

What prayers for the dead in the Tridentine period?

[Pseudo-]John of Damascus, «De his qui in fide dormierunt» and its «Protestant» translation by Johannes Oecolampadius

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Three translations of the «De his qui in fide dormierunt» were produced in the course of the sixteenth century¹. The first one, by Johannes Oecolampadius, printed for the first time in 1520² was also the most influential. It was reprinted not only in the four early «Protestant» Basel editions of the «Opera Damasceni» 1535, 1539, 1548 and 1559, but also in the «Roman Catholic» Cologne edition of Henricus Grauius which dates from 1546³. Grauius in his preface [A3v] justifies his inclusion of Oecolampadius' translation in the following terms:

«Eum sermonem doctissime latinum reddidit frater Ioannes Oecolampadius, Birgittani [!] ordinis professor, per id tempus nondum haeresi vlli reiecto cucullo addictus, alioqui talem sermonem nunquam contra se ac suos versurus».

In fact, Grauius' statement can be shown to be somewhat rash. One glance at Oecolampadius' dedicatory epistle to Conrad Peutinger – an epistle which was

¹ The mediaeval translation, mentioned in MPG 95, 246 is no longer extant.

² Quantum defunctis prosint viuientium bona opera, sermo Ioannis Damasceni Iohanne Oecolampadio interprete, Augsburg 1520. Cf. *Ernst Staehelin, Oekolampad-Bibliographie*, 2. Auflage, Nieuwkoop 1963, no. 28 [abbr.: Oekolampad-Bibliographie].

³ Ioannis Damasceni Opera... iam iterum graecorum exemplarium collatione castigata... Basileae, H. Petri 1539. The contents of the volume are identical to those of the 1535 Basel edition also printed by H. Petri: 1) «De fide orthodoxa» in the translation of Lefèvre d'Étaples with Clichtoue's commentary, 2) «De his qui in fide» under the title of «Quantum bona opera viuientium» in the translation of Oecolampadius, 3) «Historia Iosaphat et Barlaam» in the mediaeval (12th-13th cent.) translation attributed at the time to George of Trebizond, 4) «Damasceni vita a Ioanne patriarcha Hierosolymitano Ioanne Oecolampadio interprete». The 1548 edition, compiled by Marcus Hopper and also printed by Petri added several other treatises notably those translated by Ioachim Perion in 1544. It also included the Greek text alongside the Latin versions of «De fide» and «De his». Although Hopper does not say so, his Greek text is in fact that of the 1531 Verona edition: ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ ΕΚΛΟΞΙΣ ... Ioannis Damasceni editio Orthodoxae fidei. Eiusdem de iis qui in fide dormierunt, Veronae 1531 (apud Stephanum et fratres Sabios). The 1559 edition also compiled by Hopper and printed by Petri is a slightly expanded version of the 1548 volume. As for the 1546 edition of Henricus Grauius – Opera ... summo Henrici Grauii studio ... Coloniae, P. Quentel 1546 – it consisted chiefly of mediaeval Latin versions of Damascene's works, the notable exceptions being «De fide» in the translation of Lefèvre d'Étaples «cum eiusdem glossis [!]» (in fact an abridgement of Clichtoue's commentary by Grauius himself) and Oecolampadius' version of «De his». Cf. *Irena Backus, Traductions latines des «Oeuvres» de Jean Damascène: éditions de Cologne (1546) et de Bâle (1548)*, in: *Acta Conuentus Neo-Latini Guelpherbitani 1985*, ed. S. P. Revard, F. Rädle, M. di Cesare, Binghampton N.Y. 1988, 17-25.

not reprinted after 1520 –, shows that the future reformer translated Pseudo-Damascene's sermon not in defence of Roman Catholicism but to serve as an example of moderation⁴. He states openly: «sed vt impii hoc sermone arguuntur, ita superstitiosorum commenta non probantur»⁵. He explains, moreover, that the translation represents an answer to questions concerning purgatory that were raised in a discussion between Peutinger and himself, some time ago. The discussion took place before Oecolampadius' entry into the monastery. Moreover, it is worth noting that immediately on entering the Brigittine monastery at Altomünster in April 1520, Oecolampadius wrote two treatises, «Iudicium de Martino Luthero» and «Paradoxon», which expressed open sympathy with Luther's views on salvation by faith. Both were printed in the following year⁶, and both were attacked by the Roman Catholic authorities.

Thus the external evidence of the circumstances surrounding Oecolampadius' translation of «De his», as well as the evidence of the epistle dedicatory, would lead us to suspect that the translation itself might understress rather than overstress the importance of prayers for the dead. As for the Greek manuscript used by Oecolampadius, it was sent to him by Bernhard Adelman also in 1520⁷. As we shall see, the text differs substantially from that used by the later translators.

