

**THE USE OF IMAGERY AS STRUCTURAL ELEMENT
IN AMPHILOCHIUS OF ICONIUM,
IN MULIEREM PECCATRICEM [HOMILY IV]¹**

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Abstract

*Although the use of imagery in Early Christian and Byzantine homiletics can be defined as common device, one does often find examples (i.e. homilies) which are marked by an almost excessive use thereof, such as Amphilochius' homily *In mulierem peccatricem*. Images taken from both Scripture and contemporary life feature as constant binding or structural element in the development and forward movement of the narrative. In such cases one could not go wrong in referring to it as *Ein Denken in Bildern*. Within a homiletic style that can be defined as one of descriptive and dramatic representation of biblical episodes, the use of imagery plays an important role, for by means of imagery the preacher can establish and create a picturesque world in which he has the biblical characters move and act – but in which he also endeavours to involve the audience, making them participate in this newly created world. And the successful involvement of the audience in this recreated world of biblical characters guarantees for the preacher the power of his message.*

¹ The study is based on the text published by Datema (1978:107-126). The actual homily starts at line 4 and ends at line 433 of the published text. References to sentences or passages in the Greek text or direct quotations from the text are indicated by means of the lines with omission of the paragraph number.

As illustration of this way of thinking the analysis follows a linear reading of the homily (with constant reference to the outline of the homily as set out in B. Outline of the contents of Homily IV below) to show how Amphilochius uses images as links in a chain of narrative and dramatic exposition of his theme and/or message.

A. Introduction

The theme of Homily IV of Amphilochius² concerns the sinful woman who was living an immoral life in the town, and who came uninvited into the house of the Pharisee (called Simon), washed the feet of Jesus, and afterwards anointed him with precious oil of myrrh, as recorded in Luke 7.36-50. Amphilochius, like other *patres*, identifies this woman and this scene with the one recorded in Mt. 26.6-13 and Mk.14.3-9 as well as the one recorded in Jn.12.1-8. There are, however, some marked differences between these four anointment scenes: It is clear that the one recorded by Matthew and Mark is the same, although Matthew relates that *the disciples* were indignant because of the waste of the ointment, while Mark merely says that *some* among those present were complaining about this waste. Luke places the scene not at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, but Simon the Pharisee with no mention of the specific town; he also records a dialogue between Jesus and Simon, including a parable, which Matthew and Mark do not relate. John also places the scene in Bethany, but at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and it is Judas who is named as the one who complains about the waste of ointment. Furthermore, the woman is an anonymous sinner in Mt.26, Mk.14 and Lk.7, but in Jn.12 it is Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anoints the feet of Jesus. Apart from identifying the various anointment scenes, Amphilochius refers to her as the woman of Schechem.

The integration of these various anointment scenes by Amphilochius resulted in the following picture:

- The basic story-line is taken from Luke 7
- The scene takes place in Bethany (Mt. 26 and Mk.14) at the house of Simon the leper (Mt.26 and Mk.14)
- The sinful woman (Luke 7) is from Schechem³ (Amphilochius)
- Judas (Jn.12) becomes a character in the story-line of Luke 7. He complains about the waste of the precious oil of myrrh and thus becomes an object of invective

² For the life, works and status of Amphilochius see especially Holl (1904), Gstrein (1966) and Datema (1978: ix-xxx).

³ Amphilochius uses the form Sivkima, the form used by the LXX, e.g. Gen.33.18. Shechem has been identified by W.F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (1954:247), with Sychar of Jn.4.5. See *The New Bible Dictionary* (ed. J.D.Douglas), London 1963: 1173 and 1225.

According to the opening line of the homily (‘Previously [πρώην] Christ won us over sufficiently when he dined at the house of Zacchaeus’) it would seem that Amphilochius wrote a homily on Zacchaeus, one well-known to his audience. We do, in fact, possess such a homily, namely Homily VIII. But Datema (xix) doubts whether Homily VIII is the one envisaged here by Amphilochius. He writes:

‘Mais si ces mots font penser à une homélie d’Amphiloque sur Zachée, ils se rapportent à une homilée prononcée à Iconium, *ce qui n’est pas le cas pour la nôtre*.⁴ A la fin de son discours, l’orateur semble indiquer qu’il n’est que l’invité chez un autre: τῷ ἐν ἀρεταῖς πλουτοῦντι πατρὶ τὸν λόγον καταλείψωμεν· ἀκόλουθον γὰρ τὸν φιλόξενον τοῦ φιλοξένου διηγῆσασθαι τὰς ἀρετάς.⁵ En toute probabilité, Amphiloque se trouvait chez Basile de Césarée, dont l’hospitalité est bien connue.’

