

A Mirror for Justinian: The *Ekthesis* of Agapetus Diaconus

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THE FOUNDATION for Byzantine thought about the relation of the emperor and the empire to Christian theology was established almost as soon as there was a Christian emperor. In his oration on the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's reign Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea described the earthly empire as the *μίμησις* of the kingdom of heaven.¹ Eusebius was able to draw on a rich and ancient tradition of classical and Hellenistic speculation about kingship, and by relating this tradition to Biblical and theological motifs he provided the Christian Church, so suddenly transferred from persecution to favor, with a sophisticated and timely theory of empire.²

By the time Justinian I came to the throne in A.D. 527 a Christian Roman emperor had long since ceased to be a novelty. In the two centuries since Constantine there had been only one exception, Julian, to the general rule that the emperor should profess some sort of Christian belief—whether Catholic, Arian or Monophysite. After two hundred years, however, a Christian emperor was still something of an anomaly. The rhetorical flourishes of Eusebius were not a sufficient answer to the basic question which had been formulated by the Donatists, "What does the emperor have to do with the Church?"³ It has been said that it was because Justinian represented both the imperial idea and the Christian idea that he is memorable.⁴ It would

¹ Ed. I. A. Heikel, *Eusebius Werke I* (GCS, Leipzig 1902) 193–259. Eng. transl. of the oration by E. C. Richardson in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* SER. II, I (New York 1890) 581–610. Of special importance are §§ 2.6, 3.5–6, 4.3, 5.2–6. A succinct statement of the theory is in 5.2: "And truly may he deserve the imperial title, who has formed his soul to royal virtues, according to the standard of that celestial kingdom" (. . . οὗτος ὁ τῆς ἐπέκεινα βασιλείας τὸ μίμημα βασιλικαῖς ἀρεταῖς τῇ ψυχῇ μεμορφωμένος).

² See N. H. Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Mélanges Bidez* (Brussels 1933) 13–18 (= Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* [London 1955] 168–72). A major more general study, on which Baynes draws, is E. R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," *YCS* 1 (New Haven 1928) 55–102.

³ "Quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?" quoted by Optatus of Milevis, *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam* 3.3 (ed. Ziwsa, CSEL XXVI 73).

⁴ Charles Diehl, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, trans. G. B. Ives (Princeton 1925) 19.

be more accurate to say that Justinian is especially interesting because both those ideas were at the time in a state of flux, so that he represents not only the ideas but also an attempt to define them in relation to each other.

It is important for the historian to know what Justinian's contemporaries thought about the emperor's position and rôle in Church and civil society, since judgements about Justinian's "Caesaropapism" are too often made without adequate attention to the historical context.⁵ It is the purpose of this article to study one particular text from the abundant source material for the era of Justinian to see what it can tell us about theological ideas of empire and the imperial dignity current at that time.

I

Agapetus, a deacon of the Great Church of God in Constantinople (that is, Hagia Sophia, which was not until after the beginning of Justinian's reign the monument that we now know), addressed to Justinian a set of seventy-two precepts, known as the *Ἐκθεσις κεφαλαίων παραινετικῶν* (*Exposition of Articles of Advice*).⁶ This early example of "Mirror of Princes" literature has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention.⁷ Much ingenuity has been devoted to

⁵ D. J. Geanakoplos, "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of the Problem of Caesaropapism," in his *Byzantine East and Latin West* (New York 1966) ch. 2, has clarified many points in this perennial historical problem by making distinctions between the civil and the ecclesiastical in Byzantium, showing where they overlap and where they do not and how the distinctions became clearer after the ninth century; he agrees in general with the view of Ostrogorsky that the theory and practice of Maximus the Confessor (7th cent.), John of Damascus (8th cent.) and Theodore of Studion (early 9th cent.) had a great deal to do with this development.

⁶ The text, based on two mss, is conveniently available in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 86:1 (Paris 1865) 1163–1186, reprinted from A. Gallandi's *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum XI* (Venice 1776), which was reprinted in turn from A. Banduri, *Imperium orientale* (Paris 1711). About half the chapters are translated in E. Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium from Justinian to the Last Palaeologus* (Oxford 1957) 54–61. When a translation from Barker is available I use it, with a note to that effect. Otherwise the translations are my own.

⁷ The *Ekthesis* figured prominently in the researches of Karl Praechter into the tradition of Greek and Byzantine thought about kingship: "Antike Quellen des Theophylaktos von Bulgarien," *BZ* 1 (1892) 399–414; "Antikes in der Grabrede des Georgios Akropolites auf Johannes Dukas," *BZ* 14 (1905) 479–91. Praechter devoted a special article to Agapetus: "Der Roman Barlaam und Joasaph in seinem Verhältnis zu Agapets Königsspiegel," *BZ* 2 (1893) 444–60. (The relevant parts of *Barl.* are the speeches at 33.308ff and 36.331ff.)

In 1906 Antonio Bellomo published what appears to be the only full-length work to date on Agapetus: *Agapeto Diacono e la sua scheda regia* (Bari 1906). Apart from useful information about the more than eighty mss of Agapetus' work, the chief claim to fame of this *Vorarbeit*

the attempt to identify the author, and every Agapetus who can be found in the sixth century has been proposed. However, Bellomo showed how none of those suggested before he wrote would do, and S. Vaill   demonstrated the impossibility of the identification which Bellomo himself suggested.⁸ It seems that we must be content with knowing nothing of a personal nature about Deacon Agapetus. One ms of the *Ekthesis* carries a notice in Latin that Agapetus had been Justinian's teacher; but this is isolated and is not taken seriously by scholars.⁹

While we know nothing about our author, there does seem to be one fixed point in "Agapetstudien." The seventy-two precepts are arranged in most of the mss so that their initial letters form the acrostic τῶ θειοτάτῳ καὶ εὐσεβεστάτῳ βασιλεῖ ἡμῶν Ἰουστινιανῶ Ἀγαπητὸς ὁ ἐλάχιστος διάκονος ("Agapetus the most humble deacon to our most sacred and most devout Emperor Justinian"). Moreover, it is clear from several of the precepts that the addressee is understood to be already in possession of the imperial title, so a *terminus a quo* of A.D. 527 is established. Furthermore, in § 72 specific reference is made to the emperor's spouse (ἡ ὁμόζυγος) as living. Since Theodora died in 548, that year is established as a *terminus ad quem*. Within that twenty-one-year span the *Ekthesis* is usually dated early, from 527 to 530.

to an edition that never appeared is the long devastating review by Praechter, *BZ* 17 (1908) 152-64. This review article is probably the most useful study yet made of the *Ekthesis*.

A partial analysis of Agapetus' use of Isocrates is to be found in Bruno Keil, "Epikritische Isokratesstudien," *Hermes* 23 (1888) 346-91, esp. pp.367-69, where the resemblance of §§ 32 and 56 to Isoc. *Ad Nic.* 2.27-30 is indicated. More recently Ihor Ševčenko, "A Neglected Byzantine Source of Muscovite Political Ideology," *HarvSlavSt* 2 [= Festschrift F. Dvornik] (Cambridge [Mass.] 1954) 141-79, has demonstrated the extensive use of Agapetus in early Russian literature. He also has important remarks about Agapetus' sources that will be discussed below.

A brief r  sum   of the *Ekthesis* is provided by G. Downey, *Constantinople in the Age of Justinian* (Norman [Okla.] 1960) 49-52, preceded (pp.47-9) by a clear statement of Eusebius' achievement. Downey calls the *Ekthesis* "a classic epitome in which we can see what the new Emperor's subjects thought of his function—or what it was desired that they should think of it."

⁸ Bellomo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 136-62. Special attention has been given to an Agapetus with whom Procopius, *Ep.* 112, corresponded. However, the fact that that Agapetus had no connection with Constantinople seems to rule him out. Sim  on Vaill  , "Le diacre Agapet," *Echos d'Orient* 10 (1907) 173-5. Vaill   has a review of Bellomo's book in the same volume, p.191. Bellomo had proposed a monk Agapetus of St Sabas in Palestine. Vaill   demonstrated that this monk was dead by A.D. 519 or 520, at least seven years before the earliest possible date for the *Ekthesis*.

⁹ For the notice, see Gallandi's "Notitia" to the *Ekthesis* reprinted in *PG* 86:1, 1153-4. Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*² (Munich 1897) 456, states the general opinion on the worth of this tradition.

There seems to be no better reason for this than the general assumption that a "Mirror of Princes" is more likely to be presented to a ruler early in his reign than later. It is impossible to date the treatise with much precision, and because its content is so general, not much would be gained by doing so.¹⁰

If there is general agreement that we do not know who Agapetus was, there is dispute as to the sense and significance of what he wrote. Krumbacher classifies Agapetus among "Profanautoren," while Keil says that the tone of the work is "durchaus kirchlich-salbungsvoll." Bellomo credited the *Ekthesis* with brilliance and originality, while Praechter vigorously objected to such a characterization.¹¹ In all the work that has been done on the *Ekthesis* a preponderance of attention has been paid to questions of form, sources and parallels, with an attendant slighting of the question of interpretation. Maybe Agapetus was not very original. But even if Byzantium was often content to think the thoughts of other ages, Byzantium did think those thoughts, frequently in new contexts and combinations. Agapetus had a very extensive tradition to draw on, and we can attribute to him at least an exercise of judgement in choosing which elements of that tradition to include.

Even if we could trace every one of Agapetus' maxims to an earlier source, we would still be justified in reading his treatise carefully as providing evidence for opinions about the emperor and his rôle that were current in the sixth century. After a discussion of one particular problem of sources in Agapetus I will proceed to an analysis of the ideas in the *Ekthesis*.

