

# Preaching and Christianization

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Reading the Sermons of John Chrysostom

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## *Abstract*

The rise of Late Antiquity as a separate discipline, with its focus on social history, has meant that the vast homiletic corpus of John Chrysostom has received renewed attention as a source for the wider cultural and historical context within which his sermons were preached. Recent studies have demonstrated the exciting potential his sermons have to shed light on aspects of daily life, popular attitudes and practices of lay piety. In short, Chrysostom's sermons have been recognised as a valuable source for the study of 'popular Christianity' and the extent of Christianization at the end of the fourth century.

This thesis, however, will question the validity of some recent conclusions drawn from Chrysostom's sermons regarding the state of popular Christianity. A narrative has been developed in which Chrysostom is often seen as at odds with the congregations to whom he preached. On this view, the Christianity of élites such as Chrysostom had made little inroads into popular thought beyond the fairly superficial, and congregations were still living with older, more culturally traditional views about religious beliefs which preachers were doing their utmost to overcome. It is the argument of this thesis that such a portrayal is based on a misreading of Chrysostom's sermons, and which fails to explain satisfactorily the apparent popularity that Chrysostom enjoyed as a preacher.

What this thesis sets out to do, therefore, is to reassess how we read Chrysostom's sermons, with a particular focus on the harsh condemnatory language which permeated his preaching, and on which the image of the contrary congregation is largely based. To do this, this thesis sets out to recover a neglected portrayal of Chrysostom as a pastor and

preaching as a pastoral and liturgical activity, through an exploration of four different but overlapping aspects of the socio-historical context within which his preaching was set. A consideration of the scholastic, therapeutic, prophetic and liturgical nature of his preaching will shed light on the pastoral relationship between the preacher and his congregation and will, significantly, provide a backdrop against which his condemnatory language can be explained and understood. It will become clear that his use of condemnatory language says more about how he understood his role as preacher than about the extent of Christianization in late-antique society. Through focussing on the issues of the social composition of the congregation and the level of commitment to (Chrysostom's) Christianity, it will be argued that sermon texts are in their nature resistant to being used as sources for this kind of social history. Despite this, however, glimpses will also emerge of a very different picture of late-antique Christianity, in which Chrysostom's congregation are rather more willing to listen and learn from their preacher than is often assumed.



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## *Note on Abbreviations*

Abbreviations of ancient texts follow those used in H. G. Liddell and R. Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*, C. T. Lewis and C. Short's *A Latin Dictionary*, and G. W. H. Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Abbreviations of Chrysostom's works follow those established by Wendy Mayer, and can be accessed on-line at [www.cecs.acu.edu.au](http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au) (for convenience they have also been included in the list of Chrysostom's works in the bibliography). Otherwise, the following abbreviations are also used:

BNP	<i>Brill's New Pauly</i>
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, series Latina
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
Field	F. Field (ed.), 1849-62, <i>Interpretatio omnium epistolarum Paulinarum per homilias facta</i> (7 vols., Oxford: Oxford University Press).
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
SC	Sources Chr�tiennes

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

PART I

*Introduction*

## CHAPTER 1

### *Introduction*

Around the year 400, an elderly bishop from Galatia arrived in Constantinople. In order to show him the customary hospitality, and out of respect for his age, John, the bishop of the imperial capital, allowed the visitor to deliver the Sunday sermon in his place. As he came forward to preach, he was met with a rather tumultuous reception by the Constantinopolitan faithful. The week before, the congregation had received from their bishop a resounding rebuke against their continued attendance at the theatres and hippodromes. Such a rebuke, however, had not kept them away from church; far from it. The people had come back the following week even more desirous than before to hear their bishop, and were disappointed to find they were to be addressed by a more mild-mannered guest preacher. They wanted ‘our tongue which cuts, censures, strikes, grieves’!<sup>1</sup> The next time he did address them, Chrysostom praised the way they had received his rebuke, comparing them to a child refusing to let go of his mother even when she had sternly scolded him. He was naturally delighted to have such an attentive and receptive audience to preach to.

At least, this is the bishop’s own presentation in that sermon of the events of the preceding couple of weeks.<sup>2</sup> It does seem to have been the case, however, that the ‘tongue which cuts’ was hugely popular: John, the Chrysostom (the ‘Golden Mouth’, as he was

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<sup>1</sup> ...τὴν ἡμετέραν ποθοῦντες γλώσσαν τὴν τεμοῦσαν, τὴν ἐπιτιμήσασαν, τὴν καθικομένην, τὴν ὀδυνήσασαν. Chrys. *Pater m. usq. mod. op.* 1, PG 63.512.1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Pater m. usq. mod. op.* For an introduction to the sermon and an abridged translation, see Mayer and Allen 2000, 143-7.

posthumously nicknamed),<sup>3</sup> was depicted by fifth-century historians as a strict moralist, but also a popular preacher. As we will see later, the charges brought against him which led to his deposition were primarily concerned with his uncompromising character;<sup>4</sup> at the same time, the people revolted when their beloved bishop was taken from them.<sup>5</sup> A similar picture can be discerned in Antioch, where he was first ordained as priest: despite his endless rebukes against swearing oaths in sermon after sermon at a time of crisis for the city, people continued to flock to his church.<sup>6</sup> It was said that when the time came for him to be consecrated bishop of Constantinople, he had to be removed from his home-town at night to avoid a riot.<sup>7</sup>

What are we to make of the fact that, on the one hand, we have a picture of crowds flocking to hear Chrysostom, hanging on to his every word; on the other hand, a picture of a preacher persistently delivering stinging rebukes and harsh criticism? Why did people flock to hear someone rebuke them? Recent studies have taken his condemnatory language as either reflecting a congregation which was rather lacklustre in its faith, or as reflecting a preacher who was somewhat 'out of touch'. In either case, the relationship between the preacher and his congregation would appear somewhat strained. But such narratives do not tally with the clear testimony of the sources to Chrysostom's popularity and the affection in which he was held by many Christians: the fact that Chrysostom was a popular preacher seems to have been lost from this scholarship. In light of this, it is the contention of this thesis that we need another way of reading his sermons and interpreting his critical language.

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<sup>3</sup> The title begins to be regularly applied to him from the sixth century. For his biographer Palladius and the fifth-century historians, he remains simply 'John'.

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 38-9.

<sup>5</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.16; Soz. *h.e.* 8.18.

<sup>6</sup> This was the recurring theme of his sermons *On the Statues*, delivered whilst the city awaited the emperor's verdict on the rioting that had led to damage being done to the imperial statues. In spite of such a theme of condemnation, they also appear to have won him his reputation as a preacher: cf. Kelly 1995, 75-83.

<sup>7</sup> Soz. *h.e.* 8.2.

The sermons of late antiquity have proved to be tantalising texts.<sup>8</sup> They were in some form delivered before large congregations comprising, it is generally thought, a cross-section of society.<sup>9</sup> There is every possibility, therefore, that they should be able to provide illuminating insights into the lives of the people that they addressed, particularly, perhaps, through the critiques the preacher makes of his congregation. Sermons have come to be seen as dialogues between élites and masses, ‘which allow us to examine beliefs and behaviors that people refused to accept, the condemned traditions that many Christians continued to observe, and the elements of orthodox Christian piety that people cherished.’<sup>10</sup> By unpacking these dialogues, modern students of Chrysostom have tried to piece together a picture of what ‘popular Christianity’ was really like, a picture otherwise obscured by the dominance of élites in our sources for late antiquity. Forming such a picture in turn can give us a glimpse into the level and process of Christianization in the years after the first Christian emperor took control of the Eastern Roman Empire.

This thesis, however, will question the validity of the picture of popular Christianity which has begun to emerge. It is the argument of this thesis that such a portrayal is based on a misreading of Chrysostom’s sermons, and particularly a misreading of the language of condemnation. What is needed is to recover a neglected portrayal of Chrysostom as a pastor and preaching as a pastoral and liturgical activity, set within the social world of late antiquity. What this thesis sets out to do, therefore, is to reassess how we read Chrysostom’s sermons, with a particular focus on the harsh condemnatory language which permeated his preaching, and on which the image of the contrary

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<sup>8</sup> I use the terms ‘sermon’ and ‘homily’ interchangeably throughout this thesis, though there have been attempts to distinguish them. For example, Berger 1992, 173, defines the homily as a ‘niederer Homilie’, which focuses on the exegesis of a text, and the sermon as a ‘höherer Homilie’, a free discourse. See also Allen and Cunningham 1998, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Although this is debated: see below, pp. 213-31.

<sup>10</sup> Maxwell 2006, 5.

congregation is based. Once we have understood more clearly Chrysostom's aims in preaching and the rhetoric of condemnation, we will be able to use these important documents more carefully in the study of social history.

Given that the volume of his sermons far surpasses that of any other Eastern Church Father, it is unsurprising that the figure of John Chrysostom features heavily in sermon studies, and this thesis will follow suit. Chrysostom's surviving sermons total over 800, preached in both Antioch as priest and Constantinople as bishop. They consist of a wide variety of types, from exegetical sermons expounding passages of scripture, through polemic against heretical groups, to panegyrics celebrating the lives of saints. Many appear to be derived from the notes of short-hand writers scribbling down his sermons as he preached, providing us potentially with direct access to sermons actually preached before a live congregation.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, his sermons – more than those of any other Church Father – often engage the congregation directly, referencing their reactions, responding to their questions and complaints and drawing attention to their shortcomings. It is this direct engagement with the congregation that makes his sermons so attractive to the student of social history. It is my contention, however, that we have been too seduced by their allure as sources for social history. We need to take a step back and appreciate what kind of activity preaching actually was. In so doing, we will find that his sermons are much more resistant to being used as evidence in this way for social history.

In this introduction, I shall begin by setting out some of the broad themes in current late-antique and Chrysostomian research, before focussing in on those particular studies this thesis is responding to. From there I shall then set out an overview of my own approach to reading Chrysostom's sermons and the studies upon which that approach is based.

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<sup>11</sup> On this see below, pp. 53-62.

PREACHING IN LATE ANTIQUITY

The period today known as ‘late antiquity’, during which Chrysostom preached, is by definition a period of transition. Until the twentieth century, Edward Gibbon’s (in)famous work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, set the tone for how the period was perceived, as a period of increasing decadence and decay (in part due to the rise of Christianity), a period that was a mere shadow of the glory days of Ancient Rome. It is only relatively recently that this negative conception of the period has finally been dispensed with – thanks to the work of Henri-Irénée Marrou, A. H. M. Jones, Arnaldo Momigliano, and especially Peter Brown – although it is still understood as a period of change and shifting boundaries, particularly in the realm of cultural and social change.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the very boundaries of the discipline, both temporal and spatial, are still very much up for debate, though their fluidity is seen as central to the concept of what late antiquity is. Philip Rousseau, for example, in the preface to his recent handbook on the subject, concludes that ‘Late Antiquity is considered to be, therefore, after some things and before others.’<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is not a clearly defined era, but a period of transition from one era to another. The introduction to another handbook begins by taking the reader to Ireland and China, far beyond the geographical borders of classical antiquity (of which late antiquity is supposed to be the end).<sup>14</sup> Late antiquity is, in the words of that same handbook, ‘certainly one of the most important hinge periods for the history of the civilizations of Europe and the Middle East and even, as this book claims, Central Asia as

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<sup>12</sup> Marrou 1949; Momigliano 1963; Jones 1964; Brown 1971a, 1992. Brown, indeed, introduced his 1971 book as ‘a study of cultural and social change’ (p. 7).

<sup>13</sup> Rousseau 2009, p. xxii.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson 2012. These handbooks provide useful introductions to the proliferation of different approaches and current topics of interest. See also Bowersock, Brown and Grabar (eds.), 1999; Swain and Edwards (eds.), 2004; Clark 2011; not to mention the volumes of the *Journal of Late Antiquity* (begun in 2008) and the published papers from the biennial conference *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*.

well.<sup>15</sup> It is the time, in short, when the world of Classical Antiquity was transformed into the Middle Ages in the West, and Byzantium in the East.

It is an obvious point that a key element in that transformation was the gradual Christianization of society. The conversion of the Emperor Constantine was a watershed moment in that transition, the moment when Christians and the Christian religion went, almost overnight, from being an at worst persecuted, at best marginalised minority, to being in the privileged position of receiving imperial favour. The impact of that radical transformation on both Christianity and the wider Greco-Roman world was, needless to say, substantial, and since the beginnings of the discipline of Late Antiquity in the 1960s there has been a plethora of studies on a whole range of different areas documenting the social and cultural change that resulted, from the prevailing discourse of society,<sup>16</sup> through the status of ‘holy men’,<sup>17</sup> to attitudes to wealth, poverty and philanthropy,<sup>18</sup> to name just a few of the more notable examples. Given the interest late-antique scholars have had in social and cultural change, this process of Christianization has often been studied with an emphasis on ‘popular Christianity’: how were the lives of ‘just ordinary people of no account’<sup>19</sup> affected by the conversion of the emperor and the privileged position accorded to the adherents of his new religion?

The rise of Late Antiquity as a separate discipline over the last fifty years or so has therefore led to increased attention being paid to sermons, and particularly the vast oeuvre of John Chrysostom, in part for the light they can shed on popular Christianity at this time of transition. Up until thirty years ago, the sermon, with some notable exceptions, was generally relegated to the category of ‘popular’ literature and considered a sub-literary

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<sup>15</sup> Johnson 2012, p. xxii.

<sup>16</sup> Cameron 1991.

<sup>17</sup> Brown 1971b; Rapp 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Holman (ed.), 2008; Brown 2002; Brown 2015.

<sup>19</sup> MacMullen 1984, 1.

genre that was therefore not worthy of study.<sup>20</sup> It is extraordinary that the comprehensive study of preaching produced by Joseph Bingham as part of his multi-volume *Origines Ecclesiasticae* published between 1708 and 1722 only received an update in 1991 in the form of Alexandre Olivar's *La predicación cristiana antigua*. Both works focus on a range of topics such as classification of different sermons, location and moment of preaching, length and number of sermons and data on audience response. In between these two works were a few studies more focussed on one particular aspect of preaching, particularly rhetoric, textual transmission and sermons as sources for cultural information.<sup>21</sup> It was, however, only really in the 1990s that homilies began receiving greater attention; but although Wendy Mayer, in her survey of the field seven years ago, notes new studies which have used sermons to access daily life, explored the means by which they 'promote a discourse and construct a reality',<sup>22</sup> and investigated the surrounding liturgy<sup>23</sup> and the origins of Christian preaching,<sup>24</sup> nonetheless she concludes that the field is 'still in its infancy' and 'has much to yield the sensitive investigator as it is explored in more scientific and novel ways in the years to come.'<sup>25</sup>

A similar story emerges when we focus in on Chrysostom studies in particular. Earlier research was somewhat sporadic, with a tendency to focus on biography and rhetoric.<sup>26</sup> At the 1967 Oxford Patristics Conference, Robert Carter, in a paper reflecting on the future of Chrysostom studies, expressed concern at the comparatively small number of scholars working in the field, a concern repeated by Wendy Mayer in her update eleven years ago.<sup>27</sup> For Carter, the greatest need was the collation of manuscripts, the production

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<sup>20</sup> Mayer 2008a, 567.

<sup>21</sup> Mayer 2008a, 566-7.

<sup>22</sup> Wilken 1983; Cameron 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Van de Paverd 1970. See also below, pp. 176-7.

<sup>24</sup> Stewart-Sykes 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Mayer 2008a, 579. Given that Chrysostom tends to dominate early Christian homiletics, for further bibliography see also the notes to the following paragraphs.

<sup>26</sup> Baur 1959-60; Ameringer 1921; Burns 1930; Soffray 1939.

<sup>27</sup> Carter 1970, with Carter 1973; Mayer 2005b.

of critical editions and determining authenticity. Whilst much work has been done in each of these areas, as will be discussed in the next chapter, they remain a priority for Chrysostom studies.<sup>28</sup> Of other potential areas of research, Carter saw Chrysostom's thought and theology as being the area which continued to provide most life to the field.<sup>29</sup> Forty years later, Mayer was able to write that 'as an overall percentage of publications in Chrysostom studies across the spectrum, studies on Chrysostom's theology, exegesis and ethical teachings continue to constitute a majority.'<sup>30</sup> Thus we have had an array of studies on topics as diverse as his exegesis of scripture,<sup>31</sup> his views on the priesthood,<sup>32</sup> on slavery<sup>33</sup> and on ecclesiology,<sup>34</sup> his theology of divine accommodation,<sup>35</sup> and his polemic against the Jews<sup>36</sup> and the practice of 'spiritual marriage'<sup>37</sup> – and this is just to scratch the surface.<sup>38</sup> Such studies join more traditional topics approached from fresh perspectives, with renewed attention being paid to the events of Chrysostom's life<sup>39</sup> and his involvement in politics, imperial<sup>40</sup> and ecclesiastical.<sup>41</sup>

## CHRYSOSTOM'S PREACHING AND CHRISTIANIZATION

One particularly prominent feature of recent scholarship on sermons, and on Chrysostom's sermons in particular, has been that interest in popular Christianity. A number of key

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<sup>28</sup> See below, pp. 31-3.

<sup>29</sup> Carter 1970, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Mayer 2005b, 24.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Young 1986; Young 1997; Mitchell 2000; Amirav 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Lochbrunner 1993.

<sup>33</sup> De Wet 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Christo 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Wilken 1983.

<sup>37</sup> Leyerle 2001.

<sup>38</sup> A comprehensive on-line bibliography for Chrysostom studies, regularly updated by the Centre for Early Christian Studies at the Catholic University of Australia, can be found at [www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysostombibliography.html](http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysostombibliography.html).

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Kelly 1995; Tiersch 2002.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Liebeschuetz 1990; Liebeschuetz 2011; Mayer 2006.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Elm 1998; Mayer 1999a; Caner 2002, 158-205.

studies have emerged over the past two decades, which have sought to use Chrysostom's sermons to learn not about the thought of the preacher, but about the congregations who listened to him, and not just aspects of daily life, but to assess the state of popular Christianity, and thus the process of Christianization, in two key centres of the Eastern Empire at the turn of the fifth century.

Studies in the preacher's audience can be said to have begun with Ramsay MacMullen's essay of 1989. His argument, which focuses on the evidence of Chrysostom's sermons, but looks more widely as well, was that the congregations such men preached to consisted only of the upper classes of society. The rhetorical style would not, he argues, have been understood by anyone other than those who had received a similar élite education, and the congregation is often described in such a way as to suggest that only those from a similar élite social background are present. Furthermore, the size and number of known churches was such that there was simply not the capacity to contain more than a tiny percentage of the Christian population. This last argument he takes up in more detail in his recent book, *The Second Church*: through systematically surveying the archaeological evidence in each part of the Roman Empire, he concludes that there would have been space in them to accommodate a mere 5% of the Christian population.<sup>42</sup> He concludes: 'For the student today who would see early Christendom in some anachronistic light, as equally welcoming to all, the plain facts are thus rather uncomfortable and are accordingly resisted.'<sup>43</sup> For him, preaching betrays an essentially 'two-tiered' Christianity, with the élite meeting in the grand basilicas, and the masses gathering for their worship in the cemeteries outside the city.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> MacMullen 2009.

<sup>43</sup> MacMullen 2009, 15.

<sup>44</sup> On the 'two-tiered' model of late-antique Christianity, see below pp. 20-1.

The arguments of the original essay were later directly challenged by Phillip Rousseau.<sup>45</sup> Focussing on the Latin west, he argues for a ‘more optimistic view’, demonstrating that though preachers may have been members of the *élite* and made use of their rhetorical training, they still sought to engage and teach a wide audience. He concludes: ‘Only a member of the *élite* could have developed such vivid discipline; but the invitation to understanding and social inclusion was visibly broader in its address.’<sup>46</sup> The consensus is now very much opposed to MacMullen’s view, with most studies assuming Chrysostom’s congregations consisted of a wider cross-section of society.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, all the remaining works discussed in this section proceed on the assumption that Chrysostom’s congregations were broadly representative of ‘popular Christianity’. In my view, however, the debate is far from settled, and in Chapter 7 we will reconsider the question when we turn to how much sermons can tell us about the congregations who listened to them.

A more systematic study of the preacher-audience relationship, beyond the social composition of the congregation, was only begun by Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer in the 1990s. Over the past two decades or so, they have produced a substantial number of articles dealing with various aspects of Chrysostom’s sermons, initially working together, but then subsequently with Mayer pushing things forward on her own (at least as far as Chrysostom is concerned). Their work began with a project systematically analysing the sermons of, in particular, John Chrysostom, Proclus of Constantinople and Leontius, presbyter of Constantinople, in order to draw from them information regarding the everyday lives of Christians living in the imperial capital.<sup>48</sup> They were keen to emphasise the importance of sermons as a source for social history: since they were delivered to a

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<sup>45</sup> Rousseau 1998. For my own critique, see below pp. 214-8.

<sup>46</sup> Rousseau 1998, 400.

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., Maxwell 2006, 11-87.

<sup>48</sup> Allen and Mayer 1993, 261.

largely (it is assumed) non-élite audience, they ‘thus reflect situations of everyday life and the social and religious thought-world of ordinary people.’<sup>49</sup>

From here, much of Allen and Mayer’s work on Chrysostom has taken one of two directions. First, since their initial interest was in the everyday lives of Christians in Constantinople, it was necessary to determine which of his sermons were preached there, and which in Antioch. Through 1994 and 1995, they published several articles analysing different sermon series and argued that they consist of sermons preached in both locations, and therefore could not have been preached together as a series.<sup>50</sup> The appendix will consider an alternative conclusion that is still in line with their evidence; but nonetheless they are right to move away from the previous tendency to assign provenance to an entire series on the basis of a topical reference in one homily of that series. This work was pursued further by Mayer in her doctoral thesis (published in 2005), in which she reassessed the grounds for assigning provenance to individual sermons, and drew up a greatly reduced corpus of sermons which could be securely located.<sup>51</sup> Mayer has argued that determining where Chrysostom preached what is vital for using the sermons for social history and for fully exploring the preacher-audience relationship (their second principal trajectory).<sup>52</sup> In a more recent essay, she has pursued this line of argument further, by drawing attention to the different audiences beyond the immediate congregation to which sermons were addressed, namely the outside non-Christian world who would see (he hoped) the message of his preaching lived out in the lives of his flock, and later audiences who read his sermons in translations or eclogues.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Allen and Mayer 1993, 260.

<sup>50</sup> Allen and Mayer 1994; Allen and Mayer 1995a; Allen and Mayer 1995b.

<sup>51</sup> Consisting of just 51 sermons: see Mayer 2005a.

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., Mayer 1997a. It is not entirely clear to me that provenance is as important for these issues as Mayer insists. Cf. Mitchell 2002, 458: ‘Often as one moves from one homily to the next there are not insignificant commonalities between Antioch and Constantinople in terms of audience composition, rhetorical challenge and response, and pastoral engagement.’

<sup>53</sup> Mayer 2011.

Secondly, Mayer began exploring different issues related to the relationship between the preacher and his audience. In a collection of essays on a range of early and Byzantine preachers entitled *Preacher and Audience*, Mayer's contribution on Chrysostom suggests five categories into which 'we can neatly separate the types of information that are available,'<sup>54</sup> each headed by a question word: who (composition and identity of audience, identity of preacher), where ('geography, topography, architecture, furnishings'),<sup>55</sup> when (frequency, time, liturgical calendar etc.), how (preaching style, audience comprehension and behaviour), and why (reasons for attendance and preaching). Many of her subsequent articles explore some of these topics in further detail.<sup>56</sup> Their work is useful for drawing out detailed data from the sermons on the Christian communities of Constantinople and Antioch, the activities of the preacher and the circumstances of preaching; but more fundamental questions on the very nature of preaching, upon which such work must surely rest, have only recently begun to be explored.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to this, there was little attempt to draw the details together into a wider picture of the state of popular Christianity at the end of the fourth century. This was pursued, often building on the work of Mayer and Allen, in three monographs published during the 2000s, which from different angles used Chrysostom's sermons to assess the extent of Christianization in his congregations, often incorporating sociological theories to do so. It is these three important studies which this thesis particularly seeks to respond to, and so we shall spend some time considering them. First, in 2004 Aideen Hartney sought to show how Chrysostom's teaching on the right relationship between the genders was fundamental to a wider aim of transforming the city. She argues that he operated with an

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<sup>54</sup> Mayer 1998a, 122.

<sup>55</sup> Mayer 1998a, 126.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. who: Mayer 1999b; Mayer 2000; where: Mayer 1997b; Mayer 1998b; Mayer and Allen 2012; when: Mayer 2001.

<sup>57</sup> See below, pp. 24-5, 112, for further recent essays by Mayer which have begun to do this through an exploration of preaching from the perspective of philosophical therapy.

essentially Aristotelian view of the city, which saw it as made up of individual households, each of which was a microcosm of the whole. Central to the household were relations between husband and wife, and so by focussing on gender roles and behaviour, his aim in his preaching was to reorder each household along more Christian lines, particularly in terms of attitudes to wealth and poverty. By transforming individual households, he would also thereby transform the city as a whole.

For Hartney, then, sermons were the means by which Chrysostom sought to Christianize society: ‘Chrysostom employed his talents throughout his career to a very specific end. This was the remodelling of the ancient city along the lines that he considered appropriate for a Christian community.’<sup>58</sup> The picture, however, that emerges of the congregation from her arguments is that they were rather half-hearted in their commitment: Chrysostom faced an audience who may have gone to church (though not regularly), but was far from Christian in their habits and attitudes. He used every means possible (sometimes getting ‘somewhat carried away’)<sup>59</sup> to persuade his ‘more pedestrian congregation’<sup>60</sup> to take on a Christian worldview and, in short, be Christianized. Though arguing against those who see the sermon as directed only at the rich, she suggests that he struggled to get people to come and, when they did, to hold their attention.<sup>61</sup> The picture is of an enthusiastic preacher and a rather reluctant audience, a Christian élite seeking to impose their Christianity on a largely unwilling community: ‘Unhappy with the state of affairs which met his gaze each Sunday ... Chrysostom strove to present his flock with an alternative mode of behaviour.’<sup>62</sup> The implication is that the process of Christianization still had a long way to go.

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<sup>58</sup> Hartney 2004, 5.

<sup>59</sup> Hartney 2004, 59.

<sup>60</sup> Hartney 2004, 32.

<sup>61</sup> Hartney 2004, 47-51.

<sup>62</sup> Hartney 2004, 183.

Jaclyn Maxwell's study of 2006 was focussed on using Chrysostom's sermons to learn about the Christianization of late-antique society. '[S]ermons can provide information about the process of Christianization, the variety of religious beliefs and practices coexisting at one time, and about the ways in which laypeople interacted with church authorities. ... The intention of this study is to learn about the Christianization of late antique society.'<sup>63</sup> Maxwell begins in the opening chapters by arguing against the MacMullen view that Chrysostom's congregations were comprised primarily of the élite. She draws attention to the familiarity many would have had with highly rhetorical public speeches, points out allusions in his sermons to the presence of various different social groups, and argues that his preaching style was in fact aimed at a largely uneducated audience. In the remaining two chapters she comes to the central argument of her thesis, identifying disagreements between the preacher and the audience preserved in the text as a way of building up a picture of lay piety in late-antique Antioch.

Whereas Hartney had given the impression that the audience were rather non-committal in their Christian faith, Maxwell acknowledges that Chrysostom's stringent rebukes need not mean that his congregation were 'lukewarm Christians or even crypto-pagans':<sup>64</sup>

Many of the topics Chrysostom preached about were in response to certain Christian beliefs that members of his congregation already held. His complaints about their ignorance and his exhortations to improve their behavior can easily lead to an inaccurate impression of these people as reluctant or lukewarm Christians. ... Much of the behavior that Chrysostom found objectionable stemmed more from a different interpretation of Christian piety than from actual ignorance or indifference. Many of the disagreements were due to the fact that a good deal of his teachings conflicted with previously held Christian traditions.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Maxwell 2006, 1, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Maxwell 2006, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Maxwell 2006, 143.

The people before him are still committed Christians, but committed to a ‘different interpretation of Christian piety’. In other words, Maxwell considers the beliefs of the congregation and the beliefs of élites such as Chrysostom to represent two alternative claims to orthodoxy: one held to by the élite, and the apparently long-established and deeply-held ‘Christian traditions’ adhered to by the masses. Indeed, despite the title of her book, she goes so far as to say that ‘most of his work as a preacher was not in fact Christianization (much less conversion) but rather the reorienting of his followers’ practices and beliefs to align better with his own conception of orthodoxy.’<sup>66</sup> His sermons were delivered in an attempt to ‘convert Christians to his version of the faith.’<sup>67</sup>

The third study takes a rather different approach. Isabella Sandwell’s research focuses on the issue of religious identity in the sermons of Chrysostom and the orations of his older contemporary and possible teacher Libanius, drawing on sociological models of identity. Through paired chapters on different themes, she compares how they both thought about the notion of religious allegiance, and ‘how far late-antique individuals wanted to work with permanent religious identities in the first place.’<sup>68</sup> Her argument is that Chrysostom was seeking to impose on his listeners the notion of a fixed religious identity, that they were either Christians or non-Christians, whereas for Libanius religious identity was much more fluid and could be adapted to suit different circumstances. Though positing both attitudes to religious identity as ‘options that were available to and chosen by individuals in the fourth century,’ it is Libanius’ more flexible viewpoint she believes to have been the more widely-held: ‘For most people, who had to live alongside one another despite differences of religious allegiance, it simply was not practical to be constantly asserting a strong religious identity.’<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Maxwell 2006, 119.

<sup>67</sup> Maxwell 2006, 174.

<sup>68</sup> Sandwell 2007, 4.

<sup>69</sup> Sandwell 2007, 279-80.

Following the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, she argues that in any well-functioning society, people act without consciously articulating the rules by which they are behaving. Instead, they act according to their ‘habitus’, defined as ‘a set of deeply ingrained dispositions, traditional ways of being and socially shared ideas of what is appropriate. These are installed in every individual from birth and go on to make up their unconscious sense of ‘feeling right’ in their social world.’<sup>70</sup> In this context, she argues that Chrysostom’s sermons – and Christian texts more generally – should be viewed as ‘ideology’, that is, as imposing on their listeners rules and prohibitions for how their lives should be conducted. As a result, Chrysostom and other Christian preachers struggled because ‘they were seeking to impose a rigid structure on a situation that was normally managed in a more subtle way.’<sup>71</sup> Despite his insistent pleas to the contrary, many in his audiences had no strong allegiance to a Christian identity. Indeed, she questions ‘how far the “Christian” label that Chrysostom sought to impose on his audiences can be seen to have correlated to a physical Christian community in Antioch. I shall argue that very often it cannot.’<sup>72</sup> By contrast, for Libanius, and most of the citizens in Antioch, religion was very much a private affair, and they instead ‘favoured religious practices that gave them personal access to the divine.’<sup>73</sup>

We have, then, three different perspectives on the Christianity of Chrysostom’s audience drawn from a close study of his sermons. For Hartney, they are somewhat lukewarm Christians and non-committal about their faith. For Maxwell, they are keen Christians but with a different viewpoint from that of Chrysostom on what it means to be and to live as a Christian. For Sandwell, they have a rather more fluid notion of religious allegiance, which does not make them necessarily spiritually lukewarm, but prepared to

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<sup>70</sup> Sandwell 2007, 17.

<sup>71</sup> Sandwell 2007, 19-20.

<sup>72</sup> Sandwell 2007, 32.

<sup>73</sup> Sandwell 2007, 33.

follow any path that will take them to the divine. What emerges from all three, however, is a similar picture of a preacher struggling to hold attention, struggling to persuade people to accept his version of orthodoxy. In their portrayal, he is a preacher somewhat out of touch, and going against the grain. On a popular level, Christianity had made little inroads beyond the fairly superficial, and congregations were living with older, more culturally traditional views about religious belief which preachers were doing their utmost to overcome.

This thesis seeks to challenge the grounds on which this picture is based. It will be seen in Chapter 7 that such a picture of the nature of popular Christianity in the fourth century is based upon the condemnations with which Chrysostom frequently and persistently denounces his congregations. The assumption is that such language reflects a wide divergence in belief and practice between preacher and congregation. It is the argument of this thesis that reading his sermons in this way fails to appreciate fully the pastoral nature of Chrysostom's preaching, and does not do justice to the fact that Chrysostom was a hugely popular and well-respected preacher with his congregations. To a large extent, each of these studies treats the sermon as merely the communication of ideas and knowledge; his condemnations, therefore, reflect his frustration at his failure to get his message across. This thesis challenges this picture of preaching by presenting a more nuanced way of reading Chrysostom's sermons that better takes into account the pastoral and liturgical nature of Christian preaching. Chrysostom as the theologian and as the politician are depictions that are well-established; what is now needed is a more focussed attention on Chrysostom as a pastor of his congregation. For it is only by seeing

him as a pastor that the paradox of the popularity of the ‘tongue which cuts’ can be resolved.<sup>74</sup>

Recovering the pastoral nature of Chrysostom’s preaching requires us to contextualise his sermons within the social world of late antiquity. This thesis will therefore explore aspects of the socio-historical context (to be discussed below) which best illuminate preaching as a pastoral activity – an exercise that will be of interest in itself for learning more about what was a regular activity in late antiquity. But it has a wider importance too: in exploring these different perspectives on preaching, we will come to see that regular and vigorous denunciations of one’s audience were part and parcel of what it meant for Chrysostom to be a preacher and served particular purposes, which therefore mean we should treat them much more cautiously as pointing to the state of popular Christianity and the extent of Christianisation at the end of the fourth century.

For such a way of reading Chrysostom’s sermons persists in wider scholarship. Wolf Liebeschuetz, for example, in his recent comparative study of Ambrose and Chrysostom, argues that in his sermons the latter ‘seems principally concerned to persuade his congregation.... The mass of the Christians of Antioch simply did not see an incompatibility between such ancestral customs and habits and calling themselves Christians.’<sup>75</sup> Like the laity presented by the studies discussed above, they were entrenched in their traditional lifestyles, and refused to accept Chrysostom’s alternative form of Christianity. There is a general assumption that Chrysostom’s condemnations of his congregations reflect the fact that they were not ‘playing his game’, as it were, they were not on side with his aims and objectives. This thesis provides a much-needed reassessment of whether this is a fair assumption to make.

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<sup>74</sup> The only significant study of Chrysostom as a pastor is Allen and Mayer 2000, who usefully discuss all the various activities which make up ‘pastoral care’ in late antiquity. As a result, preaching itself as a pastoral activity receives only a brief discussion (p. 368-9).

<sup>75</sup> Liebeschuetz 2011, 188.

In questioning this assumption, this thesis also contributes to a growing trend in other areas of scholarship of moving away from such simple dichotomies of ‘élites’ vs. ‘masses’, where there is considered to be a fundamental and all-pervasive distinction and differentiation between the two. Peter Brown, in his work on the cult of the saints, argued strongly against such a ‘two-tiered’ model of late-antique Christianity. At the time, the relationship between élites and masses was frequently articulated in terms of a ‘capitulation by the enlightened elites of the Christian church to modes of thought previously current only among the “vulgar.”’<sup>76</sup> He deplored the contempt he felt scholarship implicitly held towards the Christian laity, and stressed instead the commonality of beliefs held by all levels of society. He cites Arnaldo Momigliano, who concludes that ‘my inquest into popular beliefs in the Late Roman historians ends in reporting that there were no such beliefs. ... the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries never treated any belief as characteristic of the masses and consequently discredited among the elite.’<sup>77</sup>

Scholarship has, however, moved on since the 1970s, and there is now much greater interest in and respect for popular piety on its own terms, rather than seeing it as a ‘failure to be something else.’<sup>78</sup> None of the above studies could fairly be represented by Brown’s description of the scholarship of his day. Maxwell, in particular, suggests that sermons should be considered as ‘dialogues’ between élite preacher and lay congregation.<sup>79</sup> Sandwell appears much more positive about the masses than about Chrysostom: they have the ‘feel for the game’ which their preacher lacks.<sup>80</sup> However, in this scholarship there still persists an emphasis on the opposition and divergence between

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<sup>76</sup> See Brown 1981, 17.

<sup>77</sup> Momigliano 1972, 18; cited in Brown 1981, 19.

<sup>78</sup> Brown 1981, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Maxwell 2006, 5; an idea picked up by Brown in his preface to the 2015 re-printing of his original study.

For a similar argument from the sermons of Augustine, see Rebillard 1997.

<sup>80</sup> Hartney is the only one of those three to depict the congregation in more negative terms.

élites and masses: to quote the title of MacMullen's recent book, the latter constitute a 'second church' (whether or not they actually met somewhere else, as he argues). It would be inaccurate to argue that there was no differentiation at all; but we should move away from this being the primary model by which we understand what is going on during the sermon and, consequently, the relationship between the preacher and his congregation. My approach is in line with that of the 2004 conference of the Ecclesiastical History Society, which 'sought to question or at any rate to complicate these polarities by inviting exploration not of the divergence but of the interaction between elite and popular religious belief and practice,' and indeed questioned whether such a stark polarity existed at all.<sup>81</sup> By exploring the different contexts of Chrysostom's sermons and the ways in which he interacted with his congregations, this thesis seeks to counter 'the unhelpfulness of any simple bi-polar characterisation of the complexities of religious experience and religious institutions and practice.'<sup>82</sup>

## OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of three parts. The first part, including the current chapter, consists of introductory material. The second chapter contains some preliminary reflections on the nature of the texts of sermons which have been preserved. A number of scholars (most recently Guillaume Bady) have expressed concerns about the reliability of the textual tradition, concerns which rarely find their way into broader scholarship.<sup>83</sup> However, the state of the evidence must be critically assessed in order to have a clear understanding of the limitations of the evidence and to be able to mitigate such limitations. Chapter 2

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<sup>81</sup> Duffy 2006, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Duffy 2006, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Bady 2010.

therefore discusses two key issues raised by recent scholarship with regard to the sermons of Chrysostom: the reliability of the process of transmission from the first written versions to the earliest manuscripts in the ninth century; and the relationship between the written text and the sermon which was actually delivered. The issues will by no means be resolved, but an awareness of the difficulties of the texts is necessary before a close study of those texts can be undertaken.

In the second part, we turn our attention to an exploration of the pastoral nature of Chrysostom's preaching, by setting his sermons in the social world of late antiquity. Four different but overlapping aspects of the historical context will be considered: the ancient schoolroom is studied first as affording the closest parallel to the typical practice of Chrysostom in his preaching; then we turn to his widespread use of medical language within the context of both classical psychagogy and Old Testament prophecy to assess the aims of his preaching as far as the congregation is concerned; before finally we consider the immediate setting of the sermon – the liturgy – as a crucially important factor for understanding what the sermon was doing in its original context. The different aspects chosen are not intended to be exhaustive of the potential ways of reading Chrysostom's sermons, but have been selected as those which shed the clearest light on Chrysostom as a pastor. Consequently, the role of the sermon in politics, theological controversies, or as a rhetorical set-piece for special occasions will not be considered in any detail here. Additionally, other images that Chrysostom uses to depict his pastoral activity, such as the parent or the dinner-party host, may be touched on, but, in view of their more limited use, do not receive any sustained attention.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, each of these aspects provides a backdrop against which his condemnatory language can be best explained and understood.

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<sup>84</sup> See pp. 91-2, 195-7.

By contextualising his harsh criticism in this way, we will be in a better position to interpret his language appropriately.

Chapter 3, then, begins by situating Chrysostom's sermons within the social world of late antiquity. Traditionally, the sermon has been discussed by historians and classicists in terms of rhetorical genre, placing it within the context of classical rhetoric.<sup>85</sup> It will be demonstrated, however, that scholars have struggled usefully or meaningfully to classify individual sermons according to rhetorical genres, and consequently an alternative approach to contextualising preaching is required. The reason for this difficulty, it will be suggested, is that preaching – at least in the form of the exegetical sermons which this thesis will focus on – is better understood not as public speaking *per se*, but as teaching or lecturing, a form of speaking which is less tied to set rhetorical genres. Even when the exhortation, the latter half of the sermon, is discussed in relation to particular genres, they are genres which are inherently rather more loosely defined. This approach, which sees sermons as fundamentally a scholastic activity, is not in itself new. Frances Young has already demonstrated how much patristic exegesis was influenced by the tradition of classical *paideia*, with Christians creating their own alternative Christian *paideia* based on the scriptures.<sup>86</sup> In particular, Young presented an intriguing argument that the tension between the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools of exegesis reflected wider tensions in the methods of the rhetorical and philosophical schools of antiquity.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, David Rylaarsdam's recent work on the coherence of Chrysostom's theology and pedagogy shows that the classical concept of adaptability (*συγκατάβασις*) undergirds both

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<sup>85</sup> See n. 26 above, and more generally, Kennedy 1983; and Berger 1992.

<sup>86</sup> Young 1997. In this she follows Cameron 1991.

<sup>87</sup> She was followed in this by Mitchell 2000 in her study of Chrysostom's rhetorical portraits of the apostle Paul. Though wishing to add certain nuances, she broadly agrees with and supports the approach of Young in viewing Chrysostom's exegesis within the tradition of rhetorical, as opposed to philosophical, education. Also important for the study of Chrysostom's exegesis is Amirav 2003.

Chrysostom's theology and his preaching, his thought and his practice.<sup>88</sup> His preaching both utilises techniques of adaptability drawn from classical pedagogy, but also itself participates in God's own pedagogy, by which he sought to lead people to union with Christ. Chapter 3 will build on these arguments by illustrating other ways in which Chrysostom's methods reflect those of classical pedagogy. The chapter will further demonstrate that, when Chrysostom's preaching is viewed through the lens of classical pedagogy, his stridently condemnatory language becomes no longer understood as the consequence of his frustration with a slovenly congregation, but rather as a typical characteristic of any teacher in late antiquity.

In the following two chapters we focus on Chrysostom's frequent use of medical language within the context of both classical psychagogy and the scriptural tradition as a means of exploring his aims in preaching. To do so will further explain his persistent use of harsh criticism. Teachers, particularly philosophers, saw the purpose of their teaching to be the therapy of the soul. Similar medical language also permeates both Chrysostom's preaching and his discussion of preaching in his treatise *On the Priesthood*, and will thus prove to be important for assessing how he perceives and articulates his objectives as preacher. Despite it being a commonly used metaphor in his preaching, Chrysostom's use of medical language has only very recently begun to receive attention, particularly in recent articles by Mayer, who has depicted Chrysostom as a 'medico-philosophical psychic therapist.'<sup>89</sup> During research on madness in Chrysostom, she noticed the 'pervasiveness of medical imagery, language, and ideas throughout the Chrysostomic corpus.'<sup>90</sup> She argues that for Chrysostom 'sin is a form of mental illness, a state of imbalance within the mind/soul, for which, unlike mental illnesses that have a

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<sup>88</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Mayer 2015b, 143.

<sup>90</sup> Mayer 2015b, 147.

physiological cause, the human being is personally responsible.’<sup>91</sup> Noting that a very similar theme is to be found in many of the Hellenistic philosophers, she thus argues that Chrysostom in his ministry was exercising a very similar therapy of the soul. Chapter 4 will largely support her arguments through a closer analysis of his preaching (her own research focussing more on a selection of his treatises).<sup>92</sup>

However, despite the similarities, there are significant differences, which will be considered in Chapter 5. Although Mayer sees her work as in many ways parallel to that of Rylaarsdam’s, in that they both want to view Chrysostom as a classical psychagogue, she differs in wishing to ‘reject the term “theology” as a modern, etic construct, in favour of applying to his thought the label of (Christian) philosophy.’<sup>93</sup> However, it would be a mistake to view Chrysostom as entirely parallel to other (non-Christian) philosophers of antiquity, and it is the purpose of this chapter to explore the impact of the scriptural and Christian tradition on Chrysostom’s therapy of the soul. It will be shown that though his language of medicine and the nature of his therapy can be paralleled in medical and philosophical writings, his understanding of the goal of the therapy and what underlay the sickness was fundamentally different: it was not happiness that he wanted his congregations to acquire, but eternal salvation. He wanted to lead his congregation not to a state of happiness and peace of mind, but rather to a condition of fear and trembling at their sin before a holy God.

Finally, in Chapter 6 we turn to the immediate setting of the sermon, its place within a corporate act of worship. Although a number of studies have drawn attention to the possibilities sermons present for learning about the contemporary liturgy,<sup>94</sup> very few approach the sermon itself as a liturgical event. Indeed, after a brief discussion by Olivar

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<sup>91</sup> Mayer 2015b, 147. Here she builds on Raymond Laird’s investigation of Chrysostom’s anthropology, with a focus particularly on the relationship between sin and the γνώμη, translated ‘mindset’: Laird 2012.

<sup>92</sup> A similar perspective has recently been explored by Kolbet 2009 for Augustine.

<sup>93</sup> Mayer 2015b, 144.

<sup>94</sup> See below, pp. 176-7.

(who does not look beyond the very beginning and end of the sermon),<sup>95</sup> only two other works that I am aware of have considered this perspective, and both do so briefly. Young touches on the transcendental nature of scriptural language as something which pointed beyond itself, and she demonstrates how Chrysostom in his exegesis sought to bring out for his congregations the evocativeness of scripture and thus lift their minds to the divine Reality to which it points.<sup>96</sup> The other study is a recent essay by Sandwell contrasting Chrysostom's and Basil of Caesarea's exegesis of the opening of Genesis.<sup>97</sup> Basil's approach to the text is to explain as clearly as possible any difficulties contained within it; Chrysostom's, on the other hand, is quite the opposite, to leave his congregation baffled. This, however, was deliberate, she argues, in that bafflement would lead to awe and worship. The chapter will pursue the theme further by arguing that the sermon was not an interlude in the liturgy, as would be implied by studies which treat the sermon only as a window onto the rest of the liturgy, but an integral part of it, and of vital importance for fully appreciating what kind of activity preaching was. It was not merely the communication of knowledge and ideas, but formed part of a liturgy of worship. Furthermore, when seen in that context, Chrysostom's condemnatory and fear-inspiring language can be readily understood as arousing feelings of humility and contrition that were considered appropriate at a moment when the believer entered the presence of God.

This final chapter is the most significant contribution of Part 2 to our understanding of the sermon. The liturgy is the aspect that is most often overlooked, despite it being the immediate context in which the sermon was set; and a nuanced reading of a text can only be constructed once its relationship with its original setting and its role within that context have been fully understood. Each of these chapters, however, contributes to furthering our understanding of Chrysostom as a pastor. In particular, it will become clear throughout

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<sup>95</sup> Olivar 1991, 515-27.

<sup>96</sup> Young 1997, 140-160.

<sup>97</sup> Sandwell 2011.

Part 2 that his use of condemnatory language has more to do with how he understood his role as a pastor and preacher than with the level of commitment among his congregation. In Part 3, therefore, we turn finally to the implications of the previous chapters' findings, and in Chapter 7 we will turn to tackle head on the question with which this thesis began: in light of all that we have seen about what kind of activity preaching was, how far can we really use sermons as sources for social history? What kind of history, indeed, can we write from sermons? Through focussing on the issues of the social composition of the congregation and their level of commitment to (Chrysostom's) Christianity, it will be argued that sermon texts are in their nature resistant to being used as sources for this kind of social history.

Instead, following Derek Krueger's recent study of Byzantine liturgy, it will be argued that though sermons cannot be used, at least without difficulty, to access the everyday lives of ordinary Christians, they nonetheless do present how Chrysostom viewed his congregation, and how he wanted them to view themselves. It will be argued that how he addressed his congregation cannot be separated from his scripturally-informed ecclesiology. For Chrysostom, his congregation are an instantiation of the Universal Church, the exalted body of Christ called to live a penitential life. His sermons ultimately tell us only about his own construction of his congregation, though one which his regular listeners may well have been shaped by.<sup>98</sup> Krueger acknowledges that sermons and similar texts do not provide 'unmediated access to Christians' interior realities,'<sup>99</sup> but for Krueger this is, as I understand him, not really the issue. In offering Christians a template of the Christian life, liturgical texts present a construction of reality which, through enacting it in

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<sup>98</sup> See also Hagit Amirav's study of Chrysostom's exegesis of the Noah narrative, who in the introduction argues that sermons should be seen for the most part as literary constructs which are little effected by the dynamic of his relationship with his congregation, and which therefore can tell us very little about everyday life. She is, indeed, dismissive of the 'present scholarly tendency ... to place the larger part of the Chrysostomian corpus in the immediate context of the preacher and his audience.' Amirav 2003, 51.

<sup>99</sup> Krueger 2014, 9.

the liturgy, they eventually come to inhabit. Instead of trying to access popular Christianity *per se*, he seeks ‘to examine broadly disseminated and collective modes for constructing and expressing a common individuality that in its generic force is not quite individual at all.’<sup>100</sup>

It is in this sense, then, that sermons and the wider liturgy provide us with access to the lives of everyday Christians. We may not be able to analyse them for nuggets of information on the social make-up of his congregation or construct from the preacher’s rebukes a set of beliefs and opinions which ‘ordinary’ Christians held in opposition to the clerical *élite*; in this respect they can tell us very little about the state of popular Christianity or the process of Christianization. However, what they do present is Chrysostom’s own construction of reality, in part scripturally informed, a construction which would in turn have gone some way to shaping the congregation’s own self-conception. Sermons both provide a template for and are an enactment of ‘popular Christianity’.

The thesis then closes with a brief summary of the principal arguments and some concluding thoughts on the consequences of this thesis for future research. This is followed by a short appendix assessing the arguments of Mayer and Allen that Chrysostom’s exegetical sermon series were only put together for publication. It is important to deal with this argument as it would potentially contradict one element of the scholastic nature of preaching we will identify in Chapter 3, namely preaching sequentially through a curriculum of key texts. This would, however, be too much of a diversion from the flow of the main argument in that chapter, and so is presented separately as an appendix.

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<sup>100</sup> Krueger 2014, 8.

This thesis presents new insights into the person of Chrysostom, the nature of Christian preaching and popular Christianity in late antiquity. Listening to Chrysostom preach must have been an often unsettling experience, given the frequency and severity with which he critiqued his congregations. Despite this, he was hugely popular with the people of both Antioch and Constantinople. The narrative presented by Hartney, Maxwell, Sandwell and others fails to explain satisfactorily the popularity of the ‘tongue which cuts’, instead overlooking his popularity and presenting his criticisms as coming from a member of the élite who was out of touch with the beliefs and attitudes of his audience. The thesis explains the apparent paradox and challenges this narrative by recovering a picture of Chrysostom as a pastor, and a pastor who was well-appreciated for the preaching ministry that he performed.

Going hand in hand with this, this thesis presents a new perspective on regular Christian preaching, viewing it as a primarily pastoral and liturgical activity, rather than as the mere communication of knowledge and ideas. Only Chrysostom will be studied; but nonetheless, his vast corpus presents a unique opportunity to study examples of regular preaching. Furthermore, he may have been an extraordinary preacher, but we should see this as indicative of him being an ideal to imitate rather than as an exception to the norm.<sup>101</sup> As a result, this thesis may therefore indirectly shed light on an activity that took place in churches across the Greco-Roman world and beyond, week-by-week or even day-by-day, treating it as an event in its own right rather than simply as a mine for other historical or theological data. These sermons were about more than Christian formation: Chrysostom believed that his role as preacher was to prepare the souls of his congregation to meet their God – both in the present moment in the course of the liturgy, and at the end of time on the Day of Judgement. It is the argument of this thesis that this ‘God-

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<sup>101</sup> For his later reception as a preacher, see below, pp. 39-40.

dimension' cannot be sidelined as insignificant, but is rather of fundamental importance for our understanding of what the sermon was.

It is only when we can appreciate what Chrysostom's own aims and purposes were when he came forward to preach that we can appropriately interpret his words as a source for social history. It is only when we can contextualise Chrysostom's condemnatory tone and his harsh criticism that we can appreciate it as being typical for a teacher such as himself, and as serving his particular pastoral and liturgical objectives. As a result, we can no longer use his condemnations to construct a narrative of late antiquity which depicts the majority of ordinary Christians as lazy, contrary or uncommitted, and it is hoped that future research into the social history of late antiquity will be grounded in a more sensitive appreciation of the nature of Christian preaching. Indeed, the popularity of Chrysostom's stern pastoral ministry suggests that many Christians may have taken the Christian faith more seriously than they are often given credit for.

## CHAPTER 2

### *The State of the Evidence*

#### A BLEAK PICTURE?

‘Thou hast them as they were preached and pressed in Sermons to the Capacity and Conscience of his Auditors, and taken from his Mouth by a Notary.’ These words concluded the preface to a collection of sermons by the seventeenth-century English preacher John Everard, assuring the reader of the fidelity of the texts before them to the sermons as they were originally preached.<sup>1</sup> In the comfort of his or her own home, the reader would be able to come as close as possible to experiencing the preaching, as it happened, of this noted preacher. When we come to the late-antique sermon, much scholarship appears to be done on the implicit assumption that we can have the same confidence, that the text we are reading is, more or less, the very words spoken during a service. Though the grounds for this assumption have been questioned from many angles over many years,<sup>2</sup> such work does not seem to have affected the flourishing of homiletic (and particularly Chrysostomic) scholarship in other fields, which frequently takes the reliability of the sermon-text for granted.

Of particular concern is the lack of modern critical editions of Chrysostom’s homilies, though a call for more attention to be paid to the production of these has often

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<sup>1</sup> Everard 1659, sig. b 2v, quoted by Parkes 1991, 33 n. 32. Parkes omitted the end of the sentence which fills me with less confidence that the words to follow were taken directly from the mouth of the preacher: ‘...yet afterward Owned and Approved by himself, he desiring to peruse them, they lying with him three or four Months, and compared with his own Notes.’

<sup>2</sup> See especially Musurillo 1961; Bady 2010; and other works cited in the footnotes to follow.

been issued.<sup>3</sup> Whilst many of the treatises and other such works have received much attention, editions of homilies have been rather slower in materialising. The series *Sources Chrétiennes* have done the most work in producing new editions, and at the time of writing there have been published 11 volumes<sup>4</sup> containing 48 sermons<sup>5</sup> – a mere 5% or so of his total homiletic corpus. Others have been produced elsewhere, a number as part of doctoral theses, but for the vast majority of Chrysostom's homiletic corpus we rely on the work of the eighteenth-century Benedictine scholar Bernard de Montfaucon, as reproduced by Jacque Paul Migne a century later in the *Patrologia Graeca*.<sup>6</sup> His work invariably relies on just a few manuscripts and is often heavily indebted to previous editions, particularly that of Sir Henry Savile in the early seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth-century edition by Frederick Field of the homilies on Matthew and on the Pauline epistles represents something of an improvement on the text of Montfaucon, but still falls short of a full critical edition.<sup>8</sup>

The reasons for this lack of critical editions are well-known. To begin with, there is the sheer size of the Chrysostomic corpus: 18 volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca* are dedicated to him, which compares to 10 for Cyril of Alexandria, the next most represented author, and 16 of the *Patrologia Latina* for Augustine. His works are distributed among around 2,000 manuscripts, a daunting number for any prospective editor, though he has now much-needed assistance in the (as yet incomplete) series *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci*.<sup>9</sup> In light of this alone (and further difficulties will emerge as we proceed through this chapter), it is no surprise that so little has been done. Bady naturally concluded that

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<sup>3</sup> E.g. Malingrey 1961, 81; Mayer 2005b, 11-18.

<sup>4</sup> Volumes 28, 50, 277, 300, 362, 366, 396, 433, 560, 561 and 562.

<sup>5</sup> Including catecheses and panegyrics, but excluding works which were self-evidently never intended to be preached.

<sup>6</sup> Chrysostom's homilies can be found distributed through volumes 47-64.

<sup>7</sup> On these editions see Goodall 1979, 2-5.

<sup>8</sup> On Field's text, see further below, pp. 55-6.

<sup>9</sup> Baur 1907, 28-31, knew of 1,917 Chrysostom manuscripts.

this ‘rendant très improbable l’existence d’un nouveau Savile au 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.’<sup>10</sup> It may be quite some time before we get a complete set of critical editions of Chrysostom’s output, but nonetheless the importance of producing more editions cannot be understated. Without such editions, all research based upon the texts of his sermons ‘remains conditional’,<sup>11</sup> until a more secure text can be established. There is not the space within this thesis to do any text-critical work of my own; and so, as far as possible, we will rely on those texts which have already received some critical attention.<sup>12</sup>

Even if we had up-to-date critical editions, sermons still present innumerable problems. The sermons’ 400-year journey from Chrysostom’s mouth to the earliest manuscripts in the ninth century was a tumultuous one. Guillaume Bady argued that the manuscript tradition had a role to play not only in transmitting the texts of Chrysostom, but in transforming them as well, to the extent that he concluded that ‘Éditeurs, traducteurs, commentateurs, tous orphelins de Chrysostome, nous sommes condamnés à assumer notre propre part de tradition, et même de paternité, sur une œuvre qui est la sienne et aussi un peu la nôtre.’<sup>13</sup> This chapter does not intend to solve such problems, but to assess how problematic they are, and how best they can be mitigated. The problems can be considered under two headings corresponding to the two principal phases of a sermon’s journey: namely, that from oral delivery to written text, and then the several centuries of manuscript transmission. We will consider them in reverse order.

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<sup>10</sup> Bady 2010, 151.

<sup>11</sup> Mayer 2005b, 17.

<sup>12</sup> See below, pp. 63-5.

<sup>13</sup> Bady 2010, 163.

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

We begin, then, with the transmission of the text from its original ‘publication’ to the earliest surviving manuscripts. It is partly these difficulties that have slowed progress on the editing of texts, but even when edited texts have been produced, various issues remain. Herbert Musurillo articulated well the crux of the problem: ‘One must realize that the text of a Greek patristic writer was not merely a school-text to be copied; it was part of a common, living heritage.’<sup>14</sup> The earliest manuscripts we have for Chrysostom date from the ninth century, at least four hundred years after his death. We simply cannot presume that, even making allowances for normal human error, in those four hundred years scribes faithfully reproduced the text before them. We must first seek to understand their purpose in reproducing his texts before we can draw conclusions on their reliability. Three, not necessarily mutually exclusive, motivations can be identified, which I have termed ‘theological’, ‘liturgical’ and ‘academic’.<sup>15</sup>

### *Theological Motivations*

At the Second Council of Constantinople, convened by the Emperor Justinian in 553, twelve ‘holy fathers’ (along with the four previous ecumenical councils) were listed by the emperor as being authoritative for the church, amongst whom was John Chrysostom.<sup>16</sup> In creating this canon, Justinian was on one level establishing a corpus of texts against which

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<sup>14</sup> Musurillo 1961, 86.

<sup>15</sup> Major essays on this topic are Weidmann 2012; Bady 2010; Cunningham 1996; Gribomont 1974-5; Musurillo 1961; Wenger 1956. On the transmission of texts in the Middle Ages, see Wisnovky *et al.* (eds.), 2012. See footnotes for further bibliography on specific points and individual texts.

<sup>16</sup> *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 4.1, p. 13. The other names listed are: Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory of Nazianus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Theophilus, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, Proclus and Leo.

to test conflicting theological views, bestowing these figures with authority for future generations of Christians. But on another level the emperor, and the members of the Council, needed to reassure themselves and persuade their opponents that they were in line with the tradition of the church. To be truly orthodox meant being in agreement with the historical tradition of orthodoxy. By laying claim to the most authoritative figures in the Church, they were therefore asserting that they, the Council, were alone orthodox and true to the tradition of the Church; anyone who disagreed was outside of the tradition and consequently a heretic.<sup>17</sup>

Despite being exiled and dying in ignominy in a remote corner of the empire, Chrysostom's authoritative status became quickly established. By the sixth century he had become a saint, and is frequently cited as the 'teacher of the whole church'.<sup>18</sup> John Moschus, towards the end of the century, relates the story of a certain Amma Joanna, who had met Chrysostom shortly before his death, and who had a vision in which she was unable to find the bishop amongst all the Fathers of the Church in heaven because he was too close to the very throne of God.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, a vast quantity of texts became attached to his name, whether through scribal error or by deliberate falsification.<sup>20</sup> The latter practice was widespread and theologians often attacked their opponents for creating forgeries.<sup>21</sup> These texts, whether deliberate forgeries or not, illustrate the growing authority the name Chrysostom was beginning to wield.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For more on this, see Gray 1988.

<sup>18</sup> πάσης ἐκκλησίας διδάσκαλος, Jo. Caes. *Apologia Concilii Chalcedonensis* 4.2.148-156. Cf. also *Adversus Aphthartodocetas* 2.10-12; Cosm. Ind. *Top.* 10.45-56; Dor. *Doct.* 12.128, 16.169. In the West, he was cited soon after his death as an authority on both sides in the Pelagian Controversy: see Thonnard 1967; Bouhot 1989; Cooper 1993; Gorman 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Jo. Mosch. *Prat.* 128.

<sup>20</sup> Sever Voicu has identified over a thousand texts that are falsely attributed to Chrysostom: Voicu 1982, 1198. See also Regtuit 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Gray 1988. See also Wilson 1983, 53-5.

<sup>22</sup> See also Mayer 2008b for the shift in attitudes to Chrysostom witnessed in the three major Christian historians of the fifth century. For the efforts of Palladius in rehabilitating Chrysostom, see Rapp 2001.

Such authority is problematic for the student of Chrysostom today. There is a danger that the Chrysostom we study is not the man himself, but rather the image that was created and developed in subsequent centuries to meet the needs of new theological debates. This is the argument that Musurillo was making in saying that patristic texts were part of a ‘common, living heritage’. He continues:

It might be plagiarized or adapted under a new name, especially if it contained sound ascetical doctrine, as Werner Jaeger has shown us was the case with Gregory of Nyssa’s *De instituto christiano*. It might be issued by an heretical school, like the works of Athanasius and Methodius, and used as arguments in theological controversy. Again, it might be bowdlerized and issued in an edition which would lack any passage that could occasion scandal or controversy – and this is the most frequent occurrence.<sup>23</sup>

Conrad Leyser, among others, has argued something similar for Augustine: he demonstrates how later generations ignored anything that was ‘distinctively Augustinian’ and created for themselves an Augustine whose authority was respected, but who said only what later generations of theologians considered he was supposed to say as a respected and orthodox Father of the Church.<sup>24</sup> Musurillo goes on to cite a number of specific examples of Greek texts being adapted in this way, including Chrysostom’s treatise *On Virginity*. His study of the manuscript tradition of the text revealed that they contained few variants and include sharply polemical chapter headings which were clearly added in at a later date. Both, he argues, point to a normalisation of the text sometime in the eighth or ninth centuries.<sup>25</sup> His argument, however, is far from conclusive: the lack of variants could have another explanation, and the polemical chapter headings in fact point to a reluctance to tamper with the actual text itself.

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<sup>23</sup> Musurillo 1961, 86-7.

<sup>24</sup> Leyser 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Musurillo 1961, 91-4; see also Musurillo 1966.

In any case, the possibility of theological normalisation should not in general be seen as problematic a concern for Chrysostom as it may have been for other authors. Chrysostom differs from the like of Augustine in not being a radical theologian, at least insofar as during his lifetime he did not invite significant criticism for his theological views, and afterwards was remembered principally for his eloquence and passion as a preacher. Let me substantiate these claims.

First, he was not attacked during his lifetime or afterwards for holding heretical views. This is in contrast, of course, to Augustine who was engaged in bitter and prolonged doctrinal debates with Pelagius and his associates. The general picture provided by the sources is that Chrysostom formed enemies not over points of doctrine, but because of his zealous and uncompromising character; as we saw at the beginning of this thesis, he was well-known as a stern moralist. Take, for example, the following description of the bishop by Socrates, who, we remember, was the least partisan of the church historians:

ἦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος, ὡς φασι, διὰ ζήλον σωφροσύνης πικρότερος καὶ πλέον, ὡς ἔφη τις τῶν οἰκειοτάτων αὐτῷ ἐκ νέας ἡλικίας, θυμῷ μᾶλλον ἢ αἰδοῖ ἐχαρίζετο, καὶ διὰ μὲν ὀρθότητα βίου οὐκ ἀσφαλῆς πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντα, δι' ἀπλότητα δὲ εὐχερῆς· ἐλευθεροστομία τε πρὸς τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντα ἀμέτρως ἐκέχρητο, καὶ ἐν μὲν τῷ διδάσκειν πολὺς ἦν ὠφελῆσαι τὰ τῶν ἀκουόντων ἦθη, ἐν δὲ ταῖς συντυχίαις ἀλαζονικὸς τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν αὐτὸν ἐνομίζετο.

