

The Authenticity and Historicity of the Chrysostomian Homily CPG 4333.2*

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Περίληψη: Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει την γνησιότητα και την ιστορική ακρίβεια της δεύτερης Ομιλίας περί Μετανοίας του Ιωάννου Χρυσοστόμου (CPG 4333.2), σύμφωνα με τα κριτήρια που έχουν καθιερωθεί στο πλαίσιο των χρυσοστομικών σπουδών, δηλαδή το γλωσσικό ιδίωμα των ομιλιών και το δόγμα που εμφανίζουν. Θα καταδειχτεί ότι η ομιλία CPG 4333.2 μπορεί όντως να αναγνωριστεί ως ένα γνήσιο έργο του Ιωάννου Χρυσοστόμου, αλλά θα αμφισβητηθεί η παραδοσιακή αναγνώρισή της ως προϊόν της περιόδου που ο Ιωάννης βρισκόταν στην Αντιόχεια. Η μελέτη προτείνει ότι η δεύτερη ομιλία περί Μετανοίας ανήκει στην περίοδο που ο Ιωάννης ήταν Επίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, γιατί το ιστορικό της πλαίσιο γίνεται καλύτερα κατανοητό όταν εντάσσεται στα γεγονότα, στις δολοπλοκίες στο αυτοκρατορικό παλάτι και τις προσωπικές σχέσεις που οδήγησαν τον Ιωάννη Χρυσόστομο στην τελική του εξορία και τον θάνατο. Η νέα ανάγνωση της CPG 4333.2 που προτείνεται στηρίζεται στον τρόπο με τον οποίο γεγονότα στην αυλή του αυτοκράτορα Αρκαδίου επαναδιατυπώνονται σύμφωνα με παραδείγματα από βιβλικές αφηγήσεις που χρησιμοποιούνται στην ομιλία, και πιο συγκεκριμένα την αναγνώριση της αυτοκράτειρας ως Ιεζάβελ, του ευνούχου Ευτρόπιου ως Δαβίδ και, γεγονός ακόμα πιο σημαντικό, του ίδιου του Ιωάννη ως ιδανικού ιεροκήρυκα, συνείδηση των ισχυρών και ελεγκτή των ηθών της Αυτοκρατορίας.

* This paper was originally part a chapter in my doctoral dissertation for which I studied, edited, and contextualized the manuscripts found in 2007 by the Humboldt University Nubian Expedition in a church on the Island of Sur in the Fourth Nile Cataract region in Sudan (Näser C. and Tsakos A., “From Bits and Pieces. A Corpus of Medieval Manuscripts from the Humboldt University (H.U.N.E.) Concession in the Fourth Nile Cataract”, In: Anderson J.R. & D.A. Welsby (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, Proceedings of the 12 International Conference for Nubian Studies, Leuven-Paris-Walpole 2014, pp. 977-984), among which fragments of the Chrysostomian homilies CPG 4333.2, CPG 4544 and CPG 4578 were identified (Tsakos, A., *The Manuscripts discovered at site SR022.A in the Fourth Cataract region, North Sudan*, PhD, Humboldt University, Berlin, 2018). In 2011, the suggestion for a new provenance for CPG 4333.2 was presented at the 22nd Byzantine Congress at Sofia. Since then, two new publications (Belleli A., “Justine en Jézabel. La fabrication textuelle d’une mauvaise impératrice romaine dans la première moitié du Ve siècle”, *Revue des Études Tardo-antiques* 6 (2016-2017), pp. 83-107 and Mayer W., “Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict: Controlling the Narrative Surrounding the Deposition of John Chrysostom”, In: Mayer, W., N. Bronwen and A. Christian (eds), *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2013, pp. 151-68), made me decide to publish the ideas put forward here as an independent article. For its fulfilment, I would like to thank colleagues from the Research Group for the study of Antiquity at the University of Bergen for their feedback, as well as the anonymous reviewers selected by the editors of *Post-Augustum*. The volume in honor of Dimitris Kyrtatas offered me an excellent context for this publication, since I have had the honor and the pleasure of reading some Chrysostomian texts with Kyrtatas in the framework of the Greek-Norwegian research group “Phanes” that profited greatly from Kyrtatas’ erudition and insightful remarks in the works and epoch of John Chrysostom.

Abstract: The present paper discusses the authenticity and historicity of the second Chrysostomian homily on Penitence (CPG 4333.2), according to criteria set forward in the framework of Chrysostomian studies, i.e. the language of the sermon and its doctrinal aspects. It shows that CPG4333.2 may indeed be identified as an authentic work of John Chrysostom, but challenges its traditional attribution to the Antiochian period of John. This study proposes that the second homily on Penitence belongs to John's Constantinopolitan period, because its historicity is best understood against the events, the court machinations, and the personal relationships that led to John Chrysostom's final exile and death. Pivotal elements in this new reading of CPG4333.2 are the recasting of the histories in Arcadius court according to the biblical paradigms used in the sermon, i.e. the Empress Eudoxia as Jezebel and the eunuch Eutropius as David; and above all, of John himself as the preacher par excellence, conscience of the mighty and moral controller of the Empire.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Ομιλίες, Πατερικά κείμενα, Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος, Ευδοξία, Ευτρόπιος

Keywords: Homilies, Patristics, John Chrysostom, Eudoxia, Eutropius

John Chrysostom was born in 349 in Antioch to parents belonging to high social ranks. In 367, he completed his studies of rhetoric under Libanius and on Easter day 368 he was baptized. He then spent four years assisting the Bishop of Antioch, Meletios, as a reader, but decided to retreat to the Syrian mountains in 372. Six years later, he had to return to Antioch and to his service under Meletios, due to health problems caused by severe ascetism. In 380/1, John was ordained deacon by Meletios, and in 386, presbyter by Evagrius, the successor of Paulinos, follower of Meletios. Thus, begins his extremely successful career as preacher, which will continue in the imperial capital of Constantinople, where he is summoned against his will in 398 to assume the Bishopric (Metropolitan of Constantinople). Key role in this summoning was played by Eutropius, the first eunuch to be elevated to the office of consul of the East (399), probably aiming at making of John the moral compass for priesthood and court at the capital. Things will not develop as planned though, and with the turn of the century Eutropius will lose position and get exiled, returning to the capital only to be executed. In 403, John will also be exiled by the so-called Synod of the Oak (403), dealing with matters linked with Origenism and the competition for power between the Alexandrian and the Constantinopolitan sees. He will make a brief return to the capital, only to be exiled again in 404, and die by the Black Sea on the 14th of September 407. Despite his close contact with the imperial authorities, Chrysostom's

troubles in the end of his life are considered as an outcome of his conflicts with the palace, especially with the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius (395-408).¹

The historicity of these conflicts is hard to doubt, but the core of the accusations that led to Chrysostom's exile are linked with a rhetorical topos that John appears to have used against Eudoxia, namely that he compared her with Jezebel, a biblical figure associated with the bad influence women have on their men, the evil of corrupt authority, deceitful prophecy, and lies. In recent research, however, it has been shown that the homilies witnessing this comparison, as well as details gleaned from Chrysostom's biographies relating these events, are rather of pseudepigraphic character or attempts to recast historical events in biblical shape, respectively.² Nevertheless, the immense *corpus chrysostomicum* has not been studied exhaustively yet, and new discoveries await those who turn their attention to homilies, which have still not been discussed thoroughly.

