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THE WITCH OF ENDOR

I SAMUEL 28 IN RABBINIC AND CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS TILL 800 A.D.

BY

K. A. D. SMELIK

INTRODUCTION

At Smyrna during the persecution of emperor Decius,¹ the priest Pionius and his co-religionists received the martyr's crown. The account of their passion, which was made afterwards,² contains some speeches. Pionius is supposed to have delivered these to his adherents, whilst in prison. *Inter alia* he speaks about the Jews; he regards them to be dangerous for the Christians, because they alleged (according to this martyr) that Jesus' resurrection was due to necromancy, and consequently no proof of his divinity. They referred to I Sam. 28, the story about the witch of Endor.³ There the Scripture states that Samuel was recalled to life at Saul's demand; according to them Jesus was resuscitated in the same manner. "Pionius" tries to refute them by asserting that Samuel himself did not appear. Infernal daemons assumed his shape, and showed themselves to the woman and to Saul.

So, according to "Pionius", I Sam. 28 was interpreted by Rabbinic and Christian exegetes in a completely different manner. In fact, the exegesis of some of them is not that different. In this article I want to give a survey of the most important Rabbinic and Christian interpretations of

* In the first place I want to thank Prof. Dr. M. A. Beek, Prof. Dr. S. de Boer and Dr. J. C. J. Sanders for their help, and Mrs. S. Beek-Hobart for revising the translation into English.

¹ 250 A.D. From Eusebe (*H.E.* IV, 15, 46f.) one could infer that this martyrdom took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180); this appears to be incorrect, cf. G. Rauschen in *Bibl. d. Kircheng.* 14 (Kempten 1913) 7, n. 3.

² I used the Latin version edited by the Bollandists in *Acta Sanctorum*, February I, p. 45.

³ To call her a witch is, of course, an anachronism, but not unsuitable.

I Sam. 28 from the period before 800 A.D.⁴ and a comparison between them. It is not my aim to be apologetical on behalf of either side.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In I Sam. 28 the decline of Saul, which is described in the preceding chapters, culminates. Saul, once chosen by the Lord to be the first king of His people, is now forced by Him to turn to His enemies, the very enemies Saul had driven from his realm. The persecutor of all necromancers has to resort to necromancy himself. At Endor Saul is told by the prophet, who once anointed him, that he has to die. Only his former adversary, the witch, is willing to show some kindness to him.

Although the general tendency of this narrative is clear enough, it contains many difficulties, when read from a more logical point of view. Some of these are even impossible to solve. Therefore this pericope gave expounders of every age much trouble, but especially those from Antiquity, when Biblical exegesis was more strictly determined by dogmatic and logical considerations.

“Pionius” already posed an important question: was Samuel raised by the necromancer or do we have to understand the Scripture in a different way? We do not have any reason to suppose that the writer of I Sam. 28 did not want us to believe that Samuel himself appeared at Endor. Likewise, the author of I Chron. 10,13f. had no doubt whatsoever on this point, when he summarized Saul’s life. For the rest the Bible does not mention this necromancy, except the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. There (46,23) Samuel is praised to have prophesied even after he had passed away.⁵ Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* VI,327–39) nor the *Versiones Antiquae* show any doubt or objection in their rendering of I Sam. 28; the LXX even insert into their translation of I Chron. 10,13: “and Samuel the prophet answered him”.

THE VIEW OF PSEUDO-PHILO

Pseudo-Philo has a different opinion.⁶ Although he does not deny that Samuel himself appeared, and he does believe in necromancy in general,

⁴ 800 A.D. is, however, only an approximate date; sometimes it was also necessary to discuss writings from a later period.

⁵ Cf. also *Pirke de R. Eliezer*, ch. 33(= *P.d.R.E.*).

⁶ *Lib. Ant. Bibl.* LXIV, 1–9.

he makes the prophet say:⁷ “And therefore, do not glorify thyself, king, neither thou, woman. For thou didst not raise me, but this instruction, in which God said to me, when I was alive, that I should come to thee and announce thee that thou hast sinned against God already a second time in a negligent way. Hence after having breathed my last, my bones were disturbed in order to tell thee, whilst I am dead, what I heard, whilst alive.” (v. 7). So Pseudo-Philo does not want to accept that this important prophet was submitted to the power of a necromancer, and he suggests that Samuel appeared at the command of the Lord.

THE VIEW OF THE RABBIS

At first the Rabbis did not share Pseudo-Philo's objection. As “Pionius” remarked, they consider necromancy to be wicked but possible⁸ and according to them Samuel himself was raised at Endor. In their exegesis of I Sam. 28⁹ this is presupposed, as appears from their explanation of the strange fact that in v. 12 the witch suddenly recognizes Saul:¹⁰ she noticed that it was the king himself “by no other reason than that (a dead man) rises in front of a king not (in the way) as he rises before an ordinary citizen. In front of an ordinary citizen he rises with the face downwards, but in front of a king with the face upwards.” Cf. also their answer, when the question is raised: “And (Saul) did not know (Samuel)?”:¹¹ “No, but three things have been said about the one who resuscitates a dead person by necromancy: he who resuscitates, sees him, but does not hear

⁷ My translation is as literal as possible.

⁸ Cf. L. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Budapest 1898)53. He asserts that since some Rabbis performed necromancy, they cannot have considered it to be wicked *in se*. In Rabbinic literature necromancy in general is discussed in *Mishna*, Sanhedrin 7,7, more detailed in *Bab. Talm.* (= b.) Sanh. 65a, b. Cf. also *Pal. Talm.* Sanh. VII,10; here I Sam. 28,8 is mentioned. R. Mana (or Mani; Amorite of the second generation) induces from the verse that the woman „knew words, many words“ (*i.e.* charms). So by sorcery she resuscitated Samuel. The Rabbis enacted severe laws against necromancy in conformity with the Torah (Lev. 20,27), but this kind of mantic did not fall into desuetude.

⁹ Cf. *Tosefta*, Sota 11,5; *Palestinian Talmud*, Chagiga II,1, Sanh. VII,10; *Babylonian Talmud*, Berachot 12b, Shabbat 152b (b. Shabb.), Eruvin 53b, Chagiga 4b (b. Chag.), Sanh. 65b; *Midrash Rabba*, Gen. R. 65,8, 95,1, Lev. R. 26,7, Num. R. 11,3, Lam. R. III,29,9, Eccl. R. VII,1,4; *Midrash Samuel* 24,1–6 (M. Sam.); *P.d.R.E.* 33; and *Tanchuma* (ed. Buber) III,81–83.

