



DICCIONARIO  
GRIEGO-ESPAÑOL



IV/V d.C.     **Chrysostomus, Iohannes** scriptor ecclesiasticus et **Pseudo Chrysostomus** (Chrys.)  
Miller, D.R., «Found: A folio of the lost full commentary of John Chrysostom on  
Jeremiah», *HSCPh* 94, 1992, pp.379-385.  
Fr.Ier. = Fragmentum in Ieremiam.

Miller 1992.pdf

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FOUND: A FOLIO OF THE LOST  
FULL COMMENTARY OF  
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON JEREMIAH

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**F**RAGMENTS of John Chrysostom's Commentary on Jeremiah have survived in an Abridged Version made at an unknown date.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the Abridged Version itself is quite fragmentary. The text printed by Migne (*PG* 64.740–1037) under the title of Chrysostom's Commentary is actually a compilation of extracts made from works of various commentators. A thorough study of the text was made in 1913 by L. Dieu.<sup>2</sup> The findings of Dieu relevant here are as follows. The manuscripts of the Jeremiah Commentary are of two types. Type I or the Small Catena consists of extracts from a pseudo-Chrysostomian commentary<sup>3</sup> and from the work of Theodoretos of Cyrrihus; after the fourth book of Jeremiah the extracts are only from Theodoretos. Type II or the Large Catena consists of extracts from Chrysostom and other authors. On the Large Catena Dieu writes: "The Chrysostomian fragments of the Large Catena (Type II) are very numerous and, even supposing that in a very large part of these foreign elements have been intermixed, many still remain which by reason of their style and their exegesis appear to derive from an authentic work."<sup>4</sup> Dieu thus reaffirms the authenticity of some of the Chryso-

<sup>1</sup> See *Clavis Patrum Graecorum II* (Turnhout 1974) nos. 3882, 4447; *ibid. IV* (1980) [= *Catena*] 218; also J. A. de Aldama, *Repertorium Pseudochrysostomicum* (Paris 1965) nos. 239, 509. On the MSS see especially R. Carter, *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci II: Codices Germaniae* (Paris 1968) no. 51; *ibid. IV: Codices Austriae* (1983) no. 17; *ibid. V: Codicum Italiae Partem Priorem* (1983) no. 4. I should like here to express my gratitude to the anonymous reader of this paper for his helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> "Le commentaire sur Jérémie du Pseudo-Chrysostome, serait-il l'oeuvre de Polychronius d'Apamée?," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 14 (1913) 685–701.

<sup>3</sup> Dieu suggests that the source is a lost work by Polychronios of Apamea.

<sup>4</sup> Dieu (above, n. 2) 690.

tomian extracts found in the MSS of Type II. The only other text of Chrysostom's Commentary known to exist is a partial Armenian translation; it is as yet uncertain whether a Type II text or some portion of the original commentary was translated.<sup>5</sup>

A comparison of the text of the folio with the appropriate passages of Dieu's Large Catena shows beyond a doubt that the text printed below represents the original from which the Catena was made. As Dieu observed, the text gives every indication of being a genuine work of Chrysostom; language, style and method are demonstrably his. It seems apparent, therefore, that the folio preserves a small portion of Chrysostom's lost work. If one may judge by the length of Chrysostom's incomplete comments on three verses, the original work must have been quite long.

### The Folio

In 1972 the Houghton Library of Harvard University purchased a 14th-century vellum Sticherarion which had belonged to the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps.<sup>6</sup> This manuscript, now known as Houghton 27, is remarkable not only as a Byzantine Sticherarion, but for its binding as well. According to a note in the upper margin of the front pastedown, one Hieromonk Leontios had the manuscript bound at his expense in 1632. The covers are of blind-tooled black morocco leather stretched over wooden boards. The front and rear pastedowns are of vellum, being consecutive folios written in a fine, early 12th-century hand; they were removed from a menologium containing the martyrdom of Prokopios the Great Martyr. The back flyleaf is a vellum folio written in a fine 12th-century hand containing selections from the *Novellae* of Justinian. The front flyleaf is a vellum folio written in a fine, late 10th-century hand, and contains the text published here by permission of the Houghton Library. Evidently the craftsman who bound Hieromonk Leontios' volume had numerous early manuscripts

<sup>5</sup> For a reference to the translation see G. Aucher in *Χρυσοστομικά, Studi e Ricerche intorno a S. Giovanni Crisostomo* (Rome 1908) 147. The MS referred to is No. 1426 of the Matenadaran Library (see the Catalogue of J. Kareniants, 1863), a 14th-century selection from commentaries by many authors; judging from the extensive contents of the MS, the Armenian version of the Jeremiah commentary could not be the complete text of the original. My thanks to Robert Thompson of Harvard for this information.