The second translation of «De his» appeared in 1532⁸ from the pen of count Lodovico Nogarola (†1559), translator of «Platonicae Plutarchi Cheronaei Quaestiones» (1559), among other works, and author of the notorious address to the Council of Trent on 26 December 1546, in which he held up St. Stephen's attitude to his adversaries as a model for dealing with the Protestants. Nogarola was the sole layman to address the Council of Trent⁹. Although his translation of «De his» appeared some years before the Council's first session, its purpose

⁴ Cf. *Ernst Staehelin*, Die Väterübersetzungen Oekolampads, in: *StHZ* 33, 1916, 57-91, esp. 63 [abbr.: Staehelin, Väterübersetzungen]. The article does not analyse Oecolampadius' translations. It does, however, offer a complete list of them with some bibliographical details. It also discusses the criticisms levelled at Oecolampadius' translations of Chrysostom by Germanus Brixius and other humanists.

⁵ Reprinted in: *Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads...*, bearb. von *Ernst Staehelin*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1927-1934, (QFRG 10-11), vol.1, no. 90, p. 132-133.

⁶ Cf. *Oekolampad-Bibliographie* nos. 29, 42. A good account of Oecolampadius' position during those years is given by *Hans R. Guggisberg*, Johannes Oekolampad, in: *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte 5: Die Reformationszeit 1*, Martin Greschat (Hrsg.), Stuttgart 1981, 117-128. The definitive biography remains that of *Ernst Staehelin*, Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads, Leipzig 1939 (Nachdruck 1971), (QFRG 21).

⁷ Cf. *Johannes Heumann*, Documenta litteraria, Altdorf 1758, 202ff. On Adelman himself cf. *Geiger*, Bernhard Adelman von Adelmansfelden, in: *ADB* 1, Nachdruck der 1. Aufl. 1875, Berlin 1967, 79.

⁸ *Ioannis Damasceni libellus de his qui in fide dormierunt ex graeco in latinum versus per Ludouicum Nogarolam comitem Veronensem, Veronae 1532* (apud Stephanum et fratres Sabios, mense martio). There were no other editions of this version.

⁹ On his life, works and his speech at the Council see further: *Hubert Jedin*, Geschichte des Konzils von Trient, vol. 2: Die erste Trienter Tagungsperiode 1545-47, Freiburg i. Br. 1957, 384ff., 521ff.; *Hubert Jedin*, Un laico al Concilio di Trento, il Conte Lodovico Nogarola, in: *Il Concilio di Trento* 1, 1942/43, 25-33; *A. v. Druffel*, Über den Grafen Ludovico Nogarola und das Trientiner Konzil, in: *Sitzungs-Berichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, München 1875*, 426-456.

was quite unequivocally anti-Lutheran. In his preface, addressed to Clement VII, he states [a2v.]:

«... nihil est tamen quod te magis commouerit atque commoueat quam Germaniam pene totam olim religiosissimam et SSR ecclesiae deditissimam Leutheri [!] scelere a Christi fide descuiisse ac magna ex parte vicinas regiones suis erroribus imbuisse. Quam dum in veterem veramque sententiam reducere conaris, quid abs te neglectum, quid praetermissum dici potest...»

Indeed he says further:

«... Ioannis Damasceni libellus super his qui dormierunt in fide, *nuper aeditus* ... ad tollendum Leutheri [!] errorem de purgatorio momentiplurimum habere videtur. Huius ego lectione cum fuissem vehementer oblectatus, eum ad communem studiosorum vtilitatem, qui graecarum literarum rudes ac ignari sunt, in latinum volui transferre...»

Thus in translating the treatise Nogarola intends to produce a weapon of anti-Lutheran controversy. The Greek text of «De his» was already available having been printed in the previous year¹⁰ («nuper aeditus») under the patronage of Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona and counsellor to Clement VII¹¹. Needless to say Giberti is also mentioned by Nogarola in his preface [a3r.] as vir «sane et morum sanctimonia et omni scientiarum genere ornatissimus, [qui] innumerabiles sacrae paginae libros cum graecos, tum etiam latinus... imprimi curauit...»

Indeed, as will be shown, Nogarola follows the 1531 Greek text to the letter and only one marginal remark would suggest that he was aware of variants. Nogarola's version never approached the popularity of Oecolampadius and was never reprinted after 1532.

Even less popular was the version of «De his» produced in September 1586 by Giovanni Briani of Modena. Dedicated to the Tridentine reformer of Bologna, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti¹², it apparently was never published and is extant in Briani's autograph at the Istituto per le scienze religiose in Bologna as part of the «fondo Oppizzani» of that city's Archiepiscopal Library¹³. The manuscript is paginated 1-49 and contains marginal glosses also in Briani's hand¹⁴. The title-page is set out to resemble the title-page of a printed book¹⁵. As for the translator, Briani, the sources are few and contradictory. According to Tiraboschi¹⁶ he was the elder [!] brother of the historian Girolamo Briani (1581-1646)

¹⁰ Cf. supra note 3.