¹⁰ Cf. Lev. R. 26,7 (and parallels) and also I Sam. 28,14 (LXX) where it is stated that Samuel appeared upright, possibly in connection with this exegesis.

¹¹ Lev. R. 26,7, referring to I Sam. 28,13f.

his voice; he who needs him, hears his voice, but does not see him; and he who does not need him, does not hear or see him."

Some heretic, who denied the resurrection of the dead and the Rabbinic view that the souls of the righteous abide beneath the seat of the Holy One until the Day of Judgement,¹² questioned R. Abbahu (Amorite of the third generation) about I Sam. 28.¹³ How can Samuel be raised by necromancy, when he is supposed to be beneath God's throne? (Of course, a necromancer has no authority there.) R. Abbahu explains to him that during the first twelve months after death the soul at times returns to the body, and only after that period, when the body has ceased to exist, the soul ascends to heaven and returns nevermore. This necromancy took place before the set time of twelve months.

Thus even the great Samuel could be resuscitated by a necromancer. About the magic she used, however, the Rabbis are very vague: in Lev. R. 26,7 they describe the necromancy itself in this way: "And she did what she did, and she said what she said, and raised him."

CHANGES OF VIEW IN THE GA'ONIC PERIOD

Only in the Ga'onic period (strictly speaking beyond the scope of this survey) doubt arises about the reality of necromancy in general and of this necromancy in particular.¹⁴ Some exegetes, like the famous Kimhi,¹⁵ stick to the traditional opinion and maintain that it was Samuel who spoke to Saul. In his commentary on I Sam. 28, however, Kimhi mentions the opinion of R. Samuel ben Hofni († 1034). This Ga'on is a representative of a more rationalistic group of scholars. He thinks that no dead man was raised by the woman in Endor, but that she was the one who said everything. He tries to prove this assertion by referring to the prophecy the presumed Samuel gives. This was no real prophesy, because it consists only of facts that are well known to everybody, like the rejection of Saul, because of his attitude towards Amalek, and the anointment of David. And one did not need to be a prophet to predict that Saul would perish soon. The woman actually recognized Saul from the beginning, noticed

¹² Cf. G. F. Moore, *Judaism II* (Cambridge¹⁰1966) 389f., but he speaks about „treasuries“ instead of „the seat of the Holy One“.

¹³ Cf. b. Shabb. 152b (codex Munich); *textus receptus* reads Sadducee instead of „min“, heretic.

¹⁴ Cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia⁵1968) VI, 237.

¹⁵ Or Radaq (c. 1160–1235), but according to B. Hahn, *Spectrum Endoreum* (Jena 1684) 30, Kimhi changed his opinion afterwards.

his fear, and understood what the issue of the battle against the Philistines would be. So it was not difficult for her to feign this prophecy, and have success with it.

A third group of Jewish exegetes adhered to the opinion of Pseudo-Philo, probably without knowing his work: Samuel arose at the command of the Creator to the astonishment of the woman, who saw, for the first time, that her malpractices were successful. Therefore she uttered a loud cry, as is stated in v. 12. (R. Saadya).¹⁶ Since the Ge'onim these three views have coexisted in Jewish exegesis until our time.¹⁷

SURVEY OF THE CHRISTIAN OPINIONS¹⁸

Without too much difficulty we can reduce the opinions of the Christian exegetes of the period till 800 A.D. into three basic views:

I. Samuel was resuscitated by the woman:

Justin Martyr, Origen, Zeno of Verona, Ambrose, Augustine, Sulpicius Severus, Dracontius, and Anastasius Sinaita.¹⁹

¹⁶ Quoted by Kimhi in his commentary on I Sam. 28.

¹⁷ Cf. „Divination“ in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* VI, 116f., and the commentary by S. Goldman on Samuel (Soncino), p. 169.

¹⁸ Most surveys of these opinions are not very elaborate, nor complete; *vide e.g.* Dallaeus, *De usu patrum...* (Geneva 1686) 297; C. Semisch, *Justin der Märtyrer* (Breslau 1842) II, 463, n. 4; E. R. Redepenning, *Origenes* (Bonn 1846) II, 460f.; H. Lesêtre, *Évocation des Morts* in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, col. 2129ff. and J. H. Waszink, *Tertulliani de Anima* (Amsterdam 1947) 582f. There are two exceptions (as far as I know): L. Allatius, *De Engastrimytho Syntagma* (Lyon 1629) 413–532 (of his edition of the works of Eustathius) and the quoted work of B. Hahn. In order to prove that Eustathius was right in refuting Origen, Allatius discusses most Ecclesiastic writers on this point, also from later periods, though not the Syriac (ch. VII–XI and XXII). Because he was not interested in Rabbinic exegesis (cf. p. 507), he does not discuss Rabbinic writings. Hahn had the same incentive as Allatius; his discussion of Patristic interpretations, however, is less elaborate, but he mentions also the Rabbinic view. Since both writers were only interested in proving the correctness of their interpretation, their discussion is not exactly detached, as appears from comments like this: the Jews „*innumerus fabulis et figmentis historiam hanc conspurcant*“ (Hahn). I hope to have done more justice to all groups.

¹⁹ Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* 105 (PG 6,721); Origen, *In librum Regum homilia II* (Kleine Texte 83), cf. also comm. on John 20,42 (GCS 10,385); Zeno of Verona, *Tractatus* I,xvi,4 (PL 11,376); Ambrose, comm. on Luke I,33 (PL 15,1547); Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* II,3 (CCSL 44,81–6), *De cura gerenda pro mortuis* XV,18 (CSEL 41,651f), *De octo Dulcitii quaestionibus* VI (PL 40, 162f), *De doctrina Christiana* II,xxiii,35 (CCSL 32,58), cf. also his epistle 43 (CSEL 34/2,105); Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* I,36 (CSEL 1,37); Dracontius, *Carmen de Deo* II,1,324ff. (PL 60,797); Anastasius Sinaita, 154 *Quaestiones*, 39 and 112 (PG 89,581ff.

