

# Apostolic authority and the 'incident at Antioch': Chrysostom on Galatians 2:11-14

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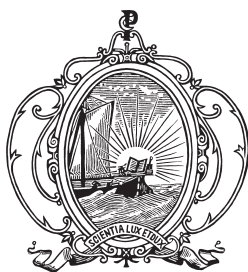
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# Apostolic Authority and the ‘Incident at Antioch’: Chrysostom on *Gal. 2:11-4*

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## ABSTRACT

Paul’s confrontation of Peter in Antioch, as related in *Gal. 2:11-4*, caused much consternation for the exegetes of the early church. Controversy over how these two foundational apostles could clash produced multiple divergent theories, and even provided fodder for pagan critics. Chrysostom’s interpretation of the passage is often incorrectly lumped with that of other fathers. This article looks closely at Chrysostom’s elaborate explanation in his occasional homily on the pericope (*In illud: In faciem ei restiti*), and compares this to the exegesis found in his better-known sermon series on *Galatians* (*In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*). Close analysis reveals the former as a highly-structured and Christianized *encomium* to the city of Antioch. Chrysostom’s interpretations are placed in the context of other patristic and pagan uses of the Pauline text, as well as the context of perceptions of authority in the early church.

One Pauline passage which has plenty of commentary in the Latin tradition but not as much in the Greek is that of the confrontation of Paul and Peter found in *Gal. 2:11-4* and referred to by New Testament scholars as the ‘Incident at Antioch’.<sup>1</sup>

11 ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατε-  
γνωσμένος ἦν. 12 πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνή-  
σθαι· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περι-  
τομῆς. 13 καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς  
συναπῆχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει. 14 ἀλλ’ ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν  
ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων· εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρ-  
χων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαΐζειν;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; <sup>12</sup>for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. <sup>13</sup>And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup>But when I saw that they were not acting

<sup>1</sup> The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement no. 283302 (COMPAUL).

<sup>2</sup> NA 28.

consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’<sup>3</sup>

New Testament scholars comment on how controversial this passage was in the Early Church, and how odd, strained, and downright defensive the early exegesis sounds to modern ears. In the East, Clement of Alexandria went so far as to declare that the ‘Cephas’ in this passage must be someone other than the apostle Peter.<sup>4</sup> Jerome, following Origen, portrays the whole incident as deliberately staged play-acting, a deceptive pantomime to allow for a teachable moment.<sup>5</sup> In the West, Tertullian rather plainly views Paul as overreacting to Peter’s behaviour.<sup>6</sup> Augustine famously takes Jerome’s interpretation to task in scathing epistolary combat, declaring this kind of exegesis to be hogwash – Peter in this instance was just wrong.<sup>7</sup> For Augustine, the incident shows that grace carries the day, the truth will out, and Peter’s humility in taking reproof demonstrates that no leader is above correction.

Several of the early fathers, though, can be observed trying to defend Peter, and/or Paul, because they see them as the apostolic foundations – or as Chrysostom calls them in his sermon *In illud: In faciem ei restiti*, the pillars (στυλοὶ) of the church.<sup>8</sup> Whichever architectural metaphor one uses, there is no denying the authority which early Christian communities attributed to Peter and Paul. As time went on, these communities wanted their pillars to be perceived as standing together. To have them disagree – or worse, be wrong – was somehow unthinkable. Or so the main narrative about the history of the interpretation of this pericope goes.

And to a certain extent, that assessment has quite a bit of truth. Yet in a wide range of New Testament commentaries from the past few decades, as well as nearly every analysis in patristic scholarship of the ‘Incident at Antioch’, Chrysostom gets lumped into the same category as Jerome and Origen, explaining away

<sup>3</sup> NRSV.

<sup>4</sup> Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel, Ursula Treu (eds), *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, GCS 17 (Berlin, 1970), 196, Fragment 4, line 9-12. Referred to in Eusebius, *HE* 1.12.1-3, as from Clement’s *Hypotyposes* 5.

<sup>5</sup> Jerome, *Epistulam ad Galatas* 2.11-14 (PL 26, 338-42). Origen, *Stromateis* 10. Origen alters his view in *Contra Celsum* 2.1.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.20 and 5.3. See also *De praesc. haer.* 23.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *Epistulae* 28.3, 40.3-7, and 82.4-30. Jerome’s *Epistula* 112.4-18 contains his riposte.