¹¹ Cf. *L. Bopp*, Gian Matteo Giberti, in: *LThK* 4, 1960, 885.

¹² Cf. *P. Prodi*, Gabriele Paleotti, in: *LThK* 7, 1962, 1368.

¹³ *L. Frati*, Bibliothecae Archiepiscopi Bononiensis Catalogus, Bononiae 1856, 404. But cf. infra, note 16 concerning the printed versions of the work.

¹⁴ The MS. is signed on p. 49 «Ego Ioannes Brianus manu propria scripsi, 1586 ».

¹⁵ IOANNIS DAMASCENI. // HVMILIS MONACHI // ATQUE PRESBYTERI LIBELLVS DE // HIS QVI IN FIDE DORMIERVNT DE // GRAECO IN LATINVM TRANSLATVS: // PER IOANNEM BRIANVM MVTNENSEM. // Decoration at the bottom: two cherubs holding a shield.

¹⁶ Cf. *G. Tiraboschi*, Bibliotheca modenese, Modena 1781[-1786], 1, 344ff.: 6, 49. It is worth noting that according to Tiraboschi, Briani's translation of «De his» was printed in 1580: Iohannis Damasceni de his qui in Domino moriuntur, libellus e Graeco in Latinum versus, Mutinae, ap. Antonium Gadaldinum, 1580 (4^o). I have so far been unable to locate a single copy of the printed version. If Tiraboschi's information is

and a school-master at Sassuolo from 1588 onwards. As well as translating «De his», he re-edited Vincentius' «Tabulae continentes septem S. Ecclesiae sacramenta»¹⁷. According to Mazzuchelli¹⁸ he was also the author of «Meditazioni sopra il Pater noster» apparently published at Modena without any indication of date.

Although Briani stresses in the heading above the incipit [p. 7: Haud infrequenter] that the treatise has been translated by him «nouissime et fideliter», his preface to Paleotti is no more than a pale copy of Nogarola's preface to Clement VII written and published fifty-four years previously. He thus explains [p. 4] that «De his»

«... est opusculum quidem certe aureum et mirum in modum pollens ad e-
uersionem illius prauae disciplinae Lutheri ob quam totam pene Germaniam
olim religiosissimam et S.R.E. deditissimam a Christi fide descuiisse legi-
tur, et cui tu in primis illustrissime et reuerendissime Cardinalis et Archi-
episcopo amplissime studes. Huius ego lectione, cum fuissem vehementer
oblectatus eum ad communem studiosorum vtilitatem qui graecarum litera-
rum rudes et ignari sunt, in Romanum sermonem traducere volui et vestrae
amplitudini potissimum dicare in animum mihi induxi».

The similarity of phrasing to Nogarola's preface is too great to be coincidental. Indeed Briani admits on p. 20 of his text that he simply copied out Nogarola's metric translation of the versified section of «De his»¹⁹ (he was either not aware of or deliberately disregarded the translation of Damascene's works by Jacques de Billy which had appeared in Paris in 1577²⁰). The second part of Briani's preface to Paleotti confirms his total dependence on Nogarola, as he simply copies out the doubts expressed by his predecessor (a2v.-a3r.) about the authenticity of «De his». These doubts are expressed in a very veiled fashion. Nogarola and Briani after him specify:

«Quamuis nolim quempiam suspicari hoc ipsum non vere fuisse Damasceno
ascriptum, iccirco quod Machabaeorum historiae plurimum innitatur, quam
in volumine quarto De fide orthodoxa quod legitimum esse Damasceni om-
nes censent, in sacrorum librorum numero non reponit. Nam si quis vtrum-
que studiose et sedulo pertractabit, videbit certe simili oratione ac stilo
vtrumque esse atque ad magni Dionysii elocutionem cuius etiam grauissi-
mum testimonium plerumque adducit, proxime accedere».

It is difficult to see whether the argument against the authenticity of the work came from Nogarola himself or whether he is merely replying to an argument

correct, however, the 1586 MS. would represent a revision of the printed version. See also the article: *G. de Caro*, Briani, Girolamo, in: *Diz. Biogr. d. Italiani*, Roma 1972, 14, 211-213.

¹⁷ Nouem illae tabulae continentes septem S. ecclesiae sacramenta, nec non irregularitates, suspensiones olim a R. P. Fr. Vincentio de Quintiano o. p. editae, Mutinae 1588. Cf. *G. M. Mazzuchelli*, *Gli Scrittori d'Italia*, II:4, Brescia 1763, 2082ss.

¹⁹ «In vertendis carminibus sequentibus quia optime [!] et prudentissime versa fuisse a Ludouico Nogarola inuenimus, ideo doctam et dilucidam illius versionem ponendam esse duximus». Indeed, the translation of the verses is that of Nogarola with no changes or emendations (= a8r.-b1v. in the 1531 edition).