II

The identification of a source for a Byzantine writing answers but one of the questions a scholar may wish to ask. We can never assume that a quotation proves that a source was known in its entirety at a

¹⁰ For the date of Theodora's death see, e.g., E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* 2 (Paris 1949) 589. Bellomo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 127, saw the significance of the date of Theodora's death for the dating of the *Ekthesis*, but for some unknown reason he assigns that event to the year 563. Bellomo's strained attempt, pp.100-115, to prove that Agapetus' maxims are directed at four kinds of individual faults of Justinian as they are known from Procopius is decisively refuted by Praechter, *BZ* 17 (1908) 160-1.

¹¹ Krumbacher, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) 591; Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 367; Bellomo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 64, 69-70, 116-19; Praechter, *BZ* 17 (1908) 159.

particular time. The Byzantines depended to a great extent on *florilegia*, and the solving of all the problems inherent in the tradition of these collections lies probably many years in the future.¹²

There is a remarkable set of correspondences between several of the maxims of Agapetus and fragments attributed to Philo Judaeus contained in some of the *florilegia*. After I had tracked down a number of these I discovered that the correspondences had already been noted.¹³ Since the recognized correspondences have not all been gathered together and set forth in tabular form, however, it will be worthwhile to do that here. Also, I shall add to the Agapetus-Philo parallels the two instances where *Barlaam and Joasaph* has the same wording. The importance of the evidence from *Barlaam* for the analysis of the Philo fragments has not been discussed by Praechter or Ševčenko.¹⁴

¹² See, among others, Curt Wachsmuth, *Studien zu den griechischen Florilegien* (Berlin 1882), especially ch. 4 ("Ueber das byzantinische Florilegium 'Parallela' und seine Quellen") 90–161, and ch. 5 ("Gnomologium byzantinum ἐκ τῶν Δημοκρίτου Ἰσοκράτους Ἐπικτήτου ε varii codicum exemplis restitutum") 162–216. For a recent summary of scholarly opinions, together with bibliographical notes, about the three *florilegia* which will concern us in what follows, see Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Hand. der Alt. XII.ii.1, Munich 1959): for the *Loci Communes* attributed to Maximus Confessor, p.440; for the *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John of Damascus, p.482; for "Antonius Melissa," p.643. For our purposes it is sufficient to know the consensus, that "Maximus" is dependent on the *Sac.Par.* and that "Antonius" is dependent on both the others; furthermore, that "Maximus" and "Antonius" have probably preserved some of the lost third book of the *Sac.Par.* Useful information from Russian works on the *Melissa* tradition, which includes at least three other lines of transmission besides "Antonius," is mentioned by Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 142–3. See also n.84 *infra*.

¹³ Praechter, *BZ* 17 (1908) 153 n.2, mentions Agapetus §§ 12, 21, 23, 28, 64 and their correspondence with Philo fragments from the Richter ed. of Philo (Leipzig 1829) in which "ex Antonio" eine Reihe von Philonfragmenten abgedruckt ist, unter denen mehrere in Wirklichkeit Agapetsätze sind." Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 142–7, discusses the parallels and concludes, on grounds to be discussed in what follows, that the fragments are not genuine Philo. He notes (146 n.24) that he had completed his article before he learned of Praechter's remark on the Philo fragments. It is interesting that in another connection Praechter made a contribution to the identification of Philo passages: "Unbeachtete Philonfragmente," *ArchGeschPhilos* 9 (1896) 415–26, where he shows how various Byzantine chroniclers made unacknowledged use of Philo in their accounts of Old Testament history.

¹⁴ The Philo fragments will be given as they are found in the printed text of Maximus Confessor, *PG* 91, from the edition of Combefis. Differences in the text in Ant. Mel. will be noted. When J. Rendel Harris, *Fragments of Philo Judaeus* (Cambridge 1886) is cited, I have compared and silently corrected his text by reference to Constantin Tischendorf, *Philonea* (Leipzig 1868), which he is quoting but with certain minor and inexplicable alterations. (Tischendorf prints fragments he had found in a *florilegium* at Cairo.) The lemma Φίλων or Φίλωνος at the head of a Philo fragment is taken from the printed Greek text of Max. Conf. There are no *lemmata* at all in the printed Greek text of Ant. Mel., *PG* 136. Richter, who takes his "ex Antonio" text of the fragments from Thomas Mangey, *Philonis Judaei opera* (London 1742), has a few minor differences from the *PG* text. These may be differences in the ms tradition of Ant. Mel., or may merely represent haste or carelessness on Mangey's part.

(1)

Agapetus, § 12

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 567 (PG 91.792c).
Ant. Mel. *Sermo* LI (PG 136.941D–
944A; Richter, VI.234).

Ἀποστρέφου τῶν κολάκων τοὺς ἀπατηλοὺς λόγους, ὡσπερ τῶν κοράκων τοὺς ἀρπακτικοὺς τρόπους· οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς τοῦ σώματος ἐξορύττουσιν ὀφθαλμούς· οἱ δὲ τοὺς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐξαμβλύνουσι λογισμούς, μὴ συγχωροῦντες ὄραν τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθειαν. ἢ γὰρ ἐπαινοῦσιν ἔσθ' ὅτε τὰ ψόγου ἄξια, ἢ ψέγουσι πολλάκις τὰ ἐπαίνων κρείττονα· ἵνα δυοῖν θάτερον αὐτοῖς ἀμαρτάνηται, ἢ τὸ κακὸν ἐπαινούμενον, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ὑβριζόμενον.¹⁵

Φίλωνος. Ἀποστρέφου τῶν κολάκων τοὺς ἀπατηλοὺς λόγους·

ἐξαμβλύνοντες γὰρ τοὺς τῆς ψυχῆς λογισμούς οὐ συγχωροῦσι τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν ἀλήθειαν. ἢ γὰρ ἐπαινοῦσι τὰ ψόγου ἄξια, ἢ ψέγουσι πολλάκις τὰ ἐπαίνων κρείττονα.

The Philo fragment in this instance consists of about half of Agapetus' maxim, with a few grammatical changes. The analogy with crows is absent, as is the belaboring of the 'either . . . or' point at the end.

(2)

Agapetus, § 21

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 561 (PG 91.781c).
Ant. Mel. Ser. CIV (PG 136.1012BC;
Richter, VI.235–36).

Τῇ μὲν οὐσίᾳ τοῦ σώματος, ἴσος παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ βασιλεύς, τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ δὲ τοῦ ἀξιώματος

Φίλων. Τῇ μὲν οὐσίᾳ τοῦ σώματος, ἴσος παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ὁ βασιλεύς· τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ δὲ τοῦ ἀξιώμα-

¹⁵ "Flee the deceitful words of flatterers as you would the ravenous habits of crows; the latter gouge out the eyes of the body, but the former blunt the reasonings of the soul, making it impossible to see the truth of things. Sometimes they praise things which are worthy of censure, and often they censure things more worthy of praise. Thus one of two sins is committed by them: either the praise of evil, or the contempt of good."

ὁμοίος ἐστὶ τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεῷ· οὐκ ἔχει γὰρ ἐπὶ γῆς τὸν αὐτοῦ ὑψηλότερον. χρὴ τοίνυν αὐτὸν καὶ ὡς Θεὸν μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι, καὶ ὡς θνητὸν μὴ ἐπαίρεσθαι· εἰ εἰκόνι θεϊκῇ τετίμηται, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰκόνι χοϊκῇ συμπέλεκται· δι' ἧς ἐκδιδάσκεται τὴν πρὸς πάντας ἰσότη-
τα.¹⁶

τος, ὁμοίος ἐστὶ τῷ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεῷ. οὐκ ἔχει γὰρ ἐπὶ γῆς αὐτοῦ ὑψηλότερον. χρὴ τοίνυν καὶ ὡς θνητὸν μὴ ἐπαίρεσθαι, καὶ ὡς Θεὸν μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι. εἰ γὰρ καὶ εἰκόνι θεϊκῇ τετίμηται, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰκόνι χοϊκῇ συμπέλεκται, δι' ἧς ἐκδιδάσκεται τὴν πρὸς πάντας ἀπλό-
τητα.

The Philo fragment has the ὡς Θεόν . . . ὡς θνητόν passage in reverse order from Agapetus. A more significant difference occurs at the place where Agapetus reads εἰκόνι χοϊκῇ and the Philo fragment reads κόνει χοϊκῇ—"he is also involved in earthly dust." This latter reading seems much more characteristic of Agapetus, since the play on εἰκόνι θεϊκῇ . . . κόνει χοϊκῇ is thoroughly consonant with his style, while the repetition of a word is something he strives to avoid. There is a discrepancy between ἰσότητα 'likeness' and ἀπλότητα 'simplicity' at the end. The Agapetus reading makes better sense, and the editor of Maximus Confessor suggests ὁμοιότητα, a synonym for ἰσότητα, as an emendation.

(3)

Agapetus, § 23

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 554 (PG 91.769c).

Ant. Mel. Ser. LVII (PG 136.872D;

Richter, VI.234).

Harris, *Fragments* 104.

Τοιοῦτος γίνου περὶ τοὺς σοὺς οἰκέτας, οἶον εὐχῆ σοὶ τὸν Δεσ-

Φίλωνος. Τοιοῦτος γίνου περὶ τοὺς σοὺς οἰκέτας, οἶον εὐχῆ σοὶ

¹⁶ "In the nature of his body the king is on a level with all other men, but in the authority attached to his dignity he is like God who rules over all; for he has no man on earth who is higher than he. Therefore, like God, he must never be angry, yet as a mortal man he must never be lifted up in conceit; for if he be honoured by being in the divine image, he is also involved in the earthly image whereby he is taught his equality with other men." [Barker]

This section of Agapetus receives a good deal of attention in Ševčenko's article. The Philo fragment is quoted in E. R. Goodenough, *Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (New Haven 1940) 90 (where it is introduced as follows: "One statement is preserved which might have come from any pagan"); and in H. A. Wolfson, *Philo II* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1947) 331.