This is the case with the Chrysostomian sermon CPG 4333.2.³ It is titled variously, as with most patristic works: The *editio princeps* by Migne calls it “Περὶ Μετανοίας. Καὶ εἰς τὴν σκυθρωπότητα βασιλέως Ἀχαάβ, καὶ εἰς Ἰωῶν τὸν προφήτην” (MPG 49, 283-292). In CPG, it is identified by the opening sentence: Εἶδετε τῆ προτέρᾳ Κυριακῆ πόλεμον καὶ νίκην; Finally, it is most often referred to as the “Second Homily on Penitence”. This sermon has been traditionally considered as an original work by Chrysostom, which belongs to a group of nine sermons that have been assigned to the Antiochian period of John's career as preacher. Therefore, CPG 4333.2 has not been included in the discussion about the conflicts of Chrysostom with the imperial palace, although it contains some very fitting to that context themes, as it will be shown in this paper. Thus, it will be argued here that although the homily is indeed an original work, it fits best in the Constantinopolitan period of Chrysostom's preaching. Consequently, this identification will shed new light on the interpretation of the most crucial moments for John's life and post-mortem appreciation, improving the interpretation of a thorny topic for both Chrysostom studies and Early Christian history, namely “the narrative surrounding the deposition of John Chrysostom”.

¹ The biography of Chrysostom by Kelly J.N.D., *Golden Mouth: the story of John Chrysostom - Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*, London: Duckworth 1995, is both rich in information, sharp in its insights, and an excellent read. The main contemporary biographers of Chrysostom are pseudo-Martyrios, Palladios, Sokrates, Sozomenos, Theodoretos, Philostorgios, and Zosimos (see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 291-5).

² See Mayer W., “The Making of a Saint. John Chrysostom in Early Historiography”, In: Wallraff M. and R. Brändle (eds), *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren. Facetten der Wirkungsgeschichte eines Kirchenvaters*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2008, pp. 39-59; idem, “Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict”.

³ In referring to a work of a Church Father written before the 8th century CE, it has become the custom to use the code from the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (CPG) published by Brepols in Belgium. In referring to a text from the Greek Patristic corpus more generally, it is customary to use the pagination of the edition of the *Patrologia Graeca* (MPG) prepared by the French priest Jacques-Paul Migne (1800-1875) between 1857 and 1866. The works by John Chrysostom are contained in volumes 47-64 in MPG, but the first editions of the texts were prepared by Savile in the 17th century and Montfaucon in the 18th. Migne is considered to simply have copied the work by Montfaucon with nothing more added than some introductory notes. The edition by Migne and Montfaucon has been considered the *editio princeps*.

Introduction to the Second Chrysostomian Homily on Penitence

Homilies can be classified roughly in nine types: exegetical, catechetical/mystagogical, occasional, socio-ethical, polemical, festal, panegyric, monastic, and theological.⁴ In general, though, the homily is a “discourse which was usually, although not always, delivered within a liturgical context in church”.⁵ The Chrysostomian homilies seem to conform to this definition, and it can be expected that they make reference to the readings of the day in the Mass. One should be cautious, however, to distinguish between the sermon delivered in the church (or elsewhere),⁶ and the manuscript witness that transmitted its text to posterity. The identification of what was originally said by the homilist and what was added by notaries and copyists in the course of the transmission of the text of a homily is a challenging endeavor.⁷ Thus, although John was a figure highly involved in the everyday life of both Antioch and Constantinople – where he served in his clerical career as deacon, priest, and bishop – and his sermons were quite often inspired by contemporary events or instances meaningful for his community and flock (e.g. the series of 21 homilies *On the Statues*, MPG 49.15-222), it is not easy to contextualize historically his homilies, as it will also be exemplified in this paper.⁸

More particularly, the second Chrysostomian homily On Penitence – coded CPG 4333.2 – has been considered by the first editors of Chrysostomian corpora, namely Savile and Montfaucon as an original work;⁹ Migne adopted this opinion.¹⁰ Thenceforth, the homily has received almost no attention by scholars studying the works of Chrysostom. It has simply been treated as an integral part of the nine homilies On Penitence that constitute the work CPG 4333. Since this group of homilies is traditionally dated to the period when John was a priest in Antioch (386-

⁴ Cunningham, M., “Homilies”. In: Jeffreys, E., J. Haldon and R. Cormack (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, pp. 875-7.

⁵ Idem, p. 872.

⁶ see Mayer, W., “Homiletics”, In: Ashbrook Harvey S. and D.G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 571.

⁷ Idem, pp. 575-9.

⁸ The present paper will not examine the manuscript tradition of sermon CPG 4333.2, for which the earliest witnesses do not pre-date the 10th century, as discussed in my thesis (Tsakos, *The Manuscripts discovered at site SR022.A in the Fourth Cataract region, North Sudan*, pp. 241-55), where I show that the manuscripts from Sur might belong in fact to the earliest preserved generations in this work’s transmission history (idem: pp. 255-70). The data-base Pinakes provides a good overview of the available dates for Chrysostomian homilies, illustrating the distance between an original creation and its first manuscript witnesses, a problem that goes far beyond what can be tackled in the space and goals of the present paper.

⁹ Savile H., 1612-1613, Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου τῶν εὐρισκομένων τόμος (ἁ - ἦ) - Δι’ ἐπιμελείας καὶ ἀναλωμάτων Ἑρρίκου τοῦ Σαβιλίου ἐκ παλαιῶν ἀντιγράφων ἐκδοθεὶς. Eton. 1612, vol. VI, p. 779; Montfaucon de B., 1718-1738, *Sancti patris nostri Ioannis Chrysostomi archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opera omnia quae extant, uel quae eius nomine circumferentur*, Paris 1718, vol. II, p. 287.

¹⁰ Migne J. P., 1857-1886, *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*. Paris 1862, vol. 49, col. 277-8.

398 CE), the homily under scrutiny has also been considered as a product of the Antiochian period of Chrysostom.¹¹

The text as given in the *Patrologia Graeca* (MPG 49, 283-292) starts with a direct reference to the weekly preaching activities of John: “Did You see last Sunday the war and the glory? The war of the devil, and the glory of the Christ?” This glory refers to the losses that the devil laments having experienced from the repentance enacted that previous Sunday. John calls upon each member of his congregation to keep up their church duties and repent their sins, for this is the ultimate destruction of evil, the most essential role of the church, and the supreme achievement for a preacher.