<sup>6</sup> No. 7506.

at his disposal, and perhaps a significant portion of Chrysostom's Commentary on Jeremiah. It is, then, not unlikely that other folios of the Commentary may have likewise survived as flyleaves and await identification.

The text of the manuscript's front flyleaf is given below along with a translation. The extracts of the Large Catena mentioned above, printed in the *Patrologia Graeca* 64.820c, are set in bold face to illustrate their relation to the complete text.

### The Text

ἀ]λιστα τὸ κάλλος ἐμφαίνεται, εὐχαρὶς τις ἦν. τί δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ; οὐκ αἰσχύνεται λαμπρῶ τῇ φωνῇ τὸ κάλλος ἀνακηρύττουσα ἢ γραφή: “Ἰωσήφ ἦν καλὸς τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὠραῖος τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα.” μὴ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι ἐκεῖνοι, μὴ

5 γένοιτο. καλοὶ δὲ ἦσαν, οὐχὶ τὴν σύνθεσιν τῶν μελῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν εὐεξίαν τοῦ σώματος ἅπασαν, ὅπερ ἔστι κάλλος ὑγιές. τί δὲ ὁ Σαμψὼν ἐκεῖνος; τί δὲ ὁ Ἀβεσσαλώμ; ἄκουσον δὲ πῶς καὶ Ἱηρεμίας αὐτὸς οὗτος λέγει τὸ κάλλος αὐτῶν ἅπαν ἐν τοῖς Θρήνοις, οὕτω φάσκων: “οἱ

10 τρυφεροὶ μου ἐπορεύθησαν, ὑπὲρ λίθου σαμψείρου (*sic*) τὸ εἶδος αὐτῶν.” εἶδες πῶς αὐτῶν τὴν ὥραν παρέστησε; τί ἂν τις εἴποι περὶ τῶν γυναικῶν, πῶς περιμάχητοι: τῆς Σάρρας, τῆς Ῥεβέκκας, τῆς Λειάς, τῆς Ῥαχήλ, τῆς Ἄννας, τῆς Ἰουδίθ, τῆς Ἐσθῆρ; αἱ τοὺς βαρβάρους οὕτως εἶλον, ὡς καὶ

15 τὸ ἔθνος ἅπαν διασῶσαι ἐκ μεγάλων κινδύνων. ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ πάντα παρ' ἡμῶν μανθάνητε, τὰς ἱστορίας ἀναπτύξαντες πάντα ταῦτα εὐρήσετε ἀναγεγραμμένα. καὶ πάλιν, “ἐν πορφύρᾳ τρεφόμενοι” φησι “καὶ ἐπὶ κοκκίνων.” τί δὲ τῶν ἐνδυμάτων τὸ κάλλος; οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὰ ἄλλα παρέχον αὐτοῖς τὰ σωματικά, οὐχὶ καὶ τοῦτο πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων παρέξειν

20 ἔμελλεν; “εἰς αὐτὴν ἤξουσι ποιμένες καὶ τὰ ποιμνία αὐτῶν καὶ πήξουσιν ἐπ' αὐτὴν σκηναὺς κύκλω καὶ ποιμανοῦσι τὰς ἀγέλας αὐτῶν ἕκαστος τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.” **τοῦτο ἐρημίας μὲν ἔστι σύμβολον** καὶ γέγονε, ταῖς οἰκίαις Ἰσ[ρα]ῆλ λοιπὸν ἔσται φησὶν· **ἐξέβη δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων.** “εἰς αὐτὴν

