιχόρια. The first of these expresses sympathy with the θεοτόκος, who bears a heavier burden than any woman who knows from the outset that her child is mortal.
- 1042-1045: The second ἡμιχόριον acknowledges the superior wisdom of the θεοτόκος.
- 1046-1062: The θεοτόκος utters an imprecation against the murderers of the Lord.
- 1063-1070: The combined χορός now repeat their view that the θεοτόκος suffers more than normal mothers who mourn for children whom they have known to be mortal.
- 1071-1094: The θεοτόκος notices the soldier who pierces the side of Jesus. She perceives also his abrupt change of attitude, and his confession. (Cf. 1087.)
- 1095-1109: Interpreting the miracle of blood and water flowing separately from the wound in Jesus' side, the χορός expects divine justice.
- 1110-1133: In a final invocation to Jesus on the cross, the θεοτόκος laments her own loss, expresses concern about his burial, and confirms her faith in the promise of the resurrection.

## Second part: The Burial of Christ:

- 1134-1147: St. John (the θεολόγος) announces the arrival of Joseph of Arimathea, followed by Nicodemus.
- 1148-1188: Dialogue between John and Joseph, who has come to fetch and bury Jesus, but reports that the Jews have asked Pilate to prevent him being buried.
- 1189-1246: John comforts Joseph: Christ, who has manifestly been revealed to be divine, will be buried in view of the expected resurrection on the third day.
- 1247-1275: The θεοτόκος greets Joseph and Nicodemus. Although she is cautioned by Joseph, she stays at the cross to assist in the burial preparations.
- 1276-1308: After trying once more to dissuade the θεοτόκος from helping in the burial, Joseph and Nicodemus take Jesus down from the cross and hand him to her.
- 1309-1426: In one of the longest monologues of the play, the θεοτόκος laments the death of her son, giving free expression to the maternal love which binds her to him. Regarding the divine mystery of redemption, she states that it was all planned even before God created the universe. She recalls her maidenhood, the birth of Christ, and the fact that she did not expect he would have to die for the redemption of mankind. Noticing with appreciation the care which John and Joseph have taken, she reflects that the deceased do not really benefit from such offerings, but from being released from bondage in Hades – the divine mystery which has been foreshadowed by John the Baptist and by Jonah. On this she bases her hope in the resurrection, while indicating that Pilate and Judas will not escape punishment.
- 1427-1465: Joseph announces the death of Judas, which the θεοτόκος interprets as a manifestation of divine justice. Guiding Joseph and Nicodemus in the final burial preparations, she expresses her grief in a lament containing three anapaestic lines (1461-3).
- 1466-1488: Joseph and Nicodemus carry the body of Jesus to the tomb.

- 1489-1619: The θεοτόκος follows them to the tomb, where she speaks about the meaning and effect of the death of Christ: It implies victory over death; but the Jewish people will be punished for their unbelief and for their rejection of the Son of God. Finally, she invites Joseph and Nicodemus to spend the night at John's home, to await the dawn of the third day.
- 1620-1636: John approves of this decision, and they all go to his house, in order to be quite near to the tomb.
- 1637-1699: In reaction to Joseph's farewell words to Jesus, as if to a friend finally separated from him by his death, the θεολόγος explains to Joseph the mystery of redemption in Christ - the basic reason for his incarnation and death. Yet the people who planned to kill him will be banished from their land.
- 1700-1711: Joseph anticipates suffering the same fate as his countrymen - a fate which he fears more than death.
- 1712-1765: The θεολόγος explains that this is the fate which the Jewish people deserve, for their stubbornness since the time of the prophets. But Christ will rise from the dead, and will save Joseph too.
- 1766-1796: Convinced by the θεολόγος, Joseph now shares in the anticipation of the third day.
- 1797-1817: Prompted by the θεοτόκος to proclaim God's power, and encouraged by the θεολόγος, Nicodemus and Joseph depart. The others go to John's house.
- 1818-1854: Dialogue between the θεοτόκος and two ἡμιχόρια: All night she has been awake, lamenting Jesus' death.
- 1855-1883: Rising at dawn on the sabbath day, the women see a messenger approaching. He informs them of the guard who has been sent to the tomb, presumably in order to prevent the disciples from stealing the body.
- 1884-1905: The θεοτόκος pities the scribes and elders, who do not realize their own folly. Perhaps, she says, the guard will be an eye-witness to the resurrection.

### Third part: The Resurrection:

- 1906-1940: Before dawn, on the day after the sabbath, the θεοτόκος suggests that one of the women should go to the tomb as a scout.
- 1941-1963: Mary Magdalene offers to undertake this task. The χορός and the Virgin will follow after a while.
- 1964-1979: Magdalene hopes to be rewarded for her efforts by witnessing the resurrection.
- 1980-1991: The θεοτόκος decides to accompany Magdalene.
- 1992-2030: They depart in the direction of the tomb, while the θεοτόκος expresses her intense longing to see her divine son resurrected.
- 2031-2037: Magdalene notices the absence of the guards.
- 2038-2042: They wonder who will roll away the large stone.
- 2043-2053: Magdalene sees that the stone has been removed. She reports this to the disciples, and quickly returns.
- 2054-2059: The θεοτόκος sees a shining figure sitting on the stone. The guards have become like dead men.
- 2060-2075: The angel tells them that Jesus has risen from the dead. They should tell the news to the disciples; to Peter especially.
- 2076-2083: The θεοτόκος is filled with joy.
- 2084-2107: On their way to tell the disciples, Christ appears to them. They kneel down before Him, but He sends them off to tell the disciples.
- 2108-2115: The joy of the θεοτόκος is beyond description.
- 2116-2133: Seeing the other women approaching, Magdalene joins them and returns to the tomb. They see a youth sitting in the tomb, who repeats the message of the first angel.
- 2134-2173: Magdalene wants to go and tell Peter and the others immediately, but the χορός is fearful at first.
- 2174-2190: A messenger, bringing the news of the resurrection, learns that the θεοτόκος knows already.
- 2191-2269: The messenger tells how the guards have run to the Jewish council, and reports the contents of their discussion: The guards told of the strange events which occurred at the tomb, but the council bribed them to remain silent. Accepting the bribe, the



guards yet insisted on telling the council of their experience at the tomb.

2270-2295: At this point, the chief priests and the guards are introduced directly: The priests use threats in order to secure the silence of the guards, but they insist on the truth of the resurrection.

2296-2377: Now Pilate is also introduced. He wants to know why the guards are so frightened. When they say it is because the body has been stolen, he is furious, suspecting that the guards are lying to him.

2378-2388: The messenger concludes his report, saying that the guards are proclaiming everything they have seen.

2389-2414: The θεοτόκος welcomes the news, although it implies inevitable doom for the Jewish council. She calls on her companions to return once more to the tomb.

2415-2479: From the ensuing dialogue we learn that Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves, after Mary Magdalene had told them about the empty tomb. The events as witnessed by Magdalene, are described again (*cf.* Jn 20.1-18). She also reports that Jesus appeared to two others, who were walking along a country road (*cf.* Mk 16.12; Lk 24.13-35).

2480-2503: The women reach the house of Mary, where Cleopas is telling how Jesus has appeared to him on the road. At that moment the Lord appears among them, though the doors have been locked.

2504-2531: Christ greets them, and assures them that it is not a ghost appearing to them, but He himself. He sends them into the world to proclaim the Gospel, and bestows on them the presence of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Epilogue:**

2532-2602: The play is concluded by a prayer to the Saviour, followed by an invocation to the Virgin, in which she is begged - as πρέσβις εὐπρόσδεκτος to her Son (2589) - for protection against evil.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF THE PLAY

An aspect of the *Christus patiens* which has deliberately been ignored in chapter 1, is the question regarding the identity of its author. The answer to this question, by the middle of the sixteenth century, seemed straightforward: St. Gregory of Nazianzus. In the more recent publications on the *Christus patiens*, however, the reader will simply not find unqualified indications of its author and date of composition.

The reason is that the *editio princeps* - the text published by A. Bladus in 1542 - followed the manuscript tradition in attributing this Euripidean cento to Gregory of Nazianzus; but since 1571 this attribution has been contested. The first doubts about the correctness of the manuscript attribution were expressed in that year by I. Leuvenklaius. His remarks served to initiate a scholarly dispute which would prove to be unique, both in respect of its persistence and in respect of its complexity. As far as persistence is concerned: after more than four centuries, the dispute is still very much alive. As far as complexity is concerned: the arguments advanced in the course of this dispute involve aspects of poetic style, metre, language, literary genre, biography, history, and theology, to name but the most important.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the different arguments which have been advanced in support of, or in opposition to, the traditional attribution to the Nazianzen, the complexity of the problem may be illustrated from another perspective, by listing the alternatives which have been suggested to accepting the Nazianzen as author of the *Christus patiens*. These are - in chronological order of being suggested by different critics - Apollinaris of Laodicea (either the elder or the younger), Gregory of Antioch, John Chrysostom, a certain Stephen (Stephanus), some unknown monk with limited knowledge of the plays of Euripides, John (or his brother Isaac) Tzetzes, Theodorus Prodromus, Constantine Manasses; and in addition to all the above, there is the frequently

recurring suggestion that the play has been composed by an anonymous versificator of the 11th or the 12th century. The reader should bear in mind that the proponents of all these suggestions believed they had positive proof, or, at least, reasonable probability, supporting their hypotheses; also that even after four centuries, a unanimous scholarly opinion regarding the issue seems unattainable.

During the course of the debate, various arguments have been advanced to support or to oppose the traditional attribution, and many more in support of or in opposition to alternative suggestions. It goes almost without saying that those arguments considered by their proponents to be incontestable were the ones which met with the most vigorous opposition.

A survey of the major events marking this debate can be found in the *introduction* of the edition of A. Tuilier (1969). It aims at giving an objective account, but being a supporter of the traditional attribution of the play to Gregory Nazianzen, Tuilier tends to omit contributions not directly in favour of or opposed to the issue of Gregorian authorship. For a more comprehensive survey of all relevant contributions the reader is referred to F. Trisoglio (1974), whose 238 footnotes constitute a valuable bibliography covering publications from 1571 to 1972.

Trisoglio discusses, in chronological order, the different contributions to the debate concerning the authorship of the *Christus patiens*. It would serve no purpose to repeat here all the details of his account; however, it is necessary to provide some framework in which the relevant material can be studied. Therefore the following discussion is not presented as a chronological account, but is structured according to a classification of the arguments relevant to the question.

The reasons for this different approach are the following:

- 1) Simply keeping count of the opponents and the defenders of Gregorian authorship will not lead to any conclusion; their arguments have to be considered and evaluated.
- 2) In the course of the debate, some arguments are neglected

or forgotten for years, and afterwards re-introduced. In a purely chronological survey of the debate, the impact of such arguments may be missed.

3) The scope of the relevant arguments is much wider and more complicated than simply opposing, or assenting to, the traditional attribution of the play to Gregory of Nazianzus. This can better be illustrated by deviating from the strictly chronological approach found in both Tuilier's *introduction* and Trisoglio's article.

After expounding all the relevant arguments in this way, the period since 1969 will be discussed in chronological order, because (1) this will provide a supplement to Trisoglio's article, adding more recent publications to the bibliography, and (2) it will reveal that no new arguments have recently been introduced into the debate.

#### **Classification of the arguments:**

After a survey of all the relevant publications, it seemed practical to divide the arguments advanced during the course of the debate into the following categories:

##### **- Stylistic arguments:**

This category includes arguments involving a comparison of the stylistic features of the *Christus patiens* to those of other works by Gregory of Nazianzus. The arguments relate to *gravitas*, *acumen*, *elegantia*, *nobilitas*, tragic versus comic diction, the frequency of comparisons, variety versus monotony, piquancy, etc.

##### **- Metrical arguments:**

These are the arguments concerning prosodic laws and the degree to which they are observed.

##### **- Linguistic arguments:**

Arguments concerning vocabulary, morphology, and syntax are presented under this heading.

##### **- Literary arguments:**

These arguments involve a comparison of the *Christus patiens* to other dramatic literature - especially to the works of Euripides. They concern dramatic composition, the formal elements of ancient Greek tragedy, dramatic conventions,

characterization, the definition of the *Christus patiens* as *tragicomoedia*, the motivation for composing a cento, as well as - surprisingly - charges of plagiarism.

**- Historical arguments:**

This category includes the arguments concerning biographical data, the history of textual tradition (both of the *Christus patiens* and of the plays of Euripides), influence upon or from other christian literature, the historical circumstances favourable to the composition of a cento, and the existence or absence of other centos comparable to this one.

**- Theological arguments:**

Arguments concerning christology, mariology, adherence to the canonical sources, apocryphal inspiration, *decorum*, and the polemical nature of the *Christus patiens* are presented and discussed under this heading. The reader will note that the sub-category of mariology is in itself quite comprehensive, including arguments concerning the characterization of the Virgin, the doctrine of intercession, the veneration of Mary, and terms of honour referring to the Mother of Christ, among which the title θεοτόκος (*deipara*) is the one most frequently entering into the dispute.