John is subsequently using characteristic passages from the Holy Scriptures to support his argument that ‘penitence for the sins is salvation from the sins’. First, he uses a negative example from Genesis, 4:1-16: Cain does not repent for having killed his brother Abel and is reproached by God, albeit more for the lack of repentance than for the murder itself. Then, he narrates three characteristic stories of penitence achieved through different means:

- The first story refers to the repentance that David is forced to make guided by the prophet Nathan (Samuel 2, 11 and 12). The prophet Nathan accuses David of behaving like a rich man who had many cattle but nevertheless sacrificed the single goat of a poor man when a stranger came to town and some welcoming feast should be prepared. What David did was to have sent away his general Uriah to the most perilous campaign hoping that he could thus make him disappear and have Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, for himself. David’s penitence is presented as an act of free will, and thus, despite the sins committed, he becomes a paradigm for all Christians.
- The second story refers to King Ahab of Israel, whose reign is dated to the second quarter of the 9th century BCE, and whose story is narrated in the first book of Kings 16:29-22:40. The main event of the biblical narration is the wish of Ahab and his queen Jezebel to appropriate unjustly the vineyard of their neighbor Naboth (Kings 1, 16:29-22:40). Prophet Elijah confronts the king and makes him feel sad and regretful for the injustice. His sin is linked with the immoral influence of his queen, Jezebel, and his penitence is guided by mourning for the gravity of the sin.
- The third story is the one of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. The former was proud of his social standing and pious acts and prayed thus to God; the latter was humbled by shame for his sins and only asked for God’s pardon. Jesus’ parable aimed at castigating the haughty ones in his society. This form of repentance is achieved through humility. Since the tax collector is not really a humble person – rather he

¹¹ See, for example, Malainos Ph., *Ιωάννου Χρυσόστομου. Οι Εννέα Λόγοι Περί Μετανοίας*, Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece 2002.

is of low morality and quality – John has to turn to the example of humbleness par excellence.

- So, in the end, Chrysostom discusses with his audience a quotation from 1 Cor 15:9, where Paul humbles himself by claiming that he is not worth of being called an Apostle, because he had persecuted the church of God.

Somehow, it is honesty and truthfulness that is applauded in all these three forms of repentance.

But can the term “truthfulness” also be used to describe the relation of the transmitted text in CPG 4333.2 with an original homily? If the provenance of the sermon from the Antiochian period of John’s homiletical activity is to be challenged, then the investigation should also confirm that the work was an authentic Chrysostomian creation indeed, something that has not been examined in the literature yet. However, standards have already been set for conducting such examinations in the *corpus chrysostomicum*.

CPG 4333.2 in the framework of Chrysostom Studies

A very long list of academic publications dealing with various aspects of the life, work, and ideas of John Chrysostom has seen the day.¹² And rightfully so, since John was the most prolific writer among the early Fathers of the Eastern Church. Special mention should be made of the project *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci*, administered and published by the Greek Section of the Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes (IRHT) of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in France.¹³ The project was officially announced at the 4th International Congress of Patristic Studies of Oxford in 1959 and aims at the compilation of an analytic inventory of all the codices that contain Chrysostomian works. However, the project did not start before 1963. The main agents were Carter and Aubineau. Subsequently, other scholars took over the responsibility for the multiple goals of the project. Already after five years of work, and at the 5th International Congress of Patristic Studies of Oxford in 1967, Carter presented his understanding at that time of the future of Chrysostom Studies.¹⁴ Despite the publication of the *Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum* by De Aldama,¹⁵ there seemed to remain a *desideratum* to

¹² The most updated bibliography is the one compiled by Wendy Mayer online:

<http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/chrysostombibliography.html>

¹³ Augustin P., “Le programme des Codices Chrysostomici Graeci (1956-2006). Un inventaire exhaustif des manuscrits chrysostomiens grecs”, In: Fellous, S., C. Heid, M. H. Jullien and Th. Buquet (eds), *Le manuscrit dans tous ses états. Cycle thématique de l’IHRT, 2005-2006*. Paris-Orléans, IHRT 2006 [=Ædilis, Actes. Séminaires et tables rondes, 12], pp. 1-3.

¹⁴ Carter R. P., “The Future of Chrysostom Studies”, In: Cross, F. L. (ed.), *Papers presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1967*, Part 1: Editiones, Critica, Philologica, Biblica, Historica, Liturgica et Ascetica. *Studia Patristica*, X, 1. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur 107. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1970, pp. 14-21.

¹⁵ Aldama de J. A., *Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum*, Paris: CNRS 1965.

define further the criteria of authenticity for the works attributed to Chrysostom, since new works were appearing and old ones were reexamined.¹⁶

A major step ahead was achieved by Voicu,¹⁷ who elaborated diverse and detailed categories for all the possible problems of attribution in the immense corpus chrysostomicum: First, there is the problem of those Chrysostomian works that were edited or (re-)written by the followers and friends of John, since the moment that these works were produced by Chrysostom, until they arrived to us, through the various manuscripts that preserved them in the centuries that followed John's activity in Antioch and Constantinople. Then, there is the more general problem of distinguishing the spurious works from the authentic ones. Moreover, particular works that are attributed as spuria to Chrysostom need to be reinstated as authentic. Finally, these spurious works can be divided in two major categories: the ones deriving from combinations from other works; and the ones which are autonomous and integral. Despite the usefulness of this categorization, Voicu's conclusion was that the problems of studying this extensive and heterogeneous literary corpus are various and complex. Thus, more work is needed for the improvement of the research results in this specific field of patristic studies.

Carter's suggestion that in search for authenticity priority should be given to language is still generally accepted,¹⁸ albeit nuanced. Voicu referred to the importance of doctrinal criteria too,¹⁹ which a generation earlier Carter had discarded. In the present paper, both language and dogma are taken in consideration. However, although it is expected that they can provide good evidence for identifying the Chrysostomian character of a sermon, it is also desired that a given sermon can be contextualized historically. In other words, if someone wished to imitate the words and thoughts of Chrysostom, one could achieve the goal of creating a pseudepigraphon (and De Aldama's catalogue proves the point beyond doubt), provided that one possesses enough talent. Nevertheless, such a pseudepigraphic creation may be disclosed if it can be shown that it cannot belong to any concrete historical context of Chrysostom's life or that it does not fit within the framework of the established chronologies, networks, ideas, and relations that constitute the background of the homilist.

It is of course very difficult to pinpoint in time every homily from the immense corpus chrysostomicum. It is more feasible to identify the provenance of a given homily choosing between Antioch and Constantinople, based on both internal and external evidence. Thus, Wendy Mayer, in her seminal work on the provenances of the Chrysostomian homilies,²⁰ admitted that, before discussing whether a sermon was delivered in Antioch or in Constantinople, one should establish the degree of authenticity of the given work. She subsequently also assigned the primal role in such

¹⁶ Carter, "The Future of Chrysostom Studies", pp. 17-8.

