

COSMAS VESTITOR'S ASCETIC-PHYSIOLOGICAL  
FRAGMENT (CPG 8163)

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The ascetic-physiological fragment attributed to Cosmas Βεστήτωρ or Βεστιάριος (“keeper of the imperial wardrobe”) has long been known to scholars. It was edited in 1955 by Antoine Wenger, who stated: «Le fragment ascétique-physiologique qui se lit dans cod. Argentorat. 12,<sup>1</sup> de l’année 1296,<sup>2</sup> f. 69<sup>v</sup> et Vatic. gr. 491 f. 152<sup>v</sup> est peut-être authentique.<sup>3</sup> Nous le reproduisons pour que personne ne perde plus sa peine à le chercher.»<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, Wenger’s edition is literally riddled with inaccuracies, and is, as it stands, incomprehensible. This fragment, the only one by Cosmas to be extant in an anthology, warrants republication.

Although it is not possible to be very particular about this author, Cosmas’ activity is supposed to have started after 730 and ceased in 850 at the latest.<sup>5</sup> A further narrowing of this 120-year time span does not

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<sup>1</sup> Wenger was well acquainted with this manuscript; he found there the Greek original of an exegetical commentary of Hesychius of Jerusalem which was hitherto known in a Latin translation only; see A. WENGER, *Hésychius de Jérusalem. Notes sur les discours inédits et sur le texte grec du commentaire sur le Lévitique. Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 2 (1956) 457–470, here 464. Wenger also found out that a fragment of Chrysostom, ἐκ τῶν μυσταγωγικῶν πρὸς τοὺς φωτισθέντας λόγος γ’ – part of a series of eight Chrysostomic homilies he had discovered in the Athonite monastery of Stavronikita in 1955 – was also extant in the manuscript of Strasbourg, f. 75<sup>v</sup>; see A. WENGER (ed.), *Jean Chrysostome, Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites. SC, 50bis. Paris* <sup>2</sup>1970 (1957), 35. All the fragments Wenger mentioned are, in fact, extant in the *Florilegium Coislinianum*, and not in the Strasbourg manuscript alone. This manuscript is only one of the witnesses of the *Florilegium Coislinianum*, as will be shown below.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, its correct dating, as indicated in its colophon, is 1285–86.

<sup>3</sup> In the *CPG*, it is ranged among Cosmas’ *dubia*.

<sup>4</sup> A. WENGER, *L’Assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle: études et documents. Paris* 1955, 152, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The ms. *Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, Augiensis* 80 contains four homilies on the Dormition of the Virgin (*CPG* 8155–58). According to the most recent editor of

seem possible in the present state of our knowledge. Furthermore, the place of the fragment within Cosmas' *œuvre* is not easy to determine. It is well-known that all preserved works by this author are homilies, most of them concerning John Chrysostom: *Orationes i–v de translatione Iohannis Chrysostomi*;<sup>6</sup> *Laudatio in Iohannem Chrysostomum*;<sup>7</sup> *Vita Iohannis Chrysostomi*.<sup>8</sup> To this list may be added an *Oratio de Chrysostomi exilio*<sup>9</sup> and an *Oratio de translatione Iohannis Chrysostomi*,<sup>10</sup> both of which remain unpublished. Additionally, a *Sermo in Ioachim et Annam parentes deiparae*<sup>11</sup> and *Laudationes iii Zachariae* are preserved.<sup>12</sup> Finally, four sermons on the dormition of the Virgin Mary, extant only in Latin, have been critically edited.<sup>13</sup> It could seem that the ascetic-physiological fragment is alien to the subjects Cosmas normally addressed; nevertheless, the fragment could easily have been an excursus within a now-lost homily. In fact, the compiler of the anthology

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these homilies, the manuscript should be dated to the end of the 9th c. (A. P. ORBÁN, *Sermones in dormitionem Mariae. CC Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 154. Turnhout 2000, v; cf. 95–96 for a discussion on Cosmas' life and works, which primarily updates what Beck had already written in an important article; see H.-G. BECK, *Kosmas Vestitor. LThK 6* [1961] 566). In these homilies, Cosmas is called "beatus", and elsewhere μακάριος. Wenger, on his side, points out that «tous les manuscrits connus lui donnent invariablement le nom de μακάριος, *beatus*, ce qui suppose révolu l'espace d'une ou de deux générations» (WENGER, as footnote 4 above, 153). See also A. EHRHARD, *Kosmas Vestitor. LThK 6* (1934) 220–221, for whom Cosmas must have been active not after the end of the 8th c. For the *terminus ante quem*, see A. WENGER, *Les homélies inédites de Cosmas Vestitor sur la Dormition. REB 11* (1953) 284–300, here 299–300: Cosmas, who according to Wenger was acquainted with the works of Germanus I of Constantinople (patriarch until 730), must have lived «vers le milieu du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, un peu après saint Germain».