**Discussion of the arguments:**

**2.1 STYLISTIC ARGUMENTS:**

The first doubts to be expressed regarding the correctness of the manuscript attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Gregory of Nazianzus, were based upon stylistic considerations. In 1571, I. Leuvenklaius wrote that he found it difficult to be persuaded of the Gregorian authorship of this "tragoedia seu potius tragicomoedia", because it lacked the *acumen* and the refinement (or symmetry - τὸ στρογγύλον) characteristic of the Nazianzen.

Similar sentiments were expressed also at Cambridge, when W. Perkins (1611, col.236) wrote: "Gregorii Nazianzeni tragoedia non sapit stylum Gregorii" - the tragedy does not "know" the style of Gregory. (Is this to be interpreted as indicating criticism of the attribution to Gregory, or simply as a

factual observation of the stylistic differences between two different poetic types, perhaps implying a censure of Gregory for composing in a literary type in which his personal style did not find its free expression? Both Tuilier and Trisoglio hint at the first possibility, but the quotation from Perkins contains no explicit clues.)

The first alternative to be proposed as a more likely author than Gregory Nazianzen, was Apollinaris of Laodicea. This possibility was suggested by C. Baronius in 1588, and seems to have been considered acceptable by R. Bellarminus, who expressed his opinion about the play in the following words (1613, p.77): "Tragoedia, *Christus patiens*, non videtur habere gravitatem solitam Nazianzeno, praesertim cum describitur eiulatus matris Christi, quae prudentissima et constantissima erat." (In fact, the association of *gravitas* with an acceptable characterization of the mother of Christ indicates to me that cardinal Bellarminus, when using this term, was probably confusing poetic or rhetorical style with seemliness - *decorum* - as regarded from his own religious perspective. The phrase in which Caillau (1840) uses the term - *gravitas sermonis* - seems to support this suspicion, unless the term itself has undergone a change of meaning between the 17th and the 19th centuries.)

G. J. Vossius (1647, vol.2, p.72) defines proper tragic diction as speech which matches the solemnity of the matters it describes; he then states that in the *Christus patiens* Gregory Nazianzen errs in this respect. "Eius dictio tragica subinde in orationibus; comica magis in tragoedia: nisi tragoediae eius, ut aliquibus visum, auctor potius sit Apollinaris" - thus accepting the possibility of Apollinarian instead of Gregorian authorship, by virtue of the stylistic differences which he notices between the *Christus patiens* and the speeches of the Nazianzen. This opinion of Vossius regarding the diction of the *Christus patiens* is shared by A. Baillet (1685-6, vol.4.2, p.457), the only difference being that Baillet seems more reluctant to accept the notion of Apollinarian authorship.

This type of argumentation, however, is not common to all scholars of the 17th century. It is rejected by P. Lambecius (1671, pp. 22-3), who states that the *gravitas* argument against Gregorian authorship is of no or of very little value; if this argument by itself would suffice to settle the authorship controversy, the authenticity of many of Gregory's genuine poems would also be suspect.

L. S. le Nain de Tillemont (1703, vol.9, p.559) mentions that there are scholars, both catholic and "heretic", who do not recognize in the *Christus patiens* the style nor the *gravitas* of Gregory; but he denies seeing any reason for attributing the play to Apollinaris.

Most of the terms in which arguments concerning stylistic aspects are stated, are reflected in the opinion of R. Ceillier (1738, vol.7, pp. 196-8), who maintains that this tragedy lacks the *nobilitas*, the *gravitas* and the *varietas* of Gregory's poetry; nor is the expression of thoughts so exact and elevated; and almost totally absent are the comparisons which occur quite frequently in Gregory's poetry.

A sharply critical opinion is expressed by L. C. Valckenaer (1768, p.xi). He denies that Gregory deserves the insult of being considered the father of such a monstrous offspring, with its numerous metrical irregularities and its disgusting lack of piquancy. Valckenaer refrained from naming any other candidate; and so did C. D. Beck (1788, p.466), who only mentioned that this tragedy was published under the name of the Nazianzen, of whom, he said, it was really unworthy.

I. A. Fabricius (1802, vol.8, p.600) expresses himself more in favour of the manuscript attribution than of scholarly conjecture, though he observes in the *Christus patiens* a lesser degree of *elegantia* and of *iudicium et acumen* than in other poems of Gregory.

Directly opposed to Valckenaer's views are those of J. C. W. Augusti (1816, pp. 10-7), who - among other arguments - asserts that differences between the *Christus patiens* and

the speeches of Gregory should be expected, because of the difference in literary genre. This argument in itself seems obvious, but it surely did not prevent H. C. A. Eichstädt (1816, pp. 21-33) from observing that the play from beginning to end is dominated by a "molestissimus ... languor", and that the diction lacks warmth and is "expers omnis succi et nervorum". (In every respect Eichstädt was echoing the opinion of Valckenaer. In fact, his contribution to the debate is nothing but a defence of the latter against the criticisms of Augusti.)

The observations of Villemain (1845, p.395) serve to place this issue in a slightly different perspective. He describes the differences between the *Christus patiens* and other poetry of Gregory Nazianzen as "evident inferiority" on the part of the former, but he considers this inferiority to be an inevitable result of the diversity of genre, and therefore not constituting a decisive argument against Gregorian authorship. (It is difficult to interpret the remark which Villemain adds: "... ajoutons qu'à tout considérer, ce drame n'est pas une production indigne de saint Grégoire." Does this indicate that he regards the "evident inferiority" as excusable in this particular case, or does it betray the fact that he uses the expression "inferiority" to appease the opponents of his views, without really regarding the play as inferior to the rest of Gregory's poetry?)

Regarding stylistic aspects of the *Christus patiens*, J. A. Lalanne (1852, pp. xxvii-xxxi) simply stated that many other poems of the Nazianzen - of undisputed authenticity - would also seem inferior to his *gravitas*, if the particular motives for their composition were not taken into account. In other words, even if the *Christus patiens* were inferior to the stylistic standards expected from a poet like Gregory, this would still be irrelevant as an objection to its origin.

Lalanne is positively in favour of the attribution to Gregory Nazianzen, whereas Ellissen (1855), who judges the arguments of Lalanne (mentioned above) as valid, has a more objective approach. He declares his intent to demonstrate, not the



authorship of Gregory, but rather the fragility of arguments generally accepted as certain proof against this authorship.

It seems that Tuilier did not carefully read Ellissen, for he states that Ellissen reproduced the text of Dübner "et les positions de la critique" (p.17), and that Ellissen did not hesitate to reveal the weaknesses in the arguments of those opposing the attribution to Gregory, "tout en refusant de croire à l'authenticité du drame" (p.17 n.4). This explains why he maintains that after the edition of Ellissen, almost nobody dared to defend the authenticity of the play.

Indeed during the second half of the 19th century different scholars did express negative views concerning the *Christus patiens*, and declared it to be of 11th or 12th century origin, without much argumentation. These views, however, were expressed in publications not primarily concerned with the play itself. This fact explains, on the one hand, the scantiness of argumentation. On the other hand, it may be an indication that the arguments against the authenticity of the play had by that time gained general acknowledgement, to an extent which discouraged further study of the subject. In fact, between 1860 and 1880 only A. Döring and J. L. Klein published studies specifically concerned with the *Christus patiens*. Döring's hypothesis, that Tzetzes is the author of the *Christus patiens*, probably contributed to the fact that many scholars were convinced of a 12th century origin.

Klein (1866, pp. 599-634) represents the opposite viewpoint, being a defender of the traditional attribution to Gregory of Nazianzus. He derives his conclusion upon the authenticity of the play from diverse arguments, among which, however, the only one possibly pertaining to style is his admiration of the poetic beauty of Mary's lament over Jesus.

A curiously flippant approach is found in I. Kont (1882, p. 444): The play is by Gregory Nazianzen, but others, of lesser ability, later interpolated some scenes; probably those which caused critics to repudiate its authenticity.

During the following decade, the dispute about the origin of the *Christus patiens* was dominated by metrical arguments, which will be discussed in the next section. This phase was followed by greater emphasis on literary and theological arguments. There were many superficial remarks, again in publications not primarily concerned with the *Christus patiens*. There were some defenders of the authenticity of the play, while many were satisfied with repeating what seems to have become the *communis opinio* by the end of the 19th century: that the *Christus patiens* was composed by an anonymous versificator of the 11th or 12th century.

In 1931, the traditional attribution of the play to Gregory Nazianzen was defended in a study by V. Cottas, mainly on the basis of theological and historical arguments. Regarding stylistic aspects, Cottas says that the objections of critics are disputable; the stylistic deficiencies and the numerous repetitions could be blamed partly to the work of copyists, partly to the anti-heretic intent of the author (pp.199-200). Later in the same study (p.209) she refers to stylistic aspects again, rejecting the idea of a contamination of different plays, on the basis of the stylistic, formal, and conceptual uniformity of the play. (It seems to me that this argument, in as far as it concerns style, contradicts the former one.)

Among the unusually large number of scholars who published reviews of Cottas' studies, roughly one third seem to have been convinced by her arguments, while the rest insisted that the play's authenticity could not be proved. Two of these, who refer explicitly to stylistic arguments, are Maas and Momigliano:

P. Maas (1932, pp. 395-6) is brusquely hostile towards the attribution of the play to Gregory, saying that all competent scholars exclude the possibility of Gregorian authorship, for stylistic and metrical reasons.

A. Momigliano (1932, pp. 47-51) sees in the era of Romanos a calculable *terminus post quem* for the *Christus patiens*,

which verifies what he regards as the stylistic and metrical indications that the play belongs to the 11th or the 12th century.

The impetus given to the dispute by Cottas soon diminished, however, and - as far as stylistic arguments especially are concerned - during the following years, nothing worth mentioning was published. At the VI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'études Byzantines in 1948, A. Tuilier expressed his opinion that the objections against the authenticity of the play - among which those dissociating the cento from the noble personality of Gregory of Nazianzus - lacked scientific foundation. It would take two more decades, though, before these preliminary statements of Tuilier finally assumed the form in which they were published in the *introduction* to his edition of the *Christus patiens* (1969).

During this interval, the only detailed study of the play to be published was that of C. del Grande. In *Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo*, vol.3 (1956, coll.712-3) he says that the largest obstacle to the attribution of the play to Gregory is the stylistic confrontation between the diction of the play and that of Gregory's hymns. He believes this obstacle may be overcome by supposing that interpolations to an original lyrical nucleus, which was probably the work of Gregory, have resulted in the text as we have it from Byzantine philology between the 9th and the 11th centuries. An elaboration of this view is to be found in Del Grande (1962), where lines 1656-62 are cited as a particular instance of a passage not corresponding to the "gusto" of the Nazianzen.

Q. Cataudella (1969) is in favour of the view that the play belongs to the 4th century, but does not regard Gregory of Nazianzus as the original author. He says the arguments concerning style and metre are the strongest objections against the attribution of the play to Gregory, but he does not see in them any objection against attributing it to another 4th century author. (Only one aspect of style, viz. the absence of comparisons, is explicitly mentioned by Cataudella; he simply asserts that this results from the

literary genre to which the *Christus patiens* belongs.) The hypothesis which he proposes is the following: The original author is Apollinaris of Laodicea; the parts reflecting an anti-apollinarist doctrine are the result of a revision of the play, probably by Gregory of Nazianzus.

Regarding the credibility of Cataudella's hypothesis, the following remarks may be made:

1) There is no historical evidence for the kind of revision he assumes. (This objection was mentioned to me by professor K. Mitsakis, who also pointed out that there is no evidence of the play ever being performed in Byzantine times. In fact, Mitsakis does not regard it as being intended for stage performance. Cataudella, on the other hand, supposes that the play was actually performed, and that it was so popular among the public that the orthodox theologians felt themselves compelled, either to have it destructed, or to have the text corrected in order to conform with orthodox doctrine.)

2) By the solution which he proposes, Cataudella is in fact evading the problems which the dispute involves. Instead of verifying the scientific basis of the objections against Gregorian authorship - especially the arguments relating to metre and to style - he accepts those objections without questioning, and then supposes an author of whom not enough is extant to provide a basis for judging to what extent the same objections would be applicable in his case.

The contribution of A. Tuilier (1969) is valuable not only for his edition of the text, which is based upon much more comprehensive manuscript evidence than the 1885 edition of J. G. Brambs, but also for his detailed exposition of arguments relating to the dispute about the authenticity of the play. Tuilier is a defender of the traditional attribution of the play to Gregory Nazianzen. In chapter 3 of the *introduction* to his edition, he discusses the issue of authenticity from the perspective of external criticism, dividing the arguments into those pertaining to the manuscripts - "témoignages de la tradition directe" - on the one hand, and those pertaining to interferences between *Christus patiens* and diverse authors - "témoignages de la tradition indirecte" - on the other. For

the purposes of this discussion, it may be noted that all of Tuilier's arguments can be classified as historical, and that he does not even mention stylistic arguments, except once in chapter 1, where he summarizes the development of the dispute regarding authorship of the play.