- II. Either Samuel or a daemon in his shape appeared at God's command: John Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Pseudo-Justin, Theodore bar Koni, and Isho'dad of Merv.²⁰
- III. A daemon deceived Saul and gave him a forged prophecy: Tertullian, Pseudo-Hippolytus, "Pionius", Eustathius of Antioch, Ephraem, Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius Ponticus, Pseudo-Basil, Jerome, Philastrius, Ambrosiaster, and Pseudo-Augustine.²¹

Cyril of Alexandria, Procopius of Gaza and Bede are mentioned separately, because one could place them both in group II and in group III.²² Since the third group seems to have been the most authoritative, it will be discussed first.

and 764). Perhaps this is also the view of Evodius, cf. his letter to Augustine (CSEL 44, 492).

²⁰ John Chrysostom, Comm. on Matthew VI,3 (PG 57,66), Comm. on the letter to Titus III,2 (PG 62,678); Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Quaest. in I Reg.* 28 (PG 80,590), *Quaest. in I Paral.* introduction (PG 80,808); Pseudo-Justin, *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos* 52 (PG 6,1296f. – may be written by Theodoret, cf. Altaner, *Patrologie*, 340); Theodore bar Koni, *Quaestiones* (CSCO 55,222ff.); Isho'dad of Merv, comm. on Samuel (CSCO 229,81ff.).

²¹ Tertullian, *De Anima*, 57,8f. (CCSL 2,866f.) (In the spurious *Carmen adversus Marcionem* III,126ff.–CCSL 2,1437–however, Samuel is praised, because „he retained prophetic rights also after his rest“); Pseudo-Hippolytus, *In Reges fragm.* (GCS 1,123), not written by Hippolytus, but by an unknown author, cf. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* II, 582 and H. Achelis, *Hippolytstudien* (TU 16,4) 122ff.; „Pionius“, cf. n. 2; Eustathius, *De Pythonissa* (Kl.T. 83); Ephraem, comm. on Samuel, 28 (in *Opera Omnia*, ed. P. Benedictus, ser. Syr. I [Rome 1737] p. 387–90) – cf. however, n. 3 – *Nisibian Hymn*, 42,6 (CSCO 240,38f.) and 57,15f (CSCO 240,86), *Contra Julianum*, (CSCO 174,86f) and the abstract of a sermon (CSCO 363,63); Gregory of Nyssa, *De Pythonissa* (Kl.T.83); Evagrius Ponticus, *Cephaleia Gnostica* VI,61 (Patr. Or. 28, 242f.); Pseudo-Basil, comm. on Is. 8,19/22 (PG 30,497); Jerome, comm. on Matth. 6, 31 (PL 26,46), comm. on Ez. IV,13,17f. (PL 25,114), cf. however his comm. on Is. III,7, 11 (PL 24,106); Philastrius, *Diversarum Haereseon liber* 26,1f. (CCSL 9,226f.); Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones Veteri et Novi Testamenti* 27 (CSEL 50,54ff.) and Pseudo-Augustine, *De mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* II,11 (PL 35,2179).

²² In *De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* VI (PG 68,432) Cyril refutes that Samuel was resuscitated; it was a daemon pretending to be the prophet. But on the other hand, he thinks that God announced Saul impending death in order to aggravate his suffering (cf. p. 175), though he does not say explicitly that the daemon prophesied at God's command. Procopius (comm. on I Sam., PG 87,1116f – cf. however, his comm. on Is. 7,10–17 and 8,19, PG 78^{bis}, 1961 and 1993) and Bede (comm. on I Sam., CCSL 119, 256f.) reject the opinion of group I, but cannot decide, whether group II or III holds the right view. From the statement of Gregory of Nazianze (*Oratio IV, Contra Julianum I*, 54, PG 35,577) on I Sam. 28, we cannot infer which view he hold.

THE NECROMANCY AT ENDOR WAS COMPLETELY DELUSIVE

As already stated, the main objection to a literal interpretation of I Sam. 28 is that one has to presume a wizard to be able to raise a most holy prophet from the dead which is impossible, since the ministers of Satan can never be more powerful than the ministers of God: "what is inferior obeys the commands of what is superior" ("Pionius"). Saints are able to exorcize evil spirits, but daemons are not able to summon saints (Eustathius, ch. 11). Moreover, the evil spirits had no control over the righteous during their lives; would they after death? (Procopius). "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and Death will never touch them" (Wisdom 3,1; quoted by Philastrius).²³ Since it is impossible that Samuel was resuscitated without his consent, did he follow the Devil of his own accord? This is absurd, according to Ambrosiaster.²⁴ Besides, God did not want to answer Saul through living prophets (cf. v. 6), why would He through one raised from the dead? (Gregory of Nyssa and Pseudo-Augustine).²⁵ As Jesus infers from God's designation as "God of the Living" that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be alive (Matt. 22,32), the pious Samuel too must have been alive, when Saul consulted the woman. Therefore, when she raised someone from the dead, it cannot have been Samuel (Evagrius). Thus taking I Sam. 28 in a literal sense is, according to these authors, impious and absurd.

Since it is not uncommon for the Devil or his confederates to assume the appearance of a righteous man (cf. 2 Cor. 11,14f.: "And no marvel; for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing, if his ministers also transform themselves as ministers of

²³ According to the Latin translation Philastrius used. Cf. however, the opinion of Justin and Anastasius, discussed below.

²⁴ Gregory of Nyssa deduces the following argument from the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus (Luke 16,19ff.), often cited in the discussion about I Sam. 28. There Jesus states that there is a great chasm between the compartment of righteous and that of wicked in the Hades, which no one can cross. And since a necromancer can only resuscitate dead from Hell (cf. the opinion of the heretic, mentioned p. 163f.) the woman cannot have raised Samuel, even if he would be willing to pass to Hell, because of this chasm. Cyril infers the same reasoning from Revel. 6,9. According to him it states that the souls of the righteous are in Paradise underneath an altar, where daemons cannot come, so it was impossible. He reminds also of the promise Jesus made according to John 10,27-29.

