

## APPENDIX 1

### CATALOGUE OF EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR FISH SYMBOLISM: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The following abbreviations are necessary to note here: Dölger = IXΘΥΣ (5 vols.); WS = L. Wehrhahn-Stauch, “Christliche Fischsymbolik von den Anfängen bis zum hohen Mittelalter” (the appendix). For other abbreviations, see pp. xx-xxiii above. For bibliography, I generally include a small selection of the materials that I deem most relevant, and I attempt to select the best editions of texts. Bold lettering in the texts refers to direct quotations within the texts themselves (especially biblical passages). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

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#### I. THE FISH FROM A WATER SPRING AND THE EUCHARISTIC FISH

1. **The Inscription of Avercius** (late second century C.E.). See pp. 311-71 in Chapter 3 for full commentary on fish symbolism, as well as Appendix 3 for related matters and Appendix 3.4 for text-critical commentary.

**Bold lettering** = the inscription of Alexander where it intersects with the text of the Avercius inscription as preserved in the vita; **underlined lettering** = the remains of the text of the Avercius inscription on the original stone; plain lettering = the text of the Avercius inscription according to the vita.

- 1 [Εκ]λεκτής πό[λ]εως ὁ πολει[της τ]οῦτ' ἐποι[ησα]  
[ζών ε]ν' ἔχω φανερ[ήν] σώματος ενθα θέσιν.  
**Ὄνομι** Ἀβέρκιος ὄν ὁ **μαθητῆς ποιμένος ἀγνοῦ**  
ὅς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας ὄρεσι πεδίοις τε,  
5 ὄφθαλμοὺς ὅς **ἔχει** μεγάλους πάντη καθοροῶντας.  
Οὗτος γὰρ μ' ἐδίδιαξε [...] γράμματα πιστά,  
Εἰς Ῥώμην ὅς επεμψεν βασιλεῖ ἀναθρήσαι  
καὶ βασιλίσσαν ἰδέιν χρυσόστολον χρυσοπεδίλον.  
Λαὸν δ' εἶδον ἐκεῖ λαμπρὰν σφαγεῖδαν ἔχοντα,  
10 καὶ Συρίας πέδον εἶδα καὶ ἄστεα πάντα. Νίσιβιν  
Εὐφράτην διαβάς· πάντη δ' ἔσχον συνο[μαίμους],  
Παύλον ἔχων ἐπ' ἔχω· Πίστις πάντη δὲ προήγε  
Καὶ παρέθηκε τροφήν πάντη ἰχθὺν ἀπὸ πηγῆς  
πανμεγέθη καθαρόν, οὗ ἐδράξατο παρθένης ἀγνή,  
15 καὶ τοῦτον ἐπέδωκε φιλοῖς ἔσθῃν διὰ πάντος,  
οἶνον χρηστὸν ἔχουσα, κέρασμα διδοῦσα μετ' ἄρτου.  
Τὰτα παρεστῶς εἶπον Ἀβέρκιος ὡδε γραφήναι,  
ἑβδομηκοστὸν ἔτος καὶ δεῦτερον ἦγον ἀληθῶς.  
Ταυθ' ὁ νοῶν εὐξαιτο ὑπὲρ Ἀβερκίου πάς ὁ συνωδός.

- 20 **Οὐ μέντοι τύμβω τις ἐμῷ ἕτερόν τινα θήσει.  
Εἰ δ' οὖν, Ῥωμαίων ταμείω θήσει δισχέιλια χρυσά  
καὶ χρηστὴ πατρίδι Ἱεροπόλει χέιλια χρυσά.**
- 1 As a citizen of a select city I have made this  
monument  
while alive in order that I might have a public  
place for my body.  
My name is Avercius, the disciple of a holy  
shepherd  
who pastures his flocks of sheep on mountains and  
on fields
- 5 (and) who possesses huge eyes, which he casts down  
everywhere.  
For he has taught me faithful words [ . . . ],  
he who has sent me to look up at a kingdom  
and to see a golden-robed and golden-sandalled  
queen.
- 10 There I saw a people who had a brilliant seal,  
and I saw the plain of Syria and many cities,  
including Nisibis,  
after I crossed over the Euphrates. Everywhere I  
had brethren,  
while I had Paul in my carriage. Faith led me  
everywhere  
and furnished everywhere as nourishment a fish  
from a water spring,  
(a fish) which was enormous and pure, and which a  
holy virgin grasped.
- 15 And she (Faith) bestowed it among friends so that  
they could always eat it,  
as they had excellent wine and as they gave it  
in its mixed form with bread.  
While present I Avercius said that these (words)  
were to be written here,  
when I was in my seventy-second year.  
Let everyone, who understands these (words) and  
who is in unison (with them), pray on behalf  
of Avercius.
- 20 Let no none put any other person in my tomb.  
If anyone does this, he or she will pay two  
thousand gold coins to the Roman treasury  
and one thousand gold coins to the well-endowed  
fatherland of Hieropolis.

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2. **The Inscription of Pectorius of Autun** (c. 200-c. 400 C.E.). See pp. 371-88 in Chapter 3 for full commentary on fish symbolism (including bibliography) and Appendix 4 for text-critical apparatus.

- 1 Ἴχθυος οὐρανοῦ θεῖον γένος, ἡτορι σεμνῷ
- 2 Χρήσε, λαβῶ[ν πηγῆ]ν ἀμβροτον ἐν βροτέοις
- 3 θεσπεσίων ὑδάτ[ω]ν, τὴν σὴν, φίλε, θάλπεο ψυχ[ῆ]ν
- 4 «Υἷδασι ἀνάοις πλουτοδότου σοφίης.
- 5 Σωτήρης ἁγίων μελιδέα λάμβαν[ε βρώσιν],
- 6 »Ἐσθιε πινάων ἰχθὺν ἔχων παλάμαις.
- 7 Ἴχθυϊ χφ[ρταζ'] ἄρα, λιλαίω, δέσποτα σῶτερ.
- 8 Ἐὐ εἰδοὶ μήτηρ, σὲ λιτάζομε, φῶς τὸ θανόντων.
- 9 Ἀσχάνδιε [πάτ]ερ, τῶμῳ κε[χα]ρισμένε θυμῷ,
- 10 Σὺν μήτρῳ γλυκερῇ καὶ ἀδελφειοῖσιν ἐμοῖσιν,
- 11 Ἴχθυος εἰρήνη σέο] μνήσεο Πεκτορίου.

Divine race of the celestial fish, make use of a pious  
heart,  
as you, one among mortals, receive the immortal spring  
of oracular waters. Refresh your soul, friend,  
with the ever-flowing waters of wealth-giving wisdom.  
Receive the honey-sweet food of the savior of  
the saints.  
As you hunger, eat a fish that you hold in the palms  
of your hands.  
Bring satisfaction with a fish, for which I yearn,  
Lord savior.  
I pray to you, light of the dead, that my mother rests  
well.  
My father Aschandius, dear to my heart,  
along with my sweet mother and brothers,  
remember your Pectorius in the peace of the fish.

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3. “**Narration of Events Taking Place in Persia,**” in 11.3-15.20 of Bratke ed. (= Ἐξήγησις τῶν παραθέντων ἐν Περσίδι, c. 434-439 C.E., possibly from the Christian History of Philip of Side, as 45.1-9 indicates). See pp. 389-405 for full commentary on fish symbolism (including bibliography). Although the entire text is important, the key passage for the fish symbol is ll. 12.11-12.30.

- 11.3 Ἐκ Περσίδος ἐγνώσθη Χριστὸς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· οὐδὲν γὰρ |  
λανθάνει τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ νομομαθεῖς ἅπαντα φιλοπονούν- |
- 11.5 τας· | ὥς γὰρ ἐν ταῖς χρυσαῖς ἀρκλαρίαις κεκόλαπται |  
καὶ κείνται ἐν | τοῖς ἱεροῖς βασιλείοις, λέξω, ὅτι |  
πρῶτον ἐκ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ἱερῶν | καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἱερέων |  
ἤκουντα ὄνομα Χριστοῦ. τοῦ γὰρ | ἱεροῦ τῆς «Ἡρας, ὅ |  
ἐστὶν ἐπέκεινα τῶν βασιλικῶν μελέθρων | ὅπερ Κύρος ὁ |  
11.10 βασιλεὺς ὁ πάσης εὐσεβείας γνώστης κατεσκεύασεν, | καὶ |  
ἀνέθηκεν ἐν αὐτῷ θεῶν ἀνδριάντας χρυσοῦς καὶ ἀργυροῦς |  
καὶ ἐκόσμησεν αὐτὸ λίθοις πολυτελέσιν——· ἵνα μὴ τὰ |  
τῆς | κοσμήσεως λέγων διασύρω. κατ' ἐκείνας δὲ τὰς |  
ἡμέρας, ὥς | αἱ γεγραμμένα πτυχὰ διδάσκουσιν, εἰς- |  
ἐλθόντος τοῦ βασιλέως | ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ λῦσιν ὄνειράτων |
- 11.15 δέξασθαι, ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ ἱερεὺς | Προῦπιππος· **Συγχαίρω**

σοι, δέσποτα, ἢ «Ἡρα ἐν γαστρὶ ἐλα | βεν. ὁ δὲ βασι-  
λεὺς μειδιάσας λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἡ θανούσα ἐν | γαστρὶ  
χει; ὅς εφη· Ἡ θανούσα ἀνέζησε καὶ ζῶν γεννᾷ. |