¹⁷ Voicu S. J., "Pseudo-Giovanni Crisostomo: I confini del corpus", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 39 (1996), pp. 105-15.

¹⁸ Carter, "The Future of Chrysostom Studies", pp. 20-1.

¹⁹ Voicu, "Pseudo-Giovanni Crisostomo: I confini del corpus", p. 113.

²⁰ Mayer W., *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom - Provenance*, Vatican 2005 [=Orientalia Christiana Analecta 273].

studies to language.²¹ Unfortunately, in Mayer's work CPG 4333.2 is not discussed explicitly but it seems that it is understood as an authentic work of the Antiochian period of John,²² following the traditional approach introduced already by Savile (see previous section).

Conversely, in the present paper and on the basis of Mayer's work, the suggested Antiochian provenance of CPG 4333.2 will be challenged. Then, based on Voicu's definitions of authenticity, it will be enquired whether this sermon is not one among the several authentic Chrysostomian works that should be reexamined (see above). In order to do this reexamination, a more or less established path in Chrysostom studies will be followed:

First, the Chrysostomian character of the language used in homily CPG 4333.2 will be confirmed. Then, the degree to which the homily CPG 4333.2 fits into the doctrinal framework that the *Corpus Chrysostomicum* seems to belong to will be examined. Finally, the homily will be contextualized in its historical setting.

The Language of the Sermon CPG 4333.2

Given the very large number of works attributed to John Chrysostom (more than 800 sermons, in addition to treatises, letters etc. that in the *Patrologia Graeca* of Migne occupy 18 volumes in total, namely from PG 47 to PG 64), it was impossible to complete an exhaustive survey of all the details pertaining to a definition of what might be termed 'Chrysostomian language' for a study like the present one. However, with the help of a tool like TLG,²³ it was possible to isolate a set of examples that portray the linguistic preferences of John, in the following manner: The language of selected passages from CPG 4333.2 were compared with the language of similar passages from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), as can be identified through advanced search options in the database.²⁴ The results demonstrated the degree to which some phrases are characteristic of Chrysostom both as common expressions in his works and as elements, which appear more often in Chrysostomian works rather than in works of other Fathers. These elements and expressions can be grouped in the following categories, for each of which one example is given:

1. The use of common expressions that characterize the rhetorical style of Chrysostom. A good example is the phrase ἵνα δέ μάθῃς ὅτι which appears 24 times in the TLG database, among which 16 come from works of Chrysostom. Two of these examples derive from the second homily *On Penitence*.
2. The inclusion of biblical quotes in a Chrysostomian homily that have become characteristic of his work. Here follow two examples that illustrate the appurtenance of such speech to Chrysostom's habits and thus bespeak the originality of the language:

²¹ Idem, p. 26.

²² Idem, pp. 35-273, especially p. 255, Table 13a and p. 261, Table 13b.

²³ <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu> (last accessed 7th of March 2021).

²⁴ The passages were selected on the basis of the text preserved in the manuscript fragments studied in the frame of my doctoral dissertation, as explained in note 1.

- a. From the Old Testament, the expression λέγε σύ τάς ἀνομίας σου πρῶτος (“admit yourself first your unjust actions”) from Isaiah 43:26 that appears 26 times in the TLG, in various contexts, 15 of which are in works of John – twice in two different homilies of CPG 4333.
 - b. From the New Testament, the expression τά σκεύη αὐτοῦ (δι)αρπάσαι (“and spoil his goods”) from Matthew 12:29 and Mark 3:27, referring to the expulsion of demons from possessed humans by Christ without the help of Satan, by using the metaphor of the burglary of the house of the rich man. The expression finds 123 entries in TLG, but only 82 of them depend on the biblical text. Among these, two are the New Testament passages themselves, five are from *Catena* of the New Testament, and one from the *Constitutio Apostolorum*. 28 different authors share the rest of the 74 examples. 12 are from works of Chrysostom, while most citations (21) come from works of Cyril of Alexandria. Two of the 12 Chrysostomian citations come from homily CPG 4333.2.
3. There are also particular combinations of words that although they seem very common, are actually very rare, and still appear mainly in a Chrysostomian context. Very characteristic is the phrase ἀκρόπολιν... καθεῖλεν (“levelled the citadel”) that strangely (exactly because it can apply to many military narrations) finds only five examples in the TLG database. Among these, two derive from Chrysostomian works and they are quite revealing: one comes from CPG 4333.2 and the other from one of the most famous letters from exile to his closest acquaintance in Constantinople, Olympias. Thus, the combination of these two words add definite weight to the demonstration of the originality of the language of the homily under scrutiny.
 4. Finally, the use of rhetorical schemes like the rhetoric questions, which are very common in all the Chrysostomian works, should be pointed out. Several are attested in the sermon CPG 4333.2. Here is a phrase from the beginning of the third section (MPG 49, 287):

Ἔχεις δέ μετανοίας ὁδόν καί ἐτέραν. Ποίαν δὴ ταύτην; Τό πενθῆσαι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Ἡμαρτες; πένθησον καί λύεις τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Ποῖος κάματος οὗτος; οὐδέν σε πλέον ἀπαιτῶ, ἢ τό πενθῆσαι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Οὐ λέγω σοί πελάγη τεμεῖν, οὔτε εἰς λιμένας καταγαγεῖν, οὔτε ὁδοιπορῆσαι, οὔτε ὁδόν ἄπειρον ἀπελθεῖν, οὔτε χρημάτων ἀγρίων ποιήσασθαι δίοδον, ἀλλὰ τί; Πένθησον ἐπὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

(Translation: “But you have another means of repentance. Which is that? To mourn for the sin. Did you commit a sin? Mourn and you absolve the sin. Where is the difficulty with that? No more do I ask from you, but to mourn for the sin. I am not asking you to cross seas, nor to tow boats in the harbour, nor to travel long journeys, nor to go on an endless road, nor to make a passage by wild means, but what? Mourn over the sin.”).

As it will be seen in the next section, the ideas behind the specific passage are revelatory of Chrysostom’s mindset and attitude as a church leader.

The above examples illustrate to a satisfactory degree, in my opinion, the Chrysostomian character of the language of the sermon under scrutiny.

Doctrinal Aspects of the Sermon CPG 4333.2

Following the established path of scrutinization of a homily in the framework of Chrysostom studies, the degree to which the doctrinal ideas expressed in sermon CPG 4333.2 are similar to those often expressed by John Chrysostom is the next topic to be examined. In other words, it needs to be checked that the constituent parts of the given homily, the biblical references and imagery that John is using in the sermon under scrutiny, are themes found commonly in Chrysostom's works in general. This fact was relatively easily established through consultation of the TLG database.

