

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF SAINT JOHN OF DAMASCUS

BY

AIMILIANOS TSIRPANLIS

A. INTRODUCTION*

Sources of his Life

Until recently, the Greek *Vita*, composed by a certain John, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who based his findings on an Arabic original, was considered to be the oldest biography of St. John Damascene.¹

* List of Abbreviations

a) Dictionaries

- DACL = Dictionnaire d' Archeologie Chretienne et de Liturgie.
DTC = Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique.
BKV = Bibliothek der Kirchenvater.
LThK = Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche.
ThQ = Theologische Quartalschrift.
ZKTh = Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie.
BiDS = A Biographic Dictionary of the Saints.

b) Periodicals

- AcS = Acta Sanctorum. Paris.
AcSS = Acta Sanctae Sedis. Rome.
AmHR = The American Historical Review.
AnB = Analecta Bollandiana. Bruxelles.
BuArChr = Bulletin d' ancienne Litterature et d' archeologie chretienne. Paris.
ByZ = Byzantinische Zeitschrift. München.
DK = Der Katholik.
EchOr = Echos d' Orient. Paris.
EtThP = Etudes de Theologie Positive sur la sainte Trinite. Paris.
JThS = Journal of Theological Studies. Oxford.
MuB = Le Musée Belge.
OrChrAn = Orientalia Christiana Analecta. Rome.
OrChr = Orientalia Christiana. Rome.
RechSR = Recherches de Science Religieuse. Paris.
RThom = Revue Thomiste. Paris.
ScC = Scuola Cattolica. Milano.

1. See P. G. 94, 429-90; reprinted from M. Le Quien *St. Joannis Damasceni Opera Omnia I* (Paris 1712; Venice 1748) I-XXIV; mention is made of its dependence on the Arabic original, see *ibid.* P. G. 94, 433B and 489A.

This *Vita* was enlarged by John Merkouroplis, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1156-66), and edited by Papadopoulos Kerameus from a MS in the National Library in Athens, written in 1367. A third Greek *Vita*, a rather protracted and unhistorical panegyric, was published by the same editor. It was the great fortune of Constantine al-Bacha, a Basilian monk of the monastery of St. Savior in Saida, to discover the Arabic original of the *Vita* of St. John Damascene².

«Michael, monk and priest», is the author of this Arabic *Vita*. In the preface to the *Vita*, he states the reason for its composition³. We are informed that the city of Antioch was forced to surrender to the Seldjuk Sultan Sulaiman ibn Kutulmis, the founder of the dynasty of Iconium. This occurred on a Wednesday, December 4, 1084, the day on which the Christians celebrated the feast of St. Barbara and St. John Damascene. They prayed most fervently to these Saints and, as by a miracle, obtained their freedom from the Sultan. The following year, the «feast of St. Barbara and the pure John» was commemorated again. Then a monk, Michael, wished to learn of the life of St. John, but «he was told by every one that, neither in Greek nor in Arabic, could there be found a full story of his life». Michael began to gather material without succeeding in finding authentic sources, but «merely bits of scattered news or reminiscences written down by contemporary Fathers in brief notes». Yet, these were but anecdotes or «apophtegmata», commonly known among the monks of the Orient.

There is but one authority mentioned by name, St. Stephen the Younger, who witnessed the enthusiastic zeal shown by the Damascene in defense of the holy images. Most of his information, however, is derived «from hearsay and oft-repeated oral tradition»⁴. It is presumed that he would have used genuine biographical material, if it had been

2. *Biographie de Saint Jean Damascène; texte original arabe*, publié par la première fois par le P. Constantin Bacha (Harisa, Liban, 4th ed. 1912), reprinted as *Biography of St. John Damascene; original Arabic text*, published for the first time (London 1912); see G. Graf, «Das arabische Original der *Vita* des hl. Johannes von Damaskus, D K 2 (1913), 164-190; 320-21, which contains a critical examination and a German rendering of the Arabic *Vita*: see a translation into Russian by A. A. Wasiliew published in St. Petersburg, 1915.

3. See Graf *loc. cit.*, 168.

4. See *id. loc. cit.* 168-70, preface to the Arabic *Vita*; see *ibid.* 189.

available. Due to the lack of historical data, his biographical sketch does not convey the impression of sound and historical reliability⁵.

In the opinion of G. Graf⁶, after a through investigation of these sources, a comparison between the Greek recension made by the Patriarch John, and the Arabic *Vita* discovered by C. al-Bacha, proves the complete identity of the two texts with but slight deviations in the introduction and conclusion. Graf is convinced that the newly discovered Arabic text is actually the one underlying the Greek text, and chronologically prior, and that all historical data in the Greek recension, with one exception, «are enlargements, paraphrases and panegyric embellishments» of the Arabic text, and that, in addition, all Greek MSS, one excepted, are of a more recent date than the Arabic *Vita* which, according to its preface, must have been written shortly after December 4, 1085.