πότην γενέσθαι· ὡς γὰρ ἀκούομεν, τὸν Θεὸν γενέσθαι. ὡς γὰρ ἀκού-
 ἀκουσθησόμεθα, καὶ ὡς ὀρώμεν, ομεν, ἀκουσθησόμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ
 ὀραθησόμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου καὶ Θεοῦ· καὶ ὡς ὀρώμεν, ὀραθησόμεθα
 παντεφόρου βλέμματος. προεισε- ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. προενέγκωμεν οὖν τοῦ
 νέγκωμεν οὖν τῷ ἐλέῳ τὸν ἔλεον, ἐλέου τὸν ἔλεον, ἵνα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ
 ἵνα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὁμοιον ἀντιλά- ὁμοιον ἀντιλάβωμεν.
 βωμεν.¹⁷

Barlaam and Joasaph 36.333

. . . καὶ ὡς ἀκούομεν ἀκουσθησόμεθα, ὡς ὀρώμεν ὀραθησόμεθα ὑπὸ
 τοῦ θείου καὶ παντεφόρου βλέμματος. προεισενέγκωμεν οὖν τοῦ ἐλέου
 τὸν ἔλεον, ἵνα τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὁμοιον ἀντιλάβωμεν.

The main differences here are 'the Master' (τὸν Δεσπότην) in Agapetus where the fragment has 'God' (τὸν Θεόν); and the fragment's simple 'we shall be seen and heard by God' where Agapetus and *Barlaam* have 'the divine all-seeing Eye.'¹⁸

(4)

Agapetus, § 28

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 685 (PG 91.1012A).

Ant. Mel. Ser. II (Richter, VI.233).¹⁹

Ἴσον τῷ πλημμελεῖν, τὸ μὴ
 κωλύειν τοὺς πλημμελοῦντας λο-
 γίζου. κἂν γὰρ τις πολιτεύηται
 μὲν ἐνθέσμως, ἀνέχεται δὲ τῶν
 βιούντων ἀθέσμως, συνεργὸς τῶν
 κακῶν παρὰ Θεῷ κρίνεται· εἰ δὲ
 βούλει διττῶς εὐδοκιμεῖν, καὶ τοὺς

Φίλωνος. Εἰ βούλει διττῶς εὐδο-
 κιμεῖν, καὶ τοὺς κάλλιστα ποιούν-

¹⁷ "Be such to your household as you would wish the Master to be to you; for as we hear, so shall we be heard, and as we see, so shall we be seen by the divine and all-seeing eye. Therefore let us first pay mercy for mercy, that we may obtain like for like." I cite *Barlaam and Joasaph* here and elsewhere from the ed. of G. R. Woodward and H. Mattingly (LCL, London 1937), where parallels in Agapetus are noted in the margin.

¹⁸ Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) *passim*, notes the frequent trouble that Russian translators of this maxim had making any sense out of the expression "divine all-seeing eye."

¹⁹ I have searched thoroughly the PG Ant. Mel. and have been unable to find this fragment.

τὰ κάλλιστα ποιῶντας προτίμα, τας προτίμα, καὶ τοὺς τὰ χείρονα
καὶ τοῖς τὰ χείριστα δρῶσιν ἐπι- πρᾶττοντας ἐπιτίμα.²¹
τίμα.²⁰

The Philo fragment consists only of the last clause of this section of Agapetus. It is difficult to determine the original Agapetian reading here, since the play *πρᾶττοντας*—*ποιῶντας* is thoroughly characteristic of him, while a grammatical mistake (*ἐπιτιμάω* should take the dative of person, *τοῖς δρῶσιν*, not an accusative, *τοὺς πρᾶττοντας*) is not.

(5)

Agapetus, § 50

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 556 (PG 91.773AB).

Harris, *Fragments* 105.

Πλέον ἀγάπα, βασιλεῦ γαλη-
νότατε, τοὺς λαμβάνειν παρὰ σοῦ
χάριτας ἰκετεύοντας, ἥπερ τοὺς
σπουδάζοντας δωρεάς σοι προσφέ-
ρουν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ὀφειλέτης
ἀμοιβῆς καθίστασαι· οἱ δέ σοι
τὸν Θεὸν ὀφειλέτην ποιῶσι, τὸν
οἰκειούμενον τὰ εἰς αὐτοὺς γι-
νόμενα, καὶ ἀμειβόμενον ἀγαθαῖς
ἀντιδόσεσι τὸν φιλόθεον καὶ φιλάν-
θρωπὸν σου σκοπὸν.²²

Πλέον ἀγάπα, βασιλεῦ, τοὺς λαμ-
βάνειν παρὰ σοῦ χάριτας ἰκετεύον-
τας, ἥπερ τοὺς σπουδάζοντας
δωρεάς σοι προσφέρουν. τοῖς μὲν
γὰρ ὀφειλέτης ἀμοιβῆς καθίσταται·
οἱ δέ σου τὸν ὀφειλέτην ποιήσουσι,
τὸν οἰκειούμενον τὰ εἰς αὐτοὺς
γινόμενα, καὶ ἀμειβόμενον ἀγαθαῖς
ἀντιδόσεσιν τὸν φιλάνθρωπὸν σου
σκοπὸν.

The correspondence in this instance is very nearly *verbatim*. The main difference is at the end, where Agapetus reads τὸν φιλόθεον καὶ φιλάνθρωπὸν σου σκοπὸν and the fragment omits φιλόθεον. The significance of *philanthropia* in Agapetus will be discussed below.

²⁰ "Consider it the same thing to sin and not to punish sinners; for if someone lives according to the laws and at the same time tolerates those living lawlessly, he is judged by God to be an accomplice in the evils. If you wish to be esteemed on both counts, honor those who do the finest things and rebuke those who do the worst things."

²¹ Ant. Mel. is the same as Max. Conf. except that it reads *πρᾶττοντας* where Max. Conf. reads *ποιῶντας*.

²² "Love those more, O most serene Emperor, who ask for gifts from you, than those who are eager to give gifts to you. For to these latter you will be a debtor, while the former make God a debtor to you—for he appropriates as his own the things done for them and gives good things in return for your God-loving and humanitarian intention."

(6)

Agapetus, § 63

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 559 (PG 91.777D–780A).
Harris, *Fragments* 104.

Ὁ μὲν Θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται· ὁ βασιλεὺς δὲ μόνου Θεοῦ. μίμου τοίνυν τὸν οὐδενὸς δεόμενον, καὶ δαφιλεύου τοῖς αἰτοῦσι τὸν ἔλεον, μὴ ἀκριβολογούμενος περὶ τοὺς σοὺς οἰκέτας, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι παρέχων τὰς πρὸς τὸ ζῆν αἰτήσεις. πολὺ γὰρ κρεῖττον ἔστι διὰ ἀξίους ἐλεεῖν καὶ τοὺς ἀναξίους, ἢ τοὺς ἀξίους ἀποστερεῖν διὰ τοὺς ἀναξίους.²³

Φίλων. Ὁ μὲν Θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται· ὁ βασιλεὺς δὲ μόνου Θεοῦ. μίμου τοίνυν τὸν οὐδενὸς δεόμενον, καὶ δαφιλεύου τοῖς αἰτοῦσι τὸν ἔλεον, μὴ ἀκριβολογούμενος περὶ τοὺς σοὺς ἰκέτας, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι παρέχων τὰς πρὸς τὸ ζῆν ἀφορμάς. πολὺ γὰρ κρεῖττον ἔστι, διὰ τοὺς ἀξίους ἐλεεῖν καὶ τοὺς ἀναξίους, καὶ μὴ τοὺς ἀξίους ἀποστερεῖν διὰ τοὺς ἀναξίους.

Again, the correspondence is almost *verbatim*. Where Agapetus says that the emperor should not enquire closely into the affairs of the members of his household (οἰκέτας), the fragment says his ‘suppliants’ (ἰκέτας). The reading of the fragment sounds more like Agapetus, since we would not expect the deacon to repeat a phrase (περὶ τοὺς σοὺς οἰκέτας) which we have encountered already in § 23. Agapetus uses the term ‘things necessary for life’ (τὰς πρὸς τὸ ζῆν αἰτήσεις) while the fragment speaks of ‘the resources for life’ (τὰς πρὸς τὸ ζῆν ἀφορμάς).²⁴

(7)

Agapetus, § 64

Philo fragment

Max. Conf. 681 (PG 91.1004B).
Ant. Mel. Ser. VIII (PG 136.1137C;
Richter, VI.233).

Συγγνώμην αἰτούμενος ἁμαρτημάτων, συγγίνωσκε καὶ αὐτὸς τοῖς

Φίλωνος. Συγγνώμην αἰτούμενος ἁμαρτημάτων, συγγίνωσκε καὶ

²³ “God has need of nothing, the emperor has need of God alone. Therefore imitate the one who needs nothing, and be generous to those seeking mercy; do not inquire closely into the affairs of your servants, but give to everyone the things necessary for life. It is better by far for the sake of the worthy to have mercy also on the unworthy, than to deprive the worthy because of the unworthy.” See n.84 *infra*.

²⁴ Harris, however, agrees with Agapetus in reading αἰτήσεις.