Τοιοῦτος ὢν τὸ ἦθος καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν προβληθεὶς μείζονι ἢ ἐχρῆν τῇ ὀφρῦι κατὰ τῶν ὑπηκόων ἐκέχρητο, διορθοῦν τοὺς βίους τῶν ὑφ' αὐτῷ κληρικῶν, ὡς ὤετο, προαιρούμενος. εὐθὺς οὖν ἐν ἀρχῇ φανεὶς τοῖς τῆς ἐκκλησίας τραχὺς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐμισεῖτο, πολλοὶ τε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπηχθάνοντο καὶ ὡς ὀργίλον ἐξέκλινον.

He was, so they say, a rather disagreeable man because of his zeal for temperance, and, as one of his associates from his youth said, he was much more given to indignation than to deference. Because of the integrity of his life, he was heedless with regard to the future, and because of his simplicity he was reckless. He employed a freedom of speech with those he encountered that was unrestrained, and in his teaching he was powerful at reforming the morals of his listeners; but in private meetings he was considered arrogant by those who did not know him.

Being of such a character, when he was selected for the episcopate he was haughtier than necessary in his relationship with those subject to him, since he was determined

to correct the lives of the clergy under him, so it is thought. Consequently, right from the beginning he came across as severe and was hated by them, and many were hostile to him and shunned him as an irascible man.<sup>26</sup>

This is hardly a flattering description. Socrates paints a picture of an uncompromising man, who was more concerned about sticking to his principles than getting along with people. He formed enemies among the clergy not over points of doctrine, but because of his severity. The ‘tongue which cuts’ may have been popular among the laity, but it seems to have been less so amongst those who considered themselves his equals. As Socrates’ account progresses, this severity comes out again and again, and his downfall appears to be more a result of an undiplomatic personality that was not suited to the political context of the imperial capital, rather than for any theological doctrines.

This tallies with what we see elsewhere. In Palladius’ defence of his beloved bishop, he makes no attempt to rebut any charge of heresy: his focus is entirely on defending his character and conduct. If there were any serious charges of heresy, it seems remarkable that Palladius makes no attempt to counter them. In the Acts of the Synod of the Oak, preserved by Photius, there are two lists of charges:<sup>27</sup> the first, consisting of 29 charges, is entirely to do with his character and conduct; the second, consisting of a further 17 charges, is very similar with two exceptions. The first two charges come closest to labelling him with a specific heresy in denouncing his hospitality to supposed Origenists (though it falls short of labelling him with the heresy itself). The sixth and seventh charges are the only ones that attack points of doctrine: the sixth attacks him for being too liberal with offers of repentance; the seventh claims that he had suggested that Christ did not pray correctly and was therefore not heard. The latter’s meaning is obscure and has not yet been correlated with anything in his surviving works. The former fits with much of what we

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<sup>26</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.3.13-4.2.

<sup>27</sup> Text can be found at Malingrey (ed.), 1988, 100-14.

know of his character and preaching style from his surviving sermons, and, according to Socrates, it was a teaching even his friends were critical of.<sup>28</sup> If this is so, then evidently it was not seen as a dividing-line between his supporters and his enemies. In any case, these two charges appear to be the exceptions that prove the rule: it should be clear that the charges were predominantly concerned with his character and conduct, rather than any point of doctrine.<sup>29</sup>

This should be something of a surprise. In an age when theological debates raged on several fronts at once, Chrysostom must rank as one of very few bishops who was not deposed on a clear charge of heresy. Furthermore, he was rehabilitated remarkably quickly, and principally, it seems, due to popular pressure rather than an acquittal of any charges: even Cyril of Alexandria was firmly opposed to Atticus' move to include John's name in the diptychs not because of any doctrinal issue, but simply on the basis that deposed bishops should not be ranked amongst their ecclesiastical peers.<sup>30</sup> Chrysostom's deposition, therefore, was presented as the penalty not of heresy, but rather of a disagreeable character.

Second, he was principally remembered in the early centuries after his death not for a particular theological stance, but as an eloquent and powerful preacher. This is, for example, a recurring feature of Socrates' account of his episcopacy: the people loved him for his 'brilliant and alluring' sermons;<sup>31</sup> 'he flourished in his teachings and was acclaimed for them';<sup>32</sup> whilst plots were being orchestrated against him, again he flourished as preacher;<sup>33</sup> and between his exiles he 'devoted himself to teaching'.<sup>34</sup> Theodore Anagnostes, in his history based heavily on the three major fifth-century historians,

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<sup>28</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.21.

<sup>29</sup> For further discussion of these charges, see Kelly 1995, 221-5.

<sup>30</sup> Cyr. *Ep.* 76.

<sup>31</sup> λαμπροὶ καὶ τὸ ἐπαγωγὸν ἔχοντες, Socr. *h.e.* 6.4.9.

<sup>32</sup> ταῖς διδασκαλίαις τε ἤνθει καὶ διαβόητος ἐπὶ ταύταις ἦν, Socr. *h.e.* 6.7.30.

<sup>33</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.10.10.

<sup>34</sup> ταῖς διδασκαλίαις ἐσχόλαζε, Socr. *h.e.* 6.17.12.

introduces Chrysostom as a presbyter in Antioch who ‘displayed his wonderful words to the praise of the people in Antioch.’<sup>35</sup> Amma Joanna in John Moschus’ tale describes Chrysostom as the one ‘who delighted the Church of God with his words.’<sup>36</sup> In the eighth or early ninth century, Cosmas Vestitor wrote a short biography heavily indebted to the picture of Chrysostom as an eloquent preacher. One of his fourteen chapters tells the story, early in his career, of a woman interrupting his preaching to ask that he speak so as to be better understood by the less well-educated, and he willingly obliges.<sup>37</sup> This probably apocryphal story presents us with a Chrysostom who was at the same time both an eloquent and erudite orator, and an immensely popular preacher held in deep affection by his congregation.

This survey is far from exhaustive, but it is representative. Time and again he is quoted among other Church Fathers to support a particular viewpoint and referred to as a διδάσκαλος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας; but never is a particular individual theological stance attributed to him. The one minor exception that I have found (outside of the charges brought against him at the Oak, discussed above) comes in the writings of the seventh-century monk Maximus the Confessor, who cites Chrysostom’s exegesis of Acts as an example of the historical (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν) interpretation.<sup>38</sup> But beyond this reference to his exegetical method, he is presented by later sources as doctrinally indistinct from the other Fathers of the Church.

With Augustine, recent studies have seen this as the result of a process of normalisation, whereby, in order to become a Father of the Church, he had to be shaped and moulded to better reflect the views of the Church of which he was a Father. But this process we can, to a certain extent, observe taking place in the sources – there are definite

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<sup>35</sup> λόγους θαυμαστοὺς πρὸς παραίνεσιν τῶν ἐν Αντιοχείᾳ λαῶν ἐπεδείξατο, Thdr. Lect. *h.e.* 4.272.

<sup>36</sup> ὁ τοῖς λόγοις εὐφράνας τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Jo. Mosch. *Prat.* 128.

<sup>37</sup> Cosmas Vestitor, *Vita Ioannis Chrysostomi* 5.

<sup>38</sup> Max. *Qu. dub.* 119.

individual views which become toned down in later sources. With Chrysostom, however, we see something quite different: his theological views were not considered carefully articulated and radical enough to provoke criticism during his lifetime and after his death there was no heresy or difficult teaching that needed to be toned down before he could take his place firmly among the Fathers of the Church. It was rather his fiery and uncompromising personality and his eloquence as a preacher that both brought him critics and won him lasting praise. In other words, one could perhaps say that Chrysostom was, in the eyes of other leading church figures, theologically ‘normal’, so to speak, to begin with; that is, his work did not need, as with Augustine, to undergo any significant theological normalisation in subsequent centuries to become accepted as a Church Father. Consequently, though later theological debates should be remembered and their impact on the transmission of the texts watched out for (as, perhaps, with his treatise *On Virginity*), we should not be concerned about their reliability from a theological standpoint.

### *Liturgical Motivations*

Another aspect of sermons being part of a ‘common, living heritage’, but not really discussed by Musurillo, is their nature as liturgical texts. With reference more specifically to hagiographical texts, Høgel argues that ‘as texts circulated and faced new audiences copyists would now and then redact upon the text to make it suit new social, liturgical, linguistic, and political contexts.’<sup>39</sup> Increasingly, it seems, priests and bishops relied less on their own ability to preach, and simply read out a preserved sermon of a Church Father.<sup>40</sup> Given that the original sermon was composed with a particular congregation in a

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<sup>39</sup> Høgel 2002, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Cunningham 1996, 184-5.

particular time and place in mind, the re-use of the sermon in later centuries could well have involved alterations to the text to make it more universally relevant.

Such re-use of existing material can most clearly be seen in a number of sermons which, on closer inspection, turn out to be either modifications of other preserved sermons, or fusions of excerpts from several pre-existing sermons.<sup>41</sup> For example, in three pseudo-Chrysostomic sermons on Christmas recently studied by Cornelis Datema and Pauline Allen, two of the three are virtually identical apart from the conclusion, while the third shares with the other two only the opening paragraph.<sup>42</sup> Datema and Allen rightly conclude that the opening originated with this third sermon, and was then reused in the other two. It is a beautifully lyrical passage depicting the transformation that was effected by Christ's incarnation, and one can quite see why a later preacher or editor would want to reuse the material for his own sermons. The conclusions of the two otherwise identical sermons differ only in that one includes a specific reference to a recently deceased bishop, the other moves straight into an extended doxology. Again, Datema and Allen rightly conclude that the reference to a specific event was removed and replaced by something more universal so that it could be better used for a later congregation.<sup>43</sup>

In both cases we see the texts of sermons being plagiarised and modified in order to meet the needs of later generations. Here we are fortunate to see such liberal use of the text in action and to piece together the various stages that the text underwent. We are, or may, not be so fortunate with the majority of our texts. It is quite possible that such alterations did take place, and the originals have been lost from the manuscript tradition. Indeed, a large number of our surviving sermons are preserved only in menologia and similar manuscripts, which have sermons deliberately arranged to fit the Church calendar for use

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<sup>41</sup> See Aubineau 1965.

<sup>42</sup> Datema and Allen 1989. For a similar example see Datema and Allen 1981.

<sup>43</sup> Bickersteth 1980, 478, considers the practice of re-using material in this way to be widespread: 'Such re-use of existing material is so frequent in homiletics that the path is littered with erroneous *inedita*.'

within the liturgy.<sup>44</sup> Since great effort had already been taken to select and arrange the sermons for use in a particular church, it is entirely possible that editing of the text itself was undertaken to make them even more relevant to their new audience. Students of homiletics today must beware the presence of material that was included in later centuries of the transmission of the text, and remember that the text we have is one that may have been modified to fit the needs of a later audience, rather than being an accurate reflection of the original.

However, the picture is not quite as bad as the foregoing may suggest. To begin with, we saw above two ways of modifying texts. The first was to re-use excerpts of old sermons in new ones: such re-use should be observable, since there is likely to be something of a discontinuity and a difference of style and content between the excerpted material and the new context.<sup>45</sup> Individual texts and their manuscript tradition will have to be carefully studied. The second was the removal of specific details: though their absence may be indicative of later revision, their presence should be an encouragement that the text has been left relatively untouched, since if a later editor were undertaking a wholesale revision of a text, it seems unlikely that he would leave in such irrelevant details.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, it appears only to be in around the eighth century that the sermons of the Fathers began to be extensively re-used as sermons to be preached in the liturgy: Cunningham has demonstrated that many of the liturgical collections date from the eighth

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<sup>44</sup> For a comprehensive survey of the different types of liturgical manuscript involved, see Ehrhard 1937-52. To make matters worse, it is not always entirely possible to identify liturgical manuscripts: for example, MS Athen. EBE 212 (10<sup>th</sup> century) appears simply to be a collection of Chrysostomic sermons with no obvious liturgical arrangement; but a dedication at the beginning of the volume asks that it be not removed from the Church building to which it was being given, suggesting that this book, though not obviously liturgical, may nonetheless have been produced primarily for use within the liturgy. See Marava-Chatzinicolaou and Toufexi-Paschou 1997, §1.

<sup>45</sup> An exception would be if the author were excerpting from a previous sermon of his own – this we shall return to below.

<sup>46</sup> The converse, though, is not necessarily true: a text that has been transmitted without specific details may have had none to begin with, rather than that they were ironed out by subsequent editors.

century onwards,<sup>47</sup> and so up until that point there would not have been any liturgical motivation for emending the text. But by this time, Chrysostom had been firmly established as a Father of the Church. In a canon of the Council in Trullo of 692, ‘the holy and approved preachers and teachers’ were ranked alongside scripture itself as authors whose works were to be preserved:<sup>48</sup> the presence of the canon suggests that hitherto they had not been treated with this degree of reverence, but it is nonetheless evidence of their increasingly canonical status during the late seventh and early eighth centuries, that is, the very time when patristic sermons were beginning to be re-used in the liturgy. The two are most likely to be connected: as the Church Fathers were gaining something of the authority previously only afforded to scripture, their sermons came to be used alongside scripture, and even as a secondary scripture, to be read to the faithful during the course of the liturgy. Although their works may have undergone alteration as a result of theological normalisation in order to be accepted as patristic in the first place, once they had achieved that status and their works were considered authoritative for use by later preachers, they would have been held in great reverence and their words tampered with sparingly.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the proliferation of pseudo-Chrysostomic texts mentioned above could suggest that many later preachers, aware of the extent of alteration that sermons could undergo, published their work under the name of Chrysostom in the hope of preserving it untampered with for posterity.

In conclusion, then, whilst we should still be cautious particularly when dealing with sermons which appear devoid of any specific circumstantial details, the canonicity of

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<sup>47</sup> Cunningham 1996, 185; followed by Høgel 2002, 42-3. Many collections include mostly sermons from the fourth and fifth centuries, but also a number from the eighth century, suggesting that the compilers for the most part worked with ‘old’ texts from the Fathers of the Church, but where no text could be found that was relevant to a particular feast, a contemporary text was chosen instead.

<sup>48</sup> Canon 68. See Nedungatt and Featherstone 1995, 150-1.

<sup>49</sup> Høgel 2002, 45-6, argues for a hierarchy of texts, with scripture at the top being the most authoritative and therefore the most revered, followed by the Church Fathers, and finishing with hagiographical works

Chrysostom's sermons throughout the Byzantine period should give us confidence in the accuracy of the texts which have been preserved.

### *Academic Motivations*

By academic motivations, I mean that these texts were also copied for the same reasons that any other text of antiquity was copied, because it was admired, and individuals desired to read it for their own enjoyment and/or edification. Collections of his sermons were available for the wealthy and educated to consult, as suggested by Socrates, who encourages his readers to read Chrysostom's sermons for themselves to appreciate their eloquence and persuasiveness.<sup>50</sup> Later in the ninth century, Photius includes sermons in his survey of literary works that he has had the opportunity to read, suggesting that he has been able to consult them in a library or possessed them in his own private collection: they were not merely confined to liturgical use in church or monasteries.<sup>51</sup> There were two major libraries in Constantinople that could have contained such books: the Imperial Library, founded originally by Constantine and surviving in some form right through until 1453, which was well-stocked and appears only to have lacked the rarest of volumes; and the library of the patriarchate, established by the Patriarch Sergius in the early seventh century.<sup>52</sup> A definite reference to the existence of Chrysostom's sermons in the latter comes in the twelfth-century chronicler Zonaras, who informs us that copies of his 'exegesis of the holy scriptures' were lost in a fire at the library in 726.<sup>53</sup>

Thus Chrysostom's sermons were admired and reproduced as works of literature in their own right, not simply as theological reference tools or liturgical texts. As with all

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<sup>50</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.4.

<sup>51</sup> Phot. *Cod.* 172-4 refers to the sermons on Genesis, Acts and the Pauline epistles.

<sup>52</sup> Wilson 1967, 54-62.

<sup>53</sup> John Zonaras 15.12.1; see also Wilson 1967, 59.

works of literature from antiquity, his sermons passed through a tradition in which generations of scribes introduced new readings, whether deliberately or not; what is surprising about parts of Chrysostom's homiletic corpus is the extensiveness of such revisions.

In recent decades studies have shown that a number of Chrysostom's sermon series have been transmitted in two, at times quite different, recensions.<sup>54</sup> In each case, there is a 'smooth' and a 'rough' recension, and an analysis of the differences between the two shows the former to be a later revision of the latter. These later revisions generally take the form of a supposed improvement on the text, and the fact that they often turn out to be quite the reverse, demonstrates that they are not the work of the author, but of a later editor who misunderstood the text.<sup>55</sup> These revisions can at times be quite extensive: in editing the homilies on the Acts of the Apostles, Francis Gignac noted that 'the difference between the primitive text and that of existing editions is as much as 17 percent in some homilies.'<sup>56</sup> This should cause us to beware the excessive interference of later scribes in the transmission of the text, since there may be many more such improvements which have totally replaced the original in the tradition, a danger which seems much greater with Chrysostom than with classical literature more generally given the greater extent of revisions already visible.

The extent of revision is worthy of note. To be sure, copyists were only human and were liable to make mistakes. But deliberate revisions would only have been made if the copyist believed his exemplar to be itself a victim of previous scribal error which it was his duty to correct. What the extensiveness of such revisions in the Chrysostom tradition suggest, therefore, is that copyists found before themselves exemplars which, in their

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<sup>54</sup> Such studies include: on Acts: Gignac 1975, 1987, 1998; on John: Harkins 1966; Taylor 1991; on Titus and Philemon: Goodall 1979.

<sup>55</sup> An interesting example of a case where the revisers got it right was discussed by Smothers 1951-2.

<sup>56</sup> Gignac 1998, 225.

minds, did not match the quality which a 'great' such as Chrysostom should produce. This can be best explained (as numerous studies of individual works have shown) if we postulate that the 'rough', original recension was in some way reflecting the original sermon delivered extempore.<sup>57</sup> It would contain all the marks of a genius such as Chrysostom, but would nonetheless still contain stylistic errors due to its being composed off the cuff. Thus the presence of a rough recension should actually be a cause for encouragement rather than despair, as it is quite possible that in this version of the text we are coming very close to the original sermon as preached. This we will explore in more detail in the following section.

Our texts, then, were copied and re-copied for one or more of these three reasons, and any study of them must always keep these in mind. When making an argument based on a particular passage, it is important to ask whether or not that passage could have been altered by later tradition for one of these purposes. However, I hope also to have shown that, in actual fact, we need not despair as much as some have suggested in working our way back through centuries of transmission. Each of the problems that have been discussed I have attempted to show are either not insurmountable or are significant for only some texts but not for all. Greater problems present themselves, however, when we take another step back to the original publication, and so we turn now to the relationship between the text we have and the words originally spoken.

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<sup>57</sup> Preaching extempore does not at all rule out doing some preparatory study on the text.

FROM SPOKEN WORD TO WRITTEN TEXT

Assuming we can reconstruct with some confidence the text of the sermon as it was first published, there is no guarantee that this text therefore reflects the words originally delivered by the preacher. Is the text a transcript of what was preached, and, if not, what is it? How can we tell? And how does this impact our use of sermons for socio-historical purposes? Here I shall set out the possible types of text we may have, the criteria by which a text is assigned to each type and implications for its study.

*Artificial Sermons*

Chrysostomus Baur suggested that the majority of Chrysostom's homilies were in fact treatises published in a homiletic form, arguing from a lack of spontaneous remarks (this we shall return to): 'So one must come to the surprising conclusion that Chrysostom, considering everything, must have written more than he preached.'<sup>58</sup> Though, as will become clear, I disagree with his claim that the majority should be considered as such, nonetheless we should entertain the possibility that at least parts of his homiletic corpus were never intended to be preached.

A good example of this is the work *On Saint Babylas, against Julianus and the Gentiles* (CPG 4348), which has long been recognised as being a treatise rather than a sermon, despite containing some homiletic features.<sup>59</sup> To begin with, it is very long, about four or five times as long as a typical sermon on Matthew's Gospel. It is 'carefully

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<sup>58</sup> Baur 1959-60, 223.

<sup>59</sup> Schatkin 1970, 475-7.

constructed according to the rules of classical rhetoric,<sup>60</sup> suggesting a work that has been meticulously put together. At one point he explicitly states that he is writing the work.<sup>61</sup> Signs such as these demonstrate quite clearly that this is an artificial sermon, a text that was written with no intention of it being preached, even though it contains the marks of an oral delivery: there are references throughout to hearing and speaking and to an imaginary live audience.<sup>62</sup> It was composed as if it were being orally delivered, but it was never intended to be preached. This is by no means unusual: just over half of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* were never actually preached as sermons, but were composed in homiletic form to fill in the gaps when the compilation was put together.<sup>63</sup>

This should cause us to be wary of assuming a text is a sermon simply because it looks like a sermon. Marks of orality, which may give it the air of being a live sermon, could quite easily have been included to make a written text appear oral. The reason for doing this most probably lies in the fact that late-antique society was still predominantly an oral culture, one that valued the spoken word more highly than the written. Furthermore, Chrysostom was a trained orator, having spent time supposedly in the rhetorical school of Libanius:<sup>64</sup> it is no surprise that he should want to compose pieces of oratory, even when delivery was never intended. Whatever the reason, such texts should not form the basis of a study on preaching itself. They may prove useful in learning what the preacher considered to be key elements of the sermon genre, elements which needed to be reproduced to give the text authenticity; but they remain texts that were composed primarily with a reader, or at the very least a listener in a private, non-liturgical context, in mind. Whatever their similarity to live sermons, the intended audience and context of the

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<sup>60</sup> Schatkin 1983, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Chrys. *De Bab. c. Iul. et gent.* 78.

<sup>62</sup> See Schatkin 1983, 44, for references.

<sup>63</sup> Olivar 1991, 933.

<sup>64</sup> Kelly 1995, 6-8.

text may well be very different. Our focus must, then, be on those texts which were, in some form, actually preached.

*Text prepared by Chrysostom*

We know, however, that Chrysostom preached regularly, and Socrates, in a well-known passage, attests to the existence of sermon texts that in some way reflect his actual preaching:

ὁ μέντοι λαὸς διὰ τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ λεγομένους ὑπ' αὐτοῦ λόγους σφόδρα συνεκρότει καὶ ἠγάπα τὸν ἄνθρωπον, μικρὰ φροντίζων τῶν κατηγορεῖν ἐπιχειρούντων αὐτοῦ. ὅποιοι δέ εἰσιν οἱ τε ἐκδοθέντες παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγοι καὶ οἱ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τῶν ὀξυγράφων ἐκληφθέντες ὅπως τε λαμπροὶ καὶ τὸ ἐπαγωγὸν ἔχοντες, τί δεῖ νῦν λέγειν, ἐξὸν τοῖς βουλομένοις αὐτοὺς ἀναλέγεσθαι καὶ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὠφέλειαν καρποῦσθαι;

The people, however, applauded and loved the man for the words he spoke in church, and thought little of those who were seeking to bring charges against him. Of what quality his sermons were – how brilliant and alluring - both those published by himself and those taken down by short-hand writers whilst he was speaking – what do I need now say, since it is possible for those who are willing to read them and reap the benefit from them?<sup>65</sup>

This passage is extremely useful in assuring us that not all of Chrysostom's homiletic corpus consists of 'desk' homilies: some, if not much, of it stems from his live preaching. According to Socrates, it was possible, by means of the published written text, for an individual to transport themselves back in time to hear a 'brilliant and alluring' sermon delivered by the great preacher. He may not have been familiar with Chrysostom's own publication techniques, being of the next generation; but he would at least be familiar with what was normal, or at least plausible, in the publication of sermons. He considers there to

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<sup>65</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.4.8-9.

be two types of text available: those produced by the man himself, and those produced from the notes of the short-hand writers. The latter we will come to below. The former could contain a whole variety of different texts: the ‘desk’ homilies considered above; texts that were carefully prepared in advance and intended for delivery, either by himself or someone else; and texts based perhaps on the short-hand writers’ notes, or on his own notes, and prepared by himself for publication post-delivery. In sum, these are all texts that have been carefully composed and thoroughly thought through, exhibiting something of a stylistic polish that one would expect to be missing from sermons preached impromptu.

The difficulty with those texts which received significant editorial attention by Chrysostom or another, is the impossibility of knowing what their audience and context was. A sermon that was prepared in advance, and then published more or less unchanged will be intended for a particular audience, the congregation, in a liturgical context. If, however, he is drawing up the text using his own or stenographers’ notes after the sermon, he may be attempting to reproduce as faithfully as possible what he actually said; or, on the other hand, he may be preparing the text with an awareness that the audience and context is now different, and so will reshape the text with that different audience and context in view. Successive studies on Classical Greek oratory have shown that speeches, particularly forensic speeches, were revised after delivery for publication. Ian Worthington, for example, argued that ‘the revised speech allowed the orator to display – and have recognised – his compositional or literary skill. After all, at the basic level, this is a form of advertising, and speechwriting was how most, if not all, orators made their living.’<sup>66</sup> Now, this will not be the case with preachers, who gave speeches in a very different context and for very different reasons than forensic orators; but nonetheless it

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<sup>66</sup> Worthington 1996, 172.

presents an interesting precedent for the adaptation of speeches when being presented in a written form for a different audience and for a different purpose.<sup>67</sup>

An example from Chrysostom may be found in the treatise *On Virginité*. This was considered by its modern editor, Musurillo, to be made up of a series of sermons on 1 Corinthians 7, which were then reworked into a treatise. His argument is based on a few references in the text to an audience and to speaking; on the fact that the text consists of a close exegesis of the scriptural passage (in the manner of a homily); and on the omission of detailed exegesis when we reach chapter 7 in his series of homilies on the epistle (suggesting they were excerpted to create the treatise).<sup>68</sup> His argument is not a very strong one, but it is at least a plausible theory. If it is right, then it presents an interesting example of material originally composed for a congregation being reshaped into a very different work intended for a primarily reading audience. Even if other texts remained in the form of a sermon when they were published, unless we can be confident that minimal, if any, revision has taken place, it will be impossible to know what the intended audience and context truly was.

Wendy Mayer has rightly drawn attention to the fact that there were secondary and tertiary audiences to Chrysostom's homiletic teaching.<sup>69</sup> However, we must push this further: the audience of the homilies as we have them today may not be even primarily a congregation in a liturgical setting, but rather individuals or small groups in a private or perhaps monastic setting. This fact is problematic for using sermons for the study of social history: without knowing who the intended audience was or what the text's context was, we cannot contextualise any social data we may be able to draw from them.

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<sup>67</sup> Aristotle too, though not commenting directly on speeches being turned into written texts, is aware of the different styles required by oral and written works, *Rh.* 3.12.1-2. See also Hubbard 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Musurillo 1961, 92-3.

<sup>69</sup> Mayer 2011, 89-94.

*Transcript drawn from stenographers' notes*

Socrates also referred to the existence of published sermons which were based on the notes of stenographers. We do indeed have one group of texts, which, in the manuscripts, claims to be just that. The homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews begin with these words:

Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους Ἐπιστολὴν, ἐκτεθεῖσα ἀπὸ σημείων μετὰ τὴν κοίμησιν αὐτοῦ, παρὰ Κωνσταντίνου πρεσβυτέρου Ἀντιοχείας.

Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, published from notes after his death by Constantinus, a priest of Antioch.

There is much we can learn from this short statement about the publication process of this series of sermons, and potentially, therefore, about other sermons too. First, it states that the text is based on ‘notes’ (‘σημεῖα’), most likely referring to the notes of the short-hand writers referred to by Socrates. By late antiquity, short-hand writing was widely used and a highly developed skill. The ‘σημεῖα’ were signs which could be drawn with no more than a few strokes of the pen (and most often a single stroke);<sup>70</sup> an apprentice σημειογράφος was required to learn a list of these signs and their values, known as the ‘Commentary’, by heart before he could enter into the profession.<sup>71</sup> Once the notes had been taken, the next stage was for these ‘signs’ to be expanded to produce a normal, written text, legible to those not trained in short-hand. Human error, both in taking the notes and then in interpreting them, would naturally mean that the transcript would not be perfect, but it could be relied upon as a more or less accurate text of the delivered speech. Plutarch claims that the reason why only one speech of Cato the Younger survives was that the system of short-hand writing had only just been introduced into the Latin world by Cicero:

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<sup>70</sup> ‘They have the force of many letters in short and brief strokes,’ (ἐν μικροῖς καὶ βραχέσι τύποις πολλῶν γραμμάτων ἔχοντα δύναμιν) Plu. *Cat. Mi.* 23.3.

<sup>71</sup> For an edition of this manual, see Milne 1934; with Tovar and Worp 2006.

he thus clearly believes he has in his hands a transcript of the speech delivered by Cato, and whether or not he was right in his belief, he provides clear testimony to the possibility existing, at least in his day, of oral speeches being preserved accurately in a written form.<sup>72</sup>

A second point to note is Constantinus' choice of title. The most common title for the sermons on the Pauline epistles is ὑπόμνηματα (meaning something like 'minutes' or 'notes'), but the series on Romans and Hebrews are both given the title ἐρμηνεΐα (meaning literally 'interpretation'). This possibly suggests that Constantinus' aim was to produce, using his preserved homiletic material, a complete collection of Chrysostom's exegesis of Hebrews, for others easily to consult, in a similar way to the eclogues produced in later centuries, where passages from different sermons were put together to produce a complete Chrysostomic text on a particular theme.<sup>73</sup>

However, unlike his commentary on Galatians, the work clearly is not a commentary in the strict sense of the word, a complete, line-by-line exegesis of the text. The homilies do not always seem to follow on from one another, and occasionally overlap in the text commented on (for example, the first and second homilies both contain exegesis, admittedly with different emphases, of 1:3-4).<sup>74</sup> They still preserve the concluding exhortative addresses to the congregation, where strict exegesis of the text has been left fully behind. Constantinus has made no attempt to turn the homilies into a proper commentary, which he could easily have done by excerpting only the exegetical sections and rearranging the material to produce a line-by-line commentary. By preserving the homiletic form, it appears that he wished to interfere with Chrysostom's own words as little as possible.

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<sup>72</sup> Plu. *Cat. Mi.* 23.3. For the use of stenographers in a Christian context, see particularly Eus. *h.e.* 6.36.1 on Origen, Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 7.3 on Augustine, and Gr. Naz. *Or.* 42.26. See also Hill 1998, 303-4; although his interpretation of the passages he cites are sometimes questionable.

<sup>73</sup> See De Aldama 1965, §59.

<sup>74</sup> On this see below, pp. 260-1.

This is an important point. Any study using sermons to access popular Christianity must rely on texts that come as close as possible to the sermons preached before an actual congregation. Other texts may well imitate preaching, and can therefore tell us something about the sermon genre, but they were composed with a different audience and a different context in mind, one that was primarily monastic or élite.<sup>75</sup> With the sermons on the letter to the Hebrews we have a title which states that the text was compiled from notes, most likely the shorthand notes of the stenographers: we must now consider other methods of identifying such texts. There are three elements of a text which suggest it may be a transcript.

### *Identifying the transcripts*

#### A double recension

The first feature of a text which suggests it may be a transcript has already been discussed, namely the existence for some sermon texts (particularly those on the Pauline epistles) of both a ‘smooth’ and a ‘rough’ recension, the smooth being a later ‘improvement’ of the rough. As was argued above, later copyists were puzzled at the poorer quality of these sermons of the ‘Golden Mouth’, presumed they had a corrupted text, and therefore sought to emend it to bring it more in line with the standard of other works. The poorer quality of the rough recension can, however, be explained, if it is seen as a transcript of a sermon preached with some measure of extemporaneity. Unfortunately, all editions before the twentieth century (and, it will be remembered, the vast majority of Chrysostom’s work

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<sup>75</sup> Of course, even where we do have confidence that we have a transcript of a sermon Chrysostom preached in church, there is no guarantee that the congregation it was preached to was representative of popular Christianity. This is, however, another question, one which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

exists only in these editions) did not sufficiently distinguish between the two recensions, and frequently printed a mixture of the two. It is vitally important that work is undertaken to produce critical editions of the rough recensions. The one partial exception to this is the edition of Field, who was heavily dependent on one manuscript of the rough recension, which he judged to be superior: his text, though not a proper critical edition, is therefore useful in presenting something that takes us potentially very close to the sermon as preached.<sup>76</sup>

### Mistakes and poor style

A clear sign of a text that has been composed, to some extent, impromptu and has had minimal, if any, revision is the presence of mistakes, inconsistencies and elements of poor style, those aspects most often corrected by later scribes in the smooth recension. These are marks of a work that is being composed on the spot, and it is only inevitable that, however good the speaker may be, he will not produce a perfect speech. If there is any revision of the text in preparation for publication, these elements would be the first to be revised; it is inconceivable that a reviser, be he Chrysostom himself or someone else, would leave in such glaring errors and departures from good style, and the more glaring they are, the less likely it is that any revision has been done to the text. By way of illustration, I shall give just a couple of examples.

A good example of a mistake can be found in the sixtieth homily on John's Gospel.<sup>77</sup> Chrysostom arrives in his exegesis at John 10:20, 'Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?"' He says, rightly, that this is the fourth time

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<sup>76</sup>Goodall 1979, 5. As a result, throughout this thesis the text of Field will be preferred over Montfaucon.

<sup>77</sup>This example was pointed out to me by Justin Hardin during a seminar held in Oxford in the spring of 2013.

Jesus had been accused in John's Gospel of being demon-possessed, and he proceeds to list the previous occurrences. He cites 7:20, 8:48 and then returns straight to 10:20, omitting the third verse, 8:52. Chrysostom has forgotten what the third quotation was, since he goes on to say the following:

μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ τέταρτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλάκις αὐτὸν ἀκηκοέναι. Τὸ γὰρ λέγειν, *Οὐ καλῶς ἐλέγομεν ὅτι δαιμόνιον ἔχεις*; οὐ τοῦ δεύτερον καὶ τρίτον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πολλάκις εἰρηκέναι τοῦτο, σημεῖόν ἐστι.

Rather, not for the fourth time, but even many times he had heard this. For to say, 'Were we not right to say that you have a demon?' [8:48] is a sign that this was not the second or third time that they had said this, but that they had said it often.<sup>78</sup>

He tries to cover up his mistake by claiming that the exact number of references recorded by John does not really matter, since the second quotation makes clear that this must have, in any case, been a frequent accusation. This would be an obvious and straightforward passage to revise on publication: he, or an editor, would simply need to insert the forgotten quotation; the impromptu interpretation of 8:48 to cover his mistake could even be retained. If the sermon had received even some editorial attention before publication, it seems odd that this section was overlooked.

A second example comes from the first homily (= the argument) on Philipians, and is best illustrated through a comparison of the rough and smooth recensions of the text. Neither recension has received a modern critical edition, and so the texts used for comparison are those of Field and Montfaucon, as being illustrative of the rough and smooth recensions respectively. Consequently, the argument, based as it is on a close reading of the text, can only be preliminary:

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<sup>78</sup> Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 60, PG 59.331.48-52.

*Rough:*

Ταῦτα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰδότες, καὶ τοσοῦτους ἔχοντες τύπους, καὶ φίλτρον τὸ πρὸς αὐτούς· ὅτι γὰρ ἐφίλει σφόδρα αὐτούς, δῆλον· *Οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω*, φησὶν, *ἰσόψυχον*, ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει· καὶ πάλιν, *Διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*· ταῦτα οὖν εἰδότες καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἑαυτοὺς παρέχωμεν ἀξίους τῶν τοιούτων ὑποδειγμάτων.<sup>79</sup>

Since we too know this, and have such great examples, and his love for them – for that he did love them greatly is clear: ‘For I have no-one of like mind,’ he says, ‘who has a genuine concern for your affairs;’ and again, ‘because I have you in my heart, both in my chains...’. So, since we too know this, let us present ourselves worthy of such models.

*Smooth:*

Τοῦτο δὲ πολὺ πρὸς αὐτοὺς φίλτρον ἔχειν ἐμφαίνει. Ὅτι γὰρ ἐφίλει σφόδρα αὐτούς, δῆλον· *Οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω*, φησὶν, *ἰσόψυχον*, ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει καὶ πάλιν, *Διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*. Ταῦτα οὖν εἰδότες καὶ ἡμεῖς, καὶ τοσοῦτους ἔχοντες τύπους ἀγάπης, ἑαυτοὺς παρέχωμεν ἀξίους τῶν τοιούτων ὑποδειγμάτων.<sup>80</sup>

He shows that he has this much love for them. For that he did love them greatly is clear: ‘For I have no-one like him,’ he says, ‘who has a genuine concern for your affairs;’ and again, ‘because I have you in my heart, both in my chains...’. So, since we too know this, and have such great examples of love, let us present ourselves worthy of such models.

From even a cursory glance at both, it is clear that the syntax of the rough recension is incomplete, and consequently more difficult to read.<sup>81</sup> However, if we dig deeper into the text and the surrounding context, a more comprehensible train of thought can be observed in the rough recension, suggesting that to be the original.

Before the passage quoted, Chrysostom has been explaining how highly Paul thought of the church at Philippi, both for the strength of their faith and for their zeal for good deeds. After the passage quoted, he turns to exhort the congregation, urging them to imitate the Philippians: they may not have a persecution and trials to endure, but they can still imitate their zeal for good deeds. This passage, then, acts as a link between the two sections, the phrase ‘since we too know this, let us...’ marking the change in focus. The

<sup>79</sup> Chrys. *In Phil. hom.* 1.192A-B (taken from the edition by Field).

<sup>80</sup> Taken from the edition by Montfaucon, reprinted by Migne, PG 62.180.29-37.

<sup>81</sup> The recent translation by Allen 2013 of this text completely masks over the ‘roughness’, and presents a neat translation which, therefore, is inaccurate.

difference between the two is where the change in focus actually comes in the text, and how the quotations about Paul's love for the Philippians fit in.<sup>82</sup>

In the smooth text, Chrysostom moves straight from speaking of the good things the Philippians had done, or would have done, in their care for Paul, to speaking of his love for them. He quotes two passages from the letter to demonstrate this, before moving into the exhortation, which initially appears to be built primarily on Paul's love for them. However, the passage that follows speaks primarily of imitating the Philippians' good deeds, not Paul's love. The syntax of the smooth text may be neat and tidy, but when unpacked, the passage is incoherent and lacks a logical sequence of thought.

In the rough text he builds his exhortation from the start of the passage on the good deeds of the Philippians: they are now the examples to follow. The section on Paul's love appears now as a digression: this comes across in the incomplete syntax of the first sentence, and the repetition of 'ταῦτα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰδότες', with which he seems to be consciously picking up the thread from where he had left off. It is then clear that the 'models' to imitate are principally the Philippians, rather than Paul. The reason why Chrysostom digresses to talk about Paul's love is not clear, but he most likely means that Paul's great love of the Philippians proves that they must be a worthy example to follow. They have the apostolic seal of approval. The train of thought may be roughly articulated and not perfectly clear, but it is at least coherent. Given the lack of clarity and poor syntax of the rough text, it is understandable that a later scribe attempted to produce a clearer and neater text that better fits the standard expected of a great orator; what he produced, however, was a text that is no longer simply unclear, but illogical.<sup>83</sup> The rough version must, therefore, be the original. The broken syntax and clumsy phrasing suggests a text that is being composed orally and on the spot: no-one stops to question incomplete

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<sup>82</sup> The Montfaucon text in fact has the paragraph break after the quotations, in contrast to Field who begins the new paragraph with the start of the passage.

<sup>83</sup> Field's apparatus criticus presents a couple of other attempts to produce a neater text.

sentences in everyday speech. It suggests quite strongly, in other words, that the text is drawn from the notes of stenographers.<sup>84</sup>

#### Circumstantial details and clear engagement with a live audience

The third mark of a text being derived from stenographers' notes is the inclusion of circumstantial details, references to things which were pertinent at the time of preaching, but which lose their relevance when addressed to subsequent audiences. Perhaps the best example of this comes from a sermon now attributed to Severian of Gabala, but nonetheless useful as an example. Halfway through the sermon, the text suddenly reads: παιδὸς δὲ μικροῦ ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ θλιβέντος εἶπεν ('With a small child in the crowd being in distress, he said').<sup>85</sup> There then follows a short passage on how the devil loves to distract people from hearing the Word of God, before resuming where he had left off. The remark about the child is clearly a comment by a stenographer to explain the sudden change of topic: in the middle of preaching, a child perhaps started crying or making some sort of disturbance in the congregation, causing the preacher to stop in mid-flow, and he proceeded to make good use of the interruption to draw a spiritual lesson. Likewise the ending of the sermon appears rather abrupt, and the stenographer has added another explanatory note, that he finished because some men were in distress. If a sermon is going to be revised and edited before publication, such comments as these would be the first to be removed, as they are irrelevant for subsequent audiences.

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<sup>84</sup> A number of studies have shown similar phenomena in other Chrysostom texts: see above, n. 54.

<sup>85</sup> Sever. *In illud: Quando ipsi subiciet omnia*, p. 159.9. See also Goodall 1979, 69-70, for the full passage and discussion.

Such comments by the stenographers are extremely rare, but nonetheless, it is possible to discern the marks of a live delivery in a number of sermons. A famous example is in Chrysostom's fourth sermon on Genesis:

Ἄλλὰ γὰρ διανάστητε, καὶ τὴν ῥαθυμίαν ἀπόθεσθε. Τί τοῦτο; Περὶ Γραφῶν ὑμῖν διηγούμεθα, ὑμεῖς δὲ, τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀποστήσαντες ἡμῶν, πρὸς τὰς λαμπάδας καὶ τὸν τὰς λαμπάδας ἄπτοντα μετεστήσατε. Καὶ πόσης τοῦτο ῥαθυμίας, ἡμᾶς ἀφέντας, τούτῳ προσέχειν;

But really, wake up! Get rid of this idleness! What is this? We are explaining the scriptures to you, but you turn your eyes away from us and instead fix them on the lamps and the lamp-lighter. Of what great idleness is this, that you forget us and pay attention to them?<sup>86</sup>

A call to pay attention need not in itself constitute a mark of spontaneity: a writer, imitating the homiletic genre, could easily insert such an imperative to spur the reader on. What is interesting here is the reference to the lamps and the lamp-lighter: although Chrysostom goes on to make much use of them as an analogy of what he is doing in preaching, nonetheless the passage has such a sense of immediacy, that it seems difficult to imagine that this could all have been contrived artificially for a published sermon. Furthermore, since it is a distraction from the main thread of the sermon, and since it is very much concerned with the particular situation when the sermon was being preached, it is most likely that an editor wishing to make even minor revisions to prepare the text for a different audience, would not leave such a passage in the final text. The passage does not speak to a reading audience, but to a live congregation, with a lamp-lighter wandering around putting the lights on and causing some distraction from the preacher. It is therefore again strongly suggestive that the text as a whole is largely a transcript of a live sermon. We could further add that there are no examples from antiquity of orators artificially inserting such interjections to make a worked-up speech sound like one as it was delivered.

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<sup>86</sup> Chrys. *In Gen. serm.* 4.198-202.

Their presence in the text of Chrysostom's sermons therefore points to them being transcripts of an actual delivery.

But care needs to be taken. We need to beware of reading too much into marks of spontaneity. It was seen when discussing sermons composed primarily for a reading audience that spontaneous remarks could be included artificially to give the text the air of orality.<sup>87</sup> Every supposed mark of spontaneity needs to be carefully considered to assess whether or not it really is a genuine mark of orality. In many cases, there will be no easy way of knowing: simple references to the audience and the language of speaking and hearing may belong to either preached or written homily. Other passages, such as references to applause or questions from the congregation, may easily be inserted. References to applause, for example, could have a double effect: it first serves to underline the importance of the point that he has been making, in a similar way to how background music in a film emphasises the most dramatic parts of the narrative; secondly, it has a certain rhetorical force, in that if the reader finds himself caught up in the imaginary applause, he will then find himself chastened by the rejoinder which always follows not simply to applaud but to obey. This need not necessarily be the case; but close analysis of a passage and how it fits into the broader rhetoric of the text is necessary, before we can use it as evidence of spontaneity.

The presence of one of these three elements – a rough recension, mistakes/poor style, circumstantial details – is not necessarily proof that the text under consideration is a transcript of a live delivery, just as the absence of them does not necessarily prove the converse. However, they are highly suggestive, and given that we know transcripts were taken and were in circulation, it seems very likely that those which bear the marks of a live delivery are in fact transcripts drawn from stenographers' notes.

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<sup>87</sup> For genuine and simulated extemporaneous marks in Greek oratory, see Dorjahn 1957.

## CONCLUSION

What I hope to have done in this chapter is to demonstrate the wide variety of different influences which had the potential to shape the sermon texts we have today. At every stage of its journey from preacher's mouth to modern printed edition, a sermon text was being presented to a different audience, and with each new audience came the opportunity to revise and edit the text to address that new audience. If we wish to study late-antique preaching, as it originally happened during the liturgy, we must do our best to sift our way back through these various influences on our texts in order to come as close as we possibly can to the original delivery. Although some distance will always remain between us and the original delivery, we need not despair as much as some textual scholars have done. Doubts will always remain, but sermons can still tell us much about late-antique preaching. On the other hand, historians need to pay more attention to the journey a sermon has undertaken to reach us today, rather than simply assuming that the texts we have give us a clear view into the daily preaching of late antiquity. Whilst all sermon-texts can tell us something, if carefully studied, about late-antique preaching, those texts which most appear to be transcripts of actual deliveries – those texts which have been least influenced by the needs and desires of subsequent audiences – should form the basis of any study of late-antique preaching.

With this in mind, the texts which form the basis of this thesis meet the following criteria. First, given that it is not always clear how closely a sermon text relates to the sermon as originally preached, it was important to choose those texts which did appear to preserve a transcript of a live delivery. As we are seeking to contribute to scholarship on social history, it is important that as far as possible we use sermons which bear all the marks discussed above of live delivery, rather than those which were written or edited for

the literate élite. Secondly, studies in social and cultural history are generally better served by evidence that is more ‘everyday’ than exceptional, where people can be observed going about their normal, daily business rather than in attendance on special occasions. This would rule out the numerous sermons delivered for the feast days of the church or at significant moments of history, and leaves us largely with the exegetical sermons. Of these, those on the Pauline epistles would be more desirable, given his obvious love for the apostle, and who according to Chrysostom was read at least ‘twice a week’.<sup>88</sup> For this reason, sermons from his exegetical series, and especially the Pauline series, will form the basis of this study.

In addition, however, closer attention will be paid to the two short series on Titus and Philemon. To begin with, it is important that we focus in on a small selection of sermons to avoid the temptations that inevitably exists with such a large corpus of cherry-picking those particular passages which support the argument, and overlooking many examples which point in a different direction. A dozen examples of something may seem a lot, but in a corpus of 800 they could just as much be construed as exceptions rather than the norm. These two series are short enough (six and three sermons respectively) to facilitate a close reading of the text. Secondly, it is important that the text to be studied has received a scientific critical edition to ensure reliability. As we have seen, this limits our options considerably. No critical editions of any of the Pauline homilies have been published, and only the homilies on Titus and Philemon have received any critical attention in the form of Goodall’s prolegomena to an anticipated edition (which never in the end materialised). Though not as comprehensive as a full edition would be, it remains

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<sup>88</sup> καθ’ ἐκάστην τὴν ἑβδομάδα δίς, Chrys. *In Rom. hom.* 1.425A. See also pp. 76-7.

an important study of the manuscript tradition and the quality of the text, with useful discussions of the more problematic passages.<sup>89</sup>

There is little one can say by way of introduction to these texts.<sup>90</sup> The two short sermon series, consisting of six and three sermons respectively, have received minimal scholarly attention.<sup>91</sup> It is unclear where and when they were preached,<sup>92</sup> and may have been preached more than once.<sup>93</sup> They are in many ways unremarkable sermons, but therefore present us with an opportunity to view this exceptional preacher performing his regular duty of delivering a sermon to the Antiochene or Constantinopolitan faithful. They were preserved as good examples of what typical, everyday preaching aimed to be. They afford, therefore, a unique window onto the sermons delivered regularly in churches throughout the Eastern Roman Empire in late antiquity.

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<sup>89</sup> A critical edition of the Titus homilies was produced by Maria Konstantinidou as part of a DPhil thesis at Oxford in 2006, but remains unpublished. The thesis was consulted during the course of this research, but due to the difficulty of access, the text of Field was used as the base text throughout. Another edition was produced, also as part of an unpublished thesis for the Université de Strasbourg, by Wendy Fick in 1992.

<sup>90</sup> For the 'live' quality of these sermons, see Goodall 1979, 73-8.

<sup>91</sup> Apart from Goodall's study of the textual tradition, Hübenthal 2008 and Decock 2010 present brief treatments as part of broader studies on the reception of Titus and Philemon respectively. The series on Philemon received some attention in the 1990s in a debate between Allen Callahan and Margaret Mitchell concerning whether the traditional interpretation of Onesimus as Philemon's runaway slave was invented by Chrysostom: see Callahan 1993; Mitchell 1995; Callahan 1995.

<sup>92</sup> Mayer 2005a, 323-4, 377-8, 408-9, 422-4, finds in them no clear indications of provenance.

<sup>93</sup> See below, pp. 266-71.

PART 2

*The Nature of the Sermon*

## CHAPTER 3

### *Preaching and the School*

#### INTRODUCTION: THE SCHOLASTIC NATURE OF PREACHING

In order to understand what kind of activity regular preaching was, it is necessary to assess where it best fits in the social world of late antiquity. What framework from the ancient world will best enable us to appreciate what preachers thought they were doing, and how their congregations responded to them? Over the course of these four chapters we will be answering this question; in this chapter we begin by making the case that when he preached his exegetical homilies, Chrysostom was performing a scholastic activity, and that he to a certain extent resembled a teacher in a classroom. It is not my intention to argue that there was a deliberate or direct appropriation of techniques from any one pedagogical tradition, but rather that the parallels which can be observed between Chrysostom's activity as preacher and the activity of teachers in a variety of classroom contexts suggest that preaching was viewed as a scholastic enterprise. This was not all that it was, and we will see further contexts in subsequent chapters; but the scholastic nature of preaching will be our focus in the present chapter.

This is an important point to make because the scholastic nature of preaching has not always been fully appreciated. Sermons have often been viewed through the lens of public oratory, and therefore analysed according to the different rhetorical genres. This is, of course, not an unreasonable parallel to make: as Jaclyn Maxwell demonstrates, the

popularity of a preacher such as Chrysostom reflected the broader popularity for public speaking in late-antique society.<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom was a student of no less than the famous orator Libanius,<sup>2</sup> and a number of his sermons clearly do follow the conventions set for different rhetorical genres. The sermons *Against the Jews* fall into a long tradition of speeches of invective against individuals or groups.<sup>3</sup> The sermons *In praise of Saint Paul* are composed as encomia on the saint, and follow the conventions of that genre.<sup>4</sup> His speech *On his return* can be understood as an epibaterium, a speech of arrival: the third- or fourth-century treatise attributed to the rhetorician Menander, *On Epideictic Speeches*, emphasised the importance of expressing joy and enthusiasm to be back in such speeches, a requirement more than adequately met by Chrysostom.<sup>5</sup> Further examples could be adduced, and a number of studies over the course of the past century have explored the undeniable influence that Greek rhetoric had on him as a preacher.<sup>6</sup>

However, when we come particularly to Chrysostom's exegetical sermons – the focus of this thesis – such a rhetorical analysis fails to satisfactorily explain what is going on. This has been amply demonstrated by the difficulties that have met several scholars' attempts at neat classification. The most comprehensive attempt at this was undertaken by Alexandre Olivar, who suggests two different schemes of classification: one based on 'form', one on 'subject'.<sup>7</sup> Both schemes end up appearing somewhat artificial, since, as Olivar himself points out, few sermons in fact fit into just one of the categories outlined in either scheme. For example, the sermon *On blessed Philogonius* begins as an encomium

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<sup>1</sup> Maxwell 2006, 11-41.

<sup>2</sup> For Libanius' influence on Chrysostom, see Hunter 1988 and Fabricius 1962.

<sup>3</sup> On the rhetorical form of these sermons, see Wilken 1983, 116-23. Cf. e.g. Isocrates' *Against the Sophists* or Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

<sup>4</sup> On these less well-known texts, see Mitchell 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Men. Rh. 2.3

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Ameringer 1921; Hubbell 1924; Burns 1930; Kennedy 1983, 180-6.

<sup>7</sup> Olivar 1991, 511-4. Under 'la forma' are six categories: proclamatory, instructive, polemical, paraenetic, censuring and panegyric. Under 'la materia' are two categories, 'la exposición exegética' and 'el sermón temático', which are further subdivided: the first into homilies which form a series and those which are independent; the latter into catecheses, sermons connected to the liturgical year, panegyrics, exhortations, circumstantial sermons, and others.

on the saint, moves into a celebration of the approaching festival of Christmas and concludes with an exhortation to purity before approaching the Eucharist. Under Olivar's second scheme, Chrysostom moves through three different categories. Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, in their introduction to Chrysostom, rightly conclude that 'in many instances ... the labels traditionally used are more convenient than accurate.'<sup>8</sup> Frances Young went so far as to say that 'for the modern reader, the most disturbing aspect of Chrysostom's sermons is their chaotic form.'<sup>9</sup>

This raises the question whether it is useful to read many of these sermons in terms of set rhetorical genres at all. The difficulty in assigning individual sermons to particular genres suggests that to analyse them in this way is to misunderstand the very nature of the text. We need another framework from the ancient world that would better explain their 'chaotic form'. The lack of structure would be less 'disturbing', I suggest, if we read particularly his exegetical sermons not primarily as formal works of oratory, but rather as the more fluid form of a classroom lecture. In other words, his sermons – which, as we saw in the previous chapter, very often appear to exist as transcripts of a live delivery – are better understood not as public speeches, with a clear structure and obeying the set conventions of classical rhetoric, but rather as the more informal and partly extemporaneous reflections of a teacher before a classroom of students, and meeting a variety of perceived pastoral and liturgical needs of the moment. Young does in fact go on to say that 'we can hardly regard these exegetical collections as purely literary creations divorced from Chrysostom's regular preaching task.'<sup>10</sup> This is not to deny that there are important and obvious differences between sermons and lectures.<sup>11</sup> Sermons were

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<sup>8</sup> Mayer and Allen 2000, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Young 1983, 217. Cf. Allen and Mayer 2000, 30. Barkhuizen 1995 argues that the fiftieth homily on Matthew has a thematic unity, but this does not negate the sense that these sermons have a rather chaotic structure.

<sup>10</sup> Young 1983, 218.

<sup>11</sup> See also Clarke 1971, 123-4.

delivered as part of a corporate act of worship, something which will be explored in Chapter 6, and, it is generally believed,<sup>12</sup> before much larger and more socially mixed audiences. Despite these differences, however, it is the argument of this chapter that classroom teaching provides a framework with greater explanatory power for the activity of regular preaching than public oratory.

The analogy with the school is one that Chrysostom himself frequently makes. ‘If a child went to school every day, and then learnt nothing more, would we be satisfied with the excuse that he went there every day? Would we not in fact find in this the greatest cause of complaint, that though he went there every day, he did this to no purpose? Let us think in this way for ourselves too...’<sup>13</sup> For Chrysostom, coming to church was akin to going to school: members of the congregation came to learn lessons, and if they went home without having done so, their time at church had been in vain. Throughout Chrysostom refers to himself and other priests as διδάσκαλοι, and the church itself he calls, among other things, an ‘academy of philosophy and a school of the soul’ (φιλοσοφίας διδασκαλείον, καὶ ψυχῆς παιδευτήριον).<sup>14</sup> As such it is a place of higher education, and he expresses annoyance at having to continually provide elementary education like a grammarian (γραμματιστής).<sup>15</sup> Commenting on a passage from the letter to Titus concerning slaves, he argues that little in the way of moral behaviour can be expected from slaves, given that even freeborn men, with all the advantages of parents, a

<sup>12</sup> Though see pp. 213-31 below for discussion of the arguments.

<sup>13</sup> Εἰ καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν τὸ παιδίον εἰς διδασκαλείον βαδίζει, εἶτα μηδὲν μανθάνει πλέον, ἄρα ἀρκέσει εἰς ἀπολογία ἡμῖν τὸ καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐκεῖ βαδίζειν αὐτό; οὐκ αὐτὸ μὲν οὖν τοῦτο μέγιστον ποιησόμεθα ἔγκλημα, ὅτι καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἐκεῖ βαδίζον, μάτην τοῦτο ποιεῖ; Τοῦτο δὴ καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν λογιζόμεθα.... Chrys. *De stat.* 5, PG 49.79.31-7. Cf. *In Gen. hom.* 11, PG 53.94.19-46; and *In Gen. hom.* 32, PG 53.293.19-28. For God as a father, sending his children to the schoolmasters of trials and tribulations, see, e.g., *De stat.* 16, PG 49.168.16-29.

<sup>14</sup> *In 2 Cor. hom.* 15.550D. A very common image. See also *In Act. apost. hom.* 13. PG 60.111.15-7; *Mut. nom. hom.* 4, PG 51.145.31-4; *Vid. elig.*, PG 51.330.46-52; *Pecc. frat. non evulg.*, PG 51.353.30-1; *Exp. in ps.* 46, PG 55.208.22; *In Matt. hom.* 17.232D; *In Eph. hom.* 21.160A. Asterius of Amasea explains to his congregation that the martyr festivals are ‘public schools of our souls’ (‘κοινὰ παιδαγωγεία τῶν ψυχῶν’) where they can imitate the martyrs and learn from the teachers, *Hom.* 3.1.2.

<sup>15</sup> Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 9.391F. Cf. *In Heb. hom.* 9.92C.

παιδαγωγός, a τροφεύς and a διδάσκαλος to guide them, still fail to lead upright lives; the Church, however, can take their place and teach slaves to live morally, so that in their transformed lives they would be an even greater witness to the power of the Church's teaching.<sup>16</sup> In saying this, Chrysostom therefore suggests that he sees the Church as performing a similar function to the various teachers a child will encounter at different stages of his education.

It is the purpose of this chapter to explore the consequences of the Church being seen as a school for how we read and understand Chrysostom's preaching. If he understood his role as being similar to that of a schoolmaster, what light does this shed on how he undertakes his preaching task and in particular how he relates to his congregation? The scholastic nature of preaching has already been explored to a limited extent in previous scholarship. For example, over a decade ago, Alistair Stewart-Sykes argued that the origins of Christian preaching lay in a development of the homily from prophecy to preaching, from examination of prophecies given by individuals under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to examination of scripture. This process he terms 'scholasticization' as the looser patterns of prophecy gave way to 'systematic communication through the reading and interpretation of Scripture in part under the influence of preaching in the synagogue and in part as the result of the models available for delivery and discussion within the schools, as the churches formed themselves along these essentially scholastic lines.'<sup>17</sup> Martin Clarke similarly argues for the scholastic nature of Christian gatherings: 'An outsider used, let us say, to the readings from Chrysippus and the moral exhortations of a Stoic teacher would, if he found his way to a Christian meeting, recognize a certain similarity in the method, if not in the content of the teaching.'<sup>18</sup> In particular, Clarke draws attention to the following features of Christianity as echoing practice in the philosophical

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<sup>16</sup> *In Tit. hom.* 4.753B-D

<sup>17</sup> Stewart-Sykes 2001, 271.

<sup>18</sup> Clarke 1971, 123.

schools: the use of the term φιλοσοφία, the emphasis on healing spiritual diseases,<sup>19</sup> the probationary period before full admittance (the catechumenate), and the succession of bishops, who taught from a θρόνος<sup>20</sup> or καθέδρα.<sup>21</sup> For both Clarke and Stewart-Sykes, the practice of Christian preaching was influenced by – or at least could find a parallel in – the pedagogical activities of the Greco-Roman school.

More detailed work on the influence of the ancient school on Christian preaching has been done on the specific issue of exegetical method. Here Frances Young's work is of most importance: in her wide-ranging study of patristic exegesis, she argues that the ways in which the Church Fathers used and interpreted biblical texts mirrors the exegetical techniques employed in the classical *paideia*. One of her key contributions that is particularly relevant for this study is that the distinction between Antiochene and Alexandrian exegesis is not so much one of historical/literal vs. allegorical exegesis, as is often maintained, but rather that the Antiochenes stressed the narrative coherence of a text when seeking to draw meaning out of it, whilst the Alexandrians treated individual words and phrases as symbols or tokens of other realities, paying less attention to the coherence of the text as a whole.<sup>22</sup> Although she maintains that the differences between the two approaches are not as marked as is generally believed, she does suggest that the differences can be paralleled in the different exegetical techniques employed by the rhetorical and philosophical schools (the Antiochenes reflecting the former, the Alexandrians the latter).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, she goes so far as to say that 'the early church was more like a school

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<sup>19</sup> On which, see below, chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g. Lib. *Ep.* 819.4 and Chrys. *In Act. apost. hom.* 8, PG 60.76.3.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g. SIG 845 and Bas. *Ep.* 188.1. As Clarke 1971, 120, points out, still today we speak of an episcopal *throne* in a *cathedral* in an ecclesiastical setting, and in the universities there are still (metaphorically) professorial chairs.

<sup>22</sup> The first she refers to as 'ikonik' the second as 'symbolic'. See especially Young 1997, 161-213: 'Ikonik exegesis, I suggest, implies some kind of genuine representation, by contrast with symbolic exegesis where the symbols are signs and tokens,' p. 184.

<sup>23</sup> Other important studies of Chrysostom's exegesis include Amirav 2003 and Mitchell 2000.

than a religion in the social world of antiquity.<sup>24</sup> This chapter will investigate further this scholastic dimension of preaching, though we will begin to see here and more fully in subsequent chapters, that there were ways in which it was very unlike a school as well.

David Rylaarsdam's recent monograph also demonstrated the importance of classical education as a context for understanding Chrysostom's preaching. Rylaarsdam persuasively argues for the concept of adaptability as being central to both Chrysostom's theology and pedagogy. Just as God adapts himself by various means to weak and finite humans in order to draw them back to himself, so Chrysostom as a teacher employs the same techniques of adaptability in his efforts to lead his congregation closer to God. This concept of adaptability is one that Rylaarsdam discovers also to be key throughout much of classical *paideia*. Rhetoricians emphasised the importance of adapting one's speech to the needs and capacities of a varied audience, a theme taken up by philosophers in their efforts to lead people to the truth.<sup>25</sup> In his final chapter, considering Chrysostom's homiletic technique, Rylaarsdam discusses two core components of his preaching which display in practice his pedagogical use of adaptability, and which can be paralleled in earlier rhetoricians and philosophers: namely, creating images for his audience to behold in their minds, and varying his content, ethical standards and tone to suit the audience and the occasion, that they can all make progress in the Christian life.<sup>26</sup> Some of his arguments we will consider in greater detail below, but in general the approach of all these studies of setting preaching within the context of classical teaching is one that this chapter seeks to pursue and develop further.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, we will make the case that Chrysostom's exegetical homilies are better understood as records of an essentially scholastic activity, rather than as works of oratory. Building on the connections the above

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<sup>24</sup> Young 1997, 244.

<sup>25</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014, 18-22.

<sup>26</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014, 228-82.

studies have already made between Christian preaching and the classroom, we will explore the extent to which Chrysostom's activity as preacher reflected the activity of teachers in a variety of educational settings. This is done particularly through reflections on the curriculum Chrysostom followed and the typical structure of the exegetical sermon: in both regards it will be seen that how he undertook the activity of preaching to a large degree mirrored how διδάσκαλοι in the classroom undertook their teaching.<sup>27</sup>

Having then further established the importance of schoolroom teaching as a context within which to understand Chrysostom's preaching, in the second part of the chapter we turn to consider what implications this has for reconstructing the relationship between Chrysostom and his congregations. It will be seen that teachers in antiquity typically had a reputation for being hard taskmasters, and this is in many ways reflected in Chrysostom's own approach of critiquing his congregations in often harsh terms. Similarly, the concluding exhortations of his sermons often make use of the genres of protreptic and diatribe, genres used by both popular philosophical preachers as well as in more informal classroom lectures: for both of these genres harsh and strident language was an essential feature. In each of these ways, then, we can begin to understand his use of condemnatory language through situating it within the historical context of classical pedagogy. That said, in this chapter we will only begin to explain this quality of his preaching. It will become increasingly clear that arousing fear in his congregation seems to be an important part of Chrysostom's homiletic technique, and this will require further explanation than the pedagogical context alone can provide.

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<sup>27</sup> It is worth mentioning that Jewish rabbis were engaged in a similar activity of preaching and expounding texts. Whilst they certainly influenced the practice of early Christians, it is unclear how much influence they exercised on Christians in the fourth century. In any case, parallels with them will be considered in Chapter 6.

