AMPHILOCHIUS OF ICONIUM, HOMILY 5: ‘ON HOLY SABBATH’. TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

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ABSTRACT

Holy Sabbath, the eve of Easter, celebrates the burial of Christ, when his body remained in the tomb. But the homilists of the Early Church also celebrated it as the time when Christ did battle with Death and, as conqueror of Hades, liberated the dead. In this homily Amphiblochius follows tradition in referring to this aspect of the celebration of Holy Sabbath, but at the same time dedicates a large part of the homily to a polemic against the Jews, pointing out the futility of their doing battle against a ‘dead’ Christ by guarding his tomb. The homily exhibits a strong rhetorical character, including several images and personifications, while in his polemic against the Jews the preacher bestows a dramatic dimension on his homily by means of apostrophe and dialogue. The paper offers a translation in English accompanied by a running commentary, both translation and commentary following the general structure of the homily.

1. Introduction

Homily 5 is the shortest among the extant Greek homilies of Amphiblochius (born 340-345).\(^1\) It exhibits a strong rhetorical character and contains several arresting images, including the use of personifications. This variety of rhetorical figures and sentence structure gives rhythm and flow to the spoken word, so typical of Greek rhetoric. Written as an encomium for Holy Sabbath,\(^2\) the homily, which is the oldest homily on Holy Sabbath which we possess, celebrates the burial of Christ, his descent into Hades and subsequent victory over Death. As such it belongs to the so-called ‘Christus Victor’ homilies written for Holy Saturday or the paschal vigil. These homilies presented the death of Christ and his descent into hell in terms of a

\(^{1}\) For the life (and works) of Amphiblochius, see especially K. Holl, Amphiblochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den grossen Kappadoziern (Leipzig 1904) 6-42; and C. Daema, Amphiblashii Iconiensis: Opera (Turnhout 1978) ix-xxx.

\(^{2}\) In the tradition of the ancient church, the sacraments were not celebrated on Holy Saturday, when Jesus’ body rested in the tomb. The altar remained bare and unadorned, without cloths, candles or cross. See J.C.J. Metford, The Christian Year (London 1991) 63.
spiritual warfare in which the Saviour broke into the fortress of the underworld, released the captives of Satan, and led them in a triumphal procession into heaven. Hesychius of Jerusalem (c. 380-c. 455), on the liturgical setting of whose homilies we have much information, and who is a near contemporary of Amphilochius, provides another good example of this type of homily.

But this celebration of Christ’s victory over Death serves not only as exhortation to the congregation to experience joy in view of this victory, but especially as polemic against the Jews, which is in line with the fact that homilies dealing with Holy Week and Easter are especially characterized by their anti-Judaic polemic. The largest part of the homily is directed at their frenzy and folly, a great section thereof in the form of apostrophe. This anti-Judaic polemic in Early Christian homilies is often a mere topos, not reflecting an actual animosity, but tending to be there for theological and exegetical reasons. There are exceptions, such as Melito's *Peri Pascha* and John Chrysostom's homilies against the Judaisers, and I have in two recent publications pointed out that Proclus of Constantinople strongly suggested in one of his homilies (2.9: *PG* 65.697C) that Jews were often present at Christian services, at least as far as Constantinople was concerned, and that, at the conclusion of the service, they would mock and ridicule the preacher's words, naturally in order to provoke Christians. Thus the question of whether this is purely a patristic topos or is reflecting actual tension is still debated.

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4. I.e. 1.7-13, 2.37-4.83.
5. See e.g. K.W. Nosakes, ‘Melito of Sardis and the Jews’, *Studia Patristica* 13 (1975) 244-49; R.L. Wilken, ‘Melito, the Jewish community at Sardis, and the sacrifice of Isaac’, *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) 53-69.
The purpose of this article is twofold: firstly to provide the reader with a translation of the homily into English, and secondly to offer a commentary on the nature of the homily as an \textit{encomium} on Holy Sabbath. With this in view, the translation is offered in the form of sections representing the general structure of the homily as outlined below, followed by a commentary at the close of the translation of the homily as a whole.

2. General structure of the Homily

- 1.2-7: introductory remarks on the festive occasion for which the homily has been written.
- 1.7-13: reference to the possible ridicule by Jews and pagans regarding the Christian philosophy.
- 1.13-17: the joy of Christians: Christ’s death is a victory over Death.
- 1.17-20: reaction of Nature contrasted with that of the Jews regarding Christ’s suffering for mankind.
- 2.30-37: the mystery of Christ’s suffering.
- 2.37-43: Christ’s prayer for his killers: his goodness and love for mankind.
- 2.43-51: The Jews reject his goodness and plan a strategy against a ‘dead’ Christ.
- 2.51-4.78: extensive dialogue with imaginary Jew regarding the fears of Jews concerning a ‘dead’ Christ.
- 4.79-83: final comment on the blindness of the Jews.
- 4.86-88: concluding doxology.