- 12.1 Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς· τί τοῦτο, σαφήνισόν μοι. Ὁ δὲ φη-  
σιν· | Ἀληθινῶς δέσποτα, καιρίως εφθασας τὰ ἐνταῦθα·  
πάσαν γὰρ | τὴν νύκτα τὰ ἀγάλματα εμειναν χορευόντα τὰ  
τε ἀνδρεῖα τὰ | τε γυναικεῖα, λέγοντα ἀλλήλοις· δεῦτε  
12.5 συγχαρῶμεν τῇ «Ἡρα· | καὶ λέγουσί μοι· Προφῆτα,  
ἔπαγε, συγχαρον τῇ «Ἡρα, ὅτι ἐφι | λήθη· ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπον·  
Τίς εἶχε φιληθῆναι, ἢ μὴ οὐσα; αἵτινα | λέγουσιν·  
Ἀνέζησε καὶ οὐκέτι λέγεται «Ἡρα ἀλλ' Οὐρανία·  
Μέγας | γὰρ «Ἡλιος ἐφίλησεν αὐτήν. αἱ δὲ θήλειαι πρὸς  
τοὺς ἀνδρας | ελεγον δῆθεν τὸ πρᾶγμα εὐτελιζουσαι·  
12.10 Πηγὴ ἐστὶν ἡ φιληθείσα· | μὴ γὰρ «Ἡρα τέκτονα ἐμνη-  
στεύσατο? καὶ λέγουσιν οἱ ἀνδρες· | «Ὅτι μὲν πηγὴ  
δικαίως εἰρηται, ἀποδέχομεθα· Μυρία δὲ αὐτῆς |  
τοῦνομα, ἥτις ἐν μήτρα ὡς ἐν πελάγει μυριαγωγὸν  
ὀλκάδα | φέρει· εἰ δὲ καὶ πηγὴ αὕτη, οὕτω νοεῖσθω·  
πηγὴ γὰρ ὕδατος | πηγὴν πνεύματος ἀναίξει, ἓνα μόνον  
12.15 ἰχθὺν εχουσα τῷ τῆς | θεότητος ἀγκίστρῳ λαμβανόμενον,  
τὸν πάντα κόσμον ὡς ἐν | θαλάσῃ διαγιγόμενον ἰδία  
σαρκὶ τρέφων· καλῶς εφητε· τέκ | τονα χει ἐκείνη,  
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ λέχους, ὅν τίκτει τέκτονα· οὗτος | γὰρ ὁ  
γεννώμενος τέκτων, ὁ τοῦ τεκτονάρχου παῖς, τὸν τρι- |  
12.20 σύστατον οὐράνιον ὄροφον ἐτεκτόνησε πανσόφοις τέχ-  
ναις, τὴν | τρικᾶτοικον ταύτην στεγότητα λόγῳ πήξας.  
εμειναν οὖν | τὰ ἀγάλματα φιλονεικούντα περὶ «Ἡρας καὶ  
Πηγῆς καὶ ὁμοφῶ | νως εἶπον· Πληρουμένης τῆς ἡμέρας τὸ  
13.1 σαφές ἀπαντες καὶ | πάσαι γνωσόμεθα. νῦν οὖν, δεσ-  
ποτα, παράμεινον τὸ λοιπὸν | τῆς ἡμέρας· πάντως γὰρ  
εξει τὸ πρᾶγμα τελείαν δῆλωσιν· τὸ | γὰρ ἀνακύψαν οὐκ  
ἔστι τὸ τυχόν. μείναντος δὲ τοῦ βασι | λέως ἐκεῖ καὶ  
13.5 θεωρούντος τὰ ἀγάλματα, αὐτομάτως αἱ κινυ | ρίστριαι  
ἤρξαντο κρούειν τὰς κινύρας καὶ αἱ Μοῦσαι αἰδεῖν· |  
καὶ ὅσα ἦν ἐνδον τετράποδα καὶ πετεινὰ ἀργυρόχρυσα,  
ἕκαστον | τὴν ἰδίαν ἀπετέλει φωνήν. τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως  
φρικιάσαντος καὶ | ὄλως φόβου πλησθέντος — εμελλεν  
ἀναχωρεῖν· οὐκ ἔφερε | γὰρ τοῦ αὐτοματισμοῦ τὸν τάρα-  
13.10 χον — λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἱερεὺς· | Ἀνάμεινον βασιλεῦ·  
πᾶρεςτι γὰρ τελεία ἀποκάλυψις, ἣν ὁ θεὸς | τῶν θεῶν  
σαφήνισαι ἡμῖν ἠρετίσατο. τούτων δὲ οὕτω λεχ | θέντων  
διηνοίχθη ὁ ὄροφος καὶ κατήλθεν ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς καὶ |  
ἔστη ἐπάνω τῆς στήλης τῆς Πηγῆς καὶ φωνὴ ἠκούσθη  
τοῖ | αὐτῇ· Δέσποινα πηγὴ, ὁ Μέγας «Ἡλιος ἀπέστειλέ με  
13.15 μὴνῶσαι | σοι αἶμα καὶ διακονῆσαι τὰ πρὸς τόκον, ἀμιαν-  
τον τόκον ποιῶν | μενος πρὸς σέ, μήτηρ τοῦ πρώτου πάντων  
τῶν ταγμάτων | γινομένη, νύμφη τριωνύμου μονοθεῖας  
οὐσα· καλεῖται δὲ | τὸ ἀσπορον βρέφος Ἀρχὴ καὶ

- 13.20 **Τέλος· ἀρχὴ μὲν σωτηρίας, τέλος δὲ ἀπωλείας.** ταῦ  
της τῆς φωνῆς δοθείσης **ἅπαντα τὰ ἀγάλματα** **ἔπεσαν**  
ἐπὶ πρόσωπον, μόνης τῆς Πηγῆς ἰσταμένης, ἐν ἣ ἔωρητο  
**παγὲν διάδημα βασιλικόν, ἔχον ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἄνω** **θρα-**  
**κος καὶ σμαράγδου λιθοκόλλητον ἀστέρα·** ὑπεράνω δὲ  
αὐτῆς **ἵστατο ὁ ἀστήρ.** Ταχὺ δὲ προστάττει ὁ βασιλεὺς  
ἐνεχθῆναι πάντας τοὺς σοφοὺς σημειολύτας, ὅσοι εἰσὶν  
13.25 ὑπὸ τὴν βασιλειαν αὐτοῦ. Τῶν δὲ κηρύκων ταῖς σάλ-  
πιγξιν ἐπισπευδόντων πάντας, παρεγένοντο πάντες εἰς  
14.1 τὸ ἱερόν· ὡς δὲ εἶδον τὸν ἀστέρα ἐπάνω τῆς Πηγῆς καὶ  
τὸ διάδημα αἷμα τῶ ἀστερωτῶ λίθῳ τε ἀγάλματα ἐδέα-  
φους κείμενα εἶπον· **βασιλεῦ, ῥίζα ἐν θεοῖς καὶ βασι-**  
**λικὴ ἀνέκυψεν, οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἐπιγείου βασιλείως·** **χαρακ-**  
**τήρα φέρουσα· ἡ γὰρ Πηγὴ Καρίας τῆς Βηθλεεμίτιδος**  
14.5 **ἔστι θυγάτηρ, τὸ δὲ διάδημα βασιλικὸς τύπος, ὁ δὲ**  
**ἀστήρ οὐρά·** **νιὸν ἔστι μῆνυμα ἐπὶ γῆς τερατευόμενον·**  
**ἐξ Ἰουδα ἀνεστη βασιλεία, ἥτις πάντα τὰ τῶν Ἰου-**  
**δαίων ἔχαρει μνημόσυνα.** τὸ δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐδαφισθῆ-  
ναι, τέλος τῆς τιμῆς αὐτῶν **ἐφθασεν.** ὁ γὰρ ἐλθὼν  
14.10 **πρεσβυτέρας ἀξίας ὧν τοὺς νεάζοντας ἐν αὐτῇ σείσει·**  
**νὸν οὖν, βασιλεῦ, πέμψον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα·** εὐρήσεις  
**γὰρ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ παντοκράτορος σωματικῶς σωματικαῖς**  
**ἀγκάλαις·** **γυναικειαῖς βασταζόμενον.** **ἔμεινε δὲ ὁ**  
**ἀστήρ ἐπάνω τῆς Πηγῆς τῆς κεκλημένης Οὐρανιας, ἀχρις**  
14.15 **ἂν ἐχθλῶν οἱ μάγοι·** καὶ τότε μετ' ἐκείνων ἐπο-  
ρεύθη. ἐσπέρας δὲ βαθείας ἐφάνη ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἱερῷ Διόνυ-  
σος οὐ μετὰ τῶν τῶν Σατύρων λέγων τοῖς ἀναθήμασιν·  
**Πηγὴ οὐκέτι μία ἐξ ἡμῶν ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς χρῆμα τίξει,**  
**ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τινα γεννώσα ἀνθρώπον θείας ὄντα σὺν λημμα**  
**τύχης·** **ἱερεῦ Προῦπιπτε, τί καθέζη ἐνταῦθα πράττων;**  
15.1 **πράξις τις ἐγγραφὸς ἐφθασε καθ' ἡμῶν, καὶ μέλλομεν,**  
**ὑπὲρ ἐμπράκτου προσώπου ἐλεγχεσθαι·** **ἂ ἐφαντάσαμεν,**  
**ἂ ἐφαντάσαμεν·** **ἂ ἠρξάμεν, ἠρξάμεν·** οὐκέτι χρῆσμοὺς  
**διδόσμεν·** **ἠρθη ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἡ τιμὴ·** **ἀδοξοὶ καὶ ἀγέρασ-**  
**τοι γεγόναμεν, εἰς μόνος ἐκ πάντων τὴν ἰδίαν ἀναλα-**  
15.5 **βῶν τιμὴν·** εἶπον **Μιθροβάρδης·** οὐκέτι Πέρσαι γῆς καὶ  
ἀέρος φόρους ἀπαιτοῦσιν· ὁ γὰρ στήσας αὐτὰ πάρεστι  
πρακτικὸς φόρους τῷ πέμψαντι προσκομιζῶν, ὁ τὴν  
παλαιὰν εἰκόνα ἀνακτίζων καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆ εἰκόνι  
15.10 συντιθεὶς καὶ τὸ ἀνόμοιον ἐφ' ὁμοίωσιν· οὐράνος γῆ  
συγχαίρει, ἡ δὲ γῆ καυχάται οὐράνιον δεχομένη καὶ-  
χῆμα· **ἂ οὐ γέγονεν ἄνω, κάτω γέγονεν·** ὃν ἡ εὐδαίμων-  
νώσα τάξις οὐκ εἶδεν, ἡ δυσδαιμονώσα θεωρεῖ· ἐκει-  
νοῖς φλόξ ἀπειλεῖ, τοῦτοισι δὲ δρόσος πάρεστιν. τῆς  
Καρίας ἡ εὐτυχία, Πηγὴν κατὰ τὴν Βηθλεεμ τεκεῖν·  
15.15 τῆς Πηγῆς ἡ χάρις, οὐρανοπόθητον γενέσθαι καὶ χάριν  
χάριτος συλλαβεῖν. ἡ Ἰουδαία ἠνθησεν, αὐτίκα  
μαραίνεται τὰ ἡμέτερα· τρεῖς ἔθνη κίβδη· καὶ ἀλλογε-  
νέσι σωτηρία ἦλθεν, τοῖς ταλαιπωροῦσιν ἀνάψυχις· πλε-

ονάζει· ἄξιως αἱ γυναῖκες χορεύουσι λέγουσαι·  
Κυρία | Πηγῆ, ναματοφόρε, ἡ οὐράνιου φωστήρος γεναμένη  
μητηρ, ἡ ἀπὸ | καύματος δροσίζουσα τὸν κόσμον νεφέλη,  
15.20 μνημόνευε τῶν σῶν | οικετιδῶν, φίλη δέσποινα.