²⁰ «De his qui in fide» was translated anew by de Billy. Cf. *A Posseuinus*, *Apparatus sacer*, Coloniae 1603, 863-864. On the 1577 edition in general cf. *Irena Backus*, *Jean Damascène*, «Dialogus contra Manichaeos», in: *REA* 38, 1992, 155-167.

advanced by someone else. It is interesting to note that both Jacques de Billy and Possevinus in his «Apparatus sacer» of 1603 do not in any way question John of Damascus' authorship of «De his»²¹.

Our object in examining the translations of Oecolampadius, Nogarola and Briani is twofold. Firstly we shall compare the Greek text used by Oecolampadius with that used by the two Italians. Secondly, we shall attempt to estimate the «doctrinal slant» given to the original by its various translators.

Greek text

Nothing is known of the Greek manuscript that Adelman sent to Oecolampadius. All that we can say with any confidence is that it differed substantially from the Greek text that was published in Verona in 1531 and that served as basis for both Nogarola's and Briani's translations. The Verona volume contained also the Greek text of «De fide orthodoxa» and it is ironic that the «Protestant» editor Marcus Hopper of Basel in 1548 used both the texts of that edition which he printed alongside Lefèvre's version of «De fide» and Oecolampadius' version of «De his»²². Hopper certainly does not admit openly to having done this, saying simply in his preface [2v.]:

«Accesserunt adeo nunc priori editioni graeca quae vides hic omnia. Sunt autem ea ἑκδοσις τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως... Sermo denique περὶ τῶν ἐν πίστει κεκοιμημένων... Reliqua si graece extant, nobis hercle in conspectum hactenus non venerunt».

Hopper's discretion about the sources of his Greek text is hardly surprising given the aims of the 1531 Verona edition as stated by «Donatus Veronensis» in the preface to Clement VII. There, after a general panegyric of Greek as the language of the first Christians, Donatus specifies that the Greek text of the two treatises was furnished by Gian Matteo Giberti, Bishop of Verona [i2v.]. The latter's intentions are then made quite plain [i3r.]

«Gibertus sibi etiam atque etiam consyderandum duxit nulli aptius opus «De orthodoxa fide» dicari potuisse quam tibi: cui non solum aduersus barbaras nationes quae hoc tempore armis illam nunquam oppugnare desistunt, semper autem conantur euertere, sed etiam aduersus nouos desertores veritatis qui Luteriani vocantur, certamen assiduum est... Hunc igitur Damascenum habebis quasi telum acutissimum, quo si non priores illos, saltem hos posteriores hostes confodias».

It must be stressed that the Verona text cannot be said to differ *doctrinally* from that used by Oecolampadius eleven years previously. On the other hand, as we shall see, differences of reading do, on occasions, give rise to interpretations with a particular doctrinal slant. We shall here examine some of the more important textual differences.

²¹ Cf. Possevinus, *ibid.*

²² Cf. *supra*, note 3.

Θέλει γὰρ οὕτως ὁ φιλόανθρωπος Κύριος αἰτεῖσθαι, καὶ νέμειν τὰ τῶν ἰδίων κτισμάτων πρὸς σωτηρίαν αἰτούμενα, καὶ τότε μᾶλλον [*1531: αὐτοῖς] ὀλικῶς ἐπικαίμπεται οὐχ ὅταν τις *μόνον ὑπὸ* [*1531: ὑπὲρ] ἰδίας ψυχῆς ἀγωνίζηται, ἀλλ' ὅταν [add. καὶ 1531] ὑπὲρ τοῦ πέλας τοῦτο ἐργάζηται. Ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ θεομίμητον ἐκτυποῦται, καὶ τὰς ἐτέρων δωρεάς, ὡς οἰκείας ἐξαιτεῖ χάριτας, καὶ τῆς τελείας ἀγάπης τὸν ὄρον ἐμπερικλείει καὶ τὸν μακαρισμὸν ἐκ τοῦ* του πορίζεται, καὶ τὴν ἰδιάν συν* [*om. 1531] τῆ(ν) τοῦ πέλας εὐεργετῆ(ν) ψυχὴν ὅτι μάλιστα [add. 1531: κομίζεται].²³

For thus the kind Lord wants to be asked, and He wants to distribute those things which are sought for the salvation of His own creatures, and He is inclined [to them] all the more, not when someone is concerned only for his own soul but when he [also] does something for his neighbour. For thus he becomes an imitator of God and demands the gratification of others as his own grace, and he reaches ultimate charity and attains happiness from that *in doing good to his neighbour's soul, he benefits at the same time his own soul as greatly as possible* /or ** in doing good to his neighbour's soul he attains the utmost happiness.²⁴