The following **conclusions** may be drawn from a survey of the stylistic arguments introduced into this dispute:

1) These arguments reveal a total lack of uniformity in the criteria which scholars apply when passing judgement on the question of the play's authenticity. While most express criticism of the poetic style of the play, some take the speeches (*orationes*) of the Nazianzen as their standard of measurement; others take the poems; and only a few allow for some Euripidean influence upon the style of the play.

2) Neither is there any consensus about the applicability of these criteria. Some scholars criticize the poet's style, without regarding it as an argument against the authenticity of the play; while others consider it to be the most valid argument, or at least among the most valid.

3) Implicit in all these arguments is the underlying notion that Gregory of Nazianzus was a poet of unrivalled talent, whose works are all masterpieces showing impeccable stylistic refinement and taste from beginning to end. This assumption obviously correlates with the widespread - though unfounded - belief that the standards set by the classical era were never equalled, let alone surpassed, by men of later ages; so that "classical" becomes equated with both "excellent" and "ancient", and "inferior" is necessarily "of post-classical origin". Though this rule may be valid for many artistic endeavours of various kinds, its uncritical application by scholars have led to many subjective opinions being accepted as statements of fact. Regarding the Nazianzen particularly: even though his works reveal undeniable poetic skills, and though his rhetorical training is put to effective use in all his writings, we should be careful not to confuse his poetic repute with his lasting renown as an expounder of orthodox doctrine, which earned him the title of "the Theologian".

\* \* \*

## 2.2 METRICAL ARGUMENTS:

In addition to his argument based upon the poetic style of the *Christus patiens*, Leuvenklaius (1571, p.921) stated that the rules prescribed for iambic verse are not observed in this play, whereas they are strictly adhered to in the iambic poems of the Nazianzen. This argument, also, was repeated by Perkins (1611, col. 236): "... tragoedia ... neque versum Jambicum, more Gregorii, accurate observat"; and it was echoed almost *verbatim* by W. Cave (*circa* 1690 - reprinted posthumously in 1741, vol.1, p.248).

The first European scholar to re-introduce this argument, was F. Buonarruoti (1716). Because of the nature of his study - it concerns archaeology - Buonarruoti only briefly refers to the *Christus patiens*. A notable aspect of his contribution, though, is that he was the first to repudiate explicitly both the attribution to Gregory and the hypothesis of Apollinarian authorship (which had been accepted by many scholars of the 17th century), and to suggest that the play was composed by a "modern author" (p.265).

Valckenaer (1768), who had neither a word of praise for the play, nor a moment's doubt about the artistic excellence of Gregory, mentioned the numerous metrical "irregularities" as one of his reasons for denying that the play could have been composed by the Nazianzen. To this argument Augusti (1816) replied that those metrical "errors", which are unacceptable in other poetry, were inevitable in a poetic mosaic like the *Christus patiens*.

For the greater part of the 19th century, references to the metre of the *Christus patiens* kept recurring, but without detailed discussion. A. B. Caillau (1840) referred to the lack of *metri rectitudo*; C. Magnin (1849) recorded among other scholarly objections against the attribution to Gregory the inexact metrical patterns of the play; A. Ellissen (1855) did not regard the metrical errors - the use of  $\alpha$ ,  $\iota$ , and  $\upsilon$  as *anceps*, and the arbitrary lengthening and shortening of syllables - as proof against the authenticity of the play.

The first detailed study of the metre of the *Christus patiens* is found in an inaugural dissertation by J. G. Brambs (1883, pp. 27-37). He states the following:

- 1) The author of the *Christus patiens* treats  $\alpha$ ,  $\iota$ , and  $\upsilon$  as *anceps*; whereas this oscillation rarely occurs in other poems of Gregory.
- 2) In the play trisyllabic feet are avoided, while these abound elsewhere in the poetry of Gregory.
- 3) Hiatus, normally admitted without restraint by Gregory, is carefully avoided in this play.
- 4) The penultimate syllable is normally accented in the play, whereas this is not the rule in Gregory.

To these arguments Brambs adds some others, of linguistic nature, in support of his view that the Nazianzen could not be the author of the *Christus patiens*. He also excludes the possibility of Apollinarian authorship (by reason of the abundance of trisyllabic feet and of hiatus), and concludes upon the authorship of either John Tzetzes or Theodorus Prodromus (both of the 12th century). Of these two, Brambs finally indicates Prodromus as the more likely author.

In reaction to this hypothesis of Brambs, I. Hilberg (1886) asserts that Theodorus Prodromus cannot be the author of the *Christus patiens*. He lists the following ten points of contrast between the play and the trimeters of Prodromus:

- 1) Iambic trimeters which are not paroxytone occur much more frequently in the play than in the poetry of Prodromus - 24 times more than in the *Love of Rhodante and Dosiclea*, while the *Catomyomachia* does not contain a single transgression of this law.
- 2) Prodromus' trimeters are all dodecasyllables, whereas the play has 8 verses consisting of 13 syllables.
- 3) The author of the play sometimes arbitrarily lengthens the short vowels  $e$  and  $o$ , while Prodromus does this only in justifiable cases, like proper names and *termini technici*.
- 4) Both Prodromus and the author of the play respected the law that  $\eta$ ,  $\omega$ , and all vowels followed by a double consonant ("starke Doppelconsonanz") are long. (Whether this is a point of contrast, the reader may judge for himself!)

- 5) Prodromus uses  $\alpha$  with iota subscript as short only twice (both cases being excusable, says Hilberg), while the author of the *Christus patiens* does so twice (with no excuse).
- 6) The first syllable of  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\omega}$  - which is long - is used as short only 4 times by Prodromus (all in the second foot), but without restraint even in the sixth foot in the play.
- 7) The first syllable of  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omega\nu$  - also long - is used as short in lines 1667 and 1669 of the play (in the sixth foot), but never in Prodromus.
- 8) Prodromus shows more restraint than the author of the play in his treatment of short vowels before a *muta cum liquida* as *anceps* ("mittelzeitig").
- 9) Dialectal forms like  $\theta\nu\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  and  $\tau\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\omega\nu$  occur in the sixth foot in the play, but never in Prodromus.
- 10) The rule of *caesura semiquinaria* or *semiseptenaria* - the natural pause after the fifth or seventh syllable - is always observed by Prodromus, but not always in the play.

In order to evaluate the influence which these arguments had upon the course of the scholarly dispute, it should first be considered whether the points noted by Hilberg can serve to refute Brambs' proposal of Theodorus Prodromus as the author of *Christus patiens*. In the following paragraphs, Hilberg's statements are discussed successively:

- 1) The demonstration that Prodromus regards the paroxytone ending of a trimeter line as a rule which he observes with remarkable care: this is probably the most notable point of contrast to the *Christus patiens*, which does not reveal any awareness of such a "rule". Hilberg mentions (p.283) that among the first 500 lines of the play there are 116 which do not have a paroxytone ending. This means 23%. A random sample of lines from the rest of the play produced the figure of 22%. This differs significantly from the trimeter verse of Prodromus, for which the figures are 1% (*Love of Rhodante and Dosiclea*) and zero (*Catomyomachia*).
- 2) The rule of twelve syllables: this seems to support the view of Hilberg, though 8 verses out of 2600 are a relatively small number, which cannot conceal a strong preference for



the dodecasyllable. It may be added that Hilberg's discussion of the 8 lines in question further weakens his argument. He writes: "In fünf Fällen (626, 1165, 1450, 1570, 2219) hat der Verfasser thatsächlich einen euripideischen Vers mit 13 Silben abgeschrieben und nur aus Nachlässigkeit es unterlassen, ihn entsprechend zu ändern" (p.284). If this is seen as an excuse of those "errors", it leaves Hilberg with only 3 lines - or a deviation of 0,1% - to prove his point.

3) The alleged care with which Prodrōmus avoids using a short e or o as long: Hilberg arrives at the small number of exceptions - which he regards as justified by the fact that they involve proper names or "Kunstausdrücke" - via a much larger number of emendations of lines "sämmtlich corrupt und fast durchweg leicht zu emendieren" (p.285). The author of *Christus patiens* is denied these extenuating circumstances, and the text of the play is accordingly denied the benefit of conjectural emendation. This vicious circle renders the argument inconclusive.

Note: Regarding Brambs' emendations of lines 84, 217, 725, 1203, and 1238, Hilberg says: "Wäre Theodoros Prodrōmos der Verfasser des *Christus patiens*, so würde ich die Notwendigkeit solcher Verbesserungsversuche anerkennen; dass aber jene Voraussetzung und somit auch diese Folgerung unberechtigt sind, dürfte dem Leser bereits klar geworden sein." (p.287)

4) Adherence to the rule that η, ω, and all vowels followed by a double consonant are long: by his emendation of all the exceptions to this rule - both in the play and in Prodrōmus - Hilberg deprives his own argument of a conclusion.

5) Two instances in the play, and two in Prodrōmus, of an α with iota subscript being used as short: Hilberg has already pronounced judgement upon the author of the play, has he not?

6; 7; 9) The use of a long α - resulting either from crasis, or from contraction of α-ε, or replacing η in dialectal forms like τλάμων - as short: this occurs in both authors, though never in the sixth foot in Prodrōmus - owing to Hilberg's emendation of line 225 of the *Amicitia exulans*.

8) The measure of reserve with which short vowels occurring before a *muta cum liquida* are treated as *anceps*: the difference between "some restraint" and "no restraint" in the use of a generally acknowledged licence seems somewhat too subtle to be decisive in an authorship controversy.

10) The careful observance of the rule applying to *caesurae* proves Prodromus to be technically more precise than the author of the play. This may indicate that to Prodromus form was more important, whereas the author of *Christus patiens* regarded content as more important - an oversimplification, perhaps, but not improbable, taking into account the fact that the *Catomyomachia* is a parody of the dignity of ancient tragedy, whereas the *Christus patiens* in no way can be considered a parody.

After more than a century, these weaknesses in Hilberg's arguments have not yet been exposed. K. Horna (1929) asserts that Brambs and Hilberg have decisively proved that the play belongs to the 12th century. Even Trisoglio (1974) evaluates Hilberg's article simply as "costruito con una saldezza incommensurabilmente superiore" to that of Dräseke (1884), who considered Apollinaris to be the play's author.

If Hilberg has proved anything, it is that the author of the *Christus patiens* was not one of the better 12th century iambic poets. From this can be deduced either that he was one of the less able members of that group, or that he was not a 12th century iambic poet. Hilberg concluded upon the first of these alternatives; and so, it seems, did all scholars who repeated after Krumbacher that the *Christus patiens* was composed by an anonymous author of the 11th or 12th century. The second possibility did not even occur to Hilberg, since his main concern was to refute Brambs, not to support the candidacy of any other author. Thus he built his entire argument on the supposition that the play is of late origin.

This assumption is repeated - as if it were a fact - by many scholars of the 20th century. In the following paragraphs, only those are mentioned who refer explicitly to metre:

G. Montelatici (1916, pp.137-8) asserts that the play reveals metrical correctness only in those lines taken from ancient tragedy in their totality, while the rest betray an "absolute ignorance" of prosody. He supports the view that the play was composed near the end of the 11th century.

P. Maas (1932) bluntly states that for stylistic and metrical reasons, all competent scholars oppose the attribution of the play to Gregory of Nazianzus.

According to the opinion of A. Momigliano (1932), metrical and stylistic considerations point towards an 11th or a 12th century origin of the play.

A. Vogt (1934) also does not believe that Gregory Nazianzen is the author of this play. He asserts that for prosodic and theological reasons, the *Christus patiens* is to be regarded as a work of the 7th century, possibly from Jerusalem. (?)

Concerning the metre of the *Christus patiens*, A. Tuilier (1950) points out that this play is the only known example of a cento in iambic verse. Later Byzantine literature did not experiment any further with this type of poetry. Since the change from prosodic verse to a metre based upon the stress of syllables had already occurred by the time of Romanos, Tuilier sees no reason for comparing the *Christus patiens* to the works of Theodorus Prodromus.

In sum, this survey of the metrical arguments which have been introduced into the authorship controversy leads to the following conclusions:

- 1) Though many scholars note some differences when comparing the metre of the play to that of the iambic poems of Gregory, they are divided in their opinions about the validity of such a comparison as a means of settling the authenticity dispute.
- 2) Attempts to identify an alternative author by means of metrical analysis have been unsuccessful; yet these attempts have somehow led to the assumption that the play was written in the 12th century. During recent decades, this assumption has frequently been uncritically accepted as a proven fact.