From out of Persia, Christ was known from the beginning. For nothing escapes the notice of those in that (country) who are learned in the laws and who toil after all matters. Just as he was engraved on golden treasure boxes and was placed in royal temples, I say that the name of the Christ comes above all from the temples there and from the priests in them. In the temple of Hera, which is beyond the royal houses and which King Cyrus—the diviner of all piety—constructed, he (Cyrus) set up golden and silver statues and decorated them with very costly precious stones. I do not say this in order to ridicule these decorations. In those days, as the written tablets teach, when the king entered the temple to receive the explanation of his dreams, the priest Prouppipos said to him: **I rejoice with you lord, for Hera has become pregnant.** Smiling the king said to him: **A dead woman is pregnant.** He said: **A dead woman came to life and bears life.**

And the king (said): **Make clear to me what this is.** He said: **Truly you have arrived here at the right time. For all night the statues remained dancing, both the men and the women, saying to one another: Come rejoice with Hera.** And they said to me: **Approach, prophet. Rejoice with Hera that she is loved.** And I said: **Who has been loved—the one who does not exist?** They said: **She came to life and she is not called Hera, but Ourania; for great Helios loved her.** The females say to the males that they disparage the deed. **Water Spring is the one loved. Was not Hera betrothed to a carpenter?** And the men said: **On the one hand, we accept that she is rightly called Water Spring, but, on the other hand, her name is Muria.<sup>1</sup> For in her womb, as in the sea, she bears a ship of countless measures burden.<sup>2</sup> If she is Water Spring, she is to be understood in this way. For the spring of water always flows forth with the spring of life, which has only one fish caught on the hook of divinity, since it nourishes the entire world with its flesh as if in the sea.** (The women): **You have spoken well: She has (as her husband) a carpenter, but not from the marriage couch, which gives birth to a carpenter. For this one who became a carpenter—the child of the chief carpenter—constructed a three-fold heavenly roof with clever skills and made this three-housed mansion by means of the word.** In this way the statues remained engaging in rivalry concerning Hera and Water Spring and they spoke in unison: **When the day is finished, we will all know completely what is certain. Now therefore, lord, remain the rest of the day. The deed will in any case bring a perfect demonstration (and) it will not reveal external reality.** While the king remained there looking at the statues, suddenly the harp players began to play the harps and the Muses began to sing. And each of the four-footed and the winged creatures made of silver and gold, which were inside, acted with its own voice. As the king was shuddering and entirely filled with fear, he was about to leave, since he could not bear the sudden confusion. The priest said to him: **Remain, king. For the perfect revelation is present, which the god of gods has chosen to make clear to us.** After these words were so spoken, the roof opened and a bright star came down. And it set itself above the column of Water Spring and this voice came: **Lady Water Spring, great Helios sent me at the**

same time to reveal to you and to minister at the childbirth—a childbirth without stain, which was made for you who have become the mother of the first ranks and who are the bride of the thrice-named single divinity. The seedless child is called **Beginning and End. On the one hand, the beginning of salvation and, on the other hand, the end of destruction.** All the statues fell on their faces, while Water Spring stood. On her was found attached a royal diadem which has above it a star set with rubies and emeralds. Above it stands the star. Immediately the king ordered that there be brought (to him) as many of the wise interpreters of signs as were in his kingdom. After the messengers exhorted everyone with their trumpets, all came to the temple. As they saw the star above Water Spring and the diadem together with the star-studded stone and the statues lying on the floors, they said: **King, the divinely inspired and royal root has emerged, and it bears the stamp of the heavenly and earthly king. Out of Judah, a kingdom will come up that will remove all remembrances of the Jews. That the gods have fallen to the ground means that the end of their honor has come. For the one coming will thoroughly shake in it the worthy females, as well as the young males. Now, therefore, king, send forth to Jerusalem. For you will discover the son of the all-mighty in his corporeal form, as he is elevated corporeally by the bent knees of women.** And the star remained above Water Spring (who is called Urania), until the Magi were to depart. And then it went forth with them. Deep in the evening Dionysus appeared in that temple without the Satyrs and said to the monuments: **Water Spring no longer gives oracular responses as one of us, but rather better than us. Better than us she gives birth to a certain man of divinity, who is a fetus of Fortune. Oh priest Proupippos, what are you sitting there doing? The deed that is written has arrived for us, and we are about to be proven as liars that have reached beyond our abilities. Those things which we have made visible, we have made visible. Those things which we have ruled, we have ruled. We no longer give oracles. We have become inglorious and dishonored, as only one among all (of us) assumes his own honor. I have spoken for Mithrobades.** No longer do the Persians demand tribute of the earth and the air. For the one who establishes these is present, as he conveys effective tribute to the one sending these. He rebuilds the image and constructs the image for the image and gives the dissimilar to the similar. Heaven rejoices with the earth, and the earth boasts as it receives the heavenly boast. What was above was below. What the happy troop does not see, the wretched troop sees. A flame threatens these, while dew is present to those. It is the fortune of Karia that she gave birth to Water Spring in Bethlehem. It is the grace of Water Spring that she bore the one longed-for from heaven and that she conceived the grace of grace. Judea has blossomed and immediately our Judea has disappeared. Salvation came three times to the gentiles and to those of other races. Relief increases for the suffering. Deservedly the woman dance saying: **Lady Water Spring, bearer of flowing water, mother bearing the splendor of heaven, from whose heat the cloud bedews the world, remember your female servants, dear mistress.**

## Notes

1. Muria can refer to the concept of a “countless” number (literally “10,000”) and to the name “Mary.”
  2. That is, a huge ship.
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## II. FISHING FOR CHRISTIANS

### II.A. Christ and/or Christians as the fish on a hook in reference to the biblical call of the fishermen and/or Matthew 17.24-27

1. Origen (c. 185-c. 254 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 13.10 = WS 9 and discussed in Dölger, 1:17-18 and 2:30-32 = PG 13:1120f. = GCS 40 (Greek ed., E. Klostermann, 1935).

With reference to Matt. 17.24-27

Τοῦτο δὲ τὸ νόμισμα ἐν μὲν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰησοῦ οὐκ ἦν, ἐν δὲ τῇ θαλάσῃ ἐτύχανε, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματι τοῦ θαλασσίου ἰχθύος, ὃν καὶ αὐτὸν οἶμαι εὐεργετούμενον ἀναβεβηκέναι, ἐν τῷ Πέτρου ἀγκίστρῳ συνειλημένον, γενομένου ἀλιέως ἀνθρώπων. ἐν ᾧ ἦν ὁ τροπικῶς λεγόμενος ἰχθύς, ἵνα καὶ ἀπαρθῆ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἔχον τὴν εἰκόνα καίσαρος νόμισμα, καὶ γένηται ἐν οἷς οἱ ἀλιευόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν μεμαθηκότων ἀνθρώπους ἀλιεῦειν.

Hoc autem nomisma in domo quidem Iesu non erat, in mari autem erat et erat in ore piscis marini, quem ipsum piscem arbitror adiuvatum adscendisse ad hamum Petri et comprehensum ab eo, qui hominum piscator fuerat factus, in quibus erat qui nunc moraliter dicitur piscis, ut tollatur ab eo nomisma, quod habebat imaginem Caesaris, et fiat inter eos qui piscati sunt eum.

This coin was not in the house of Jesus, but was found in the sea and in the mouth of the sea fish, which, when caught on the hook of Peter, who had become a fisher of persons, rose up, I believe, to its benefit. The fish on the hook was a figurative reference to him,<sup>1</sup> in order that the coin with an image of Caesar might be taken up and in order that it might be among those fishermen who learned to catch persons.

## Notes

1. “To him” might also read “to it” or “to them.” For problems in the translation, see pp. 436-38 above.



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2. Origen (c. 185-c. 254 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 17.13 = WS 13 = Dölger 2:31 (n. 1) = PL 9:1018 = CSEL 65 (A. L. Feder, 1916) and SCh 254, 258 (J. Doignon, 1978-79)

ἀναβεβκέναι δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἐν τῷ λογικῷ ἀγκίστρῳ συνειλημμένον, καὶ εὐεργετούμενον ὑπὸ τινος αὐτὸν διδάξαντος Πέτρου τὴν ἀλήθειαν, μηκέτι εἶχει ἐν τῷ στόματι τὸν στατήρα, ἀλλὰ ἀντ' ἐκείνου τὰ εἶχοντα τὴν εἰκόνα [τῆ] λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ.

(The fish) came up from the sea caught on the spiritual hook and benefited from Peter who taught it the truth. It did not yet have the stater in its mouth, but instead of that, it had the sayings with the image of God.

Note that Clement in Text # X.H.1 has the stater refer to prodigality and greed.

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3. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 13.12 = PG 13:1125

Destinatus enim ad praedicationem Petrus et piscator hominum factus doctrinae hamum misit in saeculo, quo adpositi cibi dulcedine vagatos ex eo fluctuantesque protraheret. Huic adhaesit beatus ille primus martyr a Domino, qui ore suo quadrigeminum denarium continebat, id est evangelici numeri unitate Dei gloriam Dominumque Christum in passione contuens praedicebat.

Indeed, Peter was destined to preach and to be a fisher of persons, to whom he sent out the hook of doctrine in the midst of the world. With sweet bait he dragged them out as they were wandering from him and floating about. The very first martyr after the Lord clung to it, the martyr who contained four denari in his mouth. That is, he preached the glory of God in the unity of the number of gospels and by looking at the Lord Christ in his passion.

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4. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 3.17 (c. 398 C.E.) = WS 93 = PL 26:32 = CCL 77 (D. Hurst and M. Adriaen, 1969)

Videtur autem mihi secundum mysticos intellectus, iste esse piscis qui primus captus est, qui in profundo maris erat, et in salsis amarisque gurgitibus morabatur, ut per secundum Adam libaretur primus Adam.

It seems to me that the passage ought to be understood in a mystical sense. That fish, which was first captured and which was in the depths of the ocean and in salty and bitter whirlpools, came into being in order that a first Adam might be liberated by a second Adam.

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5. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Epistle 71.1 (398 C.E.) = WS 25 = Dölger 5.319 = PL 22:69 = CSEL 54 (I. Hilberg, 1910-18)

Piscator hominum, misso rete apostolico, te quasi pulcherrimum auratam inter innumera piscium genera traxit ad litus.

After the apostolic net was cast, the fisher of human beings reeled you (Lucinus) in to shore, as if you amongst the innumerable species of fish were an extremely beautiful gilthead.

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6. Zeno of Verona (bp. 362-371/2 C.E.) Tractatus 2.13.2 (De somnio Jacob) = WS 14 = Dölger 2:29-30 = PL 11:430

With reference to Matt. 17.24-27

Piscem primum a mortuis adscendentem Christum debemus accipere, cuius ex ore duo denarii, id est duo testamenta, prolata sunt, quae salutem cum Domini gloria et Petri felicitate, utpote super quem aedificavit Ecclesiam, duobus populis profecerunt. Mare autem mundum significasse, non dubium est. Hamum vero praedicationem, quia sicut hamus missus in mare mortem piscis ostendit; ita evangelica praedicatione missa per mundum mortem Domini adventumque testatur. . . .

We ought to receive Christ as the first fish ascending from the dead, from whose mouth are brought forth the two denari—that is, the two testaments. They go forth as two peoples to salvation with the glory of God and with the joy of Peter, above whom one built the Church. Yet there is no doubt that the sea signaled the world. In fact, the hook signaled preaching,<sup>1</sup> because a hook cast into the ocean shows the death of a fish. Thus, the preaching of the gospel, which was cast throughout the world, bears witness to the death and second coming of Christ.

