Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia

FIRST PHASE
2009-2012
Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia

Monasticism has played a major role in European history, especially for education and literature, and been a decisive factor in the formation of Christian culture. Its emergence has, however, been seen as a break with classical education. In spite of the fact that monasteries have been centres of education throughout the centuries, the role of early monasticism in the transmission and transformation of classical culture, has received little attention. On the basis of new discoveries and unresearched sources the program investigates how early monasticism can be understood in continuity with the paideia of Late Antiquity, in particular the philosophical schools.

On the basis of a theory of continuity with and transformation of the classical heritage the program investigates texts and other material, primarily from Egypt and Palestine. Central to the program are the collections of apophthegmata, or sayings, of the early monastic tradition. A dynamic and comprehensive database of these is part of the program, and critical editions of selected Greek, Syriac and Arabic collections are planned. The apophthegmata, as well as texts by important monastic authors from the region, are analyzed in relation to classical educational material and literary models with the help of a variety of perspectives and methods. Reports from archaeological excavations, as well as papyrological publications, are revisited in search for material neglected or interpreted against a preconceived background of monastic rusticity. Bridging the gap between the Late antique city and the monastery the program also develops new links between the fields of Classical and Theological studies.

Mar Saba monastery in the Judean desert
THE FIRST THREE YEARS of the research program have made it manifest that the topic selected for the program and the aspects chosen in the original plan, as well as the theoretical framework and suggested methods, are well founded. The original overarching hypothesis that there is strong continuity in the area of education between the non-Christian classical tradition as manifested in the schools of Late Antiquity and the early monastic tradition in its various forms, has been confirmed. The theoretical framework in which early monasticism, and more generally early Christianity, is considered as part of the Hellenistic cultural heritage, has proven useful in discovering unnoticed elements of continuity. Our focus on the use, rather than origin, of intellectual traditions and texts has helped in uncovering the survival as well as transformation of classical *paideia* in the monastic tradition, in particular in the East. As part of our research new questions have arisen and new material has been added.

ALTHOUGH OUR FOCUS on the traditions of the East, and in particular the Gazan, Egyptian-Palestinian connection remains, it has become evident that we need to also address material from other areas, including the Latin West. In several areas new results have been gained and we firmly believe that the research program when finished will have changed our understanding of the educational aspect of early monasticism and its relation to classical *paideia*. We are also certain that the research program will result in a major re-evaluation of the most important source material, the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and we hope that we at the end will also have contributed substantially in the development of methods for research on early monastic material.

THE RESEARCH PROGRAM has gained wide international interest and recognition and the research team has been actively involved in a significant number of international conferences. International experts have contributed to the regular internal workshops of the program. The program has also arranged one symposium in collaboration with the Institute of Advanced Studies at Hebrew University and is this year arranging one symposium in collaboration with the research program *Ars Edendi* at Stockholm University and the EU-funded project *Sharing Ancient Wisdoms* at King’s College, London.
RESEARCH GROUP:

Project director:

Samuel Rubenson,
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Researchers:

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Bo Holmberg,
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Henrik Rydell Johnsén,
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Lillian Larsen,
Associate Professor,
University of Redlands

Per Rönngård,
ThD, New Testament,
Lund University (on leave from 2010)

David Westberg,
PhD, Greek,
Uppsala University

Research assistants:

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M.Phil, Classics,
Lund University

Benjamin Ekman,
M.Phil, Church History,
Lund University

Invited guest scholars:

Elin Andersson,
PhD, Latin,
Stockholm University (March 2012 - )

Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana,
Assistant Professor,
Università di Bologna
(Jan. - March 2011)
Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia

Studies in unedited Greek collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

**BRITT DAHLMAN**

**THE AIM OF THIS PROJECT** is to study and produce critical editions of parts of some of the little known and ignored Greek collections of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, in order to prove the inadequacy of many of the presuppositions that have governed research on and editions of much of early monastic florilegia. The texts that were in particular considered to be in need of editing were the Greek *Vita Pauli Thebani*, which is part of the so called *Collectio Scorialensis parva* (mss. Scorialensis R.II.1 and Parisinus gr. 919), and the anonymous series of the so called *alph.-anon. deriv.* collection.