\* \* \*

### 2.3 LINGUISTIC ARGUMENTS:

J. G. Brambs (1883) was the first scholar to introduce into the dispute arguments of a linguistic character. He is opposed to the attribution of the play to Gregory Nazianzen, and notes the following linguistic differences between the play and other works of the Nazianzen:

- 1) In the play κάρα occurs as a feminine noun, whereas this happens once only - in a doubtful case - in Gregory.
- 2) The adverb ναί occurs frequently in the play, and is sometimes repeated; in Gregory it occurs rarely, and is never repeated.
- 3) The comparative in stead of the superlative form occurs frequently in the play, but it is alien to Gregory.
- 4) The verbs μολῶ, ἐρῶ, and θίγω are conjugated irregularly in the play, though not in Gregory.
- 5) The use of the aorist conjunctive in future sense occurs in the play, but is very rare in Gregory.
- 6) Aorist infinitives occur in the play in future sense, though Gregory follows classical usage in this respect.
- 7) The aorist optative is used for future indicative or for optative with ἄν in the play, much more frequently than is usual for Gregory.
- 8) The perfect is used for the aorist, "contrary to the rules", in the play but not in Gregory.
- 9) The verb κέκραγα has present as well as past value.
- 10) The form ἔφησε - alien to Gregory - occurs in the play.

The only other contribution containing linguistic arguments is that of T. Mommsen (1895) who says that the play contains a number of features indicating its late origin, for example the semitic instrumental ἐν (but cf. Euripides *Bacchae* 159), the frequent occurrence of composites with παν-, and certain "monsters" like λαμπροπυρσόμορφος.

Except for these two contributions, no research has been done on the language of the *Christus patiens* and its relation to the linguistic usage of the Nazianzen. The question whether linguistic features of the play do or do not support the attribution to Gregory, is still far from being answered.

\* \* \*

## 2.4 LITERARY ARGUMENTS:

Much more scholarly attention has been given to the literary aspects of the play than to its language. The first of these to be introduced into the debate involved characterization. As early as 1588, Baronius voiced his criticism of the *animi affectus* of the *Deipara* expressed in this tragedy. Similar criticism of the poet's characterization of Mary is contained in a remark by Bellarminus (1613): "... describitur eiulatus matris Christi, quae prudentissima et constantissima erat."

It seems that Bellarminus judged the characterization of the Virgin from a theological perspective, expecting of the dramatist to remain faithful to the gospels in his portrayal of Mary, to an extent which allows no concession to the demands of a dramatic plot. The same is true of R. Ceillier (1738), who disapproves of the doubts, fear, and anger expressed by the Virgin during the course of the play, which, he says, do not agree with her portrayal by the church fathers as a very steadfast person.

Proof of this tendency among some scholars to apply strictly theological criteria in the evaluation of an aspect which clearly also involves literary considerations, may be seen in the article by C. Magnin (1849). When listing the objections of earlier scholars against the attribution of the play to Gregory, he includes among the theological objections those criticisms expressed against the characterization of the Virgin. Under the heading of literary objections he listed arguments concerning language, style, and metre.

Some other literary aspects were introduced into the debate by D. Triller (1748). In order to support his assertion that the play was written by an ignorant monk, Triller lists the following defects in the play's construction:

- duration of three days, against the classical convention;
- the excessive use of messenger speeches;
- the absence of choral odes.

He also objects to the insufficient characterization of the different roles, to the monotony of the discourses, and to

the poor style of the play. It is clear that the criteria by which Triller evaluates the play are not theological, like those of Bellarminus and Ceillier; instead, he measures by all the standards of ancient tragedy, and arrives at the verdict that in many respects the *Christus patiens* falls short of those norms.

The opposite view is expressed by J. Iriarte (1769), who defends the literary merits of the play, and sees no reason for it to be described as a *tragicomoedia*. He sees nothing "humile" or "sordidum" or "ridiculum" in the play, and finds in it all the requirements of true tragedy.

The fact that the *Christus patiens* is a cento of Euripidean verse, also led to divergent scholarly opinions about its literary merits. In reaction to Valckenaer, who regards the play as an infantile literary production, Augusti (1816) sees behind the author's explicit reference to his poetic source a conscious reason for composing a cento. According to Augusti, it was the poet's purpose to introduce not himself, but another, to speak; and by mentioning his source, he was not committing plagiarism. The views of Augusti, in their turn, were vigorously opposed by Eichstädt (1816), who repeated the literary objections of Triller. To these he added some others, like the so-called comic character of Mary, the verbosity of her speeches, and the "indecentcy" of her laments over her son.

J. A. Lalanne (1852) admits that the laments of the Virgin are somewhat exaggerated, but he asserts that no tragic character exists without exaggeration. Thus he defends the attribution to Gregory by excusing the amount of exaggeration which some parts of the play exhibit. Implicit in this type of reasoning is the assumption that it is not characteristic of Gregory to exaggerate. One needs only to read some of his encomia, though, to realize that objections to exaggeration in the play can never be made into a cogent argument against Gregorian authorship.

In fact, Lalanne himself is of the opinion that the character

of the Virgin constitutes an argument in favour of Gregorian authorship. Her passionate temperament, her sensitivity to grief, as well as the way in which strength of purpose and human doubt are intermingled in her character, are all seen by him as manifestations of the personality of the Nazianzen.

A. Ellissen (1855) differs from those scholars who regard the characters in the play as not sufficiently individualized. He admits that the absence of choral odes may constitute a defect in its composition, though only if it is warranted to expect that the play should conform to all the norms applying to classical tragedy.

Whereas Ellissen has a positive appreciation of the poetic merits of the *Christus patiens*, A. Döring (1864) is of the opinion that the play has no such merits at all.

J. L. Klein (1866) agrees with Lalanne in regarding the character of the Virgin as a projection of the passionate, impulsive, fragile, but very noble temperament of the Nazianzen. In this respect, he sees the stamp of Gregory unmistakably impressed upon the play.

(Because of the centonic nature of this play, one should be careful not to ascribe to Gregory - or to the author, who ever he may be - every detail of characterization. It should be remembered that many traits of the characters may inevitably be taken over from Euripides along with the lines of verse. On the other hand, the poet may have chosen particular lines from Euripides primarily because they expressed the traits with which he planned to invest one of his characters.)

Klein detects in the three messages received by the Virgin a crescendo of importance and interest, which is paralleled by a dramatic crescendo in her reactions to them. He also says that the purification of humanity which is dramatized in this play leads to a *catharsis* the extent of which Aristotle could never have foreseen.

A. Nauck (1876) describes the play simply as "drama illud insulsum quod in libris Gregorio Nazianzeno male tribuitur" -

"that tasteless play which is wrongly attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus in the manuscripts".

Regarding characterization, K. N. Sathas (1878) observes that the Virgin is presented in the play more like Hecuba than like the Mother of God "who bemoans in a christian manner the crucifixion of Christ".

Note: With this argument Sathas seems to ignore, firstly, the centonic nature of the play; secondly, the possible influence which the demands of dramatic presentation may have exerted upon the laments which the dramatist wrote for the Virgin; and thirdly, the fact that in *Oratio* 15 (PG 35, 928 B ff.) the Nazianzen uses a similar technique in his portrayal of the mother of the Maccabees.

Objections against the "pagan nature" of the laments of the Virgin were voiced also by A. d'Ancona (1891), who regards the play as an example of intellectual and poetic decadence.

Without ignoring the artificiality of the method of composition, E. A. Pullig (1893) regards the verses borrowed from Euripides as fulfilling the purpose outlined in the introductory verses, and therefore not reflecting negatively upon the author.

Though M. de la Rousselière (1895) considers Gregory of Antioch - rather than the Nazianzen - to be the author of the *Christus patiens*, he evaluates the literary merits of the play in almost the same way as Pullig. He says the author can not be accused of plagiarism, because he takes only small phrases from Euripides; no situations, costumes, characters, or ideas.

Note: In my opinion, the author's greatest achievement is precisely his imitation and successful adaptation of many more elements of ancient tragedy than de la Rousselière would admit.

According to de la Rousselière, the characterization of the virgin reveals the poet's profound theological insight and fine analytical abilities.



K. Dieterich (1902) states that the *Christus patiens* is not truly a play, since it consists largely of messenger speeches and laments. He observes that Mary does not reveal the characteristics of a Mother of God; neither is she properly conceived as a literary character, since she exhibits some individual traits of the most divergent male and female characters of ancient tragedy; and in her oscillation between desperation and faith, the first gains the upper hand every time. Thus, according to Dieterich, the play is not inspired by any artistic or religious sensibility; the rage with which Mary repeatedly explodes against the enemies and the traitor of her son, is unfit for a christian; and the only scene reflecting a true christian spirit, is the one in which Peter is pardoned. He sees the character of Mary as a reflection of the spirit prevailing in the Byzantium of the 11th or 12th century - a spirit lacking the victorious power of faith and consequently also lacking the joy of life and of artistic expression.

These observations of Dieterich reveal the same type of reasoning as do the comments made by scholars like Sathas and d'Ancona. They reflect a tendency to compare the *Christus patiens* to classical tragedy, or to non-dramatic christian literature, or to both simultaneously, and to regard any deficiencies which such a comparison may seem to reveal, as proof that Gregory Nazianzen could not be the author of the *Christus patiens*. Underlying this type of reasoning is the assumption that everything the Nazianzen ever produced was impeccable, both from a literary and a religious perspective. This assumption, however, is unwarranted, and the comparison is an unfair one. Since the *Christus patiens* is the only known play by its author - whether or not he be the Nazianzen - it is unrealistic to expect from it the same standards of dramatic art than from the known plays of Euripides, which after all constitute a small selection from the vast literary production of this famous poet. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that the characters in this play would reveal some traits which, being inspired by Euripidean characters, can not be traced back to the gospels or to patristic sources.

A. Baumgartner (1905) agrees neither with the severe criticism of Dieterich, nor with the extremely laudative remarks of Klein. His own views about the play are the following:

- 1) The author was attracted by the religious seriousness, the fascinating rhetoric, the moving pathos, as well as the rich and beautiful language of Euripides; but he has not really penetrated the theory and practice of dramaturgy.
- 2) Contemplating the tragedy of the crucifixion and death of Christ, he was convinced that the laments of the virgin mother surpassed those of Hecuba in their measure both of grief and of love, but the only model from which he could shape into drama the great tragic argument of the history of mankind, was the simple narrative account of the evangelists.
- 3) The construction of the play is ingenuous and simple, but not inept, for it reveals a fine understanding of dramatic situation, a moving pathos, and theatrical effect in details.
- 4) The play has poetic beauty, and it remains an important event in the history of christian drama.

G. Montelatici (1916) denies the authenticity of the play, and dates it at about the end of the 11th century. He says a more exact indication is impossible, due to the lack of other works of the same genre, and to the conservative character of its language. He notes that the play does not follow the classical pattern, since it introduces too many characters, it lacks unity of time and locality, and there do not exist internal divisions like in classical tragedy.

Another opponent of the attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Gregory of Nazianzus, is F. Ermini (1916). His opinion is based upon the characterization of the virgin, to which he expresses objections similar to those recorded by Baronius, Bellarminus, Ceillier, Eichstädt, Sathas, d'Ancona, and Dieterich.

Q. Cataudella (1931) regards it as evidence of an exceptional artistic intuition that the poet immersed the divine mystery of the passion of Christ in a human concreteness of feeling, without totally humanizing it. He notes that in the first

part of the play the Virgin projects a contrast between grief and hope. This he regards as the psychological reality which the poet has recognized in her, as the human offprint of the divine mystery.

When this view of Cataudella is compared to the opinions of some of the scholars mentioned previously, it becomes clear that Cataudella praises precisely those literary aspects of the play which others severely criticise. This indicates once more the total lack of consensus among scholars about valid criteria for judging both the play's literary merits and the issue of its authenticity.

Concerning the characterization of the virgin mother in this play, V. Cottas (1931) states that it reflects the poet's intention to portray her as truly the Mother of God, though not superhuman. According to Cottas, the poet was placing emphasis upon the difference between the divine nature of Christ and the human nature of his mother, in order to illustrate the truth of the Incarnation. Another point which concerns the literary value of the *Christus patiens*, viz. the idea that it resulted from the contamination of several plays, is rejected by Cottas on the basis of the stylistic, formal, and conceptual unity which she observes in the play.

R. Cantarella (1948) says that the figure of the Virgin is drawn with profound humanity, and that the poet has at times infused her with accents of true poetry, though he frequently did not avoid the pitfalls of verbosity.

The old and widespread tendency among scholars to judge the characterization of the Virgin from a purely theological viewpoint, is still prevalent in some recent publications. Thus N. Vernieri (circa 1950) deprecates the profanation of the Virgin by language which recalls the figures of Hecuba and Medea.

A different approach is seen in the study of J. M. Szymusiak (1965), who regards the laments of the Virgin as coherently reflecting the psychological state of the mother who mourns for her son, and therefore not as theologically unacceptable.

Szymusiak points out that most patristic authors - unlike later theologians - referred to the Virgin only casually in their studies on Christ, tending to emphasize her humanity, and ignore the more complicated questions of mariology; and that the representation of Mary in the manner of suffering mothers from ancient tragedy may be seen as fitting well into this pattern.

Cataudella (1969) regards the excessive humanity with which Mary is portrayed as possibly the result of a deliberate attempt to emphasize by contrast the divine aspect of Christ.