### Notes

1. Here the hook explicitly refers to preaching.

7. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.6.15-16 (386-390 C.E.) = WS 21 = Dölger 1:6 = PL 225-226 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Piscis ergo es, o homo. Audi quia piscis es: **Simile est regnum coelorum reti misso in mare, quod ex omni genere piscium congregavit. Cum autem esset impletum, duxerunt id ad littus, et sedentes elegerunt optimos in vasis suis, malos autem foras miserunt. Sic erit in consummatione saeculi. Exibunt angeli, et separabunt malos de medio iustorum, et mittent eos in caminum ignis.**<sup>1</sup> Sunt ergo et boni et mali pisces; boni servantur ad pretium, mali statim ardent. Bonum piscem nec retia involvunt, sed elevant. Nec amus internecat atque interficit, sed pretiosi vulneris perfundit sanguine, in cuius oris confessione bonum pretium reperitur, quo tributum apostolicum et census Christi possit exsolvi. Sic enim scriptum est dicente Domino: **Reges terrae a quibus accipiunt tributum vel censum? "A filiis suis, aut ab alienis?" Et respondente Petro, "ab alienis", ait Dominus. "Vade ad mare, et mitte amum, et eum piscem, qui primus ascenderit, tolle, et aperto ore eius invenies ibi staterem. Illum sumens dabis eis pro me et te"**.<sup>2</sup>

Noli igitur, o bone piscis, Petri amum timere; non occidit, sed consecrat. Noli quasi vilem te contemnere, quia vides corpus infirmum. Habes in ore tuo quod et pro Petro et pro Christo offeras. Noli timere Petri retia, cui dicit Jesus: **Duc in altum, et laxate retia.**<sup>3</sup> Non enim in sinistram mittit, sed in dextram, sicut iussus a Christo est.<sup>4</sup> **Noli timere sinum.**<sup>5</sup> Ideo misit retia, et complexus est Stephanum, qui de evangelio primus ascendit habens in ore suo staterem iustitiae. Unde confessione constanti clamavit dicens: **Ecce video caelos apertos, et filium hominis stantem ad dexteram Dei.**<sup>6</sup> Pro hoc pisce stabat Dominus Jesus; sciebat enim esse in ore eius pretium sui census. Denique glorioso martyrio et Petri iudicium, atque doctrinam, et Christi gratiam locuples adsertor implevit.

Oh human being, you are a fish. I have heard why you are a fish: **The kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea, which gathers fish of every kind. When it was full, however, they brought it to the shore and sitting they put the best in their vessels, but they threw the bad ones out. So it will be at the end of the world. Angels will come and will separate the bad from the midst of the just, and they will put them in the furnace of fire.**<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there are both good and bad fish. The good fish are preserved as a prize, but the bad immediately burn. They do not trap a good fish, but they raise it up. Nor does a hook slay and kill it, but it flows over with the blood of a precious wound, in whose mouth through confession (of Christ) is found a good reward. With this (reward), the apostolic tribute and the tax of Christ can be paid. Thus, it is written, when the Lord says: **From whom do**

**the kings of the earth receive tribute? From their children or from others? And Peter responded, “from others.” The Lord says: “Go to the sea and cast out a hook and take out that fish which first comes up, and, when you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater. Taking it, you will give it on my behalf and your’s.”<sup>2</sup>**

Oh good fish, do not fear the hook of Peter. It does not kill you, but rather it sanctifies you. Do not condemn yourself as worthless, because you see a weak body. You have in your mouth something which may serve as an offering for Peter and for Christ. Do not fear the nets of Peter, to whom Jesus says, **go out into the deep and loosen your nets.**<sup>3</sup> For he does not cast them into the left part, but into the right part, as it was ordered by Christ.<sup>4</sup> Do not fear his shelter, because it was said to him: **While alive you will be (taking) human beings.**<sup>5</sup> Thus, he cast out the nets, and he caught Stephen, who ascended from the gospel and had a stater of justice in his mouth. Whereupon he shouted in continual confession and said: **Behold I see the heavens opened and the son of man standing on the right side of God.**<sup>6</sup> The Lord Jesus stood by this fish. For he knew that in its mouth was the payment of his tax. At length the generous advocate fulfilled the judgement and teaching of Christ with a glorious martyrdom.

#### Notes

1. Matt. 13.47-50
2. Matt. 17.24-26
3. Luke 5.4
4. John 21.6
5. Luke 5.10
6. Acts 7.55

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8. Ps. Athanasius of Alexandria (late fourth-fifth century C.E.), Quaestiones in Novum Testamentum 10 = WS 91 = PG 28:713

**Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος πρὸς τὸν Πέτρον· »Ἀπελθε εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ βάλε ἀγκιστρον, καὶ τὸν ἀναβάντα πρῶτον ἰχθὺν ἄρον, καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ, εὐρήσεις στατήρα. Τούτον δὸς ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ.<sup>1</sup>**  
Τίς ἡ θάλασσα; ὁ κόσμος. Τί τὸ ἀγκιστρον; ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἰχθὺς ὁ Χριστός. Στατήρ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου, ἐν ᾧ μελλε κάκενός σταυρωθῆναι, καὶ ὁ Πέτρος.

**The Lord said to Peter. “Go to the sea and throw out a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and, after opening its mouth, you will find a stater. He did this on behalf of you and me.”**<sup>1</sup> What is the sea? The world. What is the hook? The word of God. The fish is Christ. The stater is the cross of the Lord, on which he would also be crucified. And there is Peter.

## Notes

1. Paraphrase of Matt. 17.26.

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9. Ps. Augustine (fifth century C.E.), Sermon 205.1 = PL 39:2125 and PL 223:855 = WS 32 = Dölger 2:33-34 (in part)

With reference to Luke 5.1-11

Dum enim Petrus in hamo quaerit concludere piscem, hamum verbi misit Christus, et ipsum tenuit piscatorem. Distendebat Petrus sinuoso lini volumine vacuum cortinam, et dum insequitur gravidi semper aequoris prolem, captorem suum fecit in littore Christum Salvatorem. Trahebat, et trahebatur, exercebat in aequore violentiam, et patiebatur in mente capturam. O aquigenum pirata reptilium, deservisti artificium hoc, mutasti de pisce ad piscem. (Est enim Christus piscis ille, qui ad Tobiam ascendit de flumine vivus, cuius iecore pre prunas passionis assato, fugatus est diabolus, et per amaritudinem fellis afflatus, et illuminatus est mundus.) De pisce, inquam, ad piscem, de reti ad Ecclesiam, de mari ad fontem, de captore factus est captura. Reliquit enim salum fluctuans, et coepit ambulare post pisce. Similitudo artis inflammat desiderium audientis, ut qui ante captorium iaciebat in salo, verbi nunc retia spargat in mundo. Tunc enim pisces induxit, nunc autem homines sagenis spiritualibus irretivit.

In fact, while Peter sought to capture the fish on a hook, Christ sent the hook of the word, and it took hold of the fisherman himself. Peter filled an empty kettle with a twisted spool of fishing line, and, while there followed the progeny of an always pregnant sea, he made Christ Savior his captor on the shore. He pulled and he was pulled. He was occupied with violence in the sea, and he consciously endured his capture. Oh pirate of water-born creatures, you have been devoted to this profession; you have changed from a fish to a fish. (Indeed, Christ is that fish who rose while alive from the river to Tobit. Because his liver was roasted on the coals of his passion, the devil fled; and because he was breathed on by the bitterness of the gall bladder, he illuminated the world.) I say, from a fish to a fish, from a net to the Church, from the sea to the spring; from

the captor is made the capture. While floating, he left the salt sea and he began to walk in the manner of a fish. The similarity of the profession inflamed the desire of the listener so that, whereas before he threw nets into the salt sea, now he sprinkles the nets of the word into the world. Earlier he caught fish, but now he ensnares persons with his spiritual nets.

Note the phrase “from a fish to a fish” and similar phrases in other passages. For more discussion on Tobit, see below in Section X.D.

-----10. Peter of Laodicea (c. 7th - 8th cent. C.E.) = Dölger 2:32

Ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν οἱ ἰχθύες οἱ ἐν βυθῷ ἀπιστίας καταβυθισθέντες καὶ ἀνασπασθέντες ἐκ τῶν πονηρῶν τοῦ βίου παραχῶν διὰ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ἀγκίστρων, τουτέστι τῶν διδασκῶν, καὶ εὐθέως ἐκ προοιμίων διδαχθέντες λαλεῖν τὰ τίμια καὶ μυστικά λόγια.

For we are the fish submerged in the watery depths of faithlessness and pulled out from the evil disorder of life by means of the apostolic hooks—that is, the teachings—and immediately taught from the beginning to speak virtuous and mystical words.

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## II.B. The stater as Christ

1. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 C.E.), bp. of Alexandria (412-444 C.E.), In Matthaëum 17.27, frag. 212 (after 428 C.E.) = WS 54 = PG 72:429

Δυνάμενος καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς παραγαγεῖν τὸν στατήρα οὐκ ἐποίησε τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ σημεῖον ἐποίησεν, ἵνα μυστήριον ἡμᾶς διδάξῃ θεωρίας γέμον· ἰχθύες γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐκ τῶν πικρῶν τοῦ βίου παραχῶν ἀνασπασθέντες ὡς ἐκ θαλάσσης διὰ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ἀγκίστρων σχόντες ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν στόμασι τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν στατήρα τὸν βασιλικόν, ὅς ἐδόθη ὑπὲρ δύο ἀντίλυτρον, ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἡμῶν ἡτοι ὑπὲρ δύο λαῶν, Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ ἐθνικῶν, ὁμοίως λυτρῶμενος πένητας καὶ πλουσίους ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς νόμος ἀνυποστόλως ἐξ ἑσού ἀπῆται τὸ τέλος τῆς δραχμῆς παρά τε πλουσίου καὶ πένητος.

Ἡδύνατο ὁ σωτὴρ καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς παραγαγεῖν τὸν στατήρα, οὐκ ἐποίησε δὲ τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ σημεῖον εἰργάσατο, ἵνα δείξῃ μυστήριον ἡμῖν θεωρίας ἑμπλεον· ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν οἱ ἰχθύες θηρευθέντες ἐκ τῶν τοῦ βίου παραχῶν διὰ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν διδασκῶν. »Ἐχομεν δὲ ἐν τοῖς στόμασιν ἡμῶν στατήρα, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τὸν Χριστόν.

Although he was able to bring forth the stater, he did not do it, but made the sign from the sea in order that the mystery full of contemplation might instruct us. For we are fish arising from the bitter troubles of life, that is from the sea, (and we) have Christ, the royal stater, in our mouths on account of the apostolic hooks. He was given on behalf of a double ransom—both our soul and our body—or on behalf of two peoples—both Jews and Gentiles. And likewise he was ransomed for the poor and the rich, since the ancient law openly requires a payment of the drachma equally for both the rich and the poor.

The savior was also able to bring forth the stater from the earth, although he did not do it, but made the sign from the ocean in order that he might show a mystery full of contemplation to us. For we are fish hunted from the troubles of life on account of the apostolic teachings. And we have the stater in our mouths—that is, Christ.