- 25 ἤξουσι ποιμένες καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων. “εἰς αὐτὴν ἤξουσι ποιμένες καὶ πῆξουσι τὰς σκηναὶς αὐτῶν κύκλω” τὰς ἐκκλησίᾳ||ας εἰκότως ἂν τις εἴποι καθάπερ σκηναὶς πανταχῶ τῆς οἰκουμένης εἰσὶ πεπηγυῖα μάνδρα προβάτων. ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις τὸ ἔθος, ὡς ἐν τάξει ἀρᾶς ἀγαθῆς
- 30 συμβαίνει, οἶον “διαμεριῶ αὐτοὺς ἐν Ἰακώβ καὶ διασπερῶ αὐτοὺς ἐν Ἰσραὴλ.” μικρὸν γὰρ ὕστερον τῆς ἡμέρας πεπληρωμένης πρὸς τὰ βασίλεια συνελάσουσιν, ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς σκηναῖς ἔστωσαν. ὅσα μὲν ἀπεπλανήθη τῶν προβάτων, λύκων ἔσται βορά· τὰ δ’ ἐπόμενα τῷ ποιμένι διὰ τῆς
- 35 ἀυλαίας θύρας εἴσεισι καὶ πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ παραστήσεται τῷ δεσπότη. “παρασκευάσασθε ἐπ’ αὐτὴν εἰς πόλεμον· ἀνάστητε καὶ ἀναβῶμεν ἐπ’ αὐτὴν μεσημβρίας.” ὄρα πόσα ὁ Θεὸς κατασκευάζει, ὥστε αὐτοῖς ἐνθεῖναι τὸν φόβον, ὅπου γε καὶ ῥήματα ἀναπλάττει παρὰ τῶν πολεμίων
- 40 ὥσπερ παρόντων καὶ παρακελευομένων ἀλλήλοις, καίτοι γε ἐν μεσημβρίᾳ οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο πόλεμος. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο δηλοῖ, ὅτι οὐ λάθρα οὐδὲ λανθανόντως ἀλλὰ μετὰ παρήρησις ἐπιθήσονται, ὃ τεκμήριον τοῦ σφόδρα θαρρῆεῖν ἔστιν ἑαυτοῖς. ἐν γὰρ μεσημβρίᾳ καὶ ἔμποροι καὶ στρατιώ-
- 45 τῆς καὶ ναύτης καὶ ἕκαστος τινὰ τέχνην ἢ κάματόν τινα μεταχειριζομένων ἀναπαύει τὸ σῶμα κεκμηκός, καὶ μάλιστα ὁ στρατιώτης, ὅσῳ χαλεπώτερος ἀπάντων ὁ πόνος, οὐχὶ μέχρι ἰδρώτων μόνον ἐστῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν φόβον ἔχων ἀναρρίπτόμενον καὶ διαλύοντα τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν ἕξιν. ἀλλ’
- 50 ὅμως οὕτως ἐπὶ παρεσκευασμένην ἀρπαγὴν ἤξουσι καὶ οὐ δεήσονται πόνων, ὡς καὶ “ἐν μεσημβρίᾳ” φησὶν “ἐπιθέσθαι σοι, ἀνάστητε.” οὐχ’ ἀπλῶς κεῖται τὸ “ἀνάστητε,” ἀλλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν μακροθυμίαν ἐμφαίνει, ὅτι ἀγαγὼν αὐτοὺς πόρρωθεν...

#### Translation

... beauty is especially manifested; he was a charming person. But what of Joseph? Scripture is not embarrassed as it proclaims [his] beauty with a clear voice, “Joseph was fair of form and very beautiful of countenance” (Gen. 39:6). These [mentioned previously] were not to be similar. Far be it! But they were fair, not merely with respect to the constitution of their limbs, but the overall health of their bodies as

well, which is sound beauty. But what of that Samson? And Absalom? Listen how our Jeremiah himself speaks of all their beauty in the Lamentations, saying, “My delicate ones have gone rough ways” (Bar. 4:26), and again, “They shone whiter than milk, they became like cheese, above the sapphire stone is their countenance” (Lam. 4:7, 8). Do you see how he represents their lovely bloom of youth? What can one say about the women, how highly prized they are? [What about] Sarrha? Rebekka? Leia? Rachel? Anna? Judith? Esther? Those women who slew the barbarians in such circumstances that they rescued even their whole nation from great perils. But lest you should learn everything from us, after you will have opened up these histories, you will find all these things recorded. And again, “They are reared in purple,” he says, “and upon scarlet things” (cf. Jer. 10:20, 4:30). But what of the beauty of clothing? As he was, indeed, attributing to them the other bodily trappings [of beauty], was he not going to present this one before the rest? **“The shepherds and their flocks shall come to her** [i.e. Jerusalem], and they shall pitch their tents against her round about, and shall feed their flocks each one with his hand” (Jer. 6:3). **This is, on the one hand, a symbol of desolation**, and it was borne out; he says, perhaps, that it will afterwards happen to the dwellings. **It was, on the other hand, also fulfilled in the apostles.** “The shepherds shall come to her and they shall pitch their tents round about,” **one might reasonably say ‘churches’ in the manner of tents: throughout the inhabited world they are pitched [like] sheepfolds for sheep.** This indeed is also the custom among the Jews, as is borne out under the form of a good curse as follows, “I shall divide them in Jacob, and I shall scatter them in Israel” (Gen. 49:7). For a little later, when the day is fulfilled, they will come together to the king’s courts, but [for now] let them remain in the tents. As many of the sheep as went astray will be the prey of wolves; but those which follow the shepherd will enter in through the gate of the courtyard and [go] to the royal [gate(?)] and will stand before the master. **“Make preparations against her for war, rise up, and let us go up against her at midday”** (Jer. 6:4). **Behold how many things God prepares so as to instil fear in them! For this reason He also invents words [spoken] by their enemies as though they were present and giving commands to each other. Besides, warfare would not be waged in midday. This, however, makes it clear that they will attack not secretly or stealthily but with boldness—which is a sign that they place great**