Oecolampadius' text very likely maintained the μᾶλλον in καὶ τότε μᾶλλον ὀλικῶς whereas the Verona text in its 1531 version and as reprinted by Hopper (= SH) substituted αὐτοῖς for μᾶλλον. Moreover, Oecolampadius maintains μόνον in τις μόνον ὑπὸ ἰδίας ψυχῆς and «adds» καὶ in ἀλλ' ὅταν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ πέλας. The text of SH reads τις ὑπὲρ²⁵ ἰδίας ψυχῆς... ἀλλ' ὅταν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ πέλας. An even more important textual divergence occurs in the final sentence with SH reading καὶ μακαρισμὸν ἐκ τοῦ τὴν τοῦ πέλας εὐεργετῆ(ν) ψυχὴν ὅτι μάλιστα κομίζεται. Oecolampadius' text, it would appear, reads καὶ τὸν μακαρισμὸν... μάλιστα as in MPG.

The resulting translations diverge correspondingly, although it must be noted that Oecolampadius' style here makes it particularly difficult to reconstruct his Greek text with any precision.

Oecolampadius 419²⁶. Est enim et haec voluntas benignissimi Domini vt creaturae quae ad salutem petuntur, sic petantur et distribuantur, et exoratur non solum quando quis pro salute propria est anxius, sed et quando pro proximo aliquid operatur. Haec enim foelix diuinae bonitatis imitatio est, dum quis aliis non minus quam sibi gratiam exposcit et tunc consumatae charitatis terminus ac beatitudo attingitur dum in proximo animae suae benefacit.

Nogarola a73. Vult enim clemens Dominus sic seipsum ab hominibus postulari et quaecunque ad suarum creaturarum salutem petuntur tribuere: quibus tunc prorsus flectitur ac inclinatur cum quis gratia proximi, non pro sua ipsius anima sollicitus est. Nam ex hoc similis Deo efficitur qui aliorum munera quasi in suam expetit gratiam. Atque cum erga animam proximi sui beneficus extiterit perfectae charitatis terminum complectitur ac quam maxime beatitudinem acquirit.

²³ MPG 95, 253; Verona 1531, 143v.-144.

²⁴ The literal English translation is for use of readers less familiar with Greek. It should not be considered as the definitive rendering!

²⁵ Ὑπὲρ remains a possible reading also in Oecolampadius's text.

²⁶ The pagination is that of the 1548 edition (Basel, Hopper, Petri, Cf. supra note 3).

Briani 17. Nam voluntas Domini est sic se ab hominibus postulari et cuncta tribuere quae ipsemet ad salutem suarum creaturarum petitur [!], *quibus* tunc maxime flectitur atque inclinatur, *cum aliquis* sui proximi gratia, non sui ipsius anima anxius est. Propter hoc enim ille similis Deo efficitur qui aliorum munera vt in suam gratiam expetit; atque *cum de anima proximi sui benemeritis extiterit*, terminum charitatis perfectae complectitur et *beatitudinem quam maxime acquirit*.

Because of Oecolampadius' condensed style it is difficult to say whether his text did in fact read *μᾶλλον*, but there is certainly nothing in his translation that corresponds to *αὐτοῖς*. Nogarola's and Briani's versions on the other hand, both have *quibus* which could only correspond to *αὐτοῖς*. Whatever his text, Oecolampadius's translation of this sentence is grammatically poor and his Latin is difficult to construe²⁷. There is, however, no doubt that his Greek text read *ὄχι ὅταν τις μόνον* and he is the only one of the three translators with *non solum quando*. As for the last sentence, Oecolampadius's version is again too condensed to serve as an adequate guide to his Greek text. It does, nonetheless, provide some clues. Nothing in the reformer's Latin corresponds to *κομίζεται* whereas Nogarola and Briani state clearly: *beatitudinem ... acquirit*. Moreover, Oecolampadius' is the only version to render explicit the idea that it is the benefactor's soul that profits from good deeds on behalf of others. The exact phrasing: *dum in proximo animae suae benefacit* points to a reading with *τὴν ἰδιάν*, but not necessarily to a reading with *σὺν*.

Our second passage shows clearly that there was a variant in Oecolampadius' Greek, but here the question is complicated by his manipulation of the text so as to alter the doctrine of John of Damascus.

Καὶ γὰρ μετὰ τὸ φάσαι τὸν ὑποφήτην ταῦτα, γέγονε πάντας ἐν τῷ ἄδη ἐξομολόγησις ἐκείνων λέγω τῶν *ἐκεῖ πιστευσάντων* [**om. 1531] ἐν τῇ σωτηρίῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ καθόδη. Ὁ γὰρ ἀπλῶς ἔσωσε πάντας ὁ ζωοδότης, ἀλλ' ὡς εἴρηται, καὶ ἐκεῖ τοὺς πιστευσάντας²⁸ For after the prophet said this [i.e. who will confess thee in the depths? Ps. 6,6] there was nonetheless confession in Hell of those I say [who believed even there] in the Lord's salutary descent. For the giver of life saved not everyone indiscriminately but, as has been said, those who believed even in that place.