A. Tuilier (1969) also admits that Mary's doubts and her expressions of grief seem excessive to the modern reader, but points out that it belongs to the Cappadocian tradition as represented by St. Basil and by Amphilochius of Iconium. He adds that the parallels with Medea and Agave seem to indicate that the poet resolves on both the tragic and the religious levels those mythical contradictions which in Euripides find no solution. This, he says, presupposes a profound knowledge of the classics on the part of the author, whom he believes to be the Nazianzen.

The findings of this survey of literary arguments which have been introduced into the dispute concerning the authenticity of the *Christus patiens*, may be summarized as follows:

- 1) The characterization of Mary by the author is discussed more frequently than any other literary aspect of the play.
- 2) Those scholars who object to this characterization, mainly for theological reasons, mostly regard their own objections as proof against the authenticity of the play. However, there are some who do not regard this aspect of the play as a valid argument for settling the authorship dispute.
- 3) Those scholars in favour of accepting the attribution of the play to Gregory, make it their task to provide acceptable reasons for the way in which the Virgin is portrayed by him.
- 4) Also regarding other literary aspects of the play, much difference of opinion exists; neither do scholars agree about the value of these for settling the authorship dispute.

\* \* \*

## 2.5 HISTORICAL ARGUMENTS:

Regarding the manuscript tradition of the *Christus patiens*, I. Leuvenklaius (1571) notes that the title preserved in the manuscript which he used, differs from that which is current in other manuscripts of the works of Gregory. Whereas the usual form reads Γρηγορίου τοῦ θεολόγου, or Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Γρηγορίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ θεολόγου, the title of the manuscript *Parisinus* 1220 reads Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Γρηγορίου τοῦ θεολόγου ὑπόθεσις δραματικῆ κατ' Εὐριπίδην περιέχουσα τὴν δι' ἡμᾶς γενομένην σάρκωσιν τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ κοσμοσωτήριον πάθος. To Leuvenklaius, this seemed to have originated from a more recent editor, who hoped to ascribe to Gregory this imitation of Euripidean verse, which, according to Leuvenklaius, corresponds neither to the tragic poet, nor to Gregory of Nazianzus.

Though a supporter of the attribution of the play to Gregory, D. Heinsius (1643) is cautioned by his own observation that the *Suda* does not mention this work by name, while assigning to Gregory 30000 lines of poetry. To this P. Lambeck (1671) replies that, in fact, a certain manuscript of the *Suda* does mention τὸ κατ' Εὐριπίδην καὶ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθῶν δράμα, which is omitted in printed editions of that source.

R. Ceillier (1738) did not attach much value to the testimony of this single manuscript, and added that the *Suda* did not have strong authority, because of its being written more than 500 years after the time of Gregory. Ceillier thought that the play could be attributed to a certain Gregory, who became bishop of Antioch in 572, and that this author has later been confused with the Nazianzen. He based this hypothesis upon a passage of Evagrius Scholasticus, which he interpreted as meaning "Gregory, famous for his poetic ability". However, this text could also mean "Gregory whose fame is great, to use poetic terms" - cf. J. Dräseke (1884).

(Note: The quotation is from *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.6, and reads: Γρηγορίου οὗ κλέος εὐρὺ κατὰ τὴν ποίησιν.)

In fact, although this Gregory was famous in his time, there is no evidence that he was a great poet.

A. B. Caillau (1840) also seems to regard as important the argument that only a relatively young manuscript of the *Suda* includes the play among the works of the Nazianzen. He adds that most of the ancient manuscripts of the play itself do not contain the author's name.

A historical argument of a totally different kind is that of L. C. Valckenaer (1768), who is strongly opposed to the traditional attribution of the play, and asserts that among the poems of Gregory, there is nothing composed of the verses of others, and that only in the *De virtute* (line 328) does the Nazianzen copy an iambic line of Euripides.

Valckenaer's argument is rejected as indecisive by C. Magnin (1849), who notes that this strange kind of composition was practised also by Proba, and was tolerated by Tertullian, while being criticized by Jerome. Accordingly, says Magnin, Jerome would obviously not mention the *Christus patiens* among the works of the Nazianzen.

(When critically examined, these opposing views reveal the inconclusiveness inherent in many arguments regarding the authenticity of the play. Valckenaer's is, strictly speaking, an *argumentum e silentio*, and should be weighed against the unanimity of the explicit indications in favour of Gregorian authorship of the play. The flimsy basis on which Magnin's refutation is built, rather tends to lend some undeserved credibility to an argument like that of Valckenaer.)

Accepting Voltaire's theory, that religious plays originated at Constantinople, Th. Warton (2nd ed. 1870) asserts that Gregory banned the pagan *spectacula* from the theatre of the capital, and introduced plots taken from the Old and the New Testaments. Of these, he maintains, the *Christus patiens* is the only surviving play. (Since Warton's premise is unproven, his argument does not seem to have much value.)

J. C. W. Augusti (1816) formulates some reasons which the Nazianzen may have had for composing this play: it could be to "cover the nudity of the Saviour in the clothing of classical poetry", or to demonstrate that even the pagans involuntarily sang "the hymn of the Word" and that the Greek dramatists were "instruments of the Word and of the Holy Spirit". These motives - Augusti asserts - are not unworthy of one who by his zeal has earned himself the title of "the Theologian". Augusti was also the first scholar to mention the historical circumstances prevailing under the reign of Julian the Apostate, as probably leading to the composition of a work like the *Christus patiens*.

The views of Augusti are opposed by H.C.A. Eichstädt (1816), who considers the silence of so many authors to be a stronger argument than the unanimous testimony of all the codices - which are, admittedly, quite young.

F. Dübner (1846) attributes to Tzetzes the epilogue (lines 2605-10) which has been preserved in one of the codices. His reasons are (a) the pun on the name of Lycophron, (b) the term *λῆποι* referring to myths, which occurs in line 2606 as well as quite often in Tzetzes' commentary on the *Cassandra* of Lycophron, and (c) the identity between line 2610 of the *Christus patiens* and line 1 of the *Cassandra*. From this epilogue Dübner infers that Tzetzes has read the play without knowing who the author was. This he regards as evidence that the attribution to Gregory must be a later development.

A. Döring (1864) agrees with Dübner in attributing to Tzetzes the epilogue (lines 2605-10) which is preserved in one of the manuscripts. However, Döring goes further, and attributes to Tzetzes the entire play.

J. A. Lalanne (1852) sees a historical argument in favour of Gregorian authorship in the exigency of presenting Christian themes in the style of the classical authors. This was an urgent need in the late 4th century, during the persecution under Julian. Lalanne also regards as significant the fact that until late in the 16th century, the voices attributing

the play to Gregory were unanimous.

Lalanne's views concerning the historical circumstances of the 4th century are shared by J. L. Klein (1866), who adds that the invectives of the virgin mother against Judas are parallel to those of Gregory against Julian.

As far as historical arguments regarding the question of the play's authenticity are concerned, a new perspective was opened by A. Kirchoff (1853). He held that the author was a monk who had limited knowledge of the plays of Euripides. This belief he based upon the observation that the *Christus patiens* contained quotations from only those seven plays of Euripides which were preserved in later (mediaeval) times.

In this field, particularly, scholarly progress has been very slow. The following figures may show how an image of the full scale to which the author has made use of Euripidean material has only gradually been built up:

Valckenaer (1768) was aware of 197 lines taken from Euripides – from *Hippolytus*, *Troades*, *Medea*, *Rhesus*, and the *Bacchae*;

Porson identified two more plays from which verses were taken, viz. *Hecuba* (4 lines) and *Orestes* (7 lines);

the Benedictines (1840) knew of 606 verses, all from the seven plays mentioned above;

Döring (1864) reached a total of 1125 Euripidean verses, taken from these same seven plays;

and in addition to these, Tuilier (1969) has identified some verses taken also from the *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Helen*, both *Iphigenia* plays, and the *Phoenissae*.

Note: The importance of Tuilier's contribution in this respect lies in the identification of more plays from which extracts have been made, rather than in the identification of more lines from the plays already known to have been used.

Döring (1864) states that since there is a notable number of passages in the *Christus patiens* which either support the better readings of Euripides manuscripts against the weaker ones, or preserve readings which differ from all manuscripts, it is plausible that the author may have had before him a text which differs considerably from all extant manuscripts.



K. N. Sathas (1878) mentions - as an argument against the attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Gregory - that none of the scholiasts affirms his authorship of this play.

J. G. Brambs (1883) does not consider the testimony of *Parisinus* 2875 to be of much value, because this codex is mutilated at the beginning. Brambs supposes that the name of the author may have been imagined by a later scribe.

After 1883, nearly half a century elapsed before historical arguments were again introduced into the debate, this time by a supporter of the traditional attribution of the play. It was V. Cottas (1931), who asserted that in the 9th century, George of Nicomedia wrote a commentary on the three parts of the play, confirming its originality and naming the author as "the Theologian". (Cf. PG 100, 1457 ff.; 1489 ff.)

Cottas interprets a passage in *Oratio* 22 (PG 35, 1140) - where κωμωδία is contrasted to τραγωδία - as an allusion of Gregory himself to the play. (This interpretation is rightly rejected in a review by Q. Cataudella (1932), as well as by la Piana (1936).)

After comparing the *kontakion* "On Mary at the Cross" of Romanos to a parallel passage in the *Christus patiens*, Cottas infers the anteriority of the play from the force with which the play communicates a dogma which, in Romanos, has the security of something established long since. Regarding the *kontakion* "On the Resurrection", she mentions the following arguments in favour of the authenticity of the play:

- 1) the citation by Romanos of "the Theologian" as his source;
- 2) confusion between the episodes of the resurrection, which occurs in Romanos, but not in the play.

Finally, she asserts that Gregory has been imitated also by John Chrysostom, by Epiphanius of Cyprus, by Germanus of Constantinople (7th century), by Simon Metaphrastes (10th century), by the monk Epiphanius (11th century), as well as by George of Nicomedia, especially in presenting Mary as the first to see the resurrected Jesus.

In her dissertation which was also published in 1931, Cottas declared that all literary works of the oriental Church

concerning the Passion of Christ, as well as all innovations in the iconography concerned with this cycle, were based upon the *Christus patiens*.

(This sweeping assertion is probably the main reason why many scholars rejected her defence of the play's authenticity with so much contempt.)

In a review of Cottas' publications, L. Bréhier (1932) states that the parallels between the *Christus patiens* and the *De Virgine iuxta crucem* of Romanos prove only that the unknown author of the play was inspired by the melodist. He admits that the affinities between the play and George of Nicomedia may prove the anteriority of the play, although both may, alternatively, be supposed to derive from a common source.

Whereas Q. Cataudella (1932) agrees with Cottas in seeing an influence from the *Christus patiens* upon Romanos, P. Maas (1932) regards Romanos as the imitated, not the imitator.

A. Momigliano (1932) asserts that Romanos is definitely the earlier of the two. In support of this view he argues that the play amplifies the material present in Romanos. By the term "Theologian", he says, Romanos refers to the Evangelist.

A. Vogt (1934) supposes that the attribution to Gregory may have resulted from later confusion of the biographer, Gregory the Presbyter, with the Nazianzen himself. Vogt also mentions another possibility, *viz.* that the play may have been written at Jerusalem, in the 7th century, in order to defend Orthodox doctrine against Judaistic monotheism.

R. Cantarella (1948) regards Cottas' arguments in favour of the attribution to Gregory as not being totally convincing. However, he does not see in Momigliano's *terminus post quem* any decisive proof against the possible authenticity of the play, since in this case, like in many similar ones, one of the *termini* is uncertain. Regarding the approximate date of the *Christus patiens*, he says that the only plausible time of composition - with the exception of the 4th century - is after the 10th century, when the great editions of Aeschylus,

Sophocles, and Aristophanes give evidence of renewed interest in dramatic poetry. Cantarella adds that the whole question will have to be reconsidered, (a) if the "commentary" by George of Nicomedia really refers to the *Christus patiens* and is authentic, and (b) if the author of the play did make use of tragic works which did not survive the Middle Ages.

(Like Cantarella, Q. Cataudella (1969) also does not consider the parallels with Romanos to provide decisive proof against or in favour of the play's authenticity - but *cf.* chapter 8.)

In the first of his contributions to the dispute regarding the date and authorship of the *Christus patiens*, A. Tuilier (1948) indicates his intention to determine the historical era in which the composition of such a cento would be most likely. He cites the testimonies of Irenaeus and Tertullian regarding the creation of centos, as well as the examples of Ausonius, Proba, and Pomponius. He asserts that by the end of the 4th century, this art was so widely diffused that it was alluded to by St. Jerome and St. Augustine; and that by the middle of the 5th century it was represented by the empress Eudoxia.

Tuilier (1968) asserts that this play fits exactly into the apologetic perspective of christians in the second half of the fourth century, adding that it is the expression of an epoch in which the classical tradition was still alive. He cites evidence that apart from Euripides *Bacchae*, *Hecuba*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, and *Orestes*, from which numerous lines are used, the author also knew the *Andromache*, *Heracles*, and *Phoenissae*, as well as the *Rhesus* and *Troades*.

J. M. Szymusiak (1965) believes that even if the authorship of Gregory cannot be proved, the play belongs to the same epoch as his life and activity.