The homily is characterized by an elaborated picture of the woman’s sinful past, an elaboration also found later in Romanos the Melodist’s representation of the sinful woman (*kontakion* 10 in the Oxford edition by Maas-Trypanis = 21 in the French edition by Grosdidier de Matons),⁶ and which reflects the same kind of elaboration Amphilochius has given in Homily VIII in the case of Zacchaeus. It is the longest of Amphilochius’ extant Greek homilies, and is an admirable composition as far as narrative and characterisation are concerned.

B. Outline of the contents of Homily IV

Lines 4-47: Exordium. Angelic festivity when the Lord feasts with human beings, having come to save the lost sheep, like Zacchaeus. The lack of understanding on the part of the Pharisees. The audience is exhorted to act differently by following the Shepherd

Lines 47-51: Transitional passage – homiletic motif: the preacher undertakes to set out the gospel reading in order that the audience may come to an understanding of its meaning. Threefold theme is announced: Christ’s love for humankind, the unreasonableness of the Pharisees, and the repentance (homecoming) of the sinful woman

Lines 51-418: Main part of the homily = dramatic exposition of Luke 7.36-50 covering 5 phases, interrupted by lines 91-121

1. Jesus at the house of Simon the leper [51-80]
2. The uninvited appearance of the sinful woman at the house of Simon – reference to the sins of her past life [80-90]

⁴ Italics are mine.

⁵ Homily VIII.10.(239)240-242.

⁶ For an analysis of this *kontakion* see Barkhuizen (1990).

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Lines 91-121: Ethical digression: Lawful sexual intercourse in marriage vs licentiousness
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3. A dramatic account of the past sinful way of living of the woman. Her repentance [122-169]
 4. The sinful woman enters Simon's house and washes and anoints Jesus' feet [170-244]
 5. The Pharisee's criticism and Judas' complain at the wasting of the ointment – both countered by the preacher [external invective] and Jesus [internal invective] [245-418]

Lines 419-431: Exhortation to the audience to praise the sinful woman and emulate her lament of repentance, while offering gratitude to the Lamb of God

Lines 431-433: Concluding doxology

In reading Homily IV some significant aspects present themselves to the reader, which, we should remind ourselves, were part and parcel of the literary tools of the early christian preacher with which he enhanced his sermon, thus contributing to the understanding of the message on the part of his audience.⁷ These aspects can be divided into two broad categories, those that express *the homiletic perspective* and those that are expressive of *the thought world* of the homily.

Literary or rhetorical aspects that reflect the homiletic perspective of a homily are especially those that serve as method of exposition and clarification, i.e. creating an understanding of the message on the part of the audience. The following have been identified in Homily IV:

- Metaphorical presentation
- Dramatised presentation with its subsections of:
 - dialogue,
 - interior monologue
 - apostrophe and invective
 - characterization
- Aspects that relate to the relation or interaction between preacher and audience

⁷ For the relation between preacher and audience see the various articles in Cunningham & Allen, as well as Barkhuizen (2005) 140-142 with reference to Amphilochius himself.

Of particular significance regarding the expository aspect of Homily IV is *the abundant use of imagery* in this homily,⁸ to such an extent that one could even refer to the homily's message as 'ein Denken in Bildern',⁹ Amphilochius employing imagery as *structural element*, i.e. imagery or metaphorical language becoming a vehicle by which he moves from thought to thought. As illustration of this way of thinking the analysis follows a *linear reading* of the homily (with constant reference to the outline of the homily as set out above) to show how Amphilochius uses images as links in a chain of narrative and dramatic exposition of his theme and/or message. The images Amphilochius employs are printed in italics.

C. Reading of Homily IV

The Exordium [lines 4-47]

The homily opens on a festive note, for when Christ partakes in the festive joy of humans [sharing with them their table], the preacher states, this is worthy of being called 'angelic feasting'. True festivity exists indeed where the Lord dines with sinners. Moving from the concept 'humans' [5/6] to tax collectors, prostitutes [8], slaves [14-15] and condemned sinners [those found guilty] – Amphilochius employs - in the latter instance - the first image of the homily by referring to Christ as *the Judge who dines with those found guilty* [15-16]. The antithesis 'Judge vs those found guilty' heightens this paradoxical sense of joy, already created by the preacher in the opening lines, for it is wholly uncommon for a judge to dine with the condemned. This immediately brings into sharp focus the purpose of Christ having become man, namely to save humankind. To further underline Christ's act of salvation of humankind, Amphilochius, knowing that his audience were aware of the references in the Gospels to Christ taking to the sea, he immediately turns this literal act of sailing on the sea into the metaphor of *the sea of life*: Christ has come to 'pull those, who are tempest-tossed on the sea of life, from the depth of sin' [18-20]. The *language of travel [on sea]* now leads the preacher to exploit this theme further by describing Christ as one visiting villages and cities, traveling along narrow and rough roads [20-21], in order to bring in 'those who are lost at the meeting of three roads,'¹⁰ into his *own flock*¹¹ just like *untended sheep*¹² [21-23].