²⁵ Cf. however, the opinions given by John Chrysostom, Theodoret, Pseudo-Justin and Isho'dad of Merv (discussed below).

righteousness”),²⁶ what then is more obvious to assume than that a daemon posed as Samuel, in order to deceive Saul? Thus, the Devil tried to give the impression, that he has control over the righteous when dead. It would be senseless then to live in a God-fearing way, because treatment after death would not be different for the pious compared to the wicked, and it would be advisable to worship the Devil instead of God. And according to Eustathius, who gives this argument, that is the main incentive of the Devil.

But why does it say explicitly: “and the woman saw Samuel” (v. 12) and not, for example: a daemon in Samuel’s shape? According to the writers of group III this is just an instance of the Biblical practice to use condensed expressions. They give many examples of it, like the following: in the story of Balaam the daemon is plainly called “god”, although it is obvious in their eyes that not Israel’s God could be meant (Gregory of Nyssa).²⁷ Likewise, the apparition in I Sam. 28 is called “Samuel” by way of abbreviation. And this is not amazing, Augustine remarks,²⁸ because in colloquial speech we do the same: having seen Augustine or Simplician (to quote his examples) in a dream, we do not say: I saw the phantasm of Augustine or Simplician, but we say: I saw Augustine or Simplician.

Another argument, this time from Eustathius (ch. 9), in Ex. 7,12 the Scripture seems to allege, that the staffs of the Egyptian sorcerers turned into serpents – of course a most unseemly allegation. But, according to Eustathius, the Holy Writ, in this and other similar instances, presupposes that the reader will understand this magic to be delusive, because it is stated before that the story is about sorcery, and everyone knows that sorcery is just daemonic deceit. So it was not considered necessary to notify the reader of I Sam. 28 that the necromancy was a fraud. Moreover, the Scripture does not say that the woman resuscitated Samuel, only that she saw him (Procopius).

But what about “And Saul knew then that it was Samuel” (v. 14)? Here we have to realize that a king, who was vexed by daemons for so many years, could not make any distinction between reality and delusion. Samuel

²⁶ Quoted by Tertullian, „Pionius“, Eustathius, Ambrosiaster, Augustine (*de div. qu. ad Simpl.* II,3,2) and Pseudo-Augustine.

²⁷ Most writers compare I Sam. 28 with the story about Balaam. Sometimes, they refer to Gen. 18, where Abraham’s visitors, though angels, are called „men“ (e.g. Ephraem, Theodoret, Anastasius (qu. 39) and Procopius). Many other examples are given by Pseudo-Augustine.

²⁸ *De div. qu. ad Simpl.* II,3,2.

only existed in the sickly imagination of Saul (Eustathius and Ambrosiaster).

INDICATIONS THAT THIS NECROMANCY WAS DELUSIVE

Moreover, these writers believe to have found some clues in I Sam. 28 which indicate that Samuel himself did not appear.

In the first place: v. 13. Here the woman says that she sees gods coming out of the earth. The plural is remarkable. In Rabbinic literature it generally is explained by supposing that not only Samuel, but Moses too appeared at Endor. For, they say, when Samuel was resuscitated, he believed Last Judgement had come, and he took Moses with him to be his advocate.²⁹ They are called “gods”, because in Ex. 7,1 Moses is thus indicated, and Samuel, considered to be of the same rank as Moses,³⁰ was entitled to be called “god” as well.³¹ But there is also this explanation³²: “Many righteous men like him (= Samuel) came up with him in that hour.” Likewise some Christian exegetes, like Origen, interpreted “gods” as “souls of the righteous” (the LXX maintained the plural). Of course, this exegesis encountered strong opposition from the authors of group III. Not only Samuel, but a whole army of righteous (and maybe even angels) would have been resuscitated by the witch?!

They thought they had a better solution: these “gods” were actually daemons (Eustathius and Gregory of Nyssa).³³ The latter proves this by referring to Ps. 95,5 (LXX): “All gods of the heathen are daemons”. Since necromancy is a pagan kind of mantic, only pagan gods can be intended in v. 13, and according to this text pagan gods are daemons (a generally accepted view). Eustathius (ch. 10) elucidates the intention of the Devil: by calling up a whole army of forged souls of righteous, he tried to prove his divinity and indeed made Saul worship him (v. 14).

Moreover, when one believes that Samuel himself was resuscitated, one also has to believe that more than one god appeared. But, thus, one has to

²⁹ Cf. b.Chag. 4b. The Targum, however, translates: „And the woman said to Saul: I see the angel of the Lord, coming up from the earth.“

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Ps. 98.6 and Jer. 15.1.

³¹ Cf. also *the Midrash on the Psalms*, Ps. 138,§1.

³² *P.d.R.E.* 33 (cf. Lev. R. 26.7).

³³ Cf. Basil, letter 189 (PG 32,692), but also Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae Dux* 13 (PG 89,237).

deny the principle of monotheism, which is blasphemous. So, a literal interpretation is unacceptable (Cyril and Procopius).³⁴

Ephraem gives a rather witty argument:³⁵ if Samuel himself was resuscitated by the woman, why did Saul become so frightened by death that he collapsed (v. 20)? Since it would not be much trouble for the witch to raise him immediately after he died in battle. Why worry? But Saul must have seen through the daemonic deceit at that moment and therefore have collapsed.

Most arguments were found in the speech of the alleged Samuel. In the first place, they missed a firm reproach of Saul by Samuel. Instead of rebuking the wretched king for turning to a necromancer (forbidden in Lev. 19,31), and for adoring him (v. 14),³⁶ the apparition only asks why Saul disturbed him. So the impious can disturb the righteous, when deceased (Eustathius, ch. 10)? In the following chapter Eustathius gives a draft of what Samuel would have said, had he been raised: "Tell me, most condemnable of all mankind! (...) If then God deserted thee, and did not listen to thee at all, and (...) neither in dream nor in reality it is revealed to thee, what has to be done, shouldst not thou rather bow before God as a suppliant, and wash off your accused sins from thee by giving alms to the poor, instead of resorting to a soothsayer prophesying from her belly?!", etc., etc. This is a clear example of how these exegetes are determined by dogmatic considerations: here Eustathius judges a Scriptural passage to be not prophetic, because what is said is not in conformity with his opinion as to what a prophet should say in order to be a prophet.