The Greek text of SH omits *ἐκεῖ πιστευσάντων*, which is retained by the reformer's manuscript. Our three translators render the passage as follows:

Oecolampadius 421. Quamuis autem ita dicat propheta, omnino tamen in inferno confessio aliqua fuit, eorum inquam qui in salutarem Domini descensum crediderant. Christus enim assertor vitae non simpliciter omnes, sed eos tantum qui crediderant, vt dictum est, saluauit.

Nogarola a7v.-a8r. Nam postea quam verba illa protulit sacer propheta, nonnullos quidem apud inferos Dominus confitentes audiuit, eos vtique pro quorum salute descenderat. Haud enim Deus [a8r] vitae largitor omnes generatim saluos fecit, sed eos, vt diximus, qui etiam illo in loco credebant.

²⁷ For contemporary criticism of his translations of Chrysostom, cf. Staehelin, *Väterübersetzungen* 69 ff.

²⁸ MPG 95, 257, Verona 1531, 144v.

Briani 20. Posteaquam huiusmodi verba pronunciauit sacer propheta, quosdam in inferno confitentes Dominum exaudisse et eos medius fidius, quibus vt salutem daret, e coelo descenderat. Deus nanque vitae largitor non omnes generaliter saluos fecit sed (vt dictum est) eos qui illic quoque credebant...

It is possible that the Adelman MS. contained a variant without *κάκεϊ* in *κάκεϊ τοὺς πιστεύσαντας*. This, however, seems extremely unlikely. Judging by his sentence [eorum inquam qui in salutarem Domini descensum crediderant], his Greek almost certainly contained the variant *ἐκεῖ πιστεύσαντων*. Yet Oecolampadius does not translate *ἐκεῖ* and thus alters substantially the thought of the original. According to him it is those who believed in the Lord's descent who confessed, and not those who believed in it in spite of being in Hell. Oecolampadius thus places a much more overt stress on salvation by faith. The text without *ἐκεῖ πιστεύσαντων* in SH conveys a different idea: those who confessed were the very ones for whose salvation the Lord descended into Hell. The link here is between good works (exemplified by confession) and the salutary descent into Hell. Briani supplies *e coelo* – either deliberately or due to the misunderstanding of the passage – and thus places an even greater emphasis on salvation by works. According to his version, only those confessed for whose sake the Lord was incarnated. Both Nogarola and Briani translate *κάκεϊ τοὺς πιστεύσαντας* correctly placing emphasis on *κάκεϊ* so that it is the importance of faith in that place which is brought out.

Oecolampadius omits *κάκεϊ* and thus stresses, in harmony with his preceding sentence, that the Lord came to save those who believed.

This passage provides an interesting instance not only of the difference between the text used by Oecolampadius and that used by the other translators, but also of the way in which Oecolampadius tampers with his text so as to emphasise salvation by faith.

Good works

We have seen already that Oecolampadius on occasions makes free with the Greek text in order to slant the thought of the original in favour of salvation by faith. Several other passages containing (so far as can be ascertained) no textual variants show that a pronounced doctrinal slant is given to «De his» by Oecolampadius and by Nogarola and Briani. We shall here examine some of the most important instances.

Ὁ περὶ πάντα τοῖνον τὰ καλὰ καὶ Θεοφιλῆ
 πράγματα καὶ διανοήματα κοιλαινώμενος
 ὄφις, καὶ σφαττόμενος παλαμοῦτος ἐχθρὸς, τῇ
 μὲν φιλαδελφίᾳ πληττόμενος, τῇ δὲ πίστει
 ῥηγνύμενος, τῇ ἐλπίδι νεκρούμενος, τῇ
 συμπαθείᾳ κροδαινώμενος, ἐνέσκηψε τισιν ὁ
 παράνομος σκῆψιν τινα ἔκφυλον καὶ
 ἀλλότριον, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν θεσμῶν εἰς ἅπαν
 ἀντίθετον ὡς ὅτι τὰ μετὰ θάνατον πάντα τὰ
 θεοφιλῆ ἔργα οὐδὲ τοὺς προλαβόντας
 ὄντησιν²⁹.

The snake twisting round all good and
 Godloving practices and thoughts, the
 hated murderer, stricken by brotherly
 love, disturbed by faith, mortified by
 hope, shaken by compassion, the
 wicked one inspires in some a new
 and absurd opinion contrary to all
 sacred laws: namely that no good
 works serve the deceased once they
 are dead.