John, Patriarch of Jerusalem, the compiler of the Greek *Vita*, is probably to be identified with John XIII who, with two of his successors, ruled from 1105-56⁷. A number of MSS speak of John, Patriarch of Antioch, as its author, who is, perhaps, identical with John IV occupying this patriarchal see in 1098, the year in which that city was taken by the first crusaders. Geographically and chronologically, he would be closest to the Arabic biographer⁸. Peeters⁹ supposes the author of the Greek *Vita* to be a certain Georgian writer, Ephrem Mtsire (d. after 1110), who is said to have translated St. John Damascene's biography from the Greek into Georgian. Ephrem makes the assertion that the *Vita* was originally written in Arabic by Michael, a monk in the monastery of St. Simeon, and that it was translated into Greek by Samuel, Metropolitan of Adana, who added many embellishing details.

Outline of this Life

A summary of the Life of St. John Damascene can be given only in the form of a sketch. Until recent times, all biographies and monographs on St. John were based upon the Greek *Vita* of John of Je-

5. See D. Stiefenhofer, «Das hl. Johannes von Damaskus Genaue Darlegung des Orthodoxen Glaubens», B K V 44 (2nd ed. Munich - Kempten 1923) - General Introd. VI.

6. See Graf, loc. cit. 321-23.

7. See Stiefenhofer, op. cit. Gen. Introd. IV; C. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* 5 (Freiburg I. Br. 1923), 53.

8. See Graf, loc. cit. 329-31.

9. See An B 33 (1914), 80f.

rusalem as their principal source¹⁰. Modern research has done much to sift historical truth from legend¹¹. M. Jugie¹² summarizes all data concerning the Damascene, which are known with certainty, in the following brief statement: St. John is a descendant of a distinguished Christian family of Damascus in Syria; he was a priest and monk at the Laura of St. Sabas near Jerusalem, he became a prominent figure in the iconoclastic controversy, as a preacher, he enjoyed a far-reaching reputation, and has left us numerous scholarly works which witness to his encyclopedic erudition. All other data must rest on conjectures.

John Damascene was probably born in 675, at a time when Damascus served as the residence for the Mohammedan Khalif. Up to recent years, it was generally taken for granted that John belonged to an illustrious and wealthy family, that of the Mansur, i. e., the «Victorious».

10. See P. G. 94, 429-90; for a critique see E. Bouvy, «Anacréontiques dans la vie de saint Jean Damascène», *By Z* 2 (1893), 110-111; see Graf, loc. cit. 171-90; see also these monographs; A. Perrier, *Saint Jean Damascène, sa vie et ses écrits* (Strassburg, 1863); H. J. Grundlehner, *Johannes Damascenus; Academisch Proefschrift* (Utrecht 1876); J. J. Langen, *Johannes von Damaskus; eine patristische Monographie* (Gotha 1879); see art. «Altkatholiken» *Kirchenlexikon* 1 (2nd ed. Freiburg I. Br. 1882), 642ff. in reference to J. Langen; J. H. Lupton, *St. John of Damascus* (The Fathers for English readers, London 1882); id. art. «John of Damascus» in *Dictionary of Christian Biography* 3 (London 1882), 409-23, largely based on M. F. Nève, «St. Jena de Damas et son influence en Orient», *Revue Belge et étrangère* 12 (1861); F. Kattenbusch, «Johannes von Damaskus», *Realencyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 9 (3rd ed. Leipzig 1901), 286ff; K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Literatur* (2nd ed. Munich 1897), 68f.; K. J. Dyobouniotes, *Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός*, Athens 1903, and reviewed by F. Diekamp, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 13 (1904), 162ff; V. Ermoni, *Saint Jean Damascène* (La Pensée Chrétienne, Paris 1904); D. Ainslee, *John of Damascus* (4th ed. London 1906); A. Fortescus, *The Greek Fathers* (London 1908), 202-48.

11. See M. Jugie, «La vie de saint Jean Damascène», in *Ech Or* 23 (1924), 137-61; «Jean Damascène», in *DTC* 8. 1 (Paris 1924), 693-751; «Johannes von Damaskus», in *LThK* 5 (1933), 488-91; H. Leclercq, «Jean Damascène», in *DACL* 7. 2 (Paris 1927), 2186-90; «Images», *DACL* 7. I (1927), 250f.; a Greek *Vita* recently published by M. Gordillo, «*Damascenica*», in *OrChr* 8. 2 (Rome 1926), 45-103; I. *Vita Marciana. II. Libellus Orthodoxiae*, is proved to be quite worthless according to M. Jugie, «Une nouvelle vie et une nouvelle écrit de saint Jean Damascène», in *Ech Or* 28 (1929), 35-41; O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* 5 (Freiburg I. Br. 1932), 51-65.