THE SERMON AND THE SCHOOL

*The Curriculum*

Literary study formed a central part of a child's education in late antiquity.<sup>28</sup> Typically, he would begin around the age of 7 or 8 with basic literacy and numeracy in the school of the grammarian.<sup>29</sup> From here, at around 11 or 12, they would then move on to the so-called ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, the 'liberal arts', consisting traditionally of grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy.<sup>30</sup> The three literary branches, however, were held in higher esteem, so much so that by the time of late antiquity the sciences appear to have dropped off the curriculum altogether, to be pursued only in specialist schools later in life.<sup>31</sup> The main focus of the grammarian's classes was to provide his students with a thorough knowledge of the classics, particularly Homer, Euripides, Menander and Demosthenes, although at this stage these works were often taught only through selected excerpts.<sup>32</sup> At around age 15 they could begin more specialist study, with most attending the school of the rhetorician: here, through practice exercises and further study of the classics, the ultimate goal was the production of their own rhetorical compositions.<sup>33</sup> Many attended also the school of a philosopher, which by late antiquity was also focussed on the explication of texts, this time key philosophical works: in the Neoplatonist schools of late

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<sup>28</sup> Marrou 1956 remains a key reference work for the subject. See also Bonner 1977; Clarke 1971; Morgan 1998; Criboire 2001, 2007; and most recently Bloomer (ed.), 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Marrou 1956, 142-59; Watts 2012, 469. See also Kaster 1988 for the place of the grammarian in wider society in late antiquity.

<sup>30</sup> Marrou 1956, 176-7; Clarke 1971, 2, 11-54; Morgan 1998, 33-9.

<sup>31</sup> Marrou 1956, 183: 'In the end literature practically eliminated mathematics from the secondary-school syllabus.'

<sup>32</sup> Marrou 1956, 161-4; Morgan 1998, 100-19.

<sup>33</sup> Marrou 1956, 194-205, 284-7; Clarke 1971, 28-45.

antiquity, a set course of twelve of Plato's dialogues was prescribed.<sup>34</sup> There was no requirement to choose either the rhetorician or the philosopher: Socrates informs us that Chrysostom studied rhetoric under Libanius and attended the lectures of the otherwise unknown philosopher Andragathius.<sup>35</sup>

Like teaching in other contexts, Christian preaching, and the Jewish preaching out of which it originally developed, was at its heart an exposition of the tradition's key texts. Furthermore, what survives of Chrysostom's sermons would suggest that he focussed on the exposition of a smaller canon of texts within the Bible, in a similar way to a rhetorician or philosopher expounding only those works considered the most important. The vast majority of the exegetical sermons which survive do so in series working sequentially through particular books of scripture. These series are not entirely dissimilar to the series of lectures commenting on philosophical texts, with the exception that in the lectures there is no concluding moral exhortation.<sup>36</sup> Although we cannot conclude too much from only what has managed to survive the later textual tradition, nonetheless Chrysostom's surviving series do appear to represent something of a key curriculum of scriptural texts. There are two series on Genesis, containing key passages on the Creation, the Fall and the patriarchs of Israel; two on the Gospels, narrating the incarnation, teaching, passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ; one on the Acts of the Apostles, detailing the foundations of the Church; and a complete set of series on the Pauline epistles, the apostle Paul being, in

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<sup>34</sup> It is unclear to what extent this curriculum was followed in practice, although there is a striking resemblance between the texts prescribed and those which have surviving commentaries. Lamberton 2001, 442-5, 452-3. For the development of exegesis as a core component of philosophical teaching, see Hadot 1987b; Sedley 1989; Hoffmann 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Socr. *h.e.* 6.3.1. Unlike other Church Fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzus, who travelled around the eastern Mediterranean until nearly 30 in pursuit of further study (McGuckin 2001, 35-83), Chrysostom did not stay with these teachers for long: according to Palladius at the age of 18 he 'rebelled against the sophist of the empty words' (ἀφηνίασεν τοῦ σοφιστοῦ τῶν λεξυδρίων, Pall. *V. Chrys.* 5.6-7. – on the genitive singular reading, see Malingrey's note in his edition), attaching himself instead to the deposed bishop Meletius. See Kelly 1995, 5-8, 16. Less popular options included the schools of law and medicine. Marrou 1956, 186-93, 289-91; Clarke 1971, 109-18.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. Westerink 1976-7.

Chrysostom's view, the 'teacher of the world' (ὁ διδάσκαλος τῆς οἰκουμένης).<sup>37</sup> These texts seem to have formed for Chrysostom something of a core curriculum to teach the key doctrines of the Christian philosophy. Whether such a curriculum was his own or another's creation is impossible to determine, given the relative paucity of surviving sermons from preachers before Chrysostom.

This argument does depend, however, on these sermon series reflecting series which were actually preached as such. Recent scholarship has argued the contrary, that these series were only put together for publication.<sup>38</sup> These arguments are not as compelling or as conclusive as has been suggested, but to explain fully the reasons for maintaining that they do reflect actual sermon series which were preached would be too much of a distraction from the main arguments of this chapter, and so they have been set out in an appendix at the end of the thesis.

Before beginning their series of expositions of one of the key texts of the curriculum, teachers would discuss some preliminary questions, by way of introduction to the text. A number of introductions survive, often entitled simply as something like τὰ πρὸ τῆς (συν)ἀναγνώσεως τῆς Πολιτείας (literally, 'the things before the reading together of the *Republic*').<sup>39</sup> Porphyry's *Isagoge*, his introduction to Aristotle's *Categories* would be a classic example of such a work, but we also have a number of other introductions on a range of texts from Homer and Vergil, through Demosthenes and Thucydides, to Plato and Aristotle.<sup>40</sup> From Origen onwards we also have introductions to books of the Christian scriptures, and many of Chrysostom's sermon series too are preceded by such introductory texts.<sup>41</sup> His introductions can take one of the following forms: a separate hypothesis which

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<sup>37</sup> See for a selection of references Mitchell 2000, 75.

<sup>38</sup> Allen and Mayer 1994, 1995a, 1995b.

<sup>39</sup> Mansfeld 1994, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Mansfeld 1994, 1-9, Van Rossum-Steenbeek 1998, and Heath 2004, 242-3.

<sup>41</sup> The only New Testament series not to contain any form of introduction is that on 1 Thessalonians.

is homiletic in form;<sup>42</sup> a separate hypothesis which is not homiletic in form;<sup>43</sup> or a brief introduction within the first sermon before the exegesis begins.<sup>44</sup> Questions have been raised concerning the authenticity of these texts, but that at least some of these introductions were actually preached – rather than being a later editorial addition – is suggested by the introduction to John’s Gospel, which makes reference to the ‘next service’ (τῆς συνάξεως τῆς μελλούσης), and in the second sermon he continues where he left off.<sup>45</sup>

The form that these introductions took differed depending on the context. Some consist of nothing more than a summary of the contents.<sup>46</sup> Marcellinus in around the sixth century considered biography the most important way of introducing a text: ‘One must first speak of the man’s family and life: for right-minded men must examine these things before his words.’<sup>47</sup> Alongside a re-telling of the story, hypotheses to tragedies and comedies often included background information to the characters and plot, and less frequently comparisons with how the three main tragedians treat the same tale, details on the performance of the play, and historical data regarding its original production.<sup>48</sup> According to Jaap Mansfeld, Neoplatonist hypotheses considered seven principal questions: (1) the theme, aim or purpose of the work; (2) its place within the sequence of texts to be read; (3) its usefulness; (4) the reason for its title; (5) its authenticity; (6) its

<sup>42</sup> E.g. the first homilies in the series on Matthew, John, Romans and Philippians and 2 Thessalonians. These texts are sermon length, move into an ethical section towards the end and close with the customary doxology.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. the hypotheses to the series on 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Philemon and Hebrews. These introductions are relatively short and lack a concluding prayer or doxology.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. the first sermons on Acts, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 2 Timothy and Titus.

<sup>45</sup> Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 1, PG 59.28.3-4. (see also 28.40-1). The Morel edition (1636-1642) labelled the first sermon as the hypothesis, and began numeration from the following sermon. The main cause for concern appears to have been the lack of exegesis, which is not sufficient reason to doubt its authenticity as a preached sermon: see the note by Montfaucon in the preface to his edition (§I.1). See also Allen 2013, pp. xv-xvi, for the status of the *argumentum* as the first sermon of the series on Philippians. On the authenticity of Chrysostom’s hypotheses, see Bady 2010, 154.

<sup>46</sup> See, e.g., Van Rossum-Steenbeek 1998, 53-84, for a survey of introductions to Homer and Callimachus.

<sup>47</sup> ἀναγκαῖον δὲ πρῶτον εἰπεῖν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ τὸ γένος καὶ τὸν βίον· πρὸ γὰρ τῶν λόγων ταῦτα ἐξεταστέον τοῖς φρονουσί καλῶς. Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 1. Cited by Heath 2004, 243. On the role of biography in introductions to texts, see also Mansfeld 1994, 54-5, 108-13, 179-91.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed survey, see Van Rossum-Steenbeek 1998, 1-52.

division into chapters; and (7) with which part of philosophy the work was concerned.<sup>49</sup> Apart from the final two, each of these questions is considered at some point by Chrysostom in his New Testament hypotheses;<sup>50</sup> but he is most consistently interested in setting forth the theme or purpose of the work, which is often tied up with a *bios* of the author and what Mansfeld refers to as the *mise en scène*, the setting and background to the text.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, we cannot say definitively that Chrysostom was employing an isagogical scheme in use in any one particular school context, but the broader practice of discussing some preliminary questions followed by a series of expositions working sequentially through key books of scripture, is a practice that has clear scholastic parallels.

### *The Structure of the Sermon*

As we have seen, the central feature of many a classroom was the exegesis of a classic text. Some of this was perhaps done by the students themselves: Epictetus, for instance, in a passage referred to above, tells his students to ‘not only expound the books’ (μὴ μόνον ἐξηγοῦ τὰ βιβλία) but produce their own as evidence of their progress.<sup>52</sup> In any case, most of the exegesis was carried out by the teacher himself: it is to him that the students have come principally to listen, as demonstrated by Thaumasius’ irritation at Porphyry’s continued interruptions during one of Plotinus’ classes. He wanted to hear the teacher get on with lecturing ‘on books’ (εἰς βιβλία) rather than answering Porphyry’s incessant questions.<sup>53</sup> In the early fifth century, Proclus became dissatisfied with his teachers

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<sup>49</sup> Mansfeld 1994, 10-1. See also Hadot 1987a, 101.

<sup>50</sup> The chronology of Paul’s letters (2): e.g. Chrys. *In Rom. hom.* 1.426C-427D and *In Col. hom.* 1.322B-323B. The usefulness of the text (3): e.g. *In Philmn. hom. arg.* 772C-774B. The reason for the title ‘Gospel’ (4): *In Matt. hom.* 1.4A-5A. Authenticity in relation to the differences between the Gospel narratives (5): *In Matt. hom.* 1.5B-6B.

<sup>51</sup> Mansfeld 1994, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Epict. 1.4.15, with Hijmans 1959, 45.

<sup>53</sup> Porph. *Plot.* 13. My interpretation of this passage follows that of Lim 1993.

because ‘he felt that they were not being faithful in their exegesis to the philosopher’s intention.’<sup>54</sup> For grammarians and rhetoricians too, ‘guided reading of the classics was an important part’ of the classroom activity.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Quintilian stated the grammarian’s principal tasks being the ‘knowledge of speaking correctly’ (*recte loquendi scientiam*) and the ‘explication of the poets’ (*poetarum enarrationem*).<sup>56</sup> Some of the lectures that these teachers provided have been preserved in the form of scholia or commentaries, such as Servius’ commentary on Vergil,<sup>57</sup> Menander’s on Demosthenes<sup>58</sup> or the many Neoplatonist commentaries taken down ἀπὸ φωνῆς, literally ‘from the voice’ of the philosopher.<sup>59</sup>

The most detailed account of the theory of exegesis was set out principally by Quintilian, with reference primarily to the grammatical and rhetorical schools.<sup>60</sup> A text was studied under two main headings: τὸ μεθοδικόν and τὸ ἱστορικόν. The former concerned lexical analysis, and began with διόρθωσις (roughly equivalent to our concept of textual criticism) and ἀνάγνωσις (the correct enunciation and expression of the text), both relating to the establishment of the correct text. From here followed the ἐξήγησις proper of the text, involving the explanation of difficult words, tracing etymologies and paying attention to style and use of rhetorical devices – the latter being particularly important for preparing students for creating their own rhetorical compositions. Exegesis continued by paying attention to τὸ ἱστορικόν, not ‘history’ in the modern sense of historicity, but rather an explanation of background details alluded to in the text, be they myths, legends or

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<sup>54</sup> ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ οὐδέτι ἀξίως τῆς τοῦ φιλοσόφου διανοίας φέρεσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεσιν. Marin. *Procl.* 10.

<sup>55</sup> Heath 2004, 239-44.

<sup>56</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.4.2. Cf. Kaster 1988, 11.

<sup>57</sup> See Kaster 1988, 169-97.

<sup>58</sup> See Heath 2004.

<sup>59</sup> On the use of this phrase, see Richard 1950.

<sup>60</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.4-9. For this paragraph see Young 1997, 76-81 and the bibliographic references in her footnotes.

historical events.<sup>61</sup> Finally, literary criticism was, in the words of Young, ‘audience-oriented’, looking for the effect the text had on its audience, particularly the moral lessons that the text was supposed to have conveyed: ‘Literature was expected to be morally edificatory, and the exercise of moral judgement, or *krisis*, became an important aspect of the school tradition.’<sup>62</sup>

As Young has already amply demonstrated, this way of reading and interpreting texts is fundamental to all patristic exegesis. However, as Young notes almost in passing, Chrysostom ‘tends not to burden his congregation with too much *methodike*,’ focussing instead more on τὸ ἱστορικόν in order to discern in the narrative of the text as a whole the moral lesson for his congregation.<sup>63</sup> This is in stark contrast to the grammarians and rhetoricians of late antiquity, who in practice seem often more interested in τὸ μεθοδικόν. Robert Kaster notes that in Servius’ commentary on the *Aeneid*, two thirds of the comments concern points of language, concluding that this ‘disproportion is a sign of the emphasis that late-antique *grammatici* placed on linguistic instruction.’<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Heath concludes in his study of the fragments of the rhetorician Menander’s commentary on Demosthenes, that he ‘apparently believed that his analyses would be of practical value to contemporary students seeking to master the techniques of persuasion for themselves.’<sup>65</sup> For both, the focus of exposition was to draw attention to the author’s use of language and style.

By contrast, Chrysostom’s lack of interest in τὸ μεθοδικόν is something which should be stressed further. He pays little, if any, attention to issues of textual criticism, the correct enunciation of the text or discussions of interesting etymologies. He has no interest

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<sup>61</sup> Young 1997, 80: ‘*To historikon* involved the investigation of the ‘story’ presented in the text being studied.’

<sup>62</sup> Young 1997, 81.

<sup>63</sup> Young 1989, 192.

<sup>64</sup> Kaster 1988, 170.

<sup>65</sup> Heath 2004, 213.

in producing budding orators in his congregation. Such details are irrelevant to his task as preacher, and this is a point which deserves underlining. Young helpfully illustrates how Chrysostom's way of using texts is drawn from the rhetorical schools; however, the fact that he does not do many of the things which a *grammaticus* or *rhetor* would do with a text, and indeed has a very different focus, demonstrates that he should not be seen simply as a teacher with the canon of scripture replacing the canon of classical literature. This reminds us that, whilst parallels with the school are instructive, they are nonetheless only partial, as subsequent chapters will explore.

That said, one particularly important way in which Young demonstrates how instructive the school context can be is in the concept of *mimesis*, a central concept of ancient literary criticism.<sup>66</sup> Literature was understood to be mimetic of reality: 'the artist's product, the *mimēma*, could not come into existence without a corresponding object outside, on which it depends for its structure and characteristics.'<sup>67</sup> In turn, it itself presented examples to be imitated, be it of rhetorical style or ethical behaviour: Aristotle argued that people 'learn by imitation first and foremost.'<sup>68</sup> This explains why Chrysostom places so much emphasis on drawing moral lessons out of the text: as we saw above, this was, to some extent, what the text was for. In one of his eulogies on Paul, he urges the audience 'not only to admire, but also to imitate this archetype of virtue.'<sup>69</sup> In the exhortation to a sermon on Philippians, he explains that 'there are countless images in the scriptures of virtuous lives', which they are urged to follow.<sup>70</sup> Just before this he tells them to pay no attention to their own teacher, but rather to Jesus and his teachings: 'From there

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<sup>66</sup> The scholarship on *mimesis* is large and this is of necessity a brief and summary treatment. For Chrysostom, see especially Young 1997, 248-57; Mitchell 2000, 49-55 and *passim*; Rylaarsdam 2014, 231-69. More generally, see e.g. Russell 1981, 99-113; Castelli 1991; Whitmarsh 2001, 41-89; Hunter 2009, 107-27.

<sup>67</sup> Russell 1981, 99.

<sup>68</sup> τὰς μαθήσεις ποιεῖται διὰ μιμήσεως τὰς πρώτας, Arist. *Po.* 1448B.

<sup>69</sup> Καὶ ὑμᾶς παρακαλῶ μὴ θαυμάζειν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μιμεῖσθαι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον τοῦτο τῆς ἀρετῆς. Chrys. *De laud. Paul. hom.* 2.10

<sup>70</sup> Μυρίαί εἰσιν εἰκόνες ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς κείμεναι βίῳν ἐναρέτων. *In Phil. hom.* 13.294C.

take your model; you have the best image; bring yourself into harmony with that.’<sup>71</sup> For Chrysostom, then, as for many other teachers in antiquity, both the teachings and characters of texts were models to imitate.

The mimetic quality of literature also influences Chrysostom’s style of exegesis. Despite his evident desire to draw out the moral lesson from the text, in the exegetical parts of his sermons he rarely addresses his audience directly. The main exception to this is when he instructs the congregation to look at what the author or the characters are saying or doing: ‘do you see him giving before he receives?’ he asks his congregation of Paul who has offered a prayer for Philemon before making his request concerning the slave Onesimus.<sup>72</sup> The text is being displayed for the congregation to look at: it is there for them to see, and they have no need of the moral being explicitly drawn out. Young argues that ‘the empathy of Chrysostom the pastor with Paul the pastor produces a creative but non-explicit interplay between the two different audiences who, by implication, share the same shortcomings. So there is an entirely unconscious “hermeneutic of retrieval”.’<sup>73</sup>

It is a creative interplay indeed, and Chrysostom is a master dramatist in bringing the text to life on the stage, as it were, before his congregation. In commenting on Paul’s epistles, for example, he may engage Paul directly in conversation, asking questions to elucidate his meaning: ‘What are you saying? You established [Titus] on Crete, but now you summon him back again to yourself?’<sup>74</sup> But he can go further even than this, taking on the very persona of Paul himself and re-enacting the apostle’s message to his original audience: ‘For I would not, he says [to Philemon], call him my child unless he were very useful. What I called Timothy, this I call also him.’<sup>75</sup> Chrysostom slips seamlessly from

<sup>71</sup> Ἐκεῖθεν λάβε τὸν τύπον· ἔχεις εἰκόνα ἀρίστην· πρὸς ἐκείνην ῥύθμισον σαυτόν. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *In Philmn. hom.* 2.779D. On the use of the instruction to ‘look’, see Rylaarsdam 2014, 231-69.

<sup>73</sup> Young 1986, 351.

<sup>74</sup> Τί λέγεις; ἐπιστήσας αὐτὸν τῇ Κρήτῃ, πάλιν καλεῖς πρὸς ἑαυτόν; Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.766B.

<sup>75</sup> Οὐ γὰρ ἂν αὐτὸν, φησὶ, τέκνον ἐκάλουν, εἰ μὴ σφόδρα ἦν εὐχρηστος. Ὅπερ Τιμόθεον ἐκάλεσα, τοῦτο καὶ τοῦτον. *In Philmn. hom.* 2.781A.

quoting Paul in the third person, to taking on his character and playing the role of Paul himself. One moment Paul is standing next to Chrysostom, the next the two have merged into one.<sup>76</sup> Chrysostom understood well the mimetic quality of literature, and sought to draw from scripture examples of moral virtue for his congregation to observe and imitate.

After the exegesis, Chrysostom parted company with the text and turned to address the congregation directly with a moral exhortation, which he himself referred to as the ‘ethical’ (τὸ ἠθικόν) section of the sermon.<sup>77</sup> In contrast to the exegesis, where he would ask questions of the text and would take on the persona of Paul, in the exhortation he asks questions of the congregation and paraphrases the questions he suspects or knows that they may have of him. His attention shifts from the text to the congregation before him.

Although all exegetes in antiquity, as we have seen, were interested in the moral benefits of reading texts, it is only in the philosophical schools that we have any evidence for similar direct exhortations which are not exegetical in character.<sup>78</sup> Such speeches could be delivered in public or in the classroom, and there was some degree of antipathy between practitioners of each: Dio Chrysostom, for example, criticises those who speak only in ‘lecture-halls’ (ἀκροατήρια) for ‘having taken as hearers those who are allied with them and amenable to them’;<sup>79</sup> Plutarch, on the other hand, condemns the ‘sophists’ for their theatrical speeches devoid of any substance.<sup>80</sup> In the classroom, these speeches followed, or interrupted, the exegesis: Benjamin Hijmans argues that what survives of Epictetus’ teaching, the published lecture notes of his student Arrian, do not consist of all the instruction given, but only of these extempore interruptions, which were most likely in response to a question or an issue raised by the text. On one occasion, Arrian records that

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. the comments of Mitchell 2000, 407 n. 120: ‘This involves some ventriloquism on John’s part, as he shifts his forms of address to create this living encounter.’ See also Rylaarsdam 2014, 265.

<sup>77</sup> Chrys. *In Rom. hom.* 17.620D-E.

<sup>78</sup> Clarke 1971, 88-9; Hoffmann 2006, 600.

<sup>79</sup> ἐσπόνδους λαβόντες ἀκροατὰς καὶ χειροήθεις ἑαυτοῖς, *D. Chr. Or.* 32.8.

<sup>80</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 41D-42A. See below, pp. 93-4.

the diatribe<sup>81</sup> began ‘when one of the Romans had entered with his son and was listening to one of the readings.’<sup>82</sup> At this point, Epictetus stops and turns to address the new arrival. This may be an exceptional case, but it at least points to the nature of these diatribes as free discourses interrupting or following the exegesis of a text.<sup>83</sup> Some philosophers gave an opportunity for questions at the end of the class, such as Aulus Gellius’ teacher Taurus,<sup>84</sup> but we have already seen in the class of Plotinus the student Thaumasius being irritated by Porphyry’s constant questions which interrupted the exegesis of the text.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, a number of the preserved lectures of Plotinus, though not exegetical, nonetheless seem to have a text as their starting-point, suggesting that they may have arisen out of an exegesis of that text.<sup>86</sup>

The ethical sections of Chrysostom’s sermons likewise appear to interrupt the exegesis – or, at least, there is not always a clear conclusion to the exegesis, with the exhortation typically arising spontaneously out of a point raised in the text. At other times he will launch into an entirely different theme: the discussion on hell, which forms the conclusion to the third homily on Philemon, would be a good example, arising as an important topic he feels need to be addressed, but which has no direct connection with the exegesis. In these cases, the situation is not entirely unlike that of the philosophers responding to questions from students, only, with the church being a less intimate setting than the classroom, the preacher responds more indirectly to the sorts of questions he believes his congregation will have. In fact he explicitly says as he introduces the topic of

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<sup>81</sup> On the term, see below, pp. 98-9.

<sup>82</sup> εἰσελθόντος τινὸς τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν μετὰ υἱοῦ καὶ ἐπακούοντος ἐνὸς ἀναγνώσματος, Epict. 2.14.1.

<sup>83</sup> Hijmans 1959, 41-48.

<sup>84</sup> Gell. 1.26. Some of Epictetus’ diatribes (e.g. 3.22) begin *πιθομένου τινός*, ‘with someone asking...’. Hijmans 1959, 47-8.

<sup>85</sup> Porph. *Plot.* 13 – above, pp. 79-80.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. *Plot.* 1.2 begins with a quotation from Plato’s *Theaetetus*, which then forms the theme of the rest of the essay (the essays are based, according to Porphyry who edited them, on his teacher’s lectures – *Plot.* 5).

hell, ‘For often do I hear many saying even this, that God is loving towards men and will save absolutely everyone.’<sup>87</sup>

Chrysostom expounded what he considered to be the key scriptural texts, working through each book over a course of sermons, and using much the same exegetical techniques as were employed in the schools. From the exegesis he would turn to address the congregation directly with words of moral exhortation. In these respects his activity as preacher would have looked very much like the activity of a schoolteacher teaching in a classroom. In many other respects, of course, he was not at all like a teacher, and this we will see more of in subsequent chapters. But the immediate question we should now consider is what implications the scholastic nature of Chrysostom’s preaching has for our reading of his sermons, and in particular for our interpretation of his condemnatory language.

### CHRYSOSTOM THE HARSH SCHOOLMASTER?

For Rylaarsdam, Chrysostom’s severity should be viewed within the context of classical pedagogy, which advocated employing a mixed method of exhortation, referred to by the Epicurean Philodemus as the *μείκτος τρόπος*.<sup>88</sup> This is a theme that can be traced right through antiquity: even in Homer we see the two Ajaxes urging the Greeks on to fight, ‘some with gentle words, others with harsh’ (*ἄλλον μελιχίῳις, ἄλλον στερεοῖς ἐπέεσσι*).<sup>89</sup> From late antiquity Rylaarsdam cites the fourth-century orator and philosopher Themistius, who ‘recommended that philosophers should imitate a doctor who gives honey along with

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<sup>87</sup> Πολλαχοῦ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο πολλοὺς ἀκούω λέγοντας, ὅτι φιλόανθρωπός ἐστι, πάντως σώσει πάντας. Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 3.788F-789A.

<sup>88</sup> Phld. *Lib. fr.* 58.7-8; cf. Glad 1995, 71.

<sup>89</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.267.

bitter medicine.’<sup>90</sup> Both gentleness and severity were needed if students were to make progress. Accordingly, ‘Chrysostom consistently exhibits a mixed model of exhortation in his own preaching. If one reads Chrysostom as he reads Paul, a mixed method of rhetoric seems virtually omnipresent in the exhortation sections of his homilies.’<sup>91</sup>

In theory, at least, Chrysostom does indeed quite clearly state his acceptance of this mixed method of exhortation. ‘For one method should not be applied to all... Just as if you struck a mild and sheltered person you would crush and destroy him, so if you flatter one who is in need of severity you would corrupt him and not give him a chance to be restored.’<sup>92</sup> However, in practice it seems to me that he has a much greater focus on employing severity than Rylaarsdam suggests. Indeed, Rylaarsdam fails to provide many instances at all of Chrysostom employing gentle rhetoric. In one passage which he does cite as an instance of gentleness, he points out that Chrysostom says that those who are in sin should not despair (ἀπογινώσκω); however, what he does not mention is that Chrysostom nonetheless goes on to say that they should also be fearful (περιδεής).<sup>93</sup> He certainly wants to give his congregation hope that their salvation is not lost because of their sin, but he still wants them struck with fear. A severe tone, it seems, is never far away.

At the start of his discussion of the topic, Rylaarsdam does in fact acknowledge the widespread perception of Chrysostom as being somewhat severe. The conclusion he draws from this is that his congregations were rather sluggish and making little progress: ‘the more recalcitrant students are, the greater the proportion of harshness required.’<sup>94</sup> Isocrates, for example, had argued that harshness or gentleness in a parent or teacher is not

<sup>90</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014, 278, citing Them., *Or.* 24.302b. For the medical metaphor, see below, Chapter 4.

<sup>91</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014, 278.

<sup>92</sup> Οὐ γὰρ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ τρόπῳ προσενεκτέον.... Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ τὸν ἐπιεικῆ καὶ εὐγενῆ πλήττων ἀναιρεῖ καὶ ἀπόλλυσιν· οὕτως ὁ τὸν δεόμενον σφοδρότητος κολακεύων διαφθείρει καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσει διαναστήναι. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 3.746B.

<sup>93</sup> *In 1 Cor. hom.* 38.358E. Rylaarsdam 2014, 279.

<sup>94</sup> Rylaarsdam 2014, 274.

necessarily the result of their character, but the character of those in their charge: ‘for many before now have been compelled by the depravity of their subjects to rule more harshly than they wished.’<sup>95</sup> If he does tend more towards severity than gentleness, this, according to Isocrates, tells us more about the character of the congregation than the preacher. And so we end up with a similar picture to that presented by Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell: Chrysostom’s condemnatory language reflects a congregation that is rather uncommitted or sluggish in their faith.

Over the subsequent chapters, we will be building an argument against such a reading of Chrysostom’s condemnatory language. We can begin here, however, by exploring how the scholastic context explains his severity, beyond his approval in theory of the mixed method of psychagogy.

### *Teaching by Fear*

First, if it is true that harshness of gentleness in a teacher was dependent on their students’ behaviour, then it would appear that many were sorely disappointed in their students. For time and again throughout antiquity we are given the impression that teachers typically taught by fear. To begin with, despite the arguments of Quintilian and Pseudo-Plutarch against the practice,<sup>96</sup> corporal punishment was standard, so much so that in school scenes on vases, there is very often a sandal hanging on the wall.<sup>97</sup> According to Plato, those involved in a child’s upbringing do all they can to teach him morality: ‘if he willingly obeys, fine; if not, they straighten him out with threats and blows as if he were a bent and

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<sup>95</sup> πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀρχομένων κακίαν τραχύτερον ἢ κατὰ τὴν αὐτῶν γνώμην ἄρχειν ἠναγκάσθησαν. Isoc. 3.55, trans. G. Norlin. Rylaarsdam 2014, 277.

<sup>96</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.14; Plu. *Moralia* 8F-9A.

<sup>97</sup> Criboire 2001, 67. On corporal punishment, see Haarhoff 1920, 93-7; Criboire 2001, 65-73; Bloomer 2015.

twisted piece of wood.’<sup>98</sup> ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’ was a popular maxim throughout antiquity, and indeed up to very recent times.<sup>99</sup> Libanius recommends schools to have ‘active lashes and active canes’ (ἐνεργοὶ μὲν ἱμάντες, ἐνεργοὶ δὲ ῥάβδοι), and writes to a father of one of his students that beatings are necessary for ‘those sluggish in their studies’ (κατὰ τῶν ὑπτίων εἰς λόγους).<sup>100</sup> Augustine had bitter memories of his school days, and in his *Confessions* recalls the hard beatings that he received for his lack of attention to his schoolwork, comparing his experiences with those who are undergoing torture: ‘For no less did we fear [the beatings] and no less did we pray to you that we might escape them.’<sup>101</sup> Rafaella Criore points out that even example sentences for school exercises often revolved around misbehaving children being beaten.<sup>102</sup>

Teachers’ severity, however, went beyond beating. Indeed, Criore argues that adolescents were rarely beaten, although ‘intimidating methods were also prevalent in higher education’.<sup>103</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, like many other theorists, urges parents to follow the mixed method of education, to rebuke children when overly confident and praise them when in despair.<sup>104</sup> Again, in practice, however, it seemed that there was a general tendency to offer more rebukes than praise, as he only criticises those parents who are too severe: parents mollicodding their children was evidently not an issue that needed to be addressed.<sup>105</sup> The fourth-century teacher and rhetorician Ausonius encouraged his grandson not to be frightened by the ‘domineering voice of the severe schoolmaster’

<sup>98</sup> καὶ ἐὰν μὲν ἐκὼν πείθηται: εἰ δὲ μή, ὅσπερ ξύλον διαστρεφόμενον καὶ καμπτόμενον εὐθύνουσιν ἀπειλαῖς καὶ πληγαῖς. Pl. *Prt.* 325D.

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Men. *Sententiae* 422: ὁ μὴ δαρεῖς ἄνθρωπος οὐ παιδεύεται (‘The person who has not be thrashed has not been educated.’). Cf. Proverbs 13:24, ‘Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but whoever loves him is diligent to discipline him.’

<sup>100</sup> Lib. *Or.* 43.9; *Ep.* 1330.2. Cf. Haarhoff 1920, 93.

<sup>101</sup> *non enim aut minus ea metuebamus aut minus te de his evadendis deprecabamur.* Aug. *Confessiones* 1.9.15.

<sup>102</sup> Criore 2001, 69.

<sup>103</sup> Criore 2001, 71.

<sup>104</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 9A.

<sup>105</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 9B-C, 13D-F.

(*acerbi ... vox imperiosa magistri*).<sup>106</sup> He describes the typical teacher as someone who is ‘grim with age and, ungentle of voice, threatens harsh outbursts with frowning brows.’<sup>107</sup>

Although Chrysostom, in his advice to parents, again advocates a mixture of praise and blame, it is however the negative treatment which appears to take precedence:

Ἄλλὰ φοβείσθω μὲν αἰεὶ πληγὰς, μὴ λαμβανέτω δέ· ... Ἄλλὰ προσδοκάτω μὲν παιδεύεσθαι, μὴ παιδευέσθω δέ, ἵνα μὴ σβεννύηται ὁ φόβος, ἀλλ’ ἵνα μένη.... Ὅταν μέντοι ἴδῃς ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου κερδάναντα, ἄνευ· δεῖ γὰρ τινος φύσει τῆ ἡμετέρα καὶ ἀνέσεως.

Let him always fear a beating, but not receive one. ... Let him expect to be chastised, but not to be chastised, so that his fear might not be extinguished, but rather remain.... However, when you see that he has profited from his fear, let him be; for our nature needs also some leniency.<sup>108</sup>

The child is always to fear a beating: only when that fear has resulted in some moral progress is the parent to let up. Indeed, the parent is encouraged simply to ‘let him be’: despite advocating both praise and blame earlier, there is no mention here of positively praising the child for the progress he has made. His reward is simply to be released from the threat of punishment.

Are we to conclude from all this that ill-discipline was rife among the children of antiquity? Isocrates, it will be remembered, urged us to blame harsh language not on the character of the master, but on the behaviour of the disciple. If we were to ask any teacher in antiquity if their students were typically lazy and inattentive, they would indeed most likely reply in the affirmative. But this tells us more about their own expectations of and attitudes to their disciples, rather than that it was particularly characteristic of ancient schoolchildren – more so than in any other age – to misbehave. Schoolchildren were thought of as typically lazy and unruly, and therefore typically in need of strict discipline.

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<sup>106</sup> Aus. *Ep.* 22.2-3.

<sup>107</sup> *tristis senio nec voce serenus / aspera contractae minitetur iurgia frontis*. Aus. *Ep.* 22.14-5 (trans. H.G. Evelyn White).

<sup>108</sup> Chrys. *Inan. glor. et ed. lib.* 414-25.

Teresa Morgan argues that without education people were considered not fully developed as humans, and therefore in need of stringent taming to bring them under control: ‘The difference between literate and illiterate is cast, as a result, as the difference between the civilized and the savage.’<sup>109</sup> Quintilian considers even his ideal student to still be one in need of rebuke (*obiurgatio*).<sup>110</sup>

It might be argued that all this has nothing to do with Chrysostom, for after all he is teaching adults, not children. Certainly, he never beats members of his congregation!<sup>111</sup> But he does treat them as children, and often considers his relationship with them to be like that of a teacher or parent with children. We have already seen at the start of the chapter instances where he likens his role as a preacher in teaching his congregation to that of a schoolmaster.<sup>112</sup> Elsewhere, he goes even further than this. On the occasion referred to at the start of the thesis, when he claims that his congregation was distraught at being deprived of their beloved preacher for a day, he describes their response in terms of a mother-child relationship:

... ταῦτόν ποιοῦντες, οἷον ἄν εἰ παιδίον τυπτόμενον, ἐπιτιμώμενον, μηδὲ οὕτως ἀποσταίη τῆς μητρὸς, ἀλλὰ κλαυθμυριζόμενον ἔποιτο, τῶν ἱματίων τῆς μητρὸς ἐκ πλαγίων ἐχόμενον, καὶ ἐπισυρόμενον αὐτῇ μετὰ τῶν ὀδυρμῶν.

You were behaving in the same way as when a child has been beaten and rebuked, it does not withdraw from its mother, but follows her weeping, holding on to the side of its mother’s clothes and trails after her in tears.<sup>113</sup>

On another occasion he explains that his reason for progressing so slowly through the parable of Dives and Lazarus was because he did not want to overwhelm them with too much in one go: he is like a mother, he says, who introduces her child to wine gently to

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<sup>109</sup> Morgan 1998, 245.

<sup>110</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.7.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 2.739C.

<sup>112</sup> Above, pp. 70-1.

<sup>113</sup> Chrys. *Pater m. usq. mod. op.* PG 63.512.2-6.

prevent it from simply being spat back out. In a similar way, he provides his exposition of the parable in bite-size chunks so that they can more easily take it all in.<sup>114</sup> In his treatise *On the Priesthood* he states explicitly that ‘the priest should treat those in his charge just like a father would treat very young children.’<sup>115</sup> On the face of it, the image Chrysostom uses is very different – a doting parent rather than a stern schoolmaster. Nonetheless, both images in different ways infantilise the congregation, and furthermore, as Sandwell argues, in the very different parenting context of the ancient world, the maternal/paternal imagery may have brought more to a listener’s mind than the language of doting tenderness would suggest to us: ‘While Chrysostom’s explicitly stated intention was thus to convey the love he feels for his audience, his use of analogy also allowed him to imply that other more authoritarian aspects of the parent-child relationship were also applicable to the preacher-audience relationship.’<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, since he frequently spoke of his relationship with his congregation in terms of that between a parent or teacher and their children, it is not surprising that his pedagogical tone often reflected the severe and fear-inspiring language typically employed by the schoolmaster throughout antiquity and at all levels of education. We will see further in later chapters how important fear is as a pedagogical tool for Chrysostom: not a fear of himself necessarily, but ‘a fear of the resurrection, and of the judgement, and of all the other things which, according to our philosophy, happen after death.’<sup>117</sup> Nonetheless, it is still the preacher’s duty to inspire such fear in his congregation: the ideal priest, he tells them, ‘ought to terrify, to alarm, to penetrate the soul with the threat of hell’.<sup>118</sup> If his

<sup>114</sup> *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.991.34-48.

<sup>115</sup> οὕτως οὖν χρὴ τὸν ἱερέα διακεῖσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχομένους ὡσπερ ἂν εἰ πατὴρ πρὸς παῖδας ἄγαν νηπίους διακέοιτο. *De sac.* 5.4.

<sup>116</sup> Sandwell 2012, 85. The image indeed can also be used in the context of a rebuke: ‘For we are no different from children,’ (Ὅτι παίδων οὐδὲν διαφέρομεν) Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 4.356B.

<sup>117</sup> ...τὸν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως φόβον, καὶ τὸν τῆς κρίσεως, καὶ τὸν τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων τῶν μετὰ θάνατον φιλοσοφουμένων παρ’ ἡμῖν... Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 4.753D.

<sup>118</sup> Φοβεῖν χρὴ τῇ τῆς γεέννης ἀπειλῇ, δεδίττεσθαι, καθικνεῖσθαι. *In Tit. hom.* 2.739B (trans. P. Schaff (ed.)).

words alone fail to inspire such fear, he has no qualms about taking more drastic measures, and on several occasions threatens excommunication to anyone who has not thoroughly reformed themselves.<sup>119</sup>

We will continue to explore the context for his use of fear throughout this thesis; in the meantime, however, it is instructive to compare Chrysostom's stringent expectations of how his congregation should listen to his teaching with how Plutarch advises a young friend to listen to lectures. Plutarch's advice comes in an essay to a certain Nicander which claims to have been itself originally a lecture:<sup>120</sup> Brian Hillyard states that Plutarch 'himself organized a school in which he probably gave lectures of the type envisaged in *De audiendo*.'<sup>121</sup> It is the only substantial treatment of education in antiquity from the standpoint of the student, offering insights into how students were expected to receive teaching. A similar document closer in time to Chrysostom is Ausonius' letter to his grandson offering advice before he heads to school; it is a much shorter and less detailed text, but echoes the themes of Plutarch's lecture. This suggests that such attitudes to how students should receive their education persisted into late antiquity. For both Chrysostom and Plutarch, learning was not supposed to be an enjoyable activity, but one that demanded great effort and in which stern rebukes were to be expected. The parallels are illuminating, and suggest that in his condemnations of inattention or exhortations to do better, Chrysostom is not simply acting as an irascible and bad-tempered taskmaster, but is picking up and echoing themes, most likely unconsciously, that had long existed in education theory and practice.<sup>122</sup>

First, a contrast is drawn between speeches of entertainment and edification. Picking up a common theme throughout antiquity, both Chrysostom and Plutarch drew a

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<sup>119</sup> E.g. *In Col. hom.* 7.378E. See also *De stat.* 20, PG 49.211.13-212.4.

<sup>120</sup> *Plu. Moralia* 37C. On the essay, see Hillyard 1981.

<sup>121</sup> Hillyard 1981, p. xvii.

<sup>122</sup> Cross-references to other works in what follows have mostly been taken from Hillyard's commentary on Plutarch's essay.

stark contrast between themselves and popular speakers: the latter, they claimed, were putting on a show for entertainment, but they themselves were speaking for their listeners' benefit.<sup>123</sup> In his sermons Chrysostom repeatedly rebukes them for erupting into applause,<sup>124</sup> exclaiming at one point 'the church is not a theatre, that you should listen for your enjoyment.'<sup>125</sup> Many, he claims, listen to the preacher 'as though they were sitting as judges on tragic actors and lyre-players,' meaning that preachers will often be led to pay more attention to style even than professional orators.<sup>126</sup> Plutarch, using very similar language, argues that the student should pay more attention to the content of the speech than the style, 'remembering that he has come not to a theatre or a music-hall, but to a school and a classroom.'<sup>127</sup> Popular philosophers, for sure, he suggests should be listened to as one might a tragic-actor in the theatre; but those who are 'proper' philosophers (περὶ τῶν ὄντως φιλοσόφων) are lecturing for the benefit of the individual.<sup>128</sup> Excessive applause and overblown expressions of praise will make passers-by think there must be some sort of musical entertainment taking place.<sup>129</sup> Rather, silence is 'a safe adornment for the young man,'<sup>130</sup> a sentiment repeated by many later Christian writers: take, for example, Jerome's commendation of the Egyptian monks who listen in silence to their sermons.<sup>131</sup>

Secondly, both issued stern exhortations to listen more diligently.<sup>132</sup> Since the preacher/teacher is speaking for the benefit of those before him, both emphasise that their disciples make an active effort to get the most out of the teaching. Too many students,

<sup>123</sup> Whitmarsh 2005, 15-8. For Ausonius, the benefit of education was to enter the ranks of the educated ruling classes, *Ep.* 22.41-4.

<sup>124</sup> E.g. Chrys. *De stat.* 2, PG 49.38.37-8; *De stat.* 5, PG 49.79.29-30; *De incompr. hom.* 1.406-7.

<sup>125</sup> οὐκ ἔστι θέατρον ἢ ἐκκλησία, ἵνα πρὸς τέρψιν ἀκούωμεν. *De stat.* 2, PG 49.38.32-3.

<sup>126</sup> καθάπερ τραγῳδῶν ἢ κιθαρωδῶν καθήμενοι δικασταί, *De sac.* 5.1.28-31.

<sup>127</sup> μεμνημένον ὡς οὐκ εἰς θέατρον οὐδ' ᾄδειον ἀλλ' εἰς σχολὴν καὶ διδασκαλεῖον ἀφίκται. Plu. *Moralia* 42A. Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 108.6; Quint. *Inst.* 2.2.9-13.

<sup>128</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 43F-44A.

<sup>129</sup> *Moralia* 45F-46C.

<sup>130</sup> τῷ νέῳ κόσμος ἀσφαλής, *Moralia* 39B.

<sup>131</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 22.35. On the Church Fathers' desire for silence during the readings and the sermon, see Adkin 1985. That remaining silent was better than speaking was a commonplace, e.g. E. *Or.* 1540: 'Or should we keep silent? That is safer, my friends' (ἢ σῆγ' ἔχωμεν; ἀσφαλέστερον, φίλοι). See Hillyard 1981, 71-2, for further references.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Aus. *Ep.* 22.9, 12: *disce libens*, 'learn readily'.

Plutarch argues, come to lectures with the attitude that they are just passive recipients, and it is the teacher who must do all the hard work. Rather, he says, they too must do some of the work, in the same way that in a ball-game the catcher has to be just as active as the thrower.<sup>133</sup> For a comparison with Chrysostom, we could turn to the opening of one of his sermons on John's Gospel. He asks of them one favour, that they might come to the sermon having done some preparation in advance: 'for there will be no small profit from such great effort for both you and me.'<sup>134</sup> In the following sermon he apologises if he had come across as a bit too demanding, and explains that if they do not show the same effort in listening as he does in preaching, then it will count against them on Judgement Day.<sup>135</sup> For both, listening required serious effort.

However, too often, they felt, students did not pay enough attention to the teaching, and they were keen to rebuke such idleness. Plutarch condemns the following actions as inappropriate whilst listening to a lecture:

... οὐ μόνον βαρύτης ἐπισκυνίου καὶ ἀηδία προσώπου καὶ βλέμμα ῥεμβῶδες καὶ περὶ κλασις σώματος καὶ μηρῶν ἐπάλλαξις ἀπρεπῆς ἀλλὰ καὶ νεῦμα καὶ ψιθυρισμὸς πρὸς ἕτερον καὶ μειδίαμα χάσμαθ' ὑπνώδεισ καὶ κατήφειαι καὶ πᾶν εἴ τι τούτοις ἔοικεν ὑπεύθυνόν ἐστι....

... not only frowning, expressions of disgust, a roving eye, a twisting of the body and an unseemly crossing of the legs, but also nodding, whispering to each other, smiling and sleepy yawns, a drooping head and anything else like this are culpable...<sup>136</sup>

There are a number of occasions on which we find Chrysostom condemning his congregation for just these sorts of actions. In one sermon, having concluded his exegesis

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<sup>133</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 45D-E; cf. Clem. *Str.* 2.6. Quintilian, too, stressed that education is a joint effort, and teacher and student must work together, *Inst.* 2.9.

<sup>134</sup> Οὐ γὰρ μικρὸν ἀπὸ τῆς τοιαύτης σπουδῆς καὶ ὑμῖν καὶ ἡμῖν ἔσται τὸ κέρδος. Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 11, PG 59.77.41-2.

<sup>135</sup> Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 12, PG 59.81.5-22.

<sup>136</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 45C-D. For other rebukes of inattention, see Lib. *Or.* 3.12-4, and Philostratus' account of Philagrus of Cilicia, 'the most hot-headed and ill-tempered of sophists' (σοφιστῶν θερμότατος καὶ ἐπιχολώτατος), who would hit round the face anyone who fell asleep during his lectures, *VS* 578.

of the scriptural passages, he rounds on his congregation for not being that interested in the message he is preaching:

Τί λέγεις, ἄνθρωπε; εἰς βασιλείαν κέκλησαι, εἰς βασιλείαν υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ χάσμης πληροῦσαι, καὶ κνᾶσαι, καὶ ναρκᾶς;

What do you say, fellow? You are called to a kingdom, to the kingdom of the Son of God, and you sit there yawning, scratching and dozing!<sup>137</sup>

Elsewhere he charges them with chatting to each other whilst the scripture lessons are being read;<sup>138</sup> commenting on 1 Timothy 2:11 ('Let a woman learn in silence'), he claims that women chatter with each other more than they do in the market and at the baths, whereas they should be listening in silence in order to learn something profitable;<sup>139</sup> and as for roving eyes, there is the well-known example, quoted in a previous chapter, of the congregation being distracted by a lamp-lighter lighting the church lamps.<sup>140</sup> On one level it is not especially remarkable that both Plutarch and Chrysostom complain about inattentive audiences: it is the complaint of many a teacher or public speaker throughout the centuries to have an audience who are not fully engaged. Nonetheless, the comparison alerts us to the fact that Chrysostom is not alone in rebuking his congregation for inattentiveness: it was something of a trope, and, as we will explore further in Chapter 7, we should therefore be careful about drawing too much from that about the actual commitment of the people before him.

Furthermore, both are clear that criticism of behaviour and progress is something that every student should expect to receive. It is part of the educational method: the student must be willing to receive correction and change in the light of it. Both Plutarch and Chrysostom are conscious that rebukes are often not well-received. It may be that the

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<sup>137</sup> Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 2338B.

<sup>138</sup> *De stat.* 20, PG 49.199.58-200.5.

<sup>139</sup> *In 1 Tim. hom.* 9594B-D.

<sup>140</sup> *In Gen. serm.* 4.198-202 – see above, p. 61.

listener does not take it seriously: ‘Do you laugh, fearing nothing?’ Chrysostom utters in bewilderment during one such rebuke.<sup>141</sup> Plutarch compares such laughter to that of parasites when they are rebuked by those whom they are living off, and calls their behaviour ‘shameless’.<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, they may find it too unbearable: both warn against fleeing from a rebuke without letting the harsh words do their work. The rebuke may be painful, but it must be endured for the soul to be corrected.<sup>143</sup> As we will see in Chapter 4, Chrysostom, Plutarch and many other teachers saw themselves as spiritual therapists, whose surgery may be unpleasant, but necessary if the soul is to be healed.

This parallel is illuminating. It suggests that, in his denunciations of excessive enthusiasm or idle inattention, and in his emphasis on the benefit that his teaching offered, even if unpleasant to listen to, Chrysostom was acting like any typical educator was expected to act. There was a general sense throughout antiquity, as we have seen in this section, that students were never as attentive nor ever made as much progress as they could do, and improvement was best achieved by means of severity. His stern language was a feature of the sermon genre, and should therefore be treated with great caution as a genuine indicator of the levels of attention and commitment amongst the congregation. Setting Chrysostom against the backdrop of education more broadly in the ancient world in this way sheds light on his own methods of preaching.

### *Genres of Moral Exhortation*

Forceful rhetoric was also a feature of two principal genres of moral exhortation found among both popular and classroom philosophers that have typically been claimed as

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<sup>141</sup> σὺ δὲ γελάς, οὐδὲν δεδοικώς; *In Heb. hom.* 15.156A.

<sup>142</sup> τὴν ἀναισχυντίαν, *Plu. Moralia* 46C. Hillyard 1981, 226, comments that ‘the parasite is a stock character in classical literature.’

<sup>143</sup> *Plu. Moralia* 46E-47A; *Chrys. In Phil. hom.* 6243C-D. Cf. *Aus. Ep.* 22.73-9, *Quint. Inst.* 2.9.3.

precedents for the hortatory part of the sermon; although, as we will see, the strict definition of either as a genre remains problematic.<sup>144</sup> Chrysostom's exhortations reflect the requirements of these genres, and given that he was a trained rhetorician, it seems likely that he was consciously putting theory into practice. In any case, such hortatory speeches were a common feature of the teaching of philosophers to their disciples, and as a result an analysis of Chrysostom's sermons through the lens of these genres will provide further evidence that his harsh criticism was part of the genre of preaching.

### Diatribes/Lalia

The first is the diatribe. The term is a controversial one: most commonly associated with the public discourses of wandering Cynic and Stoic philosophers, but also used to refer to lectures delivered within a schoolroom setting,<sup>145</sup> the term was first employed to define a genre of speech only in the late nineteenth century by Hermann Usener.<sup>146</sup> Since then it has attracted both supporters and critics, with the latter concerned most of all that the term was rarely (if at all) used to denote a type of speech in antiquity, and that it seems impossible to pin down a formal definition of it as a genre.<sup>147</sup> Stewart-Sykes, for example, has argued that 'it is disputable even that the diatribe existed at all, and in any event is to be defined by its very fluidity.'<sup>148</sup>

However, even a critic such as Stewart-Sykes is nonetheless happy to speak of a 'diatribe-style', whilst still arguing against it being a set genre of speech.<sup>149</sup> Karl-Heinz Uthemann, in a study on the influence of the diatribe on the sermons of Severian of Gabala

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<sup>144</sup> On which Burgess 1902 remains a thorough study.

<sup>145</sup> On the latter see Stowers 1981, 48-78.

<sup>146</sup> Usener 1887, p. lxix.

<sup>147</sup> See Uthemann 1998, 140, for a brief bibliography. See also Jocelyn 1982 for a good critique of the concept of a diatribe genre.

<sup>148</sup> Stewart-Sykes 2001, 62.

<sup>149</sup> Stewart-Sykes 2001, 63. Cf. Rahn 1969, 153-6 who speaks of a 'Diatribestil'.

considers the most important element of the diatribe-style to be that it in some way takes the form of a fictitious dialogue:

One could say more pointedly that within the category of the diatribe are included only those speeches or speakers wishing to convey the impression of conducting a dialogue with the audience. The speakers play down the fact that they are holding a monologue by drawing their audience into the speech. They address their audience directly and, by utilising the familiar form of address, they create the impression that they are involved in a discussion with each individual.<sup>150</sup>

This dialogical tone can be produced through direct addresses to the audiences, often in the second person singular; using φησί to introduce questions or objections from an imaginary interlocutor; his response can take the form of ‘assertions and emotional interjections’; a full dialogue with the imaginary opponent can then develop.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, there will be a ‘linguistic style which is appropriate for a conversation.’<sup>152</sup>

Although the diatribe is never discussed unambiguously as a genre in ancient literature,<sup>153</sup> there is one genre of speech which bears some resemblances to the above description, though a link is rarely made in the scholarship between it and the diatribe. This is the *lalia*, given an extensive treatment in the third- or fourth-century treatise *On Epideictic Speeches* ascribed to Menander Rhetor. The modern commentators on this text state that ‘there is no doubt a connection with Hellenistic philosophical or moral sermons, such as modern scholars commonly call διατριβαί.’<sup>154</sup> According to Menander, the *lalia* is a form both of epideictic and symboleptic, and can be used in a variety of different contexts for different ends, including to praise or give advice.<sup>155</sup> Expression of feelings is

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<sup>150</sup> Uthemann 1998, 143.

<sup>151</sup> Uthemann 1998, 143-4. Cf. Schatkin 1987, 82, Stewart-Sykes 2001, 58.

<sup>152</sup> Uthemann 1998, 149.

<sup>153</sup> Reference is often made to ps-Hermogenes’ statement that ‘the diatribe is an ethical exposition of a brief thought’ (διατριβή ἐστὶ βραχέος διανοήματος ἠθικῆ ἐκθεσις) – cf. Schatkin 1987, 82, citing Dudley 1937, 111. Uthemann 1998, 146, however, argues that, understood in context, this is referring to a ‘rhetorical trick’ and not a set genre.

<sup>154</sup> Russell and Wilson 1981, 295.

<sup>155</sup> Men. Rh. 2.388.17-26.

encouraged.<sup>156</sup> The audience should be frequently ridiculed and blamed, though only in the abstract, with a fictitious character receiving the brunt of the attack.<sup>157</sup> The *lalia* is characterised most of all, it would seem, by lack of structure – the speaker is encouraged to aim for disorder in the arrangement of themes<sup>158</sup> – and a style which is ‘simple, plain and unadorned’ (ἀπλοῦν καὶ ἀφελές καὶ ἀκατάσκευον).<sup>159</sup>

It will be seen that Menander’s description of the *lalia* bears many resemblances to that of the diatribe: the informal and simple style, coupled with the personal expression of emotion and the giving of advice and censure to the audience would all serve the aim of the diatribe to ‘convey the impression of conducting a dialogue with the audience’ (though Menander makes no explicit reference to the creation of an imaginary dialogue). Furthermore all the features of both the diatribe and the *lalia* can be readily discerned in Chrysostom’s sermons. Uthemann, for example, though acknowledging that no detailed work had been done on the topic, believes ‘it is clear that John Chrysostom too knew how to introduce the presentational form of the diatribe, even if in a restrained manner.’<sup>160</sup> The place for such a detailed study is not here; but nonetheless, a brief analysis of a passage will be beneficial to illustrate Chrysostom’s use of the diatribe/*lalia*.

In his first homily on Titus, Chrysostom begins his exhortation from the observation that Paul, in the opening of his letter, has prayed for the leader of the church in Crete, which leads him to comment how church leaders are just as much in need of prayer, if not more so, than the laity. In the disordered style recommended for the *lalia*, he dots seemingly at random from topic to topic: it is dangerous to raise an irreligious man to the office of bishop; it is an office that should not be desired, because it has no honour or

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<sup>156</sup> Men. Rh. 2.390.19-391.5.

<sup>157</sup> Men. Rh. 2.391.6-10.

<sup>158</sup> Men. Rh. 2.391.19-29.

<sup>159</sup> Men. Rh. 2.393.22.

<sup>160</sup> Uthemann 1998, 152.

power; the bishop, rather than being supported by his flock, has to endure insult after insult.<sup>161</sup> This last point gives rise to a personal expression of emotion:

Παῦσαι λοιδορῶν· μέχρι τίνος ταῦτα φής; Οὐ βούλει εἰσενεγκεῖν; οὐδεὶς ὁ καταναγκάζων, οὐδεὶς ὁ βιαζόμενος· τί καὶ λοιδορῆ τῷ παραινοῦντι καὶ συμβουλεύοντι; Ἄλλ' εἰς χρεῖαν τις κατέστη, καὶ οὐκ ὄρεξε χεῖρα μὴ δυνηθεὶς, ἢ καὶ ἐτέρωθι ἀσχοληθεὶς. Οὐδεμία συγγνώμη, ἀλλὰ πάλιν κατηγορίαι χείρους τῶν προτέρων. Τοῦτο οὖν ἀρχή; καὶ ἀμύνεσθαι οὐκ ἔχει· σπλάγχνα γάρ ἐστιν ἴδια.

Stop your insults! How long will you keep saying these things for? Do you not want to make a contribution? No-one is forcing you, no-one is compelling you. Why do you insult the one giving you counsel and advice? Perhaps someone has fallen into need, and [the bishop]<sup>162</sup> through inability could not offer a hand, or was busy with something else. There is no pardon, but this time the accusations are worse than before. Is this, then, office? And he cannot retaliate: for they are his own heart.<sup>163</sup>

Three things can be drawn out of this passage. With the exception of the anaphora of οὐδεὶς ὁ, the passage fits the description of ‘simple, plain and unadorned.’ The sentences are short and simple, and there is a degree of ellipsis more typical in everyday conversation. Particles, interestingly, are also sparingly used, with a number of sentences, unusually for Attic prose, beginning without any explicit connection with the previous sentence. In a more formal genre of speech, where a logical, structured and coherent argument is being attempted, such particles would be indispensable; their omission here suggests a much more informal and disordered tone, the characteristic mark of the *lalia*. Secondly, there is the direct engagement with the audience. The commands and questions serve to involve those listening to him in a conversation: a response is demanded. The use

<sup>161</sup> It is not clear whether this is being delivered in Antioch, in which case he is speaking up for Bishop Flavian, or in Constantinople, in which case he tactfully refers to himself throughout in the third person. See Mayer 2005a, 323-4.

<sup>162</sup> The text at this point is unclear: at first glance, it looks like Chrysostom is presenting a possible excuse they may give for not supporting the bishop, but then it is unclear what the accusations are and why, in this context, they would be worse. We must, I think, suppose a change of subject for ὄρεξε: the bishop is, for whatever reason, unable to offer the help expected to someone in need, and in response he is shown no mercy for this lapse from his congregation. Perhaps there is a particular recent situation in mind, which may explain the ellipsis.

<sup>163</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 1.735A-B.

of the second person singular throughout further adds to this sense of dialogue, since it gives the impression that he is no longer addressing a crowd, but holding a conversation with one individual. The effect on the listener would be that the rest of the congregation almost disappears as the preacher speaks directly and personally to him. We have seen that fictitious dialogue is considered a central aspect of the diatribe-style.

Finally, there is very emotive language, another of the features, according to Menander, of the *lalia*. In the final sentence he expresses a strong feeling of love for his congregation: the word translated ‘heart’, *σπλάγχνα*, refers to the emotional centre of one’s person, the place where one feels love and anger and so on. This strong expression of love, however, comes in the midst of an even more intense expression of indignation which colours the whole passage, with the opening brief imperative and the series of despairing questions. As we saw, Menander described a key element of the *lalia* to be frequent censure of the audience, although the rebuke here is not obviously delivered in the abstract as he recommends – that is, unless we consider the second person singular to have the effect of putting distance between the audience and the recipient of the blame. Each member of the congregation could perceive the rebuke as directed at someone else, whereas it would be harder to wriggle out of if it were delivered in the second person plural. If this is the case, then we have precisely what Menander prescribes: a stinging rebuke delivered somewhat in the abstract.

A little later in the sermon comes a good example of him holding a conversation with the congregation. He complains that they do nothing to serve the bishop, expecting him to do everything alongside his priestly duties: the apostles, he says, had been able, by contrast, to devote themselves to the ministry of the word:<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Acts 6:2-4.

Τί οὖν; οἱ ἀπόστολοι, φησὶν, ἐλευθέρους εἶχον δουλεύοντας; Βούλει καὶ τοῦτο ἀκοῦσαι, πῶς οἱ ἀπόστολοι διῆγον; Ἀποδημίας ἐποιοῦντο, καὶ ἄνδρες ἐλεύθεροι καὶ γυναῖκες εὐγενίδες ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνων ἀναπαύσεως καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑπετίθεσαν τὰς ἑαυτῶν. Ἄκουε δὲ καὶ τοῦ μακαρίου τούτου παραινούντος καὶ λέγοντος: “Τοὺς οὖν τοιούτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε· ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισε, παραβουλευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας.” Ὅρῳς τί φησι; σύ δὲ οὐδὲ λόγον προίεσαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ σοῦ, μήτι γε κίνδυνον τοσοῦτον ἀναδέχη. Ἀλλὰ λούεσθαι, φησὶν, οὐ χρή. Διὰ τί, εἰπέ μοι; ποῦ τοῦτο κεκώλυται; οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ ῥύπος καλόν.

What, then? ‘Did the apostles,’ someone will say, ‘have free men serving them?’ Do you want to hear this too, how the apostles spent their time? They made long journeys, and free men and noble women put their own lives and souls on the line that they might get some rest. Hear too this blessed one advising and telling them: ‘Therefore, hold such men in high esteem; because for the work of God he came close to death, risking his life that he might fill up what was lacking from you in your service to me.’ Do you see what he says? But you don’t so much as utter a word for your father, let alone accept such great danger. ‘But he shouldn’t wash himself,’ someone will say. Why, tell me? Where is this forbidden? For it’s not good to be filthy.<sup>165</sup>

Much of what was said about the previous passage could be repeated here, with the direct questions, generally short sentences, lack of particles, and the address to the second person singular (and quite direct with the *σύ δέ*, ‘but you,’ towards the end). However, I quote the passage principally as an example of the feature most commonly attributed to the diatribe. This is the use of *φησί* without any subject to introduce an imagined question or response from a hypothetical interlocutor. In this passage it is used twice of hypothetical interjections from the congregation, and thereby, in an informal and casual way, draws them into conversation with the preacher. As Uthemann argues, this feature ‘creates in the hearer the impression that the speaker has just picked up a comment from the audience and now repeats it audibly for all to hear. This technique provides him with the opportunity to

<sup>165</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 1.735F-736A.

address the objection and to refute it *ad hominem*.’<sup>166</sup> In other words, he sets up an imaginary interlocutor in order to direct against them his stinging rebuke.

In using the diatribe-style, therefore, Chrysostom was employing a form of speech commonly used by itinerant philosopher-preachers and classroom teachers to deliver moral exhortations. It was a part of the genre to engage the audience directly – or at least, an imagined member of the audience – and to assail them with harsh criticism. Mary Cunningham has suggested that the presence of dialogue in later Byzantine preaching is a feature of the genre (however loosely defined), and caution should be exercised before using it as evidence of a genuine dialogue between the preacher and his congregation.<sup>167</sup> Likewise, condemnatory language was a feature of the genre and therefore not necessarily indicative of a congregation who were somewhat sluggish in their faith. He condemned them not necessarily because they were especially recalcitrant – at least any more than the average – but because that was what all good preachers of a diatribe did.

Furthermore, Cunningham has argued that the dialogue style employed by later Byzantine preachers in fact served to emphasise their teaching authority. She argues that intra-text dialogue (that is, dialogue between or with the characters in the text) is the ‘most daring form of interpretation’ since it necessarily involves paraphrase and a dramatic recreation of the text to suit the occasion: he is not simply explaining what it means, but, in a sense, rewriting it himself.<sup>168</sup> Extra-textual dialogue (that is, dialogue with the congregation) draws his listeners into the world of the text, and thus ‘serves only to enhance [the preachers’] role as mediators of the divine Word.’<sup>169</sup> In a similar way, she argues that dialogue of either form gives a certain timelessness to the scriptural story,

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<sup>166</sup> Uthemann 1998, 143-4.

<sup>167</sup> As does, for example, Maxwell 2006. Cf. Cunningham 2003, 112; although when referring to Chrysostom in passing, she suggests that the dialogic form of his sermons do reflect a genuine interaction with his audience, on the basis of the early work done by Mayer and Allen.

<sup>168</sup> Cunningham 2003, 104.