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3. Translation\textsuperscript{12}

1.2-7: the exordium — the feast of ‘today’

(2) Today we celebrate the feast commemorating the burial of our Saviour. And while He is \textit{below}, at the side of the dead, breaking the bonds of Death, and filling Hades with (his) light, and awaking those who have gone into the sleep (of death),
(5) we \textit{above on earth} celebrate, contemplating the resurrection; and we fear not corruption,
and (fear not) that it will prevail over incorruptibility. For it reads: ‘You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption’ (LXX Ps.15.10).

1.7-13: the ridicule of Jews and pagans

And perhaps Jews and pagans ridicule our philosophy: the former expect another Christ, the latter have enclosed their expectations in tombs,
(10) concerning whom the prophet aptly says: ‘The tombs are their homes forever’ (LXX Ps.48.12).
But they, who are ridiculing, groan, for they will groan afterwards when they look ‘upon the one whom they have pierced’ (John 19.37) and (against whom) they have committed (this) outrage. But we, who are weeping, let us blend our grief with joy.

1.13-17: Christ’s death a victory over Death

Death has seized the Lord Christ, but he shall not detain Life at his side.
(15) In ignorance he gulped (Him) down, but he will vomit forth many together with Him. He is now willingly held captive, but after this very day He will rise, having despoiled Hades.

1.17-29: Nature and the Jews

Yesterday, when He was crucified, He caused the sun to suffer eclipse,\textsuperscript{13} and in the middle of the day night occurred,

\textsuperscript{12} Note that the numbers in brackets refer to the lines in the Greek text.
\textsuperscript{13} See Matt. 27.45 et passim.
(but) *today* Death is destroyed because he received a strange corpse.

*Yesterday* creation mourned when it saw the frenzy (20) of the Jews and it put on darkness as mourning robe,

(but) *today* 'the people who sat in the darkness have seen a great light' (Matt. 4.16).

*Yesterday* the earth was shaken14 and was resolved on flight and threatened those who dwell on her that she would split open,15 and the mountains were smitten, and the rocks were cleft.16
And the temple was naked – just like a living being who has torn his robe;
(25) through what it suffered, it was showing that the Holy was profaned.

That which is without soul and life perceived the deed of daring, but they who undertook this daring act, possessed insensate souls.
The elements were vexed and almost abandoned their position and caused confusion of the universe, if it were not for the fact that they perceived the will of the Creator, that He was not unwillingly insulted.

2.30-37: the suffering Christ

(30) O new and miraculous events!
He who through his Word stretched out heaven17 is stretched out on a cross-tree.18
And He who limited the sea by means of a sand-grain,19 is enclosed by bonds.

And He who instilled the fountains with sweetness (like honey), is given gall to drink.20
And He who crowned the earth with flowers is crowned with thorns.21
(35) And He who smote Egypt with ten plagues and covered the head of the Pharaoh in waters,22 is smitten on the head with a reed.23

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14 See Matt. 27.51 et pass. 
15 See G.W.H. Lampe, PGL, s.v. διίπθρι A. 
16 See Matt. 27.51 et pass. 
17 See Gen. 1.6. 
18 For this term see R.J. Schork, Sacred Song from the Byzantine Pulpit. Romanos the Melodist (Gainesville 1995 edition) 128. 
19 See Jer. 5.22. 
20 See Matt. 27.34. 
21 See Matt. 27.29. 
22 See Ex. 14.28. 
23 See Matt. 27.30 et pass.
And He is spit upon in the face – a face the cherubim cannot endure to look at.

2.37-43: the prayer of Christ

But while suffering these things for the sake of those who were crucifying him, He prayed as follows:

‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34).

He conquers the evil through goodness.

He speaks in defence of the (40) Christ-murderers while drawing them in his net towards salvation.

He brings to naught the accusation by blaming their ignorance.

He shows no anger towards their disorderly conduct by becoming an object of contempt.

He accepts their spiritual intoxication and through his love for mankind He calls (them) to repentance.

2.43-51: the Jews reject God’s goodness – their strategy against a ‘dead’ Christ

Why should I say more?

Having purchased nothing of his kindness, they enclose in a tomb the One whom nothing of that which exists, can enclose.

and (45) they put a seal on it, thus guarding for us the salvation, and because they fear the resurrection, they place soldiers as guards at the tomb.24

Who has seen a corpse being guarded?

And what is more: who has seen a corpse being made war upon?

Who has heard of a death being doubted, yet putting fear into those who have accomplished it?

Who has not ceased fighting against an enemy after taking his life?

(50) Who has not dismissed enmity having been satisfied with the death of his (51) enemy?

2.51-53: the Jews questioned on their fears regarding a buried Christ

Why do you fear the One whom you destroyed, o Jew?

Why are you afraid of the One whom you have killed?