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## II.C General fish-catching

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 C.E.), Instructor 3 (“Hymn to Christ”) = WS 5 = Dölger 1:4, 2:59-60, 5:315 = GCS 1 (third ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu, 1972)

	Στόμιον πάλων ἀδαῶν, περὸν ὀρνίθων ἀπλανῶν, οἰαξ νηῶν ἀτρεκῆς, ποιμὴν ἀρνῶν βασιλικῶν·
5	τοὺς σοὺς ἀφελεῖς παῖδας ἀγειρον, αἰνεῖν ἅγιως, ὑμνεῖν ἀδόλως ἀκάκοις στόμασιν
10	παίδων ἡγήτορα Χριστόν. βασιλεὺ ἁγίων, λόγε πανδαμάτωρ πατὴρ ὑψίστου, σοφίας πρῦτανι,
15	στήριγμα πόνων αἰωνοχαρῆς, βροτέας γεννεᾶς σώτερ Ἰησοῦ, ποιμὴν, ἀροτήρ,
20	οἰαξ, στόμιον, περὸν οὐράνιον παναγοῦς ποιμνῆς,
————	

Fishing	άλιεδ μερόπων τῶν σωζομένων
25	πελάγους κακίας, ἰχθῆς ἀγνοῦς κύματος ἐχθροῦ
Scene	γλυκερῆ ζωῆ δελεάζων.
30	προβάτων λογικῶν ποιμῆν αἰγιε, ἡγοῦ, βασιλεῦ παιδῶν ἀνεπάφρων· ἕνγια Χριστοῦ ὁδὸς οὐρανία.

Bridle-bit of unknowing fillies,  
 wing of unerring birds,  
 secure helmsman of ships,  
 shepherd of royal sheep,  
 guide your  
 artless children,  
 sing in a holy fashion  
 chant in a guileless way  
 not with evil mouths  
 to Christ guide of children.  
 king of saints,  
 all-conquering word  
 of the highest father,  
 the ruler of wisdom,  
 eternally joyous support  
 of labors,  
 of a mortal race,  
 savior, Jesus,  
 shepherd, ploughman,  
 helmsman, bridle-bit,  
 heavenly wing

of an all-holy flock,

Fishing	fisher of mortals saved from a wicked sea, catching holy fish on a hostile wave for a sweet life.
Scene	holy shepherd of spiritual sheep, come, king of untouched children



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2. Gospel According to Thomas 8 (second century C.E.) = Nag Hammadi Codex II . . . , vol. 1 (Brill, ed. B. Layton) = B. Layton, Gnostic Scriptures, 381

(Layton translation) And He said, “What human beings resemble is an intelligent fisherman who, having cast his net into the sea, pulled the net up out of the sea full of little fish. The intelligent fisherman, upon finding among them a fine large fish, threw all the little fish back into the sea, choosing without any effort the big fish. Whoever has ears to hear should listen!”

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3. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-c. 386 C.E.), bp. of Jerusalem, Procatechesis 5 (348/50 C.E.) = WS 17 = Dölger 5:318 = PG 33:344 = SPCK (F. L. Cross, 1951)

Ἐγχωρεῖ σε καὶ προφάσει ἄλλη ἐλθεῖν· ἐγχωρεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἀνδρα βούλεσθαι γυναικὶ καθικετεύσαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο προσελθεῖν· ἀντιστρέφει καὶ ἐπὶ γυναικῶν τὸ ὅμοιον ὁ λόγος· καὶ δοῦλος πολλάκις δεσπότη, καὶ φίλος φίλῳ ἀρέσαι ἠθέλησε. Δέχομαι τὸ δέλεαρ τοῦ ἀγκίστρου, καὶ καταδέχομαι σε, κακῆ προαιρέσει μὲν ἐλθόντα, ἐλπίδι δὲ ἀγαθῆ σωθησόμενον. »Ἴσως οὐκ ᾔδεις ποῦ ἔρχῃ, οὐδὲ ποῖα σε σαγήνη λαμβάνει· γέγονας εἰσω δικτύων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν· ζωγρήθητι· μὴ φύγη· ἀγκίστρευε γὰρ σε Ἰησοῦς, οὐχ ἵνα θανατώσῃ, ἀλλ' ἵνα θανατώσας ζωποιήσῃ· δεῖ γὰρ σε ἀποθανεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι· . . .

It is possible that you also come with another motive; for a man may wish to pursue a woman and to come on account of this. Conversely, this reasoning may also apply to women. And a slave often wishes to please a master, and a friend often wishes to please a friend. I receive the bait of the hook, and I receive you. Though you may have come for a bad purpose, you may be saved for a good hope. In like manner, you do not know where you are coming, nor do you know what kind of net catches you. You have come into the nets of the church. Let yourself be taken captive. Do not flee, since Jesus hooks you, not in order that you might die, but in order that you might die and live again. For it is necessary that you die and rise again. . . .

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4. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367 C.E.) Commentary on Matthew 3.6 = WS 11 = PL 9:931 = CSEL 65 (A. L. Feder, 1916) and SCh 254, 258 (J. Doignon, 1978-79)

With reference to Matt. 4.18-22

In piscatorum vero electione ex hominum arte futuri eorum officii opus proditur, ut piscibus e mari, ita hominibus deinceps a saeculo in locum superiorem, id est in lumen caelestis habitaculi, protrahendis. Quibus et artem et patrias et domos relinquentibus, docemur Christum secuturi et saecularis vitae sollicitudine et paternae domus consuetudine non teneri.

In the true selection of fishermen as the profession of persons, is shown the activity of their future duties. As fish from the sea, so these persons in turn are dragged from the world into a higher place—— that is, into the light of the celestial dwelling place. By relinquishing their profession, their homelands, and their homes, we who will follow Christ are taught that we should not be held in the grip of concern for worldly life and of habitual attachment to one's paternal home.

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5. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-389/90 C.E.), Oration 37.1-2 (380 C.E.) = WS 18 = Dölger 5:318 = PG 282-284

Ὁ τοὺς ἀλιεῖς προελόμενος, καὶ αὐτὸς σαγηνεύει, καὶ τόπους ἐκ τόπων ἀμείβει. Τίνος ἕνεκεν; Οὐ μόνον ἵνα κερδάνη πλείονας τῶν φιλοθέων διὰ τῆς ἐπιφοιτήσεως, ἀλλ' ἕμοιγε δοκεῖ, ἵνα καὶ τόπους ἀγίαση πλείονας. . . . «Ὅπερ οὖν εἶπον, ἀλιεὺς γίνεται, πᾶσι συγκαταβαίνει, σαγηνεύει, πάντα στέγει, ἐν' ἐκ βάθους τὸν ἰχθὺν ἀνενέγνη, τὸν νηχόμενον ἐν τοῖς ἀστάτοις καὶ ἀλμυροῖς τοῦ βίου κύμασιν ἀνθρώπων.

After choosing them as fishermen, he himself throws out a net and exchanges certain places for other places. Why? Not only in order that he might gain more lovers of God through his epiphany, but, as it seems to me, in order that he might sanctify more places. . . . Thus, as I said, he becomes a fisherman, he comes down to all, he throws out a net, and he endures all things in order that he might take up the fish from the deep——that is, humanity swimming on the unsettled and briny waves of life.

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6. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-c. 394 C.E.), Oratio catachetica magna 24 (c. 385 C.E.) = PG 45:64-65

. . . τὸ προκαλύμματι τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἐνκρύφθη τὸ θεῖον, ἵνα κατὰ τοὺς λιχνούς τῶν ἰχθύων τῷ δελέατι τῆς σαρκὸς συναποσπασθῇ τὸ ἀγκιστρον τῆς θεότητος· καὶ οὕτω τῆς ζωῆς τῷ θανάτῳ εἰσοικεισθεῖς, καὶ τῷ σκότει τὸ φῶτος ἐμφανέντος, ἐξαφανισθ[ήτω] τῷ φωτὶ καὶ τῇ ζωῇ τὸ κατὰ τὸ ἐναντίον νοούμενον.

. . . the divine being (Christ) hid in the veil of our nature, in order that, like gluttonous fish, the hook of divinity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh. And life might therefore be related to death, and

light might appear in darkness, and that which is considered opposite to light and life might be totally destroyed.

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7. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Expositio euangelii secundam Lucam 4.72 (377-389 C.E.) = PL 15:718 = SC 45 (G. Tissot, 1956)

Quae sunt autem apostolorum quae laxari iubentur retia nisi verborum complexiones et quasi quidam orationis sinus et disputationum recessus, qui eos quos ceperint non amittant? Et bene apostolica instrumenta piscandi retia sunt, quae non captos perimunt, sed reservant et de profundo ad lumen extrahunt, fluctuantes de infimis ad supera transducunt.

Yet, what are the nets that are commanded to be loosened, unless they are the combinations of words, the shelters of an oration, and the nooks of disputations, which do not let them escape? And fishing nets are appropriately apostolic instruments, which do not annihilate those captured, but preserve them and drag them up from the depths to the light. They lead them from the lower to the higher regions.

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8. John Chrysostom (344/454-407 C.E.), from Antioch, bp. of Constantinople, De resurrectione d.n. Jesu Christi = WS 65 = Dölger 5:316-17 = PG 50:439

Ἐξαγαγέτω γάρ, φησὶ, τὰ ὕδατα ἔρπετὰ ψυχῶν ζωσῶν,<sup>1</sup> καὶ τὸ ἐπιτάγμα ἔργον ἐγένετο, καὶ ἡ ἀψυχὸς ἐκείνη οὐσία ἐμψυχα ζῶα ἐξέφερον.<sup>2</sup> οὕτω καὶ νῦν, ἐξαγαγέτω τὰ ὕδατα, οὐχὶ ἔρπετὰ ψυχῶν ζωσῶν, ἀλλὰ πνευματικὰ χαρίσματα. Ἐξήγαγε τότε τὰ ὕδατα ἰχθύας ἀλόγους καὶ ἀφώνους, ἐξέβαλε νῦν ἰχθύας λογικοὺς καὶ πνευματικοὺς, ἰχθύας ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀλιευθέντας· **Δεῦτε γάρ, φησὶ, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἄλιεις ἀνθρώπων.**<sup>3</sup> Ταύτην εἰπὼν τὴν ἀλιεῖαν τότε, καινὸς οὕτως τῆς ἀλιείας ὁ τρόπος· οἱ ἀλιεῦντες ἐκ τῶν ὑδάτων ἐκβάλλουσιν, ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὕδατα ἐνεβάλλομεν, καὶ οὕτως ἠλιεύσαμεν.

It says: **Then let the waters produce crawling creatures.**<sup>1</sup> And the command became deed, and that soulless substance) produced ensouled creatures.<sup>2</sup> Thus, now let the water produce not crawling creatures, but spiritual gifts. Then the water produced unintelligent and mute fish, but now the water threw out intelligent and spiritual fish—fish caught by the apostles. It says: **Then follow, and I will make you fishers of human beings.**<sup>3</sup> Then he (Jesus) spoke of that fishing, which was a new kind of fishing. We who are fishing throw (the fish) from the water ashore; we throw them back into the water, and thus we are fished.