⁸ For a general classification and analysis of images in Amphilochius' Greek homilies, see Barkhuizen (2002) 1-30. Apart from the use of imagery the homilies reflect many other rhetorical figures and Moreschini & Norelli (Vol.II, 2005:132) aptly refer to Amphilochius' homilies as 'heavily rhetorical'.

⁹ For this term, see M. Bernard, *Pindar's Denken in Bildern*. Neske 1963.

¹⁰ The trivodoi were frequented by fortune-tellers and loungers, and were associated with the vulgar and persons of doubt. Cf. Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.5.14; Aristides, *Orationes* 22 (19).10; Lucianus, *Hist. Conscr.* (Quomodo historia conscribende sit) 16.

¹¹ Cf. Mt. 26.31; Jn. 10.12/16.

¹² Mt. 9.36.

By means of association of ideas,¹³ Amphilochius now points to *Christ as shepherd*, the one who seeks after the lost sheep, having left behind the ninety-nine sheep.¹⁴ From this point up to the close of the first paragraph [line 38], Amphilochius moves wholly on the metaphorical level, adding several other elements to the sheep-shepherd image, inspired, of course, by the image of the shepherd metaphor of Jn.10.1-16¹⁵: Jesus as shepherd left the ninety-nine behind looking for the one lost, not despising the ninety nine, for they had to remain safely in the fold,¹⁶ but seeking the lost one all around, so that it may not become *the food for the devil*. For an untended sheep is ready food for wild animals,¹⁷ and *a soul not sealed* (i.e. by baptism) is exposed to *the wiles of demons*. Therefore did he previously snatch Zacchaeus *like a sheep from the mouth of a wolf*, and united him with *the fold* and deemed him worthy of a seal. For just as a shepherd, wishing to hunt down a lost sheep, let a tame animal alone, in order that he may draw in the prey (lost sheep) that has turned off from safety and is grazing freely [thus becoming an easy prey for the wolves], likewise also the Word of God took on flesh from the virgin, and placed him self like a sheep in a pasture, i.e. at the table of Zacchaeus, in order that he may draw the latter in towards togetherness and may secretly unite Zacchaeus with his own fold. (23-38).

Pointing out at the beginning of the second paragraph [line 39] that the Pharisees did not understand this and reproached Jesus for eating with tax collectors, the preacher exhorts the congregation to follow the shepherd who loves humankind¹⁸, and continues with the image of the sheep-shepherd by stating that Jesus has attached Zacchaeus, the tax collector, to *the rational fold of the apostles* ... and that he has drawn the sinful woman like a *lamb*¹⁹ (Jn.21.15) from *the throat of the devil*, and restored her to *the blameless fold*. [39-47].

Transitional passage = homiletic motif (lines 47- 51)

Introducing the story of the sinful woman at the house of Simon in line 47 by means of a homiletic motif,²⁰ Amphilochius announces to the audience a threefold

¹³ For this literary device, see Barkhuizen (1989)

¹⁴ Mt 18.12ff, Lk. 15.1-6.

¹⁵ Elements [such as the wolf] added to this image come from 1 Peter 2.25, Mt. 7.15, 10.16 = Luke 10.3 and Acts 20.29.

¹⁶ Cf. Jn.21.16.

¹⁷ Jn.10.12.

¹⁸ Titus 3.4.

¹⁹ Jn.21.15

²⁰ *Ἰνα γινώτε ... αὐτὰς ὑμῖν τὰς εὐαγγελικὰς παραθήσομαι ῥήσεις... τοῦ ὕφους τοῦ ἀναγνώσματος ἐπακούσητε... τῆς ἐρμηνείας τὴν ἐννοίαν ἀναμάσσετε* [2.47-51]. This formula probably goes back to Paul. See Moreschini & Norelli (2005:3): 'He (i.e. Paul) has a special liking, whether in moving from the introduction to the main part of the letter, or in moving to a new subject within the body, for a formula of the type "I want you to know" (Gal 1:11; Phil 1:12) or "I want you not to be ignorant" (2 Cor 1:8; Rom 1:13).'

theme: Christ's love for humankind; the unreasonable of the Pharisees; and the return of the sinful woman [her salvation]

Main part of the homily: dramatic exposition of Luke 7.36-50 [lines 51-418]

The main part of the homily – in which the preacher relates in dramatic fashion the story of the sinful woman – can be conveniently divided into five phases.