εἰς σὲ πλημμελοῦσιν· ὅτι ἀφέσει αὐτὸς τοῖς εἰς σὲ πλημμελοῦσιν·
 ἀντιδίδοται ἄφεσις, καὶ τῇ πρὸς ὅτι ἀφέσει ἀντιδίδοται ἄφεσις, καὶ
 τοὺς ὁμοδούλους ἡμῶν καταλλαγῇ, ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοδούλους ἡμῶν
 ἢ πρὸς Θεὸν φιλία καὶ οἰκείωσις.²⁵ καταλλαγῇ, τῆς θείας ὀργῆς γίνεται
 ἀπαλλαγῇ.

Barlaam and Joasaph 36.334

Συγγνώμην αἰτούμενος ἀμαρτημάτων, συγγίνωσκε καὶ αὐτὸς τοῖς εἰς
 σὲ πλημμελοῦσιν, ὅτι ἀφέσει ἀντιδίδοται ἄφεσις, καὶ τῇ πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοδού-
 λους ἡμῶν καταλλαγῇ τῆς δεσποτικῆς ὀργῆς γίνεται ἀπαλλαγῇ.

The differences in reading here are especially interesting. Praechter, in his review of Bellomo,²⁶ notes that there is a group of mss of the *Ekthesis* in which the conclusion ἢ πρὸς Θεὸν φιλία καὶ οἰκείωσις is missing. Then he notes the conclusion of the passage in *Barlaam*, τῆς δεσποτικῆς ὀργῆς γίνεται ἀπαλλαγῇ ('we are ourselves delivered from the wrath of our Master'), and concludes that on the basis of stylistic considerations we can say that *Barlaam* has preserved the true Agapetian reading, and that somewhere in the ms tradition of the *Ekthesis* the original reading was lost, and ἢ . . . οἰκείωσις was tacked on by some scribe as a makeshift ("Lückenbüßer"). Praechter's conclusion is strengthened by the Philo fragment. One can go farther and say that the fragment is more nearly what Agapetus wrote than *Barlaam* is, since τῆς θείας ὀργῆς seems metrically better than τῆς δεσποτικῆς ὀργῆς (also, 'divine anger' is a more common notion than the anger of Christ), and ἢ καταλλαγῇ as the subject of γίνεται is smoother grammatically than the dative construction in Agapetus and *Barlaam*.

III

In the foregoing discussion of §§ 12, 21, 23, 28, 50, 63 and 64 of the *Ekthesis* the question concerning the connection between these and the Philo fragments has been implicit. As I have worked with these passages I have come to share tentatively the opinion of Praechter and Ševčenko, that they are originally the work of Agapetus and that

²⁵ "Seeking forgiveness for your sins, forgive also those who injure you, because forgiveness is repaid by forgiveness, and friendship and familiarity with God result from our reconciliation with our fellow-servants."

²⁶ *BZ* 17 (1908) 159.

somehow they came to be transmitted as belonging to Philo. A summary of Ševčenko's argument will show why I share his view, and an indication of some other points will show why I do so tentatively.

Ševčenko makes the following points:

(1) The printed Greek text of "Antonius Melissa" indicates no sources; the *lemma* 'Philonis' appears only in Gesner's Latin translation, "rather flimsy grounds for determining the authorship of the Greek text." Moreover, "it is known that at least the mss representing its [the *Melissa*'s] 'long' recension make Agapetus the author of the maxim [§ 21]"; and the twelfth-century Kievan Pčela attributes its translation of τῆ μὲν οὐσία τοῦ σώματος to "Agapitos."²⁷

(2) Agapetus can be shown to be dependent on many sources, but he always tries to improve upon them. Further, "All the 'Philonic' sentences which reappear as Agapetus' chapters display the very mannerisms peculiar to the whole of his work."²⁸

(3) "It is striking that the boundaries of the suspect 'Philo' fragments should in all cases coincide with those of Agapetus' chapters and that we should precisely discover the 'unidentified' Philo fragments in Agapetus, while no correspondence between him and some authentic saying of Philo can be established. Finally, at least the 'Philo' fragment Θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται [Harris, *Fragments (supra n.14)* 104; Agapetus, § 63], sometimes attributed to Hippocrates, is definitely of gnomic origin and cannot be Philonic in its 'Agapetian' form."²⁹

These are strong arguments, but the following qualifications ought to be entered:

(1) The printed Greek text of Maximus Confessor, *Loci Communes*, which is considered to be a *florilegium* anterior to Antonius Melissa, gives the *lemma* Φίλων or Φίλωνος for the passages it transmits (with the exception of πλέον ἀγάπα, for which no *lemma* is given). I have been unable in a thorough search to locate any of these "Philo fragments" in the *Sacra Parallela*, which is thought to be earlier still and which does contain scores of authentic extracts from Philo. However, the whole third book of the *Sacra Parallela* is lost, and it may have included these passages which are preserved in the other two *florilegia*.³⁰

²⁷ Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 145.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 146.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 146–47.

³⁰ Ševčenko's note about another ms tradition of the *Melissa* shows that there must be many questions that will be helped to solution by a critical edition of that work. I have found other evidence of this attribution of τῆ μὲν οὐσία τοῦ σώματος to Agapetus (it should

(2) Praechter has shown that there are many close parallels between Agapetus and patristic writers and that in the case of Agapetus, § 66 and Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 2.19c the correspondence is almost *verbatim*.³¹ Moreover, Philo was capable of turning polished phrases such as the fragments in question; his *In Flaccum* and *De Legatione* give evidence of this.³²

(3) Ševčenko's third argument is his most compelling one. When the boundaries do not coincide, in the cases of Agapetus, §§ 12 and 28, the Philo fragment is shorter, so that is no argument against Ševčenko. I have checked a number of Agapetus' key terms in Liesegang's index to L. Cohn/P. Wendland, *Philonis Opera* VII pts. I, II (Berlin 1926–30) and have discovered no correspondence.³³ It would be remarkable to find a deacon in sixth-century Constantinople acquainted with an entire work of Philo. The most we could expect is to find Agapetus using some fragment of Philo known to us to be authentic and available to Agapetus in a *florilegium*. I have gone carefully through the lists of Philo fragments, particularly all the ones identified by Harris, and have not found any clearly authentic fragment which is also a maxim of Agapetus. Nonetheless, it is known that a good number of Philo's works are altogether lost, and there are also many unidentified Philo fragments which are not in Agapetus.³⁴ As to Ševčenko's last point, we cannot automatically rule out the possibility that Philo

be noted also that according to Ševčenko 146 the other two of Harris' fragments are transmitted as Philonic by the various *Melissa* traditions). In one of his comparative tables Wachsmuth, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 116, gives the following:

Maximus	Anton.	Mel. Aug.
561.21–28 Ἀγαπήτου Φίλωνος	80.1–4	29.10 Ἀγαπήτου

Wachsmuth cites Maximus according to the page and line of the Combefis ed., not available to me. However, its reprint in *PG* says only Φίλων. Wachsmuth is presumably drawing on his knowledge of the seventeen mss of Max. Conf. which he discusses pp.103–6. The "Melissa Augustana" is another form of *florilegium* he was analyzing. Wachsmuth's main interest centred on the classical writers, so he does not comment on this particular passage. I do not know what to make of Ἀγαπήτου Φίλωνος. Perhaps some scribe thought it meant 'of the beloved Philo.' In this confusion there is probably some valuable clue to the way in which these sections came to be attributed to Philo, but I do not know how to follow up the hint.

³¹ *BZ* 2 (1893) 455–8.

³² Available in vols. 9 and 10 respectively of the *LCL* Philo. Philo produced many epigrammatic statements, although I have not been able to find in him quite the attention to rhyme that is so characteristic of Agapetus.

³³ Goodenough, *Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (New Haven 1940) 214, warns that this Index, while valuable, is not complete; "accordingly, a negative conclusion is never possible from the Index."

³⁴ Harris, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 2–3. At the end of his book Harris gives a long list of still unidentified fragments.

himself incorporated some gnomic saying, but this does begin to sound like scholarly special pleading.

At this point it is necessary to consider the significance of the passages in *Barlaam and Joasaph*.³⁵ Praechter's conclusion after a thorough comparison of the *Ekthesis* and *Barlaam* was that neither is dependent on the other, but both go back to a common source, which is more accurately reflected in *Barlaam* than in Agapetus. Ševčenko in a footnote questions this conclusion.³⁶

This question is of direct relevance to the problem of the origin of the Philo fragments. Since two of them are found both in the *Ekthesis* and in *Barlaam*, if the two authors are dependent on a common source that source must have contained at least these two Philo fragments and the case for Philonic origin is considerably strengthened. However, even though Praechter's argument is somewhat more complex than Ševčenko suggests, I find myself in agreement with Ševčenko's conclusion. Praechter posits for the author of *Barlaam* an altogether too mechanical treatment of sources.³⁷ In the absence of the "common source" which Praechter postulated, it seems to me much more economical to allow greater stylistic latitude to the author of *Barlaam* and thus to claim that Agapetus is his obvious source.³⁸ If this conclusion is accurate, then the Agapetian origin of the two Philo fragments in question is still distinctly possible.

³⁵ The critical discussion of the authorship of this work continues, although Dölger's defense of the traditional attribution to John of Damascus seems to predominate now. For references to the literature see Beck, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 482-3.

³⁶ Praechter, *BZ* 2 (1893) 444-60. (Praechter wrote at this time [p.444] that it had been established that John of Damascus had nothing to do with *Barlaam*.) Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 148 n.30: "Praechter believes in a common source rather than in a direct use of Agapetus, since the Deacon's stylistic embellishments are never taken over literally in the interpolations [in *Barl.*]. This is hardly a decisive argument. In his *Κεφάλαια*, Pseudo-Basil, who depends heavily on Agapetus, almost never copies him verbatim."

