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THE SON(S) OF ALYPIUS

VIE ET MIRACLES

DE SAINTE THÈCLE II.38

One of the more affecting stories of Saint Thecla's healing concerns the teacher Alypius of Seleucia (*Mir.* 38).¹ Stricken with a wasting illness which brought him and his family to despair, Alypius at last took refuge in the saint's shrine. There he slept, and in his sleep was visited by Thecla, herself « a lover of *λόγοι*, a lover of the Muses, ever showing grace to those who speak her praises in polished speech ». When the saint asked what troubled him, Alypius replied by quoting the answer once made by Achilles to the similar question put by his mother Thetis (*Il.* 1.365): « You know: why am I to tell you, who know all these things? » Thecla then « smiled, delighted with the man and the verse, struck with wonder that he made so suitable a response », and began the process leading to his cure.

The story is memorable as a record of Thecla's concern for a man of the traditional literary culture (cf. *Mir.* 37.5 ff); and it is perhaps equally memorable for the notice it appears to give of « une dynastie de professeurs » at Seleucia.² Thus at the outset we meet not only the grammarian Alypius who receives Thecla's favor (= *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, II, s.v. Alypius 3, p. 62), but his son Olympius, himself a grammarian of some note (= *PLRE* II, s.v. Olympius 10, p. 803);³ while another cultured son, Soly-

¹ G. DAGRON, *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle*, texte grec, traduction et commentaire. (Brussels, 1978, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, n° 62).

² Cf. DAGRON, p. 129.

³ *Mir.* 38. 1-2 Ὀλυμπίου τοίνυν τοῦ γραμματιστοῦ τοῦ πάνυ Ἀλύπιος τις ἦν πατήρ, καὶ αὐτὸς γραμματιστῆς τε ὢν καὶ τῆδε τότε παιδεύων. Both Olympius' renown and Alypius' familiarity with Homer make it clear that γραμματιστῆς here (as at *Mir.* 39. 5-6 ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἰσοκάσιος καὶ ἀπὸ γραμματιστοῦ σοφιστῆς γεγονώς...) does not denote the (low-status) « elementary teacher » (cf. H.-I. MARROU, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*⁶ [Paris, 1965], p. 221),

mius (= *PLRE* II, s.v., p. 1020), seems to be added to their number, devoting half his day to *λόγοι* and half to caring for his father during his illness.⁴

But is the record of this family all that it appears to be at first sight? The question is prompted by two anomalies in the text as it is now constituted. On the one hand, Olympius is mentioned with some fanfare in the first sentence (quoted n. 3) as a grammarian and son of Alypius: but although he is introduced there with the phrasing and emphasis that the author elsewhere uses to introduce a central actor in a story,⁵ Olympius simply vanishes from the anecdote, not to be heard of again. On the other hand, the second son, Solymius, *does* play an important role; yet he first appears, mid-way in the story (*Mir.* 38.34-5), suddenly and simply as *ὁ παῖς ὁ Σολύμιος*, with no introduction at all, as though he had already been brought to our attention.

The inconcinnity is palpable — sufficiently so to cause one to suspect the presence of corruption. I would therefore propose that we are dealing not with two sons but with one, and that *ὁ παῖς ὁ Σολύμιος* at *Mir.* 38.34-5 is a garbling of *ὁ παῖς ὁ Ὀλύμπιος*. The easy corruption would have been due originally to a combination of scribal perseveration and anticipation (*ὁ παῖς ὁ Ὀλύμπιος* > *ὁ παῖς ὁ Σολύμιος*), one of the most frequent forms of textual corruption in general, and particularly common in the manuscripts of the family

but is used as a stylistically acceptable substitute for the (technical/professional) title *γραμματικός*, a usage favored by certain classicizing authors (e.g. Aelius Aristides, Themistius, Libanius: cf. P. WOLF, *Vom Schulwesen der Spätantike: Studien zu Libanius* [Baden-Baden, 1952], pp. 32ff, P. PETIT, *Les étudiants de Libanius* [Paris, 1956], p. 85 n. 194). This usage is consistent with what we know of the author of the *Vie et miracles*, a man possessing a rhetorical education (and perhaps even a former rhetor) concerned to present the story of Thecla in a polished style, cf. DAGRON, (op. cit. n. 1) pp. 17ff.