1. Jesus at the house of Simon the leper [51-80]

Having quoted Luke 7.36, Amphilochius opening commentary comes in the form of a twofold exclamation referring to Jesus' ineffable grace and unspeakable love for humankind, because of his relation to various sinners: to the Pharisee, who invited him, and whose invitation he accepted; to tax collectors, harlots, the woman from Samaria, the Canaanite woman, and the woman who suffered from haemorrhage. The last example leads the preacher to the image of Jesus as *physician*, treating *the illness* of them all (or: all illnesses), in order that he may help all, bad as well as good, ungrateful as well as grateful. And therefore he enters into a house (that of the Pharisee) hitherto full of sins. And here again association of ideas comes into play. Simon is by implication called an *innkeeper*. For where a Pharisee is, there can be found an incentive for wickedness, an *inn of sin*. At the same time the house of Simon, because he has condemned the sinful woman and belittled Jesus' knowledge (considering him not as true prophet), is also defined as a *household receptacle* (ὑποδοχή) of contempt.

And this concept of Simon's house leads yet to another image, namely to Christ as the *sun of righteousness*,²¹ induced by the reference to the sun and the fact that its rays are not effected by mire: Amphilochius states that Jesus did not judge it unworthy to be in the house of the Pharisee, although it is a house that is likened to an inn of sin, and a receptacle of contempt. For just *as the sun* is not harmed by mire by casting his own rays upon it, but on the contrary it even purifies the inherent unpleasantness, without itself being damaged, thus also Christ like the sun of righteousness overpowers every accursed and profane place and destroys with *the rays of his goodness the ill-smelling sin*, submitting to no outrage, diminution, or defilement.²² For this reason, Amphilochius states that Christ has given Simon his assent to be invited, to *show* firstly that by partaking of food and drink, his incarnation was no mere fantasy, that he was in fact truly human, but secondly also to reveal the sins of the Scribes and Pharisees, and *teach*²³ them the real face of repentance, as would become clear from the

²¹ Mal 3.2

²² Theodoret of Cyrus, in his *De providentia* 10.16, uses a similar image: 'If the sun, being corporeal, for it is visible and admits of dissolution, cannot be polluted when it passes through corpses, putrid mud, and many other evil-smelling substances, much more impervious to such pollution is the maker of the sun.' Translation by Halton in ACW 49.140.

²³ The verbs 'show' [77] and 'teach' [79] point in this context to an implied image of *teacher*, which is a well-known image of Christ originating from the Gospels.

repentant conduct of the sinful woman. The context thus points to the implication of Jesus as *religious teacher*.

2. Uninvited entrance of the woman – a sinner of the town. Reference to her sinful past [80-90]

Having mentioned the sinful woman, the preacher quotes Luke 7.37 (*a woman of the city, who was a sinner*), and then proceeds by defining the nature of the woman in terms of various images: she is the *fishing-net* of the devil (the latter thus being seen as *fisherman*), and also the *teacher* of transgression, shown first a *helper*, then revealed as an *enemy*. She is then described as one who *carries the burdens of Eve, weighed down by her many sins*. The preacher concludes this section by informing the audience that he will now point to the abundance of her past sins in order to show the greatness of her repentance.

Ethical digression (lines 91-121)

Amphilochius now interrupts himself by means of a digression [91-121] relating to lawful sexual intercourse in marriage as opposed to a licentious life style. This ‘digression’, of course, serves an important purpose, for the thoughts expressed here in paragraph 4 reflect on the character of the sinful woman, serving as foil to the greatness of her repentance (89-90). But here also the preacher highlights his message with some arresting metaphors.

In lines 93-106 marriage is connected with an image taken from the *agricultural activity of sowing and reaping* coupled with a *military* image. The preacher states that after Adam and Eve had sinned and were banished from paradise, and had received death as penalty, God instituted marriage *to make war upon death* (marriage and death both being *personified*), in order that one (marriage) *may sow*, and the other (death) *reap*, one may *cut down*, the other *sprout forth*. Through marriage Adam *conquered* death (the metaphor now includes a person) and *defeated* the one who is *gathering* (the harvest) in by *producing* (offspring). Before sin virginity preserved *the garment of nature* undefiled, but after the transgression, when the law of marriage was instituted, marriage *sowed* pleasure for the man with a view to lawful sexual intercourse. Quoting Heb.13.4 the preacher points to God punishing those who display an immoral and adulterous behaviour. Women, especially, should behave like Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, models of women without reproach. But those who through a word of pleasure arouse young men towards licentiousness *destroy the temple of God* – and as 1 Cor. 3.17 states – God will destroy such people. And the sinful woman counted among such kind of adulterous women. By trafficking in her nature – she has thrown men into *the pit of fornication*.