Why tremble at the One who has departed?

Why fear the One who has been made away with?  
Why are you distressed regarding the One whom you crucified?  
(Surely) you have assurance from the slaughter!

2.54-58: the Jews exhorted to courage, since for them Christ is dead and merely a man

Have courage!  
If the One who is dead were a mere man, He will not rise.  
If He were a mere man, (55) you have rightly erected the cross.  
If He were a mere man, there is no truth in what He said:  
'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2.19).  
If He were a mere man, He is held captive by Death.  
If He were a mere man, why seal the tomb, foolish one?

3.59-71: the Jews are encouraged to cease fighting against God

Wait until the third day and you will see the refutation of your own madness.  
(60) Stop wasting your time and you will observe the outcome of your transactions.  
Stop raging against the truth.  
Stop doing battle with God and by doing battle wound yourself!  
Stop insulting the Sun of righteousness 25 and stop thinking that you can extinguish those rays!  
Stop trying obstinately to silt up the Fountain of life.  
Stop troubling the authorities and stop talking about a guard.  
(65) Stop buying the lie and set the heavy-armed soldiers in motion.  
Do not labour on what is useless.  
Do not spend your money (life?) on impiety.  
Do not pay soldiers money to tell a different story.  
Do not gather the crowd next to the tomb.  
Do not have confidence in weapons.  
(70) Weapons cannot prevent Him rising from the tomb, and He26 is not thwarted by seals, nor hindered by soldiers, nor kept secret by money.

25 See Mal. 3.20.  
26 In the Greek the subject is ἀπαντάσις.
4.72-78: the resuscitation of Lazarus as symbol of Christ's divine power over Death.

But are you disbelieving?
Did you not earlier see Lazarus shake off Death like sleep?
Did you see how the corpse obeyed the command and that the bonds did not prevent (him/it)?
Did you see how (75) he was walking (clothed) in grave-clothes when he heard: ‘Come out!’ (John.11.43).
Did you see how the voice set in order the one destroyed by Death?
He is the one who could do that27 and He will be able to do this.28
He who raised the slave is himself being raised with much more ease!
He who produced the rotten corpse alive, will not allow himself to be a corpse.

4.79-83: final comment on the blindness of the Jews

But the fact is that the blindness of the Jews is great, and while seeing (80) the miracles, they do not see.
They have eyes but do not see,
They have ears but do not hear" (LXX Ps. 113.13-14).
‘For the god of this world has blinded their hearts to keep them from seeing (the light of) the gospel of righteousness’ (2 Cor. 4.4).

4.83-88: moral exhortation and concluding doxology

Well, let us meanwhile leave them to their disbelief, but let us, (85) while contemplating in our minds the tomb of the Saviour, say in unison with the companions of the faithful Mary:
‘They took away our Lord and we do not know what they have done with Him.’29
To Him belongs the glory
together with the immaculate Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and forever,
and for eternity. Amen.

27 ‘That’ refers to the resurrection of Lazarus.
28 ‘This’ refers to Jesus’ own resurrection. The positioning of the resurrection of Lazarus in the Gospel of John points forward to the resurrection of Jesus (cf. John 12.1). In the liturgical year the feast of Lazarus falls on the Saturday before Palm Sunday.
29 See John 20.13.
4. Commentary

1.2-7

- **Today:** In homilies of a festal nature, the preacher usually refers in the *exordium* to the particular festive occasion, the catchword being most often *shvmeron* (the feast of 'today'), whereby the historical event celebrated in the homily is turned into a present experience for preacher and audience. Seen from a different perspective: Amphilochius here transforms himself and his audience into participants of the historical event of the cross and the burial of Christ. This motif is reflected in the very opening sentence of the homily, defining the *shvmeron* which is celebrated as *epitavfion episthentou smhiro - hwmh* (*epistavomen*).

- **While He is below:** In spite of the word *epitavfion* in the opening lines, the tone is far from sombre. One could almost add the word *epiphanion* to the phrase, for Amphilochius in three statements, in victorious tone, informs the congregation how Christ below, at the side of the dead, is (i) breaking the bonds of Death, (ii) filling Hades with his divine light, and (iii) awakening the dead. There exist various traditions concerning the 'descensus Christi ad Inferos':

  (a) Christ attacks the portals/gates of the fortress of Hades and, after a battle with Death, liberates Adam and mankind (LXX Ps.106.16; LXX Isa. 45.2; Iesu M instructionis Nicodemi, pars II ione Descensus Christi ad Inferos cap. 5(21); Amphilochius, *Hom.* 5.1.3-4, and *Hom.* 6.15.370-79; Proclus of Constantinople, *Hom.* 11.1 (PG 65.784B), 29.2.5, 29.3.11 (ed. Leroy); Romanos the Melodist 42.8.6-7 (ed. De Matons).