## Notes

1. Gen. 1.20.
2. "Soulless substance" refers to water.
3. Matt. 4.19

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9. Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345-410 C.E.), Commentary on the Apostles' Creed 14 (c. 400 C.E.) = CCL 20 (M. Simonetti, 1961)

Sed fortasse terreatur aliquis in huiusmodi doctrina, quod quem paulo ante cum Deo Patre diximus sempiternum ac de eius substantia esse pro-  
genitum, quemque regno aeternitate maiestate unum cum Patre esse  
docuimus, nunc de eius morte tractemus. Sed nolo terrearis, o fidelis  
auditor. Paulo post istum quem audis mortuum, rursus immortalem  
videbis. Mors enim ab eo mortem spoliatura suscipitur. Nam  
sacramentum illud susceptae carnis, quod supra exposuimus, hanc habuit  
causam, ut divina Filii Dei virtus, velut hamus quidam, habitu humanae  
carnis obtectus et, sicut apostolus paulo ante dixit, **habitu repertus ut  
homo**,<sup>1</sup> principem mundi invitare posset ad agonem. cui ipse carnem  
suam velut escam tradens, hamo eum divinitatis intrinsecus teneret inser-  
to, et profusione immaculati sanguinis——solus et enim qui peccati  
maculam nescit——omnium peccata deleret. Eorum dumtaxat, qui san-  
guine eius postes fidei suae signassent. Sicut ergo hamum esca  
contectum si piscis rapiat, non solum escam cum hamo removet, sed et  
ipse de profundo, esca aliis futurus, educitur. Ita et is qui habebat mortis  
imperium, rapuit quidem in mortem corpus Iesu, non sentiens in eo  
hamum divinitatis inclusum. Sed ubi devorabit haesit ipse contiuo, et  
diruptis inferni claustris, velut de profundo extractus trahitur, ut esca  
ceteris fiat. Quod ita futurum sub hac eadem figura Exechiel dudum  
propheta signaverat, dicens: **Et extraham te in hamo meo et extendam  
te super terram. Campi inplebuntur de te et constitutam super te  
omnes volucres caeli et saturabo ex te omnes bestias terrae.**<sup>2</sup> Sed et  
David dicit: **Dedit eum in escam populis Aethiopum.**<sup>3</sup> Et Iob de eo-  
dem mysterio similiter protestatur. Ait enim ex persona Dei loquentis ad  
se: **Aut adduces draconem in hamo aut pones capistrum circa nares  
eius.**<sup>4</sup>

But perhaps some might fear that in a doctrine of this kind——one in  
which we have spoken a little before that he was eternally with God the  
Father and that he was born from his substance and in which we have  
taught that he was one with the father——we will now deal with his  
death. But do not fear, faithful hearer. A little after the death of the one  
you hear, you will see again that he is immortal. For his death is taken up  
so as to strip death. In fact, the purpose of that sacrament of flesh which  
is taken up and which we have discussed above, is that the divine virtue  
of the son of God——just as a certain hook——is covered in the form  
of human flesh. And just as the apostle said a little before, **discovered in**

**the form of a human being,**<sup>1</sup> he can invite the prince of the world to the contest. He handed his flesh over as food and, with the hook of divinity inserted inside, he held it. And with the profusion of immaculate blood—for he alone does not know the stain of sin—he destroyed the sins of all. In this regard, they stamped the door of his faith with his blood. Therefore, (he is like) a fish (who) seizes a hook covered with food and does not remove the food alone with the hook, but it (the fish) is brought out from the deep to be food for others. Such is he who had the power of death and who seized the body of Jesus in death, though not feeling in it the enclosed hook of divinity. But, when he devours it, he clings continually, and afterwards the gates of Hell are opened, as if he is dragged out from the deep so that he might serve as food for others. Ezekiel the prophet has indicated what is meant by this figure, saying: **And I will drag you on my hook and I will extend you over the earth. Fields are filled with you and I will establish above you all the birds of the sky and I will satisfy from you all the beasts of the earth.**<sup>2</sup> But David said: **He will give him as food to the peoples of Ethiopia.**<sup>3</sup> And Job similarly bore witness concerning this mystery. With the person of God speaking, he said to himself: **Either you will bring a dragon to a hook or you will place a halter around its nose.**<sup>4</sup>

#### Notes

1. Phil. 2.7
2. Ez. 32.3-4
3. Ps. 73.14
4. Job 40.24. On the Leviathan banquet, see pp. 170-74 above.

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10. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), In evangelium Ioannis 42.1  
(c. 410-420 C.E.) = WS 30 = PL 35:1966 = CCL 36 (R. Willems, 1954)

With reference to the Jews who will kill Jesus in John 8.37

**quaeritis me occidere, sermo enim meus non capit in vobis.** Si sermo meus caperetur, caperet; si caperemini, intra retia fidei tamquam pisces concluderemini. Quid est ergo **non capit in vobis?** Non capit cor vestrum, quia non recipitur a corde vestro. Sic enim est sermo Dei, et sic esse debet fidelibus, tamquam pisci hamus; tunc capit quando capitur.

**You seek to kill me, since my sermon does not catch you.** If my sermon were to be caught, it would catch; if you were to be caught, you would— like fish—be ensnared among the nets of faith. What is therefore, **it does not catch you.** It does not catch your heart, because it is not received by your heart. For thus is the sermon of God and it should therefore be for the faithful, just as a hook for a fish. Then it catches when it is caught.

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11. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), In evangelium Ioannis 122.6 (c. 410-420 C.E.) = WS 31 = Dölger 2:449 = PL 35:1966 = CCL 36 (R. Willems, 1954)

General reference to John 21.1-8

Quod ergo septem discipuli fuerunt in ista piscatione, Petrus, et Thomas, et Nathanael, et duo filii Zebedaei, et alii duo quorum tacentur, isti suo septenario numero finem significant temporis. Universum quippe septem diebus volvitur tempus. Ad hoc pertinet quod mane facto Iesus stetit in littore; quia etiam littus finis est maris, et ideo finem significat saeculi. Eumdem finem saeculi ostendit et quod Petrus rete extraxit in terram, hoc est in littus. Quod ipse Dominus aperuit, ubi alio quodam loco de sagena in mare missa similitudinem dedit: **Et eam trahunt**, inquit, **ad littus**.<sup>1</sup> Quod littus aliquid esset exponens: **Sic erit in consummatione saeculi**.<sup>2</sup>

In so far as there were seven disciples in that fishing expedition—Peter, and Thomas, and Nathaniel, and the two sons of Zebedee, and another two whose names are not mentioned—these signify by the number seven the end of time. Indeed all time turns in seven days. Of relevance is the statement that when morning came Jesus stood on the shore. For the shore is the end of the ocean and thus signifies the end of the world. The Lord himself reveals this, when he gives in a certain other place the parable of the net cast into the sea: **And they drag it to the shore**.<sup>1</sup> In order to explain what the shore is, he says: **So will be the completion of the world**.<sup>2</sup>

#### Notes

1. Matt. 13.48
2. Matt. 13.49

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12. Peter Chrysologus (c. 380-c. 450 C.E.), bp. of Ravenna, Sermon 28.1 = WS 35 = PL 52:279 = CCL 44 (A. Olivar, 1975)

With reference to Matt. 4.19

**Venite**, inquit, **et faciam vos piscatores hominum**. Ut vitalis escae iactu, ut hamo caelestis verbi de mortis gurgite animas ad lucem tollerent sempiternam. Captores piscium fiunt hominum piscatores. . . .

**Come**, he says, **and I will make you fishers of human beings**, in order that they might raise souls from the whirlpool of death to the eternal light by the throwing of life-giving food and by the hook of the celestial word. The captors of fish become fishers of human beings.

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13. Paulinus of Nola (c. 353-431 C.E.), Epistle 20.6 (399/400 C.E.) = WS 33, 69 = Dölger 5:669 = PL 61:249 = CSEL 29-30 (W. Hartel, 1894)

Memineremus nos ab utero terrae et cognationis nostrae segregatos Delphini filios esse factos, ut efficeremur illi pisces, **qui perambulant semitas (paths) maris**.<sup>1</sup> Memineremus te non solum patrem sed et Petrum nobis esse factum, quia tu misisti hamum ad me profundis et amaris huius saeculi fluctibus extrahendum, ut captura salutis efficerer et cui vivebam naturae morerer, ut cui mortuus eram viverem Domino. Sed si piscis tuus sum, debeo ore pretiosum praefere. Sed si piscis tuus sum, debeo ore pretiosum praefere denarium, in quo non Caesaris figura et inscriptio sed regis aeterni viva et vivificans imago praefulget, fidem scilicet veritatis, quae doctrinae tuae monetam et anuli tui symbolum numo cordis mei et cerae mentis inpresserit.<sup>2</sup> Doctrina enim tua **argentum igne examinatum, probatum terrae, purgatum septuplo**.<sup>3</sup>

I remember that I was separated from the womb of my land and my kin and that I became the son of Delphinus, so that I might become that fish **which passes over the paths of the sea**.<sup>1</sup> I remember that you not only became my father, but my Peter, because you cast out the hook to me in order to pull me out from the depths and from the bitter waves of this world, in order that I might become a prey to salvation and that I might die to the nature which I was living, and in order that I might live for the Lord for whom I had been dead. But if I am your fish, I ought to reveal the valuable denarius in my mouth, in which shines not the figure and inscription of Caesar, but the living and life-giving image of the eternal king. It bears the impression of the coin of your teaching, the symbol of your ring on the nummus of my heart and the wax of my mind.<sup>2</sup> For your teaching was **silver tried by fire, tested by the earth, and purged seven times**.<sup>3</sup>

### Notes

1. Ps. 8.9. Delphinus is the man who baptized Paulinus. The name "Delphinus" may well have been a pun on delphinus ("dolphin").
  2. Nummus = a type of Roman coin.
  3. Ps. 11.7=Ps. 12.6.
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14. Sedulius (fl. c. 420-430 C.E.), Carmen paschale 5.392-404 (2A) and Opus paschale 5.34-35 (2B) = WS 73 = CSEL 10 (J. Huemer, 1885)

With reference to John 21.1-10

a. Gnarus item Dominus Petro piscante per aequor  
Cum sociis captum esse nihil dimittere lina  
In dextris hortatur aquas. Mox gurgite clauso  
Pendula fluctivagam traxerunt retia pradam,  
Per typicam noscenda viam; nam retia dignis  
Lucida praecepta Dei, quibus omnis in illa  
Dextra parte manens concluditur ac simul ulnis  
Fertur apostolicis Domini ad vestigia Christi.  
Nec piscis prunaeque vacant et panis in uno  
Discipulis inventa loco. Quisnam ambigat unam  
His rebus constare fidem? Quippe est aqua piscis,  
Christus adest panis, sanctusque Spiritus ignis.  
Hinc etenim abluimur, hoc pascimur, inde sacramur.

a. Likewise, while Peter was fishing on the water with his friends, the well-known Lord encouraged him to put down his fishing line in the waters on the right side, since they had caught nothing. Soon their pendulous nets brought in out of the enclosed whirlpool a booty which had been driven by waves. For the nets, which are bright for the worthy, are the precepts of God, in which each one remaining on that right side is enclosed and is born at the same time with apostolic arms (pointed) toward the footprints of Christ. Not absent are the fish or the charcoal or the bread, which are found for the disciples in one place. Who would dispute that one faith is established in these things? Indeed, the fish is water, the bread is Christ, and the fire is the holy Spirit. For here we are purified, fed, and sanctified.

b. Post paucos iterum Dominus dies Petro piscanti cum sociis ad marinum sese litus ostendit, totaeque noctis labore pervigili nullam cernens fessos habuisse capturam, dextrum retia dimitti iubet in pelagus, confestimque clauso gurgitis salo piscosae congregationis immensa crepantes sinus eduxere cum praeda, quam ante Domini gaudentes proiecere vestigia. Tale genus ergo miraculi non vulgari facto sentiri, sed typica debet intellegentia ponderari. Retia siquidem credamus praecepta Dei lucida nimis atque perspicua, quibus omnes dextera sectantes a saeculi fluctibus eruendi clauduntur Christi vestigiis inclinati. Nam et piscis supra prunas adpositus, eodemque panis in loco simul ab ipsis inventus catholica religione cernitur non carere. Nam piscis aqua videtur intellegi, qua nos abluere certum est ac renasci, panis Christum significat salvatorem, cuius eodem corpore vescimur ad salutem. Ignis Spiritus sancti gerit imaginem, quo devoti consecramur ad fidem.



b. After a few days, while Peter was fishing, the Lord again showed himself at the sea shore. And observing that they were despairing since they had caught nothing, although they were awake the entire night, he commanded them to put down their net into the sea on the right side. And immediately from the enclosing brine of the whirlpool, by making noise, they drew out an immense brood of a fishy congregation as booty, which in their joy they threw before the footprints of the Lord. Such a kind of miracle ought not to be understood as an ordinary deed, but ought to be thought of in a typological sense. Indeed, I believe that the nets are the exceptionally bright and clear precepts of God, with which all who are standing on the right side, and who were torn out from the waves of this world, and who are changed, are enclosed in the footprints of Christ. For the fish, which is placed above the charcoal and the bread, and which in the Catholic religion is found by them in that same place, is discerned not to be missing. For the fish seems to be understood as the water, by which it is perceived that we are purified and reborn. The bread signifies the savior Christ, by whose body we are fed toward salvation. The fire bears the image of the holy Spirit, by which we who are devout are consecrated to faith.