3. The woman’s past sinful way of living and repentance (lines 122-169)

At the beginning of the next paragraph (par.5), Amphilochius clarifies the reason for interrupting his story and reflecting upon marriage and virginity: It was, as

pointed out above, not merely a digression as such, but the intention was to point to the repentance of the sinful woman: ‘And I say these things not ridiculing her because of what she did before, but praising her by reason of such things that have suddenly come about I relate the error of her sins, in order to show the virtues of her repentance’ (lines122-125).

This transition or change in her way of living is then expressed again in metaphorical language, for she is (again) depicted as *fisherman*: she was previously (before she met Jesus) catching in her *fishing-net* some of the young men through her locks of hair (lines126-127). And a few lines further down (lines142-143) she herself refers (interior monologue) to her past life as a time during which she was running around in the town quarters with her feet as *fishing-net* and her tongue as *dragnet* (σαγήνη)²⁴ (lines142-143). But in between these lines Amphilochius again employs the image of the *sea of sin*: the sinful woman, having seen that Jesus was at one time conversing with the woman from Samaria, and at another time with the Canaanite, and again was willingly robbed of power by the woman who suffered from haemorrhage, and that he was dining with tax collectors, she decided on repentance and went out to find Jesus. She begins her monologue with this very idea to abandon her futile and sinful life: ‘If he (Jesus) accepts harlots and sinners and tax collectors, up till when am I frantically, madly and ungovernably *to draw (water) from the sea of sin?*’ (lines 135-137).

The adverb ‘frantically or madly’ is represented in the Greek by the participle of the verb οἰστράω (οἰστρώσα in this instance). The verb refers to *the sting of the gadfly* (οἰστρος). The verb is used in this instance intransitively = ‘go mad, rage’, and thus takes on the metaphorical meaning of acting frantically, madly, in a frenzy.

From line137ff. the sinful woman paints a picture of the daily life-style of a harlot, and reflecting on the transitory nature of physical beauty, and the effect of her sinful life style, she already envisages the fire of *Gehenna*, for ‘... *being forced to appear beautiful to the detriment and corruption of the young men, I was hastening along the streets of the city, in the market-places, in the town quarters, with my feet as fishing-net and my tongue as dragnet*’ (lines142-143).

In her description of her former way of living, how she beautified herself to entice the young men, Amphilochius has her paint an interesting picture of the make-up of women in those times, and has her use an arresting image regarding the way her hair was done: ‘Beautifying myself to corrupt the spectators, I sometimes raised my head to *a towering height* by means of tangled locks of hair...’ (lines144-146), *the verb being used* (ἐπύργουσι) (line146) *being self explanantory*.²⁵

²⁴ In New Testament Greek both divktuon (fishing-net) and saghvnh (dragnet) are used for fishing.

²⁵ The passage reads: ‘Beautifying myself to corrupt the spectators, I sometimes raised my head to a towering height by means of tangled locks of hair, at other times letting the strands of hair locks roam from my head down my face. And at other times I coloured my cheeks red and used eye-shadow, and at other times I let streams of tears flow ruining the soul by means of flattery.’ The conservative outlook of

The images of *physician* and *judge* come into play when the sinful woman in desperation asks herself: ‘What *physician* shall I find for these endless sufferings (sins)?’ (line 150). She then depicts Jesus as *Judge* (line 154: see above lines 15-16): Realizing that she cannot cover up her sins, and cannot escape God’s notice, she asks: ‘*Whereto then shall I flee when I find the Judge everywhere, who, although not apparent, is exposing my sins everywhere?*’ And knowing that Jesus was at the house of Simon, she went there in all haste to seek him out, not asking from him healing of the eyes (ὀφθαλμῶν ὑγίειαν) or deliverance from sickness (νόσου ἀπαλλαγὴν), but *healing of her soul* (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ... ἴαμα) (lines 161-165). This is her only way out:

‘*I shall find one solution of my impending sins, if I shall find the Judge, if I shall receive the due measure of punishment beforehand*’ (lines 165-167).