**WORK ON THE TWO** main manuscripts has, however, proven the importance of the entire *Scor. parva* collection for the textual history of many significant early monastic hagiographical works. Along with other texts the collection contain stories also found in the *Historia Lausiaca*, the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, and the *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschos, which are transmitted in ancient redactions. A couple of texts attributed to the most prominent names in the collection, have been studied in detail, and the conclusion drawn that an edition should be made of the whole *Scor. parva* collection.

**IT HAS ALSO BECOME EVIDENT** that the two collections studied give us much information not only about the relationship with other hagiographical works, but also about the textual transmission of other *AP* collections, and about monastic scholarship in general. This is also confirmed by two minor studies on the so called “Sabaitic” collection, and the Georgian versions. These two have much unique material in common, material also found in the *Scor. parva* and the *alpha.-anon. deriv.* collections. Such material is crucial for understanding the formations of different collections and the stages of transmission within a collection. It has thus been decided to focus on a general analysis of the contents of the so called derivata collections and not to attempt to edit any part of the so called *alph.-anon. deriv.*

**CONCORDANCES OF** a number of important mss have been inserted into the database as has transcriptions of parts of the mss containing the *Scor. parva* collection, as well as parts of the ms. *Protaton* 86 which is used for the bilingual, Greek-Swedish edition of the systematic collection.
Bibliography:


(ed. with Per Rönngård) Paradiset. Ökenfärdners tänkespråk. Den systematiska samlingen III. Om botfärdigheten, Silentium Apophthegmata 3 (Sturefors, 2011).


Presentations and participation in conferences:


October 2009: Participation in A Nordic research seminar on “Asceticism in Early Christianity” organized by the Nordic Network for the Study of Early Christianity in its Graeco-Roman Context, Lund.


May 2012: Participation at the Eighth Swedish Congress of Philology in Uppsala.
Analysis of the Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopian collections of the Apophthegmata Patrum

Bo Holmberg and Samuel Rubenson

The aim of this project is to analyze the little known Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions of the Apophthegmata Patrum, and to prepare for editions of some of the most important witnesses. Work has concentrated on the most important part, the Syriac. A survey of early mss. containing collections of apophthegmata have been made, and complete concordances of three sixth century mss. have been prepared and inserted into the database. From this survey it has become evident that a major issue for the study of the transmission of the Syriac AP is to identify what other monastic texts appear in the context of the sayings. This seems especially important when looking at the transmission of the sayings from one cultural and linguistic context to another.

Among the earliest Syriac mss., the ms Sinai Syriac 46 has been singled out as the most important point of departure. The manuscript in its original form, that is including the folios now in a Milan ms, contains a large collection of apophthegmata, hagiographical stories from the Historia Lausiaca and the Historia Monachorum, as well as texts attributed to Evagrius of Pontus. A transcription of the series of apophthegmata in the ms. has been finished and inserted into the database. A publication of the Syriac text with an English translation is planned, but the content and format of the publication depends upon the survey of the other mss. The identification of parallels to the ca. 470 pieces included has proven that the collection is independent of any known collection, and only distantly related to the published Syriac collection, which is based on much later mss.