12. M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», *DTC* 8. I (1924), 693.

This dynasty of Mansur is said to have held, for generations, the political functions of chief minister of finance, handing it down from father to son. According to H. Leclercq¹³, the tales of John of Jerusalem are not worthy of credence. He suspects him of seemingly replacing history with legend. The claim that the Mansur-dynasty continued to hold on to its financial monopoly throughout the era of the succeeding dynasties of the Persian, Byzantine and Mohammedan rulers, in spite of all their violent antagonisms, seems at least highly questionable.

John of Jerusalem, makes his hero a member of the distinguished line of the Mansur, but why does he keep such a scrupulous silence with regard to another tradition handed down by the Melkite Patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria?¹⁴

We possess a report of the Khalif Yazid, son of Moawia, numbering, among his personal associates, a certain Christian named Sargun, known to have taken a regular part in the luxurious banquets and drinking bouts at the court of his patron. The name of Sargun is also associated with the capitulation of the city of Damascus in the year 635. We are informed that the task of negotiation for surrender was entrusted to a certain Mansur, son of Sargun, unless it was Sargun, son of Mansur, or simply Sargun; the Arab chroniclers are undecided as to the exact name. Could he have been the father of our Theologian?

The Egyptian tradition of Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria, undoubtedly well informed, makes the formal charge of treason against Sargun. What were his reasons for making such accusations against a family of the man who stood in such high honor? Was not this man, St. John Damascene, once greatly honored by the Second General Council of Nicea (787)? ~~The Melkite Church of Egypt has made no efforts to wipe off the shame which lay upon the name of one of its most illustrious men. Perhaps they sought to white wash the treason of the Mansur traitors by resorting to the realistic political expediency of a fait accompli.~~ The Arab MS¹⁵ justifies the surrender of Damascus by referring to a parallel surrender of the city of Jerusalem by its Patriarch Sophronius; the MS continues to explain; «The siege lasted on; Mansur (Sargun) went into consultation with God as to the further procedure and was granted leave to give up in surrender». In the years of the Byzantine Emperor at Constantinople, however, Sargun was a traitor, and

13. H. Leclercq, «Jean Damascène», D A C L 7. 2 (1927), 2186-92.

14. Ibid., 2187.

15. Quoted by H. Leclercq, Ibid., 2188.

the Church of Constantinople placed him under the ecclesiastical ban.

It is idle to speculate, if Sargun, the traitor, is identical with the one who surrendered the city of Damascus, or if he is to be identified with the father of St. John, or perhaps even with John Damascene himself. In the latter case, St. John would, like another St. Augustine, turn from the life of a worldly and profligate to that of a scholar and saint. In summary, we can do nothing but say that the early life of the Damascene will remain shrouded in mystery. His elementary training in philosophy and theology, St. John is said to have received from Cosmas the Elder, a monk from Calabria or Sicily, who was captured by the Arabs and, subsequently, ransomed by John's father. Another Cosmas, called the Younger, an adopted orphan, brought up and tutored together with the Damascene by Cosmas the Elder, became Bishop of Majuma later in 742¹⁶. Both were noted as monks and melodians in the celebrated Laura of St. Sabas. At any rate, the works of the Damascene witness to his stupendous and encyclopedic knowledge in profane and sacred sciences. Furthermore, M. Jugie¹⁷ finds no reason to doubt that John succeeded his father as minister of finance due to the manner in which his name is associated in the acts of the Council of 787¹⁸ but he does not favor the view that John had ever held the position of a Grand Vizier to the Khalif¹⁹. When in 725, the Iconoclastic controversies begin, we find St. John in Palestine speaking as a priest and representative of John V, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 735).

It seems that he was ordained a priest by the latter not later than 726, the year in which he held the first of his fiery orations in defense of images²⁰. Therein he spoke as a priest of Sion, that is Jerusalem, representing its bishop and threatening the heretical Emperor with excommunication. The time at which St. John for the Laura of St. Sabas is not easily determined. The acts of the Seventh General Council, or the Second Council of Nicea (787) reveal that St. John «preferred the shame of Christ to the wealth of Arabia and ill-treatment to the delights of sin»²¹. This appears to be an

16. See G. Graf, «Das arabische Original der Vita des hl. Joh. von Damaskus», in DK 2 (1913), 172ff.

17. M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», DTC 8. I (1924), 693.

18. Ibid., 693.

19. See Vita St. Johannis Damasceni: 13 (P. G. 94, 449); see M. Jugie, loc. cit., 693.

20. See G. Graf, loc. cit., 185.

21. See J. D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio 13 (Florence and Venice 1759), 356 and 400.

allusion to the choice which St. John was obliged to make between his religious vocation and worldly career. Jugie²² thinks that the year 710, in which the Khaliphs increased their hostilities against the Christians, may have determined St. John to retire from public life. The story of the forged letter sent by the Mohammedan Khalif with the intention to discredit John, and the cutting off of his right hand in punishment for his treason, followed by the restoration of his amputated hand through the intercession of the Mother of God appearing to him in a vision in the cell of his prison, does not seem to be tenable since it is not related by any contemporary records, nor do the acts of the Council of Nicea (787) take notice of this event. The edifying motive of the compiler of the Greek *Vita* becomes very apparent in the charming legend of St. John's humility, who, as a monk under obedience, sold handmade baskets on the market place of Damascus, the very city in which he had formerly held high political office.