4. The sinful woman washes and anoints the feet of Jesus [lines 170-244]

The interior monologue of the sinful woman is concluded at the end of paragraph 5, and Amphilochius now proceeds by relating her coming to the house of Simon and anointing the feet of Jesus. Again metaphorical language is employed in the scene description that follows. The woman acted silently, for she knew that Jesus is the *Overseer* (ἐφορος) of man’s thoughts, the one who knows everything. To God everything is clear, not only what she, the sinful woman, has done, but everything in *the council chamber* of the (her) soul. She is therefore at a loss what to say, and is thus *speaking through her tears*, having *furnished doors for her tongue* (an image in line with the proverb: γλῶσση θύραι οὐκ ἐπίκεινται²⁶) (lines 172-180). At the same time Amphilochius brings Jesus into the picture, now not as Judge, but as *Lawgiver*: ‘She (the sinful woman) wept, because she, having laughed so often, was washing out with her beautiful tears the evil laughter; and with her teardrops from her eyes she was washing out the filth from her cheeks, in order that through what she has sinned, through that she might also speak in her defence, and through what she has acted *lawlessly, through that she might appease the Lawgiver*’ (lines 181-196).

The woman’s act of washing Jesus’ feet with her tears is again painted within a metaphorical framework: Having shed *fountains* of tears from the eyes through which she dragged many of the young men towards licentiousness, she *washed out the hard-stained filth of sin*, letting her tears fall for herself as *a bath of repentance*. For she provided *her tears like water*, and received forgiveness

a Christian life-style of the pre-Nicene Church was re-emphasized in the teaching of the fourth century. The detrimental life-style of the sinful woman before she met Jesus at the house of Simon, and expressed here in this homily, is typical of that way of life against which the fathers were constantly warning their audiences. Being a friend of the Cappadocian fathers, it is not surprising that Amphilochius would reflect the same ascetic sentiments that we find e.g. in Basil the Great or Gregory of Nazianzus. For Basil see especially *Ep.*2.6, and for Gregory of Nazianzus, see *Or.*8.10, in which he held up his sister Gorgonia as an example of how a Christian woman should adorn herself.

²⁶ Theognis 421.

from Christ invisibly. Moreover, she washed the feet of Christ, thus not only imitating Abraham, but even outstripping him! For he, having placed the washing vessel down, washed (the feet) with water and wiped them off with a towel,²⁷ whereas she did not draw water, but released *fountains of tears* and thus washed the feet of Jesus. And fearing that she would insult holy feet with tears of a sinful woman, she produced the beauty of *her hair as a towel*, and wiped off his feet. And it was possible to see the woman bend down completely to attend to Jesus. For her eyes were shedding forth streams from above *like wells* of tears, And the soul, serving as *washing vessel*, received drops trickling down from the feet, and the hair, fulfilling *the role of a towel*, wiped them clean; and the hands, pouring out the alabaster of myrrh, anointed the divine feet with perfume honouring *the Perfume*.²⁸ (lines 198-216)

By this act of her, the sinful woman, the preacher points out at the beginning of par.7, conquered the ungrateful mind of the Jews. For while some of them tried to stone him, she anointed him with perfume of sweet fragrances – the word ‘perfume’ reflecting back on the metaphorical use of perfume in lines 215-216 said of Jesus. The preacher then uses the New Testament symbol of Jesus as the corner-stone in describing (with some measure of sarcasm) the evil attitude (which becomes metaphorically the *evil stones*) of the Jews towards him: ‘The Jews, because they were ungrateful, because they were witless, and senseless, were repaying the Benefactor by treating the corner-stone²⁹ *kindly with evil stones*’ (lines 217-222).

5. The Pharisee’s criticism and Judas’ complaint at the wasting of the ointment – both countered by the preacher and Jesus [lines 245-418]

In paragraph 8 (lines 245-290) Amphilochius relates the condemnation on the part of Simon of both the woman’s act of repentance and Jesus’ acceptance of her action towards him. This provides the preacher with the opportunity to apostrophise Simon,³⁰ employing throughout this section *judicial imagery*. Concepts like condemn (248-249; 270), convict (252), indict (253), shining accuser and denouncer (255-256), condemning the one whom the judge justifies (263-264), accuse (277), urging the judge towards accusing others, asking pardon for yourself (282-283) – are all part and parcel of this invective directed against Simon. Simon is reproached by the preacher for treating and honouring Jesus as God by inviting him to his house, but at the same time condemns him as a man and accuses him of ignorance for not having known that she was a sinful woman. Thus Simon *condemns the Judge who justifies* this woman, and in doing so

²⁷ Cf. Gen.18.4.