  (b) Christ proclaims to those in the underworld the salvation from original sin and Hades brought about by his victory over Death (1 Pet. 3.19-21; Romanos the Melodist 45.6.7; 7.3).

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30 For a classification of the ancient (Greek and Latin) homily, see especially A. Olivier, *La predicación cristiana antigua* (Barcelona 1991) 511-14. For an overview of the festal homily, see Old (note 3) 95-105.

31 In such homilies the word 'today' (*shvmeron*) often initiates the use of anaphora in the prologue.

The victory over Death is obtained by means of guile: Christ descends into the underworld disguised as a human being, is unwittingly swallowed by Death, and then forcibly vomited forth together with the dead (Amphilochius, Hom. 5.1.13-17, and Hom. 6.9.215-12.312, 6.15.367-70; Proclus of Constantinople, Hom. 11.1 (PG 65.784A)).

- The dead: The dead are called τους κοιμηθέντας, 'those who have gone to sleep/who are sleeping'. Since the coming of Christ and his victory over Death, those who have died in Christ are merely sleeping (see Mark 5.39). For this concept see especially John Chrysostom, De coemeterio et cruce I, and M.M. Beyenka, 'Cemetery, a word of consolation', CB 28 (1951) 34.

- We above the earth celebrate: The victorious character of the opening passage of the homily is confirmed by the fact that the audience, the 'we', celebrate Christ's resurrection, his victory over Death: it is a celebration free of all fear of corruption, for corruption, Amphilochius reminds his audience by quoting Ps. 15.10 (LXX), has no part in the life of God's Holy One. He underlines this by the accumulation of related concepts in: ἐκ τῶν ἐκς τῶν θανάτων ... διὰ τὸν θάνατον (1.6-7). Notice also the contrast between κατωτέρω and ὑπὲρ γῆς: below the battle and victory, above the celebration.

- The citation of Ps. 15.10 (LXX) is the first in a line of 8 direct quotations from Scripture (apart from numerous allusions) by means of which Amphilochius wishes to confirm and underline specific theological and polemical statements throughout the homily. This points, not to an exegetical frame of mind, but rather to a use of Scripture to verify his arguments. This is often the case in festal homilies as opposed to the exegetical (expository) genre, which deals with 'l'explication d'une lecture biblique'. Here in this festal homily, which draws its themes from the liturgy, it is almost as though these biblical citations are merely introduced as witnesses to his argument against the Jews and pagans and in favour of the truth of...
At the same time Amphilochius also employs the traditional method of typology, interpreting, in accordance with Acts 2.27 and 13.35, the holy one as a reference to Jesus Christ.

1.7-13

- Jews and pagans ridicule (our philosophy): The joyous character of the exordium is almost minimized by a probable (\(\text{\textit{\\textbf{}}}\)) case of ridicule on the part of the Jews and pagans. Homilists of the patristic age often present their audience with a discourse against an imaginary enemy, whether Jew, pagan or heretic. For the purpose of this technique, see commentary on 2.51-53.

- Our philosophy: The early Christians used this term in reference to the Bible (following Philo), and specifically the Christian religion. Our philosophy is thus the equivalent of 'our religion', and in the context of this homily, it refers in particular to the Christ-event of death and resurrection. Opposed to this philosophy, the Jews, not recognizing Christ as the true Messiah, expect another Messiah. The reference to the pagans in the context of Ps. 48 (LXX) should be related to Acts 17.22-32 (Paul's speech on the Areopagus), and especially 17.32: when the Athenians heard him speak of the resurrection of the dead they ridiculed Paul's message. In this sense – according to Amphilochius – the pagans, by ridiculing the resurrection of the dead, enclose their expectations in tombs, which are their homes forever.

- They will groan … blend our grief with joy: Although the preacher acknowledges the congregation's grief resulting from Christ's death and burial, this will soon be replaced by joy, for already Christ's divine power is revealed in Hades. And he can therefore exhort them to blend their grief with that joy, while Christ's victory causes the enemy to groan and wail. This contrast between the

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35 See also Old (note 3) 68-69.
38 For 'philosophy' as a term for the Jewish religion, see Clement, Str. 1.28 (p. 108.24; PG 8.921C); Methodius, Symp. 7.4 (p. 75.15; PG 18.129C); as a term for Christianity, see Justin I, Apol. 26.6 (PG 6.369A; Melito of Sardis, Frg. 1.7.20 (ed. Hall)).
Jews/pagans and the audience is neatly expressed by a chiastic arrangement of the concept grief – joy (abba):

(a) gelw`si ... gelw`nte~ (1.8, 11): Jews/pagans
(b) stenavzousi ... stenavxousi u{steron (1.11-12): Jews/ pagans
(b) dakruvonte~ to; pavqo~ (1.13): Christians
(a) hjonhv(1.13): Christians

• The preacher’s exhortation that the congregation should experience joy, is no idle hope, but stems from a sure knowledge of the divine power of Christ. He therefore transports them again to Christ in the realm of Death, where he pictures Christ, as he did in the opening lines of the homily (1.2-3), as conqueror of Death. This picture of the victorious Christ in Hades is drawn in three statements (1.13-17) of an antithetical nature (notice the thrice-repeated ‘but’), a technique to which Amphilochius also returns below in 2.30-37.

