

J. F. Coakley, *Amphilochius of Iconium: The opening of his homily on My Father who sent me is greater than I*. The Syriac text edited and translated (Alexandria, Virginia: Jericho Press, 2021). Pp. iv + 10; \$50.00.

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Amphilochius of Iconium (340/345 to after 394) was an intimate part of the circle around the Cappadocian Fathers, being a cousin of Gregory of Nazianzus and a kind of disciple of Basil of Caesarea. With the latter he carried on an extensive correspondence about all matters of concern to the church of their day. Appointed bishop in 373, he acquired such a reputation in support of Basil's ecclesiastical and theological agenda that he was designated as one of the guarantors of orthodoxy at the Council of Constantinople in 381 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.1.3). His surviving corpus is not extensive, and much of it fragmentary, and yet enough remains to get a sense of Amphilochius as a Christian bishop and theologian, even if the precise contours of his genuine corpus remain debated.¹

Several of his homilies are extant in their entirety in Greek, but only a handful of Greek fragments from his homily on John 14:28 survive (really, John 14:28 combined with wording from John 14:24). There are also a few excerpts in Latin and Syriac. There is, however, a Syriac translation of the whole homily preserved on folios 95r–101v of British Library, Oriental ms. 8606, though the opening sections are missing. This Syriac text

¹ The best edition is now *Amphiloque d'Iconium: Homélie, Tome I: Homélie 1–5, Tome II: Homélie 6–10; Fragments divers; Épître synodale; Lettre à Séleucos*, introduction, translation, notes, and index by Michel Bonnet in collaboration with Sever J. Voicu, Sources chrétiennes 552 and 553 (Paris: Cerf, 2012).

was edited and translated into English by Cyril Moss in 1930² and re-edited and translated into French in 2012.³ The slim volume under review here presents the Syriac text and an English translation of the formerly missing opening sections of the homily. This Syriac text is taken from two leaves of a manuscript in the archives of Westminster College, Cambridge (WGL 9/20), which once immediately preceded folios 95r–101v in the above-mentioned British Library manuscript. At long last, then, the complete homily has been recovered in Syriac translation. In this homily Amphilochius engages in polemics over the exegesis of John 14:28, which was disputed in the Trinitarian and Christological debates of his era.

The title of the homily was previously known, even if its beginning was missing.⁴ Theodoret of Cyrrihus quoted this homily three times in his *Eranistes* (see 1.56, 2.54, and 3.51), each time stating that it was a discourse on John 14:28 (ὁ πατήρ μείζων μου ἔστιν) rather than on John 14:28 combined with John 14:24 as the newly edited Syriac text has it. Timothy Aelurus quoted two excerpts from this homily, both of which overlap with the newly edited Syriac text. The passages agree almost exactly; Coakley notes the few textual differences in his translation. The title Timothy gives to the homily also corresponds with the title in the newly edited Syriac text. The homily's title was also preserved in Latin by Facundus in his *Pro defensione trium capitulorum* XI.3.2, as a sermon on the verse *qui misit me pater maior me est*, which accurately reflects the Syriac title. Facundus also preserved the opening words of the homily as *laborare nos fecit certamen haereticorum*, which matches the

² Cyril Moss, "S. Amphilochius of Iconium on John 14:28: The Father who sent me is greater than I," *Le Muséon* 43 (1930), 317–364.

³ Bonnet, *Amphiloque d'Iconium: Homélie*, Tome II, 192–225.

⁴ The fragments discussed in this paragraph are edited in Bonnet, *Amphiloque d'Iconium: Homélie*, Tome II, 226–241.

Syriac ܐܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܠܟܐ. Therefore, the newly edited Syriac text verifies this report of Facundus.

Coakley's very readable translation is preceded by a four-page introduction which in brief compass describes the manuscript's history, Amphilochius's life and writings, and the contents of the homily. The reader is referred to the previous translations in English and French to see what follows the beginning portion presented in this volume.

I consider myself quite lucky to be the recipient of a copy of this exquisite volume for review, which was handcrafted at the private press of J. F. Coakley. The Syriac type is Oxford's pica large face estrangela, and the volume consists of sixteen pages of Zerkall mould-made paper bound in chiyogami decorated paper boards. In this age of shoddily made books from major publishers, crappy print-on-demand copies, and the ubiquity of pdf scans, this volume has reminded me of just how beautiful books can be as physical objects.