But such similar extraordinary details narrated in the *Vita* arouse suspicion give ground to misgivings. But on the contrary, it is when we refer to the contents of his writings that we are able to gather the certain assurance that, in his retirement as a monk at the Laura of St. Sabas, near the city of Jerusalem, St. John unfolded his great talent as a scholarly theologian, a popular preacher, a prolific writer and a model monk up to the very «winter of his eloquence»²³. The note of his Greek *Vita*²⁴, revealing that some of his works have undergone a revision, seems confirmed by the existence of their longer and shorter recensions.

From the acts of the Iconoclast synod of Hieria in 754, we learn of the anathematization of three main defenders of images, namely Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 733). George, Metropolitan of Cyprus (d. 754) and «Mansur (spelled in Greek Μάνξηρος in Hebrew ממוך, i. e., bastard with reference to Deut. 23,2), cursed favorer of the Saracens, traitorous worshiper of images, wronger of Jesus Christ and disloyal to the Empire; Anathema to Mansur, teacher of impiety and bad interpreter of Scripture»; and we are informed that «the Trinity had struck down the three»²⁵, the word καθεῖλε, pro-

22. See M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», D T C 8. I (1924), 693; «La vie de saint Jean Damascène», E-ch-O-r-23 (1924), 143ff.

23. See In Dormit. homil. 2. I (P. G. 96, 724).

24. See P. G. 94, 484B. note 36.

25. Ἡ τριάς τοὺς τρεῖς καθεῖλεν; see Mansi, Sacror. Concil. coll. 13 (Florence and Venice 1759), 356 and 400; see C. J. Hefele, *Koncilien-geschichte* 3 (2nd ed. Freiburg I. Br. 1877), 417.

bably, refers to their death. The interpretation of death seems preferable, even though this word could be taken in the sense of anathematization or deposition, since the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicea (787) when rehabilitating them, paralleled the ban pronounced by the conciliabulum of 754, and declared that «the Trinity had glorified the three»²⁶. We have it on the authority of the Chronographer Theophanes, the Confessor (d. ab. 817)²⁷ that the iconoclastic Emperor Constantine Copronymos (741-55) changed the name of «Mansur ben Sargun» into Μάνξιρος. He fastened thereby to the Damascene's name the opprobrious epithet «Mansur», an appellation synonymous with treason in Byzantine ears; such juggling of names was not uncommon in days of factional strifes, as we may infer from the equally inglorious subriquet «Copronymos» itself²⁸.

S. Vailhé²⁹ was able to determine the exact date of the death of St. John Damascene on the basis of the details of the Life of St. Stephen³⁰ a monk at the Laura of St. Sabas, and a nephew of St. John Damascene. Stephen died on March 31, 794, at the age of sixty-nine; we learn of his entry into the Laura at the age of ten years. There he lived at the side of his uncle for a period of fifteen years, that is, in this calculation, until 749 (December 4th), presuming that he was born in the early months of 725. In all probability, the year of the death of St. John Damascene is, therefore, 749, and the day of his death is, perhaps, December 4th.

As early as the ninth century, Theophanes, the Chronographer, honors him as a Saint, and bestows upon him the epithet of Χρυσορροάς or the «golden-streamed»³¹. This may be taken to be an allusion to the river bearing this name and watering his native town of Damascus,

26. Ἡ τριὰς τοὺς τρεῖς ἐδόξασεν; see Mansi, loc. cit. 400.

27. See Theophanes, Chronographia, P. G. 108, 841; concerning the Chronographer Theophanes, see K. Krumbacher, Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur (Munich 1891), 420-4; see also Mansi, loc. cit. 13 (Florence and Venice 1759), 356.

28. See J. H. Lupton, St. John of Dalascus (London 1882), 61 notes 1 and 2.

29. See S. Vailhé, Date de la mort de saint Jean Damascène, in ECHOR 9 (1910), 28-30.

30. See «Vita St. Stephani», in A c S Julii III, 504-84.

31. See Theophanes, Chronographia, P. G. 108, 824: «In the year 729, there lived at Damascus John Chrysorrhoas, son of Mansur, a priest and monk, distinguished by his holiness and knowledge who, in unison with the Bishops of all the East, pronounced excommunication against the Emperor Leo; see Homily in St. John Chrysost., P. G. 96, 762.

but it may also betoken the elegance of his style, the purity of his doctrine and the splendor of his virtues. Since the tenth century, his name appears on the Synaxaria on November 29th or on December 4th³².

