

FRANCESCA PROMETEA BARONE (ed.), *Iohannis Chrysostomi De Davide et Saule homiliae tres*. Corpus christianorum. Series Graeca; 70. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, pp. Lxxxii + 77, ISBN 9782503527970.

The most recent addition to the *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca* is Francesca Prometea Barone's edition of John Chrysostom's three homilies *De Davide et Saule*. Usually overlooked in studies of Chrysostom, these three homilies have received a significant amount of attention in recent years: in addition to this volume, which is their first critical edition, Barone has also published an Italian translation with a general introduction, whereas Robert C. Hill devoted an article to these three homilies, which are also included in his English translation of Chrysostom's Old Testament Homilies.¹ Consequently, these texts are now easily accessible for many readers and will contribute to our understanding of a wide range of topics, including Chrysostom's homiletic style (especially his use of narrative and repetition to explain concepts to his listeners), Antiochene methods of exegesis, Christian interpretations of the Old Testament, patristic views on anger and forgiveness, as well as life in Antioch and the aftermath of the Riot of the Statues.

Chrysostom dedicated these three homilies to the story of Saul's spite resulting from his jealousy of David's military success, in contrast to David's repeated, heroic acts of clemency and kindness toward Saul. Chrysostom presents David as an exemplar of the virtue of forgiveness because he followed evangelical precepts even while living under the Old Law that did not require him to treat Saul with such kindness. The homilies offer characteristic examples of Chrysostom's approach to communicating his lessons to his listeners, such as his suggestion that they should continue to discuss David and Saul at home with their wives and children (*Hom.* 1.7.10-3). In the third homily, Chrysostom explains eloquently why he is devoting three successive homilies to one specific topic: just as portrait painters stay close to their subjects for several days in order to create an exact likeness, Chrysostom's listeners will spend several days close to David in order to absorb the precise nature of his virtues (*Hom.* 3.2.69-78). Not just a rhetorical flourish, this is an example of Chrysostom's ability to invoke images that would have been easily comprehensible by the laity. We see additional examples of his interaction with his congregation in his direct addresses: at the beginning of the second homily, he praises his listeners for their attention and good will,

¹ John Chrysostom, *Omellie su Davide et Saul*. F. P. Barone (trans.), Rome 2008. R. C. Hill, "Chrysostom's Homilies on David and Saul," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 44, 2000, 123-41. St. John Chrysostom, *Old Testament Homilies: Vol. 1 Homilies on Hannah, David and Saul*. R. C. Hill (ed.), Brookline, Mass. 2003.

only to greet them the next time with an attack against those who had preferred the spectacles over church and had missed *Hom. 2*. This section against the spectacles is significant for several reasons: it is key to Barone's establishment of the chronology (see below) and it describes in detail Chrysostom's views on the sinfulness of the spectacles and their repercussions (anger, hostility, marital problems). Also, at the beginning of this section, Chrysostom refers, however briefly, to a process of penance and purification that he believes the offenders should submit to before returning to Mass (*Hom. 3.1.1-32*)

Barone's introduction to the *Corpus Christianorum* volume dedicates only the first paragraph to the contents of the homilies before moving on to focus on the chronology. After establishing that the sermons were preached in 387, Barone addresses the question of the three homilies' relation to each other. Because Chrysostom followed the biblical narrative so closely in this series, beginning one sermon exactly where the previous one left off, Barone is able to establish beyond a doubt that the three homilies have been preserved in the correct order (xiv-xv). In order to establish the exact date of the sermons in 387, Barone addresses a recent proposal by Hill that the sermons took place during Lent of 387, that is, while the Antiochenes and their preacher were still waiting to learn of their fate in the aftermath of the Riot of the Statues. Hill argues that these three homilies were a plea to Theodosius to be like David and show clemency, and therefore were preached before Easter, when, in *Ad populum Antiochenum Hom. 21*, Chrysostom delivered the good news that the emperor would not destroy the city. Barone, however, points to Chrysostom's lengthy digression in *Hom. 3* against the spectacles: the lure of the spectacles would not have been possible during the crisis. In a sermon indisputably dated to Lent in 387 (*Ad populum Antiochenum Hom. 15*; PG 49. 153), Chrysostom had remarked on the closure of the spectacles as the one good thing to result from the riot (xix).

The introduction to the edition is devoted in large part to the manuscript traditions. Barone's text is based on an analysis of 41 manuscripts, more than half of which date from the 11th century or earlier; 31 contain the complete series. In addition to these manuscripts, sections of *De Davide et Saule* are also found in a number of other texts, including a pseudo-Chrysostomic homily *Contra Theatra* and the *Eclogae*, a collection of sermons focused on morality compiled by Theodorus Daphnopates in the 10th century. Barone also describes a papyrus copy of the third homily *De Davide et Saule*, translated into Sahidic Coptic. The papyrus itself dates from the 7-8th c., whereas the translation is dated to the 5th c. (lxxii). In the end, Barone reveals that the modern editions of the text from the 17th and 18th centuries, which in turn were the basis of the *Patrologia Graeca*, non dista in maniera significativa da quello trasmesso dalla tradizione manoscritta superstite che, come già detto, si presenta decisamente omogenea (lxxvii-viii).

JACLYN MAXWELL
Ohio University
maxwelj1@ohio.edu