<sup>6</sup> *CPG* 8142–8146. K. ΔΥΟΒΟΥΝΙΟΤΕΣ, Κοσμᾶ Βεστίτωρος ἀνέκδοτα ἐγκώμια εἰς τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τοῦ λειψάνου τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσόστομου. *EEBS 2* (1925) 55–83 (for the fourth of them, see also A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche, 1. TU*, 50. Leipzig 1937, 221).

<sup>7</sup> *CPG* 8148. K. ΔΥΟΒΟΥΝΙΟΤΕΣ, Κοσμᾶ Βεστίτωρος ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον. *EEBS 16* (1940) 148–155; cf. EHRHARD (as footnote 6 above) 236.

<sup>8</sup> *CPG* 8147. F. HALKIN, Douze récits byzantins sur saint Jean Chrysostome. *Subsidia hagiographica*, 60. Bruxelles 1977, 429–442.

<sup>9</sup> *CPG* 8150. Cf. EHRHARD (as footnote 6 above) 243.

<sup>10</sup> *CPG* 8162, where it is listed among Cosmas' *dubia*.

<sup>11</sup> *CPG* 8151. *PG* 106, 1005–1012; cf. EHRHARD (as footnote 6 above) 240.

<sup>12</sup> *CPG* 8152–54. F. HALKIN, Zacharie, père de Jean Baptiste, Trois panégyriques par Cosmas Vestitor. *AB 105* (1987) 251–263.

<sup>13</sup> As mentioned above (footnote 5).

where this fragment is preserved had a propensity for excerpting and quoting *separatim* such short and somewhat independent texts, often entirely disregarding their original contexts.<sup>14</sup>

Cosmas' fragment has come down to us in a Byzantine alphabetic anthology which arranges its material roughly following the model of the *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John Damascene, namely, the *Florilegium Coislinianum* (*FC*).<sup>15</sup> M. Richard has described more than ten witnesses of this anthology, while Wenger knew only two of them. He possibly collated both of them, although he – or in one or two occasions the typographer – incorporated into his edition a number of mistakes that were absent from either manuscript. As we have seen, while Cosmas was active between the mid-8th and mid-9th c., the *FC* can be roughly dated to the period between the early 9th c. and the first half of the 10th c. Both periods overlap considerably, and any further precision in the dating of either of them could be instrumental in the dating of the other. Nevertheless, in the present state of our knowledge, no definitive conclusion can be drawn from either one as to the dating of the other.

The present fragment can be conveniently divided into two sections. In the first one, from the beginning to ἐκχυνόμενον δάκρυον, it is stated, among other things, that when there is torment (ἀδημονία) in the soul, tears are bitter. The second section, from ἐπειδὴ στροβουμένης τῆς καρδίας ὄν, is in many respects parallel to the first. Indeed, it reintroduces some of the previously mentioned words and concepts: καρδίας / ἐγκάρδιος; πικρίαν / πικρόν; τὸ ὑγρόν τῆς φύσεως [...] ἔκκενοῦσιν / ἐκχυνόμενον δάκρυον. A crucial aspect, however, appears here for the first time: the hygienic function of tears, and a physiological

<sup>14</sup> See for instance the case of a short Athanasian fragment, in T. FERNÁNDEZ, *Dos fragmentos inéditos de Atanasio de Alejandría, Erytheia* 32 (2011, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> For this anthology, see in the first place M. RICHARD, *Florilèges spirituels grecs*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, 5. Paris 1962–64, col. 484–486, reprinted in idem, *Opera minora*, I. Turnhout/Leuven 1976, n° 1. See also I. DE VOS et al., *L'art de compiler à Byzance: la lettre Γ du Florilège Coislin*. *Byz* 78 (2008) 159–223, and I. DE VOS et al., *La lettre B du Florilège Coislin: editio princeps*. *Byz* 80 (2010) 72–120. My own edition of letter alpha will be published in 2012 by the *Series Graeca* of the *Corpus Christianorum*. This edition is based upon my doctoral dissertation: T. FERNÁNDEZ, *Book Alpha of the Florilegium Coislinianum. A Critical Edition with a Philological Introduction*. Leuven 2010. For a succinct description of the *FC*, cf. also T. FERNÁNDEZ, *Un auteur inconnu dans le Florilège Coislin: Léonce de Damas*. *Sacris Erudiri* 47 (2008) 209–221; and T. FERNÁNDEZ, *The Florilegium Coislinianum and Byzantine Encyclopaedism*, in S. NEOCLEOUS (ed.), *Sailing to Byzantium*. Cambridge 2009, 127–144.