<sup>8</sup> Chrysostom’s use here of στυλοὶ to describe Peter and Paul echoes *Gal.* 2:9, just prior to the pericope under discussion, in which Paul gives an account of meeting the church leadership in Jerusalem and describes Peter, James, and John as οἱ δοκοῦντες στυλοὶ εἶναι: ‘those who seemed to be pillars’ or ‘those so-called pillars’. In this description, following on from the deprecating comment about those who ‘seemed to be something’ in *Gal.* 2:6, Paul does not ascribe quite the same level of honour to church ‘pillars’ as Chrysostom imputes to Peter and Paul here.

the conflict as a bit of pretending for the benefit of others.<sup>9</sup> Is that perception accurate?

Understanding what Chrysostom thought about the passage is less trivial than might be assumed. Through many centuries, and indeed still in the East, Chrysostom came to be perceived as the supreme interpreter of Paul in the Greek-speaking church. What he had to say about Paul carried a huge amount of weight. His iconography often depicts John tête-à-tête with the Apostle.<sup>10</sup> John's own laudatory sermons on Paul similarly display a deep connection with the apostle. Chrysostom's Pauline exegesis was held up as exemplary; his explanations form the core of the patristic commentary found in the rich manuscript tradition of biblical *catenae*, often the first citation after the scriptural *lemma*.

A closer look at patristic exegesis of the pericope offers a fascinating window onto not just internal controversies, but also external contexts influencing the interpretation. The fathers' 'tortured' exegesis often has a crucial contextual explanation. The relationship between Jews and Christians in late antiquity provides the backstory to a main category of creative interpretations. For example, a very early Pseudo-Clementine text, presumed to represent Ebionite or at least Jewish Christian views, attempts to uphold Peter as an example, and subtly denigrates Paul's accusation in *Gal.* 2:11 that he 'stood condemned'.<sup>11</sup> Clement of Alexandria could be seen as countering 'Ebionite' influence by declaring that this must be a different Cephas, an otherwise unknown person numbered among the seventy disciples, not the more familiar apostle.<sup>12</sup> Tertullian, on the

<sup>9</sup> E.g., 'Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome saw it as a staged event concocted between Peter and Paul in order to bring the issues out into the open and so to condemn the Judaizers more effectively', Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary* (41): *Galatians* (Dallas, 1990), 108. Nearly identical wording can be found in Hansen's commentary: 'Some early church leaders (Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome) could not believe that this conflict really occurred. They explained that Paul and Peter must have staged the conflict to illustrate the issues at stake', G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians* (Leicester, 1994), 61. See also John Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries* (Oxford, 2008), 106-8 and 114-6; René Kieffer, *Foi et justification à Antioche: Interprétation d'un conflit (Ga. 2, 14-21)*, *Lectio Divina* 111 (Paris, 1982), 14-5, 82-103; Franz Mussner, *Der Galaterbrief: Auslegung* (Freiburg, 1974), 146-54; Alfons Fürst, *Augustins Briefwechsel mit Hieronymus*, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband* 29 (Münster, 1999), 7.

<sup>10</sup> A famous legend, probably medieval in origin, describes a scene in which John's servant Proclus went to check if his master was free to meet with a caller, but saw him writing while listening to another visitor. When he asked later who it was, Chrysostom said he had been alone, working on his commentary on the Pauline epistles. Then Proclus saw an icon of the apostle Paul and recognised the visitor. This scene of Paul whispering in Chrysostom's ear is depicted in numerous manuscript illustrations and iconography. For example: a miniature headpiece illustrating a homily on Penitence, Temperance, and Virginity from a 9<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine edition of Chrysostom's homilies in Athens National Library (MS 211, folio 172r); a 12<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine illustration facing the incipit for Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Psalms* (Athens National Library, MS 7).

<sup>11</sup> Pseudo-Clement, *Hom.* 17.19.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 4 above.

other hand, frames his exegesis in light of the Marcionite controversy. As the Marcionites rejected the Old Testament and its law, Tertullian counters by highlighting Peter's accommodation to the local Jews as evidence of his acceptance of the authority of the first testament, while pointing out Paul's 'Jewish' actions elsewhere as evidence of his more typical stance.<sup>13</sup> In the Antioch of Chrysostom's day, some Christians participated in the cult of the Maccabean martyrs and perhaps even Jewish festivals,<sup>14</sup> suggesting a degree of permeability of religious boundaries.