The Greek Orthodox Church still observes his feast on December 4th. The Roman Martyrology mentions his name on May 6th³³. On August 9, 1890 Pope Leo XIII raised St. John Damascene to the dignity of a Doctor of the Church and extended his feast to the whole Church to be observed on March 27th³⁴. St. John Damascene is the patron Saint for students of Oriental Studies.

Writings: Editions and Translations

St. John's writings may be classified in six categories: 1) Dogmatic, 2) Polemic, 3) Ascetic, 4) Eurmeneutic, 5) Orations, and 6) Poems or Hymns. His most important work - the «Fons Scientiae» - was written at the suggestion of his former fellow-monk, Cosmas Melodus, Bishop of Maiuma. It is divided into three parts, dealing with philosophy³⁵ («Dialectica»), heresies, and the Orthodox faith («De Fide Orthodoxa»), the most important of the three.

For his philosophical doctrines he is indebted to Aristotle as well as to Plato through Dionysius Areopagites mainly and Maximus the Confessor, whereas the book of heresies is for the most part a reproduction of the «Anakephalaiosis», attributed to St. Epiphanius. Also here he borrows from Leontius of Byzantium and Theodoretus of Cyrus, who traced a similar outline in his work «Haeticorum Fabularum Compendium»³⁶.

The «Fons Scientiae» made its entry into the West through the translation of Burgundio of Pisa (d. 1194) and Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (d. 1253)³⁷. The first printed edition of any portion of the works

32. See M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», D T C 8. I (1924), 695; L T h K 5 (1933), 491.

33. See «Vita St. Johannis Damasceni», in A c S, Mayi II (Paris 1866) 108-18.

34. See A c S S 23 (Rome 1890-91), 255-6.

35. J. Bilz attempted to give an analysis of the philosophical terminology as they were employed in the works of St. John (=Die Trinitätslehre des hl. Johannes von Damaskus, Paterborn 1909, 1-26).

36. P. G. 83, 335-556.

37. See S. H. Thomson, The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (Cambridge 1940), 45-51; translation of Opera Johannis Damasceni; the author claims that «the translation (of five works, among them the (De Fide Orthodoxa) which we here ascribe to Grosseteste, has hitherto been attributed, without proof (see Le Quien in

of the Damascene was that of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, in a Latin version by Jacques Lefèvre d' Etaples (d. 1536) at Paris in 1507, and the first Greek edition, in print, of the same treatise was at Verona in 1531. The first attempt to publish the complete *Fons Scientiae* with other works of St. John, in Latin translation, was made by the Dominican Friar Henry Grave at Cologne in 1546³⁸. The first publication of the *Fons Scientiae*, in Greek and Latin columns, was provided by the learned French Dominican Michel Le Quien who, with the help of other scholars, published all the works which were attributed to St. John Damascene, or in any way associated with his name, at that particular period. He promised them lengthy prolegomena and scholarly dissertations, and edited them in two Folio volumes (Paris 1712; reprinted in Venice 1748).

But this edition still contains much that is spurious or omits works which are attributed to St. John, as only the future will prove. This edition, procured by M. Le Quien, has been reprinted, with a few additions by Gallandi and Cardinal Mai, in J.P. Migne's Greek Series, in volumes 94-96, Paris 1864.

In the eleventh century, the first and third parts of the *Fons Scientiae*, extracts of the second and other dogmatic works, were translated into Arabic. Their translator is said to have been Abul Fasch Abdallah ibn al Fald, the Melkite Metropolitan of Antioch, who flourished in the middle of the eleventh century.

There is a MS in Arabic translation of some works of St. John extant in the Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences at Leningrad, and the Vatican Library possesses Cod. Vat. Arab. 79 (written in 1223) containing an Arabic translation of fifty-three chapters of the *Dialectics* and one-hundred chapters of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*³⁹.

There are also many MSS of the *Fons Scientiae* preserved in the Libraries of London, Paris, Rome, Dublin, Venice, Bologna,

his preface to his edition, Paris 1712, reprinted in P. G. 94, 67f) to Burgundic of Piss who was known to have translated the *De Fide Orthodoxa*; see *ibid.* 45; See E. Hocedez, «Les trois premières traductions du «*De Fide Orthodoxa* de St. Jean Damascène», in *M u B* 17 (1913), 109-23; «La diffusion de la *Translatio Lincolnensis* du *De Fide Orthodoxa* de St. Jean Damascène», *B u l Arch Chr* 3 (1913), 139-98; see P. Minges, «Zum Gebrauch der Schrift *De Fide Orthodoxa*, des Johannes von Damaskus in der Scholastik», *T h Q* 96 (1914), 225-47.