Q. Cataudella (1969), who also believes that the play belongs to the fourth century, if not to the Nazianzen, points at the notice of Sozomenus, *viz.* that Apollinaris wrote christian tragedies on the pattern of Euripides, in reaction to the

edict of Julian. To Cataudella, the extensive knowledge of Euripides manifested by the author indicates an era in which the interest for Euripides was still alive (the 4th century) or in which it was resurrected (the 12th century). He sees an argument in favour of the 4th century date in the passage of centonic character occurring at lines 585-596 of *De virtute*, a work of undisputed authenticity.

J. Grosdidier de Matons (1967) is convinced that the author of *Christus patiens* is dependant upon Romanos, because only the first strophe of "On Mary at the Cross" - the part which was repeatedly used in church services - seems to have been known to the author of the play. He also believes that "the Theologian" to whom Romanos refers in the third strophe of the first hymn "On the Resurrection", is John the Evangelist; not the Nazianzen, as Cottas has asserted.

In the introduction of his edition of the *Christus patiens*, A. Tuilier (1969) mentions the following historical arguments in favour of the attribution of the play to Gregory:

1) All manuscripts are unanimous in indicating the Nazianzen as the author of the play. Although *Parisinus gr.* 2875 lacks the title, the introduction and the first 108 lines, a later copy of it, *viz. Monacensis gr.* 154, witnesses to the earlier existence of the *incipit* containing the name of Gregory.

2) The text of the *Christus patiens* corresponds with the ancient tradition of the text of Euripides, as opposed to the mediaeval. As far as the *Bacchae* is concerned, it contains elements which were lost in mediaeval manuscripts; thus it establishes a distinction between documents prior to the 6th century and those pertaining to the 6th or later centuries.

3) The *kontakion* "On Mary at the Cross" of Romanos has a dramatic character which probably reveals influence from the play. Furthermore, the melodists had a habit of harmonizing hymns which were anterior to them - taken from the Nazianzen and from Chrysostom especially; Romanos seems to allude to the introduction of the play (*cf. τραχομένη* - line 27); the

*kontakion* contains some particularities of tragic style; and Romanos refers to the presence of Mary Magdalene at the tomb on the morning of the Passover, following the account of the "Theologian", whereas he always refers to the Evangelist by the name John.

4) Regarding the relations of this play to mediaeval poets: there is no relation to John of Damascus; those with John Mauropus (11th century) demonstrate the anteriority of the play; the parallels which Brambs believes to observe between the play and Theodorus Prodromus are inconclusive, because of the literary and linguistic differences between them.

5) The silence of biographical sources about the play and its author is not a valid argument against its authenticity, since Byzantine information on the Nazianzen is generally quite scanty. In this respect, the following may be noted:

a) The *Suda* follows the testimony of Philostorgius and that of Jerome, who contains inexact information and obscurities which reveals him to be poorly informed about the literary and theological activities of the Nazianzen.

b) Gregory the Presbyter mentions that the Nazianzen wrote poetry of all kinds, in order to neutralize the effects of the edict of Julian - an unjustified claim, if the *Christus patiens* is excluded from his poetry. Furthermore, the same biographer mentions that the Nazianzen particularly imitated the language of the theatre, using the term *ὑπόθεσις*, which occurs in the title of the play, as attested by the best manuscript tradition.

c) Although Sozomenus (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.18) states that Apollinaris composed tragedies on the Euripidean pattern to counteract the edict of Julian, the *Christus patiens* could not have been written by him, because of theological reasons.

d) The *Catalogus librorum ecclesiasticorum* of the Nestorian Ebedjesu contains a note concerning a *liber tragediae* among the works of the Nazianzen which were translated into Syrian.

This testimony must relate to a very old source, since these translations must have been made before the year 500.

Furthermore, the term *liber tragediae* explicitly reveals that the tragedy (originally) constituted a separate volume. This confirms the authenticity of the play, by indicating that it is anterior to the generalization of the codex. It also explains how the play could be isolated from the rest of Gregory's works during the Middle Ages. Finally, the length of the play - approximately 2600 lines - is equal to that of a *volumen* containing the gospel of Matthew or Luke, which makes it quite plausible that the term *liber tragediae* may refer to the *Christus patiens*.

(The term *liber* occurs also in the title of this catalogue; thus, if the catalogue contains works which are posterior to the generalization of the codex, the particular significance which Tuilier attaches to this term seems unwarranted.)

#### **Conclusion:**

This survey of the arguments of historical nature which have been advanced during the course of the dispute regarding the authenticity of the *Christus patiens*, reveals that no solid conclusions can be drawn from the historical data available on this issue. The basic problem remains to consider which one of different possibilities seems the most probable. The scanty biographical information on the author, for instance, offers no decisive proof either of the play's authenticity or of its late origin. Every argument against its authenticity, like the fact that only one manuscript of the *Suda* mentions it among the works of Gregory, has to be considered in the light of a related argument in favour of its authenticity, like the *Suda's* reference to 30000 lines of poetry written by Gregory, which is nearer to the truth if the *Christus patiens* is included in this corpus.

\* \* \*

## 2.6 THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS:

In the vast literature concerning the *Christus patiens* and the question of its authenticity, the first remark which may be classified under the heading of theological arguments, is that of I. Casaubon (1614). He asserts that blood and water flowed from the side of Jesus, separately, even though the author of the *Christus patiens* seems to affirm the opposite in the phrase *πεφυρμένον ποτόν* (line 1082). Casaubon notes, however, that a few lines later (1104) the author mentions *αἷμά τ' οὐ πεφυρμένον*. From this he concludes upon an error of textual transmission in line 1082.

The conjecture which he proposed - *κοῦ πεφυρμένον ποτόν* - is accepted by F. Combéfis, who believes that the author would not depart so far from Scripture and sound doctrine, or from *decorum*, as to speak of a *πεφυρμένον ποτόν* flowing from the side of Jesus. Though the notes of Combéfis have been lost, and we know his comments on the play only from the citations by Caillau (1840), his opinion about the identity of the play's author may be deduced from his arguments concerning line 1082. Instead of simply consenting to Casaubon's quite reasonable contextual argument for emendation, and accepting the reading *κοῦ πεφυρμένον*, he adds the doctrinal argument mentioned above. This reveals his belief that the author is Gregory of Nazianzus; for if he did not consider the play to be authentic, he would not have attached significance to this doctrinal argument.

F. Buonarruoti (1716) quotes the *Christus patiens* as one of the ancient sources mentioning the use of three, rather than four, nails at the crucifixion - though he adds that the play does not have great authority, since it was composed neither by Gregory of Nazianzus, nor by Appolinaris the elder, but by a "modern author".

R. Ceillier (1738) argues that the emotions of doubt, fear, and anger exhibited by the protagonist of the play contradict the portrayal of the Virgin by the church fathers; and the reference to her consecration to the Temple, and miraculous

feeding by an angel, shows apocryphal influence; consequently he does not accept the attribution of the play to Gregory. He adds that, by supposing the erection of churches and the institution of festivals in honour of the Virgin in his own time, the author reveals that he was writing no earlier than the second half of the fifth century; for it was only after the Council of Ephesus (in 431), at which the title θεοτόκος was officially recognized, that the construction of churches in her honour in Constantinople and elsewhere could commence.

On the basis of this latter argument, Ceillier also excludes the possibility of Apollinarian authorship, adding that the play underlines the distinction between the two natures of Christ, which was denied by Apollinaris of Laodicea. Another argument of theological character which Ceillier mentions, is the appearance of Jesus to the Virgin directly after the resurrection. This, says Ceillier, has no parallel in the gospels, and the first to advance this idea was Sedulius, whose *Paschale Opus* was written about the middle of the 5th century.

With reference to lines 103-104 of the *Christus patiens*, L.C. Valckenaer (1768) asserts that the Nazianzen would never address to the most holy Virgin the same terms as Venus uses of herself in the *Hippolytus* - "numquam Gregorius Nazianzenus Mariam dixisset οὐκ ἀνώουμον Ἀρνήν". (This argument seems to be built on Valckenaer's own view of *decorum*, rather than on doctrinal considerations.)

The play is described by J. C. W. Augusti (1816) as a source for precise knowledge of the Christian doctrines, though not significant in terms of aesthetical value. Thus this defender of the play's authenticity draws a clear distinction between literary and theological arguments regarding the play.

A. B. Caillau (1840) records the following objections against attributing the play to Gregory of Nazianzus:

- lines 272 ff: The Virgin becomes excessively angry and uses insulting language when addressing the enemies of her son.



- lines 439 ff: The Virgin cannot accept the fact that her Son has to die.
  
- lines 469 ff: She is filled with fear which is unworthy of the holy Virgin, who is portrayed by Ambrose (*De institutione Virginis*, 7) as "fugientibus viris stabat intrepida"; and she loses herself in laments and in tears, though Ambrose says of her: "stantem lego; flentem non lego" (*De obitu Valentiniani*, p. 1185).
  
- lines 965-6: The construction of many churches, as well as the celebration of solemn festivals, in honour of the Virgin, seems an anachronism before the Council of Ephesus in 431.
  
- lines 1349 ff: The references to the feeding of the Virgin by the hands of angels, and her being entrusted to the care of a pious man, give evidence of apocryphal influence on the play, being derived from the *De ortu Beatae Virginis*.
  
- lines 2095 ff: According to these lines, Christ appears to the virgin Mary directly after the resurrection.

Caillau also does not accept the suggested attribution of the play to Apollinaris, because of its insistence that Mary is the mother of the Diphysite - μήτηρ τοῦ Διφυσοῦς (line 1795). He adds that the *De ortu Beatae Virginis* is later than the time of Apollinaris; therefore the *Christus patiens* must also belong to a later era.

Note: Caillau cannot be blamed for being misinformed about the date of origin of the *De ortu Beatae Virginis*; but the publication, in 1958, of a papyrus containing the Greek text of this document, and dating from the third century, is the final proof that the influence from this source is an invalid argument for rejecting a fourth century date for the play.

To the objections of the Maurinists, viz. that the numerous titles of honour occurring at lines 2572 ff., and especially the reference to the corporeal assumption of the Virgin; seem more natural for the age of John of Damascus, Caillau replies that many prayers of Ephrem contain more numerous and more splendid titles than the passage concerned, and that even the

doctrine of the Assumption can be traced to earlier sources.

The arguments of scholars who are opposed to the attribution of the play to Gregory are recorded also by C. Magnin (1849). Among the theological arguments, he records criticism of the sudden and profound changes in the characterization of the Virgin, "who falls from the divine model of resignation which appears in the canonical books, and in the writings of the fathers, into violent paroxysms of human grief". Magnin also mentions the objections against traditions originating from apocryphal sources, and against some anachronistic titles of honour and forms of veneration.

Being a defender of the attribution of the play - or, at the least, of the play in its earliest form - to the Nazianzen, Magnin replies to the latter of these objections by asserting that the veneration of Mary was notably developed before 431.

J. L. Klein (1866) defends the authenticity of the *Christus patiens*, while asserting that the play exhibits theological concepts identical to those of the Nazianzen, especially as far as soteriology is concerned. However, the scene in which the Virgin is comforted by St. John he regards as interpolated because "the canonical cult of the Mother of God was not sanctioned before the Council of Ephesus in 431" (p. 618).

Arguments of a theological nature recurred in the article of J. Dräseke (1884), who is in favour of the attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Apollinaris of Laodicea. He regards the notion that the prayer to the Virgin (at the end of the play) belongs to the era of John of Damascus, as being unfounded. He points to evidence in the works of Gregory, of an intense devotion to the Virgin, of which, he says, Apollinaris was one of the greatest representatives. (This seems to me to be a textbook example of a circular argument.)

In his "étude littéraire" of the play, M. de la Rousselière (1895) asserts that the poet's characterization of Jesus and of the Virgin reveals profound theological insight, and fine analytical ability. In the next chapter, "aperçus historique et critique", he defends the legitimacy and correctness of

the sentiments manifested by the Virgin, both from a literary and a theological point of view.

A remark which K. Dieterich (1902) made, in the context of an extremely negative literary evaluation of the play, may serve to illustrate the confusion existing in the reasoning of many scholars, between theological and literary arguments concerning the play. Dieterich says the *Christus patiens* is not a play in the proper sense, since it consists mainly of messenger speeches and laments; Mary, he says, does not have the substance of a Mother of God; neither is she a character properly conceived from a literary point of view, since she combines the traits of the most divergent - masculine as well as feminine - characters of ancient tragedy; she oscillates between faith and desperation, proving that the play is not inspired by any artistic or religious sensibility.

The question whether or not the Virgin in this play reveals traits characteristic of the Mother of God, is a theological-historical issue. Its implications for the authenticity of the play can only be illustrated by asking: What were the characteristics attributed to the holy Virgin by the orthodox church in the fourth century? Were these traits associated with the title "Mother of God", and to what extent are they reflected in the *Christus patiens*? The answer to all these questions is strictly irrelevant to the question whether she is characterized according to acceptable literary practice. Since Dieterich does not distinguish between the different kinds of arguments, he almost inevitably confuses the play's literary merits - or lack of it - with the question regarding its origin as seen from a theological perspective.