• In ignorance … gulped down: The concept of Death gulping down Christ in ignorance and vomiting him forth together with many, is one of three traditions related to his descent into Hades, as noted above. It refers to the fact that Death was ignorant of Christ being divine, not knowing that he was not yilo;~ a[nqrwpo~, but in fact a[nqrwpo~ te kai; qeov~. Christ is therefore ironically referred to as xevnon (!) nekrovn in 1.19. A related image presents the devil gulping down the divinity of Christ, like a fish the bait. Amphilochius uses this very image in homily 6 (par. 9.243-47).

• Captive … despoils: Although taken captive by Death, Christ as man and God despoils Death and will consequently rise as victor over Death. See comments above on the traditions connected with Christ’s descent.

• Willingly taken captive: The concept that Christ suffered willingly is often stressed in patristic homilies on the passion of Christ. The locus classicus for this concept is John 10.18: ‘No one takes it (i.e. my life) away from me; I am laying it down of my own free will, I have the right to receive it back again.’

1.17-29

• The sun … creation etc.: Amphilochius now turns to another topos in connection with Christ’s suffering and death: the involvement of creation and nature in this Christ-event as if they were living beings
(see 1.24 ‘just like a living being’). This *topos* has here been formulated in the form of a comparison between events of ‘today’ (*shvmeron*), Christ’s burial and descent into Hades, and ‘yesterday’ (*cqev~*), his crucifixion. (Note, however, that the first *shvmeron* has already been expressed by the preacher at the very beginning of the homily (1.1), and the ‘yesterday’ that opens this section actually presents the second part of the comparison, which follows the pattern: *today* – *yesterday*). The scheme involves the eclipse of the sun, the grief and mourning of creation, the shaking of the earth, the mountains and the rocks, as well as the temple, the robe (curtain) of which was rent. This enumeration of elements of nature is not mere embellishment, but serves to intensify his polemic against the Jews: in their frenzy they crucified the Lord, but the eclipse of the sun, the mourning of creation, and the shaking of earth, mountains and rocks, as well as the events in the temple, are seen as expressions of awe and horror on the part of these elements in the face of the actions against Christ, their Creator. Amphilochius emphasizes this contrast between nature and Jews by means of a play on words: he refers to the Jews as ἀπαλαίπθησαν ἐκὼν ὑποκατεύοντα, while the elements of nature, although they are called ἡ ὅλη, ἀνεπάντο, did perceive (ἐπεταπείνων) this outrageous deed on the part of the Jews (1.25–27). In a closing statement the preacher summarizes this reaction of the elements: they were vexed, and almost abandoned their position and caused confusion of the universe (1.28–29). What prevented this confusion was again the fact that, in contrast to the senseless Jews, they sensed that Christ was insulted according to his own wishes, a motif frequently emphasized in patristic texts, as noted above in the commentary on 1.17.

2.30-37

- O new and miraculous events: At 2.30 the preacher breaks off his movement from ‘yesterday’ to ‘today’ with an *exclamation* (*W kainw`n... pragmatwn*) that serves both as reflection on the immediate

39 This *topos* is based on statements in both the Old and New Testament, e.g. Deut. 4.26; 30.28; 32.1; 3 Kings (LXX) 16.31; LXX Ps. 68.34; 95.11; Isa. 1.2; Luke 23.44-45; Matt. 28.2). Cf. further Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* (ed. S.G. Hall) part. 97–98, lines 717–29). See also J.H. Barkhuizen, ‘Creation and nature as personifications in the homilies of Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople’, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 83 (2001) 161-70.

40 For this, see Barkhuizen (note 9: 2001) 19-22; and F.J. Leroy, *L’Homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople*. Studi e Testi 247 (Vatican City 1967) 166-68.
foregoing section (1.17-29) and as introduction to the following section (2.30-37) which deals with the mystery of Christ’s suffering. In this connection the words kaion kai paradwun are significant: they set the tone of what is to follow, namely the mystery of God’s oikonomia, realised in the suffering Christ, but who is at the same time Creator of the universe.

- He who … is This double nature of Christ sets the pattern for Amphilochius: six antithetical statements, the first part of each relating to his sufferings as human being, and the second part to his divinity. The pattern of antithesis (humanity – divinity) is further strengthened by the grammatical pattern of expression:
  (a) verb in passive tense – indicating what is done to Christ (his suffering) = his humanity
  (b) oJ + participle42 – indicating who Christ is and what he has done as Lord = his divinity

Example (2.30-31):

Xuvlw/ tanuvetai ... oJ lovgw// teivna~ to;n oujranovn.