³⁷ The first part of Praechter's argument has to do with the *order* of thought in *Barl.* as distinguished from the lack of coherence between the various sections of the acrostically determined *Ekthesis*. He expresses his argument in terms of an image (p.449): anyone looking for colored stones can complete his job easily by tearing apart a mosaic picture, while it requires an especially fortunate turn of events to find a well-ordered mosaic made from a number of stones connected without plan. It seems to me quite probable, however, that this is precisely what the author of *Barl.* did, just as much later in Muscovy Joseph Volockij (d. 1515), in one of his pamphlets, works in bits and pieces from Agapetus (*cf.* Ševčenko, *op.cit.* [*supra* n.7] 156-9).

³⁸ As to the other possibility, that Agapetus is dependent on *Barl.*, there can be added to Praechter's arguments against this (pp.458-60) the fact that the picking and choosing of phrases from the *Ekthesis* to work into a narrative is more plausible than the breaking up of the individual sentences and parts of sentences in *Barl.* to work into the *Ekthesis*. Finally, if *Barl.* does come from the pen of John of Damascus, the chronological factor is decisive.

The balance remains in favor of the view that the seven passages discussed above are not authentic Philo. But the question remains for further investigation: how did these particular passages of Agapetus get into the tradition and come to be attributed to Philo? Why Philo—and only Philo?—for in combing the *florilegia* I have not found any other Agapetus passages transmitted under any other name. How are we to explain the transmission of seven gnomic sayings belonging to a work by a sixth-century deacon under the guise of the great first-century Alexandrian Jew? This question rather neatly characterizes the sort of cultural puzzles in which Byzantine history abounds.

IV

The transition from source study to a more general exposition of Agapetus' text is provided conveniently by § 17 of the *Ekthesis*.

There has been revealed in our age that time of felicity which one of the writers of old prophesied as coming to pass when either philosophers were kings or kings were students of philosophy. Pursuing the study of philosophy, you were counted worthy of kingship; and holding the office of king, you did not desert the study of philosophy. Now if the love of wisdom is what makes philosophy, and if the beginning of wisdom is to fear God—Who [or which] is always present in your heart—then what I say is clearly true.³⁹

Praechter has shown how extensive in all periods was the use made of Plato's prescription for the ideal state in *Republic* 473D.⁴⁰ He divides the interpretations into three categories, and gives numerous examples of each: (1) Plato's statement is an ideal, which is always to be pursued; (2) Plato's prescription came to fulfilment sometime in the past; and (3) the Platonic challenge is seen as met in the time of the author citing it. Agapetus is of course in this third group.

When we know that Agapetus is at this point drawing on a long tradition, we nonetheless have not exhausted the significance of § 17. For Agapetus is, so far as I know, original in coupling this passage from

³⁹ Barker's transl.: 'Ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἀνεδείχθη τῆς εὐζωΐας ὁ χρόνος, ὃν προεῖπέ τις τῶν παλαιῶν ἔσεσθαι, ὅταν ἢ φιλόσοφοι βασιλεύσωσιν, ἢ βασιλεῖς φιλοσοφήσωσιν· καὶ γὰρ φιλοσοφοῦντες ἠξιώθητε βασιλείας, καὶ βασιλεύσαντες οὐκ ἀπέστητε φιλοσοφίας. εἰ γὰρ τὸ φιλεῖν σοφίαν ποιεῖ φιλοσοφίαν, ἀρχὴ δὲ σοφίας ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ φόβος, ὃν ἐν τοῖς στέρνοις ὑμῶν διαπαντὸς ἔχετε, εὐδηλον ὡς ἀληθὲς τὸ παρ' ἐμοῦ λεγόμενον.

⁴⁰ BZ 14 (1905) 482-4.

Plato with the definition of the beginning of wisdom from *Proverbs* 1:7—"the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."⁴¹ What matters is not whether this tells us anything about the piety of Justinian, which it does not, but rather that it gives an insight into the way the Byzantines could reconcile their Greek and Biblical heritages. Agapetus implies that the Bible provides the definition of a key term in Plato's prescription, so that a Christian emperor becomes the concrete expression of what Plato had in mind.⁴²

The rôle of such Biblical, and also liturgical, reminiscences in Byzantine writings must not be overlooked or minimized. Hearing the Biblical lections and the liturgy as often as they did, the Byzantines must have been sensitive to allusions and nuances dependent upon those sources.⁴³ There are places in the *Ekthesis* where an idea or phrase would clearly call to the reader's mind a Scriptural passage. This would be true even if some other source could be demonstrated. § 50 (one of the "Philo" passages) does not recommend disinterested care for the desires of others; by helping them the emperor will find God in his debt. But the reason for this is that God "makes his own the things done for others," which is a reminiscence of the principle stated in *Matthew* 25:40.

This Byzantine sensitivity to Biblical echoes is not merely a convenient hypothesis of the historical imagination. If the dependence of *Barlaam and Joasaph* on Agapetus be granted, we have specific evidence of the *Ekthesis* reminding the author of that work of Biblical passages.

He called to mind the uncertainty of earthly riches, how they resemble the running of river waters [cf. Agapetus §7]. Therefore made he haste to lay up his treasure where neither "moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal" [*Matt.* 6:19-21].⁴⁴

And which commandments above all shouldest thou

⁴¹ Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος Θεοῦ. Psalm 111(LXX: 110):10 reads Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος Κυρίου. Bellomo, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 135, notes this allusion, but does not draw any significant conclusion from it. Elsewhere (p.102) he tries to draw some sort of specific personal connection between § 17 and Justinian.

⁴² It is interesting that when Gregory of Nazianzus refers to the passage of Plato, he is writing to the pagan philosopher Themistius, and he speaks of "your Plato": Greg. Naz. Ep. 24 (PG 37.60B).

⁴³ G. Downey, "Philanthropia in Religion and Statecraft in the Fourth Century after Christ," *Historia* 4 (1955) 199-208, esp. 205-207, has demonstrated how useful for the study of Byzantine thought is scholarly attention to the liturgy.

⁴⁴ *Barl.* 33.310 (LCL transl.).

observe? “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,” and “Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful” [Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:36]. For the fulfilment of this commandment, above all, is required of them that are in high authority. And, soothly, the holder of great authority ought to imitate the giver of that authority, to the best of his ability. And herein shall he best imitate God, by considering that nothing is to be preferred before showing mercy [cf. Agapetus, § 37].⁴⁵

But hear yet another commandment, the fellow of the former: “Forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you”; and “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses” [Matt. 6:15; Mark 11:26]. Wherefore bear no malice against them that offend against thee; but, when thou askest forgiveness of thy sins, forgive thyself also them that injure thee, because forgiveness is repaid by forgiveness, and by making peace with our fellow-servants we are ourselves delivered from the wrath of our Master [cf. Agapetus, § 64, which is also discussed above].⁴⁶

In this way the author of *Barlaam* produces what might be called an “inverted exegesis”; he uses passages of Scripture to make a commentary on the text of Agapetus.

In addition to the Biblical echoes there are allusions to works of two of the Byzantines’ favorite theologians, St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nazianzus. Praechter has demonstrated Agapetus’ dependence on them in §§ 7, 34, 43, 66, 69, 70, 72.⁴⁷ And in fact, as Praechter notes, this rather frequent use of the Fathers makes Agapetus, for all his dependence on gnomological fragments from Greek antiquity, a typical representative of what Krumbacher called the first of the two

⁴⁵ *Barl.* 36.332–3 (LCL transl.).

⁴⁶ *Barl.* 36.333–4 (LCL transl.).

⁴⁷ *BZ* 2 (1893) 455–8. Praechter cites these Fathers according to the texts of their whole works. In looking through the various *florilegia* I encountered several of these passages; this raises the suspicion that Agapetus did not know even the works of the Fathers in their entirety, but may have been dependent on collections of extracts from them. Agapetus § 69, Basil, *Hom. in div.*, PG 31.296c; *Sac.Par.*, PG 95.1160c, and Ant. Mel., PG 136.817c. Agapetus § 72, Basil, *op.cit.* 292c–293A; *Sac.Par.* 1485A. Agapetus § 7, Basil, *Hom. in illud Lucae, destruum*, PG 31.265c; *Sac.Par.*, PG 96.409c. I also found a correspondence between Agapetus and the third Cappadocian Father, Gregory of Nyssa: Agapetus § 24, *Sac.Par.*, PG 96.88A.

major periods of Byzantine literary history. In the second period the sources from pagan antiquity were genuinely recovered and studied.⁴⁸

Apart from these specific connections with the Biblical and patristic traditions there is not much in the *Ekthesis* that could be called exclusively Christian—although the treatise is sufficiently Christian in content and intention to make Agapetus a rather uncomfortable member of Krumbacher’s “Profanautoren” category. Just as in its theology the Church took over a very great deal of the thought of the past, so also in that part of its theology which dealt with political matters. We need to see what pattern of kingship emerges from the parts of the tradition that Agapetus chose to use.

V

The Eusebian theory of imitation or likeness is announced in § 1:

Having a dignity which is set above all other honours, Sire, render honour above all to God, who gave you that dignity, inasmuch as he gave you the sceptre of earthly power after the likeness of the heavenly kingdom.⁴⁹

If the emperor is inaccessible to his subjects because of the exaltation of the earthly kingdom (διὰ τὸ ὕψος τῆς κάτω βασιλείας) he should become easily accessible to them because of the strength of authority from above (διὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς ἄνω ἐξουσίας) (§ 8; cf. § 34). Prayer is a major element in the impregnable wall surrounding the empire.⁵⁰

The relationship of the heavenly and earthly kingdoms is more complex than this, however. If the heavenly kingdom is the model, it is also the goal of the emperor’s striving, and the earthly kingdom becomes his ladder for the ascent to heaven. In a metaphor that

⁴⁸ BZ 1 (1892) 399–400. Praechter compares the *Ekthesis* of Agapetus and the “Mirror of Princes” of (Pseudo-) Basil (9th cent.) on the one hand to that of Theophylact of Bulgaria (11th cent.) on the other, and shows how Theophylact made use of many ancient sources. Of Agapetus and Pseudo-Basil he says that both works bear a strong Christian stamp, and in Agapetus especially the use of patristic writers is very extensive.