²⁸ Notice the enumeration: eyes – soul – hair – hands, emphasizing her act of total repentance.

²⁹ For the corner-stone of Is.28:16 interpreted messianically of Christ as the stumbling-block to the unbeliever but as the unifying force among God’s believing people, see Rom.9:33, Eph. 2:20-22 and 1 Pet. 2:6.

³⁰ See Barkhuizen (1986) and Block.

dishonours Jesus. Simon's conduct indeed reminds the preacher of the saying of Jesus recorded in Mt.23.24, which he quotes and then reworks the terms involved (i.e. gnat, camel, sieve) into the metaphorical context of his homily: 'Why do you strain at the *gnat of the woman*, while you swallow down *the camel of your own sins*' (279-280). At the end of this passage (par.8) Amphilochius turns also to Judas (whom he will attack in par.9) and, employing a medical image, asks from him: 'You reckon down as waste *the healing care* of Christ and you call futile *expense* what has advanced towards God's honour?' – Christ being again depicted as *physician*.

Paragraph 9 continues with the invective directed at Judas, and several images serve as vehicle for Amphilochius' invective. In line 299 Amphilochius addresses Judas and rebukes him for complaining about the waste of myrrh poured over Jesus' feet, pointing out that Jesus received myrrh and thus showed a way of repentance; he received the sinful woman's tears and thus checked a *fountain* (or: *source*) of *sin*. This, of course, the preacher suggests, caused Judas grief, as it did the devil, 'for he saw that through her her race is henceforward turned around towards repentance, and he *is being stung* and is distressed for having henceforth *no net* by means of which he can *hunt down man*' (301-305). Amphilochius points out that Jesus did not expose *his sickness* (Jesus as physician) but rather rebuked him, and from this point on the preacher's invective is replaced by one on the part of Jesus. In his invective Jesus *inter alia* points out to Judas that the sinful woman had nothing to grant him except *a well (fountain, source) of tears*, propitiating through a *fountain the Fountain*, procuring for a *Teacher* an immaterial propitiatory gift. (323-325).

Continuing with his rebuke Jesus uses *imagery from the financial world* and points to Judas that he grumbled over the *financial loss* of the perfume that could have been sold, but it is in fact no great loss for he goes and *sells* Jesus for only thirty pieces of silver! Jesus asks: who is the *buyer*? And at what *price* will someone buy God? Why is he, Judas, making the *transaction cheap*? Someone is *selling* God in the form of man for thirty pieces of silver, like a *household-slave, like a foreigner*! Someone is *selling a Physician-without-pay* for thirty silver pieces, that *gives light to blind people, a physician that raises lame people to walk again* [325-343].

The conclusion of the paragraph is also marked by imagery: Jesus refers to the rope with which Judas will hang himself as *the fruit of his betrayal*, while the woman will be remembered indelibly, that her alabaster vase will be extended for all time, having the *fragrance of memory* in abundance [347-352].

Paragraph 10 deals with the conversation Jesus had with Simon regarding the two debtors and the moneylender, and this leads Amphilochius to an extension of the parable in figurative/metaphorical terms. In relating the parable told by Jesus to Simon the Pharisee, namely of the two men who were in debt to a man, one owing him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty (Lk.7.41), Amphilochius comments on this parable as follows: 'Terrifying is the manner of the tale. *Our life*

is invisibly writing (on) a document: the thoughts and deeds and roaming of the eyes and emotions of the soul. But Jesus, called the *moneylender* and lover of humankind (ὁ φιλαίθρωπος δανειστής), resolves our fear, tearing up *the pages of our sin*, and not only tearing them up, but also smoothing them away with *the waters of baptism*, in order that no trace of element or note of syllable may remain of man's bygone sins. He *lends out*, but does not receive his due. He is treated unfairly, but does not shrink back, for his hand is extended to them who beg (for mercy). Because he is a lover of humankind, he does not punish, does not torture, does not hand humankind over to wanton violence, but *cancel[s] humankind's debt* (365-388).

In paragraph 11 Amphilochius has Jesus return to the image of *the fountain of tears* which the sinful woman shed, and through which she wiped off *the filth of her sin* [403-404]. Contrasting the act of repentance on the part of the woman with Simon's dishonouring attitude, and pointing to the fact that she anointed his head, while he did not, Amphilochius has Jesus quoting S.of S. 1.3 [*Your name is like myrrh poured out*] and emphasizing the fact that it was *poured out* - not wasted – as Judas would have had it - and accordingly has him referring to the *vessel of the Jewish mind* that was *rotten*. But the sinful woman indeed honoured Jesus with tears and ointments, *having thus blended a kind of twofold mixing bowl* [411, 415-418].