38. See J. Langen, *Johannes von Damaskus* (Gotha 1879), 29ff.

39. See D. Stietenhoter, *o p. cit.* XIV, quoted from Wassiliew.

Verona, Vienna, Leningrad, etc. That of Paris alone owns twenty-two MSS of the *Dialectica*, four MSS of the *Haereses*, and twenty-seven MSS of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. The Library of Vienna also harbors many MSS still unexplored, not to mention the Near East which may yet yield hitherto unknown treasures.

The *De Fide Orthodoxa* is a comprehensive presentation of the teaching of the Greek Fathers on the main Christian doctrines, especially the Trinity, Creation, and the Incarnation; the Sacraments, Mariology, Images, and other subjects are also treated, but less systematically.

The *De Fide Orthodoxa*, in the edition of Le Quien, comprises one hundred chapters and is divided into four books⁴⁰. The division into chapters seems to be original, and is, perhaps, intended to parallel the one hundred heresies of the second section of the *Fons Scientiae*. None of the Greek MSS, however, know of the existence of a division into four books, nor is this suggested by the first printing of the Greek text at Verona (1531). Some MSS are found to have marginal notes made in ink, and from this circumstance, R. Ceillier⁴¹ conjectures that this division may have originated in imitation of the *Libri IV Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard, due also to the striking similarity of their contents. The only *Code x, Regius n. 3445*, which Le Quien considers to be of recent date, has two divisions; the doctrine on God or «theology», comprising forty-four chapters, or book one and two, and the doctrine of salvation or «economy», consisting of fifty-four chapters, or Book three and four. Le Quien retained the division into four books and numbers the one hundred chapters in continuity.

The outline of the *De Fide Orthodoxa* follows the pattern of Theodoretus of Cyrus' «*Haereticarum fabularum compendium*»⁴² whose fifth book contains a resumé of the orthodox faith and Christian morality. Theodoretus treats the Trinity, creation, matter, angels, demons, man, providence, redemption, biblical revelation, baptism, resurrection, judgment, second Advent of Christ, antichrist, virginity, marriage, immortality, penance and fast. In general, the Damascene

40. See M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», *DTC* 8. I (1947), 697; D. Stiefenhofer. *op. cit.* XXVII; J. Lupton, *St. John of Damascus* (London 1882), 70f.

41. See R. Ceillier, *Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques* 12 (Paris 1862), 71ff.

42. P. G. 83, 335-556.

follows this design. Book one (chapters 1-14) treats of God one and triune; book two (chapters 15-44) deals with the works of God; creation, angels, demons, world, paradise, man and providence; book three (chapters 45-73) concerns itself with the Incarnation or with Christology; book four (chapters 74-100), least orderly, continues commenting on the events after Christ's resurrection i.e. on christological subjects (chapters 74-81), then breaks up the well-ordered plan and takes up a variety of theological matters, such as faith, baptism, the cross, prayers towards the east, Eucharist, Mariology, veneration of Saints, relics, images, Sacred Scripture, against Manicheans, Jews, on virginity, circumcision, anti-Christ and on the resurrection. The Latin translation of Burgundio of Pisa (d. 1193), perhaps, the first rendering into Latin, remained the «Damascenian Vulgate» of the medieval scholastics down to the sixteenth century. In its «barbarity», that is «Literalness of style», it was, in the opinion of P. Mignes⁴³, even exceeded by that of Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253) and his school. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, d. 1536), a humanist, retranslated the *De Fide Orthodoxa* in a more polished and readable Latin which appeared in print at Paris (1507). Abbot James Billius (d. 1581) corrected Lafèvre's translation, Combefis, the great patristic scholar (d. 1679), amended still further the text of Billius, and M. Le Quien added a few more corrections to his famous edition of 1712, at Paris; this edition has been reprinted by J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, volume 94, Paris 1864⁴⁴, 517-1228. In 1546, there appeared at Basel an edition which might be called the first attempt of a collected edition of all the works of St. John. The 1548 edition of the same contains the Greek and Latin text of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*, arranged in parallel columns. The Latin is that of Lefèvre⁴⁵; and a commentary by Jodocus Chlichtoveus Neoportuensis (d. 1543) has been added which had already appeared previously in 1512. Lefèvre's brief explanations to each chapter and

43. See P. Minges, «Zum Gebrauch der Schrift *De Fide Orthodoxa* des Johannes von Damaskus in der Scholastik» *ThQ* 96 (1914), 225-47; he quotes Le Quien as characterizing Burgundio's translation as «rudis prorsus barbarusque», see *ibid.* 237f.; Lefèvre's translation is a «revision of that of Burgundio», see *ibid.* 238; later translation are said to be «versiones elegantiores, castigatiores», see *ibid.* *loc. cit.*

44. See D. Stiefenhofer, *op. cit.* XXVIII.

45. Lefèvre d'Étaples, J., *Beati Joannis Damasceni Orthodoxae Fidei Accurata Explicatio, quatuor libris distincta*, Basel 1548.

the lengthy commentary of Chlichtoveus were omitted by Le Quien, with the observation that they had made little or no contribution towards explaining Greek theology⁴⁶.