<sup>169</sup> Cunningham 2003, 106.

presenting ‘this sacred reality to congregations in an immediate and understandable way,’ and thus again enhancing the preacher’s authority as the one who turns that sacred reality into something meaningful for his listeners.<sup>170</sup> The diatribe-style thus lent weight to the teacher’s authority and served to ‘render his message more effective’.<sup>171</sup> Using a medium that involved persistent condemnation did not create distance between ‘his innate austerity and extreme holiness ... and his more pedestrian congregation,’ but rather was what made his preaching so powerful and so popular.<sup>172</sup>

### Protrepic

We have seen, then, how one type of speech which was common among the teachers of the philosophical schools was employed also by Chrysostom in the hortatory sections of his exegetical sermons. The second type of speech common in such contexts was the protrepic. This was a speech that was ‘essentially intended to win over the hearer to the pursuit of a certain mode of life.’<sup>173</sup> As with the diatribe, it is debated whether or not we can speak of protrepic as a ‘genre’ in the conventional sense, with a set form and structure. From his analysis of a variety of protrepic works from a range of philosophical backgrounds, Mark Jordan concludes that we can only really speak of a protrepic genre with reference to the ‘rhetorical situation’: ‘Protrepics are just those works that aim to bring about the firm choice of a lived way to wisdom – however different the form of those works and their notions of wisdom might be.’<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Cunningham 2003, 107.

<sup>171</sup> Cunningham 2003, 104.

<sup>172</sup> Hartney 2004, 32.

<sup>173</sup> Stewart-Sykes 2001, 69.

<sup>174</sup> Jordan 1986, 330.

The protreptic was therefore the means by which a philosopher would win adherents to his school in his delivery of public addresses: this practice is mocked by Lucian in his satire *Vitarum auctio*, which depicts an auction of different philosophers, with each seeking to attract buyers through their persuasive words. Though perhaps most suited to persuading someone to take up philosophy in the first place (Philo of Larissa, for example, sees it as the first task of the philosopher),<sup>175</sup> nonetheless there is a sense in which, as Jordan argues, ‘the protreptic never seems to end.’<sup>176</sup> It served to encourage continuing and deepening adherence to the philosophy amongst the students who had already chosen that course of life. Epictetus, for instance, remembers the extraordinary ability his teacher, Musonius Rufus, had to point out his students’ faults, that is, where they were not living in full adherence to their professed philosophy.<sup>177</sup>

There was, then, a common aim to all protreptics:

Because the hearer’s whole self is at stake, the desired commitment must be exclusive and unlimited. The promise made in return is to lead the self to its best condition. What the hearer’s choice requires, where it leads, what the self will become, whether a steady happiness will result – these are debated. But the evident continuity of protreptic works across the schools is grounded, I think, in a tacit agreement about the situation of radical choice.<sup>178</sup>

Protreptis, therefore, may not have been a clearly defined genre, but, broadly-speaking, it was an exhortation to a complete, all-embracing commitment to the way of life advocated by the philosophical school, based on the belief that this was the best or only true way to live.

The hortatory sections (and indeed certain passages of the exegetical sections) of Chrysostom’s sermons reflect this depiction of protreptic. Chrysostom is clear again and

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<sup>175</sup> Stob. 2.7.2. Gill 2013, 342, considers protreptic the preliminary activity of a philosophical therapist, which encourages people to undertake his therapy.

<sup>176</sup> Jordan 1986, 332; see also Swancutt 2004.

<sup>177</sup> Epict. 3.23.

<sup>178</sup> Jordan 1986, 333.

again on the radical choice that a commitment to the Christian philosophy entails. Here is a good example by way of illustration. He has been exhorting his congregation to show mercy, and has reminded them of their debt to God:

σὺ δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὀφείλων τοσαῦτα, καὶ κελευόμενος ἀφεῖναι, πάλιν ἵνα σὺ λάβῃς, οὐκ ἀφίης; Τί δήποτε, παρακαλῶ; Οἴμοι, πόσης μὲν ἀπολαύομεν φιλανθρωπίας, πόσῃ δὲ ἐπιδεικνύμεθα κακίαν, πόσῃ ὕπνον, πόσῃ νωθεῖαν; Πῶς εὐκόλον ἢ ἀρετή; Ἐνταῦθα οὐ σώματος ἰσχύος χρεία, οὐ πλούτου, οὐ χρημάτων, οὐ δυναστείας, οὐ φιλίας, οὐκ ἄλλου οὐδενός, ἀλλ' ἀρκεῖ θελήσαι μόνον, καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἦνυσται, πρᾶγμα πολλὴν ἔχον ὀφέλειαν. Ἐλύπησεν ὁ δεῖνα καὶ ὕβρισε καὶ ἔσκωπεν; Ἐννόησον, ὅτι καὶ σὺ πολλὰ τοιαῦτα εἰς ἑτέρους ποιεῖς, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν δεσπότην ἄνες καὶ συγχώρησον.

But you, though you owe so much to God and have been ordered to forgive so that you might receive it in return – do you not forgive? Why ever not, I ask you? Good grief! How much kindness do we enjoy, and how much wickedness do we display? How much drowsiness? How much sluggishness? How easy is virtue? Here there is no need for bodily strength, or wealth, or riches, or power, or friendship, or anything else, but to be willing is alone sufficient, and then the whole deed is accomplished accompanied with great benefit. Has someone grieved you or insulted you or mocked you? Consider that you too do many such things to others, even to the Lord himself. Let go and forgive.<sup>179</sup>

Throughout this passage there is the sense of urgency: through rhetorical questions, direct commands, short sentences (all typical features of the diatribe and *lalia*, remember), he urges his congregation to live a radically different life. His description of them as sleepy and sluggish implies that they are not living out in full what it means to be a Christian. Too often they follow vice instead of virtue, they bear grudges instead of showing forgiveness. The Christian philosophy, like all other philosophies, affects every aspect of the follower's life. The passage is a call to action, to wake up, to pay attention and live out the philosophy they have claimed adherence to. Furthermore, although he goes into no details, he makes clear that 'great benefit' will result from accepting his call to a radically-transformed life: he is not urging a change of life just for the sake of it, but because this will produce a

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<sup>179</sup> Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 1.777F-778A.

concrete benefit to the individual, something which all philosophers claimed, even though defining that ultimate good in subtly different ways.<sup>180</sup> Such an all-embracing and radical exhortation is characteristic, as we have seen, of the philosophical protreptic.

The radicalness required by the protreptic is, however, something that deserves underlining. In the light of the nature of protreptic as urging a radical transformation of life, it becomes clear that Chrysostom's use of condemnatory language is merely part of the rhetoric of the genre. His accusations of sluggishness, as in this passage, should not be taken as an indication of reality. By accusing them of sluggishness, he thereby dramatically contrasts their current way of life with the way of life that he is advocating: by portraying the gap between the two options to be as wide as possible, he makes a full and continuing commitment to the Christian life appear to be something very radical indeed, thus fulfilling the key requirement of philosophical protreptic. If his message were that they were not doing too badly, but could do a bit better, his sermons would be dull and uninspiring. Depicting matters in black and white throws them into sharp relief, and is therefore much more powerful as a rhetorical technique; nuanced presentations are rarely as persuasive.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude with two key points that this chapter has brought to light. It was argued in the first part of the chapter that the context of classical education formed a better framework than public oratory through which to understand and appreciate what kind of activity preaching was. These sermons do not fit within set rhetorical genres, and even when comparisons were drawn between the ethical part of the sermon and the expectations

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<sup>180</sup> What benefit Chrysostom had in mind, we shall return to in Chapter 5.

of particular rhetorical genres, the genres under discussion were precisely those which have often eluded strict definition. The sermon as represented by those of Chrysostom's exegetical series is better understood not as an 'oration', as a set-piece work of rhetoric as would be delivered in the theatre, the law-courts or on festive occasions, but as something more loosely-defined, deploying rhetorical techniques perhaps, but not fulfilling the requirements of any one particular genre of oratory. It exhibits the careful explanation and severe, but loving rebukes of a teacher for his disciples, rather than of an orator for his audience, the more fluid and loose form of a lecture, than the stricter delineations of public oratory. If the (exegetical) sermon genre is to be defined, it is in following a basic pattern seen in the schools of exegesis working through a curriculum, and giving way to free exhortation.

Setting his sermons within this scholastic framework helps to explain Chrysostom's common characterisation as a stern moralist. His harsh language has often been taken as evidence for a lack of commitment from his congregation to his conception of what the Christian life should look like. This chapter has, however, begun to show that such language is part and parcel of the sermon genre, when it is read against the backdrop of pedagogical practices in the ancient world. It seems to have been something of a trope for teachers (then probably just as much as now!) to complain of poor standards among their students, and to be strict in their encouragements to do better. Such language is understandable also in the context of the two genres which the ethical sections of his sermons correspond to most closely. The diatribe or *lalia* requires direct engagement with the congregation and personal expressions of emotion, both of which can result in (among other things) strong, direct denunciations of the students' behaviour. Protreptic, on the other hand, necessitates a clear and powerful presentation of the urgent and radical transformation that the speaker's philosophy demands: to achieve this, he must condemn

their current life, and any other possible alternatives, in the strongest possible terms. His severe tone is therefore understood as reflecting his own teaching methods within the context of classical pedagogy, rather than as being an indicator of a sluggish or contrary congregation. These implications we will pursue further in Chapter 7. For now, we must continue our investigation into what kind of activity preaching was by exploring an image that seems to have been very important for Chrysostom as a way of articulating and presenting his own conception of his task, and furthermore an imagery that he shared with classical philosophers from a variety of different schools. This was the language of medicine and therapy.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Preaching and the Cure of Souls*

#### INTRODUCTION

Philosophers in antiquity often described their role in medical terms: they saw themselves as spiritual physicians, whose task it was to heal the diseases of the soul. Their disciples they saw as psychologically sick and in need of their medical attention. The medical metaphor is one that Chrysostom himself uses frequently to describe his role as preacher: he too saw his congregation as spiritually sick. Exploring his use of this metaphor, therefore, against the backdrop of earlier uses of such language among classical philosophers, will illuminate how he perceives and presents his objectives as preacher to his congregations. However, the philosophical context will prove to be only a partial parallel; we will see in the following chapter that a more fully rounded picture of his cure of souls can only be established when he is set against the background of the scriptures and Christian theology. These two chapters will thus help to flesh out further what kind of activity preaching was; but they will also establish some of the key purposes of Chrysostom's preaching, enabling us to understand better his rhetoric, so that we can create a more nuanced picture of what we can and cannot learn from his sermons and their condemnatory language about popular Christianity.

Despite being a prevalent metaphor in Chrysostom, his use of medical language to describe his activity as preacher has received little significant scholarly attention, though

there have been studies of other Church Fathers.<sup>1</sup> The main exception has been Wendy Mayer, who, in a series of recent essays, has argued that a key part of how Chrysostom saw his activity as preacher was as a ‘medico-philosophical psychic therapist.’<sup>2</sup> According to Mayer, Chrysostom was operating within a long tradition among philosophical and medical writers in which much the same language was used to describe psychic disorders and their treatment as doctors would use for physical ailments. Indeed, she further argues that it is an unhelpful modern, post-Enlightenment anachronism to draw too strict a divide between the physical and the spiritual in ancient thought: Galen would be a classic example of someone who wrote treatises on the treatment of both physical and spiritual illnesses.<sup>3</sup> Seen within this context, Mayer argues ‘the homily can no longer be read simply as Christian moral theology illustrated by medical metaphors. Instead, we are required to reframe it as a Christianised form of both medical treatise and medicinal therapy.’<sup>4</sup>

The importance of this concept of the ‘cure of souls’ in much classical philosophy has received much attention in a number of studies in recent decades. Pierre Hadot argued that classical philosophy was not so much interested in providing a systematic description or explanation of reality as an end in itself, but always had the aim of providing the individual with a ‘way of life’. In particular, he claimed that philosophy ‘appears, in the first place, as a therapeutic of the passions.’<sup>5</sup> Martha Nussbaum, in *The Therapy of Desire*, expands on this as she explores how the medical model of philosophy was developed in the three major Hellenistic schools, the Epicureans, the Stoics and the Sceptics.<sup>6</sup> She

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<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria: White 2008; Gregory of Nazianzus: Elm 2000; Augustine: Griffith 2006b, Kolbet 2009. For Gregory and Augustine see Griffith 2006a.

<sup>2</sup> Mayer 2015b, 2015c.

<sup>3</sup> Mayer 2015a, 12; see also, from the medical side, Van der Eijk 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Mayer 2015a, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Hadot 1995, 83. See also Hadot 1986.

<sup>6</sup> She draws a contrast between these schools and Plato, who, she argues, was more focussed on a truth ‘out there’ than engaging practically with what is going on in the human soul – cf. Nussbaum 1994, 16-24. She considers also a third view, that ‘ethical inquiry and teaching are simply the recording of traditional social

claims that ‘the medical analogy is not simply a decorative metaphor; it is an important tool both of discovery and of justification.’<sup>7</sup> It is the framework within which the philosopher understands his role and justifies his teaching to potential students. Most recently, Christopher Gill, in an essay we will return to later in this chapter, has further argued that, though philosophers frequently use the language of surgery, in practice there is a much closer analogy with regimen: ‘The main focus is on promoting a way of life and set of attitudes that will prevent distress and (what the theory presents as) psychological sickness.’<sup>8</sup> A number of studies, then, have demonstrated not just the pervasiveness of medical language in philosophical works, but the centrality of the metaphor for understanding the very nature of their role as philosophers.

‘Empty is the word of the philosopher by whom no passion (πάθος) of man is healed. For just as medicine has no use unless it heals the diseases of the body, so too philosophy has no use unless it casts out the passion (πάθος) of the soul.’<sup>9</sup> This Epicurean comment was quoted by the Neoplatonist Porphyry, and a very similar sentiment can also be found in a collection of maxims attributed to the Pythagoreans.<sup>10</sup> It therefore appears to be a maxim commonly in use among philosophers of a variety of schools: philosophy’s main function is the cure of souls, and if it does not go any way to achieving this, it is useless. Amongst the Stoics, Epictetus described the philosopher’s classroom as a hospital, from which they should leave in pain rather than pleasure: ‘for you have not come in healthy, but one has dislocated his shoulder, another has an abscess, another a fistula,

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belief and have no legitimate goal beyond this’ (p. 24). Apart from possibly finding it in Aristotle, she considers it most widespread in orators and poets rather than in the philosophical schools.

<sup>7</sup> Nussbaum 1994, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Gill 2013, 341.

<sup>9</sup> Κενός ἐκείνου φιλοσόφου λόγος, ὅφ’ οὐ μὴδὲν πάθος ἀνθρώπου θεραπεύεται· ὡσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς οὐδὲν ὄφελος, εἰ μὴ τὰς νόσους τῶν σωματίων θεραπεύει, οὕτως οὐδὲ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβάλλει πάθος. Epicur. fr. 221, *ap.* Porph. *Marc.* 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Sent. Pythag.* 50

another a headache.’<sup>11</sup> Cicero, influenced by Stoic teaching, argued that ‘there is indeed a medical art for the soul – namely, philosophy.’<sup>12</sup> For both, philosophy does for the soul what medicine does for the body. Finally, The Middle Platonists Plutarch and Maximus of Tyre both wrote treatises dedicated to this theme, the former’s entitled ‘Whether the sufferings of the soul are worse than those of the body,’ and the latter’s ‘Which diseases are harsher, those of the body or those of the soul?’<sup>13</sup> Across all the major philosophical schools, then, and throughout antiquity, a fundamental goal of the philosopher’s activity was the cure of souls.

Mayer sees Chrysostom’s own therapy of the soul as being firmly situated within this tradition. In a discussion of his treatise *To those who were scandalized*, she concludes that,

if we stripped out the copious scriptural exempla adduced throughout the treatise and substituted another concept of the divine for the Christian God, what we have here is a treatise on correcting the errors and passions of the soul that could have been written equally by Galen or one of the Stoic-Epicurean practical-ethical philosophers.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, medical language seems to have provided an important conceptual framework for Chrysostom in which he could understand his task as preacher, and we see this above all in his treatise *On the Priesthood*. The treatise purports to be a defence of his reasons for refusing ordination, a refusal which entailed reneging on a promise made to his best friend Basil that they would accept or reject ordination together: Basil, he argues, was much more suited to and worthy of such an exalted position, and it would be to the detriment of the

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<sup>11</sup> ἔρχεσθε γὰρ οὐχ ὑγιεῖς, ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ὤμιον ἐκβεβληκῶς, ὁ δ’ ἀπόστημα ἔχων, ὁ δὲ σύριγγα, ὁ δὲ κεφαλαλγῶν. Epict. 3.23.30.

<sup>12</sup> *est profecto animi medicina, philosophia*, Cic. *Tusc.* 3.6.

<sup>13</sup> Περὶ τοῦ πότερον τὰ ψυχῆς ἢ τὰ σώματος πάθη χεῖρονα, Plu. *Moralia* 500B-502A; Πότερα χαλεπότερα νοσήματα, τὰ τοῦ σώματος ἢ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς; Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 7. The titles are not necessarily original to their authors, but usefully summarise the contents. Gill 2013, 342-5, has a useful survey of some of the key works to survive on the philosophical therapy of the soul.

<sup>14</sup> Mayer 2015b, 153.

Church to deprive it of such a man as priest.<sup>15</sup> There has been some debate concerning the veracity of this narrative, and consequently also concerning the precise nature and purpose of the treatise.<sup>16</sup> It bears many similarities to Gregory of Nazianzus' second oration, which also purports to be a defence of his flight from ordination, and continues more generally a theme running through the history of the early church of demonstrating reluctance for ordination.<sup>17</sup> To some extent, then, the treatise could be seen as expressing, ironically, his suitability for the priesthood. In addition to this, both his and Gregory's treatise complain that too many accept the responsibility lightly and with little concern for the seriousness of the office: Chrysostom, for example, laments that 'no-one wants to look for one who is suitable or to make some test of his soul.'<sup>18</sup> The works also function, therefore, on another level as condemnations of the perceived abuses of clerical office. Whatever the specific motivation for writing the treatise was, one thing does seem clear: in it Chrysostom is attempting to set out a highly idealised picture of the priesthood.

In this idealised portrait, preaching plays an important role. It occupies, in fact, the best part of book 4 and the entirety of book 5 (about a sixth of the total six-book work). It is revealing how he introduces the topic. He begins by comparing the preacher's task with that of those who heal the body: the doctor of the body, he says, has a variety of drugs, surgical instruments and dietary recommendations by which he can relieve his patient's suffering; and even then, the patient may recover by themselves through being exposed to the right climate or getting a good night's sleep. The priest, however, has only one means by which he can cure the sufferings of the soul: 'teaching through the sermon' (ἡ διὰ τὸν

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<sup>15</sup> Chrys. *De sac.* 1.3.

<sup>16</sup> Kelly 1995, 26-8, and Malingrey 1980, 19-21, arguing for, and Lochbrunner 1993, 23-8, against. On the treatise, see also Sterk 2004, 149-53. Black 2005, 184-220, argues that the treatise should be seen as a philosophical dialogue, followed by Rylaarsdam 2014, 201-4.

<sup>17</sup> Dudley 1991, 162, who gives as examples Martin of Tours, Ambrose of Milan, Paulinus of Nola, Jerome and Augustine. One is reminded also of the more recent consecration of Justin Welby as Archbishop of Canterbury in March 2013, who claimed that he took on the role 'in weakness, fear and much trembling.'

<sup>18</sup> εἰς δὲ τὸν ἐπιτήδειον οὐδεὶς ὄρῶν βούλεται, οὐδὲ ψυχῆς τινα ποιεῖσθαι βάσανον, Chrys. *De sac.* 3.11.21-3. Cf. Gr. Naz. *Or.* 2.8.

λόγου διδασκαλία).<sup>19</sup> ‘This is,’ he claims, ‘the best instrument, the best nourishment, the best climate; this replaces drugs, cautery and iron; and if this can do nothing, all else is useless.’<sup>20</sup> He sees his own role as priest and preacher as parallel to doctors of the body. By introducing this central topic in this way, Chrysostom demonstrates the importance of the medical model to his conception of the purpose of preaching, and thus to his conception of the ideal priest. Such language indeed, as Mayer has shown, permeates his preaching. The ideal priest, like the ideal philosopher before him, is a physician of souls. Like the philosophers, he describes his task as doing everything possible to bring diseased souls to health.

It is clear, then, that this medical language was important for Chrysostom in understanding his role, as it was for philosophers in the classical tradition. Both saw themselves as therapists of the soul. However, Mayer’s arguments to some extent overstate the case, and do not draw attention to the differences between Chrysostom’s therapy of the soul, and that of a classical ‘medico-philosophical psychic therapist’. Indeed, she overlooks the fact that medical language is also employed in the Bible, even if not to the same extent. The influence of the scriptures on his thinking should not be underestimated, given that he is generally supposed to have learnt them by heart during his time as a hermit, and not to mention that his sermons were preached within the context of the liturgical reading of scripture.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Mayer would like to reject altogether the term ‘theology’ from understanding Chrysostom, suggesting that it is ‘a modern, etc construct,’ and instead would like to approach him under the heading of ‘(Christian)

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<sup>19</sup> Chrys. *De sac.* 4.3. As will be seen later in the chapter, however, Chrysostom does in fact consider the Christian to have other medicines at his disposal.

<sup>20</sup> Τοῦτο ὄργανον, τοῦτο τροφή, τοῦτο ἀέρων κράσις ἀρίστη· τοῦτο ἀντὶ φαρμάκου, τοῦτο ἀντὶ πυρός, τοῦτο ἀντὶ σιδήρου· κἂν καῦσαι δέη καὶ τεμεῖν, τούτῳ χρήσασθαι ἀνάγκη· κἂν τοῦτο μηδὲν ἰσχύσῃ, πάντα οἴχεται τὰ λοιπά. *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> See in particular Amirav 2003, who argues that late antiquity was a scripture-saturated world in which Christian rhetoric was just as much determined by the long tradition of scriptural interpretation as by the conventions of the classical *paideia*.

philosophy'.<sup>22</sup> Whilst acknowledging that theological studies of Chrysostom have tended to overlook his historical context, I do not, however, think we should therefore see him purely within a classical philosophical tradition. Indeed, what distinguished Christianity from 'pagan' philosophy was the concept of a personal God, and this God has, for Chrysostom, a profound impact upon his understanding of the cure of souls.

In these two chapters, then, I wish to explore in greater detail precisely how Chrysostom conceived of himself as a physician of the soul. We will begin by assessing the similarities between him and the classical tradition in this chapter, and then in the following chapter we will proceed to explore how his theology and the scriptures led to a rather different employment of the language of medicine.

#### CHRYSOSTOM AS PHILOSOPHICAL THERAPIST

We begin, then, by assessing Chrysostom's similarity with the non-Christian 'medico-philosophical psychic therapists' before him. Although here we will largely be confirming Mayer's thesis, this is a necessary task if we are to understand fully the differences which we will explore in the following chapter. That said, her work so far has focussed predominantly on his treatises, and so there is opportunity to develop further the ways in which Chrysostom the preacher can be considered a spiritual therapist. We will explore the similarities under four headings: the nature of the illness, the place of rational agency, the role of therapeutic discourse and the rebuilding of a health-giving belief-set.

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<sup>22</sup> Mayer 2015b, 144.

*The nature of the illness*

Let us turn straight to an illuminating passage from our homilies on Titus and Philemon. Having concluded his exegesis of Titus 1:11 on men who sought to be teachers of the Church for the sake of financial reward, he begins his exhortation as follows:

Οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν, ὃ μὴ λυμαίνεται ταῦτα τὰ πάθη· ἀλλ' ὥσπερ πνεύματά τινα ἄγρια εἰς γαληνὸν ἐμπεσόντα πέλαγος, ὅλον αὐτὸ κάτωθεν ἀνασπᾶ, ὡς καὶ τὴν ἄμμον τοῖς κύμασιν ἀναμιγνύουσι· οὕτω ταῦτα τὰ πάθη εἰς ψυχὴν εἰσιόντα, πάντα ἄνω καὶ κάτω ποιεῖ, πηροῖ τὸ διορατικὸν τῆς διανοίας, μάλιστα δὲ ἡ τῆς δόξης μανία. Χρημάτων μὲν γὰρ εὐκόλον καταφρονῆσαι τῷ βουλομένῳ· τῆς δὲ παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν τιμῆς ὑπεριδεῖν, πολλοῦ δεῖ πόνου, μεγάλης φιλοσοφίας, ψυχῆς τινος ἀγγελικῆς αὐτῆς ἀπτομένης τῆς κορυφῆς τῆς ἀψίδος τῆς οὐρανίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν οὕτω πάθος τυραννικὸν καὶ πανταχοῦ κρατοῦν, ἐκ πλείονος μὲν καὶ ἐλάττονος μοίρας, πανταχοῦ δὲ ὅμως.

For there is nothing which these passions do not ruin, but just as when fierce winds fall upon a calm sea and churn it all up from the depths, so that the sand is stirred up with the waves – so too when these passions come upon a soul, they turn everything upside down and cloud the mental sight, and none more so than the mad desire for glory. Whoever wants to can easily despise money; but to think nothing of honour from the multitude requires great effort, a strong philosophy and a certain angelic soul that touches the very summit of the vault of heaven. There is no passion, no passion so tyrannical and having dominion everywhere – to a greater or lesser degree perhaps, but still everywhere.<sup>23</sup>

Though not directly using medical language, Chrysostom diagnoses a potential problem with the soul, namely the suffering brought about by an uncontrolled passion, in this case vainglory. Vainglory is compared to a storm falling upon a calm sea, throwing the soul into turmoil and confusion. Towards the end of the passage, it is a tyrant that takes over the soul. This storm, this tyrant stands opposed to the reasoning faculty of the soul, the *διανοία* which it ‘clouds’: the person can no longer think clearly and act rationally, but is instead controlled by this passion.

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<sup>23</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 2.740D-E.

Furthermore, he describes this passion as a ‘mad desire for glory’, literally, the soul’s ‘madness of glory’ (ἡ τῆς δόξης μανία).<sup>24</sup> Mayer, in her recent work on madness in Chrysostom, identifies two different types of madness, ‘the purely physiological and involuntary; and a volitional madness with its aetiology in the soul, that occurs when the passions (ἐπιθυμῖαι) or θυμός take control of the rational intellect.’ In other words, there is what we might consider more mental illness on the one hand, and on the other a lack of rational agency through the soul’s subjection to a passion or passions. She asserts that ‘culpability attaches to the latter, but not to the former,’<sup>25</sup> that is, allowing the passions to take control of the soul is a moral failing, a vice, a sin. In the passage above, we are evidently dealing with the latter type of madness, the subjection of the rational intellect to the passions, and thus to be suffering with vainglory is, according to Mayer, volitional, and therefore a sin.

This thesis has also been argued for recently by Raymond Laird in his investigation into Chrysostom’s understanding of the γνώμη, which he translates as the ‘mindset’. He argues that for Chrysostom, ‘Sin is presented as the result of a distorted γνώμη.’<sup>26</sup>

When all is in order with enlightened λογισμός acting as the ἡγεμονικόν (ruling principle) in the soul, the γνώμη is subject to right reason, the διάνοια regains its true sight, and the desires are under control of a ὀρθή γνώμη (right mindset). Then right κρισεῖς (judgments) are then able to be made, and the προαίρεσις makes right moral choices. When the desires are allowed their rein, this order is thrown into confusion. Right reason is dethroned and a corrupted γνώμη takes its place as the ruling principle in the soul. Reason is not able to function as intended with the result that all judgments suffer from the distortion imparted to them by a corrupted γνώμη in which the desires or passions are often allowed to dominate.<sup>27</sup>

This distortion of the right ordering of the soul is understood by Chrysostom as a moral failing, as a sin. This distortion is what he also refers to as a spiritual sickness, which it is

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<sup>24</sup> On Chrysostom’s attitude towards vainglory, see Roskam 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Mayer forthcoming.

<sup>26</sup> Laird 2012, 258.

<sup>27</sup> Laird 2012, 250.

his job, at least in part, as spiritual physician, to cure. In the exhortation of the third homily on Philemon, he draws a direct comparison between the treatment of those suffering with fever that they may be restored to full health, and God's treatment of sinners that they may sin no more.<sup>28</sup> Sin is to the soul what sickness is to the body. Elsewhere, indeed, he describes wanton extravagance as a 'fever' (πυρετός)<sup>29</sup> and lustful thoughts as 'ulcers' (ἔλκοι) and 'wounds' (τραύματα).<sup>30</sup> Heresy, too, was considered a sin, a madness, an illness: a little later in *On the Priesthood* after the passage quoted above, he refers to those 'ill' (νοσοῦσιν) with the teachings of Valentinus and Marcion and those 'raging with the madness of Sabellius' (οἱ τὴν Σαβελλίου μαινόμενοι μανίαν). Such teachers do not think straight, but have allowed excessive passions to cloud their reason and lead them into error.<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding differences between the various schools, in broad outline this picture of spiritual sickness as being the control of the passions in place of the reason, and this being understood in terms of a moral failing, was common to all philosophical traditions. Plato called 'mindlessness' (ἄνοια) a 'disease of the soul' (νόσος ψυχῆς), and claimed that excessive pleasure or pain are the greatest of the soul's diseases: 'For when a man is overjoyed or, on the contrary, suffers from grief, and is hasty in his eagerness to choose the former and escape the latter, he is unable either to see or to hear anything rightly, but he is raving and at that time least capable of exercising reason.'<sup>32</sup> The passions are pitted against reason, and when the former are in control, the soul is diseased. Seneca similarly considers the passions to be 'objectionable movements of the spirit' (*motus animi inprobabiles*), which, if not brought under control at an early stage bring disease upon the

<sup>28</sup> We will return to God's role as physician below, pp. 160-70.

<sup>29</sup> Chrys. *In Col. Hom.* 7.378A.

<sup>30</sup> *C. lud. et theat.* PG 56.267.47-8.

<sup>31</sup> *De sac.* 4.4; see also Mayer 2015a, 22.

<sup>32</sup> περιχαρῆς γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ὧν ἢ καὶ τάναντία ὑπὸ λύπης πάσχων, σπεύδων τὸ μὲν ἐλεῖν ἀκαίρως, τὸ δὲ φυγεῖν, οὔτε ὄρᾶν οὔτε ἀκούειν ὀρθὸν οὐδὲν δύναται, λυττᾶ δὲ καὶ λογισμοῦ μετασχεῖν ἤκιστα τότε δὴ δυνατός ἐστι. Pl. *Ti.* 86B-C. For a discussion of the context of this passage, see Sassi 2013.

soul. Such diseases are ‘hardened and chronic vices’ (*inveterata vitia et dura*) which ‘have enfolded the mind in too close a grip’ (*animum implicuerunt*).<sup>33</sup> Again, the mind, the reason, is controlled by the passions, and such a state of affairs is a vice.

This theme was recently explored in a collection of essays entitled *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*,<sup>34</sup> and throughout it is clear that for many philosophical schools vice meant being subject to uncontrolled emotion, virtue being the control of reason. In the collection of essays, William Fortenbaugh argues that for Aristotle moral virtue is ‘a disposition to act’: it is a part of the character and enables one to respond to situations in a measured, reflective way, rather than from a thoughtless emotional reflex.<sup>35</sup> For the Neopythagoreans, Johan Thom informs us that virtue equates to finding ‘the mean between the vices of deficiency and excess, or as the “due proportion” of passions.’<sup>36</sup> Edgar Krentz suggests that for the early Stoics Zeno and Chrysippus, virtue is ‘a disposition and faculty of the governing principle of the soul brought into being by reason, or rather: reason itself, consistent, firm and unwavering.’<sup>37</sup> The theme that runs throughout is that vice is equated with or related to uncontrolled passions, whilst virtue consists of the use of reason in approaching any given situation.

Plutarch, in his fragmentary essay *Can vice cause unhappiness?*, draws a similar comparison to Chrysostom in the dominance of the passions being like a tyranny.<sup>38</sup> Tyrants can make people miserable, he says, by inflicting them with all sorts of torture; the soul can, however, use his or her faculty of reason to overcome the pain. When tortured by

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<sup>33</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 75.11-2.

<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald (ed.), 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Fortenbaugh 2008, 41-4.

<sup>36</sup> Thom 2008, 69.

<sup>37</sup> Krentz 2008, 129.

<sup>38</sup> The image is also used by the first-century BC Stoic Arius Didymus, who describes the passions as taking over the person, and no matter how much one may try to reason with an individual suffering in this way, he will not listen: ‘they are led,’ he says, ‘by their passions to the point of being controlled by their tyranny’ (ἄγονται ὑπὸ τῶν παθῶν εἰς τὸ ὑπὸ τῆς τούτων κρατεῖσθαι τυραννίδος), Stob. 2.7.10b.

vice, however, one cannot do this, because the very nature of vice is uncontrolled passion that overpowers the rational faculty of the soul:

θυμῷ δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐπιτάξειας ἡσυχίαν οὐδὲ πένθει σιωπὴν· οὔτε φοβούμενον στήναι πείσειας, οὔτε δυσφοροῦντα μετανοία μὴ βοῆσαι μηδὲ τῶν τριχῶν λαβέσθαι ἢ τὸν μηρὸν κροῦσαι. οὕτω καὶ πυρός ἐστιν ἢ κακία καὶ σιδήρου βιαιότερα.

You could not instruct anger to be at peace nor grief to be silent: nor could you persuade one who is afraid to stand their ground, nor the one struggling with regret not to cry out, pull their hair or strike their thigh. Thus vice is more violent than even fire and sword.<sup>39</sup>

Plutarch here connects vice very closely with the passions of anger, grief, fear and regret: vice, I suspect, we should understand, as above, as the disposition of the individual, and the passions are the tools it employs to wreak havoc on the soul, in the same way that the tyrant uses his instruments of torture to bring pain upon the body. In other words, a ‘vicious’ person is one who does not control his passions, and therefore cannot because of the way they overpower the mind, whilst the virtuous person is one whose mind is in control of their actions and reactions.

In the following chapter we will come on to where Chrysostom parts company with the classical philosophers in his understanding of the nature of what is wrong with the human soul, but what we can see is that when he describes what is wrong as being to do with uncontrolled passions clouding rational thought, he is echoing, consciously or not, the language and thought of the major classical schools of philosophy. This imbalance in the soul they all refer to as a madness, an illness and a moral failing. We turn now to consider their common approaches to the therapy of this illness.

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<sup>39</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 498E.

*The place of rational agency*

Given what we have seen so far of spiritual sickness being the subjection of rational thought to the passions, it is unsurprising that a large part of the therapy consisted in re-establishing the control of the reason. All the philosophical schools stressed the place of rational thought. Gill argues that the psychological framework all schools assumed was that, ‘All, or virtually all, adult human beings have some scope for exercising rational agency with a view to taking forward their development towards virtue and happiness.’<sup>40</sup> Leaving aside the goal of happiness for the time being, the point he makes is that the development towards virtue – that is, progress towards moral and spiritual health – is achieved through the exercise of the reason. He does note differences between the Stoics and Epicureans on the one hand, and the Platonists and Aristotelians on the other in the extent to which they would allow room for other factors in assisting ethical development, but nonetheless the use of rational thought is important for them all.

If we return to the passage quoted above from Chrysostom’s second homily on Titus, we begin to see the important place of reason in his therapy. The therapy expressed in this passage consists of three elements. First is ‘great effort’: since the passions are fighting against and controlling the reason, it takes a great mental effort to push back against it. Secondly, there is required a ‘strong philosophy’: by this he means a mind that is fully furnished with all the precepts and tools of the philosopher in order to withstand the onset of the passions, or, in other words, to have made substantial moral progress towards a virtuous disposition. Thirdly, there is need of a ‘certain angelic soul that touches the very summit of heaven’: this seems very reminiscent of particularly the Platonic notion of the ascent of the soul to the divine. This is most famously expressed in Plato’s allegory

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<sup>40</sup> Gill 2013, 350.

of the cave in book 7 of the *Republic*: souls trapped in the darkness of this world see but shadows of reality, and they can only enter upon reality itself when they look up to the light of the sun and leave behind the darkness of the cave.<sup>41</sup> It is their earthly nature with its desires and passions which keep them chained to the cave and unable to look up to the light. Having this ‘angelic soul that touches the very summit of heaven’ means having an intellect that is freed from bondage to earthly passions and is therefore able to overpower even the tyrannical passion of vainglory.

Furthermore, the overarching aim of philosophical therapy as outlined by Gill is the establishment of a better pattern of thinking in order to sustain a correct internal balance of the soul: such therapy is ‘designed to enable him to rebuild his belief-set in a way that provides a secure basis for development away from the framework of beliefs that generates psychological sickness and towards well-being.’<sup>42</sup> To achieve this end of restructuring the soul required the removal of false beliefs and the acceptance of true ones.<sup>43</sup> Porphyry spoke of two exercises (μελέται) we must undergo: getting rid of all things related to our mortal nature, and re-ascending and returning to the ‘intellectual beings’ (νοεραὶ οὐσίαι).<sup>44</sup> Whether on issues of doctrine or practice, much of Chrysostom’s preaching is taken up with encouraging them to change their thinking. We can see this worked out in practice as he continues in the second homily on Titus:

Πῶς ἂν οὖν αὐτοῦ περιγενοίμεθα, εἰ καὶ μὴ κατὰ κράτος, ἀλλὰ κἂν ἐξ ἐλαχίστου μέρους; Ἄν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβλέπωμεν, ἂν τὸν Θεὸν σχῶμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν, ἂν μείζω τῶν γήινων λάβωμεν λογισμόν. Ἐννόησον, ὅταν ἐπιθυμῆς δόξης, ὅτι αὐτῆς ἐπέτυχες, καὶ μάθε τὸ τέλος, καὶ οὐδὲν εὐρήσεις. Ἐννόησον ὅσην ἔχει τὴν ζημίαν τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὅσων καὶ ἡλικῶν ἀποστερεῖ

<sup>41</sup> Pl. *R.* 514A-520A. Cf. Bosinis 2006 for Chrysostom’s use of Platonic imagery.

<sup>42</sup> Gill 2013, 351.

<sup>43</sup> Philosophical therapy in the broad sense in fact consisted of three elements: protreptic (the exhortation to submit to therapy), the therapy itself (the removal of false beliefs) and advice (the replacement with true beliefs) – cf. Gill 2013, 342-3. For protreptic in Chrysostom, see above, pp. 105-8.

<sup>44</sup> Porph. *Abst.* 1.30. Cf. Hadot 1995, 100. We should compare also Paul’s exhortation at Colossians 3:2 to ‘set your minds on things above, not on earthly things’ (τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).

ἀγαθῶν· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ πόνους ὑποστήσει καὶ τοὺς κινδύνους, τῶν δὲ καρπῶν ἀποστερηθήσῃ καὶ τῶν ἐπάθλων. Ἐννόει ὅτι οἱ πλείστοι κακοὶ, καὶ καταφρόνησον αὐτῶν τῆς δόξης. Καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστον ἀναλόγισαι τί ἐστὶ, καὶ ὄψει τὸ πρᾶγμα γέλωτος γέμον· ὄψει ὅτι αἰσχύνῃ μᾶλλον, ἢ δόξα τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐστὶ.

How, then, could we overcome it, even if not completely, but just in some small part? If we look up to heaven, if we have God before our eyes, if we have thoughts greater than earthly things. Consider, when you desire glory, that you have achieved it, and understand the end, and you will find it to be nothing. Consider how great a penalty the thing has, of how many and of how great blessings it deprives you. For you will undergo toils and snares, but you will be deprived of the fruits and the rewards. Consider that most people are wicked, and despise their glory. Take thought for what each case is individually, and you will see that the matter is quite ridiculous. You will see that it is rather a cause of shame than of glory.<sup>45</sup>

Notice to begin with that the therapy is to some extent limited in its goals: he only expects them to control the passion of vainglory ‘just in some small part’ and not ‘completely’. Here he picks up on the philosophical notion of moral progress (προκοπή), in use particularly among the Stoics.<sup>46</sup> Complete mastery would be the eventual goal, but for the moment he encourages them along the path to perfection with more manageable achievements.<sup>47</sup>

The therapy, then, consists of turning one’s thoughts to God and the contemplation (θεωρία)<sup>48</sup> of the divine on the one hand, and away from earthly concerns on the other. These are, in reverse order, the two sides of the therapy, the removal of false teaching and the establishment of the true. Chrysostom urges them first to ‘look up to heaven,’ to ‘have God before our eyes’ and ‘to have thoughts greater than earthly things.’ In Plato’s language, they are to look out of the cave and up to the light of the sun. Then, secondly, the therapy turns to the expulsion of earthly concerns. Three times he tells them to

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<sup>45</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 2.740F-741A.

<sup>46</sup> Fitzgerald 2008, 15; cf. also Plutarch’s essay ‘How might one perceive his progress towards virtue?’, *Moralia* 75A-86A.

<sup>47</sup> A number of Christian authors in antiquity taught that there were two ‘tracks’ of Christianity, the path of perfection and of ἀπάθεια (complete freedom from the passions) for some, whilst for others more moderate goals were considered acceptable. See, e.g., Knuutila 2004, 134-5.

<sup>48</sup> For an overview of the use of this term in ancient philosophy, see the entry in BNP.

‘consider’ (ἐννόησον, ἐννόει) what the result of their desire for glory will be: once the glory has been won, it will be disappointingly unsatisfying; it may promise much, but it costs much more in the toil and labour expended than it can possibly reward; most people in any case are not worth having glory from. This last point is extended by a further command to ‘take thought’ (ἀναλόγισαι) for each person individually whose good opinion one is seeking, and to realise how ridiculous all the energy being invested in the endeavour is. In this way he is seeking to restructure their thinking in such a way that they will no longer succumb to the passion of vainglory, but will instead be able to overcome the passion through the use of their minds. Like classical philosophers, he is encouraging his congregation to live ‘in conformity with the nature of man, which is none other than reason’:<sup>49</sup> our reason (λόγος – the root of ἀναλογίζομαι) or intellect (νοῦς – the root of ἐννοέω) is superior to the body with its desires and is the core of what it means to be human, and it therefore should be used to control or subdue the un-human and irrational passions. Much of the rest of the exhortation continues with similar thought exercises to restructure their belief-set and thus subdue the passion of vainglory.

### *The role of therapeutic discourse*

Another feature that Gill identifies as common to many philosophical schools is the formulation of the central message in a way which engages the individual’s mind and begins the therapeutic task. In other words, philosophical lectures, treatises etc. are themselves part of the therapy as they encourage the person’s mind to reassert control in the soul. Seneca, for example, explains to his friend Lucilius that he is writing down for later generations some ‘wholesome counsels’ (*salutares admonitiones*), which he

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<sup>49</sup> Hadot 1995, 102.

compares to the ‘prescriptions of useful drugs’ (*medicamentorum utilium compositiones*) for the beneficial effect they have had on curing his own spiritual wounds.<sup>50</sup> Chrysostom, likewise, in the passage quoted above from *On the Priesthood*, states that the only real medicine the Christian spiritual physician can make use of to cure the souls of his congregation is his teaching.<sup>51</sup> His sermon, like the philosopher’s lecture, is itself part of the therapy.

In theory, sermons and lectures were therapeutic through the careful administration of harsh and gentle medicine as accommodation to souls in different conditions, the μέικτος τρόπος discussed in Chapter 3. In Plato’s dialogue the *Phaedrus*, Socrates teaches that as the doctor must know how to apply different types of medicine to different bodies, so the rhetorician must know how to adapt his speech to suit different souls, ‘fitting each one to the other.’<sup>52</sup> Chrysostom similarly praises the apostle Paul, as someone who ‘varied his discourse according to the needs of his disciples, sometimes cutting and cauterising, sometimes applying a gentle medicine.’<sup>53</sup> In a sermon on John 5:17, he begins by reminding them of the harsh language of the previous sermon – having seen that his words have had an effect, he will move to gentler teaching in order not to ‘tear open the wound’.<sup>54</sup> Lectures and sermons were considered vital tools in performing surgery upon the soul, even if in practice, as we saw in Chapter 3, Chrysostom and other spiritual physicians more often employed harsh rather than gentle medicine.

In a similar way, the words of others can be used as medicine. This is more prominent in Chrysostom, who considers the scriptures to be medicine for the soul:

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<sup>50</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 8.2 – trans. R.M. Gummere.

<sup>51</sup> See above, pp. 115-6.

<sup>52</sup> ἁρμόττων ἕκαστον ἑκάστῳ, Pl. *Phdr.* 271B. For this and further examples from the rhetorical tradition, see Rylaarsdam 2014, 18-22.

<sup>53</sup> ἐποίκιλε τὸν λόγον πρὸς τὴν τῶν μαθητευομένων χρείαν, νῦν μὲν καίων καὶ τέμνων, νῦν δὲ προσηνῆ φάρμακα ἐπιτιθεῖς, Chrys. *In Gal. comm.* 1.657D-658A; Rylaarsdam 2006, 465. For Paul’s own indebtedness to the philosophical tradition of adaptability, see Glad 1995.

<sup>54</sup> ἵνα μὴ ... ἀναξάνω τὸ ἔλκος, Chrys. *Pater m. usq. mod. op.* 10, PG 63, 512.41-2.

towards the beginning of his third sermon *On Lazarus* he explains to his congregation how important the scriptures are in dealing with the temptations of everyday life. ‘We need the divine medicines in order to heal the wounds we have, and to check those wounds which we do not yet have but will have.’<sup>55</sup> As a result, he urges his congregation to pay attention to the scriptures as they are explained in church, and to read them regularly at home, dismissing the excuses they often proffer for not doing so.<sup>56</sup> Elsewhere he calls the scriptures a ‘chest of medicines’ (ἀποθήκη φαρμάκων).<sup>57</sup> Philosophers too, however, placed a similar importance on the use of texts; we have already seen, to begin with, that the reading and exegeting of older works formed a key part of the curriculum of philosophical schools. Though not directly using medical language, Epictetus criticises those who boast about their mastery of texts, but without it having had any effect upon their souls and the choices they make. The implication is that texts are to be used as medicine for the soul, and not read as purely academic exercises.<sup>58</sup> It was not just the philosophers who thought this way: the poet Horace similarly speaks of ‘words and sayings’ (*verba et voces*) which can heal a soul that is ‘feverish with avarice and wretched covetousness’ (*fervet avaritia miseroque cupidine*).<sup>59</sup> There was, then, a widespread appreciation of the therapeutic value of texts.

### *The rebuilding of a health-giving belief set*

Finally, the cure of souls is not seen as an instant fix. The restructuring of an individual’s belief-set is a long-term strategy, which in the medical analogy corresponds to the notion

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<sup>55</sup> καὶ δεῖ τῶν θεῶν φαρμάκων ἡμῖν, ἵνα καὶ τὰ γινόμενα ἔλκη θεραπεύωμεν, καὶ τὰ μηδέπω μὲν γινόμενα, μέλλοντα δὲ γίνεσθαι, προαναστέλλωμεν. Chrys. *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.993.12-5.

<sup>56</sup> See also *In Ioh. hom.* 11, PG 59.77.26-78.58.

<sup>57</sup> *In Col. hom.* 9.391C.

<sup>58</sup> Epict. 1.4.4-17.

<sup>59</sup> Hor. *Ep.* 1.1.33-5. On both, see also Snyder 2000, 36-7.

of regimen, of establishing a healthy lifestyle to ward off future sickness from the body. Indeed, Gill sees this to be at the heart of the philosophical cure of souls and the reason why medical language could be so widely used:

Philosophers, notably Stoics and Epicureans, used the medical analogy, especially terms that evoke drugs and surgery, specifically to characterize the function of philosophical therapy (as distinct from protreptic and advice), namely to remove misguided beliefs that promote psychological sickness. However, there is a much closer, and non-metaphorical, relationship between regimen and philosophical discourse in this area. This is particularly true if we do not just focus on the ‘therapy’ dimension of philosophical discourse, but consider the overall aims of this kind of practice, integrating protreptic, therapy, and advice. Indeed, advice on the long-term management of one’s life, with a view to physical or psychological health is the main common thread. The fact that regimen plays such a substantial role in ancient medicine may indeed have been one of the factors that made it plausible for philosophers to present their guidance as psychological medicine.<sup>60</sup>

In other words, philosophical therapy should be seen as ultimately providing a ‘diet’, a regimen, for the soul. As already argued for by Hadot, philosophers encouraged their adherents to undertake ‘spiritual exercises’, exercises designed to bring about ‘a profound transformation of the individual’s mode of seeing and being.’<sup>61</sup>

Such exercises involve principally the cultivation of habit. It is out of habit that people unthinkingly follow their passions and desires, and so any good philosophical therapy will help to inculcate more positive habits. Discussing Plutarch, Simo Knuuttila writes: ‘Because of the affective aspect of emotions, one cannot improve the passionate part simply by argument. Making it moderate and controllable needs long training and habituation.’<sup>62</sup> Again, later, he claims that, ‘Like Plato, Galen thought that the spirited part can be habituated to act in a way that strengthens good intentions.’<sup>63</sup> Epictetus argued that succumbing to a passion is not an isolated event, but feeds the habit, and makes resistance

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<sup>60</sup> Gill 2013, 347-8.

<sup>61</sup> Hadot 1995, 83. See also Rabbow 1954.

<sup>62</sup> Knuuttila 2004, 92.

<sup>63</sup> Knuuttila 2004, 94. See also Wright 2008, 141-2 and Kolbet 2009, 38.

next time more difficult: bruises (μώλωπες) are left on the soul, which become wounds (έλκη) on the following occasion.<sup>64</sup> Instead, habitual patterns of thought – Hadot’s spiritual exercises – need to be developed which can overcome the passions and break the habit of vice.

Chrysostom likewise continues this tradition. His congregation, in place of their current sinful habits, are to develop new practices. This can be seen in the passage discussed above, in the series of thought experiments he puts to them, with the implication that they are to consider these points whenever they feel the pull towards vainglory. He continues after the passage quoted: ‘Whenever you have done some good deed and consider that you should also show it to men ... – consider that God sees, and you will quench that desire completely.’<sup>65</sup> The use of the indefinite (‘whenever...’) makes clear that this is a habit they are to cultivate. They are to get into the habit of remembering God’s omniscience whenever tempted to vainglory. In one of the catechetical homilies, he urges them to get into the habit of repeating to themselves the words they uttered at their baptism – ‘I renounce you Satan, and your pomp and your service’ – as a way of battling against sin in daily life.<sup>66</sup> Finally, one could even say that the often-noted repetition of particular themes (e.g. almsgiving, swearing oaths) forms part of this desire to inculcate habits, as he himself at one point indicates:

τοῦτο ἔγγραφον τῇ διανοίᾳ· διὰ τοῦτο συνεχῶς ὑπομνήσκω τούτων τῶν λόγων ὑμᾶς, ὥστε ἐντεθῆναι ὑμῶν τῇ ψυχῇ τὰ εἰρημένα ἅπαντα, ὥστε ἀνεξάλειπτον μείναι τὴν μνήμην καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς μνήμης ὠφέλειαν.

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<sup>64</sup> Epict. 2.18.11.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Ὅταν ἀγαθόν τι πράττων ἐννοῆς, ὅτι δεῖ καὶ ἀνθρώποις δεῖξαι ...’ ἐννόησον ὅτι θεὸς ὄρᾳ, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐκείνην σβεννύεις τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 2, 741A-B

<sup>66</sup> Ἀποτάσσομαι, Σατανᾶ, καὶ τῇ πομπῇ σου καὶ τῇ λατρείᾳ σου, *Illum. cat.* 2, repeated several times from PG 49.239.6 to the end.

Inscribe this on your mind. It's for this reason that I continually remind you of these words, so as to fix everything I've said in your soul, so as to indelibly preserve the memory and the benefit from the memory.<sup>67</sup>

He repeats his teaching to them that it may be inscribed on their minds, that is, that they may develop a right γνώμη which will be able to bring the passions under control.

The establishment of a spiritually healthy regimen naturally requires sustained effort. This is a point made by Plutarch in his essay on *How one can sense their progress in virtue*. The essay argues against the Stoics that attainment of virtue is a gradual process, and there are certain signs which can encourage the individual that he is on the right track. The first 'sign' that he points to is that the progress towards virtue and fight against vice has continued unabated: there is no pausing, he says, in moral development, but rather any lack of forward progress and submitting to vice are two sides of the same coin. Furthermore, the increasing infrequency of such periods of back-sliding is itself a sign of progress:

Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ διαλείμματα γιγνόμενα τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν, τὰ δ' ὕστερα τῶν πρότερον ἐδραιότερα καὶ μακρότερα, σημεῖον οὐ φαῦλόν ἐστιν ἐκθλιβομένης πόνῳ καὶ ἀσκήσει τῆς ῥαθυμίας· τὸ δ' ἐναντίον πονηρόν, αἱ μετ' οὐ πολὺν χρόνον πολλὰ καὶ συνεχεῖς ἀνακοπαί, τῆς προθυμίας οἷον ἀπομαραιομένης.

However, even if there are intervals which occur in the pursuit of philosophy, but later [periods of philosophising] are longer and more steadfast than before, this is no small sign that laziness is being eradicated through toil and training. But the opposite is wicked, when after not much time there are frequent and continued set-backs, with zeal, as it were, withering away.<sup>68</sup>

In another essay he argues that 'he is no better as a physician of the soul who removes its disturbance and distress through laziness, softness and the betrayal of friends, family and

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<sup>67</sup> *De incompr. hom.* 1.413-7.

<sup>68</sup> Plu. *Moralia* 76F.

country.’<sup>69</sup> For Plutarch, laziness is dangerous, since it entails slackening off from the regimen of a philosophic life, which can only mean a return to spiritual sickness.

For Chrysostom, likewise, idleness in fighting sin is a hallmark of spiritual sickness. As a result, he persistently warns them of the dangers of lethargy, that giving up the effort will only lead to spiritual illness. The anxiety and fear his congregation experienced during the aftermath of the Riot of the Statues was to be celebrated, he argued, because by them ‘[God] has taken away our idleness and made us more zealous’.<sup>70</sup> This is evident also in a passage we will turn to later from the fifth sermon on Titus. When the body is ill, he says, we all go to great pains to receive treatment; when the soul is ill, however, ‘we all are laid-back, all idle and all negligent.’<sup>71</sup> As we will see in the following chapter, for Chrysostom, the cure for spiritual illness is readily available and easily accessible; the problem, he says, is that they are too reluctant to part with vice and sin and follow a life of virtue. The illness itself is easy to cure – it is their negligence, their idleness, he suggests, which gets in the way.

Therefore, when seen in the context of philosophical therapy, his persistent condemnations of his congregants’ idleness should not be seen as reflecting a congregation who were uncommitted in the Christian faith, but as reflecting his own conception of his role as spiritual physician, which was in part to arouse their zeal for virtue. Because he saw laziness as the foundation of slipping into sin and illness, it was his role to ensure that they kept up the effort. We see this towards the end of the fifth sermon on Titus, when he pleads with them to wake up from their lethargy, using anaphora for added rhetorical effect: ‘For how long will we be idle (ῥάθυμοι)? For how long will we be careless? For

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<sup>69</sup> οὐδὲν δὲ βελτίων ψυχῆς ἰατρὸς ὁ ῥάθυμία καὶ μαλακία καὶ προδοσία φίλων καὶ οἰκείων καὶ πατρίδος ἔξαιρῶν τὸ παραχῶδες αὐτῆς καὶ λυπηρόν, Plu. *Moralia* 465D.

<sup>70</sup> τὴν ῥάθυμίαν ἡμῶν ἀνέστειλε, καὶ σπουδαιότερους εἰργάσατο. Chrys. *De. stat.* 6, PG 49.82.42-4.

<sup>71</sup> πάντες ἀναπεπτώκαμεν, πάντες ῥάθυμοῦμεν, πάντες ὀλιγοροῦμεν, *In Tit. hom.* 5.764C. For the passage in full, see below p. 145.

how long will we not take thought for ourselves and our fellow-servants?<sup>72</sup> Notice, too, throughout this section his use of the first person plural: this is something he believes we all need exhorting to. As we will see further later,<sup>73</sup> he sees himself as sick as they: this is an exhortation to sustained effort he proclaims to everyone. He recognises, too, that humans by nature are somewhat weak in this regard. Perfect zeal, he says, is not required, and allowance is made for human weakness, as long as there is some effort towards virtue: towards the end of the sermon, he exhorts them to ‘show just as much earnestness (σπουδή) [as God] (rather, since just as much is not possible, let us show some, even if it be less).’<sup>74</sup> He allows for the weakness of human nature, and insists that they at least make some effort, that they are at least not negligent.

## CONCLUSION

Mayer’s thesis, based largely on detailed study of his treatises and letters from exile, was that Chrysostom should be viewed within the Greco-Roman tradition of medico-philosophical psychic therapy. In this chapter we have turned attention more directly to his preaching to see his therapy worked out in the very different setting of a homily addressed to a much larger and more diverse group of people. Furthermore, we have clarified precisely how his therapy mirrored the therapy of earlier ‘medico-philosophical psychic therapists’. To some degree, he saw the problem with the human soul – its ‘illness’ – to be that of the γνώμη being subject to uncontrolled passions. The therapy lay in correcting this imbalance in the soul through the use of ‘spiritual exercises’ to inculcate patterns and habits of thought which will enable the soul to resist the tyranny of the passions, and this

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<sup>72</sup> Μέχρι τίνος ῥάθυμοι; μέχρι τίνος ἀμελείς; μέχρι τίνος καταφρονούμεν ἑαυτῶν, καὶ τῶν ὁμοδούλων ἡμῶν; *ibid.* 764D.

<sup>73</sup> See below, pp. 167, 248.

<sup>74</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 5.764E.

therapy was primarily conducted by means of his sermons. As Laird concludes his study, ‘Chrysostom’s vocation may be defined as educating the γνώμη. He understood that it was dependent upon experience and education for its formation, a process that eventually sets the γνώμη so that it becomes a store of attitudes, inclinations, aspirations, and policy.’<sup>75</sup>

Setting Chrysostom within the context of philosophical therapy enables us to add another dimension to our understanding of what his pastoral activity as preacher looked like. In the previous chapter we saw the ways in which he resembled a school teacher, with his focus on expounding texts and the harsh language he used to rebuke his disciples for their failings and to exhort them to do better. This chapter, through exploring the prevalent use of medical language, has explained something of what he perceived the nature of these failings to be and, consequently, the role of his preaching in bringing correction and healing. Therefore we see further that neither he nor other therapists of the soul called their disciples sick because they were exceptionally uncommitted to their teacher’s philosophy; rather, it was because they considered it to be the natural condition of many, if not all, to need the γνώμη to be educated and habituated through spiritual exercises and sustained effort. This says nothing about how seriously or not they took their philosophy. In fact, one could go further and say that it was part of philosophy to think in such critical ways about oneself – and this is even more the case, as we will see, with the Christian philosophy.

Indeed, despite the parallels we have seen in these two chapters with other activities that took place in the Greco-Roman world, Christian preaching was also a somewhat unique activity. The findings of both these chapters inevitably provide only part of the story for what kind of activity preaching was. Over the course of the following two chapters we will consider how important the eschatological and liturgical dimensions of preaching were for understanding Chrysostom’s pastoral activity as preacher.

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<sup>75</sup> Laird 2012, 260.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Prophetic Preaching*

In the previous chapter we demonstrated the various ways in which Chrysostom fits Mayer's description of him as a medico-philosophical psychic therapist. The argument of the chapter supported her contention, in reference to Chrysostom's treatise *To those who were scandalised*, that 'if we stripped out the copious scriptural exempla adduced throughout the treatise and substituted another concept of the divine for the Christian God, what we have here is a treatise on correcting the errors and passions of the soul that could have been written equally by Galen or one of the Stoic-Epicurean practical-ethical philosophers.'<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding that this may be true for the particular treatise she examines, it is the argument of this chapter that we cannot simply 'strip out' the citations of scripture and the concept of the Christian God as if they were nothing more than ornamentation: as we will see in the following chapter, the sermon after all formed part of an act of worship to this God. The Christian God is foundational to Chrysostom's task as spiritual physician. In this regard, though he draws on medico-philosophical language in order to explain the mechanics of sin, his conception of his task as spiritual physician is in fact significantly different, and draws on a tradition that goes back to the Old Testament prophets.

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer 2015b, 153; cited above p. 114.

## MEDICAL LANGUAGE IN THE SCRIPTURES

For the use of medical language to describe sin/error as a sickness in need of healing is by no means confined to the classical tradition. It is present already in the Hebrew scriptures, and is picked up also in the New Testament and other early Christian literature.<sup>2</sup> These were the texts which Chrysostom had supposedly spent years in the desert memorising,<sup>3</sup> and which he would have heard read as part of the liturgy at every service. Since ‘the Jewish scriptures [had become] a substitute set of classics’ around which an alternative *paideia* was constructed,<sup>4</sup> it is to be expected that the language and themes of this body of literature held at least as much sway over Christian preachers as did the ‘classics’ of the Greco-Roman tradition. We begin, therefore, by exploring how the scriptures use the language of medicine and healing.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike the philosophers studied above, the language of sickness in the scriptures very rarely refers to a disorder of the passions.<sup>6</sup> Instead, it typically describes the state of being under the judgement of God. Very often in the Old Testament, this condition manifests itself in real, actual suffering, brought about by God as judgement on human sin. A repeated refrain throughout the Old Testament declares that, though God has caused Israel’s or, sometimes, an individual’s present suffering as a judgement on them, in time he promises to bring healing. In the book of Job, Eliphaz, one of Job’s so-called comforters, tries to persuade him that God’s discipline is a good thing: ‘For he causes suffering and restores again; he strikes, and his hands heal’.<sup>7</sup> In Chronicles, God is said to promise King

<sup>2</sup> And indeed persists throughout the Christian tradition: cf., e.g., Or. *hom. in Jer.* 20.3, and above, p. 112, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly 1995, 30-2.

<sup>4</sup> Young 1997, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout I shall be referring to the Septuagint when dealing with the Old Testament, as the text which would have been used by Chrysostom.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Ps. 146(147):3, ὁ ἰώμενος τοὺς συντετριμμένους τὴν καρδίαν (‘he who heals those crushed in heart’).

<sup>7</sup> αὐτὸς γὰρ ἀλγεῖν ποιεῖ καὶ πάλιν ἀποκαθίστησιν· ἔπαισεν, καὶ αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ ἰάσαντο. Job 5:18.

Solomon that in times of drought, plague or pestilence, if the people repent of their sin and turn back to him, ‘I will be gracious to their sins and I will heal their land.’<sup>8</sup> Here it is the land that is suffering as a result of God’s judgement on Israel, but such suffering of the land inevitably means famine and disease for the people. In psalm 37 (38), the psalmist describes very vividly an intense sickness that he is experiencing, a sickness he attributes to the judgement of God for his sins: ‘For your arrows have pierced me, and you have set your hand upon me.’<sup>9</sup>

If the people’s sickness is the condition of being under the judgement of God for their rebellion and sin, the therapy for such sickness must be repentance of sin and a return to God, who will heal them of the judgement he has brought upon them. Indeed, the role of the Old Testament prophets very much appears to be one of announcing God’s judgement and urging repentance so that the people may be healed. They repeatedly promise a time of healing from God after the present time of judgement, for both Israel and the other nations.<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah condemns his fellow prophets and the priests for not fulfilling this role:

ὅτι ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου πάντες συνετελέσαντο ἄνομα, ἀπὸ ἱερέως καὶ ἕως ψευδοπροφήτου πάντες ἐποίησαν ψευδῆ. καὶ ἰῶντο τὸ σύντριμμα τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἐξουθενοῦντες καὶ λέγοντες Εἰρήνη εἰρήνη· καὶ ποῦ ἐστὶν εἰρήνη;

Because from the little of them to the great, they all perpetrated lawlessness, from priest to false-prophet, they all committed falsehood. And they heal the fracture of my people as though it were nothing, saying, ‘Peace, peace’; and where is peace?<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ὕλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν καὶ ἰάσομαι τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν. 2 Chron. 7:14.

<sup>9</sup> ὅτι τὰ βέλη σου ἐνεπάγησάν μοι, καὶ ἐπεστήρισας ἐπ’ ἐμὲ τὴν χειρὰ σου. Ps. 37(38):3.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Isa. 19:22, 30:26, 57:17-21; Jer. 33:5-6; Hosea 6:1. Cf. Rooke 2006, 393: ‘The basic concept of prophecy is that of a message from God which needs to be delivered either to a particular individual or (more often) to a group of people.... Often the message is a condemnation of perceived sin that warns the group in question of the need to amend their ways if they are to avoid punishment; at other times, most famously in the book of Ezekiel, the message is an interpretation of social and political disaster in terms of punishment for sin.... There are also promises of hope and restoration, which in the first instance are addressed to specific situations ... but which subsequently take on a more generalized character and point to an indefinite time in the future when God will make everything right again for his people.’