As to the Arabic and Ethiopic tradition a preliminary survey has been published. The only Arabic version that has yet been studied and edited, although in an unpublished dissertation, is being inserted into the database. The two most important Ethiopic collections have also been inserted into the database and included in its reference system. In order to promote the work on the large and very complicated Arabic material an international expert, Dr. Jason Zaborowski, has been invited as guest scholar for the academic year 2013-2014. For the Ethiopic material a cooperation with the research project on Ethiopian monasticism run by Dr. Witold Witakowski is under its way.
The development of the database has gradually changed not only the conditions, but also the possibilities available for producing and publishing results in the area of textual transmission of the *apophthegmata*. This is in particular true for this project where previous work and editions are almost non-existent.
Bibliography:

Bo Holmberg:


Samuel Rubenson:


Presentations and participation in conferences:

**Bo Holmberg:**

*March 2009:* Research trip to Damascus, Syria. One of the purposes of this trip was to try to find evidence of the Umayyad secretary Abd al-Hamid’s literary activities in the area in the first half of the eighth century and its role in the legacy of *paideia* in late antiquity.


*July 2012:* The Ninth International Conference on Christian Arabic, Valetta, Malta.

**Samuel Rubenson:**


The Role of the Apophthegmata Patrum in Teaching, Transmitting and Transforming School and Civic Rhetoric

LILLIAN LARSEN

THE AIM OF THE PROJECT is to explore the role accorded apophthegmatic content in teaching, transmitting, and transforming school and civic rhetoric. In its first phase, this project’s focus is one of locating and re-examining papyrological and archaeological evidence that documents the general use of sayings in ancient education. Within this frame, reading material that is identifiably monastic in light of a wider array of school texts has been central. Likewise, particular focus has been placed on identifying school texts and artifacts that may have originated in a monastic milieu but have not been so attributed on account of ideological presuppositions of monastic rusticity, and/or derivative perceptions of monastic indifference to educational pursuits. The goal of the second phase of research will be to apply these initial research results in exploring the application and adaptation of Classical and Graeco-Roman pedagogical strategies in published and unpublished collections of monastic apophthegmata.

THUS FAR, the project has largely progressed according to plan. However, the return on initial research investments has exceeded expectations. During the first phase of research, a rich range of monastic pedagogical material, much of which has historically been deemed ‘anomalous’, has been collected and analyzed. Common protocols that link this monastic material with characteristics routinely encountered in Graeco-Roman schooltexts have been identified. From this, a concrete framework that corrects foundational mis-conceptions of early monastic dis-investment in literate education has been established.

AS THE SECOND PHASE of research commences, preliminary experimentation with situating monastic sayings within this alternate pedagogical frame has yielded promising results. Clear patterns of common motifs continue to emerge. Over the next three years, further analysis of texts included in published and unpublished collections of monastic apophthegmata will afford opportunity to test, refine, apply, and expand early conclusions. As importantly, recognition of common and divergent motifs will support grounded re-analysis of the degree to which emergent monastic practice re-shaped established pedagogies, and/or turned them to new ends.
Bibliography:


Presentations and participation in conferences:


Lund, University Library, Medeltidshandskrift 54. This manuscript from the middle of the 11th century contains fragments of the systematical collection (stage b3 or c) of the Apophthegmata Patrum.
Ancient Philosophy and the making of monastic formation

HENRIK RYDELL JOHNSÉN

THE AIM OF THE PROJECT is to investigate how traditions of ancient philosophy were transmitted and transformed in early Egyptian and Palestinian monasticism. The project is focused on monastic formation and pedagogical patterns in this respect, and looks at early monastic reading practices and early monastic pedagogical patterns of passions, as well as virtues.

INITIAL STUDIES OF certain patterns of passions and patterns of virtues, as well as reading practices, have demonstrated the fruitfulness of elaborating these studies further in relation to particular passions and virtues. They have also revealed the value of extending the work to virtues and to features not in the original plan, such as withdrawal and obedience. These forthcoming studies will be of importance not just in order to investigate a dependency on ancient philosophical traditions and schools, but also to illustrate how this heritage has been transformed and adapted to a new Christian and monastic audience.

APART FROM READING practices it has also proven to be fruitful to look at other actual practices such as meleté/meditatio in philosophical traditions, in relation to the monastic practice of the so-called “Jesus prayer”. Models that help to explain more generally how the classical heritage has been used and transformed, have also been projected.