The challenge of pagan anti-Christian rhetoric provides the other main exegetical context. Origen and Jerome were aware that this passage in *Galatians* provided fodder for pagan critiques, including those referred to as written by 'Porphyry' and transmitted via Macarius Magnes.<sup>15</sup> In fact, in searching for citations of *Galatians* in Greek sources<sup>16</sup> in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database, this text from 'Porphyry' cropped up; the unusual discovery of Pauline citations in non-Christian literature provided the impetus for what developed into this article. Chrysostom likewise appears to be aware of the use of the incident at Antioch in pagan polemic. Thus Origen, Jerome, and Chrysostom all knew they needed to address the accusation that this episode revealed a 'crack in the foundations' of Christianity.

The second thing noticed in gathering all the patristic citations of this passage was that, very unusually, most of the citations of these verses in the Greek fathers are located in just two works of Chrysostom: his *Galatians* commentary, *In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*, and even more in his homily, *In illud: In faciem ei restiti*.<sup>17</sup> What is even odder is that this sermon, which appears to be the only full-length treatment in Greek on the pericope to come down to us, figures virtually nowhere in discussions of patristic understanding of this incident, apart from a single article by Margaret Mitchell.<sup>18</sup> Every other

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.20 and 5.3. An example of Paul's 'Judaizing' behavior can be found in *Acts* 16:3. Further discussion on Marcion's interpretation can be found in Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.12.15.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Anthony Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 114 (Cambridge, 2001), 84-6.

<sup>15</sup> 'Porphyry' cites *Gal.* 2:12-3, Richard Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie: Le monogénès* (Tome II) (Paris, 2003), Book 3, Blondel 102. Jerome alludes to Porphyry's use of the incident in his commentary *Epistulam ad Galatas* (PL 26, 341).

<sup>16</sup> As part of the COMPAUL Project (referenced in the first footnote) based in the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing (ITSEE) at the University of Birmingham.

<sup>17</sup> Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*, PG 61, 639-42 (the columns for this pericope); and *In illud: In faciem ei restiti*, PG 51, 371-88.

<sup>18</sup> Margaret M. Mitchell, 'Peter's "Hypocrisy" and Paul's: Two "Hypocrites" at the Foundation of Earliest Christianity?', *New Testament Studies* 58 (2012), 213-34. Apart from the small selections in Mitchell's article, there is also one brief excerpt, 'On: "I opposed him to his face" (Gal. 2:11)', translated in Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen's book, *John Chrysostom* (Hoboken, 2002), 140-2; and one edition which provides the Greek text alongside an Italian translation:

scholarly assessment depends only on Chrysostom's *Commentary on Galatians*, which offers a much shorter and far less nuanced treatment of the passage.<sup>19</sup> In one or two scholarly texts, the sermon is referenced, but without comment. The impression given is that Chrysostom is univocal on this issue. His *Commentary on Galatians* was very well known from the patristic period onwards, being the earliest, and virtually only, remaining one in Greek (apart from one on the Pauline epistles by Theodoret and a much later one associated with John of Damascus, and others which are no longer extant except in fragments, if at all); moreover Chrysostom's commentary was incorporated by later compilers into *catenae* texts. In the modern era it has been translated into several languages. The sermon, on the other hand, has yet to be fully translated into English.<sup>20</sup> Despite its detailed and fascinating interpretation, and the fact that it is the longest exegesis of the pericope from the patristic era, it is virtually unknown.

And so, without having all the facts, most scholars lump Chrysostom in with Jerome regarding the two fathers' interpretation of this passage. Yet even in his brief commentary, Chrysostom does not clone Jerome's argument.<sup>21</sup> For him, the situation was ... complicated. And that complexity is even more visible in the sermon than in the commentary.

These verses from *Galatians* are cited, in whole or in part, by Chrysostom only in his commentary on the epistle and in this single homily and nowhere

Giovanni Crisostomo, *Mi opposi a lui a viso aperto* (Hom. in illud: *In faciem ei restiti*), Testi e studi 16, trans. Antonio Cataldo (Salento, 2007). The lack of a complete translation into English (or French or German) is perhaps why this sermon is so rarely commented on. Longenecker (*Galatians*, 108) does at least reference this homily in his discussion of patristic exegesis, but without comment, suggesting that it merely echoes the argument found in Chrysostom's *Galatians* commentary. Fürst labels the sermon the 'masterpiece' of 'Origenist' interpretations of the incident (*Briefwechsel* [1999], 7).