<sup>11</sup> Jer. 6:13-14. In the Hebrew, these verses are repeated at 8:10-11.

The problem, Jeremiah says, with the priests and those he condemns as ‘false-prophets’, is that they pronounce everything to be alright, that they have peace, when in fact they are experiencing, or about to experience, the judgement of God: ‘where is peace?’ They are not fulfilling their role in warning of judgement and exhorting repentance. A little later he cries out, ‘Is there no pine resin in Gilead, or is there no doctor there?’<sup>12</sup> Is there nothing or no-one, he says, that will bring Israel to repentance, to receive healing from God? Ezekiel similarly pronounces God’s condemnation on the ‘shepherds of Israel’:

τὸ ἡσθενηκὸς οὐκ ἐνισχύσατε καὶ τὸ κακῶς ἔχον οὐκ ἐσωματοποιήσατε καὶ τὸ συντετριμμένον οὐ κατεδήσατε καὶ τὸ πλανώμενον οὐκ ἐπεστρέψατε καὶ τὸ ἀπολωλὸς οὐκ ἐζητήσατε καὶ τὸ ἰσχυρὸν κατειργάσασθε μόχθῳ.

You have not strengthened that which is weakened; you have not revived that which is sick; you have not bound that which is fractured; you have not turned round that which has strayed; you have not sought that which is lost; and you have subdued the strong with toil.<sup>13</sup>

The healing that Israel’s leaders should have performed is equated by Ezekiel to exhorting repentance (‘turning round that which has strayed’) and bringing back the people to God (‘seeking that which is lost’).

Jesus in a similar vein, as recorded in the New Testament Gospels, also issued condemnations of the Jewish leaders of his day, though rarely using medical language to do so. His most famous use of such language is when he describes himself as a doctor, in response to the Pharisees asking him why he kept company with those they called ‘sinners’:

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς, Οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσιν οἱ υγιαίνοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλὰ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες· οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν.

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<sup>12</sup> μὴ ῥητίνη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν Γαλααδ, ἢ ἰατρὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκεῖ; Jer. 8:22.

<sup>13</sup> Ezek. 34:4.

And in reply Jesus said to them, ‘The healthy have no need of a doctor but the sick; I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’<sup>14</sup>

Like a true prophet in the Old Testament tradition, Jesus here proclaims himself as one who has come to urge repentance: indeed, in Mark’s Gospel, his very first words are: ‘The time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the Gospel.’<sup>15</sup> Jesus does not make clear that he necessarily sees the ‘sick’ as being those currently experiencing God’s judgement; but he at least sees them as those who are sinners and facing his judgement, those who are not living in readiness for the coming kingdom of God, and who need to repent and return to him. In the parable, it is the tax-collector, when he confesses his sins to God with the simple words ‘God, have mercy on me the sinner,’ who, Jesus says, ‘went to his house justified before God.’<sup>16</sup> He is an example of someone who has been healed, who has repented, returned to God and now judged as just.

Jesus heals the sick, however, not only by exhorting them to repentance, but in some way also through his crucifixion. The song of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 is often applied in the New Testament to the suffering of Jesus himself. One well-known example is the following from 1 Peter:

ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν· οὗ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that, freed from sins, we might live for righteousness. By his bruises you have been healed.<sup>17</sup>

Peter describes the Christian’s transition from sin to righteousness, his or her repentance, as an instance of healing. Again, on the face of it, it seems to be sin rather than specifically

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<sup>14</sup> Luke 5:31. Cf. Matt. 9:12, Mark 2:17.

<sup>15</sup> Πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. Mark 1:15.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 18:13-4.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Pet. 2:24.

God's judgement, which is the illness in need of healing. However, it seems likely that, for Peter, the Christian is healed through Christ's experience of judgement on our behalf: there are, of course, different theories of the Atonement, but this interpretation is suggested by the statement that Christ took on himself our sin, and as a result – i.e. as judgement – experienced suffering, received 'bruises'. The Christian's sin should have led to his or her own 'bruises', but instead these were put on Christ, and it is from this that the Christian is freed. Peter continues, again using imagery from Isaiah 53, and alluding also to the passage from Ezekiel quoted above: 'For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have turned back to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.'<sup>18</sup> Peter argues that his readers/listeners have now been healed; they have been released from the judgement of God and restored to relationship with him.

There was, however, always in the Christian tradition a strong tension between this healing which Christ provides in the atonement, and the on-going need for healing day-by-day, between the one-time repentance and reconciliation with God providing the hope of eternal life, and the need for daily repentance for continued sin. The Christian may have 'passed from death to life',<sup>19</sup> but there is still the possibility of him or her falling sick. A number of early Christian writers continue the tradition of the prophets in asserting the continual need even for Christians to seek healing, to repent of their sins committed after baptism. In something of a complex passage, James says that those who are sick, and apparently meaning physically sick, should approach the elders of the church for their prayers and to be anointed with oil. Such prayer, James says, should restore the sick person to health. However, he then seamlessly continues by saying that if the sick person has committed sins, he will be forgiven, and urges them to confess their sins to each other 'so

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<sup>18</sup> ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.  
1 Pet. 2:25.

<sup>19</sup> John 5:24.

that you might be healed' (ὅπως ἰαθῆτε).<sup>20</sup> For James, it seems, there is a close connection between physical sickness and committing sin, and it is possible that he sees the former as potentially God's judgement on the latter. If the sickness is the result of sin, then his healing will entail the removal of God's hand of judgement upon the sinner, and thus his forgiveness. It is for this reason, then, that James continues by urging them to confess their sins to each other and pray for each other, since it is only by repenting and petitioning God's forgiveness that his judgement will be removed and full health – spiritual and physical – can be restored.<sup>21</sup>

Other early Christian writers similarly urge their Christian audiences to live a life of repentance as the means of being healed. Towards the end of the letter to the Hebrews, the author urges his audience to endure God's discipline, and treat it as an opportunity to turn from sin and rebellion, and live lives of holiness devoted to God. He concludes, quoting words from Proverbs: 'Make straight paths for your feet, so that the lame might not be put out of joint, but rather healed.'<sup>22</sup> He urges them to live a morally upright life so that they may experience full healing, and in the verses which follow he warns them not to 'miss out on the grace of God' and end up being rejected by him.<sup>23</sup> Healing is received by living a life of repentance, turning from sinful deeds and embracing the grace of God. The author of 2 Clement makes a similar plea to his audience:<sup>24</sup>

ἀγαπῶμεν οὖν ἀλλήλους, ὅπως ἔλθωμεν πάντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.  
ὡς ἔχομεν καιρὸν τοῦ ἰαθῆναι, ἐπιδοῦμεν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεραπεύοντι θεῷ,  
ἀντιμισθίαν αὐτῷ διδόντες. ποίαν; τὸ μετανοῆσαι ἐξ εἰλικρινοῦς καρδίας.

<sup>20</sup> James 5:14-6.

<sup>21</sup> See Reicke 1964, 60, and Ferngren 2009, 67-8, for discussions of this passage.

<sup>22</sup> καὶ τροχιάς ὀρθὰς ποιεῖτε τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ τὸ χωλὸν ἐκτραπῆ, ἰαθῆ δὲ μᾶλλον. Heb. 12:13.

<sup>23</sup> Heb. 12:14-29.

<sup>24</sup> 2 Clement is widely considered to be an early sermon, though see Stewart-Sykes 2001, 174-87, who argues for it being instruction outside of a liturgical context.

Therefore, let us love each other, so that we might all come into the kingdom of God. As we have time for healing, let us entrust ourselves to God our therapist, giving him due recompense. What is that? Repentance from a sincere heart.<sup>25</sup>

To take advantage of the present time of healing requires living a life of repentance and love. This is what is due to God, and not doing it will jeopardise entrance into the kingdom of God. Therefore, to say that this is a ‘time for healing’ and that God is ‘our therapist’ means that God has opened an opportunity now to forgive those who truly repent and live obedient lives with the promise of everlasting life.<sup>26</sup> Healing means the forgiveness of sins and the concomitant removal of judgement, both in this present life, and the threat of judgement in the life to come.

Two points to conclude: first, in the scriptures and the early Christian tradition, people are sick not primarily because of emotional distress caused by wrong thinking, but because they are rebelling against God. If there is a psychological/emotional dimension to the sickness, it is primarily one of guilt, of ‘hungering and thirsting for righteousness.’<sup>27</sup> Very often, though not always, the language of sickness is referring to the actual physical experience of God’s judgement against such rebellion. The means of healing is presented consistently throughout not in some spiritual exercises, but simply in turning to God – he is the doctor, insofar as he can release people from his judgement, and the few times earthly doctors are referred to, the implication is that their task is to exhort repentance and a return to God. Throughout God is a central figure: sickness refers to the actual or potential experience of his judgement for turning away from him, and the way to be healed is to repent and return to him. It will be argued in the remainder of this chapter that something very similar can be observed in Chrysostom: while he considered sickness to be a disorder of the passions which requires a regimen of spiritual exercises for healing, he

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<sup>25</sup> 2 *Clem.* 9.6-8.

<sup>26</sup> cf. 2 *Clem.* 8.4.

<sup>27</sup> Matt. 5:6.

would nonetheless still see a disordered γνώμη as sinful disobedience of God which merits his judgement, either in this life or the next. Thus alongside the need for spiritual exercises, there is also need for the mercy and forgiveness of God in the face of eternal damnation. The nature of sickness is closely tied up with God's judgement, and the means of healing found in his grace.

A second point to make, which is important for the wider aim of the thesis, is to note how central the notion of repentance is both to Christian teachers and to Christianity itself. We have seen that Old Testament prophets, early Christian leaders and even Jesus himself, urged repentance, and urged repentance from both the people of God and those not yet believers. All needed to live a life of repentance: the Gospel of Mark began with Jesus' call to repent and believe the Good News. Repentance is foundational to early Christianity. We must therefore view Chrysostom's condemnation of sin and calls to repentance within this context: his condemnations do not reflect a congregation that is uncommitted necessarily to his version of the Christian faith, but rather a congregation who Chrysostom views, like all other Judaeo-Christian teachers from the Old Testament prophets to his day, as being a people who need to live a life of complete repentance. This is something we shall pick up again in the following chapters.

#### SICKNESS AS DISOBEDIENCE TOWARDS GOD MERITING JUDGEMENT

This understanding of what is fundamentally wrong, of what is the underlying nature of spiritual sickness, stands in stark contrast to that in the classical philosophical tradition. Gill describes four key elements of philosophical therapy which are common to all philosophical schools, and the last three of these have already been discussed above as common also to Chrysostom, namely the assumption of some level of rational agency in

ethical development, the formulation of a therapeutic message, and the giving of advice to rebuild an individual's belief-set.<sup>28</sup> However, with the first, the Christian tradition – at least insofar as we have seen in the preceding section, and as we will go on to see with Chrysostom – parts company with the classical philosophers. Gill argues that what is common to all philosophical schools is a conception of happiness: 'happiness ... is the natural target or goal of human aspiration.'<sup>29</sup> Hadot had already argued a similar point some years previously:

In all philosophical schools, the goal pursued in these exercises is self-realization and improvement. All schools agree that man, before his philosophical conversion, is in a state of unhappy disquiet. Consumed by worries, torn by passions, he does not live a genuine life, nor is he truly himself. All schools also agree that man can be delivered from this state. He can accede to genuine life, improve himself, transform himself, and attain a state of perfection.<sup>30</sup>

For Old Testament prophets, Jesus, and Christian preachers like the author of *2 Clement* and Chrysostom, the goal of therapy was very different: by exhorting to repentance, they sought to deliver sinners not from 'a state of unhappy disquiet', but rather from the judgement of God. For them, spiritual sickness was not ultimately about being 'consumed by worries, torn by passions', but rather a disobedience of God meriting his judgement. Chrysostom may have understood the cause of this sickness to be a disordered γνώμη and uncontrolled passions, but fundamentally what was wrong was not that people had not achieved a state of happiness, but that they had offended God and stood in danger of his judgement. Let us turn to some examples to demonstrate this point.

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<sup>28</sup> Gill 2013, 348-51. See also Mayer 2015b, 152.

<sup>29</sup> Gill 2013, 349.

<sup>30</sup> Hadot 1995, 102.

*Passage 1: Fifth homily on Titus*

After a long digression on the wickedness of humanity (particularly as represented by Greco-Roman culture), Chrysostom urges his congregation at the end of his fifth homily on Titus not to hate people engaged in such practices, but to recognise their illness and to take better care of them. Here, there is nothing that could not necessarily be found in the philosophers: sin is recognised as an illness in need of curing. As he continues, however, he makes clearer what he understands as the fundamental nature of their sickness and thus its cure:

Νῦν δὲ τὸ μὲν σῶμα κάμνοντος τοῦ παιδὸς οὐκ ἂν παραιτήσαιτό τις καὶ μακρὰν ἀποδημίαν στείλασθαι, ὥστε λῦσαι τὴν νόσον· τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς κακῶς ἐχούσης, οὐδεὶς οὐδένα ποιεῖται λόγον· ἀλλὰ πάντες ἀναπεπτώκαμεν, πάντες ῥαθυμοῦμεν, πάντες ὀλιγοροῦμεν, καὶ παῖδας καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς περιορῶντες ἀναλισκομένους ὑπὸ τῆς νόσου ταύτης τῆς χαλεπῆς. Ἄλλ' ὕστερον λαμβάνομεν τὴν αἴσθησιν. Ἐννοήσατε ὡς αἰσχρὸν καὶ σφόδρα καταγέλαστον ὕστερον λέγειν, οὐ προσεδοκῶμεν, οὐκ ἠλπίζομεν τοῦτο ἔσεσθαι· οὐκ αἰσχρὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπικίνδυνον. Εἰ γὰρ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ τῶν ἀνοήτων ἐστὶ τὸ τὰ μέλλοντα μὴ προορᾶν, πολλῶ μᾶλλον κατὰ τὸν μέλλοντα, ὅτε καὶ ἀκούομεν νῦν πολλῶν συμβουλευόντων καὶ λεγόντων τὰ πρακτέα καὶ τὰ μὴ πρακτέα. Ἄντεχώμεθα τοίνυν τῆς φροντίδος ἐκείνης, φροντίζομεν τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας.

Now, no-one would refuse to send their child even a long way from home if they were ill in body, in order to find a cure for the disease. But when the soul is in a bad state, no-one takes any concern, but we all are laid-back, all idle and all negligent, paying scant regard for our children, our wives and even ourselves when consumed by this grievous disease. We come to our senses *too late*. Consider how shameful and utterly ridiculous it is to say *later*, 'We did not expect, we did not imagine that this would happen.' It's not only shameful, but also dangerous. For if in the present life it is the mark of foolish men to take no thought for the future, how much more *with regard to the future life*, when we hear now so many people advising us and telling us what to do and what not to do. Let us cling to that thought, let us take thought for our salvation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 5.764C-D.

The opening words of this passage could have come from more or less any of the philosophers. The 'grievous disease' is sin or vice, but too many are too negligent with regard to their spiritual health to take much concern over healing, whether the person ill is a close relative or even ourselves. But as the passage continues, he makes clear that the reason this illness is so 'dangerous' is not because it prevents us from being truly human or from enjoying a full and contented life, but because it has the potential to cut us off from enjoying the future blessings of heaven, and, even worse, threatens us with the prospect of eternal punishment. He gets them, in philosophical fashion, to do a thought-experiment, getting them to 'consider' what they would say when they arrived in hell – for this is evidently what is meant by the repetition of 'too late', 'later', 'in the future life'. They cannot say then that they had no idea that their deeds would really merit such a punishment: the reality is that they 'take no thought for the future' and have not yet 'come to their senses'. It is the role of the preacher, as a true spiritual physician (unlike those condemned by Jeremiah and Ezekiel), to bring them to their senses and to a realisation of the reality of heaven and hell. It is the preachers who are the ones 'telling us what to do and what not to do,' and so the congregation really is without excuse if they claim on Judgement Day to have known nothing about it.

'Let us take thought for our salvation.' Such an exhortation would not have seemed out of place on the lips of a philosopher; but in this context it means something rather different, the salvation being deliverance from future punishment. This brings us to the heart of Chrysostom's preaching, and where his healing art differs most markedly from that of the philosophers. To take the latter point first, I do not mean to say that there was no conception of a judgement after death in ancient pagan thought. There was, indeed, a wide range of beliefs, from the Epicureans who taught that there was no after-life and

therefore nothing to fear in death,<sup>32</sup> to Plato who taught explicitly on several occasions that there will be a judgement after death.<sup>33</sup> What united them all, however, was the argument that whatever did happen after death was not to be feared. If any sort of punishment took place after death, it was often considered only temporary to purify the soul, rather than to be a permanent state of punishment: it was therefore of benefit to the soul. Simplicius, for example, writing over a hundred years after Chrysostom's death, but very much in the neo-Platonic tradition, wrote that 'everything which happens to us, whether punitive or avenging, whether here or in Hades, has this end, namely that the soul repents of its sins...'<sup>34</sup> 'When we sin,' Simplicius says, 'God does not turn away or become angry or separate himself from us':<sup>35</sup> this would be contrary to the nature of God. Punishment after death was therefore not something to be feared: his contemporary Olympiodorus argued that 'it is better to say that the soul is mortal than to maintain [everlasting punishment].'<sup>36</sup> For them, such a truth would be terrifying indeed.

At this point it is necessary to pause briefly, since it has been argued recently that Chrysostom, and indeed most of the Church Fathers, in fact also believed only in this beneficial punishment. Ilaria Ramelli argues at length that the doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις, most famously associated with Origen, was in fact much more widespread throughout the early Church.<sup>37</sup> Chrysostom, though 'not a plain assessor of the apokatastasis doctrine', nonetheless is argued by her to have held to the belief that future punishment is only temporary and for the eventual purification of the soul.<sup>38</sup> Her arguments, however, so far as Chrysostom is concerned, are not convincing. There is not the space here to go through

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<sup>32</sup> E.g. Epicur. *Sent.* 2.

<sup>33</sup> Pl. *Grg.* 523A-527D, *Phd.* 107C-115A, *R.* 614B-621B, *Phdr.* 245C-249D. For discussion of the passages, see Stilwell 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Πάντα γὰρ τὰ εἰς ἡμᾶς γινόμενα, κολαστικά τε καὶ τιμωρά, καὶ ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐν ἄδου, τοῦτο τέλος ἔχει τὸ μεταμεληθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἑαυτῆς ἀμαρτήμασι, Simp. *In Epict.* 38.714-6.

<sup>35</sup> Οὔτε γάρ, ἀμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν, ὁ θεὸς ἀποστρέφεται ἢ ὀργίζεται ἢ χωρίζεται ἀφ' ἡμῶν, Simp. *In Epict.* 38.683-4.

<sup>36</sup> κρεῖττον γὰρ λέγειν φθαρτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ τοῦτο πρεσβεύειν. Olymp. *In Grg.* 50.2.

<sup>37</sup> Ramelli 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Ramelli 2013, 549.

all her passages, but repeatedly she reads a lot more into individual passages than they can really support.<sup>39</sup> For example, she argues that *κόλασις αἰώνιος* refers only to ‘otherworldly punishment’ and not ‘eternal punishment’ in a sermon on John’s Gospel, and that the description of this punishment as ‘never having a limit’ (*πέρας οὐδέποτε ἔχουσιν*) only ‘suggests that it has no well-defined duration’.<sup>40</sup> The plain meaning of this phrase is surely that the punishment is limitless, and not that we simply do not know how long it is; in the previous sentence he refers also to ‘being carried off indefinitely by the fire of Gehenna’ (*εἰς ἄπειρον ὑπὸ τῆς γέεννης ἀπενεχθῆναι πῶρ*). Whenever she acknowledges that Chrysostom may be referring to eternal punishment, she claims that he is only doing so as a threat: he does not really believe this.<sup>41</sup> This, to me, is begging the question: she provides no clear evidence that he did believe in only temporary punishment, yet shows him repeatedly warning of its eternity. Maybe they were only threats, and in reality he did not believe in the eternity of hell: but if so, we have no witness of his own private thoughts. What he said, and what his congregation heard, was that if they persist in sin, they would be heading to eternal damnation. On this he could not be clearer.<sup>42</sup>

However, even if Ramelli were right to argue that Chrysostom believed only in a purificatory punishment, his paraenetic use of it still differs markedly from philosophers such as Plato and Simplicius. They both make clear that the punishment is only temporary, and even if that in itself still arouses fear, it is not something they particularly play on to encourage virtuous living: Simplicius is indeed explicit in stating that ‘God does not ...

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<sup>39</sup> Her argument is not helped by the occasional incorrect/missing reference: e.g., p. 551 ‘*In Matth.*’ should be ‘*In Ioh.*’; the subsequent reference in a footnote to ‘the same treatise’ is puzzling given that the *Homilies on John* is not a treatise, and that the reference then given is to a different work, also not a treatise (the *Homilies on the Statues*); p. 561 ‘*Hom. in Phil.*’ should be ‘*Hom. in Acts*’, and the PG volume would be useful; later on the same page, no reference at all is given to the passage discussed from the homilies on 1 Corinthians.

<sup>40</sup> Ramelli 2013, 551, referring to Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 6, PG 59.62.21-8.

<sup>41</sup> e.g. Ramelli 2013, 555.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. also Chrys. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 9.77A-D, where, in contrast to many other Patristic commentators, he takes 1 Cor. 3:15 (*αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός*) to mean ‘preserved in the fire [of hell]’. Chrysostom’s interpretation was in fact cited against the doctrine of purgatory at the Council of Florence in 1438: Gill 1959, 121-3.

become angry' at our sins, which would help to give some measure of reassurance. Chrysostom on the other hand, as we will see further, does all he can *in order to* arouse such fear: 'How can we ever be saved without fear?'<sup>43</sup> Unlike the philosophers, he wants them to be fearful of the prospect of hell, so that they would repent of their sins and devote themselves to God.

Indeed, a large part of the philosophers' cure of souls was to release people from the fear of death, not to arouse it. Gill suggests that the fear of death was 'one of the principal kinds of psychological "sickness" addressed by therapeutic writings.'<sup>44</sup> Consolation literature, in particular, was especially concerned with releasing people from a fear of death.<sup>45</sup> In his study of beliefs about judgement after death across the ancient world, Samuel Brandon argued that 'the thought of some form of *post-mortem* survival was a potent source of fear, and, as we shall see, it tormented many and inspired a terrifying eschatology. Some philosophers were concerned about its depressing effect upon men's lives, and they sought by the exercise of reason to deliver their fellow-men from the terror of death and the hereafter.'<sup>46</sup> An example of a philosopher exercising such therapy on himself would be Socrates as he faced his execution, when he argued that death meant either annihilation or some form of existence with the heroes of old: either way death was nothing to fear.<sup>47</sup>

There was certainly an encouragement, as we have seen, to live a life of virtue and not of vice; but these were conceived of primarily in terms of their effect on the individual

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<sup>43</sup> πῶς ἔνι φόβου χωρὶς διασωθῆναι ποτε; Chrys. *In Phil. hom.* 9.256C.

<sup>44</sup> Gill 2013, 343.

<sup>45</sup> Gill 2013, 343.

<sup>46</sup> Brandon 1967, 86; see also Sorabji 1983, 174-90. In a similar way, Burkert 1987, 23, argues that mystery cults, often considered as being focussed on life after death, were in fact 'meeting practical needs in their promises for an afterlife', that is, their main concern was on achieving present deliverance from the 'terror of death'. Bowden 2010, 22-3, however, goes further and argues that mystery cults differed little from Greco-Roman religion more generally in being marked by uncertainty about the afterlife, and consequently were less occupied with such matters than is often supposed: 'Compared to the certainty and intensity of the immediate experience of initiation or Bacchic ecstasy, the hope of a better experience in the uncertain world beyond death must have weighed little.'

<sup>47</sup> Pl. *Ap.* 40C-41C. Cited by Stilwell 2000, 16.

in the here and now, rather than on some future day of judgement: to live a life of virtue was what it meant to be fully human. In the words of Pierre Hadot, ‘their goal was to allow people to free themselves from the past and the future, so that they could live within the present.’<sup>48</sup> This has been disputed by Richard Sorabji, who argues that the Epicureans and the Stoics did not find value only in the present.<sup>49</sup> However, as he himself describes, both groups’ attitude to the future were marked more by a release from fear of what may happen in order to attain peace and contentment in the present, rather than, as I am claiming for Chrysostom, by a preparation for the judgement that will come. For Chrysostom, a fear of death was something to encourage to quell the other passions, rather than a passion or sickness itself in need of quelling: ‘Where there is fear,’ he tells his Antiochene congregation in the wake of the Riot of the Statues, ‘there is not envy; where there is fear, love of money does not trouble; where there is fear, anger is quenched, wicked desire is restrained, every irrational passion is banished.’<sup>50</sup> Chrysostom’s cure of souls was much more focussed on preparing his congregation for death and the judgement that will come afterwards, rather than on obtaining well-being here in the present life. ‘Nothing is so incongruous in a Christian,’ he tells his congregation, ‘and foreign to his character, as to seek ease and rest.’<sup>51</sup> For the philosophers, a person was ill if, ‘consumed by worries, torn by passions, he does not live a genuine life, nor is he truly himself.’<sup>52</sup> For Chrysostom, being ill meant, to a large degree, being in a state of facing God’s judgement.

His role as physician in attempting to heal them of this illness is the driving force behind much of Chrysostom’s preaching. Time and again he will seek to frighten his

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<sup>48</sup> Hadot 1995, 221-2.

<sup>49</sup> Sorabji 2002, 238-40.

<sup>50</sup> Ἐνθα φόβος ἐστὶν, οὐκ ἔστι φθόνος· ἔνθα φόβος ἐστὶ, χρημάτων ἔρωσ οὐκ ἐνοχλεῖ· ἔνθα φόβος ἐστὶν, ἔσβησται θυμὸς, ἐπιθυμία κατέσταλται πονηρὰ, ἅπαν ἀλόγιστον ἐξώρισται πάθος. Chrys. *De stat.* 15, PG 59.154.22-5.

<sup>51</sup> Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἀνάρμοστον καὶ ἀλλότριον Χριστιανοῦ, ὡς ἄνεσιν καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν ζητεῖν. *In Phil. hom.* 13.297C-D (trans. P. Schaff (ed.)).

<sup>52</sup> Hadot 1995, 102 – full quotation above, p. 144.

congregation with the prospect of hell to turn them from their sin. This is evident from even the most cursory of glances at his sermons. Simo Knuuttila, for example, in his brief summary of Chrysostom as part of his study of the emotions in antiquity, suggested that ‘eternal punishment and its avoidance were in his view the main motivational factors for moderate Christians.’<sup>53</sup> Towards the end of one sermon in which he has been severely upbraiding them for attending lewd performances at the theatre – even going so far as to threaten anyone who persists with excommunication – he explains his vehemence by saying that ‘it is much better that we are pained here and deliver you from the future judgement, than to indulge you with my words and then be punished along with you.’<sup>54</sup> It is much better, he is saying, to listen to a painful rebuke now which turns us from our sin, than to persist in it and suffer the consequences later. In his second homily on Philemon, he reminds slave-owners of the great humility of Christ, telling them to ‘hear and shudder’ (ἀκουσον καὶ φρίξον) from fear that they may not come anywhere near the standards set by the one who will be their eventual Judge.<sup>55</sup> In preaching on the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, he exclaims, ‘Would that I could continually proclaim this philosophy to you, and speak about hell.’<sup>56</sup> For Chrysostom, the cure of souls meant awakening his congregation to the reality of future judgement.

### *Passage 2: Sixth homily on Titus*

The second passage I should like to look at is the exhortation from the sixth homily on Titus. The theme of the exhortation is the benefits of almsgiving and more generally of

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<sup>53</sup> Knuuttila 2004, 136.

<sup>54</sup> Πολλῶ γὰρ βέλτιον ἐνταῦθα λυπηθέντας ἡμᾶς ἐξελέσθαι τῆς μελλούσης κρίσεως, ἢ ῥήμασι χαρισάμενον μεθ’ ὑμῶν κολασθῆναι τότε. Chrys. *C. lud. et theat.* PG 56.270.16-20.

<sup>55</sup> *In Philemn. hom.* 2.783A.

<sup>56</sup> Εἶθε ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ διηνεκῶς ταῦτα φιλοσοφεῖν, καὶ περὶ γεέννης φθέγγεσθαι. *De Laz. conc.* 2, PG 48.985.24-5.

being poor. Beginning with the former, he provides four reasons why they should give alms. First and fundamentally, it brings people closer to God, indeed ‘makes them like God’ (Τοῦτο ὁμοίους ποιεῖ τῷ θεῷ).<sup>57</sup> The focus is very much on God, though the concept of becoming like God can be found in particularly the Platonic tradition.<sup>58</sup> The other reasons flesh out further how almsgiving can achieve this. Second, then, is that almsgiving is the ‘mother of love’ (μήτηρ ἀγάπης), and therefore the key distinguishing mark of the Christian.<sup>59</sup> The implication may be that they may need to question whether they truly are Christ’s disciples at all if this is not something they are practising.

The third reason is that almsgiving is the ‘medicine of our sins’ (φάρμακόν ἐστι τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀμαρτημάτων),<sup>60</sup> and is able ‘to quench the fire of our sins’ (σβέσαι τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἡμῶν τὴν πυρὰν).<sup>61</sup> The language here is that of the therapy of the passions, with its emphasis on subduing turbulent emotions, often described in terms of a fire to be quenched.<sup>62</sup> From this, one may suppose that almsgiving acts as a means of overpowering such passions as greed, anger and hatred through committing such an act of loving generosity. However, as we have seen before, the goal of such therapy is not ultimately about subduing the passions: after calling almsgiving a medicine, he goes on by describing it as a ‘soap that cleanses the dirt of our souls’ (σμηγμα τοῦ ρύπου τῆς ἡμέτερας ψυχῆς) and a ‘ladder fixed to heaven’ (κλίμαξ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐστηριγμένη).<sup>63</sup> Almsgiving has a purificatory effect: it heals our passions, but, more importantly for Chrysostom, by subduing sin it enables the believer to enter into heaven. How almsgiving could achieve this he does not explain (and is not strictly important for my purposes), though it was a

<sup>57</sup> *In Tit. hom.* 6.768A.

<sup>58</sup> Dillon 1977, 43-5; Erler 2002, 159.

<sup>59</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.768B.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* 768B-C.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* 768A.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Plutarch on anger: καὶ γὰρ τὸ πῦρ ὃ μὴ παρασχὼν ὕλην ἔσβεσε, καὶ ὄργην ὃ μὴ θρέψας ἐν ἀρχῇ καὶ μὴ φυσήσας ἑαυτὸν ἐφυλάξατο καὶ καθεῖλεν (‘For he who does not provide fuel for the fire, extinguishes it, and he who does not nourish his anger in the beginning and does not blow up, protects himself and destroys it’), *Moralia* 454F.

<sup>63</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.768C.

widespread belief amongst Christians in antiquity.<sup>64</sup> His concern (and their concern, if he could use this as a persuasive tool) was for their eternal salvation, that they would in the end get to heaven. Almsgiving, he says, is a sure way to achieve that. The fourth reason is much more concerned with the present, namely its ability to create a sense of unity amongst those who give, referring to a passage in Acts to support his point. However, even this reason is introduced in such a way as to lay stress on the central importance of the eternal and future focus: ‘Tell me, *even putting the future aside* – for let us not yet raise the matter of the kingdom, but let us see in the present life: who gain, those who receive or those who give?’<sup>65</sup> In other words, consideration of their entrance into the future kingdom should be reason enough alone for engaging in almsgiving, but, putting that aside, there is another advantage in the unity it brings to the church. What is at the heart of spiritual sickness for Chrysostom is their disobedience towards God meriting his future judgement.

He then moves to consider the benefits more generally of being poor, and addresses particularly those in the congregation who have not received an inheritance.<sup>66</sup> The ‘poor’, he hopes, will not be distressed. But he is not really concerned here for their emotional well-being in the present:

Ταῦτα δέ μοι εἴρηται, ἵνα οἱ κληρον παρὰ προγόνων μὴ διαδεξάμενοι, μὴ ἀλγῶσι μηδὲ κατηφιῶσιν, ὡς ἔλαττον τῶν πλουτούντων ἔχοντες· μείζονα γὰρ ἔχουσιν, ἂν ἐθέλωσι. Καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ἐλεημοσύνην μετὰ πλείονος ἤξουσιν τῆς εὐκολίας, καθάπερ ἡ χήρα, καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν πλησίον ἔχθρας οὐδεμίαν ἔξουσιν ἀφορμὴν, καὶ πάντων εἰσὶν ἐλευθερώτεροι. Οὐδεὶς ἀπειλήσαι δυνήσεται τῷ τοιοῦτῳ δήμευσιν, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ἀνώτερος τοῦ παθεῖν κακῶς.

I’ve said this, so that those who have not received an inheritance from their ancestors are not distressed or downcast at having less than the wealthy. They have in fact more if they want it. For they will approach almsgiving with greater contentment,

<sup>64</sup> See Garrison 1993; and (focusing on the Latin West) Ramsey 1982; Brown 2015. For scriptural texts which hint at the purificatory power of almsgiving, see Luke 16:9 and 1 Pet. 4:8.

<sup>65</sup> Εἴτε γάρ μοι, καὶ χωρὶς τῶν μελλόντων· μήπω γὰρ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας νῦν κινήσωμεν, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ παρόντι ἴδωμεν, τίνες κερδαίνουσιν, οἱ λαμβάνοντες, ἢ οἱ διδόντες; Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.768C.

<sup>66</sup> Thus they are not the truly destitute, but the general poor, those who are ever at risk of becoming utterly destitute through dependence on fluctuating circumstances. Brown 2002, 14-5; Finn 2006, 18-26.

like the widow; they will have no opportunity for hostility with a neighbour; and they are freer than everything. No-one will be able to threaten such a man with confiscation of his goods, but rather he is above suffering anything bad.<sup>67</sup>

At first sight, he appears to be giving them reassurance by reminding them of the advantages in the present of not being wealthy: they will not so easily get into quarrels with others, and they need not fear anyone threatening to take away their possessions if they have little to speak of in the first place. However, the passage is also rather puzzling, which is only explained by what he goes on to say. Why would, for example, someone be more content in giving to the poor if they had less money? Surely this would put them at greater risk of destitution? Would not the general ‘poor’ be more, not less, in danger of ‘suffering anything bad’ than the truly rich?

The answer comes in what follows. Being rich brings with it so many temptations to indulge in needless extravagance, that it is much harder to live moderately (μετριάζειν), thriftily (ἐν εὐτελείᾳ) and to be free from passion (θυμοῦ ἀπηλλάχθαι).<sup>68</sup> The poor man cannot ‘suffer anything bad’ because he cannot experience the passions of luxury and indulgence. This ‘praise of poverty’<sup>69</sup> was something of a topos throughout much Greco-Roman thought: Creon in Sophocles’ *Antigone*, believing that some men must have been bribed to bury the disgraced body of Polyneices, cries out that ‘nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current among men’;<sup>70</sup> the Cynic philosopher Diogenes is supposed to have said, long before the now better known maxim of the New Testament, that ‘the love of money is the mother-city of all evils’;<sup>71</sup> and the sixth of Cicero’s Stoic paradoxes is ‘that only the wise man is wealthy’ (ὅτι μόνος ὁ σοφὸς πλούσιος).<sup>72</sup> When Chrysostom,

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<sup>67</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.768E.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.* 769A.

<sup>69</sup> From the title of Desmond 2006.

<sup>70</sup> οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀνθρώποισιν οἷον ἄργυρος | κακὸν νόμισμα ἔβλασσε. *S. Ant.* 295-6 (trans. R. C. Jebb).

<sup>71</sup> τὴν φιλαργυρίαν εἶπε μητηρόπολιν πάντων τῶν κακῶν, D.L. 6.50; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10. A similar sentiment can, however, also be found in the Old Testament, e.g. Eccles. 5:9.

<sup>72</sup> For these and further examples, see Desmond 2006, 27-71.

therefore, goes on to describe the wealthy as carrying with them ‘lack of sense, an inflammation of the soul and that load of thorns’, though the phrasing is his own, the sentiment was widely held.<sup>73</sup>

However, he does not simply say that poverty is to be preferred because it in itself is a better way to live. Again the focus is very much on the future. Those burdens which the wealthy carry are so large that they are prevented from entering the ‘narrow way’, and are instead forced along the ‘broad way’.<sup>74</sup> This metaphor was one used by Jesus: in his teaching, the wide gate was the one that leads to destruction, the narrow gate the one that leads to life.<sup>75</sup> That this is indeed what Chrysostom is thinking is made clear in what follows:

Πλὴν εἰ ὁ πλοῦτος αὐτὸς ἄκανθά ἐστὶ, τί ἢ πλεονεξία; Τίνος ἔνεκεν ταύτην ἀπάγεις ἐκεῖ; ἴνα μείζονα τὴν φλόγα ἐργάση, φορτία ὑποτιθεῖς τῷ πυρὶ; οὐ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ τὸ τῆς γεέννης πῦρ; Ἐννοήσον, οἱ τρεῖς παῖδες πῶς περιεγέγοντο τῆς καμίνου· ἐκεῖνο νόμισον γέενναν εἶναι· μετὰ θλίψεως ἐνέπεσον εἰς αὐτήν, δεδεμένοι ἦσαν καὶ συμπεποδισμένοι· ἀλλὰ πολλὴν εὐρον ἔνδον τὴν εὐρυχωρίαν. Ἄλλ’ οὐκ ἐκεῖνοι οἱ ἕξωθεν περιεστῶτες.

But if wealth itself is thorns, what about greed? Why do you carry this off there? To make the flame greater by adding fuel to the fire? Is not the fire of hell sufficient? Consider how the three boys overcame the furnace. Imagine that to be hell. It was in affliction that they fell into it; they were bound and fettered. But inside they found the broad way.<sup>76</sup> But not those standing around outside.<sup>77</sup>

If wealth itself is such a great burden to force one into the broad way, greed will be an even bigger burden. The fire which it fuels is the ‘furnace of the passions’ (ἡ κάμιнос τῶν παθῶν), referred to a little earlier, an image evoking the intensity of unrestrained emotions,

<sup>73</sup> ... ἀπόνοιαν, καὶ φλεγμονὴν ψυχῆς, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀκανθῶν φορτίον ... Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.769C.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* 769B-C.

<sup>75</sup> Matt. 7:13-4.

<sup>76</sup> He seems to have muddled his metaphors here, since the broad way is supposed to be the path that leads to destruction, but here it appears to signify a lack of impediments and hindering burdens which enabled them to come through the fire unscathed. This – in addition to the lack of connectives evident in this passage – points to this being the recording of a live delivery.

<sup>77</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 6.769D.

and also drawing on the medical concept of physical *πάθη* arousing bodily ‘fires’ or fevers (*πυρετοί*).<sup>78</sup> However, Chrysostom connects this emotional fire with another fire, to which it inevitably leads, namely the fire of hell. By arousing the one, the danger of experiencing the other is increased. The furnace into which the three boys of Daniel 3 were cast (a favourite story of Chrysostom’s) he puts forward as a type of hell, which the boys survived unharmed because they were not inflamed with passions or weighed down with burdens.<sup>79</sup> In other words, throughout this section Chrysostom is making a simple point: the rich are on a path to hell, and so do not emulate them. Those in the congregation who would consider themselves rich Chrysostom at this point expects to be fearful and to resolve to give away some of their wealth; those who were originally addressed, those resentful of the wealthy, he expects now to feel less desire for that inheritance out of fear of the consequences for obtaining their wishes. For both groups, Chrysostom’s pastoral technique has been to arouse a fear of hell. Having aroused this fear, he then turns for the remainder of the sermon to the positive side, what to do to avoid meeting with this fate, and this we shall return to below.

*Passage 3: Sixth homily On the Statues*

One other example is worth looking at from the celebrated series *On the Statues*. These sermons were delivered in Lent 387 during something of a crisis for the city of Antioch. Following the introduction of a new and unpopular imperial tax, a riot had broken out in the city, which resulted in the defacing of the statues of the imperial family. The action drew the wrath of the Emperor Theodosius against the city, which was, as Chrysostom

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Gal. *Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo*, p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> For a survey of Chrysostom’s use of this story, see Stander 2005.

would have us believe, only finally averted by the intervention of Bishop Flavian.<sup>80</sup> The sermons were thus delivered at a time of great anxiety, as the citizenry of Antioch – many of whom, we would presume, had no or little direct role in the affair – awaited the punishment of the emperor.<sup>81</sup>

The sixth sermon starts with words sounding very much like those of the philosophers:

Καὶ γὰρ ἕλκος ψυχῆς ἢ ἀθυμία, καὶ δεῖ συνεχῶς αὐτὴν ἐπαντλεῖν προσηνέσι ῥήμασιν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὕτως οἴδημα σαρκὸς χαλᾶν εἴωθε θερμῶν ὑδάτων φύσις, ὡς ψυχῆς πάθος καταστέλλειν πέφυκε παρακλητικῶν λόγων δύναμις.

Despondency is an ulcer of the soul, and it is necessary to bathe it continually with soothing words. For warm water is not so naturally accustomed to soothe the swellings of the flesh, as words of comfort have the ability to dispel suffering from the soul.<sup>82</sup>

The role of the priest, he says, is to comfort and console. The Church is the common mother of us all (ἡ κοινὴ πάντων ἡμῶν μήτηρ),<sup>83</sup> which cradles Christians fearful of civic authorities, as a mother does her children fearful of their teachers. The sermon does indeed contain some elements which we may consider consoling or comforting. He provides, for example, encouraging news that the imperial messengers were delayed, offering hope that Bishop Flavian's embassy might be in with a chance of success, and he reminds them that the emperor has shown mercy previously during the season of Lent.

Such words would have helped to bring order to their fears; but much of the rest is perhaps not what would be considered 'consolation' in this classical sense. He covers a number of points, but the main ones are as follows: the fear of punishment has been good,

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<sup>80</sup> For a comparison of the different narratives of the event offered by Libanius and Chrysostom to reflect their own agendas, see Quiroga Puertas 2008.

<sup>81</sup> For the narrative of events, see van de Paeverd 1991, 15-159.

<sup>82</sup> Chrys. *De stat.* 6, PG 49.81.20-4. For a discussion of the conflicting meanings of ἀθυμία and θυμός as witnessed by Chrysostom, see Brottier 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Chrys. *De stat.* 6, PG 49.81.42-3.

since the city is more virtuous as a result, and this is something they should rejoice about; God merely means to frighten them, not to punish them; and they should not be gloomy about their death but rather about their sin. Rather than trying to remove their fears, he explains how good it is that they are in fear. Much of his consolation to them, therefore, is to encourage them to view their present suffering as an opportunity to repent of their sins against God: this has already happened to some degree, which should be a cause of rejoicing; since God is merely frightening them and not punishing, there is an opportunity to repent; death is only to be feared if they are still living in sin. The present suffering is, therefore, good because, like his preaching, it has served to awaken them from their sinfulness. He concludes the section by saying, like the philosophers, that his aim is that ‘we may fear nothing’ (μηδὲν φοβώμεθα); but, unlike them, he adds that there is one thing they should fear, namely ‘offending God’ (τὸ προσκροῦσαι θεῶ).<sup>84</sup> Chrysostom’s consolation is not to release people from their fears, but to redirect them to the judgement of God. Offending God, and thus meriting judgement by him, is at the heart of Chrysostom’s conception of spiritual sickness.

He continues with an extended medical metaphor that is worth considering in some detail. He is attempting to explain to his congregation that experiencing God’s punishment in the here and now is a good thing, and provides, using two medical analogies, two reasons. First, someone with a wound fears not the surgeon’s knife, but the gangrene; the surgeon’s knife, though painful, heals the wound, whilst gangrene makes the patient’s condition worse. In a similar way, God’s punishment, though painful, makes the Christian better, whilst continued sin only makes him or her worse. Secondly, those who have a problem with their spleen or who have dropsy (οἱ σπλῆνα καὶ ὕδρον ἔχοντες) are most to be pitied when they feast sumptuously rather than when they are depriving themselves of

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid.* 89.19-20.

food and drink: the latter may be more painful, but it is more beneficial in the long term.

Though the analogy appears similar to the first, this time he provides an additional explanation for why punishment is beneficial:

Ἐὰν τοίνυν ἴδῃς τινὰς ἐν τοιαύταις ὄντας ἁμαρτίαις, καὶ τοὺς μὲν λιμῶ παλαίοντας διηνεκεῖ καὶ μυρίοις κακοῖς, τοὺς δὲ μεθύοντας καὶ γαστριζομένους καὶ τρυφῶντας, τοὺς τὰ δεινὰ πάσχοντας μακάριζε μᾶλλον. Καὶ γὰρ τῆς ἡδυπαθείας ἡ φλόξ ταῖς συμφοραῖς ὑποτέμνεται ταύταις, καὶ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν ψῆφον καὶ τὸ φοβερὸν ἐκεῖνο δικαστήριον οὐ μικρὰν λαβόντες ἀπέρχονται παραμυθίαν, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων δι' ὧν ἔπαθον δεινῶν ἐνταῦθα διαλύσαντες ἄπεισιν.

If, then, you see anyone who is in such sins, and some are struggling with continuous hunger and countless ills, whilst others are drunk and gorging and indulging themselves, consider those who are suffering terrible things to be the more blessed. For the flame of luxury is quelled by these misfortunes, and they go away to the future judgement and that fearful court with no small comfort, and will depart having discharged the greater part of their sins through the terrible things they have suffered here.<sup>85</sup>

Not only does the experience of God's judgement dull sinful desires, but also if a Christian's sins are being punished now, then they will not face punishment in the life to come. He draws a similar conclusion from the parable of Dives and Lazarus: those who are mostly bad now may appear to live well, but will experience the penalty for their sins in hell (like Dives); whilst those who are mostly good suffer God's judgement now for the sins they have committed, so that they may escape punishment in the life to come.<sup>86</sup> Chrysostom does indeed want to comfort his congregation in their time of suffering; but he parts company with the classical physicians of the soul by seeking to arouse, rather than quell, fear of sinning against God and the judgement that is to come.

He concludes by drawing attention to one particular sin that he is concerned about, namely the reckless swearing of oaths, a theme he preaches on throughout this sermon

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<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* 89.49-57.

<sup>86</sup> *De Laz. conc.* 6, PG 48.1041.38-1044.28.

series. Such persistence on this theme even at a time of grave crisis for the city has puzzled Otis Edwards in his recent history of preaching, who wrote: ‘it seemed as though, come hell or high water, Chrysostom wanted to stamp out swearing in Antioch that Lent.’<sup>87</sup> However, his preaching against this sin is not disconnected from his role of providing consolation, his role as spiritual physician, as Edwards seems to think. This is what the cure of souls entails, in his understanding. He ‘wanted to stamp out cursing in Antioch that Lent’ not because it was just a bugbear of his, and crisis or no crisis he was going to persist on this theme; but because he saw it as part of his role as counsellor to ensure that the people learnt the lessons that God was teaching them through their suffering and their fear of punishment. In this time of suffering, Chrysostom saw his role as physician to be one of curing the souls of his congregation of their sin by awakening them to the reality of the judgement to come.

### GOD THE PHYSICIAN

When Chrysostom’s therapy is seen against the backdrop of classical medico-philosophical psychic therapy, what is striking is just how important the arousal of fear is as a therapeutic tool. In so doing he is following in the tradition begun by the Old Testament prophets of warning of God’s judgement to come. Spiritual sickness might be reflected in disordered passions, but at the heart of what was wrong was not a failure to be happy *per se*, but being unprepared for God’s future judgement. It is the individual’s relationship with God and their future destiny which is at stake. It is for this reason that he wanted always to speak about hell, that his congregation would be prepared for Judgement Day through living lives in the present that were obedient to God. God is central to his

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<sup>87</sup> Edwards 2004, 82.

conception of both the sickness and the therapy. This becomes evident if we dig deeper into why he thought fear was especially beneficial as a therapeutic tool.

The therapeutic effects of fear can be considered to be twofold. First, fear drives people to seek the mercy of God. If they are sick ultimately because they are in danger of God's condemnation, then it is only his mercy and forgiveness which can bring healing.<sup>88</sup> Chrysostom frequently urges his congregation to throw themselves upon God's mercy and grace through prayer, fasting and weeping for their sins.<sup>89</sup> In his tenth homily on Ephesians, he laments the fact that they are so sick with the sin of vainglory, that they are unable even to heal themselves let alone others (as they are supposed to be able to). He makes this lament, he says, 'so that we all, together with our women and children, might sprinkle ourselves with ashes, put on sackcloth, perform a long fast, and implore God to reach out a hand to us and quench the terror.'<sup>90</sup> The tone throughout the exhortation is one of warning of imminent danger; but, nonetheless, it is clear that they can easily escape the danger to come if they entrust themselves to God's mercy. His hand, he says, is 'great' (μεγάλη) and 'wonderful' (θαυμαστή).<sup>91</sup> He concludes the exhortation by encouraging them that, if they make this prayer and confession, 'we will be counted worthy of being rid of this harsh and most terrible beast, and of sending up thanks to our God and Father, the lover of men.'<sup>92</sup> Referring them to God's 'philanthropy' is, indeed, how he concludes the

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<sup>88</sup> This is quite different to how people related to the gods in the classical world: 'The Greeks and Romans did propitiate and attempt to conciliate their gods, when they had reason to think that they might be angry at an offense; but placating someone, whether a human being or a deity, is a different matter from beseeching forgiveness. For the latter, as we have said, one must repudiate the act of wrongdoing together with the values that permitted it.' Konstan 2010, 99.

<sup>89</sup> See, e.g., Chrys. *In Phil. hom.* 14.303B-C, *In Col. hom.* 12.415A-417E, *In 1 Cor. hom.* 38.359A-D,

<sup>90</sup> ἵνα κοινῇ πάντες μετὰ γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων σποδὸν καταπασάμενοι, σάκκον, περιζωσάμενοι, νηστείαν ἐπιτείνωμεν, τὸν θεὸν παρακαλέσωμεν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν χεῖρα ὀρέξαι, καὶ σβέσαι τὸ δεινόν. Chrys. *In Eph. hom.* 10.79B.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> ἵνα καταξιοθῶμεν, τοῦ θηρίου τούτου τοῦ χαλεποῦ καὶ δεινοτάτου ἀπαλλαγέντες, χάριν ἀναπέμψαι τῷ φιλανθρώπῳ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ. Chrys. *In Eph. hom.* 10.80A.

vast majority of his sermons: it is ultimately only ‘through the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ’ that they will ‘receive the good things promised.’<sup>93</sup>

Secondly, fear provides a jolt to the soul that awakens it out of natural slothfulness and quickens it towards godly, healthy living – healthy because it is obedient to God and no longer merits his judgement. Laziness, however, does not simply prevent the individual from performing their own self-cure. Once fear has provided the initial redirection of the soul’s desires, God then steps in and gives the believer everything else they need to be fully healed.<sup>94</sup> This progression of fear leading to an awakened soul resulting in God’s work of salvation is clearly stated in the ninth homily on Philippians, in commenting on 2:12, ‘work out your salvation with fear and trembling’. He begins by stating that nothing can be learned without fear – as we saw in Chapter 3, this seems to have been an assumption of the ancient world. ‘Who learns letters without fear?’ he asks, taking the answer to be evident to all.<sup>95</sup> How much more then, he argues, must salvation be acquired through fear, because ‘we have need of so much fear that will correct a laziness which is only natural.’<sup>96</sup> Fear is needed, he argues, to stir the soul out of its lethargy. He then continues by encouraging them to think of God as always present, always watching as a way of arousing such fear. This fear, however, is not to be accompanied by despair:

Μὴ φοβοῦ, ὅτι εἶπον, “μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου.” οὐ διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον, ἵνα ἀπαγορεύσης, ἵνα δυσέφικτόν τι εἶναι νομίσης τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἀλλ’ ἵνα προσέχης, ἵνα μὴ διαχέης σαυτόν. Ἄν τοῦτο ἦ, ὁ θεὸς πάντα ἐργάσεται· σὺ θάρσει. “Ὁ θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν.”

‘Don’t fear because I said, ‘with fear and trembling’. I did not say this so that you would give up, so that you would think virtue was something hard to come by, but so that you would pay attention, so that you would not relax yourself. If this happens,

<sup>93</sup> For the typical concluding formula, see below, p. 184, n. 34.

<sup>94</sup> For fear as a starting-point for a godly life, see also Prov. 9:10, ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’.

<sup>95</sup> Τίς γράμματα ἔμαθε φόβου χωρίς; Chrys. *In Phil. hom.* 9.256C.

<sup>96</sup> Τοσοῦτου φόβου ἡμῖν ἐδέησεν, ὥστε ῥαθυμίαν ἐπιστρέψαι φυσικὴν μόνον. *Ibid.*

then God will work everything. Take heart! 'For it is God who is at work within you.'<sup>97</sup>

It is rather ironic that having just spent a good few minutes speaking on how to arouse fear, he then instructs them not to fear. The point is that if they have a right fear of God's judgement, they need not have a fear that despairs of their salvation. Fear is good because it causes a person to wake up and pay attention, and once that has happened God takes over and does everything else, so they need not despair.

Fear, then, is like an electric shock to the soul that jolts it out of its lethargy and redirects its will. Once that initial shock has taken place, God takes over and transforms the soul. He is keen to stress that 'if you are willing, at that moment he will work in you to will,' and 'whenever we are willing, from then on he will increase our will.'<sup>98</sup> For Chrysostom, a person has free will, but after they have made the initial decision to follow God, he works in them to enable them to continue. This, he continues, can be seen from experience: if someone gives alms one day, they feel more generous the next, whereas if they do not give alms, they become more entrenched in their miserliness.<sup>99</sup> Chrysostom does not spell out the consequences of the parallel, that God also hardens a heart that has refused to obey him, in the same way that he strengthens the desire of the one who does;<sup>100</sup> what is clear, though, is that for Chrysostom all that is needed is an attentiveness and an initial desire to obey God. Once that has happened, God takes hold of that desire and works to transform the whole person. And that attentiveness and desire is best aroused by fear.

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<sup>97</sup> *In Phil. hom.* 9.257B.

<sup>98</sup> Ἄν θελήσης, τότε ἐνεργήσει τὸ θέλειν.... Ὅταν γὰρ θελήσωμεν, αὐξει τὸ θέλειν ἡμῶν λοιπόν. *In Phil. hom.* 9.257D

<sup>99</sup> *In Phil. hom.* 9.257E.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Exod. 9:12, where God hardens Pharaoh's heart after repeated references to Pharaoh hardening his own heart (e.g. Exod. 8:15).

For Chrysostom, then, fear is beneficial because it either drives the believer to seek the mercy of God, or because it overcomes lethargy, and once lethargy has been overcome, God can get to work in the soul, enabling them to live an obedient life and thus be healed from their sin. The role of God as physician is nicely illustrated in a colourful passage from his *Catechetical Homilies*. This series of sermons is addressed to those about to undergo, or having recently undergone, the sacrament of baptism. One of his favourite images in the series is the depiction of the Christian life as a battle, and this is one such example:

Ἐπὶ δὲ ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ διαβόλου οὐ μέσος ἔστηκεν ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλ' ἡμῶν ὅλος ἐστί. Καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι μέσος ἀλλὰ μεθ' ἡμῶν ὅλος ἐστί, σκόπει ἐντεῦθεν. Ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα εἰσιόντας ἤλειψεν, ἐκεῖνον ἔδησεν· ἡμᾶς ἤλειψεν ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως, ἐκεῖνον ἔδησε δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις ἵνα συμποδίζηται πρὸς τὰ παλαίσματα. Ἐμοὶ κὰν ὑποσκελισθῆναι συμβῆ χειρὰ ὀρέγει καὶ πεσόντα ἀνίστησι καὶ πατεῖν αὐτὸν πάλιν ποιεῖ· <Πατεῖτε γάρ, φησὶν, ἐπάνω ὄφρων καὶ σκορπίων καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.>

But as for our contest with the devil, Christ does not stand in the middle, but is wholly on our side. That he is not in the middle but is wholly with us, consider from the following. Us he anointed when we entered the contest, him he bound; us he anointed with the oil of joy, him he bound with unbreakable chains so that he might be fettered for the combat. If I happen to trip up, he reaches out his hand and sets me up after my fall and makes him walk again: 'For you tread,' he says, 'upon snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.'<sup>101</sup>

This homily is addressed, it seems, to neophytes the day after their baptism.<sup>102</sup> Up until their baptism they were in training, but now that they have been baptised, they have entered the arena for real. However, this contest, as Chrysostom has explained, is in stark contrast to those of the Olympics, where the judge is impartial and the stronger man wins. Here the judge is entirely on the side of the Christian: he anoints the catechumen as he

<sup>101</sup> Chrys. *Cat.* 3.9. Some manuscripts have a different version of this passage, though the meaning is essentially the same. The scriptural quotation is an adaptation of Luke 10:19, anticipated by Justin Martyr, *dial.* 76.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. 3.5. We will return more specifically to the place of baptism and the sacraments more generally shortly.

enters the arena whilst fettering the opponent, the devil, and fettering with chains that are described as ‘unbreakable’ – there is no chance he might break free. Whenever the Christian slips or falls, the judge helps him back to his feet. A little later he explains how Christ has also given the Christian his armour, armour that is ‘more glittering than all gold, stronger than all steel, hotter and more violent than all fire, lighter than all air.’<sup>103</sup> It seems impossible for the Christian to lose the fight, since all manner of help and assistance is given to him, and everything done to hinder the devil. Chrysostom does, however, suggest that it is still possible for the devil to be victorious (at which point he is punished rather than rewarded by God); but given the fact that the odds are stacked so heavily in the Christian’s favour, such a victory could, it seems, only be lost through negligence on the part of the believer. It is a fight that every Christian is involved in and laziness alone would prevent the believer from experiencing God’s help. The passage demonstrates the encouragement for the believer not simply to carry out spiritual exercises to win the battle, but to seek the support of God. So long as he or she keeps up the fight, God will provide all that is needed for victory.<sup>104</sup>

In this regard, then, too, Chrysostom’s therapy differs from that of the classical philosophers. He, and other Christian writers, place a much greater emphasis on the role of God in bringing healing. For the philosophers, emphasis was placed on the individual’s own rational efforts: Gill argues that a common feature of all the major schools was a belief that ‘reaching happiness ... depends crucially on the person’s own agency rather than on external factors’ – though with the caveat that Plato and Aristotle both saw other things,

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<sup>103</sup> χρυσίου παντὸς στιλπνότερα, ἀδάμαντος παντὸς ἰσχυρότερα, πυρὸς παντὸς θερμότερα καὶ σφοδρότερα, ἀέρος παντὸς κουφότερα, Chrys. *Cat.* 3.11

<sup>104</sup> Conflict imagery is prevalent in the Bible, and particularly in the Pauline epistles: see, e.g., 2 Cor. 10:4, Eph. 6:11, 1 Tim. 6:12, 2 Tim. 2:3, Philem. 2. For studies of conflict imagery as a description of Christ’s work of salvation, see Aulén 1931; Turner 1952, 47-69; Daley 2004, 161-3. For its application to the believer, see Finn 1967, 73-118, on the renunciation of the devil in baptism, and Jeanes 1993, 164-70, who shows how conflict imagery connected baptism with martyrdom.

such as physical health and wealth, as being contributing factors.<sup>105</sup> That is not to say there is no element of this in Chrysostom: as we have seen, he considered sin to be caused by a disordered γνώμη, and therefore proposed thought exercises to bring the passions back under control. However, in addition to this a much greater role is assigned to the work of God in the believer. Writing on the apostle Paul, Abraham Malherbe noted: ‘Of major significance is that, whereas the philosophers stressed the importance of reason and reliance on the self in moral growth, Paul refers the moral life to God and the power of the Holy Spirit,’<sup>106</sup> and Chrysostom similarly places a clear emphasis on the work of God. As long as they are not negligent with regard to their salvation, God is willing to be there to help them along the road. After the passage cited above from the end of the fifth homily on Titus, Chrysostom says, ‘Let us in everything call upon God that he may reach out a hand,’ and later refers to God having ‘richly poured out into us the grace of his Spirit.’<sup>107</sup> It is God, he says, who ‘makes all things and transforms them.’<sup>108</sup> God is willing to help if only we would ask.<sup>109</sup>

It is, after all, God who is the ultimate physician of all. The philosopher Epictetus urged his disciples not to desire to be teachers themselves, because such a position requires that they ‘be purified beforehand and already be in a state of mind which recognises that he will be approaching holy things.’<sup>110</sup> One could say that they need to be healed themselves first before they can heal others. Chrysostom acknowledges this same sentiment himself in his treatise *On the Priesthood*, arguing that a priest ‘needs to have great wisdom, and, before wisdom, great grace from God, and moral rectitude, and purity

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<sup>105</sup> Gill 2013, 349.

<sup>106</sup> Malherbe 1987, 32.

<sup>107</sup> τὸν Θεὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι παρακαλῶμεν, ὅστε χεῖρα ὀρέξαι... Αὐτὸς πλουσίως ἐξέχεεν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος χάριν. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 5.764D-E.

<sup>108</sup> ὁ ποιῶν πάντα καὶ μετασκευάζων αὐτά. *Cat.* 3.5

<sup>109</sup> This is not to say that there was no concept of seeking God’s help in classical philosophers: Epictetus, for example, urges his listeners to ‘call upon [God] to help you and stand beside you’ (ἐκεῖνον ἐπικαλοῦ βοηθὸν καὶ παραστάτην, 2.18.29) in their struggles against the passions. However, the focus throughout is much more on one’s own rational efforts, and reliance on God is not a significant part of their therapy.

<sup>110</sup> προηγουκότεα καὶ προδιακείμενον τῇ γνώμῃ, ὅτι ἱεροῖς προσελεύσεται, Epict. 3.21.14.

of life, and virtue greater than is common for men.’<sup>111</sup> This forms one of his central reasons for refusing ordination: he is not himself healed, and therefore cannot heal others. However, when he is finally ordained, he is all too ready to tell his congregation that he is just as much a sinner as they. ‘For how long will *we* be idle?’ he cried out in a passage cited above.<sup>112</sup> In his catechetical homilies, he is even more explicit in his self-denunciation. Towards the end of one of the sermons, he turns briefly to address those who were baptised long ago, encouraging them to return to their former spiritual beauty. These words he speaks ‘to myself and those who were made worthy of baptism long ago.... Do not suffer the same things as us, I urge you, but let the laziness of those who have gone before be for you a foundation of security.’<sup>113</sup> Chrysostom presents himself as an example of what not to do rather than, as we might expect from the philosophical context, a paradigm of virtue. He claims that he himself is also in need of healing.

The fact that for Chrysostom God is the true physician makes sense in the context of Christian theology. God’s work is seen first and foremost in Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, events without parallel in classical philosophy for their effect on the individual. The cross he calls the ‘foundation of salvation’ (ὕποθεσις σωτηρίας)<sup>114</sup> through which we can be reconciled to God; it is through the cross that ‘he heals incurable wounds’ and ‘leads the tax-collector and prostitute to such a degree of health that they are declared worthy of heaven.’<sup>115</sup> Christ is the ultimate physician restoring souls to health.<sup>116</sup> Ashish Naidu, in his study of Chrysostom’s Christology, argued that for him ‘the virtuous Christian life is possible because Christ’s life in the flesh freed humanity from its bondage

<sup>111</sup> πολλὴν μὲν σύνεσιν, πολλὴν δὲ πρὸ τῆς συνέσεως τὴν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριν καὶ τρόπων ὀρθότητα καὶ καθαρότητα βίου καὶ μείζονα ἢ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἔχειν δεῖ τὴν ἀρετὴν, Chrys. *De sac.* 3.8. See also Elm 2000 for the same sentiment in Gregory of Nazianzus.

<sup>112</sup> pp. 132-3.

<sup>113</sup> Ἄλλα ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἑμᾶν λέγω καὶ τοὺς πάλοι τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἀξιωθέντας.... Μὴ δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ ἡμῖν πάθητε, παρακαλῶ, ἀλλ’ ἢ τῶν προλαβόντων ῥαθυμία ὑμῖν ἀσφαλείας ὑπόθεσις γενέσθω. Chrys. *Cat.* 5.26.

<sup>114</sup> Chrys. *De cruc. et latr.* 1, PG 49, 399.21

<sup>115</sup> ... ὅταν τραύματα ἀνίατα θεραπεύη, ὅταν τελώνην καὶ πόρνην εἰς τοσαύτην ὑγείαν ἐπαναγάγῃ, ὡς ἀξίους ἀποφῆναι τῶν οὐρανῶν. *De cruc. et latr.* 1, PG. 49, 401.58-60.