The six statements, contrasting his divinity with his humanity, are common in patristic homilies, some taken from biblical sources (see notes 25, 27-31).

2.37-43
As stated above, the exclamatio in 2.30 also points to the goodness of Christ and his love for mankind, which finds expression inter alia in his prayer for his killers in which he asks his Father to forgive them (Luke 23.24). Amphilochius comments on Christ’s prayer by means of another series of five antithetical statements.

- In the first statement or comment the juxtapositioning of ajgaqovthti th;n kakivan (nika`) highlights the exceptional quality of his forgiving love.
- In the second comment two images of a different nature are used: one taken from the judicial sphere (ajpologei`ta ... he speaks in their defence), the other from the world of fishing (saghnevwn ... ‘bringing them in in his net of salvation’), which may well reflect the saying of Christ when he called ordinary fishermen to become his

41 For the rhetorical figure of antithesis, see especially H. Maguire, Art and Eloquence in Byzantium (Princeton, NJ 1981) 68ff.; Old (note 3) 55-59.
42 The pattern is changed in the final statement in which Christ becomes the object of the sub-clause.
disciples or spiritual fishermen (cf. e.g. Matt. 4.18-19). Here he sets
the example as spiritual fisherman.
• The third statement again contains language pertaining to the
judicial world (ἐξικαλήματα, αἰτιώμενοι): he defends their sin as a case
of ignorance.
• Παροιμία in the fourth comment reveals the extent of the hostile
conduct of the Jews against Christ: because of their frenzy, he
becomes an object of contempt.
• Their frenzy is emphasised by μηθή in the final statement, while
παροιμία here at the close, reflects αὐξομενί: at the beginning,
and the section ends significantly with μετανοεῖ, serving as
antithetical assonance with παροιμία: not frenzy, but repentance
is what Christ requires from them.

2.43-51
• Why should I say more? The preacher curtails himself by means of a
rhetorical question, a common topos in contexts containing enumeration,
implying that the audience need not require more confirmation of
the goodness of the suffering Lord.
• Having purchased nothing: Amphilochius stresses the horrendous fact
that the Jews were left untouched by this show of forgiving kindness
by employing two images from commercial life. In the first he
expresses their rejection of his goodness (οὐχὶ ἐπεμενοῦν – ‘having bought nothing’), and in the second he illustrates their
foolish strategy against Christ (συνεσφήνη ἔπεσεν – ‘they put a
seal on it’) by enclosing him in a tomb and placing a guard there,
because of their fear that he would rise from the dead.
• They fear the resurrection. It is interesting to note in this connection that
Amphilochius condenses the biblical account, recorded in Matt.
27.62-64, by merely stating δεδομένη τὴν απαύγασιν. According to
Matthew, their fears were related to the disciples’ desire to steal the
body of Christ and then claim that he had risen from the dead.
However, by excluding any mention of the disciples stealing the
body of Christ, Amphilochius wishes to put the Jews in direct
confrontation with the resurrection of Christ.
• Who ….? The preacher points to the absurdity and foolishness of their
strategy against a ‘dead’ Christ, and he does so by means of a set of

63 The verb ἐξικαλήματα reflects the belief on the part of the Jews that they have
finally sealed the fate of Jesus.
rhetorical questions involving the use of anaphora on τις. The whole tone of the passage is one of astonished and sneering mockery, and every question relates to the absurdity of continuing to fight against a dead and fallen enemy.

2.51-4.78: dialogue with imaginary Jew regarding the fear of the Jews concerning a dead Christ

This is the longest section of the homily and points to the fact that Amphilochius intended it to serve at the same time as polemic against the Jews (including 1.7-13, 2.43-51, and 4.79-83). Because of its length, it is here divided into four sub-sections to facilitate comprehension. The division is mainly based on rhetorical principles:

- 2.51-53 – introduced by why-questions
- 2.54-58 – introduced by if-clauses
- 3.59-71 – introduced by imperatives (wait – stop – do not)
- 4.72-78 – introduced by questions (did you …?)

2.51-53

- O Jew: We have here both a continuation and change in style: although Amphilochius persists with rhetorical questions (‘who?’ becomes ‘why?’), he changes from indirect to direct discourse, from general terms (the Jews) to an imaginary Jew (w Joudai`e), Amphilochius thus employing the rhetorical device of apostrophe.44 In this way the preacher creates a definite dramatic effect: 45 both he and the audience are involved more directly with the sacred events forming the subject-matter of the homily. The preacher wishes to incite the feelings of his audience to the same level of intensity as his. He wishes to share with them his rejection of the conduct of the


45 See also Datema (note 11) 53: ‘Een geliefd stilmiddel, om de aandacht van het gehoor te vangen en om de uit te leggen bijbelse pericoop op dramatische wijze tot leven te brengen.’
Jews against Christ, and thereby make himself and his audience witnesses to this act of futility and absurdity against the ‘dead’ Christ.