THE HYPOTHESIS OF a dependency between monasticism and the ancient philosophical schools has to a large extent been confirmed so far. A dependency has even been observed to a far greater extent than surmised, e.g. in relation to ideals of withdrawal, hesychia, and obedience, and even in areas where a dependency was not expected to be found, e.g. concerning virtues like humility and self-criticism. The dependency that the project was intended to explore seems, thus, to be even deeper and more encompassing than expected.
Bibliography:


Presentations and participation in conferences:


October, 2009: Chair: Asceticism in Early Christianity: a Nordic research seminar organized by the Nordic Network for the Study of Early Christianity in its Graeco-Roman Context, Lund University.

January 2010: Project presentation: Forum for Patri-stik, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.


Rhetorical interchange and literary topography in Late Antique Palestine

DAVID WESTBERG

THE AIM OF THE PROJECT is to investigate works within various 'monastic' genres such as church history, polemical literature, and hagiography as consciously crafted pieces of literature. The focus is primarily on the uses of rhetoric in these texts, and on their relations to the sophistic, more explicitly rhetorical works of the same period. The investigation also involves a discussion on the authors' intellectual networks and of their views on culture and education as they emerge in the texts. The project will result in a monograph with the same working title as the project.

SUBSTANTIAL WORK has been done on the rhetorical strategies employed in Epiphanius of Salamis' Panarion and, as a presentation for a workshop on apophthegmata, work has begun on Dorotheus of Gaza. Presentations of ongoing work at conferences and symposia has resulted in the establishment of fruitful contacts with different scholars who take an interest in interdisciplinary historical and literary research.

THE WORK ON INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS and texts has led to a gradual adjustment to the theoretical premises and positions. One fundamental observation is that modern scholarly paradigms of classicists and theologians are further apart than expected, which in a way confirms the programme's basic hypothesis: that there is an artificial divide between the 'learned' and the 'monastic' cultures of Late Antiquity. Classicists working within the same chronological period and even the same region as theologians, pose very different questions, and refer to very different ancient authors in spite of the fact that they were contemporaries and even sometimes closely related to one another. This is striking, and in order to bridge the gap fresh theoretical outlines must be drawn.

THIS MEANS THAT the original idea of mapping rhetorical features within monastic literature on the basis of genre and style must be supplemented with a heavier – and thornier – theoretical discussion about culture and identity as they are revealed in the literary expressions of monastic and sophistic authors. Though still firmly established in rhetorical and philological analysis, the focus has thus shifted slightly from rhetorical figures to rhetorical concepts as they can be found in 'monastic' authors. The original 'rhetorical perspective' on monastic texts has thus gradually evolved into what might be called a form of rhetorical archaeology, investigating layers of signification in technical terminology and in the analogies and metaphors that we find in these texts.
Bibliography:


Presentations and participation in conferences:

November 2008: “Rhetorical Tradition and Canonisation in Late Antique Gaza”, The Greco-Roman Rhetorical Tradition, arranged by the Nordic Network for the History of Rhetoric, University of Southern Denmark, Kolding.


The integration of the Bible into classical ideals of education

PER RÖNNEGÅRD

**The aim of the project** is to study the use of the Bible in the *AP* and other early monastic material and compare this usage with how authorities are used in non-Christian apophthegmata-collections. The project was abrogated in June 2010 due to the researcher leaving the program for other work. It has resulted in one forthcoming publication on a central feature of the use of the Bible in early monasticism, a practice called *meletē*, and how this practice relates to *meletē* as a category in ancient rhetoric. The project has also left the research team with a valuable analysis of the use of Biblical material in one important monastic author, as well as the parallel use of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in the same author. This material is available for use by other scholars in the research program. The basic ideas and assumptions behind the project are also taken up by other members of the research team.