<sup>116</sup> On Christ’s salvation understood in ‘therapeutic’ terms by the Church Fathers, see Daley 2004, 156-8.

of sin and released it to experience life to the full.’<sup>117</sup> Chrysostom’s role as preacher is to encourage his congregation to receive the full benefits of this salvation.

The sacraments, the central rites of the Christian faith, are important too as a means of mediating the salvific effects of Christ’s redemptive work to the individual believer. As Naidu writes, ‘Through our sacramentally mediated union with Christ, we enjoy the propitiatory benefits of his victory over death and are given the privilege of divine fellowship.’ Baptism, the initiatory sacrament, is a ‘burial and resurrection’,<sup>118</sup> in which the believer imitates the death and resurrection of Christ himself, illustrated liturgically by the customary practice of holding baptisms at Easter.<sup>119</sup> Baptism works a real, inward transformation in the believer: Chrysostom applies the words of Paul at 2 Cor. 5:17 that the Christian is ‘a new creation’ to this change effected at baptism, arguing that their souls are now ‘one thing instead of another’ (ἄλλας ἀντ’ ἄλλων αὐτὰς εἰργάσατο), recreated and made new by the grace of God. This is a change not, however, of substance (οὐσία), but of the will (προαίρεσις).<sup>120</sup> They may look exactly the same, but inwardly they have been recreated, their γνώμη has been set right. All the believer needs to do is, as we saw above, to keep up the sustained effort and not grow idle:

Τὸ γὰρ ἀξίωμα διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν ἅπαξ ἡμῖν δωρηθέν, τὴν υἰοθεσίαν λέγω, τὸν ἁγιασμόν, τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν χάριν, εἰ μὴ ῥαθυμήσῃμεν, οὐδεὶς οὐδέποτε ἡμῶν ἀφελέσθαι ταῦτα δυνήσεται.

For the honour which was given us once on account of his love for mankind, I mean adoption, sanctification, the grace of the Spirit – if we are not lazy, no-one will ever be able to take these things away from us.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Naidu 2012, 165.

<sup>118</sup> Καὶ γὰρ τάφος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀνάστασις τὸ βάπτισμα, Chrys. *Cat.* 2.11, employing the language of Romans 6. For the widespread use of this language to describe baptism at the time, see Jeanes 1993, followed by Campbell 1999.

<sup>119</sup> Another favourite time for baptism was Epiphany, commemorating Christ’s own baptism in the Jordan – cf. Casiday 2007, 518-21. In the period before Constantine, the rites of baptism ‘are based on a *mimesis* of Jordan rather than of Calvary’ – Jeanes 1993, 158.

<sup>120</sup> Chrys. *Cat.* 4.14

<sup>121</sup> *Cat.* 5.23

Those gifts of holiness and intimacy with God were freely and lovingly given to Christians at their baptism; but they must be vigilant in keeping hold of them. Again, it is only laziness on the part of the believer that can prevent the transforming work of God: they must remain attentive if they are not to lose the healthy state they received at their baptism.<sup>122</sup> That health could be bestowed in this way from without is a concept completely alien to classical philosophy.

The Eucharist similarly enables the believer to appropriate for himself the salvific effects of Christ's passion:

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπλῶς τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἡ προτέρα τῆς σαρκὸς φύσις ἢ ἀπὸ γῆς διαπλασθεῖσα, ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἔφθασε νεκρωθῆναι καὶ ζωῆς γενέσθαι ἔρημος, ἑτέραν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, μᾶζαν καὶ ζύμην ἐπεισήγαγε, τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα, φύσει μὲν οὐσαν τὴν αὐτὴν, ἁμαρτίας δὲ ἀπηλλαγμένην καὶ ζωῆς γέμουσαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἔδωκεν αὐτῆς μεταλαμβάνειν, ἵνα ταύτη τρεφόμενοι, καὶ τὴν προτέραν ἀποθέμενοι τὴν νεκρὰν, εἰς τὴν ζῶσαν καὶ ἀθάνατον διὰ τῆς τραπέζης ἀνακερασθῶμεν ταύτης.

For he did not give his body in vain, but when the previous nature of flesh (the one formed from the earth) had already become dead from sin and was empty of life, he brought in his own flesh as another yeast and dough, so to speak, which was by nature the same, but was free from sin and full of life. He gave it to all to have a share in, so that, in being nourished by it and having put away their former dead body, we might be united through this table to the flesh that is living and eternal.<sup>123</sup>

By taking the bread and wine, the Christian takes into himself the very body and blood of Christ, and, as yeast 'leavens the whole batch of dough',<sup>124</sup> so the small morsels of Christ's flesh work throughout the whole body of the believer to transform his nature. Since Christ

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<sup>122</sup> There is a tension in Chrysostom's thought, and throughout early Christianity going to back to the New Testament, between the need simply to preserve what one was given at baptism, and the need to make progress. The tension is colourfully illustrated in another of the catechetical homilies, where he urges his neophytes to keep their new spiritual robes clean, robes which he compares in brightness to the sun itself; however, despite them already being as bright as the brightest thing known to man, he continues by urging them to make the beauty of their new robes even more brilliant. (*Cat.* 4. 22-3). Cf. Russell 2004, 233, who, in his survey of the development of the doctrine of deification, suggests that for Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil, 'both baptism and the moral life are said to deify.' Baptism perfects the believer, but there is still work to do.

<sup>123</sup> Chrys. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 24.214B-C.

<sup>124</sup> 1 Cor. 5:6, Gal. 5:9.

was sinless and, through his crucifixion and resurrection, defeated death, these same qualities of being ‘free from sin’ and ‘free from death’ are imparted to the believer by absorbing his body and blood into his own body. Though therapeutic language is not explicitly used, the effect is the same.<sup>125</sup> Through partaking of the Eucharist, the Christian is ‘united ... to the flesh that is living and eternal’, as his former sinful, dead body – the sick body, as it were – is renewed and transformed into a body ‘free from sin and full of life’ through its union with the risen Christ.

### CHRYSOSTOM AS PHYSICIAN AND PROPHET

Chrysostom’s role as spiritual physician differs subtly but markedly from that of the classical philosophers. In many ways more similar to the Old Testament prophets, Chrysostom’s preaching focussed on a message of repentance and obedience to a God who would be his congregations’ judge at the resurrection, but also stressed the necessity of seeking God’s mercy and love through prayer and of participating in Christ’s death and resurrection through the sacraments. Terrifying them with the threat of hell drove them to seek God’s forgiveness, and awakened them out of the lethargy which prevented him from working a transformation in the believer’s soul. At the same time, however, he was also preaching within a classical tradition, and thus saw the root cause of sin in the individual to be a disordered soul in which the reason was subject to the passions. A disordered soul was a disobedient soul. As a result, he worked towards his aim of bringing about repentance and obedience to God through urging his congregation to undertake many of the same spiritual exercises encouraged by the classical philosophers.

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<sup>125</sup> Cf., however, *In Ioh. hom.* 46, PG 59.261.49-51, where he compares the Eucharistic elements to a spring that cools down a feverish heat (τὸ κῶσος).

This can be seen further if we turn to consider the principal messages of the exhortations to Chrysostom's sermons on Titus and Philemon. The exposition of scripture would, of course, also be understood by him as of therapeutic value, but given that the second half of the sermon is more directly addressed to the congregation and focussed on a particular point, a brief survey of the main themes will usefully demonstrate the typical therapeutic/prophetic aims of his preaching. All apart from one (the first homily on Titus, discussed below) can readily be understood as exercising this Christian cure of souls. In the second homily on Titus, which we discussed in the previous chapter as an example of him employing the philosophical language of controlling the passions, he goes on to warn repeatedly of the Judgement to come, at which all will be revealed for who they truly are, regardless of what honour they have received from men; at one point he baldly states that those who desire honour will not see the kingdom of heaven.<sup>126</sup>

The relatively short exhortation to the third homily has one main point, that sin is an impurity: by repeatedly proclaiming sin to be unclean, his main focus appears to be to awaken in his congregation an abhorrence of sin and a sense of uncleanness before the divine.<sup>127</sup> The exhortation of the fourth homily is addressed to slaves, urging them to live meek and obedient lives. Much of what he has to say is focussed on the earthly benefits of such behaviour (particularly the possibility of softening a harsh master's heart), but a bigger picture is not far from his mind: at the start he reminds them that this is the commandment of God and obedience to the commandment will win for them heavenly glory,<sup>128</sup> and at the end he proclaims that even death itself yields to virtue.<sup>129</sup> In these two sermons, future judgement may not be directly mentioned, but in different ways he urges

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<sup>126</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 2.742A-B.

<sup>127</sup> This different imagery of sin as dirt is not dissimilar to his use of medical language. It is a common image in Chrysostom (see also *Cat.* 6.23-4) and was widespread in ancient thought, though often with more emphasis on bodily impurity through association with things such as death or bodily fluids, than spiritual pollution: see Lennon 2014, 3. On 'pollution' more generally in ancient thought, see Parker 1983.

<sup>128</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 4.754A-B.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.* 756D.

them to a life of obedience to God. The fifth and sixth sermons have already been discussed in detail above.

In the first homily on Philemon, there is a similar mixture of earthly and heavenly concerns in his exhortation to be merciful, though the focus is very much on the latter. The central message is that they have greatly offended God, and they will not receive forgiveness from him unless they can learn to show mercy to others. He insists that he is asking of them nothing difficult, that it is all a matter of the will – exercising will brings the passions under control.<sup>130</sup> The second homily contains an exhortation to humility, that, on one level, they may be delivered from the ‘madness’ (ἀπόνοια) of pride,<sup>131</sup> but, at a deeper level, that they may rightly submit to God in all circumstances and give him honour and glory. The exhortation of the third and final sermon begins with a brief encouragement again to show mercy if one wants to receive mercy, but consists for the most part in a response to the question as to how a merciful God can send people to hell: his answer is that the threat of hell (a real threat, otherwise it would not be a threat) is a good thing as it encourages sinners towards virtue. In each case, then, there is a clear emphasis on exhorting people to turn from sin to virtue and obedience, for fear that sin is an offence against God meriting his judgement and requiring his mercy.

The exception is the first sermon on Titus. Following on from Paul’s prayer for Titus at 1:4, he argues that bishops are indeed very much in need of prayers because it such a difficult and dangerous office, echoing some of the themes that arise in his treatise *On the Priesthood*. He explains that the office is dangerous through the many souls whose eternal destiny the bishop becomes accountable for, and is difficult because of the many insults he receives from those under him. In light of this he warns those with an ambition for the episcopate not to strive for what is an enslavement and not an honour; and he

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<sup>130</sup> Laird 2012, 232-9.

<sup>131</sup> Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 2.784D.

attacks those who insult the bishop, urging them to support him rather than make unreasonable demands. This exhortation, therefore, is less therapeutic in purpose: he does not dwell on the sinfulness of ambition or disobedience, or warn of future judgement of such attitudes. Instead, his focus appears to be more one of defending the episcopate.<sup>132</sup> This could be a response to general mutterings against the bishop, and/or it could well be in response to alternative Christian physicians in the shape of the wandering monks who were outside of the ecclesiastical hierarchy: the latter option indeed may be suggested by the nature of the insults, which centre on the supposed luxurious lifestyle of the bishop (particularly attending the baths) – in contrast, of course, to the rigorous asceticism of the monks.<sup>133</sup> This exhortation, therefore, could be regarded as a defence of the validity of the spiritual guidance provided by bishops and clergy, as opposed to that offered by any of the alternatives.<sup>134</sup>

## CONCLUSION

With occasional exceptions such as this aside, Chrysostom primarily saw his role as preacher as a spiritual physician exercising a Christianized therapy of the soul. These two chapters have sought to show precisely what we mean by this in order to get to the heart of how Chrysostom understood his pastoral activity as preacher. As Mayer has already argued, his use of medical language was in many ways parallel to that of the classical philosophers, understanding sin to be a disorder of the soul where the passions had mastery over the reason. However, he differs significantly from them in seeing the ultimate goal of

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<sup>132</sup> He does not at any point make clear whether he himself is a bishop; if he is, then he is defending the episcopate in more general terms. If he is still a priest in Antioch, he does not mention Bishop Flavian directly by name.

<sup>133</sup> On the importance of ascetic authority in late antiquity, see Rapp 2005, 100-52.

<sup>134</sup> See Caner 2002, 169-205, on Chrysostom's rivalry with the monk Isaac for spiritual authority in Constantinople.

therapy not in the achievement of present happiness or well-being, as would be the case with the philosophers, but in avoiding God's judgement for sin and receiving the blessings of eternal life. Indeed, God is of central importance to his conception of both the sickness and the therapy of the soul, and no therapy at all would be able to happen were it not for Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection, and his on-going help after initial conversion and baptism. In this he picks up a tradition that is much more rooted in the scriptures and Christian theology, and it was suggested that in many respects Chrysostom saw his role as preacher and physician as being akin to the prophets of the Old Testament, and indeed Jesus himself. For Chrysostom, to be an effective preacher means to warn terrifyingly of God's judgement to come and, using fear of future punishment as a goad, to urge his congregation to cast themselves upon his mercy and grace before it is too late.

Over the course of these three chapters, we have built up a picture of Chrysostom as a pastor by setting his sermons within the social world of late antiquity. His practice was like that of a school teacher in the classroom: he would begin by expounding the key texts of his Christian philosophy before moving on to more general moral exhortations, throughout often following the typical practice of rebuking sternly to encourage improvement. His goal was spiritual healing, which consisted in both the classical model of psychic therapy whereby disordered passions needed to be controlled, but also more fundamentally in urging repentance and obedience to the Christian God in view of a somewhat terrifying eschatology. In a model of preaching which views the sermon as nothing more than the communication of knowledge and ideas, Chrysostom's condemnations reflect simply his inability to change the beliefs of his audiences and his popularity becomes perplexing. It is only by recovering this picture of Chrysostom as a pastor that we are able to explain the great paradox with which this thesis began: the popularity of the tongue that cuts.

As a teacher correcting students and performing a painful therapy of the soul, and as a prophet of God's judgement, he focuses his preaching on the continued sins of his flawed congregation, urging them towards repentance. However, it does not necessarily follow that they were any more sinful or flawed than any other Christian congregation through history, or that the Christianization of the Roman Empire had led to widespread nominalism through the Church. It is a key Christian concept that all people are in need of God's mercy, and we have seen that Chrysostom was just as harsh on himself as he was on his congregation: indeed, he claimed he refused ordination originally for 'fear of my own safety'.<sup>135</sup> And for a sickness that all people suffer with, he considered fear – though not a despairing fear – to be an especially beneficial tool to drive people to seek God's mercy and receive his much-needed help.

These chapters have therefore begun to show that listening to Chrysostom was supposed to be a fear-inspiring experience. It is only when viewed in the context of the harsh schoolmaster, painful therapy and a terrifying eschatology, that such language of stern condemnation can be readily explained. Of even greater importance, however, is the sermon's immediate setting: an act of worship, in which Christians were brought into the very presence of the Christian God. It is to a consideration of this context that we now turn.

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<sup>135</sup> ὑπὲρ δὲ ἑαυτῶν δεδοκότες, Chrys. *De sac.* 3.14.79-80 (trans. G. Neville).

## CHAPTER 6:

### *Preaching and the Liturgy*

#### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has already introduced us to the fact that, despite parallels between Chrysostom's preaching and the activity of other teacher-physicians of the Greco-Roman world, the 'God-dimension' is significant for his Christianized cure of souls and cannot be overlooked if we are to have a fully rounded picture of the pastoral nature of his preaching. This becomes even more obviously the case if we turn to consider the immediate setting in which his sermons were delivered. The crucial difference between the sermon and a philosopher's lecture is that the former took place as part of an act of worship to the Christian God. In the fourth-century basilicas in which Chrysostom preached, the liturgy had developed into an elaborate ritual designed, as we will see, to evoke awe and wonder in the heart of the believer. The liturgical role of the sermon is, to some extent, well understood, and it is increasingly recognised that 'homilies have an important role to play ... as liturgical documents'.<sup>1</sup> Robert Taft, for example, in his recent study of the Byzantine liturgy 'from the bottom up' frequently uses sermons as sources for lay participation in the Church's rituals.<sup>2</sup> Or we can go back to Frans van de Paverd's detailed analysis of Chrysostom's sermons to reconstruct the contemporary liturgy at Antioch and

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer 2008a, 568.

<sup>2</sup> Taft 2006.

Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> The preacher will often make some passing reference to a part of the liturgy in order to make a broader point, and thus sermons can be a mine of information on the fourth-century shape of the liturgy.

Each of these studies has therefore done much to further our understanding of the late-antique and Byzantine liturgy. However, very little work has been done on the liturgical nature of the sermon itself. The sermon's role as a 'liturgical document' has, by and large, been understood in terms of the nuggets of information it can provide on the surrounding liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Liturgical studies tend only to treat aspects of the sermon such as audibility, length, number and so on. How it itself contributes to the liturgy and the experience of worship has received less attention. Since it is therefore seen as a window onto the liturgy, the implication is that it is not really a part of the liturgy in its own right. The result is that the sermon becomes something of an interlude in the ritual, a pause in the worship, and the church becomes for a time primarily and only a school.

Furthermore, some studies ignore the liturgical context of the sermon altogether. Jaclyn Maxwell, for example, claims that 'His main purpose [in preaching] was not to convince anyone to accept Christianity – the people he spoke to were already inside his church. Instead, he was trying to convert Christians to his version of the faith.'<sup>5</sup> Whilst not wishing to deny that persuasion was indeed a part of what was going on, by setting up this contrast between two different ways of understanding the sermon – conversion to Christianity, or conversion to his form of Christianity – she depicts it as purely the communication of knowledge and ideas from the preacher to the audience. The vertical dimension between the people and God is entirely forgotten. It is the argument of this chapter that we should take the sermon's place in the liturgy seriously, not as an

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<sup>3</sup> Van de Pavard 1970.

<sup>4</sup> As is the case with Mayer 2008a, 568. Much the same can be said about the chapter entitled 'The Liturgical Setting' in Mayer and Allen 2000, 17-25.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell 2006, 174.

intermission in the liturgical drama, but as a scene within it. Reflecting on this liturgical and spiritual dimension to the sermon will both further our understanding of what kind of activity preaching was, and will provide another perspective on his use of condemnatory language.<sup>6</sup>

There have only been a few works to do so in relation to the patristic period.<sup>7</sup> It was Alexandre Olivar, in his monumental study of ancient Christian preaching, who recognised the importance of the liturgical context for understanding the nature of the sermon.<sup>8</sup> His treatment, however, is brief and deals only with four points, none of which really gets to the heart of how the sermon functions as a scene in the liturgical drama. The four aspects he considers are: the moment during the liturgy when the sermon was preached; the prayers and ritual which introduce the sermon; the invitation to prayer which closes the sermon; and the concluding doxology. Each of these points, however, only really touches the surface of the issue, dealing by and large with the very beginning and the very end of the sermon. There is much more that can be said about how the sermon proper is itself an integral part of the liturgy of which it forms a part.

Two studies, however, have drawn attention briefly to the role of the sermon in evoking awe and worship in the congregation, and thus suggesting one way in which the sermon can be understood as a cultic activity. In her study of patristic exegesis, Frances Young – foreshadowing David Rylaarsdam’s treatment of the concept of adaptability in Chrysostom’s theology and practice – has a chapter in which she explores the understanding of scriptural language as being ‘sacramental’, God’s accommodation to the

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<sup>6</sup> See also McLaughlin 1991, who, in a rather simplistic argument, states that with the introduction of catechetical preaching in the fourth century, the nature of the sermon was radically redefined: ‘From being an act of worship it became an act of instruction.’ For it to be an act of worship in his understanding, it had to be a ‘short, simple, traditional, and formulaic part’ of the liturgy, and by losing that characteristic, in the fourth century ‘it threatened to make a lecture-hall of the church,’ p. 97-8.

<sup>7</sup> See Olivar 1991, 515 n. 3 for references.

<sup>8</sup> Olivar 1991, 515-27, reprinted with minor revisions from Olivar 1972.

limitations of human speech.<sup>9</sup> Her focus is on exploring how the sacramental nature of scriptural language underpinned the Church Fathers' exegesis of biblical texts, who 'acknowledged the poverty of human language to express the divine reality, yet retained the evocative power of the true metaphor.'<sup>10</sup> This view of the language of scripture as pointing beyond itself to the Reality which 'transcends all possible linguistic expression' was developed in part as a result of the context of worship for much scriptural exegesis.<sup>11</sup> In a brief discussion at the end of the chapter, she analyses a few of Chrysostom's sermons to illustrate how he draws out for his congregation the elusiveness and, consequently, the evocativeness of scripture, as something which speaks only dimly of the transcendental Reality beyond. Thus the aim of both scripture and his exegesis is 'to evoke wonder and worship'.<sup>12</sup>

The second study, which again touches on the theme only briefly towards the end, is a recent essay by Isabella Sandwell comparing Chrysostom's and Basil of Caesarea's exegesis of the opening of Genesis. Through a detailed study of their different homiletic approaches to the creation narrative, she shows that Basil went to much greater lengths than Chrysostom in explaining the science behind the text. Basil sought to explain difficulties in the text with recourse to current scientific theory; Chrysostom, on the other hand, left his congregation 'to deal with the confusions in Genesis's creation narrative by themselves.' As a result they went away 'with a sense of bafflement and a lack of understanding.'<sup>13</sup> However, she does not leave things there. In her conclusion she argues that Chrysostom deliberately took this approach 'because he was trying to achieve an effect other than understanding.' First, their sense of bafflement would have led to 'a sense

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<sup>9</sup> Young 1997, 140-60.

<sup>10</sup> Young 1997, 160.

<sup>11</sup> Young 1997, 144, 158-60.

<sup>12</sup> Young 1997, 159.

<sup>13</sup> Sandwell 2011, 559-60.

of wonderment at God'.<sup>14</sup> Second, through constant repetition of verses from Genesis, he was essentially engaging with his congregation in the practice of *lectio divina*: 'such methods were intended to present Scripture as a kind of charm to ward off evil or as a form of meditation that could induce a religious state or attitude.'<sup>15</sup>

Both these studies only really hint at ways in which Chrysostom's sermons can be read liturgically, that is, how they contribute to the liturgy and form a part of the worship event. This chapter will explore three particular aspects of the liturgical nature of Chrysostom's sermons. First, we shall reflect on the broader liturgical context of which the sermon formed a part: an appreciation of the immediate context within which the sermon was delivered will enable a greater appreciation of what kind of activity preaching was. Secondly, bearing in mind that exegetical sermons (which form the focus of this thesis) are in part a study of scripture, we shall explore the notion that scriptural study was an inherently sacred activity that brought the careful student into communion with God. Thirdly, we shall consider the worshipful emotions that preaching sought to arouse. As Young and Sandwell have already begun to do, we shall assess the ability of the sermon to evoke praise and love for God; and then, returning more directly to the theme of harsh language, we shall consider the sermon's role in highlighting the worshippers' sin in order to produce an attitude of reverential fear and appropriate contrition before God and, for the communicating congregants at least, in preparation for the subsequent celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sandwell 2011, 561.

<sup>15</sup> Sandwell 2011, 563. Other studies which touch on this theme: Krueger 2014, in a study on the subjectivities created by the elements of Byzantine liturgy, acknowledges sermons as a part of this liturgy (p. 3), but none receive any extended attention. In addition, his focus is on the sixth to eleventh centuries, and as such Chrysostom receives only a brief discussion (pp. 14-5). Volz 1990 describes the early Christian sermon as prophetic, liturgical and exegetical, but does not explain how the sermon was liturgical beyond it being 'an ingredient in the cultus or pattern of offering praise to God' (p. 104). Bradshaw 1992, 36-43, likewise considers the 'ministry of the word' to be didactic, anamnestic, paracletic and doxological, but is primarily concerned with the readings from scripture and says little on how and if the sermon performs these roles.

<sup>16</sup> It will be assumed for the sake of argument that the sermons under discussion were preached in a Eucharistic liturgy. However, this may well not have been the case for some or many of our sermons, but

HEAVEN ON EARTH: THE AWE-FUL CONTEXT OF THE SERMON.

From the earliest times in the Christian tradition, the sermon formed a part of the liturgy, the ritual worship of God. Sources as early as the second century make clear that preaching was a part of a broader act of corporate worship. The earliest indisputable evidence for the practice of preaching as part of Christian worship can be found in Justin Martyr's well-known passage from his *First Apology*. In his description on what happens each Sunday when the Christians gather together, he presents a straightforward sequence of scriptural readings, sermon, prayers and Eucharist: each element is a part of the Christians' assembly time.<sup>17</sup> Tertullian likewise, in his *Apology* for the Christian faith, describes the Christian assembly as consisting of both prayers and readings and lessons from the scriptures.<sup>18</sup> For both, preaching was closely connected with prayers and other rituals that together constituted the Christians' weekly gathering for worship.

By the time we come to the end of the fourth century, the liturgy and ritual in which preaching took place had become more elaborate, with the aim of instilling a sense of reverence and awe of God in the worshipper.<sup>19</sup> This began from before the service had even started: Chrysostom refers in passing to the habit among many of kissing the porch as they entered the church building.<sup>20</sup> Such an act suggests respect and reverence for the space which they are about to enter. This sense of awe would have been further encouraged as they entered the building: from the time of Constantine and the imperial

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unfortunately there is no means of discerning the actual liturgical context for each one, apart from on the relatively few occasions when he explicitly refers to the sacrament that is to follow. The broader point will not be affected, but the argument at this point will inevitably remain tentative.

<sup>17</sup> Just. *I Apol.* 67.

<sup>18</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 39.2-4.

<sup>19</sup> Yasin 2012a, 958: 'Churches across the early Christian world offered physical spaces in which God's presence could be sensed and appropriate responses could be made.'

<sup>20</sup> Chrys. *In 2 Cor. hom.* 30.650D. Cf. Mayer and Allen 2012, 221.

patronage of the Christian religion, grand basilicas were built in all the major cities of the Empire as centres for the Christian assembly. Architecture varied from church to church, but typically consisted of a nave for the laity with a raised platform, the *ambo*, in the centre for the readings. At the back of the church, in the east end, was the sanctuary, accessible only by the clergy, with the bishop's throne in the centre.<sup>21</sup> The walls and floor would have been richly decorated with paintings and mosaics depicting biblical or other Christian scenes, which again would have communicated to the worshipper that he was entering sacred space: Paulinus of Nola, for example, hoped that 'their minds and hearts might be captivated by the sketches painted in various colours.'<sup>22</sup>

Chrysostom, too, speaks of the church building as sacred space. In one sermon he refers to it as 'a place of angels, a place of archangels, a palace of God, heaven itself'.<sup>23</sup> He goes on to refer his congregation to the altar containing the Eucharistic elements, which, though veiled, sits before them present throughout the service. Admittedly he is saying all this by way of rebuke: he has been claiming that they treat the church like a shop in the market-place, with no respect paid for the sanctity of the place. However, as we are beginning to see through this thesis, we should be wary of taking such denunciations at face value. On the contrary, indeed, by representing their attitude to church as consisting of such profanity, he thus highlights through the stark contrast the immense sanctity of the space, and helps them to experience that sense of liminality, of being on the threshold of heaven itself.<sup>24</sup> This is something we shall return to below.

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<sup>21</sup> For the architecture of the churches of Antioch, see Mayer and Allen 2012. For Constantinople, see Mathews 1971.

<sup>22</sup> *mentes| ... caperet fucata coloribus umbra*, Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 27.582-3, tr. Kiely 2004, 469; cf. Kessler 2007, 118, and *passim*.

<sup>23</sup> τόπος ἀγγέλων, τόπος ἀρχαγγέλων, βασιλεία Θεοῦ, αὐτὸς ὁ οὐρανός, Chrys. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 36.340D.

<sup>24</sup> This remains a characteristic feature of Eastern Orthodox worship and theology. McGrath 2011, 188, notes that 'Especially within the Greek Orthodox tradition, the public worship of the church represents a drawing close to the threshold of heaven itself. Worshippers are encouraged to see themselves as peering through the portals of heaven, catching a glimpse of the worship of heavenly places.' In Orthodox thought, according to Steenberg 2008, 121, 'The Church is seen primarily as a place of encounter, where God is not so much

The service began with the Liturgy of the Word. The scriptures were held in great reverence as the very words of God, and this first part of the service was conducted in such a way as to emphasise that these were no ordinary texts that were being proclaimed and expounded. To begin with there were designated individuals whose primary function was to read the sacred text to the gathered assembly: although it was partly driven by pragmatic concerns, that, in a largely illiterate age, few would have been able to read anyway, it nonetheless suggests that the texts were seen as too special to be read by just anyone. The reader, indeed, was a clerical office, albeit a minor one, and the same standards of conduct were expected of him as of other members of the clergy. Furthermore, by the fourth century, even the reader was not considered high enough up the clerical rankings to be entrusted with the final reading from the Gospel: such was the reverence in which it was held, that only a deacon or presbyter was considered suitable for the task.<sup>25</sup>

After the entrance of the bishop, he declared the Peace ('Peace be with you', answered by 'and also with you'), and then sat down on his episcopal throne for the readings from scripture.<sup>26</sup> Interspersed between the readings were psalms, which were sung or chanted by the reader or a designated singer, the cantor.<sup>27</sup> It is also possible that the readings themselves were chanted; if so, this would have further given the impression that these were no ordinary texts.<sup>28</sup> For the final reading from the Gospel, it had become the practice for all those who were seated to stand, as a mark of reverence for the central texts of the Christian scriptures.<sup>29</sup> Before beginning his sermon, the preacher would repeat the peace.<sup>30</sup> All this ritual surrounding the readings from scripture and the delivery of the

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learned about as met, and where human lives are brought into an ecclesia, a community, of relation to this encountered God.'

<sup>25</sup> On the office of the reader, see Gamble 1995, 223.

<sup>26</sup> Chrys. *Adv. Iud. or.* 3.6, PG 48.870.17-20. See also van de Paverd 1970, 83-93.

<sup>27</sup> For the evidence see van de Paverd 1970, 116-29 and Gamble 1995, 228.

<sup>28</sup> For the argument see Gamble 1995, 225-8.

<sup>29</sup> Chrys., *In Matt. hom.* 1.18A; van de Paverd 1970, 101-2. See also Mathews 1971, 138-54.

<sup>30</sup> Chrys. *Adv. Iud. or.* 3.6, PG 48.870.20-2

sermon would have created a sense that this was not only a sacred space but also a sacred time.

The Liturgy of the Word concluded with a sermon or sermons by the priests and, finally, the bishop, very often expounding the scriptures which had just been read.<sup>31</sup> The sermon was typically concluded with a doxology which flows seamlessly out of the preceding moral exhortation.<sup>32</sup> Chrysostom's typical progression is to go from the command, to the promised blessings for those who follow those commands,<sup>33</sup> to the source of those blessings in the grace and lovingkindness of Christ, and finally to giving him therefore, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all honour and praise.<sup>34</sup> Thus we slip seamlessly from exhortation to praise of God. The two are intimately connected. The

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<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, Asterius of Amasea on three occasions makes a point of explaining that he will focus in his sermon on just one of the texts that had been read, and in one he in fact feels it necessary to touch briefly on the other passages read as well (*Hom.* 3.2; the other two are 5.1 and 6.3.1). From these passages it seems that the typical habit for Asterius was to explain all the texts in his sermon, if his focus on just one required an explanation. There is no evidence for such a custom by Chrysostom, although it does seem to have been the case that in Antioch and Constantinople there was more than one preacher (Mayer and Allen 2000, 32-3), and it is possible that each took a different passage to expound – Amasea being a comparatively small town, there would presumably have been far fewer able preachers for this to be practicable there.

<sup>32</sup> Because of its formulaic nature, it is therefore textually problematic, and questions have been raised over authenticity: there is no guarantee that the words we have reflect the actual way Chrysostom would have closed a sermon. It is entirely possible that the original stenographers did not consider it necessary to record the doxology, and it was thus added by later copyists; or it was emended, consciously or not, by scribes familiar with different formulae. Nonetheless, we can have some confidence about the genuineness of the basic doxology that has been preserved: according to Wenger 1970, 57-9, the vast majority of Chrysostom's sermons end with a more or less standard doxological formula that is furthermore distinctive to him. He goes further to suggest that we can use the presence or absence of this doxology as a way of discerning which homilies are authentic and which pseudonymous, such is its peculiarity to Chrysostom. In light of this, we can be confident that the basic doxology and its variants are able to tell us something about the way Chrysostom would typically have closed his sermons. See also Olivar 1991, 524-5; Bady 2010, 155.

<sup>33</sup> Of the sermons on Titus and Philemon, eight describe the reward as the 'good things', one (*In Tit. hom.* 3) as seeing God.

<sup>34</sup> Wenger 1970, 57-8, suggests the basic text of the doxology is as follows, though there are many variations (see also Bady 2010, 155):

ἧς/ὧν γένοιτο πάντας ἡμᾶς ἐπιτυχεῖν  
 χάριτι καὶ φιλοφροσύνη/οἰκτιρμοῖς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,  
 δι' οὗ καὶ μεθ' οὗ τῷ Πατρὶ ἅμα τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι,  
 δόξα, κράτος, τιμὴ,  
 νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

Which may we all attain to  
 by the grace and loving-kindness/mercies of our lord Jesus Christ,  
 through whom and with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit,  
 be glory, power and honour  
 now and always and forever. Amen.

exhortation is not simply about encouraging the laity to live a more moral life, or to believe and practice the version of orthodoxy promulgated by the preacher; rather, it is set primarily within a context of giving honour and praise to God.

Following the sermons, the congregation moves into the sacred climax of the liturgy with the Eucharist. At this point many had to leave who were not permitted to partake in this holiest part of the service: the catechumens, the demon-possessed and the penitents. In this transition from the ‘mass of the catechumens’ to the ‘mass of the faithful’, there is a clear sense that the latter is the ‘holy of holies’, the sacred mysteries only the initiated can participate in. For it is now that, as they partake of the body and blood of Christ, that the faithful approach as close as people can come to God himself:

Ὅταν γὰρ ἴδῃς τὸν Κύριον τεθυμένον καὶ κείμενον, καὶ τὸν ἱερέα ἐφεστῶτα τῷ θύματι καὶ ἐπευχόμενον, καὶ πάντα ἐκείνῳ τῷ τιμίῳ φοιτισσομένουσ ἀίματι, ἄρα ἔτι μετὰ ἀνθρώπων εἶναι νομίζεις καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐστάναι, ἀλλ’ οὐκ εὐθέως ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς μετανίστασαι καὶ πᾶσαν σαρκικὴν διάνοιαν ἐκβάλλων, γυμνῇ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τῷ νῷ καθαρῷ περιβλέπεις τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς;

For when you see the Lord lying there sacrificed, and the priest standing over the sacrifice and praying and all besmeared with that precious blood – do you still think that you are among men and that you stand upon the earth, but rather are you not transported immediately to the heavens, and, casting off every fleshly thought, do you look around at heavenly things with a soul that is bare and a mind that is pure?<sup>35</sup>

At the moment of the Eucharist, the worshipper finds himself or herself suddenly to be in another world, ‘transported immediately to the heavens.’ With the ‘eyes of faith’ the visual landscape which the worshipper beholds is transformed: he or she sees the Lord himself lying as a sacrifice upon the altar, the priest rather gorily splattered in his blood, and all around are to be seen only ‘heavenly things.’<sup>36</sup> In the supposed words of ambassadors from Kiev in 987 who, according to legend, had been conducting an investigation of the world

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<sup>35</sup> Chrys. *De sac.* 3.4.

<sup>36</sup> For the array of mental images which Christians leaders taught catechumens to behold with the ‘eyes of faith’, see Frank 2001.

religions, a service at Constantinople had left them uncertain ‘whether we were in heaven or on earth. ... We only know that God dwells there among men.’<sup>37</sup> ‘During the Divine Liturgy ... the earthly and the heavenly realms are joined in unity,’ argued Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia.<sup>38</sup> These are the ‘terrifying mysteries’ (φορικτὰ μυστήρια) when the division between heaven and earth, God and man is broken down.

This was the immediate context within which the sermon was preached. For all its borrowing of the pedagogical techniques of Classical education, it was therefore very different from a lecture. It took place in an awe-inspiring setting, on the threshold of heaven, with the faithful among the congregation about to participate in the sacred central rite of the Christian faith, when they ‘partake of the divine body from the very Seraphim’ and ‘touch the divine and undefiled side.’<sup>39</sup> How it fitted into this awe-ful context it remains for us now to consider.<sup>40</sup>

### SACREDNESS OF SCRIPTURAL STUDY

To begin with, then, there was a widely-held belief evidenced through much Jewish and Christian literature that the study of scripture was, because of the nature of the text, an inherently sacred activity and an encounter with God himself. Scriptural study can take place in a number of contexts: Chrysostom often urges his congregation to be diligent in

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<sup>37</sup> From the *Chronicles of Nestor*, cited by Taft 2006, 142.

<sup>38</sup> Kallistos 1990, 9.

<sup>39</sup> ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν Σεραφίμ ... τοῦ θεοῦ σώματος μεταλαμβάνειν ... καὶ ὡς τῆς θείας καὶ ἀχράντου πλευρᾶς ἐφαπτόμενοι τοῖς χεῖλεσιν.... Chrys. *De paen. hom.* 9, PG 49.345.37-41.

<sup>40</sup> It might well be argued that all of the above is only the experience the clerical elite wanted or hoped that their congregations would have, rather than the reality. This is true, and studies such as Taft 2006 looking at the liturgy ‘from the bottom up’ can in reality tell us very little about the laity’s actual experience of the liturgy: this is something we shall touch on in Chapter 7. For the current purposes, however, what is of importance is indeed what the clergy’s aims were, as this will reveal much about the nature of the sermons they delivered.

their own private reading of the Bible at home.<sup>41</sup> For many, however, the sermon would have been the principal opportunity for studying the scriptures, and Chrysostom very much views the activity of preaching as a teacher-led study of the scriptures. ‘If anyone has paid close attention to what was read (from the apostle),’ he says towards the start of one sermon, ‘then they will know that much toil and sweat lies before us today.’<sup>42</sup> It was a tough passage, and therefore studying it in the sermon was going to require much effort from everyone. Elsewhere, he compares the activity of preaching on the scriptures to harvesting, with the sermon being equated to a sickle, and the scriptures to a vine: the difference, however, is that if you harvest a vine all you are left with are leaves, whereas if you harvest the scriptures there will always be an abundance of fruit remaining. ‘Many indeed have spoken before us on this topic, and many perhaps will speak after us; but no-one will be able to empty it of all its wealth.’<sup>43</sup> In expounding to his congregation a biblical passage, he is leading them in a study of scripture, though a study which, with all their toil and effort, they are nonetheless very much participants in.

Insofar as, then, the sermon was a study of scripture, it was thereby undertaking, as we will see, an inherently sacred activity.<sup>44</sup> This is an important point to underline, since there can be a tendency, with all the efforts to place sermons within the context of classical antiquity, to treat the study of scripture as a very mundane and ‘earthly’ activity, the very antithesis of worship. In this regard, however, Jewish and Christian worship differed markedly from anything else that existed in the ancient world, in that the exposition of a sacred text formed a key part of the group’s cultic activity.<sup>45</sup> The most explicit statement

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<sup>41</sup> E.g. *In Ioh. hom.* 11, PG 59.77.32-42, and *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.991.48-55.

<sup>42</sup> εἴ τις δέξεται προσέσχε τοῖς ἀναγνωσθεῖσιν, οἶδεν ὅτι μεγάλοι ἡμῖν ἀγῶνες καὶ ἰδρωῖτες πρόκεινται τήμερον. *In fac. ei rest.*, PG 51.373.27-9.

<sup>43</sup> Πολλοὶ γοῦν μὲν καὶ πρὸ ἡμῶν εἰς ταύτην εἰρήκασιν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν, πολλοὶ καὶ μεθ’ ἡμᾶς ἕως ἐροῦσιν· ἀλλ’ οὐδεὶς τὸν ἅπαντα πλοῦτον κενῶσαι δυνήσεται. *De Laz. conc.* 4, PG 48.1007.1-4.

<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that grammarians could also refer to the texts they expounded as sacred, though without the same cultic connotations – see Kaster 1988, 15-6.

<sup>45</sup> Siegert 2008, 26.

that worship and study should be seen as two distinct activities was provided by Heather McKay in her study on Jewish Sabbath worship in the Greco-Roman world. In her introduction she defines worship as ‘rites or rituals which pay homage, with adoration and awe, to a particular god or gods.’ She then continues on the relationship between study and worship:

Reading, studying and explaining sacred texts I do not necessarily regard as worship, *unless* given a place in a planned session of worship. Otherwise I regard these activities as educational, or as serving the purpose of preserving and strengthening group identity, and not *necessarily* implying worship; the group’s understanding of the god as *addressee* of the worship is vital in my definition.<sup>46</sup>

For McKay, study of scripture does not in itself constitute worship because its focus is the gathered people, not God; it can only be considered as worship if it is carried out alongside activities, such as prayer, that are directed towards God. Such an argument oversimplifies the understanding of study and its relationship to worship in Jewish, and indeed Christian, thought of the first few centuries AD. She sets up an unhelpful and inaccurate dichotomy between ‘worship’ and ‘study’: the former is restricted to religious rituals, the latter to acquisition of knowledge and the formation of community identity.

In spite of this, a number of studies of Jewish material have shown that for the Jews study of scripture was considered a cultic activity. Arguing directly against McKay, Pieter van de Horst has persuasively made the case that ‘the presence of the Torah made the building a sanctuary; study of the Torah thus became a sacred act.’<sup>47</sup> He particularly draws attention to the legislation of Augustus condemning anyone who steals a Torah as a desecrator (ιερόσυλος), and the arguments of Chrysostom, in his sermons *Against the Jews*, that the Torah was *not* a sacred text (implying a general acceptance in society that it

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<sup>46</sup> McKay 1994, 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Van de Horst 1999, 30.

was).<sup>48</sup> The following passage from the rabbinic Midrash on Deuteronomy is a clear illustration of the fact that study of Torah could be and was considered a cultic activity.

The commentary provides two different interpretations of Deuteronomy 11:13:

*To serve Him:* This refers to study ... and just as the service of the Temple altar is called *abodah*, so is study called *abodah*. Another interpretation: *To serve Him:* This refers to prayer. You may retort, “How do you know that this refers to prayer? Perhaps it refers to the Temple service.” But scripture continues, [*to serve Him*] *with all your heart and all your soul*. Is there a sacrifice (*abodah*) performed [literally] in the heart?! Yet scripture explicitly says, *To serve Him (la'abado)*. This can only mean prayer.<sup>49</sup>

There are two points of interest in this passage. The first is the straightforward link made between studying Torah and serving God: to study God's Law means to serve God. The rabbis go into no further detail about how this was the case, suggesting that it was for them more or less self-evident and required no further explanation.

The second point of interest is the parallels drawn with other activities which would better fit with McKay's definition of 'worship'. The phrase 'to serve him', according to the rabbis, can either refer to study or to prayer, and both are further compared to the sacrifices in the Temple. Study is said to be service of God in the same way that the Temple sacrifices were; and prayer is said to be the sacrifice which is performed in the heart. By equating study to both prayer and the Temple cult in this way, the passage thus clearly expresses a view that study was a form of worship. Richard Sarason takes this one step further: he argues that 'study is viewed in rabbinic Judaism not simply as a mode of worship but as a surrogate mode of worship for the now-defunct Temple cult.'<sup>50</sup> In order for the rabbinic literature to be able to speak of Torah-study as equivalent to prayer and the Temple sacrifices – in other words, those acts which McKay

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<sup>48</sup> J. *AJ* 16.164; Chrys. *Adv. Iud. or.* 1, PG 48.850.17-851.46. Van de Horst 1999, 30-1.

<sup>49</sup> Sifre Deut. 41, cited in Sarason 1983, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Sarason 1983, 53. See also Langer 1998.

would consider as ‘worship’ – they must be operating on a different conceptual framework to that which she proposes. The sources, indeed, present a much deeper and broader understanding of both ‘worship’ and ‘study’, which leads to an understanding of scriptural study as an inherently worshipful and sacred activity.

For the Jews, the Torah had been given to Moses directly by God, and so studying the text meant studying the very words of God. This point comes out of the following passage from the Mishnaic tractate *Aboth*, a tractate which received a commentary by Benedict Viviano under the very title *Study as Worship*:<sup>51</sup>

R. Hananiah b. Teradion said: If two sit together and no words of the Law [are spoken] between them, there is the seat of the scornful, as it is written, *Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*. But if two sit together and words of the Law [are spoken] between them, the Divine Presence rests between them, as it is written...<sup>52</sup>

A few verses later, the saying of another Rabbi teaches the same thing if ten men are sat together discussing the Law,<sup>53</sup> and further Rabbinic parallels can be adduced.<sup>54</sup> The study is not directly addressed to God; there are no prayers, sacrifices or other rituals; and so, under McKay’s definition, it is therefore not worship of God. But nor is it simply a theology class. When they study God’s Law, God himself, the ‘Divine Presence’, draws close to them. Studying Torah meant coming into the very presence of God. It is a sacred time studying a sacred text, a time approaching God, not by offering sacrifices or conducting rituals for him, but by thinking about, talking about, studying him and his sacred Law, and thereby sitting in his presence.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The Mishnah is a law-code that was completed around the year 200, but based on many centuries of rabbinic oral tradition. See Neusner 1994, 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Aboth* 3:2b, trans. Viviano 1978, 67.

<sup>53</sup> *Aboth* 3:6.

<sup>54</sup> Viviano 1978, 67-9.

<sup>55</sup> Viviano 1978, 67, draws a comparison with the Divine Presence hovering over the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple, offering a further example of the equivalence of Torah-study with the Temple cult.

By the time we get to the late fourth century, Christianity has largely parted ways from the Judaism which gave it birth. Nonetheless, the above passages present important precedents which would at least have influenced the direction that early Christian preaching took.<sup>56</sup> To begin with, Chrysostom expresses a clear belief that the scriptures are divinely-inspired texts. The scriptures, he claims, contain the ‘oracles of God’,<sup>57</sup> and the words of Matthew’s Gospel are not his but Christ’s.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the scriptures were held by him to be a holy text, and therefore a text that should be approached with reverence. On several occasions, Chrysostom rebukes his congregation that they do not listen to the liturgical reading of the scriptures with due regard for the author of the words. In one sermon he condemns his congregation for not listening to the scriptures as they are read; by not doing so they insult the God who is speaking through them.<sup>59</sup> In another passage, he attacks the rich for coming to church more interested in showing off their finery, unaware, he claims, that in church they hear the very words of God:

Ὅταν γὰρ ἀναστὰς ὁ ἀναγινώσκων λέγη, “Τάδε λέγει Κύριος,” καὶ ὁ διάκονος ἐστὼς ἐπιστομίζῃ πάντας, οὐ τῷ ἀναγινώσκοντι τιμὴν ποιῶν τοῦτό φησιν, ἀλλὰ τῷ δι’ ἐκείνου πᾶσι διαλεγομένῳ. Εἰ ἤδεσαν ὅτι Θεὸς ἦν ὁ ταῦτα λέγων διὰ τοῦ προφήτου, πάντα ἂν τὸν τῷφον ἔρριψαν. Εἰ γὰρ ἀρχόντων αὐτοῖς διαλεγομένων οὐκ ἀνέχονται ἔξω προσέχειν, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἡμεῖς ὑπηρέται ἐσμὲν, ἀγαπητοί· ἡμεῖς οὐ τὰ ἡμέτερα λέγομεν, ἀλλὰ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

For whenever the reader gets up and says, ‘Thus says the Lord’, and the deacon stands and silences everyone, he doesn’t say this to honour the reader, but rather to honour the one who is addressing everyone through him. If they knew that it was God who said this through his prophet, they would cast off all their vanity. For if when magistrates address them they don’t allow their minds to wander, much more should

<sup>56</sup> Origen’s *Commentary on the Song of Songs* is a good example of scriptural study and devotion going hand in hand. E.g. Or. *Cant.* 3.202.1-11, in which the student of scripture is said to be able to understand fully only when he can ‘perceive [God] to be present’ (*si ... adesse eum sentiat*) and ‘catch the sound of His voice’ (*sonitum vocis eius accipiat*). For other similar passages from Origen, see Martens 2012, 181-6.

<sup>57</sup> τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 9.391C.

<sup>58</sup> *In Matt. hom.* 1.13A.

<sup>59</sup> *In Act. apost. hom.* 19, PG 60.155.48-156.33.

this be the case when it is God! We are ministers, beloved: we don't speak our own words, but the words of God.<sup>60</sup>

As he continues, he elaborates the analogy with an address by civic officials, comparing the reader to a royal ambassador: as the latter would express that what he is about to declare are the words of the king, so the reader, when reading from one of the Prophets, proclaims that these are the words of God. As silence is called for to hear the words of the king, so the deacon, it appears, calls for silence before the readings from scripture begin. However, the reader is not merely speaking on behalf of some distant monarch: Chrysostom stresses that God himself is present in the church. It is God they approach when they come to church, and it is God who is speaking as the reader reads from the scriptures. Indeed, the whole point of the passage is this, that when they come to church, they come not to listen to men but to encounter God. Though this is part of a rebuke, we should not therefore conclude that it was only Chrysostom who thought this, and that his repetition of the theme is illustrative of his struggle to get his message across; rather, such exhortations should be seen as the rhetorical means by which the congregation's reverence and awe are further aroused and enflamed, appropriately for the context of worship.<sup>61</sup>

Listening to the scriptures, then, involves interacting with God himself. In its capacity as a study of scripture, therefore, the sermon serves to draw people into that engagement with God. In the passage cited above, where he compares preaching on the scriptures to harvesting a vine, he continues, switching metaphor, 'however deep you dig, the more divine thoughts will gush out': it is the sermon's function to enable the

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<sup>60</sup> *In 2 Thess. hom.* 3.527D-E.

<sup>61</sup> See also *In 1 Cor. hom.* 36.341A, where he encourages catechumens, when they hear the reader declare 'Thus says the Lord', to 'depart from the earth, ... go up to heaven and consider who it is who is addressing you through him' (ἀπόστηθι τῆς γῆς, ἀνάβηθι καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, ἐννόησον τίς ἐστὶν ὁ δι' ἐκείνου σοὶ διαλεγόμενος).

congregation to access these ‘divine thoughts’.<sup>62</sup> In an earlier sermon in the same series, he explains that in reading the scriptures – by which he initially means one’s own private reading – the careful student ‘as if being initiated in sacred shrines, is in this way cleansed and becomes better, with God conversing with him through those scriptures’.<sup>63</sup> A little later, however, he backs this argument up by pointing them to the benefit they have already received from his preaching on the parable of Dives and Lazarus.<sup>64</sup> Though his primary focus is to encourage them to read and study the scriptures on their own, he does not see what they are doing during the sermon as being any different: with the help of a teacher, the homiletic form of scriptural study has the same capacity to benefit the diligent student since it too involves a conversation with God through the scriptures.

We can see something similar in the following passage as he introduces his series of sermons on John’s Gospel. It is a long passage, and I present just some excerpts:

Ὡς οὖν οὐκέτι τοῦ ἀλιέως, οὐδὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ Ζεβεδαίου, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰδότος,<sup>65</sup> τοῦ Πνεύματος λέγω, ταύτην ἀνακρουομένου τὴν λύραν, οὕτως ἀκούωμεν.... Πολλὴν οὖν παρέχωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν σιγὴν μετὰ τῆς εὐκοσμίας, μὴ σήμερον μόνον, μηδὲ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἀκούομεν, ἀλλὰ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου.... Μὴ τοίνυν μηδὲ ἡμεῖς νοσοῦντες προσερχώμεθα τούτοις· ἀλλὰ θεραπεύσαντες τὴν ψυχὴν, οὕτω δεχώμεθα τὴν ἐστίασιν. Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο τοσαῦτα προειπὼν, οὐδέπω καθῆκα εἰς τὰς ῥήσεις ταύτας, ἵνα ἕκαστος πάντα ἀποθέμενος ἀρρωστίας τρόπον, ὥσπερ εἰς αὐτὸν εἰσιὼν τὸν οὐρανὸν, οὕτως εἰσὶν καθαρὸς καὶ θυμοῦ, καὶ φροντίδος, καὶ ἀγωνίας βιωτικῆς, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπηλλαγμένος παθῶν.

So let us listen no longer to the fisherman, nor the son of Zebedee, but to the one who knows the deep things of God – I mean the Spirit, who plays this lyre.... Let us, then, be very silent and orderly, not only today, nor on the day in which we listen to him, but throughout our life.... Let us then not approach these things in sickness, but let us cure our souls first and then receive the feast. For it’s because of this that I have said all this by way of introduction and not yet turned to the text, so that each one may get

<sup>62</sup> Ὅσπερ ἂν διασκάψῃς ἐν τῷ βάθει, τοσοῦτω πλέον ἀναβλύσει τὰ θεῖα νοήματα. *De Laz. conc.* 4, PG 48.1007.5-6.

<sup>63</sup> καθάπερ ἐν ἱεροῖς ἀδύτοις ἡ ψυχὴ τελουμένη, οὕτως ἐκκαθαίρεται καὶ βελτίων γίνεται, τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁμιλοῦντος αὐτῇ διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων ἐκείνων. *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.994.25-8.

<sup>64</sup> *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.996.1-14.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 2:10.

rid of every manner of sickness and thus, as though entering heaven itself, may enter here pure and freed from anger, care, the struggles of life and other passions.<sup>66</sup>

This exhortation is delivered to prepare his congregation for his exposition of the text, the exposition which will be given ‘not only today’ but on subsequent days too. The text itself has already been read out as part of the liturgy; but after this introduction they will encounter it again as he ‘turn[s] to the text’ to explain it to them. As he explained the gospel to them, they would be studying not just any ordinary human words, but those of the Spirit of God. Their study of scripture is therefore a sacred activity, as it is the study of the words of God. As a result, they are to approach such study with an appropriate reverence, demonstrated both by listening to his exposition in respectful quiet, and by purifying their souls. For dealing with God’s Word is equivalent to ‘entering heaven itself’. During their study of scripture in the sermon, the worshipper, Chrysostom claims, enters the very presence of God.

We have begun to see, then, that Chrysostom sought to arouse in his congregation an experience of liminality in the sermon similar to that which we saw for the Eucharist. At both moments, the worshipper is poised on the threshold between heaven and earth. The parallel between the two parts of the service is on occasion made even more explicit, particularly in other preachers of the period. The sermon is seen as parallel to the Eucharist since, in the words of Catholic theologian Dom. Jean Leclercq, ‘Il distribue aux hommes le Verbe, la parole de Dieu incarnée; de ce point de vue on comprend que le diacre puisse prêcher et donner la communion au corps eucharistique du Christ.’<sup>67</sup> A very clear example of this comes from Caesarius of Arles, who urges the women of his congregation to receive the word of God as it is preached with as much care as they receive the body of Christ during the Eucharist:

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<sup>66</sup> *In Ioh. hom.* 1, PG 59.26.21-3, 26.37-9, 27.54-61.

<sup>67</sup> Leclercq 1963, 210.

*Et ideo quanta sollicitudine observamus, quando nobis corpus Christi ministratur, ut nihil ex ipso de nostris manibus in terram cadat, tanta sollicitudine observemus, ne verbum dei, quod nobis erogatur, dum aliud aut cogitamus aut loquimur, de corde nostro deperat: quia non minus reus erit, qui verbum dei negligenter audierit, quam ille qui corpus Christi in terram cadere negligentia sua permiserit.*

Therefore, with as great anxiety as we show when Christ's Body is ministered to us, lest nothing fall out of our hands onto the ground, with as great anxiety we should see to it that God's word which is dispensed to us may not perish from our hearts because we are thinking or talking about something else. The person who hears the word of God with inattention is surely no less guilty than one who allows Christ's Body to fall on the ground through his own carelessness.<sup>68</sup>

For Caesarius there is a clear parallel between the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Word. In both something sacred and therefore precious is received by the worshipper: in the former, the priest ministers the body of Christ to the Christian; in the latter the priest 'dispenses' the Word of God through his preaching of the scriptures. Both are equally precious, and thus he urges his congregation to treat both with the greatest care and attention. As the sermon progresses, he makes it very clear that he considers this dispensing of the Word as taking place primarily through the sermon rather than the reading of the scriptures: he speaks particularly of his role as a doctor in binding and dressing their wounds, and throughout the sermon urges them to pay close attention to his words. It is his words that can heal their wounds, since his words distribute to the congregation the Word of God contained in scripture, just as it is his hands which distribute the body of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>69</sup>

As far as I have been able to see, Chrysostom is never as explicit in expressing a parallel between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist. However, he does on occasion refer to the sermon as a feast on holy scripture, and in so doing uses language that is reminiscent of consuming the bread and wine. Both the sermon's exposition of scripture

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<sup>68</sup> Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 78.

<sup>69</sup> See also Aug. *Serm.* 59.6, 57.7. Norén 1992, 33, claims, without reference, that Augustine referred to preaching as an 'audible sacrament'.

and the Eucharist's distribution of the bread and wine are opportunities for the believer to feed on Christ and have communion with the divine. In one sermon, he promises to provide his congregation with a 'more plentiful table' (δαυλιεστέραν ... τὴν τράπεζαν) of teaching, if he sees that his preaching has had an effect on them.<sup>70</sup> At another time, he relates to his congregation that in his distress at being apart from them for the previous service, he was comforted with the knowledge that they were enjoying 'a brilliant table' (λαμπρᾶς ... τραπέζης); he was assured of its quality when he heard reports afterwards of the teaching they had received from their 'host' (ἐστιάτορα), teaching which constituted this 'banquet' (εὐωχίαν).<sup>71</sup>

The parallel language used for the scriptures and the Eucharist can be seen clearly if we compare the following two passages. At first glance it would seem that both, in their reference to the 'table', are speaking of the Eucharist:

Ὡσπερ γὰρ τραπέζης οὐ χρὴ μετέχειν δαιμονίων· οὕτως οὐδὲ ἀκροάσεως δαιμονίων, οὐδὲ μετὰ ῥυπαρᾶς τῆς ἐσθῆτος εἰς τὴν λαμπρὰν τράπεζαν παραγενέσθαι τὴν τοσοῦτων γέμουσαν ἀγαθῶν, ἣν αὐτὸς παρεσκεύασεν ὁ Θεός. Τοσαύτη γὰρ αὐτῆς ἡ δύναμις, ὡς καὶ πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν αὐτὸν ἀθρόον ἡμᾶς ἐπάραι, μόνον ἐὰν σῶφρονι διανοίᾳ προσέχωμεν. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸν συνεχῶς τοῖς θείοις ἐπαδόμενον λόγοις ἐπὶ τῆς παρούσης μείναι ταπεινότητος...

For just as we must not share in the table of demons, so we must not listen to demons nor approach in dirty clothes the shining table laden with good things, which God himself has prepared. For such is its power that it can raise us directly even to heaven itself, if only we attend with disciplined mind. For it is not possible for one continually enchanted by divine words to remain in their present lowliness...<sup>72</sup>

Σκόπει, παρακαλῶ· τράπεζα πάρεστι βασιλική, ἄγγελοι διακονούμενοι τῇ τραπέζῃ, αὐτὸς πάρεστιν ὁ βασιλεὺς, καὶ σὺ ἔστηκας χασμῶμενος; ῥυπαρά σοι τὰ ἱμάτια, καὶ οὐδεὶς σοι λόγος; Ἄλλὰ καθαρὰ ἐστίν; Οὐκοῦν ἀνάπεσαι, καὶ μέτεχε.

<sup>70</sup> Chrys. *Adv. Iud. or.* 1, PG 48.856.49-50.

<sup>71</sup> *In fac. ei. rest.*, PG 51.372.41-373.6.

<sup>72</sup> *In Ioh. hom.* 1, PG 59.30.5-13.

Consider, I ask you: here is a royal table, angels are ministering at the table, the King himself is here, and you stand there yawning? Are your clothes dirty and you have no excuse? Or are they clean? Then sit down and partake.<sup>73</sup>

Both tables are holy places where heaven meets earth, and both require absolute purity before they can be approached: the Christian is bidden to remove his ‘dirty clothes’ (ῥυπαρᾶς τῆς ἐσθῆτος/ῥυπαρὰ ... τὰ ἱμάτια) before approaching either ‘table’. However, while it is clear from the context that the second passage refers to the altar from which the Eucharistic elements are distributed, the ‘shining table’ of the first passage must refer to the scriptures, or perhaps a literal table upon which the scriptures are placed: the final sentence can only make sense as an explanation for what has gone before, if the ‘divine words’ is read as an equivalent to the ‘table’ of the previous sentences. If the worshipper listens carefully to the ‘good things’ – that is, the teachings contained therein – this table, he says, has the power to raise him or her ‘directly even to heaven’.<sup>74</sup> This experience of heaven on earth is caused, he suggests, by being ‘enchanted by divine words’. It is not simply that the words are of heavenly origin, but that they are enchanting, mesmerising: it is the word Xenophon uses to describe the spell which the Sirens sought to place on Odysseus and others who passed too closely by.<sup>75</sup> The divine words, if listened to properly (in this case the spell is a positive rather than a negative one!), capture the hearts and minds of their hearers and transport them to heaven. Likewise the Eucharistic table becomes a heavenly table, with the Lord Jesus in pride of place, and the angelic host serving around him. Both the scriptural and Eucharistic tables are considered sacred places, places on the threshold between heaven and earth.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *In Eph. hom.* 3.23B.

<sup>74</sup> For a similar use of the word, see the opening of Chrys. *De proph. obsc. hom.* 1.1.

<sup>75</sup> *X. Mem.* 2.6.11.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. also Ast. *Am. Hom.* 5.2.1, who speaks of the Spirit laying out ‘many good things’ (πολλὰ ... καὶ καλὰ) ‘on the table’ (ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης).

The study of scripture, then, is an inherently sacred event. It is an encounter with the words of the living God, and there is a generally held belief throughout the Jewish and Christian material studied, that where God's Word is being studied, there is God himself. To study scripture is to come into the presence of God. It is therefore unsurprising to find the sermon forming a part of the Christian ritual of worship, a ritual culminating in the 'holy of holies' where the believer feeds on God himself. At both sermon and Eucharist the worshipper crossed from earth into heaven.

### WORSHIP AROUSED BY THE SERMON

We have seen so far that the sermon formed a part of an act of worship and engaged in a sacred activity, namely the study of scripture. Since many of the above passages are delivered as part of exhortations to his congregations to appreciate better the awe-fulness of the setting and the sanctity of scripture study, we have already begun to see also how Chrysostom sought to arouse a worshipful attitude in his listeners that was appropriate to this occasion. This we turn now to focus our attention on: with the liturgical context of the sermon in mind, what attitudes was Chrysostom seeking to arouse through his preaching? By understanding another aspect of what the preacher was trying to do in his sermons we will add to our picture of what kind of activity preaching was and will provide a further context within which to place his use of condemnatory language. For there are two principal responses to God that Chrysostom encourages in his preaching, namely praise (including the similar positive responses of love and wonder) and fear (including a sense of humility and penitence before God).

*Praise*

It is clear throughout his sermons that one of his aims is to arouse awe and wonder at the beauty and majesty of God. Having just reminded them of the grace of God in bringing them into existence and purchasing them by his own blood, Chrysostom ends his second sermon on Philemon with a passionate exhortation to love the Lord. The final few sentences are full of exhortations to love God: ‘Let us be in awe at how great Christ’s love is;’ ‘let us be warmed by this love-potion;’ ‘let us both love according to our ability, and spend everything we have on his love, our souls, our money, our glory – absolutely everything – with joy, with gladness, with zeal.’<sup>77</sup> He exhorts them to be in awe, to be warmed in their hearts, to be aroused at what he has just said on the love of Christ. He compares their relationship with God to that between lovers, suggesting that they should have the same intense emotional response that a lover has for his beloved: ‘They consider it good to suffer whenever they suffer ill for their beloved.’<sup>78</sup> Whatever position in life one occupies, ‘even if a man be mean and lowly,’<sup>79</sup> the message of Chrysostom’s sermon, that God loves them, is one that should awaken love and praise in response. He hopes that such a reminder of the loving character of God will stir in them a reverent, worshipful attitude towards that philanthropic God. It is an attitude that is to be all-encompassing: they are to ‘spend everything’ on his love, ‘absolutely everything’ (with a close repetition of πάντα~πάν). He wants the people stood before him to worship their God with all of their lives.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Αἰδεσθῶμεν τὴν τοσαύτην ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, διαθερμανθῶμεν τῷ φίλτρῳ... καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἡμετέραν, καὶ πάντα κενώσωμεν εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ χρήματα, καὶ δόξαν, καὶ πᾶν ὀτιοῦν, μετὰ χαρᾶς, μετὰ εὐφροσύνης, μετὰ προθυμίας. Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 2.785D.