In his prophecy Samuel announces to Saul that he and his sons will be with him the following day (v. 19). Nowadays, this passage does not cause

³⁴ According to Bede (*o.c.*, CCSL 119,256) it is a custom in the Holy Writ to designate one with a plural, and more than one with a singular, referring to Ex. 32,4 (Vulgate). Ephraem (in his comm.) and Isho'dad suppose that not only the spectre of Samuel, but also that of Saul himself in royal garment, appeared, witnessing his impending death. Seeing this apparition, the woman suddenly recognized Saul (v. 12).

³⁵ If it is his; because the commentary on Sam. where we can find it, is a collection of quotations by other authors from Ephraem's exegetical work which did not come down to us; cf. Bardenhewer. *o.c.* IV, 353ff.

³⁶ By allowing this adoration, the Devil committed himself actually (Ambrosiaster). In Rabbinic literature this problem is solved by supposing that Samuel in fact said more to Saul than stated in the Scripture (in conformity with a general presupposition in Rabbinic exegesis). There are two versions as to how Samuel rebuked Saul on this point, one in Lev. R. 26,7, and the other in *P.d.R.E.* 33, the latter attributed to Hillel (cf. however, W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten* I, 9f.).

exegetes any problems: the writer meant to say that Saul would die and descend to the nether world the next day, where Samuel was already abiding. But in the period we are discussing, every exegete was convinced that after death there was an abode for the righteous and another for the wicked, awaiting Last Judgement (cf. Henoch 22), and that this was also believed in Old Testament times. Thus we read in the Rabbinic literature: "with me": R. Jochanan bar Nappacha (Amorite of the second generation) explains it in this way: "in my division", i.e. the division of the righteous, and not in that of the wicked.³⁷ Since Saul was not exactly sinless,³⁸ a great problem arises: how can the Scripture state that he would come to the department of the righteous? In Rabbinic exegesis this is solved by assuming that Saul's sins must have been pardoned.³⁹ But this was not acceptable to the Christian writers: the persecutor of David cannot have come into the compartment of the righteous after death. So one needed a different interpretation. Some suggest we must not take this prophecy too literally: "with me" only indicates: in the same circumstances as Samuel, i.e. dead.⁴⁰ The exegetes of group III believe to have found an easier solution: when one assumes that the Devil is speaking, there is no problem at all. Saul would be with him the following day – in hell. Actually, the Devil committed himself by saying this.⁴¹

Like R. Samuel ben Hofni, these exegetes also comment on the lack of originality in the prophecy given by the apparition. In the words of Gregory of Nyssa: "And what was obvious to conceive from what had appeared, he told (...) in the cast of a prophecy." Moreover, some believe that this prophecy did not hold: "As a physician, who does not have an accurate knowledge of his profession, announces the death, when he sees a despairing patient, but makes a mistake in the hour – in that way the daemon knowing the actions of Saul, his enterprise with the ventrilo-

³⁷ This interpretation is quoted several times in Rabbinic literature, so we can consider it to be the authoritative exegesis.

³⁸ The opinions about Saul in Rabbinic and Christian literature till 800 A.D. I hope to discuss in a separate monograph.

³⁹ For more details, cf. the publication mentioned in note 38.

⁴⁰ Augustine (*de div. qu. ad Simpl.* II,3,3; cf. also Ephraem (comm.) and Isho'dad). It is remarkable that the LXX translate: „Tomorrow, thou and thy sons with thee will fall“, presumably a correction. The Greek fathers Origen, Eustathius and Gregory of Nyssa read, however: „will be with me“, like the Masoretic text, and also like the Peshitta, Vulgate, the Latin and the Syriac fathers. Only Theodoret has a different version, akin to that of the LXX, but not identical.

⁴¹ Eustathius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrosiaster and Pseudo-Augustine.

quist, and the wrath of God, also predicted his defeat together with his death, making a mistake in the day of his death" (Pseudo-Hippolytus). They inferred from the fact that the story about the Witch of Endor is not followed by an account of Saul's death, but by the story about David and the Amalekites, that at least three days must have elapsed between Saul's consultation with the witch and his death on Mount Gilboa.

Eustathius (ch. 13) also points out the fact that, according to his Bible-version, the apparition said: "Thou and Jonathan will be with me". Would a real prophet forget to mention the other sons of Saul, who died with him according to I Sam. 31?⁴² But the daemon wanted to suggest that even the righteous Jonathan would, after death, receive the same treatment as the wicked Saul.

Not all the writers of group III are of the opinion that the daemon lied in his prophecy. Ambrosiaster, for example, is convinced that he gave a true prediction, but – he adds – this is not peculiar, because the Devil once was an angel of great quality.

SAMUEL WAS RESUSCITATED BY THE WOMAN

Since the opinions of group I are not as coherent as those of group III, each writer will now be discussed separately. In the first place: Justin Martyr. In a now lost passage of his dialogue with the Jew Tryphon⁴³ he must have discussed I Sam. 28, as appears from ch. 105 of this work: "And that the souls remain (in existence), I proved with the fact that also the soul of Samuel was resuscitated by the ventriloquist, when Saul asked for this." He goes on to say that this pericope clearly shows that even the souls of the prophets are in the power of the daemons. As we have seen, this view was unacceptable to most Christian exegetes. Justin's influence on this point is rather small: only Anastasius Sinaita has an opinion similar to that of Justin.⁴⁴

In his sermon on I Sam. 28⁴⁵ Origen confesses that at first he was very troubled by this story, but that he does not dare to deviate from what

⁴² According to Rahlfs' edition of the LXX, this variant emanated from Lucian. Gregory of Nyssa and Theodoret know it, possibly Pseudo-Hippolytus too.

⁴³ Presumably R. Tarphon, Tannaite of the second generation; written c. 140.

⁴⁴ Cf. Semisch, *o.c.* II, 465.