⁴⁹ Τιμῆς ἀπάσης ὑπέρτερον ἔχων ἀξίωμα, βασιλεῦ, τίμα ὑπὲρ ἅπαντας τὸν τοῦτου σε ἀξιώσαντα Θεόν, ὅτι καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν τῆς ἐπουρανίου βασιλείας, ἔδωκέ σοι τὸ σκῆπτρον τῆς ἐπιγείου δυναστείας.

⁵⁰ § 58. It is interesting to compare Justinian’s *Novel* 133.5 (A.D. 539): “If they [the monks], with their hands pure and their souls bare, offer to God prayers for the State, it is evident that it will be well with the army . . . cities . . . land . . . sea . . . for their prayers will propitiate God’s favour towards the whole State.” Quoted in J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* II (London 1923) 363.

Agapetus probably intended as an echo of St Paul's description of Christians as members of the Body of Christ, it is said that it is the emperor's "duty to take thought for all men, as if they were his own limbs."⁵¹ It is clear that if the empire is in this way part of the emperor's being, the condition of the empire is a measure of his piety.

Guide your kingdom aright here below, that it may become for you a ladder to the glory above. Those who govern well an earthly kingdom are deemed worthy also of the heavenly.⁵²

The final maxim (§ 72) includes a reiteration of this ladder image in an admonition to the emperor and his wife to persevere in climbing to the heavenly kingdom.

Agapetus is not completely clear on the relationship of these kingdoms. In one of the maxims (§ 18) the emperor is praised for mastering his passions; he wears the crown of moderation (*σωφροσύνη*), and it is such kingship alone—kingship over the passions—that endures for ever and ever. The context is purely personal; Agapetus makes no direct connection here between the virtue of moderation and the historical and social dimensions of the emperor's task; and the enduring kingship is something much more abstract than life in the kingdom of heaven referred to elsewhere. In another place Agapetus refers to the immortality of fame:

It is the crown of piety that adorns the king above all the ornaments of kingship. Wealth vanishes; glory perishes. But the fame of a religious life is prolonged for eternal ages, and it sets its possessors beyond the reach of oblivion.⁵³

Nonetheless, most of Agapetus' discussion of the goal of earthly striving speaks quite explicitly in recognizably Christian terms. In the

⁵¹ Barker's transl., § 46: *Χρῆ οὖν αὐτόν, ὡς οἰκείων μελῶν, οὕτω πάντων ἀνθρώπων προνοεῖν.*

⁵² Barker's transl., § 59: *Χρήσαι δεόντως τῇ κάτω βασιλείᾳ, ἵνα κλίμαξ σοι γένηται τῆς ἄνω εὐδοξίας· οἱ γὰρ ταύτην καλῶς διοικοῦντες, μετὰ ταύτης κακείνης ἀξιοῦνται.*

⁵³ § 15: *Ὑπὲρ πάντα τῆς βασιλείας τὰ ἐνδοξα, τῆς εὐσεβείας τὸ στέμμα τὸν βασιλέα κοσμεῖ· ὁ γὰρ πλοῦτος ἀπέρχεται, καὶ ἡ δόξα μετέρχεται· τὸ δὲ κλέος τῆς ἐνθέου πολιτείας ἀθανάτοις αἰῶσι συμπαρεκτείνεται, καὶ λήθης ἐπέκεινα τοὺς ἔχοντας ἴστησι.* Barker translates τὸ κλέος τῆς ἐνθέου πολιτείας as "the glory of god-like government." While *πολιτεία* does have the sense of 'government' in another of the maxims (§ 2), it seems to me clear that here the sense must be 'manner of life', as it is in fact rendered in the Latin transl. of Banduri accompanying the PG text: "sola vitae Deo placentis gloria immortalibus saeculis coextenditur." I have come across this phrase ἡ ἐνθεος πολιτεία at the beginning of one of the *Vitae* of St Theodore of Studion, PG 99.233A.

final judgement our deeds will appear as they really were (§ 69). There will be a time of repayment for our works (*ὁ καιρὸς τῆς τῶν ἔργων ἀντιδόσεως*, § 44). Death plays no favorites, so we should transfer our riches to heaven.⁵⁴ Reference is made to the hope of the coming fruition (*ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς μελλούσης ἀπολαύσεως*, § 38). Since death may catch us off-guard, “we should run past the passing things of the world and hasten on to those things which remain to the ages of ages.”⁵⁵

With the heavenly kingdom as model and goal, how can the emperor make the earthly kingdom a ladder? What is involved in “guiding aright the kingdom here below”? There are several brief references to ways in which the emperor should imitate God. He should exercise justice and teach it to others (§ 1); he should remain steady and unchanged amid changing circumstances (§§ 11, 13, 33, 34); he should forgive those who act against him (§ 64). God is abundant in good works, and since the emperor is blessed with ample means, he should “imitate him through good works” (*μίμησαι αὐτὸν δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν*, § 45).

In addition to these isolated instances of imitation there is one major theme which appears again and again in the *Ekthesis*—that of *φιλανθρωπία*, love for man.

Kingship is the most honored of all things; and it is so most especially when the person who is vested with this authority does not incline to self-will but keeps his mind fixed on equity, turning aside from inhumanity as a thing that is bestial, and showing forth humanity as a quality that is God-like.⁵⁶

Good repute comes from willing and doing humane acts (*τὰ φιλόανθρωπα*), and by doing such the emperor will please God, who gave him the power necessary for such actions (§ 6; cf. § 53). God will reward the “God-loving” and “man-loving” aims of the emperor (*τὸν φιλόθεον καὶ φιλόανθρωπὸν σου σκοπόν*, § 50).

⁵⁴ § 67: *Οὐκοῦν πρὸ τῆς ἐκείνου [sc. θανάτου] ἀπαραιτήτου παρουσίας, μεταθῶμεν εἰς οὐρανὸν τὴν τῶν χρημάτων περιουσίαν.* Since *parousia* was a technical theological term referring to the second coming of Christ, it may be that Agapetus intended a double significance here.

⁵⁵ § 70: *Παραδράμωμεν τὰ παρατρέχοντα τοῦ κόσμου πράγματα, καὶ προσδράμωμεν τοῖς εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων μένουσιν.*

⁵⁶ § 40 (Barker): *Τιμιώτατον πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία· τότε δὲ μάλιστα τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ὅταν ὁ τοῦτο περικείμενος τὸ κράτος, μὴ πρὸς ἀνθάδειαν βλέπῃ, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἐπιείκειαν βλέπῃ· τὸ μὲν ἀπάνθρωπον, ὡς θηριῶδες ἀποστρεφόμενος, τὸ δὲ φιλόανθρωπον, ὡς θεοείκελον ἐνδεικνύμενος.*

Agapetus suggests some specific components of *philanthropia*. The emperor is to treat everyone alike, playing no favorites. We have already seen equity (ἡ ἐπιείκεια—‘fairness’, in contrast to a strict application of legal rules) connected with ‘humanity’. The emperor is to judge friends and enemies on the same principles (§ 41).

If in any way he bears the image of God, who is over all, and if through him he holds rule over all, he will imitate God best if he thinks that nothing is more precious than mercy.⁵⁷

The emperor is to be lavish in giving to those who seek his help.⁵⁸ In what is probably the most specific recommendation in the entire *Ekthesis*, Agapetus reflects on the disparity of circumstances between the rich and the poor and suggests that the emperor should become a kind of sixth-century Roman Robin Hood, taking from the rich and giving to the poor:

In order that both of them [the rich and the poor] may recover health, the remedy of subtraction and addition must be applied, and equality must be substituted for inequality.⁵⁹

Philanthropia was a very ancient Greek concept, but it had undergone a great deal of discussion and development in the fourth century. Downey, offering this as an illustration of the influence of pagan philosophical ideas on Christianity, discusses “the way in which the Christian writers adopt the term *philanthropia* so that it eventually becomes, so far as it can, almost a substitute for the typically Christian *agape*, while at the same time the pagan writers, as exemplified by Themistius, Libanius and the Emperor Julian, begin to try to develop *philanthropia* as a principle of conduct—both public and private—which they can offer as a counterpart to the Christian teaching; thus

⁵⁷ § 37 (Barker): *Εἰ γὰρ πως τὴν εἰκόνα φέρει τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεοῦ, καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ κατέχει τὴν ἐπὶ πάντων ἀρχήν, ἐν τούτῳ δὴ μάλιστα τὸν Θεὸν μιμήσεται, ἐν τῷ μηδὲν ἠγγίσθαι τοῦ ἐλεεῖν προτιμώτερον.* A probable source for Agapetus here is a passage from Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria (3rd cent.) which appears in the *Sac.Par.* (PG 95.1473c): *τοῦ ἐλεεῖν καὶ εὐεργετεῖν, οὔτε προτιμώτερον, οὔτε φιλανθρωπότερόν ἐστιν ἡμῖν τι ἕτερον, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ τῷ Θεῷ.* This passage is printed among fragments “from works unspecified” by C. L. Feltoe, *The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria* (Cambridge 1904) 257. Feltoe translates: “Mercy and kindness, being dear to God, are particularly becoming in ourselves.”