<sup>78</sup> εὖ πάσχειν ἡγοῦνται, ὅταν κακῶς πάσχωσι διὰ τοὺς φιλουμένους. *Ibid.* 785E.

<sup>79</sup> Κἂν ταπεινὸς ἦ τις, κἂν εὐτελής. *Ibid.* 785D.

<sup>80</sup> This call to a radical transformation of life was noted above as also a feature of protreptic, pp. 105-8.

We can see this repeatedly throughout his sermons. At the beginning of his exposition of the epistle to Titus, he draws attention to how ‘the introduction is full of the kindnesses of God,’ as, indeed, he continues, is the whole letter.<sup>81</sup> In response, he says, ‘our hearts are warmed’ (διαθερμαίνόμεθα),<sup>82</sup> and the gratitude we feel to a friend who has done us a kindness, pales into insignificance when compared with how we should feel in response to the grace of God exhibited in our salvation. In his first sermon *Against the Jews*, he describes the applause which his previous sermon on the incomprehensibility of God received: this applause, he claims, ‘demonstrated the love for God you have in your souls.’<sup>83</sup> Whether or not they really did feel such a love for God, and were not simply applauding his sermon, is beside the point: Chrysostom’s intention is that they view their applause not as praise of him, but as ultimately praise of God. Indeed, he somewhat labours the point, going on to draw a comparison with servants who get excited when they hear someone praising their master. This effort to persuade them would suggest that his aim was to arouse feelings of praise for God which they may or may not already have felt.

On many occasions, he does not state explicitly that he wants them to feel praise and love for God, but that is evidently his intention. For example, in his third homily on Titus he uses the tender image of a father speaking with his children, we might say, in baby-talk (συμπελλίζει) as a way of depicting the loving condescension of God to humanity.<sup>84</sup> Speaking of God with such tenderness would be intended to warm the hearts of his congregation. For another example, let us turn to the opening of his series on the Gospel of Matthew. In this exuberant passage he explains why Matthew calls his work a ‘Gospel’. It is a long passage, but it deserves being cited in full:

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<sup>81</sup> γέμει τὸ προοίμιον τῶν εὐεργεσιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ. *In Tit. hom.* 1.731B.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* (trans. P. Schaff (ed.)).

<sup>83</sup> ... τὸ φιλόθεον τῆς ὑμετέρας ψυχῆς ἐνεδείκνυτο. *Adv. Iud. or.* 1, PG 48.844.12-3.

<sup>84</sup> *In Tit. hom.* 3.745F.

Εὐαγγέλιον δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν πραγματείαν εἰκότως ἐκάλεσε. Καὶ γὰρ κολάσεως ἀναίρεσιν, καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων λύσιν, καὶ δικαιοσύνην, καὶ ἁγιασμόν, καὶ ἀπολύτρωσιν, καὶ υἰοθεσίαν, καὶ κληρονομίαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ συγγένειαν πρὸς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, πᾶσιν ἦλθεν ἀπαγγέλλων· τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, τοῖς ἀγνώμοσι, τοῖς ἐν σκότῳ καθημένοις. Τί ποτ' οὖν τῶν εὐαγγελίων τούτων ἴσον γένοιτ' ἄν; Θεὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ἄνθρωπος ἐν οὐρανῷ· καὶ πάντα ἀναμιξ ἐγένετο, ἄγγελοι συνεχόρευον ἄνθρώποις, ἄνθρωποι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις ἐκοινώνουν, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ταῖς ἄνω δυνάμεσι· καὶ ἦν ἰδεῖν τὸν χρόνιον λυθέντα πόλεμον, καὶ καταλλαγὰς Θεοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν γεγενημένας φύσιν, διάβολον αἰσχυρόμενον, δαίμονας δραπετεύοντας, θάνατον λελυμένον, παράδεισον ἀνοιγόμενον, κατάραν ἠφανισμένην, ἁμαρτίαν ἐκποδῶν γεγενημένην, πλάνην ἀπεληλαμένην, ἀλήθειαν ἐπανελθοῦσαν, τῆς εὐσεβείας τὸν λόγον πανταχοῦ κατασπειρόμενον καὶ κομῶντα, τὴν τῶν ἄνω πολιτείαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πεφυτευμένην, μετὰ ἀδείας τὰς δυνάμεις ἐκεῖνας ὀμιλούσας ἡμῖν, καὶ τῇ γῇ συνεχῶς ἀγγέλους ἐπιχωριάζοντας, καὶ πολλὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν μελλόντων τὴν ἐλπίδα οὔσαν.

He called his work a 'gospel' for good reason: for he came announcing to all the removal of punishment, release from sins, righteousness, holiness, redemption, adoption, inheritance of the heavens, kinship with the Son of God; to the hostile, the hard-hearted, those sitting in darkness. What, then, could ever be the equal of this good news? God on earth, man in heaven; and everything becoming topsy-turvy. Angels singing with men, men having fellowship with angels, and with all the powers above. And it was possible to see the lengthy war wound up, and reconciliation of God made with our nature, the devil disgraced, demons fleeing, the hold of death loosened, paradise opened, curse destroyed, sin cast aside, error driven away, truth returning, the word of piety being sown everywhere and growing, the citizenship of above planted on earth, those powers having friendly relations with us, and angels dwelling continually on earth, and there being great hope for the future.<sup>85</sup>

In this passage Chrysostom uses all his rhetorical skill to emphasise the extraordinary transformation on a cosmic scale that the Gospel proclaims. He may not state explicitly how he wants them to respond, but it is clear that he is trying to stir up wonder at the events of the Gospel message, and praise for the God who is their author. The passage evokes the radical transformation that the Gospel proclaims: the numerous benefits are contrasted with the undeserving nature of the recipients, a nature that is further emphasised through use of ascending tricolon ('to the hostile, the hard-hearted, those sitting in

<sup>85</sup> *In Matt. hom.* 1, PG 57.15.50-16.14.

darkness’); God has swapped places with man, heaven with earth; everything has been turned upside down, everything has become ‘topsy-turvy’ (ἀναμύξ); the presence of demons has been replaced with fellowship with angels, and the destiny of death has been exchanged for a place in paradise. The long list of all the benefits brought about by the Gospel, which seem to go on with no end, would create that sense of an utterly comprehensive transformation of all things.<sup>86</sup> But more importantly than all of this, and underlying it all is the notion of the infinite gap between heaven and earth being bridged in the incarnation: ‘God on earth, man in heaven.’ These would have been powerful words in the context of the liturgy and the approaching Eucharist. The whole Gospel message, Chrysostom says, is about heaven touching earth, of man being able to draw close to God, something which they are about to experience a taste of as they draw near to the holy mysteries.

In all these passages, Chrysostom is seeking to stir feelings of love and praise for God. In other words, the aim of his sermons is to arouse a worshipful attitude among the congregation. Although his sermons are peppered with references to the philanthropy and grace of God, extensive passages on this theme are in fact less common than one might expect. As is well known, his attention is more usually focussed on the theme of living a moral life. This too, however, has a place within the liturgy, as we shall now discover.

### *Humility and contrition before God*

As well as pointing his congregation up to the glory of God, more frequently Chrysostom points them down to the darkness of their sin, so that they may approach the glory of

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<sup>86</sup> A favourite rhetorical technique of Chrysostom’s: Mitchell 2000, 75, explained that ‘part of the artistry and enjoyment of this kind of oratory for the preacher and his audience was to see how long he could keep it up.’

heaven as revealed in scripture and Eucharist with appropriate penance and contrition. In making his congregation conscious of the depths of their sin, he hoped to awaken in them feelings of fear and trembling which he considered appropriate for approaching the God of heaven. We have already seen how this emphasis on sin in his sermons was designed to arouse a fear of God that Chrysostom believed was necessary if the believer is to achieve his or her salvation. However arousing such emotions of reverential fear serves a more immediate purpose as well in ensuring a right attitude towards God as they encounter him in scripture and, even more so, in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

To illustrate this, let us turn to the third of the sermons *On the Incomprehensibility of God*, a series delivered against the Anomoeans, and particularly their confidence in claiming that they know the essence of God. Towards the end of the sermon, however, he leaves this theme to treat a ‘sickness’ (νόσημα) which has afflicted the church: people are leaving after the sermon (presumably with the general exit of the catechumens and penitents) and not staying for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is impossible to tell how serious the issue was: it was clearly noticeable enough to cause him to raise it, but nonetheless he is evidently employing hyperbole when he speaks of the church containing an ‘unspeakable multitude’ (τὸ πλῆθος τὸ ἄφατον) for the preacher, but is ‘empty and deserted’ (κενὴ καὶ ἔρημος) when Christ is about to appear in the Eucharist, that ‘most terrifying moment’ (τὴν φορικωδεστάτην ὥραν).<sup>87</sup>

Some at least, then, in the congregation rushed off immediately after the sermon, without bothering to stay for the sacrament. Chrysostom, however, is clear that he considers his words not to be a self-contained entity in themselves, but a preparation for the Eucharist that was to follow: ‘For if my words had been stored up in your souls, they would no doubt have held you in the church and would have sent you along to the most

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<sup>87</sup> Chrys. *De incompr. hom.* 3.353-66.

terrifying [mysteries] with greater piety.’<sup>88</sup> The ideal result of the sermon for Chrysostom is if his congregation approach the sacrament with due reverence. He does not explain further how his sermons were to have this effect; but given that ethical exhortation is such a dominant message of his preaching, we can imagine that his stinging rebukes were, at least in part, designed to render his congregation in a state of awe and trembling before the holiness of God, which they were about to experience at close quarters in the Eucharist. Even the rebuke of this passage itself could be seen to have that same function of preparing them to receive the sacrament. By roundly rebuking them for their previous negligence, and particularly by twice describing the mysteries as ‘most terrifying’ (φορικωδέστατα), he will ensure, he would hope, that they approach the sacrament this time with an appropriate degree of fear and trembling. His aim, in other words, is to terrify them, and to make explicit the awe-inspiring nature of what is about to happen. Nor was this peculiar to Chrysostom: Derek Krueger remarks that during the fourth century ‘church leaders cultivated among their congregations an increased sense of awe for the consecrated elements, instilling a fear of their holiness and their potential danger for the unworthy.’<sup>89</sup>

Given this, it is somewhat surprising at first glance that, in a very similar context, he explicitly says in his first sermon *On the Betrayal of Judas*, ‘I am not saying these things in order to frighten you, but in order to protect you.’<sup>90</sup> However, a careful reading of the text actually lends weight to the argument rather than undermining it. We have already seen that Chrysostom was a firm believer in the beneficial effects of fear. He had no qualms about declaring that no-one can be saved without fear.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, it would be quite out of character if he were here to try to distance himself from any sense that his aim was to arouse fear. Rather, the emphasis of the sentence is to be found in the positive

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<sup>88</sup> Εἰ γὰρ ἐπανεκέιτο τὰ λεγόμενα ταῖς ψυχαῖς, πάντως ἂν ὑμᾶς ἔνδον κατέσχε καὶ πρὸς τὰ φορικωδέστατα μετὰ πλείονος εὐσεβείας παρέπεμψε. *De incompr. hom.* 3.375-7.

<sup>89</sup> Krueger 2014, 127.

<sup>90</sup> Καὶ ταῦτα, οὐχ ἵνα φοβήσω, λέγω, ἀλλ’ ἵνα ἀσφαλίσωμαι. *De prod. Iud. hom.* 1, PG 49.380.58-9.

<sup>91</sup> See above, p. 149.

purpose clause, that is, his aim is not to frighten merely for the sake of it, but instead to ‘protect’ them. His words are indeed frightening: that is precisely why he feels compelled to say this. He has just told them that it is time to approach the ‘terrifying table’ (φορικτὴ τράπεζα) – the root of the same adjective we encountered in the previous passage – upon which are the very body and blood of Christ. Because of this, he warns them not to follow the example of Judas, who, as he had described earlier, took the bread and wine whilst harbouring thoughts of betrayal in his heart. When he did so, Chrysostom says, the devil himself entered into him. This happened ‘so that you might learn that those who partake of the divine mysteries unworthily, then the devil immediately assaults and enters, just as he did at that time to Judas.’<sup>92</sup>

This would be a terrifying prospect indeed, which Chrysostom recognises when he says, ‘I am not saying these things in order to frighten you.’ It is, however, a prospect he points them to not merely to terrify them, but rather that he may ‘protect’ them by encouraging them to do something to avoid such a fate. This is indeed precisely what he goes on to say next: ‘So, then, let no-one be Judas, let no-one enter with the poison of wickedness.’<sup>93</sup> If they want to avoid becoming possessed by the devil, they must approach with a pure heart and mind: ‘Let no-one, then, have wicked thoughts inside, but let us purify our minds. For we are approaching a pure sacrifice: let us make our souls holy.’<sup>94</sup> The rest of the sermon is then an exhortation to be reconciled to their fellow Christians, and to put aside any grudges or resentment. The ethical exhortation, in this instance at least, is therefore explicitly aimed at preparing his congregation for the awesome mysteries to follow. They are to approach with deep reverence, recognising that this is a ‘terrifying’ moment, and that reverence is to be displayed in souls which are pure and holy: ‘Let go of

<sup>92</sup> ἵνα μάθῃς, ὅτι τοῖς ἀναξίως μετέχουσι τῶν θείων μυστηρίων, τούτοις μάλιστα ἐπιπηδᾷ καὶ ἐπιβαίνει συνεχῶς ὁ διάβολος, ὡσπερ καὶ τῷ Ἰούδα τότε. *De prod. Iud. hom.* 1, PG 49.380.53-55.

<sup>93</sup> Μηδεὶς τοίνυν ἔστω Ἰούδας, μηδεὶς εἰσιῶν ἰὸν ἐχέτω πονηρίας. *Ibid.* 59-60.

<sup>94</sup> Μηδεὶς τοίνυν ἐχέτω ἔνδον πονηροὺς λογισμοὺς, ἀλλὰ καθάρωμεν τὴν διάνοιαν· καὶ γὰρ καθαρᾷ προσερχόμεθα θυσίᾳ· ἁγίαν ποιήσωμεν τὴν ψυχὴν. *Ibid.* 381.5-8.

your hostility, so that you might receive healing from the table; for you are approaching a terrifying and holy sacrifice.’<sup>95</sup>

In light of this, we can therefore understand his incessant rebukes throughout his sermons as, in part, helping his congregation to have the right attitude before God and to prepare themselves for the Eucharist. Not only does the reminder of their sin and the holiness of God put them in a state of fear and trembling appropriate to such a holy moment, but it would also encourage them to go beyond this and approach the sacrament with a penitent heart. Indeed, he seems mostly to mention the Eucharist in his sermons in order to condemn his congregation for not approaching with the right attitude, whether irreverently or whilst harbouring sin.<sup>96</sup> Krueger has already drawn attention to the fact that in the Byzantine period ‘the Eucharist has become in essence a penitential rite,’<sup>97</sup> and indeed sees the whole liturgy as inculcating a penitential self. By speaking so fearfully of both the Eucharist and their sin, Chrysostom was encouraging a development of this penitential self, both as necessary for salvation, but also as appropriate for receiving the sacrament. The congregation, he would hope, would be driven to humility and contrition by his words, and in repentance would approach the sacred mysteries of the Christian faith.

Let us turn to one final example to close. That his hope was for the experience of church to arouse this fear is nicely illustrated if we return to the first homily *Against the Jews*. A key theme of this sermon, mentioned above, is that the synagogue is not the awe-inspiring place which many suppose it to be. With the church, however, it is quite different:

Ἄλλ’ οὐ τὰ ἡμέτερα τοιαῦτα, ἀλλ’ ὄντως φοβερὰ καὶ φρίκης ἀνάμεσα. Ἐνθα γὰρ Θεός ἐστι ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, οὗτος φοβερὸς ὁ τόπος· ἔνθα

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<sup>95</sup> λῦσον τὴν ἔχθραν, ἵνα λάβῃς θεραπείαν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης· θυσία γὰρ προσέρχῃ φρικτῇ καὶ ἀγία. *Ibid.* 11-3.

<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., the selection of passages from Chrysostom in Sheerin 1986, a collection of patristic texts on the Eucharist.

<sup>97</sup> Krueger 2014, 110.

μυρίοι περὶ κολάσεων ἀθανάτων λόγοι, περὶ τῶν πυρίνων ποταμῶν, περὶ τοῦ σκώληκος τοῦ ἰοβόλου, περὶ τῶν δεσμῶν τῶν ἀρρήκτων, περὶ τοῦ σκότους τοῦ ἔξωτέρου.

But our places are not like that, but truly are terrifying and full of horror. For where God is, he who has authority over life and death, that is the terrifying place – where there are countless sermons on everlasting punishments, on rivers of fire, on the poisonous worm, on the unbreakable chains, on the external darkness.<sup>98</sup>

The church, he argues, is a place they should enter in fear, for here they encounter the living God. Not only that, but the preaching too is on terrifying themes, on all the punishments that can be expected by sinners in hell. His sermons, he therefore hopes, will arouse fear and trembling in the hearts of his listeners: it is his aim in preaching to terrify his congregation. What is most intriguing about this passage, however, is the fact that he delivers it as part of his attempt to persuade people to come to church, and only to church, rather than the synagogue. This is part of his advertisement for why the church should be preferred over the synagogue. Advertisements need to be attractive; and so what this suggests is that people actually wanted something terrifying, they wanted a religious experience that filled them with awe and dread. Chrysostom bases his argument on this assumption: if you want to be filled with fear, come to the church and not the synagogue, for here you will be *really* terrified. Far from his fearsome condemnatory language rubbing many people up the wrong way (as others have suggested), it seems this may have been something they actually desired or expected from their experience of church.

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<sup>98</sup> Chrys. *Adv. Iud. or.* 1, PG. 48.848.44-50.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to explore the cultic nature of the sermon, how the sermon functioned as an integral part of the liturgical drama of worship. Understanding this context is vital for correctly reading and interpreting these texts. This ‘God-dimension’ to his preaching, the fact that his sermons were not simply about the communication of knowledge or about the teaching of a philosophy, but about bringing people into the presence of God, is of profound importance for understanding what kind of activity preaching was. The liturgical context should not be seen as a superfluous backdrop, but rather as fundamental for fully appreciating the very nature of what the sermon was all about.

Exegetical sermons were primarily a study of holy scripture, a divine text considered by Jews and Christians alike to be the very words of God: to study them, therefore, meant drawing into the presence of the divine. Scriptural study may have looked like the exegesis of texts that took place in other educational contexts, but it was an inherently sacred activity, setting the worshipper in a heavenly school-room. It was the task of the preacher to distribute the divine words, just as it was his task later in the service to distribute to the faithful the body and blood of Christ, the Word of God. Preachers such as Chrysostom never failed to impress on the congregations the solemnity of the occasion, and they frequently sought to instil in their listeners a sense of awe and reverence for God, using all the powers of classical rhetoric to do so, in which Chrysostom, the Golden Mouth, was a master practitioner. However, looking up to the majesty of God and finding oneself transported to heaven went hand-in-hand with a consciousness of sin, the dirt and filth which prevented individuals from entering the presence of the holy God: a problem both in the immediate context of worship, but also as we saw in the last chapter, in light of

the future Judgement. Thus, time and again Chrysostom sternly condemns his congregations, arousing in them, he hoped, a guilt that would lead to an appropriate humility and contrition before the Almighty, and a repentance which would enable them to enter the most holy place and receive the sacrament – and at the Resurrection to enter into eternal blessings. When read in this light, therefore, his frequent condemnations of his congregation's sin are understood no longer as evidence of lethargy or contrariness, as they have usually been read, but as playing a role in inculcating in the worshippers an attitude of reverence and contrition in the context of worship and in preparation for the Eucharist that was to follow.

Whereas Chrysostom is typically studied as a theologian or politician, in Part 2 we have built up a picture of him as a pastor exercising through his sermons a pastoral ministry among his congregation. Each of these chapters has explored a different dimension that sheds light on the pastoral nature of his preaching. The context of the ancient schoolroom explained his typical homiletic practice of expounding the key texts of his philosophy followed by the delivery of a moral exhortation. It also provided a context for his harsh tongue, since teachers throughout antiquity were known to be somewhat fearsome in their teaching methods. Philosophers saw their classrooms as surgeries for healing the diseases of the soul, and an exploration of Chrysostom's own widespread use of this therapeutic language enabled us to discover his principal aims in preaching, namely the cure of souls; only his cure of souls was influenced just as much by the Christian scriptures and Christian theology as the classical tradition, and so the ultimate goal of his therapy was not the happiness of the individual but the eternal salvation of their soul from hell. Finally, as we saw in this chapter, it must not be forgotten that the immediate setting for this preaching

activity was as part of an act of worship, when Christians came into the presence of their God.

These chapters have, therefore, presented a fascinating picture of Chrysostom performing his regular pastoral ministry, giving lessons in Christian philosophy, sternly healing his flock of their spiritual illnesses, preparing them for final Judgement and drawing them with his awe-inspiring language into the presence of God. However, this was also a pastoral ministry that was popular; Chrysostom was still well-loved despite his harsh critiques and fearsome language. It is only when seen in the context of ancient education and philosophy, Christian theology and the liturgical setting, that such popularity becomes explainable. This was what people wanted and expected to hear. We must now turn to focus our attention on the congregation to assess the implications of this study of Chrysostom's pastoral ministry of preaching for what we can and cannot draw from sermons about popular Christianity at the end of the fourth century.

PART 3

*Implications*

## CHAPTER 7

### *The Congregation*

The sermons we have been studying were written by one of the foremost ‘Fathers of the Church’, still considered today one of the Three Holy Hierarchs in Eastern Orthodoxy. For centuries his sermons were preserved and studied as some of the greatest examples of Christian exegesis and some of the most eloquent presentations of the Christian life. But his sermons were preached before a comparatively ordinary and unexceptional congregation, and so there is the potential, as a number of studies in recent decades have identified, of using those same sermons as a means of accessing the lives of ‘ordinary’ Christians, to take the study of early Christianity away from a focus simply on the great names, and instead to explore what everyday Christianity was like in antiquity, what it meant for ordinary people to identify as a Christian.<sup>1</sup>

There have been two particular aspects of the congregation which have been at the centre of recent scholarship on Chrysostom’s sermons. The first is the issue of the social make-up of the congregation: how representative were Chrysostom’s congregations of wider Antiochene and Constantinopolitan society? Was it a predominantly élite male audience, or were men and women from all social classes by and large represented, and to what extent? The second key issue is the commitment of the congregation, the extent to which they were ‘on board’: when they heard Chrysostom preach, were they a rather reluctant, troublesome audience, who the preacher struggled to win over to his point of view; or were they more willing to listen and be challenged, disagreeing at times, coming

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the title of Wendy Mayer’s 1998 essay ‘Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience’.

perhaps with different existing beliefs, but respecting his teaching authority and willing to listen to what he had to say? The answers to both sets of questions necessarily depend on a clear understanding of the historical context in which Chrysostom's words were preached. The preceding chapters have set his sermons within aspects of this historical context in order to gain a greater appreciation of the pastoral nature of his preaching. It is the argument of this chapter that the conclusions of important recent studies on Chrysostom's congregation are based on a failure to appreciate fully these contexts. In short, it will be argued that his sermons are, because of their nature as liturgical and pastoral texts, resistant to such sociological approaches, and that any conclusions we do draw concerning preachers' audiences should be much more nuanced and cautious than has often been the case.

The purpose of this final chapter, then, is to explore fundamental questions about how we can use Chrysostom's sermons to learn about the congregations to whom they were addressed. We shall tackle the two key issues in turn, beginning with the composition of the congregation, and then turning to their level of commitment.

## COMPOSITION

### *The debate so far*

Who came to hear Chrysostom preach is an important question. If we want to use sermons at all as a means of accessing popular Christianity, we need to know who the people were he was speaking to. Are his sermons truly a source for 'popular' Christianity in late antiquity, or merely for the faith of the lay élite? Although something of a consensus has

developed on the side of a socially diverse audience, Ramsay MacMullen continues to argue for an attendance largely restricted to members of the élite. In light of the findings of this thesis, I would suggest that both sides are somewhat mistaken in their approach, and that actually we cannot easily know from the sermons alone the social make-up of Chrysostom's congregations. Before setting out my own new approach to this old question, I will first trace the main arguments on both sides and their accompanying problems.

To begin with MacMullen, his argument for the predominantly élite nature of the congregation rests on three main points. First, he argues that sermons were unwelcoming for their high rhetoric: the audience, he argues, must have been 'remarkably patient of rhetoric pitched at a high level of stylistic and exegetical sophistication.'<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, patristic writers, in both theological treatises and in their popular sermons, used the Atticist form of Greek that imitated the classical Attic of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, and which was a necessity for all members of the élite in this period. Henry Maguire argued that many sermons were 'as far from the everyday speech of a Byzantine in the Middle Ages as Chaucerian English is from the average English of today.'<sup>3</sup>

Such arguments, however, have not won general acceptance, and there is good reason for rejecting them. In fact, there is now a consensus that rhetoric, far from distancing the preacher from his audience, was the means by which he could engage them. Aideen Hartney, for example, argues that 'the best way of attracting a congregation's attention ... was to use the modes of public persuasion already established within the Classical tradition.'<sup>4</sup> Jaclyn Maxwell likewise suggests that 'Christians in Antioch were well acquainted with public speaking outside of their churches', and she goes on to show

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<sup>2</sup> MacMullen 1989, 504.

<sup>3</sup> Maguire 1981, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Hartney 2004, 35.

the numerous ways in which rhetoric permeated all levels of society.<sup>5</sup> Regarding his use of classical Attic, Mary Cunningham suggests that Chrysostom's 'homiletic style, although atticizing, is straightforward and clear in comparison with that of some of his successors,'<sup>6</sup> whilst George Kennedy, in his classic book on Byzantine rhetoric, claimed that a Greek audience of the time could in general understand any speech, homily or otherwise, in the atticist style, 'though the degree of understanding varied with the locale and the education of the audience.'<sup>7</sup> We should not underestimate the ability of people reared in an oral culture to follow an archaic-sounding speech, particularly when frequently exposed to it, as they would have been through frequent sermons and speeches in other contexts (as is not the case with Chaucerian English today). Indeed, his apparent popularity as a preacher suggests that he must have been at least broadly understood.<sup>8</sup>

The second argument MacMullen makes concerns how the sermons describe the congregation. He draws attention to passages where Chrysostom is 'heard to call his audience the rich, comparing them to the poor who are not before him.'<sup>9</sup> Time and again he will characterise his congregation as living the lifestyle of the wealthy, particularly with references to their ownership of slaves. For example, in his fortieth homily on 1 Corinthians he urges his congregation to dispense with their many slaves, suggesting that one would be quite sufficient. 'If this is burdensome,' he says, 'consider those who have not even one and enjoy a more satisfactory service.'<sup>10</sup> It seems those he is addressing are assumed to be in possession of a large number of slaves, while those too poor to have any are referred to only in the third person. Furthermore, his references to the poor are often of such a character as to suggest that they are in fact quite wealthy. For example, in a sermon

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell 2006, 42-64, followed by Sandwell 2007, 56-7.

<sup>6</sup> Cunningham 1990, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy 1983, 48.

<sup>8</sup> We should not also rule out the possibility that the language of the sermons was 'upgraded' for publication.

<sup>9</sup> MacMullen 1989, 504.

<sup>10</sup> Εἰ δὲ βαρὺ τοῦτο, ἐννόησον τοὺς οὐδὲ ἓνα ἔχοντας, καὶ εὐκολωτέρας ἀπολαύοντας θεραπείας. Chrys. *In I Cor. hom.* 40.384E.

on Ephesians, he argues that both the rich man and the poor man are like kings: this may be more obvious for the rich man with his vast estates and retinue of servants, but is also true for the poor man who ‘has authority over his wife, his wife over the servants,’ and so forth.<sup>11</sup> The ‘poor’ man, it seems, is just someone who has only a small number of slaves.

There are a number of things which have been and can be said in response to this. Others have pointed out that a direct address to ‘the rich’ does not necessarily mean that they were the only ones present: it could have been the case that he was addressing only a section of the congregation.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Wendy Mayer has pointed out that in the third sermon *On Repentance* he begins as if addressing an all-male audience, but later turns to address the women present.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, it is still the case that he most frequently addresses the concerns of the rich. This, however, could be because they are the most important people in society, and therefore in a position to effect greater change in the city as a whole;<sup>14</sup> because he considered them more prone to sin, and therefore in greater need of rebukes;<sup>15</sup> or because of a natural tendency to direct his remarks at those from his own social background, being the sector of society with which he was most familiar.<sup>16</sup> Further arguments against this way of reading his sermons will be discussed below.

The third argument made by MacMullen concerns the archaeological evidence for churches.<sup>17</sup> His principal argument is that the surviving church buildings could not have held anywhere near the actual number of Christians of the period. The number of church buildings is too few, and their maximum capacity (according to his calculations) too small to have held anything more than a small minority of the total Christian population. Consequently the grand basilicas in which the likes of Chrysostom would have preached

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<sup>11</sup> κρατεῖ τῆς γυναίκος ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἡ γυνὴ τῶν οἰκετῶν. *In Eph. hom.* 22.168C.

<sup>12</sup> Allen 1996, 411.

<sup>13</sup> Mayer 1999b, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Mayer 2000, 76; Hartney 2004, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Hartney 2004, 44-5.

<sup>16</sup> Mayer 1999b, 140.

<sup>17</sup> MacMullen 2009.

were frequented only by the élites, whilst the masses conducted their Christian worship in the much larger spaces of cemeteries.

Though his hypothesis is intriguing, his arguments are highly speculative and problematic.<sup>18</sup> First, his calculations of the maximum capacity for church buildings rest on a very generous assessment of the space required by each individual worshipper. He assigns each a full square metre on the basis that they would need space to ‘kneel, sit, rise to their feet, extend themselves full length on the floor, chant, give back the proper words in responses, raise their hands above them in prayer, exchange a kiss.’<sup>19</sup> Of these activities, however, only the prostration would require a significant amount of space, but the only evidence he is able to cite for this practice is from Augustine.<sup>20</sup> He also leaves out from his calculations the space in the side aisles where the view was blocked on the basis that ‘nobody wants to stare at a column for two hours.’<sup>21</sup> However, it hardly makes sense to say that the later arrivals, seeing that there was nowhere to stand with a good view, gave up and went back home: if they wanted to be there, they would be able to get as much out of listening as seeing.<sup>22</sup> In short, it seems to me entirely reasonable to calculate much higher numbers of two to three thousand in the building, with maybe many more crowded outside. They might not be able to see and hear much, but that would not necessarily in itself put them off trying to get as much out of the experience as they could.

There are other assumptions with the figures too which are open to debate. The first is his acceptance at face value of Chrysostom’s estimate that there were 100,000 Christians in Antioch – this is quite possibly a wild exaggeration, and numbers in general from

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<sup>18</sup> For other critiques of his arguments, see Bradshaw 2011 and Yasin 2012b.

<sup>19</sup> MacMullen 2009, 14.

<sup>20</sup> He cites also van de Paverd 1970, but the only evidence he provides for prostration is a mention by Chrysostom that ‘we all together lie on the ground’ (πάντες ὁμοίως ἐπ’ ἐδάφους κείμεθα). This, however, may mean nothing more than kneeling, which would not require that much space – cf. Ἐπὶ γόνυ δὲ οἱ ἱεροὶ κελεύουσι κεῖσθαι νόμοι (‘On our knees the holy laws instruct us to lie/kneel’), *Cat. ult. ad bapt.* 4.34.

<sup>21</sup> MacMullen 2009, 13.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, I myself have been to carol services in Oxford’s Christ Church Cathedral where I have sat through the whole ninety minute service without seeing a single thing!

antiquity are not to be trusted. The second assumption is that the capacity of a church building equals the total number who regularly worshipped there: given that there were several services a week,<sup>23</sup> it is quite likely that not everyone attended every service, and so the total number of even regular worshippers could be much higher. Thirdly, MacMullen seems to base his arguments on there being in Antioch only one or two large churches and a mere handful of small ones; this presupposes that the archaeological and literary records present a complete picture of the churches of Antioch, but this is far from being a reasonable assumption to make. There could well be many more churches than he gives credit for which have left no trace. Indeed, he provides several citations making reference to the existence of a number of churches in the city.<sup>24</sup> Finally, one must also take into consideration the frequent references from this period to people delaying baptism, and so we could imagine large numbers filling the sides and back of the church for the Liturgy of the Word, and on their departure there would be left more space for the faithful's participation in the Eucharist. It is likely also that Chrysostom's figure of 100,000 for the Christians of Antioch is including all those not yet baptised (but enrolled in the catechumenate), meaning that the numbers of baptised Christians participating in the full liturgy of the Church could in fact be much smaller.<sup>25</sup> All in all, MacMullen's numbers appear highly speculative and based on rather meagre evidence, and there need not be as great a disparity in numbers as he suggests.

Despite MacMullen's persistent arguments, the general consensus, as indicated above, is that Chrysostom's congregations were much more diverse. Maxwell has produced the most detailed argument in support of this view. Her arguments are based on three main points.

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<sup>23</sup> On which see below, p. 269.

<sup>24</sup> e.g. Sozomen's reference to 'one of the churches in the suburbs' (ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἐκκλησιῶν), *h.e.* 7.3.3. Bradshaw 2011, 564, also draws attention to the evidence for the continued existence of house-churches in the fourth century, with congregations unwilling to move to the new basilicas.

<sup>25</sup> On the delaying of baptism, see Ferguson 2009, 617-33.

First, she demonstrates the widespread appeal of oratory and philosophical preachers in late antiquity. The popularity of moral preachers and teachers more generally in antiquity suggests that we should be open to the possibility, attested in the sources, that Chrysostom's preaching attracted a similar level of popular appeal.<sup>26</sup> He was not by any means an isolated phenomenon in the world of late antiquity. Furthermore, oratory and public speaking permeated every area of life, from rhetorical performances on important occasions, through the law-courts, to entertainment in the theatre.<sup>27</sup> After her analysis of the sources, Maxwell concludes that 'in Late Antiquity, city people had a taste for rhetoric,' and such a taste was not confined to the upper classes.<sup>28</sup> This is, I feel, the most persuasive of her arguments: given the widespread familiarity and popular interest in both oratory more generally, and moral/philosophical preaching more specifically, it is reasonable to presume that the 'Golden Mouth' drew diverse audiences to his sermons. The argument does not prove that his regular congregation members were necessarily diverse – his popularity could, as MacMullen would argue, be limited to the great feast days of the church – but it does at least point in that direction.

Her second point is to draw attention to references in Chrysostom's sermons to various sectors of society, including the genuinely poor, workers, slaves, women and others.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the number of references she is able to provide is rather limited. A dozen or so references to the presence of artisans may seem a lot on its own, but out of a total corpus of over 800 sermons, one may actually be forced to conclude rather the opposite, that their presence was rather negligible. This is a point which MacMullen makes in response to Maxwell's argument:

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<sup>26</sup> Maxwell 2006, 11-41.

<sup>27</sup> Maxwell 2006, 42-64.

<sup>28</sup> Maxwell 2006, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Maxwell 2006, 65-87. For a similar argument, see also Allen 1996, 1997.

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Certainly in small towns, or on great religious days in great cities when every sort of person would attend, a sermon's message might well be more inclusive. ... If an ever-widening sampling of sermons is made in search of the missing women and working people, these will be found even in daily services, very occasionally. The *proportion* of reference to them nevertheless remains the same, that is, quite insignificant. For the student today who would see early Christendom in some anachronistic light, as equally welcoming to all, the plain facts are thus rather uncomfortable and are accordingly resisted.<sup>30</sup>

As discussed above, it is not clear to me that the facts are quite as 'plain' as he makes out. But nonetheless, his point is a helpful one, that references to people other than the *élite* are comparatively rare. Allusions to non-*élites* are made in such a way as to suggest that their presence is not unusual, but the paucity of references to them is problematic for Maxwell's argument that the evidence of the sermons points to a diverse congregation. If we are to draw straightforward conclusions about the social composition of the congregation from Chrysostom's references to the rich and the poor, the dominance of references to the former would in fact point to a predominantly *élite* congregation with small pockets of maybe semi-regular non-*élites*, rather than Maxwell's picture of social diversity.

A third and related point comes out of Maxwell's next chapter, in which she discusses Chrysostom's expectations of his congregation as being varied, and the pedagogical techniques he uses to teach a group of mixed abilities.<sup>31</sup> She argues that the congregation consisted largely of neither the educated *élite* nor an ignorant mass, but a group somewhere in between, 'ordinary people who knew enough about their religion to debate doctrine among themselves and evangelize others.'<sup>32</sup> To suggest that his congregations consisted of people with varied ability to follow and varied knowledge is not at all surprising or controversial. However, again, it does not necessarily follow that his congregation consisted of a variety of social groups outside of the 'educated *élite*'. Mixed

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<sup>30</sup> MacMullen 2009, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Maxwell 2006, 88-117.

<sup>32</sup> Maxwell 2006, 117.

ability would still have been found among the élite, between those who were assiduous readers of scripture and those who devoted less time to the practice, or between those who had regularly attended for a long time and those who were more recent converts, and so on. According to Porphyry, Plotinus' school consisted of men such as Paulinus of Scythopolis who 'was full of mistakes',<sup>33</sup> and he reports that he himself once questioned his teacher incessantly about a doctrine he struggled to understand.<sup>34</sup> Expectations of mixed abilities do not necessarily point to a congregation of varied social status!

In sum, the arguments both ways are inconclusive. It might seem odd, given the references Maxwell highlights to different groups, if those groups were not represented at all; but MacMullen himself argues not that the congregation is entirely élite, but that it is predominantly so. Whether or not he is right, or whether instead Maxwell's picture of a congregation that is largely representative of wider society is more accurate, cannot, it seems, be easily ascertained.

### *Arguments against the sociological approach*

Furthermore, it is my contention that this whole approach to Chrysostom's sermons is misconceived and fails to appreciate fully what he was doing as a preacher. It was, after all, not of interest for him what the social make-up of his congregation was; he was primarily concerned with the state of their souls. Three considerations in particular suggest that these texts are resistant to such a sociological analysis. First, the way in which he portrays his congregation is largely influenced by the way the Church and the typical Christian household is presented in scripture. We remember from Chapter 3 that a key element of his preaching is his exegesis of scripture, and so the themes of scripture will

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<sup>33</sup> ...παρακρουσμάτων πλήρη γεγονότα, Porph. *Plot.* 7.

<sup>34</sup> *Plot.* 13. Cf. *Plot.* 18.

often be the driving force behind his preaching. One of the central aims of Hagit Amirav's work is to demonstrate, more broadly, that 'the content of a sermon, as in the case of any other exegetical literary genre, was primarily and dominantly determined first by the prescribed biblical text.'<sup>35</sup> Thus when MacMullen argues that the audience are often characterised as being rich and the so-called 'poor' often seem quite wealthy, we are seeing nothing more than a reflection of scriptural models. For example, his arguments for a wealthy congregation are based predominantly on passages which refer to widespread ownership of slaves. However, if we reflect that there are a number of household codes in scripture, particularly in the Pauline Epistles (Chrysostom's favourite part of the Bible),<sup>36</sup> and that these codes depict a typical household as consisting of husband, wife, children and slaves, then Chrysostom's sermons are simply echoing this biblical pattern. In other words, his depiction of an average household as consisting of slaves need not reflect the social reality of his congregation, but rather the biblical lens through which he preaches.

This is further reflected by the fact that very often addresses to particular groups, whether it be the rich, the poor, women, slaves and so on, directly follow an address to such groups in the scriptural passage he is commenting on. Apart from addresses to the rich and poor in the sixth sermon on Titus, which we will come onto shortly, the only other references to particular groups in the sermons on Titus and Philemon come at precisely those points when those groups are addressed in scripture. Thus wives are addressed in homily 4 on Titus when the letter to Titus addresses wives;<sup>37</sup> similarly later in the same sermon, slaves are addressed when the letter addresses slaves;<sup>38</sup> and in the second homily on Philemon, masters are addressed in a sermon commenting on an epistle all about the

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<sup>35</sup> Amirav 2003, 28.

<sup>36</sup> e.g. Eph 5:22-6:9 and Col 3:18-4:1.

<sup>37</sup> Tit. 2:3-5. Cf. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 4.751E-F.

<sup>38</sup> Tit. 2:9-10. Cf. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 4.754A.

relationship between a master and his slave.<sup>39</sup> Even if a direct address to a group has not followed on from a reference in scripture, the Church is, at least theologically if not in practice, ‘equally welcoming to all’, and so we can expect his sermons to be directed at the whole range of humanity, without this necessarily entailing full representation immediately before him.<sup>40</sup> Just as references to the possession of slaves need be nothing more than a reflection of the typical household as presented by scripture, so too references to, for example, artisans need be nothing more than a reflection of the diversity which the universal Church theologically contains, rather than a specific reference to the presence of that group within the congregation.

Secondly, references to social groups very often point to deeper theological arguments Chrysostom wants to make. Take this example from the end of his second homily on Philemon:

Εἰ γὰρ ἀργυρίου παῖδας ὠνούμενοι, πάντα ἡμῖν αὐτοὺς ζῆν βουλόμεθα, καὶ ὅσα ἂν ἔχωσιν ἡμῖν ἔχειν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι παραγαγὼν, ὁ μετὰ ταῦτα τιμίῳ αἵματι ἡμᾶς πριάμενος; Τιμὴν κατέβαλεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ὅσην οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ ὑπὲρ τέκνου καταβαλεῖν ἂν ἀνάσχοιτο, τὸ αἷμα ἐξέχεε τὸ ἑαυτοῦ.

For if when we buy slaves with money, we want them to live completely for us, and to possess on our behalf whatever they possess, how much more will it be so with him who brought us out of nothing into being, and who after this bought us with his precious blood? He laid down such a price for us as no-one would endure even to lay down for his own child – he poured out his very own blood.<sup>41</sup>

The comment ‘when we buy slaves’ could be taken as a reference to widespread slave ownership in the congregation, and consequently a largely upper-class gathering. The wider point, however, is to draw a comparison between people’s purchasing of slaves with

<sup>39</sup> Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 2.782D-783A.

<sup>40</sup> *pace* MacMullen, cited above, p. 220. Cf. Gal. 3:28: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔνι δούλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.).

<sup>41</sup> Chrys. *In Philmn. hom.* 2.785A.

money and Christ's purchasing of Christians 'with his precious blood'. The 'we' who purchase slaves are not the congregation per se, but rather humanity in general, and stated purely for the sake of comparison: in the context of late antiquity, ownership of slaves would have been familiar enough for even less wealthy members of the congregation to still understand the point.

Another example we saw in Chapter 5, from the sixth homily on Titus.<sup>42</sup> It will be remembered that Chrysostom splits the congregation into two: the 'rich' are those laden with thorns and in danger of the fires of hell, whilst the 'poor' are those who are unencumbered and on the path to heaven. It would be better to see such labels as more than simply designations of wealth and social status; rather, he is continuing the classical tradition of the 'praise of poverty': the 'rich' are those who indulge in luxury and excess, whilst the 'poor' are those who live simply and are not burdened by greed.<sup>43</sup> There is a wider ethical point he wishes to make, in keeping with his role as physician and prophet warning of the judgement to come. We thus see his frequent references to the rich as in fact more a reflection of his desire to condemn the sins of greed and luxury, rather than as a reflection of the social status of his congregation.

This passage brings us to our third consideration, that very often designations of social groups are actually nothing more than rhetorical techniques to hammer home his point. To begin with, Chrysostom's frequent depiction of his congregation in extreme black or white terms should be understood in the context of the pedagogical concept of imitation. For in this way he presents his congregation with a choice of two personas to inhabit, clear negative and positive examples for his students to imitate or avoid. His black-and-white categorisation of the rich and poor should not be seen as reflecting the reality of late-antique society, but rather as a rhetorically effective polarising technique.

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<sup>42</sup> For the passage, see above, p. 156.

<sup>43</sup> Brown 2002, 46-9.

Not only does such language have greater rhetorical power, it also forces the congregation to accept one or other label and in so doing to receive the rebuke or challenge presented to that group. The ‘rich’ are presented for all as an example to avoid, the ‘poor’ as an example to emulate.

Another rhetorical technique that can be misunderstood is the use of direct address. Throughout his sermons he will speak directly to an individual or a group: it may be the apostle Paul, it may be a particular group such as the Jews, or it may be the congregation themselves.<sup>44</sup> Such language is effective in engaging the congregation, since it places them firmly in the position of recipients of his message: his words are for them. However, as is abundantly clear when the ‘you’ is someone like Paul, it is not always the actual congregation before him he is speaking to. A clear example of this comes from the fifth homily on Titus. In a long passage discoursing on the wickedness of humanity before Christ, he suddenly turns to address directly those historical sinners:

Εἰ γὰρ οἱ φιλοσοφούντες παρ’ αὐτοῖς τοιαῦτα ἐνομοθέτουν, τί ἂν εἴποιμεν περὶ τῶν μὴ φιλοσοφησάντων; εἰ οἱ τὸ γένειον ἔχοντες βαθὺ, καὶ τὸν τρίβωνα ἀναβεβλημένοι τοιαῦτα λέγουσι, τί ἂν εἴποιμεν περὶ ἐτέρων; Οὐ διὰ τοῦτο γέγονεν ἡ γυνή, ἄνθρωπε, ὥστε κοινῇ πᾶσι προκειῖσθαι. Ὡ πάντα ἀνατρέποντες ὑμεῖς· οἱ τοῖς μὲν ἄρρεσιν ὡς θηλείαις μιγνύμενοι, τὰς δὲ θηλείας ὡς ἄνδρας εἰς πόλεμον ἐξάγοντες. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἔργον τοῦ διαβόλου, τὸ πάντα συγχέειν καὶ ἀνατρέπειν, καὶ τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τεθέντα ὅρια διασαλεύειν καὶ μεταίρειν, τὰ ὅρια ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τῇ φύσει. Τῇ μὲν γὰρ γυναικὶ τὸ οἰκουρεῖν ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς, τῷ δὲ ἀνδρὶ τὰ δημόσια πράττειν· σὺ δὲ τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰς τοὺς πόδας κατάγεις, καὶ τοὺς πόδας εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνάγεις. Γυναῖκας ὀπλίξεις, καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ;

For if those who practised philosophy among them made such laws, what would we say regarding those who did not practise philosophy? If those who wear the beard and don the gown of a scholar say such things, what would we say regarding the others? My fellow, it was not for this reason that woman was made, so as to be offered to all in common. O you who turn everything upside down! Who sleep with men as if they were women, and lead women out to war as if they were men. This is the work of the devil, confusing everything and turning it all upside down, blurring and obliterating

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<sup>44</sup> See above, pp. 83-4.

## The Congregation

the boundaries set from the beginning, the boundaries which God set for nature. For God gave to women the management of the house, and to men to conduct public affairs. But you bring the head down to the feet, and raise up the feet to the head. You put women in arms, and are you not ashamed?<sup>45</sup>

The philosopher Chrysostom particularly has in mind is Plato, and savages his arguments in the *Republic* that women should bear arms and should be shared among men as instruments of reproduction.<sup>46</sup> After the passage he cites Euripides' portrayal of Medea murdering her children as another instance of humanity's barbarity before Christ. Those 'who turn everything upside down' are thus not those before him, but rather these sinners of the past, those who, like Plato, recommend that women 'be offered to all in common' and should be lead 'out to war as if they were men'. This remains the case throughout the passage, but by the time we get to the final sentence, the 'you' is uncomfortably direct. It feels almost as if 'we', the audience, are the recipients of his rebuke. This is deliberate. We remember that a key aim of his is to awaken fear, to terrify his congregation with the the holiness of God and the judgement to come. 'Hear and shudder' sums up one of his principal aims in preaching.<sup>47</sup> The passage is a good example of him addressing a group who is clearly not present in the congregation, but by placing the congregation in their shoes, they are made to sit up and listen, feeling the full force of his rebuke. Furthermore, on a more general level, the use of the second person fits into his wider technique of bringing characters to life in the sermon as examples to imitate or avoid. In the passage, by being directly addressed, those 'who turn everything upside down' are brought into the church for the congregation to behold and scorn. They are displayed before them as the negative example to avoid.<sup>48</sup> In short, the people addressed by Chrysostom, those referred to as 'you', can very often be not the people actually sat or stood before him.

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<sup>45</sup> Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 5.763B-D.

<sup>46</sup> Pl. *R.* 452A, 457C and throughout book 5.

<sup>47</sup> See above, p. 151.

<sup>48</sup> I suspect that a closer study of Chrysostom's use of the second person would be of great value.

The above considerations demonstrate that there is often no direct relationship between the people he addresses or refers to and the people actually before him. The congregation addressed in his sermons is, to some extent, a rhetorical construct, formed on the basis of scripture and created to articulate a theological truth or to make his condemnation of a particular sin more powerfully effective in his role as physician of the soul. To seek to draw out from his sermons clues as to the social make-up of the particular congregation listening to him is to be asking the wrong question of the material.

*A new approach: the congregation as representative*

Furthermore, each of these considerations points us to a broader theological point about who the actual audience is that Chrysostom is addressing. Though delivered before a specific group of people, the congregation actually addressed is something of a more abstract entity, representative of the whole universal Church. Indeed, the very term ‘church’ (ἐκκλησία) has an inherent ambiguity within it. Very literally it refers to an ‘assembly’ and can be used to designate an individual congregation or the building in which they meet.<sup>49</sup> But it also means much more than this: the Church is a single entity, variously referred to throughout the New Testament and subsequent Christian literature as the temple, the body, the bride and so on of Christ.<sup>50</sup> In some mystical way, the Church is both one and many, a thing that is both singular and plural, a single edifice, and yet also composed of many different congregations and many more different individuals. Given the multiple meanings of ἐκκλησία, the local congregation is thus an assembly which points to

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<sup>49</sup> E.g. Chrys. *De paen. hom.* 3, PG 49.294.37-9, where he refers to the wash-basins by the doors of the church. See also Christo 2006, 315-20.

<sup>50</sup> For these images in Chrysostom, see Christo 2006.

a reality beyond itself. In commenting on Paul's discourse on the Church as the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians, he demonstrates this multi-layered meaning of the term:

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ εἶπε, “σῶμα,” τὸ δὲ πᾶν σῶμα ἦν, οὐχὶ ἡ παρὰ Κορινθίοις ἐκκλησία, ἀλλ’ ἡ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης, διὰ τοῦτο ἔφησεν, “ἐκ μέρους” τουτέστιν, ὅτι ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡ παρ’ ὑμῖν μέρος ἐστὶ τῆς πανταχοῦ κειμένης ἐκκλησίας, καὶ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ διὰ πασῶν συνισταμένου τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν· ὥστε οὐχὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν τὴν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐκκλησίαν εἰρηνεύειν ἂν εἴητε δίκαιοι, εἴγε παντός ἐστε μέλη τοῦ σώματος.

For since he had said ‘body’ – and it was the whole body, not the church among the Corinthians, but the church throughout all the world – because of this he said ‘individually’: that is, the church among you is an individual part of the worldwide church, and of the body which consists of all the churches. Consequently, it is right for you to be at peace not only with each other, but also with the whole church throughout the world, if you are members of the whole body.<sup>51</sup>

The word ‘church’ signifies both an individual community, such as that in Corinth, but also the whole body of believers ‘throughout the whole world’, made up of all the individual churches. There is an intrinsic bond between all (orthodox) believers scattered far and wide. Thus the people he preaches to he considers to be not an isolated, individual group or community. He believes that his particular congregation is a part of something much bigger.

The belief that all Christians are the Body of Christ is made visible in the Church's central rite, the Eucharist, which, we remember, took place almost immediately after the sermon. In commenting on Paul's instructions concerning the Eucharist in 1 Corinthians, he says:

Τί γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἄρτος; Σῶμα Χριστοῦ. Τί δὲ γίνονται οἱ μεταλαμβάνοντες; Σῶμα Χριστοῦ· οὐχὶ σώματα πολλὰ, ἀλλὰ σῶμα ἓν. Καθάπερ γὰρ ὁ ἄρτος ἐκ πολλῶν συγκείμενος κόκκων ἦνωται, ὡς μηδαμοῦ φαίνεσθαι τοὺς κόκκους, ἀλλ’ εἶναι μὲν αὐτοὺς, ἄδηλον δὲ αὐτῶν εἶναι τὴν διαφορὰν τῇ συναφείᾳ· οὕτω

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<sup>51</sup> Chrys. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 32.285D-E.

καὶ ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ Χριστῷ συναπτόμεθα. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐξ ἑτέρου μὲν σώματος σὺ, ἐξ ἑτέρου δὲ ἐκεῖνος τρέφεται, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πάντες· διὸ καὶ ἐπήγαγεν· “Οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν.” Εἰ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ γινόμεθα πάντες, διὰ τί μὴ καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἐπιδεικνύμεθα, καὶ γινόμεθα καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ἕν;

For what is the bread? The body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it? The body of Christ. Not many bodies, but one body. For just as bread is one entity, though consisting of many grains, with the result that the grains are nowhere visible – they are indeed there, but because they are connected together, the distinctions between them are not noticeable – so we too are joined together with each other and with Christ. You are not fed from one body, and that person from another, but everyone from the same body. Hence he also adds, ‘For we all share in the one bread.’ If we are fed from the same body and we all become the same body, why do we not also display the same love, and become one in this respect too?<sup>52</sup>

In this passage Chrysostom stresses that when believers take the Eucharistic bread, they take into themselves the body of Christ and therefore become his body – not that they all become separate bodies of Christ, but they all mystically become part of the one body of Christ. They become one in the same way that the grains in the bread have become now one entity and the divisions between them are no longer visible: ‘we all become the same body’. Though many in his audience may not have been baptised members of the Church, the core of those listening to his sermon were a Eucharistic assembly, that is, they were not an isolated group, but part of the one body of Christ.

Furthermore, each individual congregation is a local instantiation of the whole universal Church. In the conclusion to a comprehensive study of his ecclesiology, Gus Christo argues that for Chrysostom ‘the Fulness of the Catholic Church resides concretely and completely in every one of these Churches.’<sup>53</sup> This is illustrated by a passage from his fifth sermon on Titus. He has been making the argument that love of money is a weaker passion than the love of women, and supports his case first by allusion to the attitudes of ancient philosophers. He continues, ‘But since our sermon is directed at the Church, let us

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<sup>52</sup> *In 1 Cor. hom.* 24.213D-214A.

<sup>53</sup> Christo 2006, 410.

not bring in examples from those outside, but rather from the scriptures.’<sup>54</sup> It is interesting that he does not say that his sermon is directed at Christians, or ‘a’ church, but rather ‘the’ Church: the definite article gives the sense that he sees his true audience as being something more than simply the particular assembly of people before him. His words are addressed to the whole body of Christ.

A similar point has recently been made by Mayer. She argues that Chrysostom’s audience was not only the congregation gathered before him, but also the non-Christians and heretics who would see his message lived out in the lives of his regular congregation, and beyond that the wider Christian Church who would have access to his teaching in the written format in which it survives for us today.<sup>55</sup> What I am suggesting is that we push this one step further: his *primary* audience should be seen as the whole fullness of the Church, the one Body of Christ, consisting of members past and present, actual and hoped for. It is not so much that in his preaching he is speaking primarily to those before him but with an eye to the wider dissemination of his message; rather his primary audience is the whole Church as instantiated in the worshipping congregation before him. Therefore, the way he depicts and represents his congregation will largely depend on his understanding of the Church, particularly in light of his role as teacher, physician and priest. There is no simple one-to-one relationship between how he portrays the people he is addressing and the people who are actually there.<sup>56</sup> This is not to say that the actual people before him were entirely irrelevant for the content of his preaching, but that they were viewed through his scriptural and ecclesiological lens. If so, then this means sociological approaches are ultimately in vain: those sorts of questions simply cannot be asked of the text. The

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<sup>54</sup> Ἄλλ’ ἐπειδὴ πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, μὴ ἀπὸ τῶν ἕξωθεν φέρωμεν τὰ ὑποδείγματα, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν. Chrys. *In Tit. hom.* 5.758D.

<sup>55</sup> Mayer 2011.

<sup>56</sup> This will be an important point also for our consideration later of his congregation’s commitment.

congregation addressed is representative of the whole, universal Church. The preservation and continued use of his sermons right up until the present day is testimony to that.

## COMMITMENT

In the introduction, we discussed three particularly important recent works which have sought to use Chrysostom's sermons as a window onto the Christianization of late-antique society. Though each comes at his sermons from quite different perspectives, they nonetheless all paint a very similar picture of the relationship between the preacher and his congregation. They all present Chrysostom's preaching as one side of a dialogue or debate between the preacher and his congregation, between the élite and the masses. Even Isabella Sandwell, though explicitly rejecting the dialogue model in favour of what she terms 'ideology', still represents the relationship between the two parties as a clash of two different conceptions of what it meant to be a Christian. For her, he struggles to impose a strict adherence to Orthodoxy on a congregation who had a more subtle approach to issues of religious allegiance and who saw their Christian identity as just one of many different identities, each of which could take precedence at any given moment. For Hartney, it will be remembered, the Christian laity whom Chrysostom addressed were rather 'more pedestrian' and lacklustre in their faith, and their preacher 'must have known that his success could only have been limited.'<sup>57</sup> By contrast, for Maxwell, both preacher and congregation were committed to the Christian faith, but very different versions of it: the purpose of his sermons was to persuade them to accept 'his version of the faith.'<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Hartney 2004, 32, 29

<sup>58</sup> Maxwell 2006, 174.

The arguments of each of these studies are based in large part on a particular reading of his frequent condemnations of his congregation. As has already been highlighted in earlier chapters, such language is common to Chrysostom, and after his death he was remembered as both an eloquent speaker, but also ‘on account of his zeal for moderation, he was rather too severe.’<sup>59</sup> Thus Hartney’s picture of a more lacklustre congregation is drawn principally from passages in which Chrysostom condemns them for laziness. To begin with, there are some passages where he picks out a specific expression of boredom, be it chattering or yawning; such passages, however, are few and far between, and do not of themselves support a characterisation of the congregation as ‘well capable of growing bored.’<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Hartney herself supplies only one reference in support, from the thirty-sixth homily on 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, as that passage indicates, such chattering need not be conducted by any more than a few, which Chrysostom seizes upon to deliver a stinging rebuke to all.<sup>61</sup> More common, however, are more general condemnations of the congregation as lazy or idle: he opens the second homily on Titus by comparing the saints of old to the situation today, with the words ‘we ... are full of idleness’ (ῥαθυμίας μεστός);<sup>62</sup> he closes the fifth homily with the plea, ‘How long will we be idle?’ (Μέχρι τίτος ῥάθυμοι);<sup>63</sup> and at the end of the third homily on Philemon, he cannot understand why they have become ‘lazier’ (ῥαθυμότερος) despite believing in the reality of hell.<sup>64</sup> If we take this rhetoric at face-value, then we cannot escape the conclusion that the Christians of Antioch were rather uninterested in and uncommitted to their faith.

For Maxwell, Chrysostom’s congregation are far from lazy. They are committed Christians: only they are committed to a different version of Christianity. She wants to

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<sup>59</sup> διὰ ζῆλον σωφροσύνης πικρότερος καὶ πλέον. *Socr. h.e.* 6.3.

<sup>60</sup> Hartney 2004, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Chrys. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 36.341D-342A.

<sup>62</sup> *In Tit. hom.* 2.737B.

<sup>63</sup> *In Tit. hom.* 5.764D.

<sup>64</sup> *In Philemn. hom.* 3.790D.

insist that these different views are not ‘popular deviations’, but their beliefs and their preacher’s beliefs are ‘two perspectives that interacted with each other after having developed in different contexts.’<sup>65</sup> She bases such an argument on passages in his sermons where he condemns a particular belief held by his congregation and attempts to convince them to accept his own point of view. The characteristics of such passages may include references to other views put in the mouths of his congregants, or declarations that his words would be found ridiculous. Most commonly, however, are passages where he simply uses strong language to convince them to accept his point of view, with the apparent implication that they hold the contrary view. For example, in a passage from a homily on Matthew, he declares that it should be forbidden for the envious to enter church, as is already the case for fornicators.<sup>66</sup> Maxwell interprets this passage as suggesting that his congregation were happy with the idea that fornicators should not enter church, but that ‘many probably began to worry when they heard their preacher say that fornicators were more worthy of being there than people who felt envy.’<sup>67</sup> Thus Maxwell takes a condemnation of a particular belief – in this case that envy was not as serious as fornication – as evidence for this being a widespread and staunchly-held belief among the Christians of Antioch which they were unwilling to change.

Sandwell bases her depiction of a congregation less idealistic about their Christian identity on a comparison between the views of Chrysostom and Libanius, arguing that for the former ‘clear-cut religious identities and labels were central to his thinking,’<sup>68</sup> whereas the latter employed a more subtle approach and did not consider religious identity to be so central. The views of Libanius are then applied to Chrysostom’s congregation partly on the assumption (which is not backed up) that, ‘For most people, who had to live alongside one

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<sup>65</sup> Maxwell 2006, 143.

<sup>66</sup> Chrys. *In Matt. hom.* 40.441B-C.

<sup>67</sup> Maxwell 2006, 125.

<sup>68</sup> Sandwell 2007, 61.

another despite differences of religious allegiance, it simply was not practical to be constantly asserting a strong religious identity.<sup>69</sup> However, of more importance is her observation that Chrysostom often complains about a lack of attention in his audience, and rebukes them for coming only for entertainment.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, she notices his complaints of poor attendance and concludes that ‘the majority ... would have attended only intermittently throughout the whole year,’ with only a ‘small group’ attending more regularly.<sup>71</sup> For Sandwell, therefore, such condemnations of sin point to a congregation that is somewhat uncommitted to Chrysostom’s Christianity, and uninterested in his preaching.

In sum, then, the argument of all three runs as follows. Chrysostom’s condemnatory language reflects his frustration with his congregation. This frustration is evidence of the fact that they fall a long way short of the beliefs and behaviours that Chrysostom considered appropriate for the Christian. This in turn can be taken one of two ways: either, Hartney would argue, this reflects badly on the congregation, indicating that they were rather lacklustre in their commitment to the religion they professed; or, according to Maxwell and Sandwell, this suggests that the congregation have a religious mindset that is still fundamentally ‘classical’, with only a superficial influence from the new state religion. It is the argument of this thesis that to read his sermons in this way is fundamentally to misunderstand the nature of what kind of activity preaching was. His condemnations should be understood within the context of Christian preaching as outlined in the previous chapters, and should not be taken as indicative of an actual lack of Christian devotion, or of a more pagan/traditional devotion. Furthermore, Chrysostom’s condemnatory tone should be seen as pointing more to how he wanted them to see

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<sup>69</sup> Sandwell 2007, 279.

<sup>70</sup> Sandwell 2007, 15-6.

<sup>71</sup> Sandwell 2007, 190.

themselves, rather than to what they actually were. This argument we will now develop through the remainder of this chapter.

### *Chrysostom's popularity*

First, however, it must be remembered that Chrysostom was a hugely popular preacher, and such a popularity is inexplicable in the narrative of Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell. Even taking into account that many may have attended regularly for the whole liturgical experience rather than specifically to hear him preach, nonetheless the evidence suggests that Chrysostom's preaching attracted large numbers of people, or, at the very least, that those who attended regularly liked what they heard. As we saw in Chapter 2, the consistent picture of him which is presented in the sources is that, despite being a stern moralist, he was immensely popular as a preacher. Time and again we are told that 'the people applauded and loved the man very much on account of the discourses given by him in church.'<sup>72</sup> His harsh tongue may have irritated some in positions of power enough that they plotted to have him deposed;<sup>73</sup> but the people revolted when their beloved bishop was taken from them.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, when he was taken from Antioch to be consecrated as bishop of Constantinople, it is said that he had to be removed from his home-town at night to avoid a riot.<sup>75</sup> The very survival of such vast quantities of his sermons and his posthumous epithet also point to him being a preacher whose sermons were greatly valued.

If the picture of Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell is right, that Chrysostom's sermons are witnesses of a clash of worldviews between preacher and congregation, one

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<sup>72</sup> ὁ μέντοι λαὸς διὰ τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ λεγομένους ὑπ' αὐτοῦ λόγους σφόδρα συνεκρότει καὶ ἠγάπα τὸν ἄνθρωπον. *Socr. h.e.* 6.4.8.

<sup>73</sup> See above, pp. 37-9.

<sup>74</sup> *Socr. h.e.* 6.16, *Soz. h.e.* 8.18.

