
The Macarian Homilies have attracted special interest since Villecourt pointed out in 1920 that they are the source of the Messalian propositions condemned in John of Damascus. In 1941 Hermann Dörries, grand master of these studies, showed that the transmission history is complex (Symeon von Mesopotamien, TU 55/1), viz. that beside the traditional collection of 50 Homilies (H), which Marriott in 1918 increased to 57, there is an independent recension attested by Vat. gr. 694 s. XIII (B), with its twin Athen. gr. 423 s. XIII (b). Excerpts from this collection occur in Vat. gr. 710 s. XIV (A) and Athos Dionysiou 269 s. XV (Y). A third collection besides B and H occurs in Athen. 272 s. XI, Iviron 1318 s. XVIII, and Panteleimon 129 s. XV, used by Klostermann and Berthold for their Neue Homilien des Makariosj Symeon (1961). The Arabic collections were used by Dörries in 1941 but are not yet printed. Dörries provided a remarkable commentary on the critical edition of H by M. Kröger (1964).

So, at long last, Berthold is able to print the B recension (or Collection I). Much is paralleled in H (Collection II), and the resultant synoptic problem is absorbing. Comparison shows that B and H are independent compilations from the same stock, probably made under the impetus towards mysticism imparted by Symeon the New Theologian in the tenth century. Anticipations of Hesychasm (especially B 17 and 44–5) are striking. The editing is good, but the reader must not forget that the objective is to print the B recension of the tenth century, not to reconstruct Symeon's authentic text of the fourth century by comparison with H and other witnesses. In short, the 1964 edition of H is an indispensable book without which these volumes cannot be interpreted, and vice versa. B is less revised to conform to ecclesiastical orthodoxy than H, and has a few radical passages which show what good reason Euprepius of Paltus had to make a fuss in his memorandum to Flavian of Antioch, cited by Severus of Antioch in his Contra additiones Juliani (p. 34 ed. Hespel).

The 'apparatus fontium' notes the quotation of the Gospel of Thomas logion 113 in B 35, but disregards the probable allusions to log. 3 (B 4. 5. 1; i. 45. 12) and 28 (B 4. 30. 9; i. 72. 29); perhaps also log. 2 (B 3. 5. 10; i. 40. 17). These fine volumes contain no surprises for those already familiar with the subject, but are very important in providing the Greek text of B as a secure basis for research into the Messalian problem.

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