* Why do you fear ...? While the content of the first set of rhetorical questions (2.46-51) was the absurdity of their strategy against a buried Christ, the second set relates to their fear: δελιάλ — τρεμε — δολια — ἀπονια — all picking up δολετ — of 2.45. In view of the fact that Jesus is now a νεκτω, Amphilochius mockingly consoles them that this is, in fact, their ασφάλεια — ἀγκών για — τινά — ἀσφάλειαν), and they should therefore have no fear. His sarcasm is strengthened by a short, curt ἄκρει, which introduces the next sub-section.

2.54-58

* If he were a mere man. The preacher’s mock encouragement is based on a series of conditions, of which the ‘if’ forms part of an extended ἀναφορά consisting of the phrase εἰς ἰλν — ἀναφορά —. This phrase has important Christological significance and is part and parcel of what Amphilochius has defined above (1.7-8) as ἡ Ἰουνία τῆς φιλοσοφίαν. Amphilochius deals with this concept more extensively in Hom. 6.13,313-38, while among other homilies dealing with this aspect of Christ’s humanity and divinity, homily 1 of Proclus of Constantinople is famous and well known. The following lines illustrate this well:46

But born-of-a-woman were not mere God, and not mere man (Hom.1.2).
Unless he were born of a woman,
He would not have died.
Unless he had died,
He would not have destroyed ‘through his death
That is, the devil’ (Heb. 2.14) (Hom.1.3)
O Jew, he then who bought us, was not mere man ...

But neither was he God bereft of a human body … (Hom.1.8).

Notice the fact that Proclus also addresses an imaginary Jew in Hom.1.8.

Christ, then, was not mere man, nor mere God, and Amphilochius deals with the first aspect, since the Jews believed that he was mere man (as did Death, who swallowed him in ignorance, 1.15); they should therefore have no fear that he will rise from the dead for he is held captive by Death. Thus they have done well in erecting a cross. And if this is the case, that he was a mere man, why seal the tomb? Such conduct points to foolishness (αποκρήτε). With this final phrase of par. 2 (τὸ τάλον σφραγίσαν), Amphilochius picks up και ειμνετρα σφραγίσαν of 2.44-45, and at the same time αποκρήτε, coming as the final word of this sub-section, prepares the audience for a more vehement attack on the foolishness of the Jews.

### 3.59-71
This section is structured as follows:

- **3.59-60:** opening imperative regarding the third day.
- **3.60-66:** 7 imperatives in the form of anaphora on παύσαι.
- **3.66-70:** 6 prohibitions in the form of anaphora on μὴ.
- **3.70-71:** commentary on the futility of preventing Christ’s resurrection by means of weapons, seals, soldiers or money, this final section being expressed by means of chiasm and parallelism:
  
  - o{ploi
  - ouj kwluvetai (1) ... ouj ejmpodivzetai (2) ...
  - sfragivsin (1)
  - ouj elgetai (2) ... stratiwvtai (1) ... ouj kleptetai (2) ...
  - chrhmasin (1)

- **Wait until the third day …** In 2.56-57 Amphilochius has suggested to his imaginary Jew that, if Christ were a mere man, there can be no truth in what Christ said concerning his own resurrection on the third day. Of course, this was intended as sarcasm. Now he openly attacks the Jews: ‘Wait till the third day and you will see the refutation of your madness.’ Maniva~ reflects his view on the matter and recalls paroimiv~ (2.41) and the immediately preceding αποκρήτε (2.58).
- **The passage is characterised not only by the rhetorical pattern set out above, but also by its metaphorical colouring.**
- **(a)** The biblical background of soldiers guarding the tomb obviously forms the basis for the extended military image of the Jews doing
battleground (3.61-62; 67-68; 69-70). At the same time, the words of Gamaliel recorded in Acts 5.35-39, ‘... but if it is from God, you will never be able to stamp it out, and you risk finding yourselves at war with God’ in all probability also contributed to the use of this image and the focus on the futility of the Jews, although the words of Gamaliel concerned the apostles after the ascension of Christ.

(b) The well-known image from Mal. 3.20 of Christ as the ‘Sun of righteousness’ is used in 3.62-64, and the idea of the Jews not being able to extinguish its rays should be connected with John 1.5: Christ, the light of mankind, which the darkness could not extinguish.47

(c) And following John 4.10-13 (Jesus as the fountain of life) the preacher extends this image by the concept of the Jews trying to silt it up: thp pHH th zwv prswail (3.64).

- **On what is useless.** Notice finally how Amphilochius further emphasizes the futility of the strategy of the Jews by reflecting ajnH of 2.58 in ajpH of 3.67. This, as well as the imagery and the accumulation of negative commands contribute to the whole negative tone of the passage.