<sup>75</sup> *Soz. h.e.* 8.2.

wonders how he could have become so popular if he was so disagreed with. To begin with, it contradicts the basic socio-psychological theory of cognitive dissonance. The original architect of the theory, Leon Festinger, argued that people have an instinctive drive for cognitive consistency: any information that is inconsistent with their existing beliefs produces a psychological discomfort, or cognitive dissonance. This discomfort must be relieved, whether it is by changing their behaviour or their attitudes.<sup>76</sup> For example, in a well-known experiment, he discovered that participants spoke more positively about a tedious task they had been made to undertake when they were paid less to do so. This was because those who had been paid more were able to justify to themselves why they were saying something they disagreed with, and so the feeling of dissonance for them was thereby reduced. Those who were paid less, on the other hand, had no such external justification, and so were forced to convince themselves that the task was in fact more enjoyable than they had initially believed in order to reduce the feeling of dissonance and bring about cognitive consistency.<sup>77</sup> If people typically strive for cognitive consistency, it seems unlikely that, as the picture of Chrysostom's congregation painted by Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell would suggest, they were voluntarily attending, with some degree of regularity, and enjoying an event which presented them with information that conflicted with their existing beliefs.

The principles of Festinger's theory had already been used by mass communication theorists to argue for the concept of selective exposure, the 'tendency [for people] to expose themselves to or attend to media messages they feel are in accord with their already-held attitudes and interests and the parallel tendency to avoid those that might create dissonance.'<sup>78</sup> Simplistically, it is the principle that, in the UK, a conservative-

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<sup>76</sup> Festinger 1957. For a recent overview of developments in the field, see Cooper 2007. See also Gawronski and Strack 2012 for current ways in which the principle of cognitive consistency is applied in different fields.

<sup>77</sup> Cooper 2007, 15-8.

<sup>78</sup> Baran and Davis 2012, 182.

minded person would most likely choose to read *The Daily Telegraph*, a liberal-minded person *The Guardian*, for example. People typically seek out those messages which reinforce rather than challenge their existing beliefs. If we apply this concept to late antiquity, then it would suggest that people, by and large, would only have gone to hear Chrysostom preach if they already broadly agreed with him. There was no compulsion on people to attend his church, or indeed church at all, and so many would only have come if hearing his sermon would largely reinforce rather than challenge their existing beliefs. If this is so, then the picture of Chrysostom's congregations as being largely opposed to him and in need of being radically won over appears unlikely.

Furthermore, although a key feature of Chrysostom's preaching is his harsh language and condemnation of sin, there are, however, some few occasions when he is more positive about his congregation's attentiveness and willingness to listen and learn – evidence, therefore, of their commitment to him as a preacher. He began one sermon delivered in Antioch by expressing his grief at having missed the previous service, because he had been called away by Bishop Flavian. He was comforted, however, by the fact that he had heard lots of positive things about their time without him: he says that a number of people had come up to him to relay to him what had been preached in the sermon, and he praises them for having listened so attentively that they could repeat it. As he moves on to the passage for the day, he again expresses confidence in their attention:

Ἄλλ' εἴπερ ποτὲ προθυμίαν μοι παρέσχετε καὶ πολλὴν σπουδὴν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν, ὥσπερ οὖν ἀεὶ παρεσχήκατε, ταύτην αἰτῶ καὶ τήμερον ἐμοὶ δοῦναι τὴν χάριν. Οὐδὲ μὲν ὑπὲρ τῶν τυχόντων ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ μεγάλων πραγμάτων. Διόπερ ὀφθαλμῶν δέομαι πανταχόθεν ὄξυ βλέπόντων, διανοίας διεγερμένης, διανεστηκότος φρονήματος, συντεταμένων λογισμῶν, ψυχῆς ἀγρύπνου καὶ ἐγρηγορυίας.

But if you have ever given me a desire and great enthusiasm for listening – as indeed you always have done – I ask that especially today you grant me this gift. Our sermon is not about mundane things, but about important matters. Therefore I need your eyes

to be on a sharp look-out in all directions, your intellects aroused, your minds alert, your thoughts ordered, your souls awake and vigilant.<sup>79</sup>

If we were to read this at face value alongside many of the passages considered in this thesis, we would be presented with a somewhat contradictory picture of a congregation at one and the same time both lazy and zealous, negligent and attentive. This should alert us to the dangers of taking his words too seriously as an accurate portrayal of his audience. His exuberant praise is clearly a rhetorical exaggeration, but it is no more an exaggeration than the severity of his withering rebukes, and they present a more positive picture of the congregation than the one presented by Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell.

Nor is this only a feature of his relationship with his Antiochene congregation. In Constantinople too, he can be stinging in his condemnations, but also just as enthusiastic in his commendations. He begins one sermon by praising their changed behaviour following his previous rebuke: he is delighted, he says, ‘because I see much fruit growing out of this hurt.’ Just as a body which is dead and unfeeling would not respond to a physician’s therapy, so the fact that they were so convicted is proof that they can be changed:

Ἐπεὶ οὖν τοῦτο ὑμῖν κατώρθωται, σφόδρα θαρρόμεν ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀγάπης· εἰ γὰρ μία διάλεξις οὕτως ἔδακε, καὶ εἰς τοσαύτην ἀγωνίαν κατέστησεν, ὥς καὶ ἀθυμεῖν καὶ θορυβεῖσθαι καὶ ταραττεσθαι, εὐδὴλον ὅτι δευτέρα καὶ τρίτη προσγενομένη, πάσης ἀπαλλάξει τῆς ἀρρώστιας.

Since, then, you have responded positively, we have great confidence about your love; for if one discourse bit you like this and put you in such great anguish, that you were despondent, confused and agitated, it is abundantly clear that if a second and a third are added, you will be freed from every infirmity.<sup>80</sup>

Again, we should be wary of rhetorical exaggeration, but it is hard to imagine him saying these things if his previous sermon had not ‘bitten’ them at all. Furthermore, he gives them

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<sup>79</sup> Chrys. *In fac. ei rest.* PG 51.373.18-26.

<sup>80</sup> *Pater m. usq. mod. op.* PG 63.511.36-40.

proof of how they had been affected in their greater attendance at the following service, and in their negative reaction when they found a Galatian bishop preaching instead of Chrysostom. Even taking into account his own spin on the events, it is hard to read this as displaying anything other than a genuine attachment to their preacher.

It must also be remembered that Chrysostom was by no means the only spiritual guide around. Such prophetic preachers were popular and widespread in late antiquity. We think, for example, of the so-called ‘holy man’, whose extreme asceticism and consequent ‘strangeness’ placed him in a position of great authority within his community: as Peter Brown argued, ‘to visit a holy man was to go where the power was.’<sup>81</sup> Brown particularly pointed to ‘the importance of the holy man as an allayer of anxiety’:

It would be inaccurate to call Late Romans exceptionally guilt-ridden men: it is rather that they were acutely anxious to control and delimit guilt. Caught between a bottomless God and an archaic system of public penance, laymen flocked to the holy man to know whether there was anything at all that they could do, in their small way.<sup>82</sup>

As a result the holy men were in direct competition with the ordained clergy of the Church over where true healing of sin could be found. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 5, Daniel Caner’s investigation of the ‘wandering, begging monks’ reveals the widespread popularity of these itinerant holy men, so much so that, as we saw evidenced in Chrysostom’s first sermon on Titus, the clerical hierarchy were concerned that ‘the monks in question had gained prestige not only among their ascetic peers but also among the Christian laity, who rewarded them with alms.’<sup>83</sup> The existence and popularity of these rival therapists of the soul would suggest that people were indeed in search of healing from

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<sup>81</sup> Brown 1971b, 87.

<sup>82</sup> Brown 1971b, 97.

<sup>83</sup> Caner 2002, 3.

their sins, rather than that they listened to his rebukes with either incredulity or dismissiveness, as the studies of Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell would imply.

*Condemnations and the pastoral nature of Christian preaching*

However, the central argument of this thesis is that the very nature of the text, in fact, prevents us from using sermons to assess the depth of commitment in the Christian communities of late antiquity. To begin with, each of the chapters of Part 2 developed an understanding of the sermon as a pastoral and liturgical activity which enabled us to contextualise Chrysostom's use of condemnatory language. When we understand his harsh criticism within its historical context, we are no longer able to interpret it at face value.

Chapter 3 considered the place of Chrysostom's preaching within the tradition of classical teaching. The loose structure of many of his sermons, and the focus on exegesis and moral exhortation, could be paralleled in the teaching practices of the ancient classroom or lecture-hall. His sermons have the form of lectures, and he very often speaks as a teacher to students. Something of a trope for classroom teachers, that chapter suggested, was the use of harsh language: students were expected to leave Epictetus' classroom, for example, 'in pain rather than in pleasure'.<sup>84</sup> Our comparison between Chrysostom's preaching and Plutarch's essay *On listening to lectures* revealed a number of striking similarities between them, in particular their criticisms of their students coming for entertainment rather than to learn, and their rebukes of laziness and inattentiveness. Teachers were known to be stern figures, and many remembered vividly the fear and terror they had experienced in the classroom. Furthermore, rhetorical handbooks prescribed – or described – that moral exhortations of the kind delivered by itinerant preachers or

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<sup>84</sup> See above, p. 113.

classroom teachers should use direct, urgent and emotionally expressive language. In this context, Chrysostom's stern, condemnatory language appears to be less the result of an especially slovenly congregation, and more the mark of any typical teacher in late antiquity.

Furthermore, the concept of repentance, of turning from sin to God, is a central concept in Christian thought. This we saw through chapters 4 and 5: Chrysostom continues a tradition stretching back to the Old Testament prophets in preaching heavily on repentance and condemning sin, though doing so in the language of sickness used often by classical medico-philosophical writers. The first words Mark records in the mouth of Jesus are 'The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and trust in the Gospel,'<sup>85</sup> and the apostle Paul declared that 'both Jews and Greeks are all under sin' warning his readers that 'the wrath of God is being revealed against all the impiety and injustice of men....'<sup>86</sup> The baptismal rite from the earliest times, as far as we can tell, had an emphasis on renouncing sin and of being washed clean in the baptismal waters.<sup>87</sup> Bewailing one's sin has always been a key feature of the faith, from Paul's 'What a wretched man I am!'<sup>88</sup> to Chrysostom's own comparison of himself to 'some vile outcast of mongrel birth, crippled in body and in every way utterly worthless.'<sup>89</sup>

This takes on added force in the immediate context of the liturgical setting, considered in chapter 6. The sermon was not a stand-alone event, but formed part of a rich ritual of worship. Even when the sermon was not part of a Eucharistic liturgy, study of scripture was still in itself a worshipful activity, being the study of the very Word of God. But when it did form part of the full Eucharist, the sermon preceded the great mysteries of

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<sup>85</sup> Mark 1:15.

<sup>86</sup> Rom. 3:9 (πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι), 1:18 (ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων...).

<sup>87</sup> E.g. Acts 2:38, 1 Cor. 6:11, Just. *I Apol.* 61.

<sup>88</sup> Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος, Rom. 7:24.

<sup>89</sup> τῶν εὐτελῶν τις καὶ ἀπερριμμένων ἀνδρῶν καὶ δυσγενῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀνάπηρος καὶ πάντων τῶν ὄντων μοχθηρότατος, Chrys. *De sac.* 6.12, trans. G. Neville.

the Church, when individuals could receive the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The sermon was thus, as the chapter argued, itself an encounter with the divine, and as a result Chrysostom's aim in preaching was to arouse the right worshipful attitude of devotion to and repentance before a holy God, and even more so in the context of the Eucharist which followed: it was noteworthy that when Chrysostom mentions the Eucharist in his sermons, it was most frequently to encourage the right attitude in preparation for it. His frequent condemnations, therefore, can be seen to make perfect sense in such a setting, encouraging an attitude of self-deprecation and self-humiliation.

In light of classical pedagogy, a terrifying eschatology and the immediate awe-inspiring context of the liturgy, his condemnation of his congregants' sin should not simply be interpreted as reflecting his annoyance with their lack of commitment to or engagement with his version of Christianity, or as evidence for Christianization being still at an early stage. Such language is deliberately provocative rhetoric, a trope of classical pedagogy, and with the Christian aim being to instil in the congregation a sense of guilt, to frighten them with the prospect of judgement to come, to prepare them to receive the Eucharist. We cannot simply take it as a straightforward indicator of the state of late-antique popular Christianity. Furthermore, the specific sins he critiques them for – greed, lust, anger and so on<sup>90</sup> – should again be seen as influenced largely by the scriptural and theological lens through which he sees late-antique society, and in any case more reflective of society as a whole than necessarily his own congregation. His congregation were no doubt far from perfect: but this would hardly be a peculiar feature of the fourth-century Church!

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<sup>90</sup> It would be a fruitful study to analyse statistically which sins/virtues are dealt with most frequently.

Chrysostom himself suggests on more than one occasion that his harsh language is more for rhetorical effect than a genuine sense of frustration. For example:

σφοδρότερον δὲ διελέχθημεν ὑπὲρ πλείονος ἀσφαλείας. Βέλτιον γὰρ ἐμὲ θρασύν τινα καὶ ἀπηνῆ καὶ αὐθάδη ὑποπτεύεσθαι παρ' ὑμῶν, ἢ ὑμᾶς τὰ τῷ θεῷ μὴ δοκοῦντα ποιεῖν.

But we have spoken more vehemently for the sake of greater security. For it is better that I am considered by you an arrogant, harsh and stubborn man, than that you do what God does not approve of.<sup>91</sup>

He wants his congregation to lead a life obedient to God, to remain on the path of salvation. To ensure that this is the case, he has deliberately spoken more critically ‘for the sake of greater security’, that is, to ensure that they thoroughly examine themselves for any trace of the sins he has condemned in the sermon. He would much rather be thought of as a rather disagreeable man (as indeed it seems he was by some!) than to allow them to leave this path. An interesting comparison is with Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, a century later: he once explicitly stated that ‘we are not saying these things because we believe that you do not receive the word of God willingly. ... Still, because we want you to rise continually to better things, we presume to admonish you with paternal solicitude even with regard to the things which you do perfectly.’<sup>92</sup> A condemnation, therefore, may be nothing more than an encouragement to do even better, than a criticism of poor behaviour.

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<sup>91</sup> Chrys. *In Hebr. hom.* 4.50C.

<sup>92</sup> *Non ideo haec dicimus, quod vos agnoverimus verbum dei non libenter accipere. ... sed, dum vos volumus ad meliora semper ascendere, etiam ea, quae vos perfecte cognoscimus agere, paterna sollicitudine praesumimus admonere.* Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 78, trans. Daniel Sheerin.

*A Congregation of Penitent Sinners?*

However, we can go further than this, if we return to the idea advanced in the first half of this chapter, that for Chrysostom the congregation he is addressing is an instantiation of the universal Church. His conception of what the universal Church is, as Christo's extensive research has demonstrated, is largely influenced by the images used to depict the Church in the scriptures. The Church is the bride, the body, the temple of Christ, and so on. As such it has an exalted status of intimacy with the holy God. Indeed, it has a holy status, as Christo argues: 'The Church's earthly form is rooted in her divine form and is indissolubly one with it.'<sup>93</sup> This status is not one that the Church has merited, but is a reflection of God's great love for humanity: when Christ took her as his bride, 'he did not loathe her, he did not despise her for her extreme ugliness.'<sup>94</sup> However deformed, though, she may have been to begin with, deformities will not be allowed to remain in the divine Church, the bride of Christ. 'For Christ does not permit entrance into the bridal-chamber with such a body. If he dragged off and threw out the man wearing filthy clothes, what will he not do to the one who has attached filth to his body?'<sup>95</sup> The Church is therefore seen as an entity that was dirty, has been exalted and so must have all remaining blemishes on her beauty rooted out. Accordingly, the life of the Christian, as a member of this Church, is to lead a life of repentance, rooting out one's own sin.

By viewing the congregation as an instantiation of the universal Church, he therefore sees them and constructs them as a congregation of sinners exalted in Christ and called to repentance. This characterization of them as a congregation of penitent sinners is one that many, given his popularity, may willingly have adopted. If from the above

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<sup>93</sup> Christo 2006, 401.

<sup>94</sup> οὐκ ἐβδελύξατο, οὐκ ἐμίσησε διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ἀμορφίας. Chrys. *In Eph. hom.* 20.145A.

<sup>95</sup> Οὐ γὰρ ἀνέχεται μετὰ τοιοῦτου σώματος εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν νυμφῶνα ὁ Χριστός. Εἰ τὸν ἱμάτια ῥυπαρὰ ἐνδεδυμένον ἀπήγαγε καὶ ἐξέβαλε, τὸν τῷ σώματι τὸν ῥύπον προστιθέντα τί οὐκ ἐργάσεται; *In Eph. hom.* 3.22A.

arguments we can presume that they came relatively regularly and wanted to be there, then the sermons in themselves become, to some degree, a source for popular piety. The sermon and the wider liturgy were for ‘ordinary’ Christians the principal means by which they experienced their faith, the principal activities they engaged in as Christians. Sermons and the wider liturgy provide us with access to the lives of ‘ordinary’ Christians not by constructing from the preacher’s rebukes a set of beliefs and attitudes which ‘ordinary’ Christians held in opposition to the clerical élite, but rather through presenting an event that they participated in, an event which would have had the potential to shape their own self-conception. However, as I have argued with Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell, we must tread with the greatest caution in how much we conclude about the listeners from what are, after all, only the preacher’s words. We cannot know for sure to what extent Christians accepted the penitent persona; all we can definitively say is that this was the persona Chrysostom encouraged them to adopt.

This is the argument of Derek Krueger in his recent study on the later Byzantine liturgy and the ‘liturgical models of selfhood, authored by clergy and disseminated among the faithful in the context of worship.’<sup>96</sup> He acknowledges from the outset the near impossibility of directly accessing how Christians thought and felt about their faith and religious identity, but a study of the liturgy can at least provide us with the templates of the self they were expected to inhabit:

Religious practices produce, articulate, and maintain norms for self-understanding and self-presentation. In a manner analogous to theater, ritual activities involve playing and ultimately inhabiting the mythic roles of sacred narrative. The interior lives of Byzantine Christians remain elusive, but hymns, sermons, ritual spaces, and religious artifacts offered templates telling Christians who they were in relation to God, each other, the church and the state.

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<sup>96</sup> Krueger 2014, 7.

Attention to what lay and monastic congregants heard, said, sang, and did during liturgies ... sheds light on how participation in ritual events molded the worshipper by inculcating patterns of interior self-regard.<sup>97</sup>

Whilst we may not have direct access to the interior lives of fourth-century Christians, we do have access in Chrysostom's sermons to the templates for the self which he presented for them to inhabit. Participation in the liturgy and in listening to the sermon was a ritual activity that shaped and guided how the Christian understood himself. In discussing Romanos the Melodist from the sixth century, he argues that 'the poet's search for interiority uncovers not how early Byzantine Christians were present to themselves, but rather how this preaching deacon, on behalf of the church, thought they should be present to themselves, understanding themselves as biblical subjects.'<sup>98</sup>

How they should think of themselves, Krueger argues, is as penitent sinners, as 'a disordered self, wracked with remorse, bewailing its past, overwrought with inwardly directed grief ... and thus poised, perhaps, for moral growth and transformation.'<sup>99</sup> Romanos, for example, 'presents himself as an imperfect icon, the image of a Christian who recognizes his failings while celebrating and depending on God. Such an introspective self had become typical in Byzantium.'<sup>100</sup> In a brief glance a century or so earlier, he identifies this as being true also of Chrysostom. Commenting on a passage from the sermons *On Lazarus*, he writes:

Opening and inspecting the conscience divulges secret torment. In Chrysostom's juridical model, the conscience performs the work of informant, witness, juror, judge, and jailer. Although he describes this model in the third person, from the outside, his rhetorical performance encourages his audience to consider themselves within this model. The dramatization of the guilt-ridden conscience functions as an opportunity for his listeners' self-recognition.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Krueger 2014, 7.

<sup>98</sup> Krueger 2014, 59.

<sup>99</sup> Krueger 2014, 221.

<sup>100</sup> Krueger 2014, 44.

<sup>101</sup> Krueger 2014, 15.

We have seen how Chrysostom, in his role as prophet and spiritual physician, repeatedly warned that the danger of spiritual sickness was to suffer the fires of hell. Fear of God and of hell in the context of the liturgy was identified as an important element of his cure of souls, an element which sharply distinguished him from classical physicians of the soul. The aim of these repeated warnings was to shape his listeners' self-conception as penitent sinners.

As mentioned above, we cannot know for certain the extent to which members of his congregation took on this penitent persona, but he often preaches with the expectation that they have. As was seen in the examples considered in Chapter 5, his warnings of judgement sometimes themselves function as persuasive tools, with the implication being that the prospect of future judgement was something they genuinely feared.<sup>102</sup> Let us consider the following passage from the end of his first homily on Philemon:

Ἄν ἀφιῶμεν τοῖς πλησίον τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, ἂν ἐλεημοσύνας παρέχωμεν, ἂν ταπεινοὶ ὦμεν· καὶ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεῖ ἁμαρτίας· εἰ γὰρ ὁ τελώνης, ἵνα μόνον εἴπη, “Ἰλάσθητι μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ,” κατήλθε δεδικαιωμένος, πολλῶ μᾶλλον καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐὰν ταπεινοὶ ὦμεν καὶ συντετριμμένοι, δυνασόμεθα πολλῆς φιλανθρωπίας τυχεῖν· ἂν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτήματα, καὶ καταγινώσκωμεν ἑαυτῶν, τὸ πλεον ἄποσμηξόμεθα τοῦ ῥύπου. Πολλὰ γὰρ αἱ ὁδοὶ αἱ καθαρεύουσαι.... κἂν σφόδρα ἦς ἁμαρτωλὸς, δυνήσῃ καὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐπιτυχεῖν, διὰ τούτων αὐτὰ ἐκκαθαίρων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, καὶ ἀποσμήχων τὴν κηλῖδα. Γένοιτο δὲ, ἡμᾶς πάντας ἐνταῦθα ἀποκαθηραμένους ἅπαντα τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων τὸν ῥύπον διὰ τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως, ἐκεῖ τυχεῖν τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων ἀγαθῶν....

If we forgive our neighbours their sins, if we provide them with alms, if we are humble – for this too takes away sins. If the tax-collector went home justified only for saying, ‘Have mercy on me a sinner,’ how much more shall we too, if we are humble and crushed, we shall be able to obtain much love from God. If we confess our own sins and condemn ourselves, the more we shall be washed clean of our dirt. Many are the roads of cleansing.... Even if you are a great sinner, you will be able to arrive even at the kingdom, cleansing your very sins by these means and washing off the stains.

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<sup>102</sup> See, e.g., pp. 152-3.

May it be that through confession we are all here cleansed of all the filth of our sins,  
and there happen upon the promised good things....<sup>103</sup>

That they thought of themselves as ‘grievous sinners’ seems to be taken throughout as a given. Chrysostom encourages them to forgive others because this will result in forgiveness for themselves: the exhortation only has any power if they consider themselves in need of forgiveness in the first place. He reassures them that a penitent self will find favour with God, a self-condemning self will find cleansing from their sin: again, these were evidently things many wanted to obtain. He offers them ‘many roads of cleansing’, suggesting that purity was something they desired. He encourages them that they can still get to heaven if they forgive, show pity and so forth, even ‘if you are a great sinner’, with the implication that this was an assumption they held. The passage suggests that they came with an attitude of guilt and consciousness of sin. Indeed, the very exhortation to ‘confess our sins and condemn ourselves’ makes more sense if they were prepared to acknowledge that they had sins to confess.

Furthermore, Chrysostom includes himself in that exhortation. ‘If *we* confess our sins and condemn ourselves, *we* will be cleansed.’ The use of the first person plural, rather than the more direct second person singular, is common in Chrysostom, and has the effect of linking the preacher and the congregation together in a shared endeavour.<sup>104</sup> This is not the language of ‘them and us’, of élites vs. masses, but something that both preacher and layperson are involved in together. He considers himself just as much in need of condemnation as his congregation. Like Romanos the Melodist, Chrysostom presents himself for his congregation as ‘an imperfect icon’, an example, like the tax-collector, of someone who laments their sin and thus receives the mercy of God. His condemnations of

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<sup>103</sup> Chrys. *In Philemn. hom.* 1.778D-F.

<sup>104</sup> cf. also *In Tit. hom.* 5.764D, where he cries out ‘Let us take thought for our salvation!’ (φροντίζωμεν τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας).

their sin, therefore, are not expressions of his frustration with his congregation's lack of engagement or commitment; rather, they are the means by which he helps them all to adopt penitent – and therefore saveable – selves.

A similar argument can be made from a consideration of his therapy of the soul. Let us return to a passage discussed in an earlier chapter from the second homily on Titus. It will be remembered that we identified in this passage the language of the therapy of the passions familiar from much Hellenistic philosophical discourse. The passion of vainglory, Chrysostom says, churns up the soul like storms upon the sea: 'great effort, a strong philosophy and a certain angelic soul that touches the very summit of the vault of heaven' are required to control it.<sup>105</sup> The talk of tyrannical passions controlling the soul, which only a 'strong philosophy' can overcome, is a concept to be found among the classical philosophers in their cure of souls. What is interesting about the passage is that after identifying vainglory as a passion, he does not take any time to argue that it should be seen in this way, or to defend his case that it is a powerful tyrant. Rather, he launches straight into his question, 'How, then, could we overcome it?' This question he then answers by providing them with various thought experiments they can do to help quell the passion. The underlying assumption he appears to be working with is that they want to be cured of this passion. As far as he is concerned, they are already 'on board' – it is not his purpose, in Maxwell's words, to win them over to his 'version of the faith'. They are with him and want to be changed. His sermons are not merely condemnations of sin, but they present ways of dealing with sin, to remove guilt, and to work out one's salvation. This was seen, too, in the previous passage: showing mercy to others is a means by which the Christian can receive forgiveness from God.

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<sup>105</sup> p. 118.

## CONCLUSION

Recent scholarship has sought to use sermons as a means of assessing and understanding the process of Christianization amongst 'ordinary' people in late antiquity. This chapter has urged caution in the use of this material. In two key areas, namely the congregation's social composition and level of commitment, it has been argued that the picture developed thus far has been based on brief passages excerpted from their literary, historical and theological contexts. When a more subtle reading is employed that takes these contexts more fully into account, the arguments on both sides of the debate concerning the social make-up of his congregation prove largely inconclusive, and little evidence is found to support the depiction of them as lazy, opposed or uncommitted. Thus, when Chrysostom appears to depict his congregation in his sermons as slothful and sinful, and as dominated by men from large households, we should not take this as evidence for the composition and commitment of those listening to him. To do so would be to misread his sermons. He addresses the people before him through the lens of scripture, and employing the harsh rhetoric common among teachers and spiritual physicians in the classical tradition. He addresses them as a congregation representative of the one, true, catholic and apostolic Church of God, a people redeemed by God for himself, a people called to a life of virtue, a penitential life. If we read his sermons in their right context, it becomes clear that his condemnatory language should not be taken too seriously as an accurate portrayal of his congregation, but is rather part and parcel of his role as teacher, physician, prophet and priest. And if we read beyond the harsh rhetoric, we can perhaps begin to see glimpses of a rather different congregation, a congregation keen to know the path of salvation and healing, and with the belief that John Chrysostom was particularly adept at showing them the way.

## CHAPTER 8

### *Conclusion*

This thesis began with the observation that John Chrysostom was both a hugely popular preacher, but also employed a strongly harsh and condemnatory tone, albeit with moments of gentler tenderness. It was suggested that recent scholarship on Chrysostom's sermons had failed to explain this tension satisfactorily: his condemnatory tone is taken to point to a congregation who were in some way uncommitted to Chrysostom's conception of the Christian faith, whilst the picture we are often given in the sources is of Christians hanging on to his every word. To explain this paradox, this thesis therefore set out to recover Chrysostom the pastor and to explore the nature of preaching as a pastoral activity with the hope of expanding our understanding of preaching beyond it simply being an activity of communication and Christian formation.

It is unsurprising that Chrysostom should be the focus of much of this recent scholarship on Christian preaching, given that his unusually vast corpus preserves sermons which, at least on the face of it, engage directly with the congregation before him, opening up opportunities to use these texts for the study of popular Christianity. This thesis therefore followed suit in using Chrysostom as a case-study of late-antique preaching. Furthermore, his vast corpus preserves many sermons which one could class as more typical of his everyday preaching. Small corpora would tend to only consist of the author's best or exceptional works; but with such a large corpus one might expect to see a broader range of texts preserved. And indeed, we appear to have sermons which are quite rough and unpolished, perhaps deriving from the notes taken down during the original delivery.

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As a result, they have the potential to tell us what preaching – at least as practised by Chrysostom – was like as a regular activity, beyond the more set-piece orations delivered on special occasions. In addition, since the regular sermons of Chrysostom – the ‘Golden Mouth’ – were preserved in such large quantities, this would further suggest that they were valued as examples that all preachers should be aspiring to in their regular preaching.

To explore, then, the pastoral nature of Chrysostom’s regular preaching, we studied four different but overlapping aspects. The practice of expounding key texts in something of a curriculum, followed by a speech of moral exhortation suggested a scholastic dimension to regular preaching. In addition, it was shown that he often related to his congregation like a schoolmaster, referring to them as his children or as his students, and adopting a similar persona of the strict disciplinarian which seemed to dominate ancient ideas of good education.

From here we turned to focus our attention on the purpose of preaching through a study in the following two chapters of the widely prevalent use in his sermons of medical language. On one level, such language reflected the scholastic nature of preaching: a common theme among particularly philosophical teachers was to refer to their classrooms as surgeries, and themselves as physicians of the soul. The root of spiritual sickness was a disordered soul in which the passions were running riot; healing could only come through undertaking spiritual exercises that would restore reason as the controlling faculty within the soul. We observed a similar therapeutic dimension to Chrysostom’s sermons: he saw his role too as a physician of the soul, and he also encouraged spiritual exercises that would bring unruly sinful passions under control. However, his therapy was also significantly different, a difference that pointed us to the prophetic nature of his preaching: in the manner of many of the Old Testament prophets, Chrysostom saw what was fundamentally wrong with the soul as rebellion against God that merited his judgement.

The goal of healing was not to bring about happiness, but eternal salvation from this judgement; as a result, in stark contrast to classical physicians of the soul, Chrysostom saw arousing fear of hell as an important means to achieving such healing.

The sermon, therefore, had a role in preparing people to meet their God on Judgement Day. The final chapter in this section, however, reminded us of a more immediate concern. The setting of his preaching was very different from that of a classroom lecture: the sermon formed an integral part to an immensely sacred moment, when people, through the study of scripture and partaking in the sacrament, came into the very presence of God. As a result of this liturgical context, Chrysostom sought to arouse attitudes of awe and fear that were appropriate for encountering God in word and sacrament. This is an important point to underline and one of the more significant contributions to Chrysostomian and homiletic research that this thesis makes: the cultic nature of Christian preaching radically transforms how we read and interpret these texts. To treat them as if they were nothing more than the communication of knowledge and ideas is to entirely miss the point of what these texts were doing in their original context. Instead, they were designed to arouse fear and penitence in the believer in readiness to meet with God – both now and in the future.

Exploring these four dimensions of his preaching – the scholastic, the therapeutic, the prophetic and the liturgical – helped to explain the harsh and condemnatory tone which characterises so much of his preaching. This was how teachers very often related to their students, and in addition to that, in the context of the worship of God and the judgement to come, Chrysostom considered fear a positive emotion that it was his duty to arouse. Given how central fear seems to be to Chrysostom's homiletic technique, there is ample scope here for further study, and in particular whether this is true of other preachers too. Throughout this thesis, comparisons have been briefly touched on with a range of

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preachers from Caesarius of Arles through Augustine of Hippo to Asterius of Amasea, and these comparisons all suggest that, however much Chrysostom may have differed from them as a theologian, his pastoral ministry was one that preachers across the Roman world were engaged in. At a time when theological controversies were raging throughout the Empire and dividing the Church, in their pastoral ministry preachers seem to have been united in their common practices and aims. Chrysostom's vast corpus therefore provides abundant evidence for the common pastoral preaching we find less evidence of elsewhere.

The most important implication, however, of this study was that explored in the previous chapter: what can we learn from sermons about the congregation addressed? This question has received much interest in recent scholarship, and this thesis, in light of the exploration in the nature of Christian preaching, has offered two critiques against their arguments. The first has been to caution against using sermons as straightforward dialogues between the clerical élite and the Christian masses. They remain fundamentally the products of an élite teacher, performing what he understood to be his liturgical, theological and pastoral roles. In particular, condemnations do not necessarily reflect points of disagreement or the fact that he was unable to get his message across, but form part of his purpose as a Christian preacher to inculcate a penitential self in the hearts of his congregation members.

Our conclusion, then, in this regard has been principally a negative one, that the approach of recent scholarship in using sermons as a source for social history has been methodologically flawed. Nonetheless, however much Chrysostom's scripturally-informed ecclesiology influenced the content of his sermons, the actual congregation before him were not entirely irrelevant. An important way to take this study forwards, therefore, would be to establish a sounder and more nuanced methodology for using sermons to access popular Christianity. On a basic level, there is the approach that has long been used

of mining sermons for nuggets of historical data, such as elements of the surrounding liturgy, which we looked at in Chapter 6.<sup>1</sup> Another interesting approach would be to analyse in more depth the various tasks that preachers expected their congregations to do. Taking into account the relative frequency of his different imperatives would also give an idea of the relative importance which he attached to each. Can we use such commands to paint a picture of how an ‘ordinary’ Christian was expected to live the Christian life? On a deeper level, more work could be done assessing the interplay between the concerns of the Christian congregation to whom he preached, the wider cultural context, and Chrysostom’s own scriptural lens and theological concerns. How do these different factors impact upon the content of his preaching? Then, going in the other direction, what can we draw from these texts about Chrysostom, the Christian community/ies and wider late-antique culture? In short, we need an approach that takes more into account the broader contexts – cultural, theological, liturgical – which directed and influenced his preaching.

This brings us to the second critique, which was to question the picture painted of popular Christianity at the turn of the fifth century, and consequently the process of Christianization. Hartney, Maxwell and Sandwell in particular portray the mass of ‘ordinary’ Christians as lacking zeal or commitment for the form of Christianity presented to them by their preacher. Taking Chrysostom’s condemnations of their behaviour and attitudes at face value, they depict the typical churchgoer as someone still embedded in traditional cultural values, and who looked upon the new state religion with a degree of incredulity or even irritation. Many, indeed, may have willingly embraced Christianity, and considered themselves true Christians; but, from the perspective of the élite, so this picture tells us, there was a still long way to go for even regular churchgoers to be fully Christianized, and preachers such as Chrysostom had a hard time trying to encourage them

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<sup>1</sup> The ‘Chrysostom Knowledge Base’, announced in Corbett and Mayer 2004, was intended to be a database of such socio-historical references, but it seems never to have materialised.

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to accept more than a mere superficial adherence to the Christian religion. Most Christians willingly accepted some new practices, but by and large were reluctant to do many of the things Chrysostom demanded of them. There are thus in this picture two Christianities: not to the extreme of there being a 'second church', as argued for by Ramsay MacMullen, but still two quite different expressions of the ('orthodox') Christian religion, one propagated by preachers in pulpits across the Roman empire, one practised by 'ordinary' Christians in their day-to-day lives.

However, as we saw in the last chapter, such a narrative is founded primarily on the stinging rebukes Chrysostom frequently delivered to his congregation. Just as Isocrates had argued that harsh language reflects more on the condition of the audience than on the character of the speaker, so Chrysostom's harsh language has been interpreted as reflecting a congregation reluctant to follow his conception of what it meant to be a Christian. It is my thesis that when we place Chrysostom's activity as preacher within its historical context, and recognise the scholastic, therapeutic, prophetic and liturgical nature of his preaching, then we can no longer take his condemnations as straightforward objective representations of the reality of popular Christianity. Teachers in all contexts used strict means to encourage their disciples to do better. Their teaching was not supposed to be pleasant or enjoyable, but was to inflict a pain which would cure the soul of its ills. Even more so for Chrysostom, who, in the context of the liturgy and his theology, saw it as his primary purpose as preacher to inculcate in the members of his congregation a deep sorrow for their sin and a right reverence for God. He wanted to arouse in his congregation a fear of judgement and of hell, that such fear may spark a deeper obedience to their God.

It must be remembered – and this is the point with which I shall close – that for Chrysostom, or any other teacher or preacher, to speak of his disciples as ill and as sinners does not necessarily mean that they were therefore reluctant or unwilling to change. It is

simplistic to conclude that because he condemns them, they are committed to an alternative version of Christianity. To say that someone needs to improve is not the same thing as saying that someone is unwilling to accept that they need to improve – though, of course, that may be the case. But there are many other possibilities too. Many may well have attended Chrysostom's sermons conscious that they were sinners, and genuinely desired the healing correction that his stern words would bring. It was the wish of every teacher to have such students who would willingly accept correction. Many others may well have arrived with their minds taken up more by 'worldly' concerns, but even they, when Chrysostom starts speaking of their sin, the fear of hell and the philanthropy of God, are convicted and leave, at least for the moment, desirous of change and of seeking God's mercy. This is what Chrysostom hoped his sermons would achieve; we cannot tell for sure to what extent they did so. His sermons would no doubt have been met by a range of responses, from indignation at the accusation, to conviction of sin. However, his great popularity and the affection in which he was held by many, suggests that perhaps it was no exaggeration when he claimed that they loved the 'tongue which cuts, censures, strikes, and grieves'.

## APPENDIX

### *The Use of lectio continua*

It was argued in Chapter 3 that Chrysostom's activity as a preacher reflected the activity of teachers in the classroom. In particular we saw how his practice of preaching sequentially through key books of scripture mirrored the practice of especially philosophical teachers in expounding through a series of lectures the key texts of their philosophy. The assumption that he preached exegetical sermons in series has traditionally been based on the simple fact that the majority of these sermons are preserved as series in the manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> Recent arguments, however, have questioned the integrity of these series. Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen have argued that these series are largely later constructions, and that the sermons were, with some few exceptions, never preached in the sequence in which they have been preserved.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not their arguments are correct has implications beyond the potential parallel with teachers in other contexts: there is a wider question as to how Chrysostom selected – if he selected at all – the text which he commented on, and which determined much of the content of his sermons. This appendix will carefully analyse the arguments of Mayer and Allen, but will ultimately make the case for the practice of *lectio continua*, the continuous reading through scripture over consecutive sermons.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Old 1998, 51: 'This is demonstrated again and again by the series of *lectio continua* sermons we have from one Father after another.'

<sup>2</sup> Allen and Mayer 1994, 1995a and 1995b.

ALLEN AND MAYER ON THE SERMON SERIES

In seeking to establish a corpus of sermons that could be securely located to Constantinople, Allen and Mayer discovered that the traditional dating and locating of Chrysostom's sermon series was, to a large extent, based on the unexamined assumption that his sermons were preached in the series as we have them today: if one sermon could be securely located to Antioch, for example, then the whole series, on this assumption, must be dated to his time in Antioch. They rightly questioned this assumption. Over the course of three articles published in 1994 and 1995, they took three of Chrysostom's exegetical series and set out to demonstrate that each of these series in their current form are later creations and were never preached as such. They make two key arguments: in the first two essays, they note that the two sermon series studied both contain sermons preached at different locations; in the third essay, they argue that the passages exegeted in each sermon do not neatly follow on from each other.

The first essay, then, takes the series on Colossians.<sup>3</sup> Homily 7 is fairly securely tied to Antioch because of his references to the Riot of the Statues, references phrased in such a way that would seem odd if he were preaching in Constantinople.<sup>4</sup> In homily 3, Chrysostom very clearly refers to himself as a bishop, leaving it without question that this sermon, along with homily 2 to which homily 3 makes direct reference, must have been preached in the capital.<sup>5</sup> This series thus contains a sermon that was almost definitely from Antioch, and two that were almost definitely from Constantinople. The sermons could therefore not have been preached as a series, which must be a later creation.

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<sup>3</sup> Allen and Mayer 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 7.375E-376A. Cf. Allen and Mayer 1994, 34-5.

<sup>5</sup> Chrys. *In Col. hom.* 3.349D-350B (episcopal status) and 343B (homily 2). Cf. Allen and Mayer 1994, 36-7.

The second essay deals with the series on Hebrews,<sup>6</sup> and is in part aimed at dismantling the traditional argument for the series being the last series he preached at Constantinople before his exile. As part of that argument, they show again that the series contains both sermons that were almost certainly preached in Antioch, and ones that were almost certainly preached in Constantinople. Thus the reference in homily 13 to the ‘so-called (λεγόμενοι) δεκανοί’ in the imperial palace sounds like someone familiar with the current terms used for different offices, thus making a provenance of Constantinople more likely.<sup>7</sup> Three homilies, however, seem to be Antiochene: in homily 4 he appears to accept a superior authority in the Church, suggesting this was delivered as a priest in Antioch;<sup>8</sup> in homily 14 a reference to the Olympic Games points to a delivery in Antioch, since that city had its own local games, whilst in Constantinople such a reference to an apparently current event would be odd following the ending of the Games by the Emperor Theodosius in 394, some three years before his translation to the capital;<sup>9</sup> and in homily 26, a reference to the tomb of St Thomas, which had recently been moved to nearby Syrian Edessa, again makes an Antiochene origin more likely.<sup>10</sup> Again, this series contains sermons from both locations, and therefore they could not have been preached as a series.

The third essay considers the series on Philippians.<sup>11</sup> Unable to find any passage which conclusively points to either Antiochene or Constantinopolitan provenance, they instead turn to focus their arguments on the internal coherence of the series as a whole. Their principal argument is that ‘the exegesis does not flow on uniformly from one homily to the next’: if he had been preaching in a series, then the assumption is that he would pick

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<sup>6</sup> Allen & Mayer 1995a.

<sup>7</sup> Chrys. *In Heb. hom.* 13.137C. Cf. Allen and Mayer 1995a, 324-8.

<sup>8</sup> Chrys. *In Heb. hom.* 4.47D. Cf. Allen and Mayer 1995a, 337-9.

<sup>9</sup> Chrys. *In Heb. hom.* 14.147B. Cf. Allen and Mayer 1995a, 333-4, following Opelt 1970, 64-7.

<sup>10</sup> Chrys. *In Heb. hom.* 26.237B. Cf. Allen and Mayer 1995a, 341-2.

<sup>11</sup> Allen and Mayer 1995b.

up the exegesis from where he left off on the previous occasion.<sup>12</sup> Their argument, however, is not as strong as that in the other two essays. They identify only three places of overlap in a series of 16 homilies:<sup>13</sup> homilies 3-5 (which would only entail homily 4 being an intruder), homilies 7-8 and homilies 11-12. For most of the series, the exegesis does in fact ‘flow on uniformly from one homily to the next.’ Furthermore, they make the additional argument that there is only one explicit connection between two sermons: this connection comes, however, in homilies 7-8, where Chrysostom opens the latter with a direct reference to the contents of the former.<sup>14</sup> This pair of sermons cannot surely both be sequential and be used as an argument against the sequentiality of the whole series!<sup>15</sup> With such a clear connection between the two sermons, we have to conclude, *pace* Mayer and Allen, that overlapping exegesis is not necessarily evidence against the original homogeneity of the series. Their arguments against the sequentiality of the series are thus unconvincing.

In fact, what is remarkable is that on the whole the exegesis does run smoothly from one sermon to the next. In the series on Philippians, we saw that the series had just three overlaps in an otherwise sequential exegesis, and one of these overlaps was between two sermons which quite clearly belonged together, as Mayer and Allen themselves recognised. In the other two series which they discussed, that on Colossians has no overlaps, whilst that on Hebrews has just one out of thirty-four sermons.<sup>16</sup> If they are right

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<sup>12</sup> Allen and Mayer 1995b, 278.

<sup>13</sup> The numeration of the homilies followed here is that of Field, counting the *argumentum* as the first homily, rather than that used by Mayer and Allen (though Allen 2013, p. xii n. 6, follows Field).

<sup>14</sup> ‘We have spoken of the heretics’ views’ (Εἴρηται ἡμῖν τὰ παρὰ τῶν αἰρετικῶν, Chrys. *In Phil. hom.* 7.244D): the brief summary he then gives of what ‘we have spoken’ corresponds to the content of the previous homily.

<sup>15</sup> This contradiction is illustrated by Allen 2013, a reproduction of Field’s text with a new translation, introduction and notes, who rather strangely has a note on the opening of homily 8, pointing out the overlap in exegesis as an argument against the homogeneity of the series; but this is then followed immediately by another note on the opening sentence pointing out the connection with the previous sermon.

<sup>16</sup> Between homilies 30 and 31. Homilies 17 and 32 also contain long quotations which end with verses picked up at the start of the following homily; but in each case they are only exegeted in the later homily. Homily 23, dealing with 11:7-12, oddly comments on the first half of verse 13 after verse 9, and is left out of

that these two series contain sermons from both Antioch and Constantinople, and were therefore not preached as a series, it is remarkable how smoothly the exegesis does in fact run from one sermon to the next. This is something that requires explanation. We shall begin by trying to explain the apparent sequentiality on the basis of Mayer and Allen's argument, that these sermon series are merely later editorial productions. However, we will find that there is not the evidence to support such hypotheses, and so we shall conclude this appendix by considering an alternative explanation for the apparent presence of sermons of different provenance, and one that does not destroy the integrity of the sermon series.

#### EXPLAINING SEQUENTIAL EXEGESIS

The first possible explanation is that the sermons were edited for publication in such a way as to ensure a sequential exegesis from one sermon to the next. In other words, sections of exegesis were excised to produce a smooth link between each sermon. The sermons, however, bear no clear traces of such tampering, suggesting if this was done, it was done very well indeed. Furthermore, this then would raise the question as to why the editor left in place those few overlaps which remain, if he had otherwise gone to such great efforts to produce a continuous exegesis. We may further question why there are no gaps in the exegesis, which would also be expected on such an hypothesis.

The second possibility is that the passages were set by a fixed lectionary. The evidence, however, suggests that no such lectionary yet existed at the end of the fourth century. There were, of course, specific readings set for feast days: the fourth-century

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consideration in the subsequent homily (though it is quoted at the start): given that there is no obvious reason why he jumps ahead at this point, and given that he changes the verb ending in the subsequent verse from singular to plural, it seems possible that this verse has been displaced in his version of the text.

Spanish pilgrim Egeria, for example, was impressed during her time in Jerusalem at how well-chosen the scripture readings were.<sup>17</sup> But for regular gatherings, whether these would have been Sunday or weekday, Eucharistic or non-Eucharistic, there is no evidence for a daily or weekly cycle of readings. In fact, the evidence, such as it is, points rather in the opposite direction. The Old Armenian Lectionary, for example, one of the oldest extant lectionaries, dating to late-fourth- or fifth-century Jerusalem, provides only readings for feast days: the readings at other gatherings were evidently chosen by some other method.<sup>18</sup> At the same time in the west, Augustine appears to have had considerable freedom over the readings chosen for ordinary services: Geoffrey Willis discovered in his study of Augustine's sermons that he 'frequently refers to his own exercise of choice of lessons at mass,' and then provides a good number of passages to support the point.<sup>19</sup> For example, he begins a sermon on the Parable of the Ten Virgins by referring to a promise he had made the previous day to speak on the passage, and states that he had had the passage read to them again before the sermon.<sup>20</sup> I am not aware of Chrysostom stating quite so explicitly at any point his own direct selection of the passage to be read; but a very similar passage would be the opening to his fourth homily on John's Gospel, where he explains to his congregation that, as the best teachers do not give everything to their students at once, so he will now return again to the opening words of the Gospel to complete his exegesis of them.<sup>21</sup> The implication of this passage is that Chrysostom had a similar freedom to choose the text for his sermon as Augustine, and therefore was not constrained by a fixed lectionary in his choice of passage.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Iterarium Egeriae*. 47.5.

<sup>18</sup> See Renoux 1969-71; Wilkinson 1981, 253-77. See also Burkitt 1923 for the early Syriac lectionary.

<sup>19</sup> Willis 1962, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 93, PL 38.573.46-574.1.

<sup>21</sup> Chrys. *In Ioh. hom.* 4, PG 59.45.55-46.47. Cf. also *De Laz. conc.* 3, PG 48.991.17-55.

<sup>22</sup> It has been argued that since the pericopes attested in Chrysostom's homilies often seem to coincide with the Byzantine lectionary system, he is therefore evidence for the existence of a lectionary in use at his time (e.g. Metzger 1944, 13). Against this, however, Aland and Aland 1989, 168, argue that 'a fair amount of coincidental agreement is only to be expected in analyses of the New Testament text, however independent

The third possibility is that Chrysostom's pericopes were determined by paragraphs or sections marked in his version of the text. It is an obvious point that, since we do not have access to his own personal Bible, we cannot know for sure whether the divisions between homilies do indeed coincide with divisions marked in his text. There are contemporaneous manuscripts, but none of these lend support to the argument. First, three of the major Greek majuscule manuscripts of the Bible from the period are all divided into much shorter sections. If one takes as an example the letter to the Colossians, the Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) has 52 sections, the Codex Alexandrinus (A) around 30,<sup>23</sup> and the Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus (C) 26.<sup>24</sup> Given that Chrysostom, by contrast, exegetes the text in just twelve sections, it would still be something of a surprise to find few overlaps from sermon to sermon, if his biblical text were similar to one of these. Furthermore, there are even a few occasions where a sermon will end halfway through a section as marked in these manuscripts, which is itself surprising given the brevity of the sections to begin with.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, two other systems of division contain larger sections. The Codex Vaticanus (B) has six main sections for Colossians, with 24 smaller sub-sections, whilst the so-called Euthalian κεφάλαια consist of 11.<sup>26</sup> Although these are of a much similar length to the passages typically treated by Chrysostom, again, however, his sections do not

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the approaches.' One may add further that, given the widespread use of Chrysostom's homilies in the Byzantine liturgy (see above, pp. 41-5), it may actually be more the case that the pericopes of the Byzantine lectionary were influenced by his homilies.

<sup>23</sup> The text is damaged between 1:14 and 1:17 making it unclear if there are any further divisions marked in this section.

<sup>24</sup> All these manuscripts are now available on-line at [www.csntm.org](http://www.csntm.org). C, being a palimpsest, is difficult to read in the original; an edition was published in Tischendorf (1843). On the manuscripts, see Aland and Aland 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Ⲙ: the fourth sermon (1:21-5) finishes halfway through the section 1:23-7.

A: the third sermon (1:15-20) finishes a few verses before the close of the section at 1:22; the fourth sermon (1:15-20) ends within the section 1:24-2:5; and the tenth sermon (3:18-4:4) ends in the middle of the section 4:2-5.

In C: the first sermon (1:1-8) ends within the long second section 1:3-20; the second sermon (1:9-14) begins and ends still within the same section; the fourth sermon (1:21-5) ends within the section 1:22-9; the ninth sermon (3:16-7) ends within the section 3:16-8.

<sup>26</sup> There is much debate concerning the date and provenance of the Euthalian chapter divisions: see especially Blomkvist 2012. It appears to be these chapters which are marked in the margin of the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle-Aland text, although the editors at p.78 refer simply to the 'chapter divisions (*kephalaia*) most widely used in the manuscripts.'

correspond completely with the divisions of either, as will be seen from the table comparing the three in the footnote.<sup>27</sup> Although Chrysostom's manuscript may well have had its own layout of the text, nonetheless the lack of correspondence with any surviving example from antiquity is significant.

A further argument against both the last two possible explanations is the presence of overlaps in the exegesis. Though rare, if his choice of passage were determined by a lectionary or the divisions in his version of the text, we should expect to see no overlaps in his exegesis at all. The fact that there are even a few is evidence that he himself chose the pericopes for each sermon. All in all, these approaches to explaining why Chrysostom's exegesis typically follows on from one sermon in a series to the next if those series are only later constructions all suffer from a lack of supporting evidence. We turn, then, to an alternative hypothesis.

#### ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

To summarise so far: Mayer and Allen have helpfully shown that Chrysostom's sermon series consist of sermons most likely to have been preached in different locations, and

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<sup>27</sup>

<u>Chrysostom</u>	<u>B (number of sub-sections)</u>	<u>Euthalius</u>
1:1-8	1:1-11 (1)	1:1-2
1:9-14	1:12-2:5 (2)	1:3-8
1:15-20	2:6-23 (3)	1:9-13
1:21-5	3:1-15 (3)	1:14-20
1:26-2:5	3:16-4:1 (7)	1:21-3
2:6-15	4:2-18 (8)	1:24-9
2:16-3:4		2:1-10
3:5-15		2:11-15
3:16-7		2:16-3:4
3:18-4:4		3:5-15
4:5-11		3:16-4:18
4:12-8		

conclude from this that the series were later constructions and that the sermons were never preached sequentially. The problem with this, as we have seen, is that the exegesis does very often appear to be sequential from one sermon to the next, and no explanation for this has proved satisfactory. An alternative approach is to ask instead whether their conclusion necessarily follows from their observation. In other words, can the presence of sermons within a series deriving from different locations be explained without destroying the integrity of the series?

This can be explained if we dispense with the assumption that Chrysostom only ever delivered his sermons once. We could therefore propose a hypothesis along the following lines. After first preaching through a series of sermons on a particular book, the notes made by the stenographers were carefully filed away. When he repeated the series, he could then make use of these notes, though he would likely make some changes to the earlier sermons based on new insights or to meet the needs of a different context – the exhortations might differ significantly. Importantly, though, the pericope expounded would have remained largely the same. Notes would also be made of these sermons, which were themselves filed away. When he or someone else eventually came to publish the notes, the published version of the series, whether deliberately or accidentally, may have come to consist of sermons preached in different series, and hence potentially in different locations: it may have been deliberate insofar as whoever published them selected the best example of each sermon; it may have been accidental insofar as the sudden move to Constantinople and his subsequent exile may have meant that his notes became rather confused, with later notes getting mixed up with earlier ones or being lost altogether and therefore needing to be replaced. In other words, each sermon series had several different mutations, and what we have preserved is an assemblage of individual sermons from these different mutations.

The most intriguing piece of evidence for this hypothesis is a brief reference Chrysostom makes in his treatise *On the Priesthood*. At the start of book 5 he makes the point that too many people listen to sermons as though they were spectators at some secular contest, more interested in the ‘power of the word’ (ἡ τοῦ λόγου δύναμις) than any benefit to be derived from them. A preacher is quickly condemned, he says, if he ‘weaves into his sermons some portion from the efforts of others’, even if it is only a suspicion.<sup>28</sup> But that is not all they suffer: ‘Why do I mention the efforts of others? He is not allowed to use repeatedly his own compositions.’<sup>29</sup> It is not entirely clear precisely what the Greek word translated ‘compositions’ (εὐρήματα) is referring to. Anne-Marie Malingrey, in a note on this passage in her edition of the text, takes him to be referring to the repetition of themes, and expresses some surprise since ‘on sait avec quelle facilité il a repris tel ou tel thème dans son œuvre immense.’ Given the context, however, I am not really sure that it is themes that he is referring to. It is, after all, the ‘power of the word’ – or eloquent rhetoric – which seems to be more in view rather than the content. That, indeed, seems to be the whole point – the congregation, he claims, are more interested in style over substance.<sup>30</sup> It is much more likely, then, that he is referring to re-using at least sections of material he has preached before, and it is not inconceivable that he has in mind also the repetition of entire sermons. The passage is not conclusive proof; but it does at least show us that Chrysostom regarded the repetition of material as a normal practice for preachers.

A possible parallel is with the roughly contemporary philosopher Hierocles, who lectured in Alexandria in the early fifth century. Damascius relates how Hierocles on one occasion lectured on Plato’s *Gorgias*, and one of his pupils noted down his commentary. Some time later, ‘as was natural’ (οἷα εἰκός), he lectured on the book again, and the same

<sup>28</sup> μέρος τι τῶν ἑτέροις πονηθέντων ἐνυφῆναι τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ. Chrys. *De sac.* 5.1.21-2.

<sup>29</sup> Καὶ τί λέγω τῶν ἑτέροις πεπονημένων; Αὐτὸν τοῖς εὐρήμασι τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ συνεχῶς χρήσασθαι οὐκ ἔνι. *Ibid.* 25-6.

<sup>30</sup> On this topos, see above, pp. 93-4.

student was surprised to find that the notes from the second lecture were completely different from those of the first, though still being an exposition of the same text. ‘This indicates how broad was the ocean of his mind,’ concluded Damascius.<sup>31</sup> What Damascius draws our attention to as unusual is not the repetition of a lecture course, but that the exegesis could look so different each time. What this anecdote shows, therefore, is that repeating a series of lectures was normal practice for philosophical lecturers. In a similar way, I suggest, Chrysostom also repeated his series of exegetical sermons.

One further piece of evidence for the practice of repeating sermons comes from the existence of different versions of essentially the same sermon. Here I am not referring to the different recensions noted in an earlier chapter which exist for some sermon series: as has already been argued, these different versions appear to stem from later editors ‘improving’ the rather rough style of Chrysostom’s Greek.<sup>32</sup> I refer instead to sermons with large chunks of material repeated from another, clearly separate, sermon. The clearest example was demonstrated by Walter Markowicz in his study of the similarity between sermon 3 of the *Sermons on Genesis* and homily 9 of the *Homilies on Genesis*.<sup>33</sup> As suggested at the end of his paper, other such similarities may well still be waiting to be discovered, and perhaps particularly among the *inedita*.<sup>34</sup> Such parallels would lend further weight to the argument that he repeated sermons, making minor adjustments each time for the changed setting and congregation.

An important question arising from this is whether, given that we already have 800 or so sermons surviving, it is plausible to suggest that many of these were repeated during his ministry. Is it realistic to suppose that he preached upwards of several thousand

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<sup>31</sup> Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἐπιδείκνυται τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἡλικίον ἦν ἄρα τὸ τῶν φρενῶν πέλαγος. Dam. *Isid.* fr. 45A (trans. P. Athanassiadi).

<sup>32</sup> Above, pp. 46-7.

<sup>33</sup> Markowicz 1963.

<sup>34</sup> He himself gives some examples, but these warrant further analysis in light of more recent work on the pseudo-Chrysostomica (esp. de Aldama 1965) – Markowicz refers mostly only to the edition of Savile.

sermons? Much more work still could be done in clarifying the weekly cycle of services in different localities. A recent article by Mayer on the question of how often Chrysostom preached makes the assumption that preaching could only happen in combination with the Eucharist: she dismisses the possibility of a sermon on Wednesdays with a reference to the arguments of Frans van de Paverd that ‘at neither Antioch nor Constantinople was the *eucharist* celebrated on a Wednesday.’<sup>35</sup> This may be so, but it does not therefore follow that there was no service on a Wednesday at which a sermon could have been preached.<sup>36</sup> Paul Bradshaw, indeed, considers a Liturgy of the Word to have been customary in the East on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.<sup>37</sup> He also shows that there was a daily service of prayer, and this service during Lent appears to have been accompanied by daily sermons.<sup>38</sup>

For the present argument, however, all we need to do is to gain a rough idea of the number of opportunities Chrysostom would have had to preach. It is clear at least from the above that this happened regularly at least two or three times a week,<sup>39</sup> and daily during the seven or eight weeks of Lent,<sup>40</sup> not to mention the annual cycle of festivals. Furthermore, we can presume that he himself would have preached on the vast majority of

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<sup>35</sup> Mayer 2001, 91 n. 25, referring to van de Paverd 1970, 68 – italics my own. She continues, ‘If one assumes that the Service of the Word preceded the Eucharistic liturgy at ordinary synaxes, then this would exclude the possibility that a sermon was ordinarily preached on that particular weekday.’ It is not at all clear to me why we must assume this. If she did not make this assumption, this would strengthen her arguments further for the frequency of Chrysostom’s preaching in Constantinople.

<sup>36</sup> A further point to make is that she relies quite heavily on van de Paverd’s arguments, even though these are based on the traditional locating of Chrysostom’s sermons that Mayer herself has brought into doubt (van de Paverd 1970, 61-8, 422-4). His conclusions, therefore, that at Antioch the Eucharist was celebrated on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and in Constantinople only on Saturday and Sunday, needs to be carefully reassessed in light of Mayer’s own work on the provenance of individual homilies.

<sup>37</sup> Bradshaw 1981, 90-2, Bradshaw and Johnson 2011, 25-36.

<sup>38</sup> Bradshaw 1981, 73-4, 92. Chrysostom in his catechetical homilies urges the newly baptised to gather at the church every morning before work and then to come back every evening at the end of the day. *Chrys. Cat.* 8.17-8.

<sup>39</sup> For the relevant passages see van de Paverd 1970, 61-8, 422-4, and Mayer 2001. Only Pargoire 1899-1900 has claimed he preached only on Sundays, and this appears to be more an assumption than an argument, and is rightly refuted by Mayer 2001, 90 – see also Mayer 1999c. Kelly 1995, 130, follows this assumption, again without argument.

<sup>40</sup> Van de Paverd 1991, 210-6, 250-4, argues that Lent began seven weeks before Easter in Constantinople, but eight weeks beforehand in Antioch. See also Bradshaw 2002, 183-5.

these occasions, given his own obvious talents, and the habit on certain occasions of having several preachers deliver sermons.<sup>41</sup> Given all this, it would not be unreasonable to estimate that during his lifetime Chrysostom preached over 3,000 sermons, and possibly as many as 4,000.<sup>42</sup> Seeing that we have around 800 extant homilies which are generally considered genuine, and perhaps factoring in some more which formed the basis for his commentaries (e.g. on Galatians and Isaiah), we have only around a third to a quarter of his total homiletic output. There is ample room in these figures, I suggest, for supposing that his exegetical sermon series (which together consist of around 550 sermons) were repeated several times.<sup>43</sup>

There is, then, some limited evidence for the suggestion that Chrysostom repeated sermons during his preaching career, a suggestion which could help to explain the presence of sermons from different locations existing within a single series, without having to dispense with the practice of *lectio continua*. This brings us to one final consideration, namely, the use of introductions. It was noted above that one of the parallels between teachers and Chrysostom was the practice of beginning a lecture/sermon series with an introduction to the text commented on.<sup>44</sup> Some of these introductions may well have been later additions on publication of the series: this seems especially to be the case with the introduction to the series on Philemon, and it is possible that the introductory material at the start of the first sermon on Titus was included post-delivery. We did see, however, that

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<sup>41</sup> Mayer and Allen 2000, 32-3.

<sup>42</sup> These figures are based on assuming an average of three or four sermons per week for most of the year, plus one every day during Lent, over a preaching career that spanned almost twelve years in Antioch (from early 386 to October 397) and six in Constantinople from his consecration in February 398 to his deposition in June 404 (accounting for a four-month spell when he was away from Constantinople in Asia Minor during the first part of 402, and disruptions to normal practice caused by the political events in the last six months or so of his episcopate). For the dates, see Kelly 1995. Bady 2010, 150, also suggested 4,000 sermons over 20 years by comparison with an estimated 8,000 sermons delivered by Augustine over 40 years (Muldowney 1959, p. xi, however estimated only 4,000 sermons for Augustine).

<sup>43</sup> This is not to mention a further possibility that he preached several times in different locations on the same day: this appears, at least, to have been the case with Basil of Caesarea, who apologises at the start of one sermon for his late arrival caused by having to conduct a service at a different church some distance away (*Hom. in ps. 114*, PG 29.484.16-27).

<sup>44</sup> See above, pp. 77-9.

there are other introductions which very much appear to have been preached. This was perhaps most clear with the first sermon on John's Gospel, consisting as it does of discussion of the text (in the form of the preliminary questions) followed by exhortation in the manner of a sermon. In addition, Allen, in her recent translation of the series on Philippians, is willing to entertain the idea that the introduction to this series was also preached as a sermon, containing as it does an exhortation and other features suggesting a live audience.<sup>45</sup> If the series were a later construction, though, does it really make sense to suppose, given particularly the pedagogical context, that this introductory sermon was preached in isolation? The presence of these introductory sermons instead points to there being a preached series of sermons which they were introducing.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, then, Chrysostom in his preaching employed the practice of *lectio continua*. *Pace* Mayer and Allen, he did preach series of homilies working through particular books of the Bible, and furthermore he repeated these series. Each successive repetition would in all likelihood have been based on previous notes (and that might explain also why he had notes made in the first place, if they were made on his initiative), but altered to meet the different context of time and, after his move to Constantinople, of place. The eventual published series somehow ended up with sermons from different preached series. Such a theory can only be speculative, but it not only allows us to explain why the sermon series generally consist of sequential exegesis (which would be surprising if each one were preached individually), but also neatly fits in with the argument of Chapter 3 that

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<sup>45</sup> Allen 2013, p. xv.

<sup>46</sup> In other sermon series, it is unclear whether the introduction was preached or not: it is possible that a later editor separated out the introductory material that had begun the first sermon in order to create a stand-alone hypothesis.

Chrysostom in his activity as preacher reflected the pedagogical practices of teachers more generally in antiquity, who also in their classes gave series of lectures working their way systematically through a text.

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In the following, translations of works have only been included when cited in the thesis.

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