⁴⁵ Cf. however, fragment XIV of his comm. on Sam. (CGS 6,299): a completely different view. Perhaps this fragment is spurious, or written earlier? Or later, cf. the opinion of Allatius, *o.c.*, p. 434 and of Jahn (in TU 2, 4, p. xxvii) that Origen changed his view after writing this sermon.

the Scripture states explicitly, since it is the Holy Spirit who says: "And the woman saw Samuel" (v.12). And as the Holy Spirit never lies, the witch must have seen Samuel and not a daemon, although Origen is aware of Paul's remark in 2 Cor. 11,14f. and quotes it. Moreover, he is convinced that the prophecy of the apparition cannot have been given by a daemon, because in his view no daemon can ever pronounce upon the kingship of the Lord's chosen people. But how can Samuel have been in Hades in order to be resuscitated from there? Was Christ not in Hades (referring to Christ's descent into Hades)? If he was, why not Samuel? All descended into Hades before Christ's coming, so what better place for Samuel to prophecy about the Saviour's arrival? Only after Christ's descent the righteous gained access to Paradise.

It is interesting to note that here Origen adheres to the letter of the text and refrains from the use of a pneumatic interpretation, as distinct of his ordinary manner. Although often accused of unbridled allegorizing, Origen actually always pays much attention to the literal sense of the Scripture. This exegesis of I Sam. 28 was not acceptable to the other Christian writers; two refutations of it are known,⁴⁶ only one has come down to us: that by Eustathius. I have discussed it before, but I want to mention here that Eustathius did not hesitate to taunt Origen as being a literalist, although he has no good word either for his pneumatic interpretations in other works.

In order to prove the resurrection of the dead Zeno of Verona refers *inter alia* to the story of Samuel who appeared at Saul's demand, although he was dead. And, resuscitated, he gave Saul a better prophecy than whilst alive.

Ambrose only states: "Samuel after his death, did not keep silent about the future, according to the testimony of the Scripture." The paraphrase by Sulpicius Severus of I Sam. 28 likewise is not very interesting: "Then he consulted the conjured Samuel by means of a woman whose intestines the spirit of error had filled", the last probably being a periphrasis of the Greek ἐγγαστρίμυθος (translated by me as "ventriloquist"). In a

⁴⁶ According to Jerome (*liber de viris illustribus* 83, PL 23,691) also Methodius wrote a refutation of Origen's exegesis. This has not come down to us. But in Methodius' work *De Resurrectione* (transmitted in an epitome by Photius, cod. 234, PG 103,1136) apparently it is presumed that Samuel himself appeared (cf. however, Waszink, *o.c.* 583).

poetic discussion on necromancy Dracontius mentions Saul, who is said to have conjured the prophet's soul by way of a Python.⁴⁷

For a long time Augustine could not decide whether Samuel did or did not appear, but in the end he resolved that Samuel himself was resuscitated. We can trace the evolution of his ideas on this subject from two of his writings:

a. *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, written in 396,⁴⁸ book II, question 3. In the first chapter he argues: if Satan spoke with God (Job 1), why not Samuel with Saul? If Satan put Jesus on the pinnacle of the Temple why would he not be able to raise Samuel?, etc. (the opinions of group I). So it would not be astonishing if Samuel, obeying a command of the Lord, appeared to the woman (the opinion of group II). In chapter two he suggests a different interpretation, which we already mentioned: "Samuel" designates a phantasm feigned by the Devil in the shape of Samuel. In the third chapter Augustine occupies himself with the question, if daemons can give true prophecies. After discussing some Biblical examples he concludes, that God sometimes bestows a certain predicting power on daemons, but that these daemons add lies to their prophecies, as also appears from I Sam. 28,19: Saul never came, where Samuel abode (although, at the same time, he offers a different explanation for this verse, as already discussed). In the end, after stating how hard it is to decide this matter, Augustine reluctantly pronounces that a daemon appeared at Endor.

b. *De cura gerenda pro mortuis*, ch. 15, par. 18, written in 424.⁴⁸ Having read at some time between 396 and 424 the passage in Ecclesiasticus, praising Samuel for having prophesied after death, Augustine is now convinced that Samuel himself appeared. But since the canonicity of this writing was (and is) challenged, he adds a second argument: when Moses, whose death is described in Deut. 34, could appear during the Transfiguration (Mc. 9,4), why not Samuel at Endor?⁴⁹

⁴⁷ In M. Sanh. 7.7 a necromancer like the witch of Endor, is defined as „the Python which speaks from his armpits.“

⁴⁸ These works are dated according to Altaner, *o.c.*, 426.

⁴⁹ In *De VIII Dulc. qu.* (written 425), Augustine quotes both passages discussed heretofore, but sticks to his last opinion. Cf. however, his unclear remark in *De doctr. Chr.*. Augustine's opinions were often quoted: Eugippius (*Thesaurus* 305, PL 62,1017) quotes the passage in the questions of Dulcitius; (H)rabanus Maurus, however, only that in the questions of Simplician (comm. on Sam., PL 109,66), likewise Isidore of Seville (*Quaest. in Vet. Test.* 20, PL 83,407; cf. however, his remark in *Etymologiarum* VIII,9,7, PL 82,311), Pseudo-Eucherius (comm. on Sam. PL 50,1078ff.) and Walafrid

About 700 a list was made of questions to and answers from Anastasius Sinaita. Unfortunately, the collection we have now also contains spurious questions and a distinction between the authentic and unauthentic parts of this work has not been made yet (as far as I know).⁵⁰ So now there are two passages concerning the necromancy at Endor with two contradictory answers. In qu.39 the opinion of group II (discussed below) is repeated with an argumentation like that of Theodoret. But in qu.112 a more original view is given. Asked if the conjuror raised Samuel for Saul, the writer affirms this without restriction, with reference to Rom. 5,14: "But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." In his interpretation this means that during the time that Moses' Law was valid, i.e. till the coming of Christ, even the souls of the righteous were under the control of the Devil (the opinion of Justin).

EITHER SAMUEL OR A DAEMON IN HIS SHAPE APPEARED AT GOD'S COMMAND

As it appears, group II holds a middle position: like group III they object against the assumption that the evil woman had power over the righteous Samuel, but they do not think the necromancy was a complete fraud. Like Pseudo-Philo and R. Saadya, they assume it was God's wish to notify Saul in this way that he had to die.⁵¹

The opinions fluctuate concerning the question as to whether Samuel himself appeared (Theodore bar Koni), or a daemon subdued to the Lord (Pseudo-Justin and Isho'dad). Theodoret cannot decide in this matter: in his commentary on Samuel he suggests an angel⁵² or a phantom; in his commentary on Chronicles, however, an angel or the soul of Samuel himself. In order to prove that Samuel appeared Theodore bar Koni points out the fact that the woman shrieked (v. 12) in amazement (cf. R. Saadya; Isho'dad also gives this argument) and because (in the

Strabo (comm. on Sam., PL 113,562). In *De magicis artibus* (PL 110,1099ff.), however, (H)rabanus Maurus discusses the problem himself by giving a survey of the opinions of group III.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bardenhewer. *o.c.* V, 45.