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15. Basil of Seleucia (in Isauria), bp. of Seleucia (c. 440-c. 468 C.E.), Oration 30 = WS 38 = PG 85:336

With reference to Matt. 4.18-22 and Mark 1.16-20

**Δεῦτε, ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων;** Ποῖον προβαλλόμενοι πλοῦτον, εἶπε μοι, τοὺς ὀρώντας ἐκδυσωπήσωμεν; ἢ τὰ διερρωγότα δεῖξωμεν δίκτυα, καὶ τοὺς δήμους ὡς θήρας ἀγρεύσωμεν; Ποῖαν κινήσαντες γλώτταν τῆ κάλλει τῶν λόγων τὰς ἀκοὰς σαγηνεύσωμεν; ἢ ῥήμασιν ναυτικοῖς βασιλέων ψυχὰς χειρισώμεθα; Πρὸς ἰχθύας τὴν τέχνην, οὐ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους μεμελετήκαμεν. Οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον, οὐκ εἰπόντες, οὐκ ἐνόησαντες, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀγκίστρω τῆ λόγῳ περιπαρέντες, ἠκολούθουν φθεγγομένῳ Δεσπότη, καὶ ἀλίας τὸν τρόπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐδιδάσκοντο. Ἀγρεύειν ἐμάνθανον, καὶ α πράττειν ἐμελλον, πρῶτον τοῖς ἔργοις ὑποέμενον. »Ελεγε· **Δεῦτε, καὶ ἠκολούθων καλοῦμενοι.** »Ὡ ῥημάτων διὰ πραγμάτων ἀπόδεξις! **Δεῦτε·** ἐγὼ τοῖς ὑμετέροις ῥήμασι προσπλέκω τὸ δέλεαρ· ἐγὼ δήμους καὶ πόλεις ταῖς ὑμετέραις ἐπιστρέψω φωναῖς, ἀπαρχὰς ὑμᾶς τῆς ἐμῆς σαγήνης ἐργάζομαι. . . .

. . . **Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων.** Γενοῦ μετὰ τὴν θάλατταν ἀλιεὺς ἠπειρότης, περιβαλλέσθω δικτύοις ἢ γῆ. Ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων ὑπάρξατε. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὰς τῶν ἰχθύων ἐπαναστάσεις κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐνόησαν ἄνθρωποι, ταῖς ὑμετέραις σαγήναις περιπιπέτωσαν, τὰ τῶν ἰχθύων πρὸς σωτηρίαν ὑπομενέτωσαν.

. . . **Come, will I make you fishers of human beings?** Tell me, by putting forth what sort of wealth, will we put to shame those watching? Or will we show broken nets, and will we fish for people as animals? By using what kind of beautiful language, will we net the hearers of the speeches? Or with what nautical words will we handle the souls of kings? We practiced our profession with fish in mind, not human beings. Neither speaking nor understanding this, but coming to the word, as if truly on a hook, they learned for themselves a new way of fishing. They learned how to fish and they were about to do it, but first they waited for actions. He said, **follow, and when called they followed.** Oh proof of words through deeds! By means of your words, I will attach bait. With your sounds, I will convert peoples and cities and I will make you the first offerings of my net. . . .

. . . **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of human beings.** After the sea, be a fisherman on land and let the earth be surrounded by your nets. Be fishers of human beings. For when human beings know that the fish are swarming, let them fall into your nets and let them wait for salvation as fish.

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16. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 C.E.) Homiliae in evangelia 2.3 = WS 43 = PL 76:1185f.

Captis autem tam magnis piscibus, **Ascendit Simon Petrus et traxit rete in terram.**<sup>1</sup> Iam credo quod vestra charitas advertat quid est quod Petrus rete ad terram trahit. Ipsi quippe sancta Ecclesia est commisa, ipsi specialiter dicitur: **Simon Ioannis amas me? . . . Pasce oves meas.**<sup>2</sup> Quod ergo postmodum aperitur in voce, hoc nonc signatur in opere. Quia ergo praedicator ecclesiae nos a mundi huius fluctibus separat, nimirum necesse est ut rete plenum piscibus Petrus ad terram ducat. Ipse enim pisces ad soliditatem littoris pertrahit, quia sanctae praedicationis voce stabilitatem aeternae patriae fidelibus ostendit. Hoc egit verbis, hoc epistolis, hoc agit quotidie miraculorum signis. Quoties per eum ad amorem quietis aeternae convertimur, quoties a terrenarum rerum tumultibus separamur, quid aliud quam missi intra rete fidei pisces ad litus trahimur? . . . Post resurrectionem ergo Domini missum rete dignum fuit ut tot pisces caperet, quot solummodo electos cives supernae patriae designarent).

Yet, after catching so many big fish, **Simon Peter rose up and drew the net onto the shore.**<sup>1</sup> I believe that your charity already directs what it is that Peter drags with his net onto shore. Indeed, the holy church is united with him, as it is especially said of him: **Simon, son of John, "Do you love me"?** . . . **Pasture my flocks.**<sup>2</sup> What therefore is revealed afterwards by the voice, is now revealed by the book. Because the preacher of the church separates us, therefore, from the waves of this

world, it is undoubtedly necessary that Peter leads the net full with fish to shore. For he brings fish to the solidity of the shore, because, with the voice of holy preaching, he shows the stability of the eternal homeland to the faithful. He did this with words, with letters; he does this daily with the signs of miracles. How many times by means of it are we turned toward the love of eternal quiet? How many times by means of it are we separated from the tumults of earthly affairs? With what other than a net of faith are we dragged in to the shore? . . . After the resurrection, therefore, the worthy net that was sent by the Lord caught so many fish that they designate only the elect citizens of the higher homeland.

### Notes

1. John 21.10
2. John 21.15-16

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### II.D. Divisions between good fish and bad fish in relation to the call of the fishermen in Matthew 13.47-50

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See also Ambrose in Text # III.A.3.

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1. Origen (c. 185-c. 254 C.E.), Homily on Jeremiah 16.285 t - v = WS 8=PG 13:437, 440 = GCS 6 (E. Klostermann and P. Nautin, 2nd ed., 1983)

With reference to Matt. 4.18-22

Ἄναγέγραπται ἐν τῷ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγελίῳ ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν ἐληλυθεναι παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἑώρακέναι **Σίμωνα καὶ Ἄνδρεαν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντας ἀμφίβληστρον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· ἦσαν γὰρ ἄλιεῖς. εἰτὰ** φησιν ὁ λόγος ὅτι ὁ σωτὴρ ἰδὼν αὐτοὺς εἶπε· **δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἄλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων. οἱ δὲ ἀφέντες τὰ δίκτυα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ** καὶ πεποίηκεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ <ἀνθρώπων> ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ ἄλιεῦν. καὶ **ἄλλους δὲ δύο ἀδελφοὺς εὗρεν, Ἰακώβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καταρτίζοντας τὰ δίκτυα· καὶ τοὺτους ἐκάλεσεν** ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπιστήμην, πεποίηκε δὲ κακείνους ἄλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων. καὶ **εἰ** τίς γε κατενόησε τοὺς **εἰς** ἀπὸ Θεοῦ χάριν λόγου πεπλεγμένην ὡς δίκτυα καὶ συγκεϊμένην ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γραφῶν ὡς ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥστε περιβάλλεσθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀκροατῶν τὸ πλέγμα, κατενόησε δὲ καὶ τεχνικῶς τοῦτο γινόμενον κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἣν ἐδίδαξεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, **ἵνα** τὴν αὐτὴν οὐ μόνον

τότε ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν πέμπει ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων παιδεύσας αὐτούς, ἵνα δυνηθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀνελθεῖν καὶ φυγεῖν αὐτῆς τὰ πικρὰ κύματα.

Ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνοι οἱ ἰχθύες οἱ ἀψυχοὶ ἐν ταῖς σαγήναις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβλήστροις καὶ ἐν τοῖς δικτύοις ἢ ἐν τοῖς ἀγκίστροις, ἀποθνήσκουσι θάνατον οὐχὶ διαδεχομένης ζωῆς τὸν θάνατον. ὁ δὲ συλληφθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλιέων Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἀνελθὼν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀποθνήσκει δὲ τὸ κόσμῳ καὶ τῇ ἁμαρτία ζῶοποιεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει ἄλλην ζωὴν, ὥσει ἐδύνω καθ' ὑπόθεσιν νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ ἰχθύος ψυχὴν μεταβάλλουσαν μετὰ τὸ ἐξελθεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ἰχθυακοῦ καὶ γινομένην τι κρεῖττον παρ' ἰχθύν (παράδειγμα ἔλαβον, μὴ ἀφορμὰς τις λαμβανέτω ὧν οὐκ ἤκουσε), τοιοῦτον δὴ τι νοήσεις.<sup>1</sup> ἀνελήλυθας ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ὑποπεσσὼν τοῖς δικτύοις τῶν μαθητῶν Ἰησοῦ, ἐξελθὼν μεταβάλλεις τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐκέτι ἰχθύς εἰ διατρίβων <ἐν> τοῖς ἄλμυροῖς τῆς θαλάσσης κύμασιν, ἀλλ' εὐθέως σου μεταβάλλει ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ μεταμορφοῦται καὶ γίνεται κρεῖττον τι καὶ θειότερον παρ' ὅ ἦν τὸ πρότερον.