**confidence in themselves.** For at midday merchants, the soldier, the sailor, and everyone of those engaged in some craft or labor gives his weary body rest, but especially the soldier, inasmuch as his toil is more arduous than all others. It does not merely end with [expense of] sweat, but it also involves a fear that unsettles and dissolves the soul's customary disposition. Nevertheless, they will thus be coming for the prepared seizure and will undertake such toil that he says 'even in midday they will attack you.' "Rise up." "Rise up" is not placed here casually, but rather it manifests God's long-suffering, for He led them forwards. . . .

### Notes

Lines 1–19. The text commences in the middle of a discourse on beauty. Although the scriptural passage treated is lacking, it can be supplied from the Abridged Version, which reads: "'And thy pride shall be taken away' (Jer. 6:2). Why? Because she made use of the following for wickedness: beauty for harlotry, pride for boasting. That is, 'the beautiful and the illustrious'.<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> 'The beautiful' he says on account of the law, the priesthood, and so forth; 'the illustrious' on account of the fact that with the help of God she<sup>9</sup> always proved to be superior to her enemies" (PG 64.820c). With the help of the versions of Aquila and Theodotion Chrysostom interprets the word 'pride,' applied to the Daughter of Sion, to indicate beauty. Although the prophetic text threatens the removal of this beauty, we find Chrysostom here explaining why the Daughter of Sion is rightly regarded as beautiful.

Lines 20–34. A commentary on Jer. 6:3. Chrysostom offers two interpretations of the verse, historical and allegorical. The allegorical receives more attention. He first says that the verse gives a symbolic indication of the 'desolation' of the Daughter of Sion by the Assyrians, that is, the destruction of its habitations. But turning quickly to the allegorical interpretation he states that the prophecy was "also fulfilled

<sup>7</sup> Reading φανεράν for τρυφεράν. See the text in PG 116.2.2003–2006 and the note on 2007. The text of the Commentary necessitates this reading.

<sup>8</sup> Chrysostom here cites the translations of Aquila and Theodotion as an explanation of the LXX ὕψος.

<sup>9</sup> I.e., 'the Daughter of Sion.'

in the apostles.” Chrysostom sees in the image of shepherds pitching their tents, which he reinterprets as sheepfolds, an allegory of Christian churches spread throughout the world. It is still the custom of the Jews, he says, to construct sheepfolds. He finds an example of the custom indicated by the “good curse”<sup>10</sup> of Jacob which scatters the tribe of Simeon throughout the barren land, presumably because Simeon’s descendants lived as shepherds and herdsmen.<sup>11</sup> Then, proceeding further, Chrysostom finds in the tents round about Jerusalem an allegory of the churches encircling, as it were, the Kingdom of God. Drawing on the simile of the Good Shepherd from John, he alludes somewhat obscurely to the Last Day when the Christian flock will follow the Shepherd into the Kingdom (cf. John 10:4; also Rev. 7:17), while the sheep that stray will perish (cf. John 10:12).

Lines 34–52. A commentary on Jer. 6:4. Chrysostom returns to historical interpretation and the theme of the destruction of the Daughter of Sion by the Assyrians. This is a good example of Antiochene rational exegesis.<sup>12</sup>

Chrysostom does not stray unduly from the Old Testament text. In his interpretation he makes use of every means at his disposal: rhetoric, alternative translations from Hebrew, historical data, allegory, what we might call ‘free association,’ and practical reason. Viewed in this single folio, the Commentary on Jeremiah was a careful and remarkable work, one both worthy of this great figure of early Byzantine literature and not inferior to the other famed scriptural commentaries of early Christendom.

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<sup>10</sup> The word ἀρά properly means a ‘prayer,’ but derivatively and more frequently a ‘curse’ or ‘oath.’ The oxymoron created by the adjective “good” may indicate that the outcome of the curse was a good thing. For the usage cf. the *Choephoroi* of Aeschylus 145–146.

<sup>11</sup> See 1 Chronicles 4:39–41.

<sup>12</sup> On Antiochene exegesis see D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge 1982) 27–51.