Oecolampadius 146. Igitur semper ille cuius studium est bona Deoque accepta
 opera vitare, iugulare hostilesque dolos struere, qui et fraterna charitate
 percellitur, fide dirumpitur, compassione rotatur, vt est praeuaricator
 legum, nonnullis inspirat figmentum adulterinum, alienum sacrisque
 constitutionibus omnino aduersum: *nempe bona grataque Deo opera
 omnia defunctis nihil prodesse.*

Nogarola a4v. Ille igitur iniquus serpens ac humani generis hostis perpetuus
 circa omnes honestas Deoque gratas actiones cogitationesque sese im-
 plicans cuius iugulum gladio petiit Christus, quem charitas debilitat,
 vincit fides et misericordia vexat, peruersionem quandam cum inusita-
 tam et immanem, tum etiam sacris omnino legibus contrariam nonnullis
 induit: *quaecunque scilicet vita functis pia exhibentur opera, nullatenus
 adiumento esse.*

Briani 9. Serpens ergo ille iniquus et humanae generationis perennis inimicus
 circa cunctas honestas et Deo gratas actiones se implicans, cuius iugu-
 lum Christus gladio petiit, qui a charitate frangitur, a fide vincitur et a
 misericordia vexatur, persuasionem quandam tum insuetam et immanem
 tum etiam nonnullis legibus sacris contrariam induit: *cuncta videlicet
 opera quae pia exhibentur pro iis qui ab hac iam migrarunt vita, inania
 et infructuosa illis esse.*

In spite of its somewhat telegraphic style, Oecolampadius' translation is much
 better than the other two. He distinguishes between νόμος and θεσμός (unwritten
 law) translating the former by *lex* (in *praeuaricator legum*) and the latter by
constitutio. Furthermore, Oecolampadius is the only one to translate σφαττόμενος
 correctly as an active participle referring to the serpent without having recourse
 to the elaborate paraphrase of Nogarola which Briani copies verbatim. Oecolampadius
 is also quite clear as to the role of τισιν in the sentence: it applies to the devil's victims.
 Τισιν is also thus understood by Nogarola but completely misunderstood by Briani
 who applies it to *legibus*.

However, Oecolampadius' translation of ὡς ὅτι τὰ μετὰ θάνατον... ὄντησιν does
 not correspond to his original. [Pseudo-]John of Damascus makes it quite clear
 that it is the pious works performed on behalf of the dead which are of no avail
 and this is brought out by both Nogarola's and Briani's translations. Oecolampadius
 affirms that no good works are of any avail to the dead. He thus denies that works
 performed on behalf of the dead should be accorded a particu-

²⁹ MPG 95, 248, 249, Verona 1531, 141v.

lar status. They are implicitly classed with all good works so that the significance of purgatory is reduced.

Grace and faith

More importantly, the future reformer makes a consistent effort to emphasise that divine grace and faith take precedence over good works. In the two passages that follow he does not even have to resort to alterations of text to emphasise the preeminent importance of grace and faith.

Ἐφη τοιγαροῦν ὁ πολὺς τὰ θεῖα καὶ βαθύς And so the profound Dionysius versed
Διονύσιος ἐν τῇ περὶ τῶν κεκοιμημένων in things divine says clearly...
μυστικῇ θεωρίᾳ οὕτως λέξας Αἱ τῶν ἁγίων «prayers of the saints are efficient
προσευχαί, καὶ κατὰ τὸν τῆδε βίον, μήτιγε also in this life, not only after death,
μετὰ θάνατον, εἰς τοὺς ἀξιούς ἱερῶν εὐχῶν, for those worthy of holy prayers, that
ἦγουν εἰς τοὺς πιστῶς ἐνεργούσι. Τὸ δέ, is the faithful». And by the words *not*
μήτιγε, πάντως ἐνταῦθα μηδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τὸ, *only* nothing other should be under-
πόσω γε μάλλον, ὑποληπτέον³⁰. stood than *all the more*.

Oecolampadius 417/418. Quocirca profundus ille et exercitatus in diuinis

Dionysius... inquit sanctorum preces etiam in ista vita et *non tantum post mortem* prodesse iis *solis qui digni sunt ut pro eis sanctae preces fiant, nempe fidelibus*. Vbi per id quod ait: *non tantum* post mortem, nihil aliud intelligendum quam: [418] *quanto magis* post mortem?

Nogarola a5r./v. Itaque magnus Dionysius... sic scriptum reliquit sanctorum patrum preces iis conduce-[a5v.] *re qui in vita adhuc manent, nedum illis qui iam excesserint, modo ii pro quibus adhibentur, digni, hoc est fideles, sint; quo in loco verbum illud nedum omnino par est atque idem valet quod: quanto magis*.

Briani 11/12. Quocirca Magnus Dionysius... talia verba monumentis prodidit. Praeces sanctorum patrum sunt fructuosae illis qui adhuc etiam anima fruuntur *nedum* postea qui animam amiserunt dummodo digni, id est fideles, sint illi pro quibus offeruntur. Quo in loco dictio *nedum* par atque idem quod *quo magis* sonat et valet.

