

One wants to skim this kind of book for good ideas, rather than trust it as guide to one's own thinking.

EASTERN UNIVERSITY

PHILLIP CARY

*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, I: (Première partie).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 626.) Pp. 515. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €49 (paper). 978 2 204 14702 6; 0750 1978

*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, II: (Deuxième partie, questions 1–178).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 627.) Pp. 581. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €55 (paper). 978 2 204 14703 3; 0750 1978

*Dadisho' Qatraya. Commentaire sur le Paradis des Pères, III: (Deuxième partie, questions 179–291).* Edited by David Phillips. (Sources Chrétiennes, 628.) Pp. 434. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2022. €41 (paper). 978 2 204 14704 0; 0750 1978  
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The publication of these three volumes containing Dadisho' Qatraya's Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* constitutes a major contribution to Syriac studies. Dadisho' was one of several learned East Syriac monastic authors of the seventh century who originated from the region of the Gulf (the most famous of them being Isaac the Syrian). Extracts from his Discourse on Stillness (*shelya*, corresponding to Greek *hesychia*) were first published by Paul Bedjan in his edition of Isaac the Syrian (1909), but the whole work was not made available till 1934 when it was included by Alphonse Mingana in his *Early Christian mystics*, while a critical edition was subsequently published in 2001 by F. del Río Sánchez. Dadisho's short monastic letter addressed to Abqosh, also on Stillness, was edited by A. Guillaumont and M. Albert in the memorial volume for A.-J. Festugière (1984), and later re-edited on a better manuscript basis by David Phillips (2015). It was only in 1972 that Dadisho's important Commentary on Abba Isaiah's *Asketikon* was published, by René Draguet, in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*. Although the existence of fragmentary manuscripts of his Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* (a compilation by 'Enanisho' consisting of Palladius' *Lausiac History*, the *Historia monachorum* and *Apophthegmata*, made earlier in the seventh century) had long been known to specialists from William Wright's *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the (then) British Museum*, hardly any attention had been paid to it until 1994 when Nicholas Sims-Williams published some extracts in *Analecta Bollandiana* including the earliest known reference to the semi-legendary monastic founder Awgen, and a passage on Lot (II.246), also attested in a Sogdian fragment.

The three volumes with the edition and translation of the Syriac text of the Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* represent the fruits of some two decades of preparatory work. The Commentary does not survive complete in any single manuscript, and is to be found in an epitome as well as in the fuller text. As it turns out, one manuscript of the Epitome (Vatican syr. 126) had already been published by Bedjan in his edition of the *Paradisus patrum* in volume vii of his *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* (1897, pp. 895–963). It was only after some years working with the more fragmentary manuscripts of the fuller recension that an almost complete text of it (lacking only the opening), preserved in a ninth-

century manuscript of the library of the Metropolitan of the Church of the East in Baghdad, became available. Not only did this turn out to be the oldest witness, but (apart from a single excerpt in a nineteenth-century manuscript) it is the only manuscript of East Syriac provenance to preserve the work, all the other manuscripts belonging to the Syrian Orthodox tradition (a situation which applies to a number of East Syriac monastic texts from this period).

The complexity of the transmission history, and the (far from clear) relationship of the Commentary, which is in the form of Questions and Answers to the witnesses of the *Paradisus Patrum* are clearly set out in the introduction, together with the eminently sensible principles adopted for the eclectic edition of the text; this is provided in estrangelo script with facing French translation. For each page opening there are three sets of notes: the text apparatus, providing the variants of all the manuscripts (including those of the epitome); biblical references; and annotation identifying sources and providing comments wherever these seem helpful for the reader. Finally, at the conclusion of the third volume there is a set of valuable indices: biblical references; themes; place names; personal names; and sources and parallels. The structure of this extensive last index provides an indication of the complexity of the problem of the relationship between Dadisho's Commentary and the text of the *Paradisus patrum* upon which he was commenting: thus, under Apophthegms, first comes Budge's edition of the *Paradise of the Fathers* (some twenty pages), followed by some ten pages of references to the Greek Alphabetic and Systematic Collections; only a single page lists those Sayings that the editor has been unable to identify.