⁵⁸ § 44: *δίδου πᾶσι δαψιλῶς τοῖς αἰτοῦσι παρὰ σοῦ*—“give abundantly to all who ask of you.” The verb *δαψιλεύομαι* appears in § 63, printed above as no. 6 in Section II. The only example of this verb as meaning ‘to bestow lavishly’ cited by *LSJ* is this passage, quoted as a Philo fragment from Harris, *Fragments*.

⁵⁹ § 16 (Barker): *Ἴνα τοίνυν ἀμφω τῆς ὑγιείας τύχωσιν, ἀφαιρέσει καὶ προσθήσει τούτους θεραπευτέον, καὶ πρὸς ἰσότητα τὴν ἀνισότητα μετενεκτέον.*

they seek to show that paganism as a way of life can provide principles which are as good as those of Christianity.”⁶⁰ In addition to the pagan influence on Christianity there was also a marked pagan copying of Christian practice. It has been shown that while there was certainly philanthropic practice in the pre-Christian Graeco-Roman world, it was very limited, and the extensive philanthropic activity of the Church was something new.⁶¹

By the time Agapetus wrote, these lively debates over the religious and political significance of *philanthropia* were a thing of the distant past. There was no longer a vigorous pagan opposition to the victorious Church. It is worth remembering that the *Ekthesis* is nearly contemporary with Justinian’s closing of the Academy in Athens.⁶² Agapetus reflects the development whereby in Christian thought *philanthropia* had come to serve most of the functions formerly belonging to *agape*. The term ἀγάπη appears only twice in the *Ekthesis*, and in neither case does it have any special Christian connotation.⁶³ Moreover, Agapetus gathers up senses of *philanthropia* that were kept separate in the fourth century. Kabiersch has shown that Themistius interpreted *φιλανθρωπία* according to the sense of the Latin *aequitas*, while Julian read it as *clementia*.⁶⁴ We have seen that Agapetus expresses both these ideas.

In most of his discussion of the behavior appropriate for a ruler, Agapetus refers in one way or another to the imitation of God. However, addressing the emperor as “thou divinely-made image of

⁶⁰ Downey, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.43) 199. J. Kabiersch, *Untersuchungen zum Begriff der Philanthropia bei dem Kaiser Julian* (Wiesbaden 1960), provides a thorough treatment of the fourth-century development, with bibliographical references to the extensive literature on the whole subject. Kabiersch makes clear the central importance of Themistius for the idea of *philanthropia*.

⁶¹ G. Downey, “Who is My Neighbor?” *Anglican Theological Review* 47 (1965) 3–15, esp. 3. Kabiersch, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.60) 88, concludes that Julian quite self-consciously took Christian welfare activities as his model.

⁶² A.D. 529. See e.g., A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* I (Madison 1928) 184.

⁶³ §§ 20 and 56. In both it refers to the love of subjects for the emperor. Agapetus may be intending to suggest that the subject owes the same respect to the emperor as to God, but that is probably pressing nuances too far. Downey (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.43]) notes that *philanthropia* can take the place of *agape* only up to a point, since it cannot do service for the man-to-God relationship. We have seen Agapetus in § 50 using the term *philotheos* as a balance to *philanthropos*. Downey, “The Perspective of the Early Church Historians,” *GRBS* 6 (1965) 57–70, has shown how the fifth-century historians Socrates and Sozomen begin to mesh the royal ideals of *philanthropia* and *eusebeia* (‘piety’, ‘devoutness’) which had been championed by the pagans and Christians respectively in the fourth-century debates. The *Ekthesis* is clear evidence of how complete that process was by the sixth century.

⁶⁴ Kabiersch, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.60) 87.

piety”⁶⁵ risks elevating him onto the other side of the line separating the divine from the human. The question as to where to draw that line had plagued the Church in the fourth century, and a convincing case has been made for the interplay of imperial theory and Arian theology: Arianism appealed to fourth-century emperors by bringing Christ down to their level.⁶⁶ By the sixth century Arianism was no longer a serious threat. What had to be guarded against now was any tendency for the emperor to think that his exalted position put him on Christ’s level.

Agapetus makes this point quite clear in the final maxim, where he speaks of “Christ . . . who is king of kings and of the subjects of kings, for ever and ever.”⁶⁷ Many of the maxims emphasize the solidarity of the emperor with all other men. “The king is sovereign over all; but he is also, along with all, the servant of God.”⁶⁸ Everyone desiring salvation ought to seek aid from above—and this is especially true of the ruler, who must care for all men (§ 62). No matter how many good deeds he does, the emperor always falls short of the goodness of God (§ 43). No one should boast about nobility of birth, for the poor man and the man crowned with a diadem both have clay for their first ancestor (*προπάτωρ*).⁶⁹ Finally, in one of the most forceful of the maxims, it is said of the emperor:

If he has become ruler upon earth, let him not forget that he has his origin from the earth, ascending from dust to the throne, and after a time descending back to it.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ § 5 (Barker): ὁ εὐσεβείας θεότευκτον ἄγαλμα.

⁶⁶ George H. Williams, “Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century,” *Church History* 20 (1951) 3.3–33, 4.3–26.

⁶⁷ § 72 (Barker): Χριστός . . . ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ βασιλευομένων, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

⁶⁸ § 68 (Barker): Κύριος μὲν πάντων ἐστὶν ὁ βασιλεὺς, δοῦλος δὲ μετὰ πάντων ὑπάρχει Θεοῦ. Cf. § 8: “For as we are to our fellow-servants (*τοῖς ἡμετέροις συνδούλοις*), so shall we find the Master (*τὸν Δεσπότην*) to us.” The term *σύνδουλοι* is used by St Paul in *Col.* 1:7 and 4:7 to describe his fellow-ministers. It is interesting to compare this sentiment of Agapetus with the classical Greek notion that society consists of those born to serve and those born to be served. Cf. Downey, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.61) 15.

⁶⁹ § 4. This maxim may have been composed with Justinian especially in mind. There was little danger that Justinian would boast. His uncle had come to the throne by means that are partially obscure to us (clarified as far as possible by Vasiliev, *Justin the First* [Cambridge (Mass.) 1950] ch. 2); and neither Justin nor Justinian could boast of a birth in any way noteworthy—despite the rumor, related by Procopius (*Anecdota* 12.18–19) that Justinian was conceived by a demon. Perhaps Agapetus meant to offer a bit of commonplace theological consolation to the man of obscure origin sitting on the throne.

⁷⁰ § 71: Εἰ γὰρ καὶ γέγονεν ἄρχων ἐπὶ γῆς, μὴ ἀγνοεῖτω ὑπάρχων ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἀπὸ χροῦς ἐπὶ θρόνον ἀναβαίνων, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν μετὰ χρόνον καταβαίνων.

VI

Agapetus Diaconus is not one of the unsung heroes of ecclesiastical literature. Anyone who has read Praechter's criticism of Bellomo would not dare to make Agapetus into a thinker and writer of great importance.⁷¹ Moreover, while the deacon is very clever with Greek vocabulary and construction, his constant striving after rhetorical effects, particularly rhyme, is characterized by one scholar as "in places unbearable."⁷² One has to look hard for anything genuinely original in the *Ekthesis*, and even then one is haunted by the suspicion that a source will turn up sooner or later.

Granting all this, Agapetus' work is still worth studying. There is the intriguing problem of the connection of his maxims with earlier *florilegia* and of the introduction of some of his articles into later collections under another name. The *Ekthesis* provides a look at those elements of Greek political thought about kingship which appealed to a member of the Christian clergy in the sixth century, and at the way in which those elements were incorporated into the general Christian theological theory of empire that had first been outlined by Eusebius of Caesarea. Agapetus mixes his traditions so that both the Old Testament "fear of God" and the "Know thyself" of the Delphic oracle and Socrates are offered as the basic principle for the emperor.⁷³ Imitating God both by having mercy and by maintaining an unmoved mind amid changing affairs suggests both the rather personal God of the Bible and the rather abstract God of theological speculation. The immortality of fame and life in the eternal kingdom are both presented as rewards for a good reign. The king is sometimes almost divinized, yet he is time and again reminded of his frailty, of his sharing the common lot of all men.⁷⁴

⁷¹ BZ 17 (1908) 159: "As here, so in other parts of Bellomo's book, there is a marked tendency to magnify in worth and importance the author whom he has chosen to work at."

⁷² Keil, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 367: "stellenweise unerträglich."

⁷³ The "Know thyself" appears in § 3 (Barker): "The divine lesson which we first learn, O men, is that a man should know himself. For he who knows himself will know God; he who knows God will become like God; a man will become like God when he becomes worthy of him; and a man becomes worthy of God when he does nothing unworthy of him, but thinks the things that are God's, speaks what he thinks, and does what he speaks." The idea was common in Christian thought. It is stated succinctly in an epigram of Evagrius Ponticus (4th cent.) which is found in *Sac.Par.* (PG 95.1305B): βούλει γνῶναι Θεόν; προλαβὼν γνῶθι σεαυτόν ("Do you wish to know God? Begin by knowing yourself").

⁷⁴ Ševčenko, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 173, shows how the variety of ideas in the *Ekthesis* made it a source book both for the absolutist claims of Ivan the Terrible and for the "liberal" claims of his opponents. "The 'liberals' had only to strengthen the admonitions and to

One can hardly suppose that a generalized treatise of this sort had much influence on the policy of a man who was forty-five years old when he came to the throne and who had been exercising effective power during the nine-year reign of his uncle.⁷⁵ But the *Ekthesis* does give us some sketchy hints of the principles by which Justinian's contemporaries could have formed a judgement on his reign.