explanation of them. According to the fragment, when the heart is distressed “the humours of the elements become turbid” (θολοῦνται τῶν στοιχείων οἱ χυμοί), a process that causes tears (or, more precisely, “what is humid of the nature”) to flow out from our eyes “like bilious bitterness.” Thus, the doctrine posited here is somewhat eclectic, for it conflates an emotional and a physiological explanation of tears. In the present fragment, the preponderant quality (ποιότης) is wetness (τὸ ὑγρόν), and the preponderant humour – associated with bitterness – is bile (χολή). It would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine which precise theory of the humours the author of the fragment had in mind.<sup>16</sup> It can be pointed out, however, that the notion according to which the four qualities (ποιότητες: hotness, dryness, wetness, coldness), elements and humours are related appears explicitly in many medical writings. To mention only one of the most famous examples, Galen declared that there was a direct relationship between the qualities – especially the innate heat – and the humours.<sup>17</sup> As for the circulation of the fragment, little can be said. To my knowledge, it has survived in the *FC* only, and consequently its influence, if any at all, has been limited. It might be useful, however, to better understand Cosmas and his environment or, more in general, to help explain the phenomenon of weeping in the Christian East.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The notion that humours depend directly on the four elements appears explicitly e.g. in Ammonius, *In Aristotelis analyticorum priorum librum I commentarium*, 5, 17: ἀπὸ τῶν δ' στοιχείων οἱ δ' χυμοί (M. WALLIES, *Ammonii in Aristotelis analyticorum priorum librum I commentarium. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 4/6. Berlin 1899, 1–36), or John Damascene, *Expositio fidei*, 26, 67–68: Οἱ μὲν οὖν καρποὶ ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων συνίστανται, οἱ δὲ χυμοὶ ἐκ τῶν καρπῶν (B. KOTTER, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 2. *Patristische Texte und Studien*, 12. Berlin 1973, 3–239.)

<sup>17</sup> See for instance Galen's *De naturalibus facultatibus* (G. HELMREICH, *Claudii Galeni Pergameni scripta minora*, 3. Lipsiae 1893 [repr. 1967] 101–257) 112, 1–6. For an up-to-date exposition of Galen's doctrine on humours, see R.J. HANKINSON, *Philosophy of nature*, in R. J. Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Galen. Cambridge Companions to Philosophers*. Cambridge 2008, 210–241, especially 217–223.

<sup>18</sup> Some among the many fundamental works on this topic are I. HAUSHERR, *Penthos: la doctrine de la componction dans l'Orient Chrétien. OCA*, 132. Roma 1944; E. PATLAGEAN, *Pleurer à Byzance. La souffrance au Moyen Âge. Les cahiers de Varsovie*, 14. Varsovie 1988; and M. HINTERBERGER, *Tränen in der byzantinischen Literatur. JÖB* 56 (2006) 27–51. For a more complete bibliography on this subject, see FERNÁNDEZ 2011 (as footnote 21 below).

For the present edition, ten manuscripts of the *FC* have been collated.<sup>19</sup> Cosmas' fragment is the first one of two in a chapter of letter delta,<sup>20</sup> Περὶ δακρῶν φυσιολογία.<sup>21</sup> The title of the chapter which contains the fragment is the same in all of them. The attribution is, in most of them, Κοσμᾶ Βεστίτορος; only *A* has κοσμ(ᾶ) βεστιαρ(ίου) (*sic*), whereas *C* has no attribution – or the attribution is illegible in microfilm. This shows that, in the archetype of the *FC*, the fragment was attributed to Cosmas Vestitor. This is a valuable hint of authenticity, for, in most of the cases, the attributions of the *FC* are correct; however, it is impossible to exclude a mistake already present in the archetype of the *FC*. Be that as it may, the question about the authenticity of the fragment must remain open. Indeed, the fragment is so short that it would be impossible to be conclusive.