O. Weinreich (1929) finds the description of the resurrection of Christ in verses taken from the *Bacchae* quite acceptable, explaining that the parallel between Christ and Dionysus has already been drawn by Celsus. The intention of this argument of Weinreich is hard to follow. If he means that borrowing from the *Bacchae* is theologically acceptable, we should reply that an orthodox christian author would hardly have followed the example of Celsus; if, however, he means that it is

acceptable from a literary point of view, the implication seems to be that even a poet like the Nazianzen could have used these bacchic verses to describe the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. Weinreich further complicates the matter when saying that he regards the play as a product of the 12th century. What point is there, then, in commenting on the acceptability of borrowing from the *Bacchae*?

V. Cottas (1931) observes that the term θεοτόκος occurs only in the *didascalia*, and nowhere in the text itself. Thus she argues that its presence in the *Christus patiens* is not an anachronism constituting an argument against the allocation of the play to the 4th century. (With this argument of Cottas Q. Cataudella (1932) explicitly agrees.)

The following theological arguments in favour of attributing the play to Gregory, are also expounded by Cottas:

- 1) The play is connected to the anti-apollinarist polemic of the letter to Cledonius, and to the defence of the Trinity.
- 2) The laments of the Virgin are intended to prove that she is truly the mother of God, though not superhuman.
- 3) The proclamation of Jesus regarding the intercession of the Virgin for humanity is theologically significant.
- 4) The prologue belongs to an era in which the problem of the Incarnation concerned all Christians: the era of arianism and apollinarism.
- 5) The laments of the Virgin are meant to illustrate that the Word has really descended upon the earth.
- 6) Cottas asserts that the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus is definitely later than the *Christus patiens*.

In her dissertation on the influence of the *Christus patiens* upon oriental christian art (1931), Cottas asserts that the Virgin of the play is the μήτηρ θεοῦ of the 4th century, and not yet the Παναγία. She adds that Gregory's main reason for presenting a dialogue between the Virgin and her son while he is on the cross but still alive, was to create an opportunity for Christ to explain that he dies voluntarily. In this, says Cottas, the Nazianzen was followed by Romanos the Melodist as well as George of Nicomedia.

In his review of the publications of Cottas, Q. Cataudella (1932) says that at the time when Christianity was involved in the debate concerning the Incarnation, the doctrines of the real suffering of the Virgin and the death of Christ had much more actuality than it had during the iconoclastic era or in the 11th and 12th centuries.

A. Vogt (1934) considers the play to be the product of an era in which mariology was already quite fully developed, adding that all the epithets referring to the θεοτόκος in the play belong to the vocabulary of the 7th century.

According to A. Tuilier (1948), the doubts of some scholars concerning the orthodoxy of the sentiments of the Virgin do not constitute objective and well-founded arguments against the play's authenticity. Regarding the title θεοτόκος Tuilier says that its absence from the text constitutes an argument in favour of the 4th century, because it would not have been omitted from a mediaeval work. (The same argument is found in J. M. Szymusiak (1965), who regards the absence of this title from mediaeval Byzantine works as "unthinkable", while being "logical" in the case of works of the 4th century, that is, earlier than the Council of Ephesus.) Tuilier excludes the possibility of Apollinarian authorship of the play, by reason of the affirmation of two natures in Christ - cf. the phrase μήτερον τοῦ διφυοῦς in line 1795.

Although C. del Grande (1962) believes that the *Christus patiens* is a product of the 4th century, he says that some affirmations of the θεολόγος in the play are incongruous with the thoughts of the Nazianzen. This is one of his arguments for opposing the attribution of the play to Gregory.

J. M. Szymusiak (1965), however, is in favour of attributing the play to the Nazianzen. He stresses the difference between the Fathers and later theologians in their presentation of the problems of mariology: The Fathers, he says, occasionally referred to the Virgin in their studies on Christ, normally emphasizing her humanity, as is demonstrated by some passages from Athanasius and Basil.

Since the title θεοτόκος does not occur in the text of the play, says Q. Cataudella (1969<sup>1</sup>), there are no obstacles to allocating it to the 4th century. He accepts, however, the validity of diverse arguments against the attribution of the play to Gregory. In his book, which was published that same year (Cataudella, 1969<sup>2</sup>, pp. 449-50), he lists the following arguments against the authorship of Gregory:

- The use of an apocryphal source (the Gospel of Nicodemus).
- References to churches erected in honour of the Virgin and to a cult directed to her (which was possible only after the Council of Ephesus in 431).
- The doctrine of remission of sins through the intercession of the Virgin.
- The attributes θεοτόκος and παντάνασσα, which do not seem compatible with the pre-Ephesine period.

In reply to these arguments, Cataudella asserts that nothing would have prevented a 4th century poet from referring to an apocryphal document not suspected of heterodoxy; that the references to a cult of the Virgin may be understood as only expressing a desire, or could be a later addition; that the title θεοτόκος occurs in the *didascalia*, not in the text; and that the attribute παντάνασσα could be understood in a sense which is not unconceivable for the 4th century ("pantanassa va probabilmente letto pant'anassa" - p.451). Thus Cataudella dismisses - either by excising from the text, or by sweeping from the table - all arguments of theological nature against the allocation of this play to the 4th century. His belief that the author, nonetheless, cannot be Gregory of Nazianzus, is based mainly upon stylistic and metrical arguments.

(Perhaps the treatment of the issue by Cataudella reveals the desperation which has resulted from four centuries of bitter dispute, among scholars, regarding the origin of the *Christus patiens* - a dispute which has hampered rather than promoted the study of this play, and which has given to it a notoriety far exceeding any literary merits it may have.)

As far as theological arguments are concerned, Tuilier (1969)

contributes the following:

1) The author expresses his apologetical intentions near the end of the prologue; this defense of the redeeming Passion is also his reason for including in the play a dialogue between Pilate, the priests, and the guard - in order to demonstrate the historical reality of the resurrection of Christ, against the false *Acta Pilati*, which was circulated by Maximian Daia to support the anti-christian polemic.

2) By stressing the κένωσις of the Word in the Incarnation, the play reveals its connection with the anti-apollinarist polemics of Gregory. These heretics denied the κένωσις, and believed that the Λόγος was substituted for the soul of the human person in Christ; the *Christus patiens*, however, is strictly diphysite, for it mentions the human soul of Christ (lines 886-7), and makes Mary the protagonist, demonstrating that she is the mother of the God-Man, and that Christ has fully assumed human nature.

3) This explains why Gregory, later in his life, insisted so strongly on the divine maternity. Through his influence, the term θεοτόκος became part of the theological vocabulary, for it bears witness to the part which the Virgin played in the Incarnation and Redemption. Before Gregory, no Father of the Church has studied the person of Mary in itself. Even if for metrical reasons, the title θεοτόκος does not appear in the text of the *Christus patiens*, Mary has full knowledge of her mission, and participates voluntarily in the sacrifice of her Son.

#### **Conclusion:**

Of all the different arguments which scholars have introduced into the dispute regarding the authenticity of the *Christus patiens*, theological arguments seem to have caused the most confusion. This seems to be due mainly to the lack of a clear definition of what may readily be associated with an orthodox theologian and poet of the 4th century.

\* \* \*

## 2.7 CONTRIBUTIONS SINCE 1969:

The profusion of review articles discussing Tuilier's edition of the *Christus patiens* is evidence of the impact which this publication had upon the academic world. However, the picture emerging from a survey of these reviews, reveals little more than the recurrence of the same arguments which have for four centuries been feeding the dispute about the authenticity or inauthenticity of this play:

P.-M. Bogaert (1970) accepts Tuilier's arguments about the text of Euripides, about the use made of the *Christus patiens* by Romanos and by other (mediaeval) poets, and about both the literary character and the doctrinal intention of the play as pertaining to the era and the person of the Cappadocian. He regards Tuilier's volume as scientific in its approach, and since he accepts the 4th century date, he sees no obstacles to accepting also the authorship of Gregory of Nazianzus.

E. Boularand (1970) voices his admiration of the "courageous and masterly fashion" in which Tuilier treats the problem of authenticity in its totality. He considers as decisive the agreement of the text with readings anterior to the mediaeval textual tradition of Euripides; he accepts the authorship of Gregory of Nazianzus as probable on the basis of biographical testimony; regards as inconclusive the objections based upon the silence of our sources concerning the author of the play; regards as significant the *Suda's* attribution to Gregory, of 30000 lines of poetry; and he does not disregard the argument of Gregory's familiarity with classical culture. The totality of these arguments - according to Boularand - is what renders the authorship of Gregory "more than probable".

After first summarizing Tuilier's arguments in favour of the attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Gregory of Nazianzus, P. Courcelle (1969) remarks that the gravest objection to the notion of Gregorian authorship of the play is that no-one, of ancient times, gives testimony to this effect. To Tuilier's assertion that the play's authenticity is "incontestable", he replies: "Je crains, pour ma part, qu'une contre-offensive



ne se dessine un jour; car ce poème peut très bien être d'un humaniste orthodoxe du IV<sup>e</sup> ou du V<sup>e</sup> siècle (qui s'appelait peut-être même Grégoire) et avoir été attribué fort tôt au Grégoire le plus illustre de ce temps." The first part of this remark would be proved true, as the following paragraphs will indicate; but the last part - that the play may very well be the work of a 4th or a 5th century humanist, who was probably also called Gregory - contradicts what Courcelle regards as the "gravest objection" against the attribution of the play to Gregory. How can one believe that the author, who lived in the 4th or 5th century, was probably called Gregory, and that this then led to the attribution of the play to the famous Gregory of Nazianzus, while at the same time objecting to this attribution of the play to the Nazianzen, mainly for the reason that the author was never identified as Gregory in ancient times?

To J. Darrouzès (1970), Tuilier's strongest argument seems to be the one based upon his comparison of the text with the textual tradition of Euripides' plays. However, he asserts that the solution to the problem of authenticity may lie in establishing whether the poet utilizes Euripides in the same way in his other works, and whether there exists any decisive concordance between the composition of the *Christus patiens* and the literary practices of Gregory. (To my mind, this is demanding a comparison of incomparables, since the *Christus patiens* is explicitly introduced as a play according to the pattern of Euripides - cf. the discussion of this aspect in chapter 1.)

Darrouzès further criticizes Tuilier for not facilitating the study of what he regards as the most important aspect - the mariology of this poem - due to the lack of a thematic index of terms. Accepting that the art of the cento may be proper to the 4th century, Darrouzès considers the mariology of the *Christus patiens* to be incompatible to that era.

J. A. de Aldama (1970) recognizes the impressiveness of the totality of Tuilier's arguments. However, he asserts that a prerequisite to demonstrating with certainty Tuilier's thesis

is a study of the theology, and particularly the mariology of the *Christus patiens*. His objections to Gregorian authorship are (a) the emphasis on the divine maternity and the virgin birth, (b) the affirmation of a corporeal assumption of Mary, of the redemptive death of Christ for Mary (which he infers from line 2567, while admitting that this interpretation is questionable), and (c) the doctrine of her intercession and mediation of grace. To De Aldama these themes, as well as the attention to the psychology of the Virgin - to the extent of making her the central figure in the tragedy - would present something very new for the 4th century - "qualcosa di troppo nuovo per il IV secolo".

Note: De Aldama's review is the only one that is mentioned in the supplemented 1978 edition of Altaner-Stuiber's *Patrologie* - together with the comment: "nicht von Gregor".

E. A. de Mendieta (1969) describes Tuilier's exposition of the problem of attribution to Gregory of Nazianzus, as both clear and unbiased ("aussi lucide qu'impartiale"). However, he states that none of the arguments which Tuilier draws from the direct or indirect traditions of this cento of Euripides is plainly convincing, and that - even when taken together - these arguments do not exclude dissenting views. He adds that every one of the arguments which Tuilier develops in defence of his hypothesis - even the one relating to the well-known *kontakion* of Romanos on the weeping of Mary - is susceptible to a different interpretation. "Chacun des arguments peut servir de fait à appuyer la thèse dite critique, celle qui voit dans ce centon une oeuvre médio-byzantine, probablement du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle." (p.598)

It seems, though, that de Mendieta has not carefully followed Tuilier's arguments, for he writes: "M. A. Tuilier s'efforce de démontrer successivement les points suivantes. Tout d'abord, la tragédie sur la Passion du Christ est très vraisemblablement une oeuvre apologétique du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, et elle est destinée à illustrer les mystères chrétiens au moment de la réaction païenne de l'empereur Julien. Il affirme ensuite qu'on peut rattacher le *Christus patiens* aux dernières décennies du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle et au combat dogmatique

pour la réalité diphysite de l'Homme-Dieu. Plus loin, il formule sa thèse d'après laquelle l'attribution à Grégoire de Nazianze de ce drame-centon euripidien est 'incontestable à tous points de vue' (p.72)." The arguments opposed by de Mendieta are those pertaining to internal criticism, which - though necessarily following from the arguments pertaining to external criticism - Tuilier explicitly defines as being subordinate in significance. (Cf. p.27 of his introduction.)