4.72-78

The structuring of the final part of his address to the imaginary Jew follows the same pattern of anaphora used in the foregoing passage, now on (th) eilv (4 times).

- *Did you not see ... Lazarus?* The passage opens with a question ajll j ajpistei relating to the immediately foregoing lines in which Amphilochius has emphatically stated that weapons or seals, soldiers or money could not prevent the Lord’s resurrection. To counter the disbelief of the Jews, the preacher confronts them with an event that has caused the Jews much grievance and annoyance, the resurrection of Lazarus. To appreciate the true nature of this evidence of Christ’s divine power, it will be helpful to turn to his third homily (‘On the four-day dead Lazarus’).48 In the opening paragraph of homily 3, Amphilochius points out that nothing has

47 On the significance of Christ as ‘the true Sun’, see the comments by Metford (note 2) 20-21.

irritated the Jews more than the resuscitation of Lazarus (3.1.15-16), because this was the only miracle they could not slander and deny (3.1.16-17). They slandered (ἦσακος, διατέρα) the other miracles (3.1.17-27), but they knew Lazarus well, they were part of the funeral procession, they saw the tomb being sealed and, moreover, they knew he was four days dead and that his body was already in a state of decay (3.1.28-36). His resuscitation therefore caused them much distress (ἦσακος, διατέρα), and they were unable to slander this miracle (3.1.36-41). For this reason his resuscitation was defined in the beginning of the homily as the ἁρπαξ τιθ’ ἄρα ταύτην (3.1.6-7). Amphilochius in that case using the same verbal form in addressing his audience as he does here addressing the Jew (έβας). Lazarus’ death, the preacher here in homily 5 (4.2) points out, was only ἐστή, although his body was already in a state of decay, and therefore the Jews should take notice of the fact that, if Christ could do that to his slave, he could so much more in his own case (4.76-78).39

Set in order the one destroyed: The resuscitation of Lazarus proved to be a very popular subject for homilists of both the Patristic and Byzantine Age. One of the motifs of these homilies is the recomposition and reanimation of Lazarus. In homily 3, Amphilochius states how by a single command the miracle of Lazarus’ physical restoration and his coming forth from the tomb took place – his flesh was restored, his hair, the joints of his body, his veins refilled with blood (3.5.129-132), and his soul was supported and summoned by the angels so that soul and body were

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39 See above on λειτουργεῖν.
38 Basil of Seleucia, in his homily on Lazarus, stresses more or less the same idea: (i) in the introduction of his homily, the preacher addresses his audience as follows: ‘Consider with me the difference between the Jews’ folly and the faithfulness of the Church. For (the former), on seeing the miracles with (their own) eyes, contrived to hide (these) by means of slanderous talk and overcome with malice, they did battle with the good deeds done on their own behalf’ (1.6-10); (ii) and at the tomb of Lazarus, Basil let Jesus address the Jews as follows: ‘Receive the stench of the corpse before ye bear malice towards the risen man’ (my italics). ... Because you are witnesses indeed to (his) corruption, because you have been taught (that he was) a putrifying corpse. Learn the power of the One Who speaks’ (8.9-16). The translation is by Mary B. Cunningham in ‘Basil of Seleucia’s homily on Lazarus: a new edition (BHG 2225)’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 104.1-2 (1986) 161-84.
reunited (3.5.133-35). Here he merely alludes to this miracle that demonstrates the divine power of Christ.51

4.79-83

• Amphilochius now turns from direct discourse (his invective against an imaginary Jew) to indirect commentary, pointing out the *spiritual blindness* (hJ tufl tαθ - ... tJ 'apjistia) of the Jews. Two passages from Scripture are quoted that point to the blindness and disbelief of the Jews. With this commentary he joins the ranks of both the psalmist and Paul in condemning the Jews for their obstinacy.

• *The blindness of the Jews … it does not see*: In the translation ‘the Jews’ is taken as the subject of the second part of the statement (‘seeing … they do not see’). In the Greek, however, the subject is hJ tufl tαθ, and by personifying it (hJ tufl tαθ - tJ 'apjistia), Amphilochius emphasizes the obstinacy of the Jews concerning the Person of Christ.

4.83-88

• *Let us … leave those*: Having concluded his extended polemic against the Jews, the preacher with indifference turns his back on them and returns to the subject-matter of his discourse: the celebration of Christ’s burial.

• *But let us say*: The congregation is again exhorted to become participants of the event celebrated by sharing the words spoken by the companions of Mary as recorded in John 20.13. This would seem to give the impression that the homily ends on a negative note (the women did not know where Jesus was), but as indicated above, the preacher and audience again become part of the historical situation and perspective, and in this case, the events on holy Saturday did conclude with doubt and uncertainty as to what has happened to Jesus, the women being ignorant of (as Amphilochius sees it) the battle waged by Christ against Death.

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