<sup>19</sup> E.g. J. Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries* (2008), 114-6. For further references, see 9 above. In general, patristic commentaries tend to exegete verses more succinctly than patristic sermons on the same text, particularly for those sermons which are essentially transcriptions of extemporaneous preaching. As those commentaries often started out as homilies, this tendency may be attributed to editing, either in the initial compilation or over time in the manuscript tradition. However, the boundary between the genres of commentaries and homilies is relatively porous in this period.

<sup>20</sup> As mentioned above in footnote 18, partial translations are included in Mayer and Allen's *John Chrysostom*, as well as in Mitchell's article, 'Peter's "Hypocrisy" and Paul's', wherein she alludes to her work on producing a volume of English translations of some previously untranslated homilies of Chrysostom – a very welcome development.

<sup>21</sup> Chrysostom's commentary on *Galatians* most likely dates to c. 390-4 or later (see footnote 23 below), several years after Jerome's (c. 387-8). The dating for Chrysostom's homily *In illud: In faciem ei restiti* is probably around the same time as his commentary, but conceivably could be as early as 386-7, which would possibly put it before Jerome's work. In all likelihood, however, both of these works of Chrysostom would have come after Jerome's commentary. He may or may not have read Jerome's, but he would have been, at the very least, aware of Origen's commentary on *Galatians*, which would have significantly predated and influenced Jerome's work.

else in his vast textual legacy. Added together, those citations constitute more than half of the total citations (excluding citations found only in *catenae*) of any part of this pericope in Greek up to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, even if one includes citations in the Pseudo-Clementine literature and ‘Porphyry’. Rather than being a very popular verse, it seems that in fact many Greek fathers avoided the story, or covered it quickly. This contrasts with the greater number of citations of the pericope in the Latin Fathers, and counters the perception that the Greek fathers were somehow preoccupied with the passage.<sup>22</sup> The verse has slightly less than the average number of Greek patristic citations per verse when compared to the rest of *Galatians*. In other words, it just is not a very popular story. These are not the least popular verses from scripture, in terms of number of citations in patristic sources; but if you take away the citations to *Gal. 2:11-4* found in Chrysostom’s sermon, not many are left in the Greek patristic corpus. The comparative frequencies for these citations (in Chrysostom’s homily, in his commentary, in all of Chrysostom, and in all other Greek patristic sources) are summarized in the table below.

| <i>Galatians 2</i><br>verses | Homily<br><i>In Fac.</i> | <i>Comm.</i><br><i>Gal.</i> | Total citations<br>in Chrysostom | All other Greek citations<br>(not <i>catenae</i> ) to 8 <sup>th</sup> century |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>11</b>                    | 8                        | 3                           | 11                               | <b>8</b> (incl. ‘Clement’)  |
| <b>12</b>                    | 7                        | 2                           | 9                                | <b>5</b> (incl. ‘Porphyry’)   |
| <b>13</b>                    | 4                        | 1                           | 5                                | <b>4</b> (incl. ‘Porphyry’)   |
| <b>14</b>                    | 10                       | 5                           | 15                               | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>11-14</b>                 | <b>29</b>                | <b>11</b>                   | <b>40</b>                        | <b>30</b>   |

Chrysostom probably composed his *Commentary on Galatians* in Antioch between 390 and 394, before his move to Constantinople, although some date it to the final years of his life.<sup>23</sup> This collection of texts almost certainly originated in homiletic material. The stand-alone sermon under consideration here, *In illud: In faciem ei restiti*, was definitely delivered in Antioch, and probably

<sup>22</sup> The citations of portions of *Gal. 2:11-4* in Latin texts (up to the 5<sup>th</sup> century) totals 226. By comparison, the total in the Greek fathers (excluding *catenae*) up to the 8<sup>th</sup> century totals 70.

<sup>23</sup> Longenecker argues that it must date from after 395, Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary* (41): *Galatians* (Dallas, 1990), 6. Wendy Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom – Provenance: Reshaping the Foundations* (Rome, 2005), 142. She dates the homilies which formed the commentary to 393, ‘date unspecified’ (*Provenance*, 201). See also G. Rauschen, *Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grossen. Versuch einer Erneuerung der Annales Ecclesiastici des Baronius für die Jahre 378-395* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897), 527; M. von Bonsdorff, *Zur Predigtstätigkeit des Johannes Chrysostomus, biographisch-chronologische Studien über seine Homilien-serien zu neutestamentlichen Büchern*, Dissertation (Helsinki, 1922), 50-2.



towards the beginning of his priesthood.<sup>24</sup> The homily's *prooemium* offers much insight about the early ministry of Chrysostom in terms of his relationship with his bishop and his affection for his congregation. The historical insights offered by that introduction account for nearly all references to the homily in scholarly literature.