With regard to the age of the extant manuscripts, de Mendieta remarks that, whereas the majority of the authentic works of Gregory of Nazianzus are attested in manuscripts of the 9th and 10th centuries, the most ancient manuscript containing this Euripidean cento belongs to the second half of the 13th century. This, says De Mendieta, is something to think about: "C'est là un fait qui donne à réfléchir."

(One should add, however, that the most ancient of the extant manuscripts of Euripides date from the 12th century; and that proves nothing for the dating of any Euripidean play.)

R. Henry (1969) says the publication of Tuilier's edition is justified on two counts: It is the first critical edition of the text since 1886, and it contains the first translation in French ever to be published.

Note: Henry seems to be unaware of the French translations by Lalanne, Douhet, and de la Rousselière - cf. chapter 1.

The *introduction*, Henry says, offers the reader an entirely new examination of the problem of attribution to Gregory - entirely new because, in spite of all the discussion which it has caused since the 16th century, this problem of the play's authenticity has never before been clearly expounded in all its aspects. Henry regards Tuilier's treatment of the problem as an objective examination of the case; he adds that he is quite certain that any reader in good faith could only find Tuilier's argumentation convincing.

As "indices de l'ancienneté de la pièce" Henry considers the allusions to the trinitarian heresies of the 4th century, and the textual parallels which demonstrate the anteriority of this play in relation to the recension B of the *Acta Pilati*.

W. Hörandner (1971) is of the opinion that Tuilier's arguments in their totality do not justify his thesis. The knowledge of certain passages from antique drama could also pertain to the 12th century, he says; the passage agreeing to Romanos was adapted from Romanos to the requirements of metre; there is not sufficient evidence to regard Ebedjesu's *liber tragoediae* as the *Christus patiens*. Hörandner laments the fact that Tuilier shuns decisive questions like those pertaining to the metre, which he regards as the principal argument for a later dating, since the strict adherence to the 12-syllable line unequivocally points to the medio-byzantine period, as does the regularity of the end of the line. He deplores also the absence of a linguistic index, saying that an exact analysis of the linguistic patrimony, especially of the structure of all neo-formations and of the theological terminology, would contribute decisively to solving the problem of the time of composition, and possibly also that of the author.

H. Hunger (1971) rejects all Tuilier's arguments in favour of Gregorian authorship, though he admits that centos are mainly known from the 4th and 5th centuries, and that Sozomenus once mentioned that Apollinaris of Laodicea was an imitator of Euripides. Although Hunger agrees with Tuilier regarding the extensive knowledge of antique authors on the part of Gregory of Nazianzus (p.127), he does not consider the assignation of Gregory by the manuscripts as significant, because the first one hundred lines have been lost from the most ancient extant manuscript: "Wir wissen also nicht, wie die erste Seite des Archetypus ausgesehen hat!" He does not say a word, though, about Tuilier's arguments concerning *Cod. Monacensis gr. 154*.

Concerning the edition of the text by Tuilier, Hunger says in a note (p. 127 n. 1): "Erst während der Drucklegung dieser Besprechung wurde mir die neue Ausgabe ... von Tuilier ... zugänglich. Mich konnten auch die in der ausführlichen Einleitung angeführten Argumente von einer Autorschaft des Gregor von Nazianz nicht überzeugen."

A.-M. Malingrey (1971) - like de Mendieta - is troubled by the fact that the manuscripts of the *Christus patiens* belong

to a relatively recent era, when compared to the abundance of 10th and 11th century manuscripts containing the works of the Church Fathers. However, among the arguments which he finds "possible to appreciate", Malingrey mentions the attribution of the *Christus patiens* to Gregory of Nazianzus by one of the earliest witnesses, the manuscript *Parisinus gr.* 2875, as well as by *Neapolitanus Borbonicus II A 25* (14th century) and *Vaticanus gr.* 481, dated at 1438; also the contribution made by the *Christus patiens* to the restoration of the text of certain Euripidean passages. To this he remarks: "Ce serait un argument pour faire remonter le centon avant la fin de l'antiquité, en tout cas avant l'époque byzantine proprement dite." (p.253) Another argument which he finds credible, is Tuilier's interpretation of the biographical note by Gregory the Presbyter (cf. Tuilier, p.56). He adds that - contrary to the opinion of certain critics of the Renaissance - it seems to him that the art of the cento was not unworthy of the fine man of letters who was Gregory of Nazianzus. (p.254)

About the historical situation to which Tuilier relates the *Christus patiens*, Malingrey remarks that the expression by which the play is designated in some of the manuscripts, and which occurs also in the *explicit* of *Matritensis* 4649, viz. ὑπόθεσις δραματική, seems to suggest that one should envisage this work as an apologetical demonstration in the form of an antique play. This, he says, is also how Tuilier interprets it in his *introduction*, at p. 57.

Malingrey praises Tuilier's edition as "une bonne édition critique". He adds:

Sur cette question particulièrement épineuse, il aligne un ensemble d'arguments qui permettent de concevoir comme vraisemblable l'attribution traditionnelle. Désormais on souhaiterait que les adversaires de l'authenticité fournissent des preuves positives en faveur de leur thèse.

He concludes by mentioning that much research still has to be done before the matter will be settled - e.g. a comparison of the mariology and christology of the *Christus patiens*, first to the works of the Nazianzen, secondly to the canons of the

councils of the 4th and 5th centuries; also the compilation of an exhaustive index of its vocabulary, as a prerequisite to studying the evolution of the words in their usage by Euripides and by the author of the *Christus patiens*, and then comparing this usage to the way Gregory of Nazianzus employs the same words.

In the light of his own definition of a cento - "La technique de centon consiste à assembler des citations plus ou moins fidèles, vers, fractions de vers ou simples formules, avec plus ou moins de liberté ou de fantaisie" - J. Mossay (1971) states that the borrowings from the text of Euripides are so free as not to appear artificial; but the general structure of the play is evidently conventional, and it pertains to ancient aesthetics, which have become totally outdated by the time of Gregory of Nazianzus, and - *a fortiori* - at any more recent date. Nonetheless, the play has some literary appeal: "l'oeuvre garde néanmoins son charme littéraire".

About Tuilier's defence of the authenticity of this cento, Mossay says that it will not leave indifferent even those who still reject the idea of Gregorian authorship.

The review of T. Špidlík (1970) consists mainly of quotations from Tuilier's *introduction* - perhaps not an indication of thorough study on his part. However, he states that Tuilier convinces his readers, by means of an erudite demonstration ranging from the history of the Greek manuscripts to that of the Byzantine literature and the mediaeval mystery plays, that the work should be attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus. He repeats Tuilier's arguments that all manuscripts recognize the Nazianzen as the author, that the citations in Byzantine authors confirm the anteriority of the *Christus patiens*, and that the doctrinal perspective of our text, which places it within the anti-apollinarist polemic, lends support to its attribution to the Nazianzen.

D. A. Sykes (1970) is cautiously ambivalent in his verdict: Clearly M. Tuilier is right in suggesting that not all who have pronounced the work spurious have

justified their right to do so. But equally it should be remembered that objective criteria have been put forward for examination. Krumbacher, for instance, based some of his doubts on grammar and prosody. M. Tuilier scarcely discusses either. ... there is sufficient body of original writing to make appropriate a direct comparison with the grammatical usage and metre of Gregory's trimeter verse.

Sykes accepts Tuilier's evidence suggesting that the text of Euripides used by the author antedates the standard mediaeval texts; also, it seems, the arguments that a *Christus patiens* written by Gregory would (probably) be imitated by Byzantine writers like Romanos, and that the theology of the poem is consistent with a Cappadocian position in Christology. "But neither here nor in his article has M. Tuilier succeeded in making the absence from the text of the word *θεοτόκος* into any cohesive argument for authorship."

Sykes concludes: "There may be some who will be unable to find quite the degree of literary artistry which M. Tuilier claims (pp. 73 *f.*) but who will still recognize the importance of the work and the value of this contribution to its understanding."

A. Wankenne (1970) accepts Tuilier's view that the *Christus patiens* has to be attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus:

M. A. Tuilier ne se contente pas de démontrer qu'il faut l'attribuer au saint docteur. Il rétablit sa réputation. D'abord, si elle est pleine de citations du théâtre d'Euripide, c'est parce que Julien l'Apostat avait défendu aux chrétiens l'enseignement des lettres païennes. Sous cette forme, empruntée pour une grande part, une théologie profonde s'exprime, celle de la réalité de la nature humaine en Jesus-Christ, celle par conséquent de la "Theotokos", de Marie mère de Dieu, dont le rôle est capital dans l'histoire du salut.

Referring to a remark of Gustave Cohen - "l'authenticité du drame était certaine si Grégoire citait couramment Euripide dans le reste de son oeuvre" - OR, the author of an anonymous review published in *Irenikon* 44 (1971) 130, leaves open the question whether Tuilier has succeeded in reestablishing the attribution of the play to Gregory of Nazianzus.

\* \* \*

In a study titled *La tragedia "Christus patiens" y la doctrina mariana en la Capadocia del siglo IV*, J.A. de Aldama (1972) aims at comparing the conceptual world of the *Christus patiens* with that of Gregory of Nazianzus and his cultural environment. De Aldama expresses the opinion that from this perspective, the association of the play with mediaeval byzantine literature seems definitive. He recognizes the difficulties caused by the diversity in literary genre, but affirms the originality of the Mary figure, which possesses a degree of moderation in suffering foreign to Euripides.

His verdicts concerning the Mary figure are:

- 1) The prime position which Mary has in the play, does not correspond to 4th century Cappadocia, in which the veneration of Mary was closely united with, and subordinate to, that of the Saviour. (p. 418)
- 2) The titles currently referring to Mary in the text of the play express her regality, and differ from the normal image of the Mother of God in 4th century Cappadocia. (p. 418)
- 3) The *Christus patiens* places extraordinary emphasis on the virginal birth, which seems foreign to Gregory of Nazianzus. (pp. 418-9)
- 4) According to St. Basil and to Amphilochius of Iconium, the sword which Simeon prophesied for Mary was doubt and scandal, whereas in the tragedy it is intense grief - which, however, is mitigated by a faith which brings hope and fortitude. (pp. 419-21)



5) The final supplication seems to affirm a corporeal assumption of Mary - a doctrine which is alien to 4th century Cappadocia. (pp. 421-2)

To de Aldama, all of this points to the same conclusion: if the tragedy has Gregory of Nazianzus as its author, it stands isolated from the rest of the ecclesiastical literature concerning Mary - without any immediate precedents or any traceable influence. Concerning Romanos, he finds it improbable that the latter would be inspired by only a few passages from the *Christus patiens*, while many more would prove to be ultimately useful to him; therefore he regards the hypothesis of Grosdidier de Matons, viz. that the composer of the tragedy knew only this fragment from Romanos, as plausible.

The opinion of F. Trisoglio (1974) regarding this issue is nowhere plainly apparent, except in his final paragraph:

Era destino che S. Gregorio di Nazianzo - la personalità piú affascinante ed enigmatica di tutta la patristica greca, l'uomo dalle folgoranti vittorie e dalle ritirate periodiche, l'anima piú burrascosa e piú tersa della Chiesa orientale - continuasse ad inquietare anche i posteri in rudi contrasti. La sua figura storica fu la piú ricca di fascino dei primi secoli bizantini ed è un fascino che pare riverberarsi sull'opera contrastatamente attribuitagli: in mezzo a tanta scatenata passione sembrano emergere i lineamenti della Sfinge.

\* \* \*

## 2.8 GENERAL CONCLUSION:

The foregoing review of the opinions of scholars regarding the *Christus patiens* has revealed much speculation and very little proof - either of Gregorian authorship of the play, or of its inauthenticity. It also revealed, I would suspect, a tendency of this issue to become more complicated the more it is debated. Since the first shadow of doubt has been cast on the traditional attribution of the play to the famous Gregory of Nazianzus, the number and diversity of arguments defending or opposing this attribution, has steadily been increasing.

Tuilier's *introduction*, taken at face value, is perhaps the best argument of authorship produced thus far. It is at least tempting in that one may regard the matter as settled, and go about reading the play itself, on the assumption of Gregorian authorship - or, at least, of a 4th century date. However, the interpretation of this work, like the interpretation of any literary work of art, could prove hazardous if its proper historical setting were either disregarded or - even worse - if the interpretation were attempted on the basis of false assumptions about its historical setting. A proper study of the issue, as undertaken and expounded in the previous pages, led to the conclusion that both the *Christus patiens* and the question of its (in)authenticity warrant further research - provided that it is independent and objective research, aimed at resolving rather than complicating the questions regarding the origin, intention, and literary value of this cento.

The following chapters describe the methods, findings, and conclusions of such research, as undertaken by the present author. These are submitted to the reader, together with the wish that the study of the *Christus patiens* may be to him, or her, the same gratifying experience as it has been to me.

\* \* \* \* \*