The text as presented below is sure enough, and only one somewhat problematic reading requires a short explanation. Below, πικρίαν χολεράν (*mss. T CBDFHR*) is printed, instead of the regular πικρὰν χολέραν favoured by *EG* (πικρίαν χολέραν *sic A*).<sup>22</sup> Stemmatically, the first reading must be preferred. The reading of *EG* is clearly a scribal conjecture. Furthermore, in the text, the meaning needed is not that of “bitter χολέρα”, but rather that of “bilious (χολεράν) bitternes”. Χολε-

<sup>19</sup> For the relation of the manuscripts of the *FC*, see DE Vos et al. (as footnote 15 above), 165–169. I basically agree with their conclusion, with one exception: according to my own findings (dealt with extensively in FERNÁNDEZ 2010, as footnote 15 above, cxxxiv–cxxxviii), *A* and *T* are not two independent branches of the textual tradition of the *FC*, but one and the same – they share a number of mistakes which cannot be explained through polygenesis.

<sup>20</sup> The second and last excerpt is taken from Gregory of Nyssa's *De opificio hominis*, PG 44, 160, 20–31. A full critical edition of *De opificio hominis* is still lacking; see, however, the recent critical edition of the Slavonic translation, L. SELS (ed.), Gregory of Nyssa. *De hominis opificio*. The fourteenth-century Slavonic translation. Köln/Weimar/Wien 2009, 166, 8–21. This edition contains a facing Greek text taken on the main from Forbes' edition; the Greek text is, at any rate, far superior to the text printed in the *PG*.

<sup>21</sup> Tears play a prominent role in the *FC*. The following chapter, conveniently called Ἔτι περὶ δακρῶν, contains a long unpublished pseudo-Chrysostomic fragment, of which I have prepared a critical edition. Cf. T. FERNÁNDEZ, Byzantine tears. A pseudo-Chrysostomic fragment on weeping in the *Florilegium Coislinianum*. Leuven 2011 (forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference “Encyclopaedic Trends in Byzantium?”, held in Leuven in 2009). The *FC* contains yet another chapter related to tears, Περὶ διαφόρων δακρῶν, with a fragment of Athanasius of Alexandria (*Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, PG 28, 648, 18–37), and a very famous excerpt of John Climacus (*Scala Paradisi*, PG 804, 14–23; 808, 28–31).

<sup>22</sup> Κολέραν, as printed by Wenger, is surely a misreading or a typo.

ρός meaning “bilious”, as related to χολή, and thus rough equivalent to χολώδης or χολικός, is not unattested.<sup>23</sup>

Here follows a list of the manuscripts I have collated, together with the folios or pages that the fragment occupies, chapter numbers, and attributions. The reader will remark that chapter numbers vary greatly. This is because in AT the numeration of the chapters starts over at the beginning of each letter, whereas in all other manuscripts it is continuous. An explanation as to the order of the sigla is perhaps in place here. AT are listed first because they are the only witnesses of the “first recension” of the FC.<sup>24</sup> CB are representatives of the “second recension”;<sup>25</sup> B is quoted in the second place because it likely is an apograph of C, as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> DEGFH come afterwards because they belong to the “third” or “short recension” of the FC.<sup>27</sup> Finally, R is quoted last because it is the only representative of an extremely fragmentary “mixed recension” of the FC, which occasionally contains excellent readings.<sup>28</sup>

**A** *Parisinus, Coislinianus 294*. 11th–12th c. F. 98<sup>v</sup>, chapter number ζ', attribution κοσμ(ᾶ) βεστηαρ(ίου) (sic)