The middle of the homily is more like a bit of courtroom drama. The preacher intends through his argumentation to get Peter and Paul acquitted, but also to rescue the city from the ill repute that the biblical controversy is perceived to have brought on Antioch. Chrysostom frets that Paul, by writing of the controversy so bluntly in his epistle, metaphorically carved his confrontation with Peter into a stone *stèle* as an immortal municipal *memoria* for all of humanity to read and shake their heads about Antioch.<sup>25</sup> The exegete is commenting on a biblical story of a conflict that had happened just a few hundred years prior in that very city. This is personal for him. This is about his town. The collocation of the Peter-Paul incident and Chrysostom's own congregation is highlighted early in the homily. The main point for him, and overlooked by most commentators, is that his listeners should not be quick to judge either Peter or Paul, nor be so sure that the two are blameless. Nor should they be too quick to praise Chrysostom for his persuasive speech in their defence.

John may intend to rescue the city from the internal theological and political divisions among Christians, the ecclesiastical strife that would have flavoured his childhood and teens. As Kelly points out, the broader Trinitarian debates within the church were played out with particular ferocity in Antioch, and 'the Christian community which John knew as a schoolboy and student was deeply divided'.<sup>26</sup> Even those opposed to Arianism could not agree, and supported rival bishops, one who was acknowledged by the Alexandrian see and one by the Roman see. 'The tragic legacy of schism', sighs Kelly, '... was to embitter church life in the Syrian metropolis throughout the whole of John's life'.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of these divisions, Chrysostom's motivation to appeal to not just the authority of his predecessors but also their unity becomes clear. Chrysostom declares that the sermon is an *encomium* for the city: Ἀλλὰ καὶ

<sup>24</sup> W. Mayer, *Provenance* (2005), 58. See also J. Stilling, 'De S. Joanne Chrysostomo, episcopo Constantinopolitano et ecclesiae doctore, prope comana in Ponto, commentaries historicus 401-700', in *Acta Sanctorum Septembris* IV (Antwerp, 1753), 504.

<sup>25</sup> Καὶ οὐκ ἐλέγχεις δημοσίᾳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καί, καθάπερ ἐν στήλῃ, τοῖς γράμμασι τὴν μάχην ἐγχαράζας, ἀθάνατον ποιεῖς τὴν μνήμην ἵνα μὴ οἱ τότε παρόντες μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντες οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην οἰκοῦντες ἄνθρωποι μάθωσι διὰ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς τὸ γεγενημένον (PG 51, 374.48-53).

<sup>26</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY, 1995), 11.

<sup>27</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth* (1995), 12-3.

τῆς πόλεως ὑμῶν ἐγκώμιον τὰ ῥηθησόμενα.<sup>28</sup> To be sure the audience does not miss the point, he uses ἐγκώμιον at least three other times in the sermon: ἀλλ' ὅσῳ περ ἂν ᾗ μέγала αὐτῶν τὰ ἐγκώμια, τοσούτω πλείων ἡμῖν ὁ ἀγὼν (PG 51, 373); Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγκώμιον αὐτοῦ (PG 51, 377, emphasizing that this is not an encomium of Peter); and μυρίων δὲ ἐστὶν ἐγκωμίων ἄξιος (PG 51, 388). He pushes his congregation to see the unity on which their church was founded three centuries before, and to see how they have fallen from that mark into bickering, even to the point of finding fault with either Paul or Peter, depending on their interpretation of the text. But through the *paraenesis* of the priest, perhaps the city can aspire to work toward the unity they see being held up as a model. Chrysostom references the city not just at the beginning of the sermon, but also towards its end, forming a clear *inclusio*. He reminds his audience of those who were staying in Antioch 'back then' (τότε).<sup>29</sup> In addition to the bookended references to Antioch anchoring the sermon in its context, he repeats the name of the city often in the sermon; indeed, the phrase 'when Peter came to Antioch', from *Gal.* 2:11 occurs more often in this sermon than in all other Greek sources combined.<sup>30</sup>

The sheer anaphora of the piled up mentions of Antioch, some thirteen times in the homily, plus the addition of lots of rhetorical echoes from an unusually large number of words with 'ἀντι-' as a prefix,<sup>31</sup> support the idea that really, this sermon is at least in part an ἐγκώμιον πόλεως. The encomium of the city proclaimed from the pulpit here, however, shifts from the more traditional rhetorical pattern of praise for a city's glorious past into a plea to the citizens of the city to rise up and be praiseworthy.