First of all, there is no suggestion of a distinction between spheres of Church and State. It is the empire that imitates the heavenly kingdom. The Augustinian conception of the Church as in some sense the earthly reflection of the divine kingdom had no counterpart in early Byzantium. Not very long before Agapetus wrote, Pope Gelasius had told the emperor Anastasius to keep the royal and priestly spheres separate.⁷⁶ It would in fact be several centuries before that distinction would become operative in Byzantine thought.⁷⁷ Diehl's judgement, that "an absolute emperor who takes an interest in the Church is almost certain to tyrannize it,"⁷⁸ is an opinion that Agapetus would have found unintelligible. The way in which Agapetus thought about the emperor's position made it difficult, perhaps impossible, to conceive of imperial "intervention" in the Church.

There is implied in the *mimesis* theory the necessity for the emperor to rule over everything. Just as there is nothing outside the scope of God's rule in heaven, so must the emperor rule over everything on earth. He is the steersman of "the ship of the whole world state" (*τὸ σκάφος τῆς παγκοσμίου πολιτείας*, § 2). Throughout the *Ekthesis* there is no suggestion that there are any other rulers in the world. There is

weaken the praise." Agapetus' work has been very popular in the past, and for that reason alone it is worth studying. In addition to the Slavic translations there have been others into many languages, and the Greek text itself was published more than a dozen times in the Renaissance. See the list of editions and translations prefaced to the PG text.

⁷⁵ Historians going all the way back to Procopius have said that Justinian was the real power during Justin's reign. For much detail, with a heightened appreciation of Justin's rôle, cf. Vasiliev, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.69).

⁷⁶ A.D. 494. Text in Migne, *PL* 59.41B-47A.

⁷⁷ See Geanakoplos, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5). J. W. Barker, *Justinian and the Later Roman Empire* (Madison 1966) 94-111, deals with Justinian's religious policies, and says (p.97) that "it was in accordance with such theocratic Imperial conceptions that Justinian formed his ecclesiastical policies." As an illustration of "such . . . conceptions" he refers to Agapetus in a footnote. Barker goes on: "As no will could be allowed to oppose his will in governing the Empire, so, too, would his will be supreme in matters of faith. His deportment in this respect has been taken as a very model of the principle which we call 'caesaropapism'—the rigid control of matters spiritual and ecclesiastical by the temporal ruler." The important phrase here is "which we call . . ."

⁷⁸ Charles Diehl, *Justinien et la civilisation byzantine au VI^e siècle* (Paris 1901) 28: "un empereur absolu qui s'intéresse à l'Eglise risque fort de la tyranniser."

talk about enemies, but for the most part they are thought of as internal enemies or as individuals with personal grievances against the emperor. A belief that Justinian's empire was the earthly likeness of the heavenly kingdom, and that it should therefore be all-in-all, would make Christian as well as Roman crusades out of the military efforts of the reign. "If the king is protected by God, he nobly vanquishes his enemies, and zealously gives his subjects security."⁷⁹

Agapetus makes it clear that the emperor's absolute power is tempered by his accountability—but it is accountability to the God above him, not to the people beneath him. The emperor will have to answer to God for the actions of wrong-doers he has appointed to help him in the affairs of government (§ 30). It is true that the emperor is admonished to see to it that he governs with popular consent. But this has nothing whatever to do with a notion of popular sovereignty. The point for Agapetus is that popular consent is in the emperor's interest.

Consider yourself to be surely and truly a king when you rule with the consent of your subjects. For a subject people which is unconsenting revolts when it finds an opportunity; but a people which is attached to its sovereign by the bonds of good will keeps firm and true in its obedience to him.⁸⁰

The *Ekthesis* implies throughout that the imitation of God should itself serve as a kind of control over the emperor. It is suggested that the ruler must imitate God especially in doing good deeds to the poor. His wrath is to be tempered with mercy. He should forgive that he may be forgiven. The most important source for Agapetus' conception of the ideal emperor is previous Christian thought about the nature of God—which had itself of course taken over a great deal of Greek and Hellenistic speculation. Agapetus is certainly no profound theologian, but his *Ekthesis* reflects definite ideas about the characteristics of the God whose governance of the heavenly kingdom was to serve as model for the emperor.

We know, in fact, that Justinian was famous for his acts of philanthropy, especially the building of hospitals and orphanages. Also, the

⁷⁹ § 62 (Barker): 'Υπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ γὰρ φυλαττόμενος, καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους καταγωνίζεται γενναίως, καὶ τοὺς οἰκείους κατασφαλίζεται σπουδαίως.

⁸⁰ § 35 (Barker): Νόμιζε τότε βασιλεύειν ἀσφαλῶς, ὅταν ἐκόντων ἀνάσσης τῶν ἀνθρώπων. τὸ γὰρ ἀκουσίως ὑποταττόμενον, στασιάζει καιροῦ λαβόμενον· τὸ δὲ τοῖς θεσμοῖς τῆς εὐνοίας κρατούμενον, βεβαίαν ἔχει πρὸς τὸ κρατοῦν τὴν εὐπείθειαν.

building of churches could be interpreted as the emperor's way of paying the return he owed to God; it would be easy for the building of churches to become the major expression of the "pious works" that were to be preferred to "good words."⁸¹

Moreover, by saying that the whole empire is the emperor's ladder to the heavenly kingdom, Agapetus suggests that all the resources of the State are at the emperor's disposal for the doing of good deeds. The church historian Evagrius Scholasticus (d. ca. A.D. 600) implies that Justinian's extravagance gave rise to second thoughts about the kind of identification of "imperial resources" with "emperor's means" that we see in Agapetus.

At the same time he was liberal in expenditure; so far as to raise in every quarter many sacred and magnificent temples, and other religious edifices devoted to the care of infants and aged persons of either sex, and of such as were afflicted with various diseases. He also appropriated considerable revenues for carrying out these objects; and performed many such actions as are pious and acceptable to God, *provided that those who perform them do so from their own means*, and the offering of their deeds be pure.⁸²

It has been said in criticism of Justinian that "his ingenuity was not guided or controlled by prudence, or by a solid knowledge of the economical conditions of prosperity."⁸³ Perhaps we can see Justinian's reign as a time when the Gospel principle of giving in order to receive, of scattering in order to gather (Agapetus, § 44) was tested and found not to be, at least without modification, a successful way to run a State.

The most important evidence provided by the *Ekthesis* is that early in Byzantine history there was current a conception of rulership which placed emphasis not on the emperor's relationship to the State or to the Church but on the emperor's relationship to God, with the *βασιλεία* being an agency for the expression of that relationship. The emperor had higher things on his mind than specifically political

⁸¹ Cf. Agapetus § 5.

⁸² Evagrius, *Eccl.Hist.* 4.30. The translation is that of Bohn's *Ecclesiastical Library* (London 1854). The Greek text of the portion I have italicized is as follows: *εἴπερ ἐξ οἰκείων δρῶεν οἱ τούτων ἐργάται*. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London 1898) 180.4.

⁸³ James Bryce, "Justinianus I," *Dictionary of Christian Biography* III (London 1882) 539.

problems; the pursuit of the heavenly kingdom was to be his overriding concern. Agapetus' treatise suggests, if only in an oblique way, that the ideological problem in Byzantium in the sixth century was not "Caesaropapism," which depends on distinctions that were not made in the thought of the time, but rather something we might call "Theomimetism." Eusebius' theory of imitation was a significant theological development and satisfied the immediate fourth-century requirement for a Christian interpretation of the rôle of a Christian emperor in the divine scheme of things. But thoroughgoing acceptance of the Eusebian theory, such as we see in Agapetus, hindered the development of thought about the political relationships of State and Church as institutions. That the emperor could experience any fundamental conflict between his duties to the State and his duties to the Church, or that citizens could be deeply divided in their loyalties to one or the other of these, was as unthinkable as the thought that there was dissension or anarchy in heaven.⁸⁴

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⁸⁴ Evidence for the connection of Agapetus' precepts to the history of Greek collections of aphorisms is provided by the second-century *Sentences of Sextus*, ed. H. Chadwick (*Texts and Studies* n.s. 5, Cambridge 1959), which contain a number of phrases that recur or are echoed in the *Ekthesis*. Particularly interesting in light of the Philo fragments are Sextus §§ 49-50 (p.18): ὁ μὲν θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται, ὁ δὲ πιστὸς μόνου θεοῦ. ζηλοῖ τὸν οὐδενὸς δεόμενον ὁ τῶν ὀλίγων ἀναγκαιῶς δεόμενος. Cf. Agapetus § 63, cited above as no. 6 on p.290.

Chadwick discusses (pp.158-9) the relationship between the text of Sextus and the collection of Clitarchus and the *Pythagorean Sentences* (with a parallel in Porphyry's *Ep. ad Marcellam* 11), which reads σοφός in place of Sextus' πιστός; he concludes that "the epitomator of Clitarchus drew independently upon the main and primary source laid under tribute by Sextus; or that Clitarchus himself, in unexcerpted form, was the actual source used by Sextus." He then remarks, "It is not profitable to enquire too closely into the exact source-relationship here for the reason that there is no category of literature with a less rigid and consistent existence than an anthology of aphorisms. . . . A reader might extract from such a treasury his own commonplace-book for his private moral guidance. Or if he were an ambitious young man, he might hope to attract the favour of the great ones of the earth by dedicating to them such a collection. (In the sixth century a deacon of Constantinople, Agapetus, made an anthology of this kind for Justinian.) The individual collector leaves his mark upon the tradition."

While I believe that Agapetus did something more original than merely compiling an anthology, I agree with Chadwick's characterization (p.141 n.2) of "the history of the collections of Greek maxims" as "a subject of the greatest complexity."