Exhortation directed at audience with concluding doxology [lines 419-433]

In the final paragraph the preacher returns to imagery taken from the *judiciary world* by urging the audience to praise the woman, who, having repented, has uncovered *a law of love for humankind*, a woman who has acquired *the Judge* himself as *Advocate*. She has thus conquered with tears the lament that would have resulted from the *condemnation*.

Concluding his exhortation directed at the audience, the preacher urges them to *anoint their limbs* not with oils, but *with purity*, and depicting living (a certain style of life) *as putting on clothes* (as dying is depicted as doffing your clothes), Amphilochius would have his audience live a temperate life *by clothing themselves* with temperance (Εν-δύσασθε ... τὸ ἄφθαρτον τῆς σωφροσύνης ἱμάτιον, 428-429. Cf. Eph.4.24: καὶ ἐδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον).

D. Conclusion

Within a homiletic style that can be defined as one of *descriptive and dramatic representation* of biblical episodes, the use of imagery plays an important role, for by means of imagery the preacher can establish and create a *picturesque world* in which he has the biblical characters move and act – but in which he also endeavours to involve the audience, making them participate in this newly created world. And the successful involvement of the audience in this recreated world of biblical characters guarantees for the preacher the power of his message.

Although the use of imagery in Early Christian and Byzantine homiletics can be defined as common device, one does often find examples (i.e. homilies) which are marked by an almost excessive use thereof, such as Amphilochius' homily *In mulierem peccatricem*. Images taken from both Scripture and contemporary life feature as constant binding or structural element in the development and forward movement of the narrative. In such cases one could not go wrong in referring to it as *Ein Denken in Bildern*. The following table of theme and image gives a clear picture of just how the preacher has presented his thought by means of imagery. The description of theme and image, given below in the tables, does for obvious reasons contain the minimum detail that would suffice for illustrating imagery as linking device in the development of the homily's thought-line.

E. Summary of Images in relation to the 'thought movement' of the homily

4-51

Theme	Images
The human plight – the cause of Christ coming to earth as saviour of humankind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus the judge dining with the condemned • Jesus and the tempest-tossed sinners on the sea of life • Jesus the traveller and shepherd bringing those untended sheep lost into his fold. The devil as wolf from whose mouth the lost sheep are snatched

51-90

Theme	Images
The grace and unspeakable love of Jesus towards sinners in contrast to Simon's contemptuous attitude towards such people, such as Zacchaeus and the Sinful Woman, who was previously helper of the devil, but here receives the love and forgiveness of Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus the physician healing all illnesses [or: the illnesses of all] • Simon an innkeeper and his house constitute an inn of sin and a household receptacle of contempt • Christ the sun of righteousness whose rays destroy the mire of ill-smelling sin without becoming defiled • Jesus the religious teacher teaching the Pharisees the face of repentance • The devil as fisher and the sinful woman his fishing-net

<p>The face of senselessness and ungratefulness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fountains [wells] of her tears serving as bath of repentance • Her hair serving as towel, and her soul as washing vessel • Jesus the Perfume whom she wants to honour with perfume <p>.....</p>
<p>The face of hypocrisy – Jesus’ invective directed at Simon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pharisees treating Jesus the corner-stone kindly (!) with evil stones <p>.....</p>
<p>The face of evil grief – Judas and the devil grieved by the repentance of the woman. Invective directed at Judas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial imagery = Jesus as judge <p>.....</p>
<p>Betrayal (Judas) vs repentance and salvation (Sinful Woman) – death vs. life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image of the hunting net with which the devil hunt down people. • Image of being stung • Imagery taken from the financial world – concepts of loss and the selling and buying of Jesus <p>.....</p>
<p>Jesus does not condemn, does not punish, but in his love for humankind he gives the repentant sinner complete forgiveness and new life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image of the hangman’s rope as fruit of Judas’ betrayal • Image of perfume: the fragrant memory of the sinful woman’s salvation. <p>.....</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image of the debtors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jesus = moneylender who cancels our debts ○ our life writing the soul’s emotions and thoughts and deeds on a document = the pages of our sins, being cancelled out by Jesus • The cleansing waters of baptism • The woman’s tears and the

	ointment of perfume blending a twofold mixing bowl to anoint Jesus, the Perfume
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419-431

Theme	Images
Praise of the woman who has found the judge also as her advocate who has turned her condemnation into acquittal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judiciary image: Jesus as judge and advocate
Audience should anoint them with purity and clothe themselves with temperance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anointment and clothing image

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