The pagan Libanius had written an encomium of Antioch, his adopted city, not too long before. Without a doubt John knew it well. In fact, it is highly likely, verging on certain, that Chrysostom studied rhetoric with him as a teenager. Libanius' oration follows the lines of a traditional ἐγκώμιον πόλεως, rehearsing its origins and history and comparing its exploits to great legends of old. Not once though does he mention the presence of the Christian community and its numerable churches. They are whitewashed out of his historical narrative, perhaps out of spite. Basil of Caesarea was also taught by Libanius, prior to the pagan's move to Antioch. He also would have learned the rules of composing an ἐγκώμιον, among other strict rhetorical forms. Yet in Basil's ἐγκώμιον of Caesarea contained in the homily on the martyr Gordius, as Aude Busine has pointed out, Basil also seems to turn the genre on its head, setting aside the

<sup>28</sup> PG 51, 374.18-9.

<sup>29</sup> Ὅσπερ γὰρ οἱ τότε ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ διατρίβοντες (PG 51, 388.17). The wording could be a verbal echo of *Acts* 15:35 διέτριβον ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, or 16:12, ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες, where 'that city' is Philippi.

<sup>30</sup> At least among those contained in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database.

<sup>31</sup> I.e. to reinforce the sound of the initial syllables of the name of the city in his listeners' ears.

traditional recounting of pagan pre-history and verbal parades of military triumph and formal comparison to the heroic achievements in the mist of myths, as an unworthy and prideful exemplar.<sup>32</sup> For Basil, a Christian version, in which Christian piety is praised and sacrifice remembered, would be preferable. Perhaps John is taking a leaf from his elder role model Basil and subverting the strict rules of the ἐγκώμιον πόλεως which he would have internalized as a pupil of their common teacher.

Chrysostom is very aware of the key role these two, Peter and Paul, played in the history of the establishment of the church in their city. This sermon was delivered in the Palaia (Old Basilica) in Antioch, built in the early part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but replacing a church which was thought (incorrectly) to date back to the time of these apostles.<sup>33</sup> From our perspective, the incident at Antioch happened two millennia ago. For Chrysostom, however, it was no further back in his cultural memory than Johann Sebastian Bach is for the director of the boys' choir of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. The director, the choir, the church, the city are all very aware of the heritage they carry and feel a strong, deep, and direct connection with their illustrious predecessor and a need to reproduce his work faithfully. So it is for Chrysostom and his congregation vis-à-vis Paul and Peter and their ministry in Antioch.

To further highlight the connection with his predecessors and authoritative founders of the church in the city, it should be noted that just prior to delivering this particular sermon, Chrysostom had spent time in his role as a kind of understudy to the Bishop, who was the present leader of the church in Antioch. As their priest, Chrysostom delivers a long, emotive, and elaborately wrought introduction explaining his temporary absence from his congregation during the previous service, and how difficult it was to be away from them, like a nursing baby taken unwillingly out of his mother's arms.<sup>34</sup> Being with the bishop reminded him that he was a man under the authority of another. So perhaps that forced absence from his congregation, out of obedience to the authority of his bishop, in order to be his assistant at another church for that day, all while another priest took over his duties temporarily, brought this theme of ecclesiastical authority to the forefront of his mind. He certainly works it over endlessly through the course of a sermon that would have taken hours to deliver in the form it has come down to us.

The complicated structure of the sermon brings the two forms of encomium – the praise of the apostles and the praise of the city – together in the *paranesis* at the end. Chrysostom therein exhorts his listeners that they, just as their apostolic predecessors, should be bound together tightly in a burning love for

<sup>32</sup> Aude Busine, 'Basil of Caesarea and the *Praise of the City*', *SP* 95, 209-15.

<sup>33</sup> That is, if the heading of the sermon provides the correct location. J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth* (1995), 3.

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps drawn from the Pauline metaphor in *1Thess.* 2:7.

each other, so that they might be found worthy of seeing Peter and Paul and be found in the midst of their eternal tents – in that city not made by men, but by God. Thus Chrysostom concludes by not just co-opting but subverting the classical structure of the encomium, as the real city to be praised here is the one whose tents outlast the pillars of the Antiochene church, let alone the stone walls of the secular city.