1. First, the idea presented in point 4 of the previous section is representative of the easiness of repentance and forgiveness – in contrast to the austerity of ascetic ideals that do not oversee sins so easily – which was so particularly Chrysostomian that it both raised controversies among Christian rigorists and was used by his accusers in the Synod of the Oak.²⁵
2. Then, concerning the story of Cain and Abel that opens the series of paradigms in the Chrysostomian sermon: John dedicated no less than 67 homilies to various topics of the Book of Genesis (CPG 4409), the sequence from the 18th to the 21st homilies referring to the incidents around Cain and Abel. In general, there are 221 references to Cain in the works of Chrysostom and 170 to Abel.
3. The confrontation of David and Nathan (attested three times in CPG 4333.2, i.e. in MPG 49.286 and 287) is attested in seven different works:
 1. Once in the *Contra Iudaeos, Gentiles et haereticos* (CPG 4506; MPG 48.1077).
 2. Once in his commentaries *In Matthaeum* (CPG 4424; MPG 58.641).
 3. Once in his commentary *In Epistulam ad Hebraeos* (CPG 4440; MPG 63.31).
 4. Once in the sermon titled *In illud: Vidi Dominum* (CPG 4417).
 5. Five times in the homily *De Jejunio, de Davide* (CPG 4676; MPG 62.761).
 6. Twice in the seventh homily of the *De Penitentia* Series (CPG 4333.7; MPG 49.328).
 7. Eight times in the first homily *On the Title of the 50th Psalm* (CPG 4544; MPG 55.530, 566, 572, 573 and 580).
4. A combined search in the TLG entries for the names of both king Ahab and his wife Jezebel returns 13 passages, two of which come from CPG 4333.2. Individually, king Ahab is mentioned 88 times and Jezebel 37 in Chrysostom's works. Both are mainly used as examples of evil deeds and corrupt power. Therefore, their figures could be powerful literary weapons for a homilist to

²⁵ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 220-1.

castigate unjust imperial authority. In fact, the conflicts that led to the exile of John have been seen in certain biographical traditions as the outcome of his attack against the Empress Eudoxia who was compared with Jezebel. However, recent research has shown that all the homilies that make such explicit statements should be considered as pseudepigraphic texts that were produced in the aftermath of John's deposition and death in the battle that arose around the question of his sanctity between Chrysostom's supporters and enemies.²⁶ Nevertheless, there are also six references to Jezebel in five original works – and CPG 4333.2 is not included in this list of course:

1. *De sanctis Bernice et Prosdoce* (CPG 4355; MPG 50, 629-640)
2. *In Matthaëum* – two references (CPG 4424; MPG 57-58)
3. *In Epistulam ad Romanos* (CPG 4427; MPG 60, 391-682)
4. *Fragmenta in Jeremiam* (in catenis) (CPG 4447; MPG 64, 740-1037)
5. *In Epistulam ad Philippenses* (CPG 4432; MPG 62, 177-298)

In all these examples, Jezebel is a paradigm for the negative values that she is usually associated with: corrupt authority; greediness and lust for luxury; temptation, fornication and prostitution; vainglory, audacity and fakeness. Sometimes she is the only example used, but mostly one of many that Chrysostom reminds his audience about. This list shows that the figure of Jezebel was a common theme for John. Whether in any of those, there was an indirect reference to specific individuals in his community in Antioch from where most sermons seem to derive is impossible to know, without a similar scrutinization of the contents of each work against the various historical instances that Chrysostom got involved, as is the case with CPG 4333.2 and which will be analyzed in the next section.

5. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is also used repeatedly. Suffice it to refer here to the three individual homilies that were consecrated to the specific passage: CPG 4591, 4664, and 4716.
6. The same goes for the reference to Paul from the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1Cor 15:9), to which CPG 4428 has been dedicated.

The above lists consist of references from 16 different works. Seven of these references derive from works dated to the Antiochian period of Chrysostom (7 out of 17, i.e. CPG 4333.7, CPG 4355, CPG 4409, CPG 4424, CPG 4427, CPG 4428, and CPG 4432), two are Constantinopolitan creations (CPG 4417 and CPG 4440) and seven more are of unknown provenance (CPG 4506, CPG 4676, CPG 4544, CPG 4447, CPG 4591, CPG 4664, and CPG 4716). It is difficult to make any assumptions based on such a small statistical basis, since it is the case that the Antiochian period is much longer than the Constantinopolitan (12 vs. 5 years), while individual ideas may reappear across these two periods. Strong evidence for belonging to one rather than the other can best be given either through internal references (e.g. naming in a given sermon of individuals or places or incidents known from other sources) or through

²⁶ Mayer, "Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict".

external indications (e.g. a given sermon fits a historical background known from other sources).

Therefore, the next question that logically derives from this analysis is whether the stories used in CPG 4333.2 fit into a historical context of John's life; in other words, whether it would be possible to identify the historical circumstances,²⁷ which could explain the compilation of a sermon combining these biblical narrations. In order to find an answer, the sermon's contents will have to be analyzed deeper.

The Historicity of the Sermon CPG 4333.2

In his narration of the life and work of John Chrysostom, Kelly states: "Like other preachers then and now, John was evoking famous biblical figures to press home his homiletical message..."²⁸ This point is of importance for a possible interpretation of the historical realities that Chrysostom was addressing with this homily. This means that the confrontation of David and Nathan, the story of king Ahab, and the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector could have been used by John to address in an evocative way specific problems faced by his congregation, or the social circles he was active in.

It is striking that in the first two stories the central figures are royal. Both David and Ahab were kings. In his life as preacher, the kings that Chrysostom knew were the Emperors Theodosius (347-395 CE) and his sons Honorius (384-423 CE) and Arcadius (377/8-408 CE), who ruled the Western and the Eastern parts of the Roman Empire respectively, as inherited in 395 CE by their father. Under Arcadius, John served as Metropolitan of Constantinople. Therefore, it is important to question the identification of CPG 4333.2 as written during the Antiochian period of Chrysostom, and examine whether it fits best the period of John's life, when he was closer to the kings of (New) Rome.