On January 21, 1636, the French hierarchy authorized Canon Jean Aubert to procure a critical edition of the complete work of St. John Damascene. Neither he nor his collaborators, François Combefis and Philip Labbé, ever got beyond the first attempts. The final edition is linked up with the name of the Dominican scholar, Michel Le Quien, who with the help of others managed to publish a more or less complete edition which he provided with lengthy prolegomena and scholarly dissertations. It appeared in Paris, in 1712, in two volumes, was reprinted at Venice in 1748, and found its entry into Migne's Greek series, volumes 94-96, Paris 1864. Migne's collection contains a few additions by Gallandi and Cardinal Mai. Furthermore, a number of works which claim the authorship of St. John are nowadays generally considered as spurious⁴⁷. We must add a «Treatise on Faith against the Nestorians», *Λόγος περὶ πίστεως κατὰ Νεστοριανῶν*, published by F. Diekamp in «Theologishē Quartalschrift» 83 (1901), 555-95⁴⁸.

His other great work, the *Sacra Parallela*, preserved only in fragments, is a vast compilation of Scriptural and patristic texts on Christian moral and ascetical life. It received its name from the parallel treatment of virtues and vices in its third part.

St. Damascene also wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Pauline Epistles and several homilies of a strongly dogmatic bent, e. g. on the Transfiguration, on Holy Saturday, and on the death of the Virgin. Besides his prose works he composed a number of poems which form part of the Greek Liturgy, though not all of those attributed to him are authentic. Some of these have found their way into modern English hymn-books, e. g. «Come, ye faithful, raise the strain» and «The Day of Resurrection: Earth tell it out abroad»⁴⁹.

The *Life of Barlaam and Joasaph* is apparently⁵⁰ also a genuine work of the Damascene, though modern scholars have widely questioned it.

A new critical edition of the complete works of St. John Damascene

46. See P G. 94, 781.

47. M. Jugie, «Jean Damascène», D T C 8. I (1947), 706f., lists works which are doubtful and apocryphal.

48. F. Diekamp, Th Q 83 (1901), 555-95.

49. Both in J. M. Neale's renderings.

50. So J. M. Hock, O. S. B.

is in the making. The Reverend Dr. Johannes Höck, O. S. B., of the Benedictine Abbey of Scheyern, Bavaria, Germany, will be the chief editor. Numerous Damascenian scholars have been enlisted in this eventful undertaking and the prospects are propitious.

Editions and Translations:

a) Life.

1) Arabic Life by Michael of Antioch (1085); ed. by C. Bacha, in «Katholik, Mainz», 1913, v. 2, p. 161 f., and Harisa, Lebanon, 1912); Greek trans. by John VIII, Patriarch of Jerusalem (=M. P. G. 94, 429-489; comp. Vita Sancti Joannis Damasceni, in A c S, Mai 2 [ed. by J. Bollandus et socii, Paris 1866]), 108-118.

2) Gordillo, Mauritius, ed. and trans.,... Damascenica: I. Vita Marciana. II. Libellus Orthodoxiae, in O r C h r 8 (1926), 45f.

3) M. Jugie, A. A., La Vie de saint Jean Damascène, in E c h O r, 23 (1924), 137-161, and 28 (1929), 35.

4) Id., Une Nouvelle Vie et un nouvel écrit de saint Jean Damascène, *ibid.*, 28 (1929), 35-41.

5) Papadopoulos Kerameus A., in *Analecta Ierosolymit. Stachyologias* 4, 271-302 and 302-350.

6) Perrier F. Alfred, Jean Damascène; sa vie et ses écrits. Thèse. Strasbourg, Typ. de G. Silbermann, 1862.

7) K. Acropolites, Panygirikos at Feast of St. John (14th century), in M. P. G. 140, 812-885.

8) S. Vailhé, Date de la mort de saint Jean Damascène, in E c h O r 1906, 28-30.

9) Rouet de Journal, M. J., Enchiridion Patristicum, (10th and 11th ed. Freiburg i. Br. 1937), 733-57.

10) Graf G., Das arabische Original der Vita des hl. Johannes von Damaskus, in D K 2 (1913), 164-199; 320-331.

11) M. Jugie. Jean Damascène, in DTC 8. 1 (Paris 1924), 693-751.