⁵¹ It is hard to assess to what extent Origen, Ambrose and Augustine belong to group II, instead of I, since they do not state clearly, whether Samuel was resuscitated with or without consent of God. In *De div. qu. ad Simpl.* II,3,1 Augustine suggests the former.

⁵² Also Procopius.

LXX) Samuel is said to have appeared upright. According to Theodore daemons appear lying on their back during necromancy (cf. the Rabbinic view, mentioned on p.162). Moreover, Samuel was wearing a cloak, and necromancers cannot repair worn clothes, so Samuel must have been sent by the Lord.

Since the apparition prophesied at God's command, his prophecy must be true. In order to prove this Theodoret quotes I Chron. 10,13f. (already discussed) and Ez. 14,4: "And when he goes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him through him" – but instead of "prophet" he reads "pseudo-prophet".⁵³ Refuting the argument of group III, that Saul did not die the next day, Theodoret explains that, although the story of David and the Amalekites is told in between, the Scripture does not mean to suggest by this that Saul gave battle only some days later.⁵⁴ He did die the following day. Theodoret also pleads for the originality of this prophecy, for Samuel never in his life predicted that Saul and Jonathan would die together.⁵⁵ Isho'dad agrees that the prophecy was true and he refers to other instances that daemons were forced to tell the truth.⁵⁶

But why did God give Saul a prophecy in this peculiar way? The Lord wanted to punish Saul by announcing his death to him, in order that he "would accept the verdict, and part from life groaning" (Theodoret).⁵⁷ But as Saul did not listen to Samuel during his life, a special kind of prophecy was needed. Pseudo-Justin compares it with the story about Achab and the lying spirit (I Kings 22, 19ff.). Like Achab, Saul would only hearken to a daemon. John Chrysostom agrees: the heathen only believe in predictions of their kind of mantic, so God makes use of it in order to reach them, however abominable pagan mantic is to Him. So He informed the Magi by way of a star; what the Philistinian soothsayers proclaimed in I Sam.5 comes true by His grace. "The same thing applies to the necromancer: for, since Saul believed her, God announced to him through her what would happen to him."⁵⁸ Apparently John Chrysostom puts Saul on a par with the heathen.

⁵³ Also Ephraem (comm.), Procopius and Anastasius (qu. 39).

⁵⁴ Jerome (Comm. on Matthew 6,31) expounds „tomorrow“ here as „in the future“. Procopius gives this interpretation as a possibility.

⁵⁵ Cf. n.41.

⁵⁶ Cf. also his comm. on Numbers 22 (CSCO 176,105).

⁵⁷ The same opinion is also stated by Ephraem (comm.), Cyril and Anastasius (qu.39).

⁵⁸ On Titus III,2. In his *Hom. in Matth.* 28 (29) (PG 57/8,353) he states that souls cannot become daemons after death; cf. also *De Lazaro* II,1 (PG 48,983).

According to Gregory of Nyssa, some (he does not mention their names) supposed that Samuel was very much grieved by Saul's repudiation, and that he reproachfully confronted the Lord with Saul's merit for having exterminated necromancy (I Sam. 28,3). In order to show Samuel that he was recommending Saul unjustifiably, God permitted the prophet's soul to be raised through this kind of magic.

Isho'dad has a simple solution: Saul was not worthy of different treatment, he was just "like a dog returning to his vomit" (Prov. 26,11; an allusion to I Sam. 28,3). It is interesting to note though that from v. 13, where Saul asks: "But what dost thou see?", Isho'dad infers that he could not see the apparition, and he adds that this is typical of necromancy, because the same interpretation is to be found in Lev. R. 26,7 (already discussed).

ANALYSIS

An important question remains to be solved: how is it possible that, although all these writers suppose the Holy Writ to be inspired by God, some of them had no objection to rejecting the literal sense of I Sam. 28 by stating that Samuel himself did not appear? The reason for this is that in their view the Bible is a unity. Every part of it is to be understood in accordance with the rest, for in this unity no part can be contradictory to the general tendency of the Scriptures, that (according to them) found concrete shape in the Christian faith. They believe that when a pericope, taken in a literal sense, suggests an unseemly interpretation, this cannot have been the intention of the inspired writer. Therefore, this interpretation cannot be correct; another is required. Consequently, when in I Sam. 28 the impression is created that Samuel was forced to appear by necromancy, which is an unlawful and daemonic deceit, the Scripture is to be understood in a different way.

For the general tendency among Christian writers of this period is to consider necromancy (like all pagan mantic) as a daemonic deceit. Lactantius says that necromancy was invented by daemons in order to deceive mankind.⁵⁹ Generally, in Christian thought, mantic is connected

⁵⁹ *Epitome Div. Inst.* 28 (PL 6,1036); cf. also C. Schneider, *Geistesgeschichte des antiken Christentums* (Munich 1954) I, 537ff.; K. H. E. de Jong, *De magie bij de Grieken en de Romeinen* (Haarlem²1948) 156ff. and A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1972) 221. Necromancy, however, was performed in their time. It is discussed by John Chrysostom (comm. on Matthew 34,4, PG 57,403). How a bishop resuscitated a monk in a monas-

with the Devil's works. Already in the Gospels daemons are prophesying, in Acts the apostles are at war with the daemoniac powers of sorcery and mantic (Cf. Acts, ch. 8, 13, 16, and 19). A fierce struggle, the more so, since Christian miracles and mysteries were often considered by pagans to be magic as well, and in this period pagan interest in magic was considerable. Moreover, sorcery and mantic were associated with the pagan gods, and, as we have seen, these were actually daemons in Christian (and also Jewish) eyes.