Ascending the throne of Constantinople, Arcadius married Aelia Eudoxia who was to become Augusta in 400 CE. In sources that post-date Chrysostom's era by centuries,²⁹ Eudoxia appears to have attempted to confiscate in 401 CE, with the

²⁷ Sermon CPG 4333.2 can also be seen in relation to the liturgical pattern that it presents: preaching every Sunday on the basis of a selection of readings consisting of a passage from the Old Testament – and in the case of CPG 4333.2 this would have been Kings – a passage from the Gospels – in the case of CPG 4333.2 this was Luke – an Epistle – in the case of CPG 4333.2 Paul's first letter to the Corinthians – and a Psalm – in the case of CPG 4333.2 this could have been Psalm 50, where the confrontation of David and Nathan occupies a central place. The reference to Cain and Abel should in this context be understood simply as a paradigm with no direct liturgical function, or at least not one clearly discerned yet. I have not been able to define whether this pattern, which had indeed become the norm by the time John served in Constantinople (Guillaumin M.L., "Bible et liturgie dans la prédication de Jean Chrysostome", In: Kannengiesser, C. (ed.), *Jean Chrysostome et Augustin. Actes du colloque de Chantilly 22-24 septembre 1974*, Paris: Beauchesne 1975 [=Théologie historique 35], pp. 163-4), was only used in the capital, or in other important centers, like Antioch, or larger parts of the Christian Empire.

²⁸ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 240.

²⁹ See Mayer W., "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress: The Destruction of Eudoxia's Reputation", In: Drake H.A. (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and Practices*, Hampshire: Ashgate 2006, pp. 207-8.

support of imperial orders and manipulation of the legislation, a small vineyard belonging to the widow of the unjustly accused and exiled Theognostos.³⁰ Two biblical narratives used in CPG 4333.2 match this accusation against Eudoxia: on the one hand, she would have behaved like David, who exiled Uriah to marry Bathsheba, because she caused the exile of Theognostos in order to obtain possession of the property she longed for; on the other hand, Eudoxia acts precisely like Jezebel who appropriated the vineyard of Naboth, since she appropriated the vineyard of the widow of Theognostos. In the former story, Eudoxia should mirror the person of David, which would be awkward, since she was a young woman and David an old man. At the same time there would be no space for the real ruler, her husband Emperor Arcadius. But in the latter story, two queens are reflected based on the repetition of the exact same act. Moreover, the incident with the vineyard appears as the cause for Chrysostom's anger which made him compare Eudoxia with Jezebel and thus set in motion the reactions in the palace that would lead to his exile. Finally, Arcadius is thus treated fittingly, paralleled to the biblical king Ahab.

Eudoxia as Jezebel

The main biographer of Chrysostom, Palladius (368-before 431 CE), suggests that his final condemnation (after the Synod of the Oak in 403 CE)³¹ was due to John's comparison of Empress Eudoxia with Jezebel: "The crime of high treason was the insult he had given the empress, according to the synod's report, in having called her Jezebel" (Palladius, *Dialogue* 8).³² However, the homily that is traditionally associated with this decisive conflict, namely *In decollationem S. Iohannis*, has been considered as a pseudepigraph. Actually, all the passages that contain a direct accusation of Eudoxia behaving like Jezebel come from four homilies that have been considered as pseudepigraphic:

1. MPG 52, 427-432 or pseudepigraphon 422, according to Aldama's repertorium;
2. MPG 52, 432-435 or Aldama 18;
3. MPG 52, 435-438 or Aldama 528;
4. MPG 59, 485-490 (the above-mentioned one) or Aldama 381.

As has been pointed out by Van Ommeslaeghe,³³ the uneasiness by modern scholars to accept that the insulting comparison was really pronounced publicly has been due to the wish to portray John Chrysostom as a serene saintly figure and not as a selfish bishop or an irritable preacher of social equality. The question of pseudepigrapha is much more complicated than just formal aspects of language, ideas, and content can portray. It may, for instance, appear to be linked with the wish of (earlier) researchers

³⁰ For a discussion of the story, see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 170-1.

³¹ For a discussion of these events, see idem, pp. 211-27.

³² Translation by Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 228.

³³ Ommeslaeghe van F., "Jean Chrysostome en conflit avec l'impératrice Eudoxie", *Analecta Bollandiana* 97 (1979), pp. 131-159.

to elevate the biography of Chrysostom to a hagiography of Saint John. If Van Ommeslaeghe does not see the comparison of Jezebel with Eudoxia as a historical fact, it is not because of any such embarrassment. His reasons are linked with his conviction that the truth in this detail of John's biography is attested in a single source, namely pseudo-Macarius,³⁴ who actually rejects altogether the historicity of the main event with the appropriation of the vineyard. However, all the other biographies of Chrysostom include the event in the narration and, in fact, admit that John compared Eudoxia with Jezebel.³⁵

More recently, Mayer has shown how the same narrative may have been used by those who were John's enemies in Constantinople and who had wished to find an explanation for his exile. Accusing Chrysostom of having castigated publicly and unjustly the pious and kind Empress by comparing her with Jezebel could prove their cause.³⁶ In the end, however, John was restituted, sanctified, and his writings used even in these parts of Eastern Christianity that could claim belonging to the partisans of his enemies, i.e. the contra-Chalcedonians. How did this happen?

During the Synod of the Oak (403 CE), Epiphanius of Cyprus and Theophilus of Alexandria led the party that opposed Chrysostom and succeeded in deposing and exiling him. When Christianity moved from the Arianist and Origenist crises of Chrysostom's era, towards the Council of Chalcedon and the ensuing schism between Constantinople and its southern and oriental peripheries, where the contra-Chalcedonian dogma prevailed, Chrysostom risked of being condemned as a cleric who opposed father-figures for the contra-Chalcedonians, like Theophilus. Theophilus does not appear as an innocent figure though, neither in pro- or contra-Chrysostom sources; his memory was also in need of redemption. Finally, it will be the creation of the image of a "Jezebelian" Eudoxia that alleviated the position of both Theophilus and Chrysostom, allowing the sanctification of both, contrary to the fate of the Empress. Mayer has demonstrated the gendered violence that lies behind this process.³⁷

Moreover, there is another dimension in this specific literary tradition of accusing the Empress of behaving like Jezebel: Chrysostom was not the only one to use this comparison in Late Antiquity. Another famous story is the conflict between bishop Ambrosius of Milan and the empress Justina, wife of Magnence (350-353) and Valentinian I (364-375). Valentinian had to divorce his first wife, Marina Severa, to marry the beautiful Justina, who gave him one son, Valentinian II (375-392), and two daughters Grata and Galla, the latter becoming in 387 the wife of Theodosius. Justina's years of glory were during her regency as *mater Augusti*, for more than a decade after Valentinian II was placed on the throne of his father at the age of four. The imperial family moved to Milan, where Ambrosius was Bishop since 374, and

³⁴ Ommeslaeghe van F., "La valeur historique de la Vie des S. Jean Chrysostome attribuée à Martyrius d'Antioche (BHG 871)", *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975), pp. 478-483.

³⁵ For these biographies, see Halkin F., *Douze récits byzantines sur Saint Jean Chrysostome*, Bruxelles 1977 [=Subsidia hagiographica 60].

³⁶ See Mayer, "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress"; idem, "The Making of a Saint. John Chrysostom in Early Historiography"; idem. "Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict".