⁴ *Mir.* 38. 40-3 *ὁ Σολύμιος οὗτος, καὶ ὡς φιλόστοργος καὶ ὡς φιλόλογος, τὸ μὲν τι τῆς ἡμέρας τοῖς λόγοις ἀπένευε, τὸ δὲ τῷ πατρὶ· καὶ μέχρι μὲν ἕως ἦν, ἐνεκατέρει τοῖς λόγοις, μεσημβρίας δὲ ἠκούσης ἀνίει πρὸς τὸν πατέρα...*

⁵ With *Mir.* 38.1 *Ὀλυμπίου τοῖνον τοῦ γραμματιστοῦ...*, compare *Mir.* 7.1 *Τὸν Δεξιαρὸν τοῖνον...*, *Mir.* 11.1 *τοῦ τοῖνον κατ' Ἀδρήλιον γεγονότος θαύματος...*, *Mir.* 29.1 *Ἦν τοιγαροῦν Μαριανός τις...*, *Mir.* 35.1 *Πάππος τοιγαροῦν τις καὶ Ἀλλέριος...*; and cf. the introductions to *Mir.* 9 (Menodorus), 13 (Satornilus), 14 (Hypsistus), 16 (Ambrosius), 17 (Leontius), 23 (Pausikakus), 32 (Dexianus), 39 (Isokasius), 40 (Aretarchus), 42 (Kalliste), 43 (Bassiane).

Ψ with which we are dealing here ⁶. The one subsequent mention of « Solymius » (*Mir.* 38.40 ὁ Σολύμιος οὗτος..., quoted n. 4) would then be a secondary corruption, the result of the attempt to « correct » the name by bringing it into agreement with the form found a few lines earlier ⁷. With respect to the chain of corruption suggested here, it is important to remember that the *Miracles* are preserved only in manuscripts of the family Ψ, which is further removed than the family Σ from the « texte primitif ». ⁸

If this suggestion is correct, then, it would be the grammarian Olympius whom we find in the heart of the story, giving his attention to λόγοι (i.e., to his profession) until noon each day, tending to his father for the balance of his time, and finally assisting in his cure — precisely what we should expect from the way in which father and son are introduced at the anecdote's beginning. The correction would of course somewhat reduce the size of this professorial « dynastie » of Seleucia; but it would also make our author's story far more coherent.

University of Chicago

Robert A. KASTER

⁶ For the convergence of perseveration and anticipation (esp. in the family Ψ), note : *Vie.* 18. 4 μελλούσης [-σαν codd.] ἀναπίμπλασθαι ; 19. 31 δλως ὡς θεοσημείας, ἀλλ' οὐ [ὡς D] τῆς τοῦ θηρίου φύσεως ; 20. 19 τοῦς κινδύνους ἐπαύξοντα [-αντας M] ; 21. 21 λύπη ἐπι-[-ἐν- Ψ]δειξάμενος ; 23. 31f σωφροσύνης καὶ ταῖς [τῆς VA P B] ; 27. 30f τῆς Κήτιδος [Σκητι- MT] ; *Thaum.* (p. 286) 34-6 τοῖς χρησθεῖσιν αὐτοῖς, ἢ καὶ χρησαμένους [-οῖς VMA] μὲν, συναπολομένους [-οῖς VMA] δὲ ἄρδην αὐτοῖς... ; *Mir.* 11. 45 τῶν μὲν ἐπιθεόντων [-θεουσῶν A], τῶν δὲ φευγουσῶν ; 24. 14f καὶ ἴσα λάμποντες [ἴσα ἐπιλάμποντες M], καὶ ἴσον ἐπὶ πᾶσι... ; 26. 19 ἐξ ἐκάστου [ὡς ἐξ ἐκάστου V] φυτοῦ τε καὶ πέτρας, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ἐκάστης ; 26. 28 ἐνσκιρτῆσαι φαιδρότατα [σφοδρότατα V] ; 27. 22f μέχρις ἐτουπερ εἰς τὸ ὑπο-[-ὑπερ- V]κείμενον ; 40. 29 ταύτην ἐκπομπεύει [-ειν MA]. πλήν... Cf. also n. 7 following.

⁷ Secondary corruption (i.e., a faulty « correction » influenced by a prior corruption) can be inferred, e.g., at : *Mir.* 34.52-3 ὄλετο... ὄλετο] ᾄχετο... ᾄχετο VM ; 35.1-6 Πάππος τοιγαροῦν... Πάππος]Πάππους τοιγαροῦν... Πάππους V ; and cf. *Mir.* 17.30 θυ θεασάμενος [-νον MA] ἐκπλαγῆναι λέγεται [ἐκπλαγῆ λέγεται γένεσθαι A, where γένεσθαι is clearly a « correction », interpolated after the initial corruption of ἐκπλαγῆναι to ἐκπλαγῆ] ; 23.9f τοῦ νέου προτεμένισμα [τῷ... προτεμένισματι V], ᾧ ὄνομα... (where one can conjecture that προτεμένισμα was « corrected » to -ματι after τοῦ became τῷ under the influence of the following ᾧ). In *Mir.* 38 it is of course possible that the seat of the initial corruption was the second appearance of the name (38.40 ὁ Σολύμιος οὗτος) with 38.34-5 ὁ παῖς ὁ Σολύμιος the result of a subsequent « correction ».

⁸ Cf. DAGRON, pp. 149-51.