Therefore, our question is not pertinent. The opinions of groups II and III correspond with what we can expect from Christian exegetes of this period. It is more appropriate to consider why some Christian writers adhered to the literal sense of this pericope. Justin's adherence is not so remarkable; in his time theological reflection was not very advanced and there was opportunity to hold peculiar views. Moreover, in the East the belief in the power of daemons has always been stronger than in the West. In Origen's days theological reflection was more advanced, as also appears from the fact that Origen considered it necessary to refute possible objections from adversaries. But since Origen was a very original thinker, he dared to hold exceptional views and probably regarded it as a challenge to stick to the literal sense of this extraordinary story. In the same way, Ambrose, Zeno of Verona, Sulpicius Severus, and Dracontius did not realize that their interpretations of I Sam. 28 had some implications that could not easily be reconciled with the general tendency in theology, else they would not have interpreted this pericope in a plain way. Unlike Origen's sermon, their views on this story were not very conspicuous and did not encounter criticism (as far as I know).

It is quite amazing, however, that Augustine revised his view and adhered to a literal interpretation. According to Diestel,⁶⁰ he was most willing to oppose literal exegesis, when he believed it to be in opposition to the general tendency among orthodox thinkers. But in this case he was convinced by Sirach's testimony, that is certainly hard to misinterpret. Si. 46,23 is not quoted by other authors because of its deutero-canonicity or obscurity, so it was Augustine only who was convinced by it. The

tery near Edessa (during the Arab period) is described in the Chronicle of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre (ed. J. B. Chabot) IV (Paris 1895) 16–19 (Syrian text); cf. however, Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik* (Leipzig 1951) 171.

⁶⁰ *Geschichte des alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche* (Jena 1869) 82ff. Cf. Augustine himself (*de div. qu. ad Simpl.* II,3,3): one has to find „an interpretation which is not contrary to Faith“.

interpretation of (pseudo-) Anastasius Sinaita is congenial to that of Justin. He corrects the latter, however, by stating that the Devil's dominion of the dead was ended by Christ's descent into Hades. In this way it must have been more acceptable to his contemporaries.

Although the Rabbis shared the principle that the Holy Writ is a unity and also believed in the existence of daemons – they connected another kind of necromancy with an impure spirit (b. Sanh. 65b) – they interpreted I Sam. 28 in a literal way. I see two reasons for this: in the first place mantic was very common in the environment of the Rabbis, some of them even used it. So it is not amazing that they considered the necromancy at Endor unlawful, but not impossible, daemonic or delusive. Even in a later period, when Maimonides did regard pagan mantic as illusive, he met strong opposition. Still in the eighteenth century his view was criticised by Elijah ben Solomon, stating that in this matter “accursed philosophy led him astray.”⁶¹ Secondly, as also appears from the last quotation, the Rabbis, more than the Christian exegetes, shared the range of ideas of the writers of the Old Testament. Although they did know some Greek philosophy, its influence was not as important as in later periods of Jewish history. Then Jewish exegetes had the same objection as their Christian colleagues: it is unacceptable that the righteous Samuel was resuscitated by unlawful necromancy. Some of them try to solve the problem in the way Pseudo-Philo and the Christian writers of group II did, but others have a more rationalistic explanation which, in a later period, Christian exegetes also suggest: the situation was dominated by Saul's confused state of mind, so it was not difficult for the witch to give him the illusion that Samuel appeared. This interpretation is not in the spirit of Old Testament times, nor in that of Late Antiquity. It is an example of the rationalistic kind of exegesis that, in my opinion, strains the intention of the Scriptural writers even to a higher degree than the harmonizing exegesis of Patristic and Rabbinical literature.

Thus, we have seen that, though mainly the Rabbinic and Christian exegeses of I Sam. 28⁶² differ, there are many similarities in interpretation. As it appears from what “Pionius” said, the Rabbinic exegesis at least must have been known to some Christian writers. But apparently Rabbinic and Christian exegetes did not influence each other very much on this

⁶¹ Cf. the quoted article in the *Enc. Jud.* VI, 118.

⁶² More could be said about the exegesis of I Sam. 28 in this period; I had to make a choice.

subject. Since they share, however, most of the basic principles of interpretation regarding the Scriptures, Patristic and Rabbinic exegesis are far more congenial to each other than to the rationalistic exegesis of later times.

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A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN GREGORY OF NYSSA, APOLOGIA IN HEXAEMERON, CH. 69

In ch. 69 (numeration of the critical edition by G. H. Forbes, Burntisland, 1855) of his *Apologia in Hexaemeron* Gregory explains how through an inner force, laid down by God in nature, the heavenly bodies took their own places. This holds, he says, of the milky way and the zodiac and, within the latter, of the shape of every ἄστρον, *i.e.* every constellation in the zodiac. And then, speaking of the individual stars in the constellations (also called ἄστρα), he continues: (ὥστε) καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄστρῳ πάλιν, μὴ κατὰ τὸ αὐτόματον ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν τῷ σχήματι κειμένων ἄστρον ἢ ὥδε ἢ ὥδε τὴν θέσιν ἔχειν, ἀλλ' ἰσομερῶς ἢ φυσικῶς ἐγκειμένη αὐτῷ ιδιότης ἀπήγαγεν ἐκεῖ μένειν ἐν ἀμεταθέτῳ τῇ παγιότητι, τῇ τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως δυνάμει κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Πεποιηκότος σοφίαν περικρατούμενον (ed. Forbes, p. 84 = Migne, PG 44,117A).

There must be something wrong in this text between ἀλλ' and ἀπήγαγεν, because in an infinitive construction a *verbum finitum* can not but turn up in a subordinate clause. But there is no conjunction or relative here. Moreover the words ἐκεῖ μένειν ἐν ἀ.τ.π. are senseless without a previous indication of *the place where* they remain. And, in addition, the adverb ἰσομερῶς, which means "equally divided" or "of equal length", does not fit in here.

These problems are solved if one considers ἰσομερῶς as a *mistaken writing* of εἰς ὃ μέρος = "into which part" or "into which place", *viz.* of the constellation. Thanks to the iotacisme the two sound almost the same. Gregory states, then, that every star of a constellation did not get its place fortuitously, but *at the place into which* it has been led by its innate character, *there* it remains in invariable stability, mastered by the force of its own nature in accordance with the wisdom of the Creator.