³⁷ Mayer, "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress".

free from Valentinian's authority and control Justina is supposed to have openly expressed her Arian sympathies. The culmination of such heretical behavior was the demand for a church to be given to the Arians who were numerous in Justina's court, obviously as a wish to confirm the imperial authority. The reaction of Ambrosius should have come as no surprise, nor perhaps the comparison of Justina with Jezebel. This time the appropriation concerned not a small field of a widow but a church of a powerful bishop's see. A recent analysis of the related sources by Amélie Belleli illustrates the point that the image of Jezebel became in Late Antiquity a *topos* for the bad Empress;³⁸ actually, as the story of the conflict between Chrysostom and Eudoxia shows, for all Empresses against whom the Church representatives had to oppose for one or another reason.

The similarities of the rhetorical *topoi* used in homilies with the events presented as historical reality in biographies, hagiographies and chronicles seem to point to the direction of a recasting of the history of the Late Roman Empire in biblical narrative molds. In other words, details that are included in the "standard histories" of Late Antiquity should be reexamined under the light of narrative frameworks provided by the biblical works. The popularity of such practices has been in fact established for Christian hagiography and finds its origins in the tradition of biblical typology,³⁹ where the communication between the Old and the New Testament is developed in a correspondence between biblical passages and historiography.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, neither the use of a *topos* in the literature, nor the remodeling of the historical narrative to fit such *topoi*, can prove that a homilist, like John Chrysostom, did not use precisely such *topoi* in his sermons. After all, what would be more efficient in bringing the message across to one's audience/congregation than such rhetorical *topoi*? In the words of Kelly: "It would be surprising ... if so forceful and fearless a pastor [like John] had refrained from reminding her [namely the empress Eudoxia], and his congregation, of the shameful precedent for such behaviour".⁴¹

In fact, the homilies that refer to Jezebel without naming Eudoxia explicitly might provide the missing link between factual history and literary fiction: Chrysostom had indeed used the story of Jezebel in his sermons, but without directly naming Eudoxia; since such homilies were heard by his congregation, members of which – or descendants in their families – would still read the pseudepigrapha produced in the course of the 5th century, it would make sense for those producing the pseudepigraphic texts to anchor their contents on material that has been used by Chrysostom and which provide clear evidence of his audacity. This way of thinking can be read as a strengthening factor to Mayer's use of Lakoff's cognitive theories: "It doesn't matter who actually claimed that John framed Eudoxia as Jezebel or Herodias,

³⁸ Belleli, "Justine en Jézabel".

³⁹ Harvey S.A., "Martyr Passions and Hagiography", In: Harvey S.A. and D.G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, pp. 603-27.

⁴⁰ Patlagean E., "Ancient Byzantine Hagiography and Social History", In: Wilson S. (ed.), *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, London: Cambridge University Press 1983, pp. 101-21.

⁴¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 171.

and who denied the claims, the framing and language stick; once they started to circulate, because of the implicit moral values (Jezebel and Herodias were already framed in both Hebrew and Christian scripture as enemies of true religion) the point of view would quickly become entrenched and almost impossible to defeat. The repeated metaphoric application to John within the same partisan sources of a defined array of Old and New Testament heroes (e.g. Daniel, Elijah, Joseph, John the Baptist) can be viewed as part of the same successful discourse".⁴² The success of this discourse (the "sticking" of language and framework) only increases when it is anchored in a lived experience, one where John uses himself the metaphor, even if implicitly, as in CPG 4333.2.

The Second Chrysostomian Homily on Penitence provides in fact precisely the evidence that is necessary so as to be identified with the text that Chrysostom would have prepared and delivered in 401, when his troubles with the imperial couple reached a climax. And this evidence concerns the historical contextualization of the story of the confrontation of David and Nathan.

Eutropius as David

There was another figure who exercised great influence at both the court and the Empire in general, and who appears in both authentic and pseudepigraphic Chrysostomian works: The eunuch Eutropius who played a pivotal role in John's summoning to Constantinople. Eutropius is in fact the central figure of another story of machinations at Arcadius' court that fits Nathan's parable surprisingly well: In 396 CE, during his early efforts to ascertain his position at the court, Eutropius plotted against the influential commander general of the East, Timasius, accusing him of treason. As a result, Timasius was banished to the Libyan oases never to be heard of again. Then, the ambitious eunuch also threatened the wife of Timasius, Pentadia, with destruction, but she found protection under the ecclesiastical asylum of John's bishopric see. Eutropius attempted to cancel the right to seek sanctuary in churches (Socrates 6.5 and Sozomen 8.7) only to be cornered by his own legislative measures four years later, when his fate at court changed and he fled to the only place he could find protection: The Cathedral of John!

John mercifully granted asylum to Eutropius. Nevertheless, this gesture did not offer Eutropius a favorable change of fate for he was eventually captured and executed; but Pentadia had stayed as a deaconess near John and she was one of the women in Chrysostom's circle in Constantinople to whom he would send letters in the difficult years of his exile. Obviously, in 401 CE, a year after the incident of Eutropius' fall, a reference to the event would be meaningful for certain ears, like Pentadia's, listening to John's preaching from the bishopric throne; especially if his task was to achieve penitence on the one hand by evoking the penitence of Eutropius that was accepted by John, and on the other by comparing the paradigmatic behavior

⁴² Mayer, "Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict", p. 164.

of a woman of honors like Pentadia, so much lower in social status, but superior in moral standards, than the recently declared Augusta Eudoxia.

As to the logic of paralleling Eutropius with David, two points can be raised in support:

1. The powerful eunuch had become an object of mockery in the western half of the Empire where it was unthinkable that a eunuch could rise to become a consul. Front man in these mockeries was the Latin poet Claudianus who composed two works against Eutropius (*Against Eutropius*, Poems 1 and 2). Among the accusations raised was that he was promiscuous despite his mutilated sexual state (can this be an allusion to a hidden aspect of the adventure with Timasius and Pentadia?), and that he remained ambitious despite having grey hair – ἐν ἑσχάτει πολὺ, in the terms that Chrysostom used in the homily under scrutiny here referring to David's old age.
2. John described David as both a king and a prophet, insisting on his role as a prophet. Surely, as the consul of weak Arcadius, Eutropius might have made decisions and indeed moved to actions that in fact belonged to the duties of the 'king of Constantinople'. Moreover, Eutropius might have wished to appear as possessing the charisma of prophecy, since in the days of Theodosius he was delegated the mission of delivering a prophecy from John of Lycopolis on the outcome of the expedition against Eugenius in 395 CE (cfr. Anonymous, *Historia Monachorum* I; Rufin, *Historia Monachorum* I; Pallade, *Historia Lausiaca* 35; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI 28 and VII 22). In any case, Claudianus, who expressed the disgust of the West against the ambitious eunuch, mocked him for precisely such an attitude (Poem 1, 312). The 'prophetic' nature of Eutropius may also be discerned in his pivotal role in persuading the court at Constantinople to appoint John, at the time an eloquent priest at Antioch, as bishop of the capital city. Obviously, the eunuch was aiming at controlling the imperial couple by pressing hard on their moral scruples through a strict preacher, delivering sermons of ascetic discipline with the authority of the bishop at the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

There is of course the question whether John would have ever spoken favorably about Eutropius, and especially after his death when the memory of the eunuch was probably buried for good. Apart from the unlikely but still very plausible option that he wanted posthumously to support the mind behind his ascension to the patriarchal throne, who was also his main supporter in stamping out paganism in the regions around the capital,⁴³ there is always the possibility to consider John and Eutropius as potential allies in an imperial court where no one could trust the other. John needed perhaps a positive influence at the imperial quarters, and Eutropius had no doubt selected John with the hope that he would act favorably for his causes.⁴⁴ The outcome disproved them both, but still John could use the example of the experience of

⁴³ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 142 and 146.