In the course of his answers to the questions of 'the Brothers', Dadisho' not only displays an exceptionally good knowledge of the prosopography of the texts upon which he is commenting, but he also shows considerable insight into a deeper meaning of some of the more laconic, or seemingly banal, utterances of certain of the desert Fathers. Illustrative texts, especially from Evagrius and Mark the Monk, are often adduced; also of considerable interest are quotations, several of which are hitherto unattested, from works by Theodore of Mopsuestia (whose name has been substituted by a more acceptable authority in the Syrian Orthodox manuscripts). Several of these quotations from Theodore have already been studied by Phillips elsewhere. Needless to say, Dadisho' also provides numerous details that throw intriguing light on everyday monastic life (such as in his discussion concerning the drinking of wine).

With his excellent edition and careful translation of this extensive and influential Commentary on the *Paradise of the Fathers* by Dadisho' David Phillips has made available for the first time a work which is of very considerable importance for the study of eastern monastic tradition. It is upon this sound foundation which he has provided that all future work on the subsequent history of the text in Arabic (edited by Mario Kozah and others, 2016), Ethiopic and Sogdian will need to be based. At the same time these Questions and Answers provide much that will be of fascination for more general readers who are attracted by the Sayings of the Desert Fathers.

Finally, it should be pointed out that these three volumes also represent an important and most welcome innovation in the editorial policy of Sources chrétiennes, for here for the first time the original Syriac text is provided on facing pages with the translation, whereas all earlier volumes concerning Syriac

authors contain only the translation. The publication of Dadisho's Commentary is thus doubly a landmark event.

WOLFSON COLLEGE,  
OXFORD

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

*Sight, touch, and imagination in Byzantium.* By Roland Betancourt. Pp. 416. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. £94.99. 978 1108424745  
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During the eighth and ninth centuries, when Christian theologians struggled to define the role of icons in their worship, they also re-examined theories of how the human eye perceived and interpreted such paintings. Ancient Greek optics became central to their understanding of sight, touch and imagination, generating a physical as well as philosophical debate about the extrusion of rays from the eyes, or the intromission of rays from objects into the eyes. Medical treatises on theories of vision, sensation and perception were investigated to establish the superiority of touch or sight. Arguments moved far beyond the justification for veneration, traditionally based on the statement of Basil of Caesarea that reverence for the imperial image passed on to the individual depicted, to raise philosophical problems of a more complex order.

While iconophile writers like John of Damascus developed arguments that encouraged Christians to use icons to express their devotion without committing idolatry, iconoclasts such as the emperor Constantine V denounced any possibility of painting any image of Christ's divine nature, and therefore elevated the eucharist as the sole legitimate representation that should be venerated in a spiritual manner. These debates were rehearsed and further developed under Leo V, when iconoclasm was officially reinstated at a council held in 815. The emperor had commissioned a much broader search for iconoclast texts by a commission under the direction of a scholar later known as John the Grammarian. After nearly thirty years of this iconoclast domination, the widowed Empress Theodora set about undoing it by removing John from the patriarchate and appointing the iconophile monk Methodios. She also nominated many iconophile supporters to key positions in both church and state administration. She did not, however, summon a council of all bishops to endorse this change, as had happened in 787, but relied on a new liturgical celebration of iconophile belief, the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, composed by Patriarch Methodios. While this condemned iconoclast rulers by name, she insisted on omitting her husband Theophilos from the list, citing his death-bed conversion to iconophile practice – an invention designed to excuse his clear commitment to iconoclasm.

For many years after this reversal of iconoclast theology, iconophile leaders expressed their anxiety about dissident church leaders who did not embrace the change and secretly harboured their traditional beliefs. The generation of iconoclast bishops appointed in 815 and later, reinforced by Theophilos's determination to stamp out icon veneration, may well have clung to what they considered orthodox practice. Whether iconophile supporters of Theodora, her son Michael III and his co-ruler and later sole emperor Basil I exaggerated fears of a