Oecolampadius' translation, with the notable exception of the word *solis*, follows the original much more closely than the Nogarola and Briani versions. The reformer makes no attempt to expand τῶν ἁγίων into *sanctorum patrum*. Nor does he paraphrase κατὰ τὸν τῆδε βίον as *in vita adhuc manent / adhuc etiam anima fruuntur* or indeed μετὰ θάνατον as *qui iam excesserint / qui iam animam amiserunt*. However, his rendering of εἰς by *solis* alters the entire emphasis of the original. [Pseudo-]Damascene is using the *Hier. eccl.* to emphasise the necessity of offering prayers for the living and for the dead since those prayers are efficacious so long as they are offered for the faithful. In other words it is the action of offering prayers that is essential. The prayers will necessarily have the correct effect. And this is indeed the sense conveyed by Nogarola's and Briani's translations. Yet Oecolampadius asserts that regardless of whether they are offered for the living or for the dead, prayers will only work for the faithful.

³⁰ MPG 95, 249, Verona 1531, 142r.-v.

Priority is thus given to faith. If the subject is faithful, any prayer on his behalf will work.

Oecolampadius, as we have seen, has no hesitations on occasions about tampering with his original. He does so much more blatantly than in any of the passages already discussed when translating the section in which [Pseudo-]Damascenus cites [Dionysius] on prayer.

«Διὸ τοῖς ἀνιέροις, ἦγον» τοῖς ἀφωτιστοῖς οὐκ ἐπέυχεται ταῦτα κεκοιμημένους.» Καὶ ἀόθις «Οὐκοῦν ὁ θεῖος ἱεράρχης ἐξοιτεῖται τὰ φιλα θεῶ, καὶ πάντως δωρηθησόμεθα»³¹.

«And for this reason he does in no way pray thus for the profane or the unbaptised deceased.» And again [Dionysius says]: «therefore the holy high priest prays for things which are pleasing to God and which He will generally grant.»

Oecolampadius 418. Et ideo pro *prophanis* et *baptismate non illustratis*, si defuncti fuerint, preces eas non facit. Et iterum: sanctus itaque antistes petit quae *diuinitus promissa* sunt et quae grata Deo et quae omnino daturum credit.

Nogarola a5v. Quapropter ista *ec profanis*, hoc est luce carentibus, post dormitionem minime precatur. Rursus: postulat igitur sacer antistes quae Deo grata sunt et penitus concedenda.

Briani 12. Prophanis autem, hoc est luce carentibus, post dormitionem huiusmodi res non praecatur. Flagitat quoque sacer praesul quae Deo ingrata non sunt et quae prorsus concedenda sunt.

We might note that in translating ἀφωτιστοῖς by *baptismate non illustratis*, Oecolampadius shows a much greater awareness of patristic theological terminology than either Nogarola or Briani, who translate literally: *luce carentibus*. However, Oecolampadius also departs from his original by his insertion of *diuinitus promissa sunt*. If we are to discount the remote possibility of the Adelman MS. containing this variant, Oecolampadius can be said to be making a deliberate effort to harmonise [Pseudo-]Damascenus' and [Pseudo-]Dionysius' doctrine of prayer with that put forward by Luther. We might note that Luther in his «Sermon von dem Gebet», published in 1519, defined prayer in the following terms: «Zum 1. Das eyn gepeet recht gut sey und erhoeret werde, seynd zwey ding von noeten, das erste, Das man von gott eyne vorheyssung odder zu sage habe und die selbe zuvor bedencke etc.»³². It is this very doctrine that is imported by Oecolampadius into his translation of «De his».

Conclusion

We have already had occasion to note the condensed style of Oecolampadius' translation and, independently of that, the close relationship that exists between Nogarola's and Briani's versions.

Nogarola's translation (more elegant than that of Oecolampadius) does nothing to bring out the nuances of [Pseudo-]Damascene's theological vocabu-

³¹ MPG 95, 252, Verona 1531, 142v.

³² WA 2, 175.

lary. Moreover, it occasionally forces the meaning of the original so as to bring out the special status of prayers for the dead and their connexion with salvation. Briani's translation is no more than a pale copy of Nogarola's. Only occasional stylistic flourishes and specifications of things left implicit by the «Veronese count» are added.

All in all, it seems as if the translation of «De his» that exercised the greatest influence during much of the 16th century was also the most «Protestant» in tone. Oecolampadius refuses to rank prayers for the dead in a special category, apart from all the other good works and thus understresses the importance of purgatory. Moreover, by manipulating the Greek text, and by frankly imposing a Lutheran doctrine on [Pseudo-]Damascene, he accords a much greater importance than his original to grace and salvation by faith. Stylistically his version tends to over-compression, yet, in spite of this, he shows a good knowledge of Greek grammar and theological terminology.

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