**T** *Hierosolymitanus, Sancti Sepulcri 15*. 10th c. F. 268<sup>v</sup>, chapter η', attr. κοσμᾶ (sic) βεστίτορος

**C** *Parisinus graecus 924*. 10th c. F. 115<sup>v</sup>–116, κεφάλ(αιον) οε', no attribution

**B** *Atheniensis, Bibliothecae Nationalis 464*. 10th c. P. 138, κε(φάλαιον) οε', attr. κοσμα βεστητορος (sine acc.)

**D** *Mediolanensis, Ambrosianus Q 74 sup.* 10th c. F. 43, κε(φάλαιον) ογ', attr. κοσμα (sine acc.) βεστίτορο(ς)

<sup>23</sup> See Ephraem Syrus' *De virtute, ad novitium monachum*, 100, 4: τῆς χολερᾶς σταφυλῆς (K. G. PHRANTZOLES, Ὅσιου Ἐφραῖμ τοῦ Σύρου ἔργα, 2. Thessalonica 1989, 77–110). Χολερός can be found in the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, s.v. χλωρός: Χλωρός, παρὰ τὸ χολή, χολερός καὶ χλωρός, καὶ ἐκ τούτου χλῆρος κτλ. The adjective χολερός, however, is not attested in dictionaries such as Lampe's or Demetrakos'. (G. W. H. LAMPE. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford 1961 [repr. 1968]; D. DEMETRAKOS, Μέγα λεξικὸν τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης, 9 vols. Athens 1953).

<sup>24</sup> See RICHARD 1962 (as footnote 15 above), col. 485.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, col. 485.

<sup>26</sup> See FERNÁNDEZ 2010 (as footnote 15 above), cvi–cxi.

<sup>27</sup> See RICHARD 1962 (as footnote 15 above), col. 485. Richard calls this recension, in fact, “3e recension”, rightly reporting that it is “nettement plus brève que les deux précédentes”, namely, that of AT and that of C and B.

<sup>28</sup> See FERNÁNDEZ 2010 (as footnote 15 above), xcix–c and cxi–cxli.

- E** *Argentoratensis, Bibliothecae Nationalis et Universitatis gr. 12*. 13th c. (year 1285–86). F. 69<sup>v</sup>, κε(φά)λαιον ογ', attr. κοσμ(ᾶ) βεστί(τορος)
- G** *Athonensis, Iviron 38*. 13th c. (year 1281–82). F. 23, κε(φά)λαιον ογ', attr. κοσμᾶ βεστ(...)
- F** *Atheniensis, Bibliothecae Nationalis 329*. Late 13th – 14th c. F. 92<sup>v</sup>, no chapter number, attr. κοσμᾶ βεστήτορος
- H** *Vaticanus graecus 491*. 13th c. F. 152<sup>v</sup>, no chapter number, attr. κο(σμᾶ) βεστί(τορος)
- R** *Athonensis, Lavra B 43*. 12th c. F. 189. chapter πθ', attr. κοσμ(ᾶ) βεστ(...)

### Text

Περὶ δακρῶν φυσιολογία. Κοσμᾶ Βεστίτορος.

Ἔπου γὰρ δριμεῖα λύπη, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἐγκάρδιος ὀδύνη, καὶ ὅπου πάλιν ἐκ βάθους ψυχῆς ἀδημονία, πικρὸν τὸ διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον δάκρυον, ἐπειδὴ στροβουμένης τῆς καρδίας, θολοῦνται τῶν στοιχείων οἱ 5 χυμοί, καὶ τὸ ὑγρὸν τῆς φύσεως ὡς πικρίαν χολεράν ἐπὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀναπέμποντες ἐκκενοῦσιν.

Physiology about Tears. Cosmas Vestitor

For where there is a piercing grief, there is also a pain in the heart, and where, in turn, there is torment from the depths of the soul, <there> the tear poured out through the eyes is bitter, since, when the heart is distressed, the humours of the elements become turbid, and they empty out what is humid of the nature like bilious bitterness, sending it up to the eyes.

### Abstract

This article provides a new edition of Cosmas Vestitor's ascetic-physiological fragment (CPG 8163), which was first edited in 1955 by Antoine Wenger. This is the only fragment by Cosmas to be extant in an anthology, and it is possibly authentic. The previous edition of it was based only on two witnesses of the

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2 δριμεῖα C<sup>p.c.</sup> (-ῥα C<sup>p.c.</sup>), δριμύα AR (δριμύα A), δρυμεία H ἐκεῖ ὅπου Wenger | 3 ἀδημονία. Πικρὸν sic *interpunxit Wenger* δι' ὀφθαλμῶν B ἐκχεόμενον EGR Wenger, ἐκχυνόμενον sic CB | 4 στροβουμένης sic Wenger θολοῦνται A, θελοῦνται sic Wenger | 5 πικράν EG Wenger χολέραν A EG, κολέραν sic Wenger ἐπὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν H Wenger

text, and was riddled with inaccuracies. The aim of this paper is to remedy these shortcomings by collating afresh the manuscripts known to Wenger, along with eight new witnesses. Its goal is also to set Cosmas in his context, and to provide a translation and brief explanation of the fragment.