**Bibliography:**


**Presentations and Participation at conferences**

The Apophthegmata Patrum Database (APDB)

During the first year of the research program it was realized that a database of the transmission of the Apophthegmata Patrum, a material of major importance to all projects and central to at least two of them, would be of great value. The complexity of the material, preserved in hundreds of manuscripts in many languages, constantly rearranged and transformed combined with an ambition to make the database a powerful tool that could be adapted to the individual needs of the individual scholar, made the development of the database a major challenge.

The development of the database has been made with the help of an external consultant (IT-architect Kenneth Berg) and input from the digital humanities laboratory of Lund University. It was further realized that a major condition for the success of the project would be the direct involvement of the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen and the active contribution of Prof. Faraggiana di Sarzana of Bologna University, who was invited as guest scholar for three months in 2011. Negotiations are currently being conducted with the Academy for a formal long-term agreement to secure the database.

The essential task of inserting material into the database has made it necessary to employ temporarily two research assistants and one researcher. M.Phil Benjamin Ekman has worked part time from January 2011 to June 2012 and M.Phil Claes Dahlman is working full time from March 2012, partly funded from other sources. The establishment of the database has likewise made it necessary to include the extensive Latin tradition, which was not intended to be studied within the program at the outset due to our geographical limitation. In order to do so an additional researcher, Dr. Elin Andersson, has been employed for one year from March 2012.
CONFERENCES AND SESSIONS ORGANIZED BY THE PROGRAM:

**Education and Literary Production in Early Palestinian Monasticism**, Jerusalem, February 23-25, 2010

Conference in collaboration with the research program directed by Professor Brouria Ashkelony, Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University.

**Sixteenth International Conference of Patristic Studies**, Oxford, August 9, 2011

Workshop: *Early Christian Monasticism and Classical Paideia*

**Annual Meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature**, San Francisco, CA, November 21, 2011

Session: *From Paideia to Monastic Spirituality of Egypt* with the group, *Christianity in Egypt: Scripture, Tradition, and Reception*, directed by Associate professor Lois Farag.

**Apophthegmata**, Uppsala, 7-8 June, 2012

A workshop on Greek and Arabic collections of apophthegmata, sponsored by *Sharing Ancient Wisdoms* (Kings College London, U. of Vienna, Newman Institute) *Ars Edendi Research Programme* (Stockholm University) and *Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia* (Lund University).
WORKSHOPS:

Workshop, Lund, May 26-27, 2009
“The use of cognitive science in the study of early monastic texts”
Guest scholar: Dr. Hugo Lundhaug, Oslo University.

Workshop, Lund, October 5-6, 2009
“Education in early Syriac tradition”
Guest scholar: Professor Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Brown University.

Workshop, Lund, 7-9 June, 2010
“The literary character of early Egyptian monastic texts”
Guest scholar: Professor James E. Goehring, University of Mary Washington.

Workshop, Götingen, September 21-23, 2010
“The Status of research on the Apophthegmata Patrum” with Professor Ekkehart Mühringen, Dr. Chiara Fragiana di Sarzana and Ms Natia Gabrichidze, Tbilisi.

Workshop, Uppsala, 14-15 October, 2010
“Catenae and Scholiae in Late Antiquity”, with Associate professor Denis Searby, Associate professor Witold Witakowski and Mr Eric Cullhed.

Workshop, Lund, January 31-February 1, 2011
“Early Syriac translations of Greek collections of apophthegmata”
Guest scholar: Dr. Sebastian Brock, Oxford.

Workshop, Lund, March 4, 2011
“The Use of Databases for Classical Florilegia”
Guest scholar: Associate professor Denis Searby, Stockholm University.

Workshop, St. Andrew’s Abbey, Valyermo, CA, 22-24 November, 2011
“The Pedagogical Use of Psalms in Early Monasticism”. Guest scholar and host: Dr. Luke Dysinger, OSB.
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