12) Diatribi peri Ioannou tou Damascenou kai ton autou sygrammaton, En Peraei, typ. Christofidou, 1838.

13) M. Jugie, Remarques sur de prétendus discours, inédits de saint Jean Damascène, in E c h O r 17, 343-344.

b) Writings.

DIALECTICA

14) Dialectica. Version of R. Grosseteste. Ed. by O. A. Colligan.

St. Bonaventure (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text series 6), New York 1953.

15) St. John of Damascus - Writings - (The Fount of Knowledge with Intr.) Trans. by F. H. Chase, Jr. New York, Fathers of the Church, 1958.

16) Renoux, De Dialectica S. Johannis Damasceni, Paris 1863.

17) Tannery, P., Fragments de Jean Damascène, in *Revue des Etudes Grècques* 6 (1893), 85-91.

DE FIDE OTHODOXA

18) De fide Orthodoxa. Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus, ed. by E. N. Buytaert. St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1955. Also in *Franciscan Studies* 1950/10/323-343.

19) Thomson, S. H., The writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, 1235-53 (Cambridge, Mass. 1940), 45-51: Translation: of Opera Johannis Damasceni.

20) Hocedez, E., La diffusion de la Translatio Lincolniensis du De Fide Orthodoxa de St. Jean Damascène, in *BULAR Chr* 3 (1913), 189-198.

21) Id., Les trois premières traductions du De Fide Orthodoxa de St. Jean Damascène, in *MuB* 17 (1913), 109-123.

22) De Fide Orthodoxa. Engl. Trans. by S. D. F. Salmund (N. P. N. OF., Ser. 2, IX, 1899), 2nd series, 9 (ed. by Schaff-Wace, New York 1902).

23) Hurter, H. ed., S. Johannis Damascen, Expositio Accurata Fidei Orthodoxae SS. Patrum Opuscula Selecta, first series, 41, Innsbruck 1880.

24) Saiget, R. J., Translatio Latina Johannis Damasceni: De Fide Orth. (3, 4-8) saeculo XII in Hungaria confecta, Budapest 1940.

24) Leuström, C. J., De expositionis Fidei Orthodoxe auctore Joanne Damasceno, Upsala 1839.

26) Hayd, H., Des heiligen Johannes von Damaskus Genave Darlegung des Orthodoxen Glaubens, trans. from the original text, first series of B K V, ed. by V. Thalhofer, Kempten 1880.

27) Stiefenhofer, D., Des heiligen Johannes von Damaskus Genave Derlegung des Orthodoxen Glaubens, trans. from the Greek, 2nd series of B K V, 44 (Ed. by Bärdenhewer-Weyman-Zellinger, Munich Kempten 1923).

28) Minges, P., Zum Gebrauch der Schrift De Fide Orthodoxa des

Johannes von Damaskus in der Scholastik, in *Th Q* 96 (1914), 225-247.

SACRA PARALLELA

29) K. Holli crit. ed. of *Sacra Parallela in Texte und Untersuchungen...* (Harnack) 16, 1, 1896. *Fragmente vornicänischer kirchenväter...* 20, 2, 1899.

30) F. Loofs, *Studien über die dem Johannes von Damaskus zugeschriebenen Parallelen*, 1892.

31) Ehrhard, A., *Zu den Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damascenus und dem Florilegium des Maximos*, in *By Z* 10 (1901), 394-415.

HOMILIES AND ORATIONS, ETC.

32) Allies, M. H., *St. John Damascene on Holy Images followed by Three Sermons on the Assumption*, trans. from the original Greek, London - Philadelphia 1898.

33) Puccetti, A., *S. Giovanni Damasceno: La Difesa delle Immagini Sacre, Classici Christiani*, 102 (Siena 1942).

34) Hurter, H., ed., *SS. Patrum de Sanctissima Genitrice Maria Sermones Selecti, SS. Patrum Opuscula Selecta*, 2nd series, 34, Innsbruck 1877, 1-156: *S. Joannis Damasceni: Homiliae de B. V. M.*

35) K. Dyobouniotes, *Ined. Orations of St. John Damascene on the Creation*, in *Eccles. Pharos. Alexandria*, 13 (1914), 53-69 and 119-149. Repr. Alex. 1914.

36) Sophron. Eustratiades, *Oration on the Lord's Nativity*, in *Neos Poimen*, Constant., 3 (1921), 23-42 and 165-166.

37) Woodward-Mattingly, trans., *St. John Damascene, Barlaam and Joasaph*, Loeb Classical Library, London 1937.

38) Marco Beumlero, *De duabus in Christo naturis, and communicatione idiomatum*.

39) S. Cyrilli Alexandrini et Joh. Damasceni argumenta contra Nestorianos (Latine versa by M. Johanne Wegelino Augustano).

(Continued)