⁴⁴ Cameron A., "A Misidentified Homily of Chrysostom", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988), p. 47.

Eutropius' conflict with Timasius and Pentadia, precisely because it raised him above the condemned and executed eunuch, who was in any case never mentioned.

Chrysostom created a masterpiece of intertextuality and weaved the memories of his audience with the thread that was provided by stories that both he and his congregation knew only too well. As the preacher, he stood in front of them as the authority controlling these memories through the narratives he was commenting, and in which he could choose a role for himself – and his office – too.

John as Nathan, as Elijah and as Paul

The allegories that John Chrysostom created with the narratives from the books of Samuel and Kings are completed by the fact that for the homilist's perspective the key figures are not David and Jezebel, but Nathan and Elijah respectively.

“The prophet came to the prophet” and taught him the will of God in the story from Kings. John identifies himself with Nathan,⁴⁵ and reminds of his role in admonishing Eutropius, fighting against his legislation, but in the end offering him also asylum – the forgiveness of God that Nathan helped David attain.

If someone could misunderstand David for the ruling king Arcadius, there is no harm for Chrysostom. In the narrative from Samuel, he identifies himself with Elijah, who castigates Ahab for what Jezebel is responsible for. Arcadius should repent, although the strictest punishment is prepared for Eudoxia, as he already had shown in his commentary on the Pauline Epistle to the Romans, where Jezebel who trapped Ahab in sin is doomed to receive a punishment equal to that of the snake who trapped Eva in sin.

John presents himself in the court of Constantinople as the prophet par excellence, in a crucial moment for the state and ecclesiastical affairs in the city, when his relationship with the palace was dangerously out of balance for some reasons that should be rather seen as other than the historicized biblical incident with the widow's vineyard.

His excellence reached even higher scales in the last section of the homily: Luke 18:14 gives a very fitting framework for judging the misbehavior of the priesthood; we know very well that John was eager to chastise and cleanse the Church from all corrupt elements right from the first moment he assumed his position in the Church of Constantinople.⁴⁶ Moreover, he had good reasons to demand the alliance of some and the repentance of others during the incidents that were used by a group of

⁴⁵ As a side line, it is interesting to note that in his journey through Heaven, in the third part of his *Divina Comedia*, Dante is guided through Paradise's nine spheres by his beloved Beatrice. In the Fourth Sphere, which is the realm of the Sun, Dante meets the souls of the wise, who help illuminate the world intellectually. Two groups of twelve such illuminati are presented. In the seventh and eighth place of the second group, we find aside each other Nathan, the prophet, and Chrysostom, the metropolitan (cfr. www.divinecomedy.org). According to the analysis of Erich Auerbach (“Nathan und Johannes Chrysostomus”, *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 67 (1951), pp. 118-123), the coexistence of Nathan and Chrysostom at this place of the *Divina Comedia* can only be explained by precisely the comparison of their audacious critique against the abuses of the secular authorities of their time, namely David and Arcadius – or rather Eudoxia – respectively.

⁴⁶ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 116 ff.

John's enemies as an opportunity to accuse him of disrespect and treason. In a counterattack that aimed to intimidate the arrogance and lack of penitential morality by some members of his priesthood, John glorified his favorite Apostle Paul,⁴⁷ not simply as a preacher and a priest, but as an example of humbleness. A very clever rhetoric play by a master of the art, who in his self-promotion went even beyond assuming the roles of the minor prophets of the Old Testament (Nathan and Elijah) in front of misled secular authorities (David and Ahab), by daring to set his own person beside Saint Paul.

But what saves Chrysostom from *hubris* if such an interpretation of the sermon is correct? In the homily under scrutiny, he did not directly attack anybody (οὐκ εὐθέως ἐλέγχει), but those who understood the affairs of the court at Constantinople understood the message very well. Or even too well, for those at least who set in motion the battle of the pseudepigraphs in the early 5th century. Moreover, he can be seen as the creator of his own pseudepigraphs, because he spoke of the things he discussed as if they belonged to the realm of other persons, the holy figures from the Scriptures that he was using in the Liturgy. One is reminded of Stang's religious/psychological approach to the divine inspiration in composing a work that is assigned to a more important figure than the composer him- or herself:⁴⁸ Someone wrote a letter and assigned it to Paul or Peter; a treatise and assigned it to Dionysius the Areopagite; a sermon and assigned to Chrysostom, and so on. There is a performative act in this type of writing, and Chrysostom was not alien to these tendencies. By narrating his own historical momentum through the method of biblical typology, without naming anyone present, he could safely assume the role of the most important persons among those that were participant in the original biblical narrative.

Thus, the quote from Kelly with which this section began can now be completed and assume its full meaning: "Like other preachers then and now, John was evoking famous biblical figures to press home his homiletical message, and we can be sure that he pointed no finger overtly at the empress."⁴⁹ nor did he need to explicitly point to himself as the most praiseworthy of those involved in the conflicts at Constantinople in the turn from the fourth to the fifth centuries CE.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, it has been shown that the Chrysostomian homily CPG 4333.2 has been correctly placed among the authentic works of John. Nevertheless, its assignment to his Antiochian period seems to be the outcome of the battle of the pseudepigraphs, which has perplexed enormously the understanding of both Chrysostomian literature and its historical contextualization. By setting CPG 4333.2 inside a Constantinopolitan historical framework though, this paper may have managed to improve issues on

⁴⁷ Mitchell M., *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2000.

⁴⁸ Stang C.M., *Apophysis and Pseudonymity in Dionysius the Areopagite: "No Longer I"*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012.

⁴⁹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 240.

both ends: by correcting the provenance of an important work it was possible to plausibly fill a gap in Chrysostom's activities as Bishop at Constantinople, where his relations with Eutropius can now be better appreciated. Eudoxia was never compared by Chrysostom as Jezebel; although John had all the intentions to do so, he managed to conceal the castigation in a very eloquent manner indeed.