It is written in the gospel according to Matthew that our savior came to the sea of Galilee and saw **Simon and his brother Andrew throwing their net into the sea; for they were fishermen.** Thus, the word says that the savior upon seeing them said, **follow me and I will make fishers of human beings. And leaving their nets, they followed him.** And Jesus had them undertake the fishing of human beings. And **he discovered two brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John repairing with their father their nets in the boat. And he called them over** to this profession, and he made them fishers of human beings. If someone were to consider those disciples who have the grace of the revelation from God—— that grace which is conceived as **nets**; and if someone were to consider that grace from the holy scriptures—— which is to be considered as a **dragnet**——so that the combination of words is understood to be the souls of the listeners; and if one skillfully considers with the understanding that Jesus has taught, one will see by analogy that not only then, but also now, our savior sends fishers of human beings to teach them that they can come out of the sea and flee its bitter waves.

But those fish without souls and (those fish) in the dragnets, as well as in the throw nets and in the regular nets or hooks, they die a death——but with no life succeeding death. That fish dies, which is caught by the fishers of Jesus and which comes up out of the sea, but it dies to the world and to sin. After dying to the world and to sin, it will live again by the word of God and it will take up another life, as if through intellection you are able to understand the soul of the fish transforming itself after emerging from the body of a fishy thing and becoming something better than a fish. You should know why I have taken this example: no one blasphemous should they have a different interpretation.<sup>1</sup> (As you) come

up out of the sea and fall into the nets of the disciples of Jesus, you transform the soul. You are no longer a fish dwelling in the briny waves of the ocean, but your soul is immediately transformed and metamorphosed, and it becomes something better and more divine than it was before.

### Notes

1. These two clauses are very difficult to interpret and to translate.

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2. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367 C.E.), Commentary on Matthew 13.9 = WS 12.1 = PL 9:996 = CSEL 65 (A. L. Feder, 1916) and SCh 254, 258 (J. Doignon, 1978-79)

With reference to Matt. 13.47-50

**Iterum simile est regnum caelorum reti misso in mari**, et cetera. Merito praedicationem suam reti comparavit, quae in saeculum veniens sine saeculi damno habitantes intra saeculum congregavit modo retis, quod mare penetrans ita agitur de profundo, ut per omne elementi illius corpus evadens clausos intra ambitum suum extrahat nosque ex saeculo in lumen veri solis educat in honorum electione et malorum abiectioe futuri iudicii examen ostendens.

**Again the kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea**, etc. He deservedly compared his teaching to a net, which, when it came into this world without doing damage to the world, just now gathered those dwelling inside the world. It penetrates into the sea and it is moved from the depths, such that, by passing through the entire framework of that element, it drags out those enclosed inside its ambit. And it leads us into the light of the true sun, when it shows the test of future judgement through the selection of the good (fish) and of the rejection of the bad (fish).

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3. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 2.13 (c. 398 C.E.) = WS 24 = Dölger 2:32 = PL 26:98 = CCL 77 (D. Hurst and M. Adriaen, 1969)

With reference to Matt. 13.47-50

**Iterum simile est regnum caelorum sagenae missae in mare et ex omni genere piscium congreganti, quam cum impleta esset educentes et secus litus sedentes, elegerunt bonos in vasa sua, malos autem**

**foras miserunt sic erit in consummatione saeculi**, et reliqua. Impleto Hieremiae vaticinio dicentis: **Ecce ego mitto ad vos piscatores multos**,<sup>1</sup> postquam audierunt Petrus et Andreas, Iacobus et Iohannes filii Zebedei: **Sequimini me, et faciam vos piscatores hominum**,<sup>2</sup> contexerunt sibi ex veteri et novo testamento sagenam euangelicorum dogmatum et miserunt eam in mare huius saeculi quae usque hodie in mediis fluctibus tenditur, capiens de salsis et amaris gurgitibus quicquid inciderit, id est et bonos homines et malos et optimos pisces et pessimos. Cum autem venerit consummatio et finis mundi ut ipse infra manifestius disserit, tunc sagena extrahetur ad litus, tunc verum discernendorum piscium iudicium demonstrabitur et quasi in quodam quietissimo portu boni mittentur in vasa caelestium mansionum, malos autem torrendos et exsicandos gehennae flamma suscipiet.<sup>3</sup>

**Again the kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea, and it gathers every species of fish. After bringing them in and later reclining on the shore, they put the good fish into their vessels, but they throw out the bad fish. Thus it will be at the consummation of the world**, etc. This fulfills the prophecy of Jeremiah, who said, **I will send many fishermen for you**.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Peter and Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, heard **follow me and I will make you fishers of human beings**.<sup>2</sup> From the Old and the New Testament they wove together a net of gospel creeds, and they cast it into the sea of this world—a net which is held out in the midst of the waves even until today, as they catch whatever comes from the salty and bitter whirlpools; that is, both good and bad persons, both the best and the worst fish. When the consummation and the end of the world come, however, as he plainly says in detail, then the net will be drawn out to the shore. And the true judgement of the fish will be shown in order to separate them and, in a certain extremely quiet port, as it were, the good will be cast into the vessels of celestial mansions, but the flame of Gehenna will take up the bad in order to burn them and to dry them out.<sup>3</sup>

### Notes

1. Jer. 16.16
2. Matt. 4.19
3. Exsicandos probably refers to dried fish (among other items), which were also salted for preservation as food.

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4. Augustine (354-430 C.E.) *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 64.6  
(392-416 C.E.) = WS 27 = *PL* 36:780f. = *CCL* 38-40 (E. Dekkers and  
J. Fraipont, 1956)

. . . sed **spes omnium finium terrae, et in mari longe: ipsorum finium terrae. Et in mari longe;**<sup>1</sup> et quia in mari ideo longe. Mare enim in figura dicitur saeculum hoc, salsitate amarum, procellis turbulentum, ubi homines cupiditatibus perversis et pravis facti sunt velut pisces invicem se devorates. Adtendite mare malum, mare amarum, fluctibus saevum; adtendite qualibus hominibus plenum sit. Quis optat hereditatem, nisi morte alterius? Quis optat lucrum, nisi damno alterius? Quam multi aliorum defectione cupiunt sublimari! Quam multi ut emant optant alios vendere res suas! Quomodo se invicem opprimunt, et qui possunt devorant! Et cum devoraverit unus piscis maior minorem, devoratur et ipse a maiore. O piscis male, praedam vis de parvo; praeda efficeris magno. Quotidie ista eveniunt, ante nos sunt; videmus illa, horreamus illa. Non illa agamus, fratres, quia **spes** est ille **finium terrae**. Ille si non esset **spes et in mari longe**, non diceret discipulis suis: **Faciam vos piscatores hominum.**<sup>2</sup> Iam in mari capti per retia fidei, gaudeamus nos ibi natate adhuc intra retia; quia adhuc mare hoc saevit procellis, sed etiam quae nos ceperunt, perducentur ad littus. Littus est finis maris; ergo perventio in finem saeculi. Interim intra ipsa retia, fratres, bene vivamus; non retia rumpentes foras examus. Multi enim ruperunt retia, et schismata fecerunt, et foras exierunt, quia malos pisces intra retia captos tolerare se nolle dixerunt; ipsi mali facti sunt potiusquam illi quos se non potuisse tolerare dixerunt. Namque illa retia ceperunt pisces et bonos, et malos. Dominus dicit: **Simile est regnum caelorum sagenae missae in mare, quae congregat ex omni genere, quam cum impleta esset educentes, et secus (afterwards) littus sedentes (later) littus sedentes, elegerunt bonos in vasa, malos autem foras miserunt; sic erit, in consummatione saeculi.**<sup>3</sup> Ostendit littus, ostendit finem maris. **Exibunt angeli, et separabunt malos de medio iustorum, et mittent eos in caminum ignis; ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium.**<sup>4</sup> Eia, cives Ierusalem, qui intra retia estis, et pisces boni estis, tolerate malos; retia nolite rumpere; cum illis in mari; non cum illis eritis in vasis. **Spes** enim ille **finium terrae**, ipse **spe** est **et in mari longe**. **Longe**, quia et in mari.

. . . but **the hope of all the ends of the earth and in the sea afar:** that is, of the very ends of the earth, and **in the sea afar,**<sup>1</sup> because in the sea, it is therefore far. For the sea is mentioned as a figure for this world, bitter with its saltiness and turbulent with its storms, where people are characterized by their perverse and depraved desires, just as fish devour themselves one after the other. Consider the evil sea, a bitter sea, raging with its waves. Consider with what sorts of persons it is filled. Who desires an inheritance, except with the death of another? How many wish to be exalted by the fall of others? How many desire that others may sell their goods in order that they might buy them? How they oppress and

devour whatever they can! And when one bigger fish devours a smaller, it will be devoured by a bigger. Oh evil fish, you wish to make booty out of the smaller fish, but you will make booty for a big fish. Daily these things occur in front of us. We see them and we are frightened of them. We do not do these things, brothers, because that is **the hope of the ends of the earth**. If that were not **hope** and **in the sea afar**, he would not say to his disciples: **I will make you fishers of human beings**.<sup>2</sup> They were already captured in the sea by the nets of faith, and let us rejoice to swim there among the nets. While this sea rages with storms, yet the nets which capture us lead us to the shore. The shore is the end of the sea. Therefore, it brings about the end of the world. Meanwhile, among these nets, let us love well. Let us not move outside by breaking the nets. For many broke the nets and they caused schisms and they went outside, because they said that they did not wish to endure the evil fish caught among the nets. These have become more evil than those whom they said that they could not tolerate. For these nets have seized both good and bad fish. The Lord says: **The kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea, which gathers fish of every type. After they bring them in, when it is full, and they are later sitting on the shore, they put the good fish into vessels and they throw the bad ones out. Thus will be, he says, the end of the world**.<sup>3</sup> By showing the shore, he shows the end of the sea. **The angels will come forth and will separate the evil from the midst of the just, and they will send them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.<sup>4</sup> Alas, citizens of Jerusalem, you who are among the nets and are good fish, tolerate the evil fish. Do not desire to break the nets. When you will be with these in the sea, you will be with them in the vessels. For that is **the hope of the ends of the earth and that is the hope in the sea afar**. **Afar**, because it is in the sea.

#### Notes

1. Ps. 64.6 = Ps. 65.5.
2. Matt. 4.19 and Mark 1.19.
3. Matt. 13.47-48
4. Matt. 13.49-50

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5. Peter Chrysologus (c. 380-c. 450 C.E.), bp. of Ravenna, Sermon 47.3 = WS 70 = PL 52:331 = CCL 44 (A. Olivar, 1975)

Similitudo haec prodit, cur in apostolatam piscatores elegerit Christus, et captores piscium fecerit hominum piscatores; ut divini iudicii typus arte piscatoria monstraretur. Pisces congregat captura confusos, sed in vasa discretio dat electos. Sic vocatio christiana iustos, inustos; malos bonos-que electio divina transmittit. **Simile est regnum caelorum sagenae**



**missae in mare.**<sup>1</sup> Ad huius saeculi mare tumens pompa, elatum vertice, undosum sectis, inscitia fluctuans, clamosum litibus, fremens ira, saevum procellis, peccatis naufragum, impietate demersum, misit piscatores suos Christus, hoc est, Petrum, Andream, Iacobum, Iohannem, probatos arte, cum dicit: **Venite post me, et faciam vos fieri piscatores hominum.**<sup>2</sup> Misit ergo piscatores suos retia portantes praeceptis legalibus et euangelicis innodata, monitis circumcincta virtutum, donis gratiae dilatata, euangelico sinu congregantia sine fine capturam. Hoc tempus, modo hoc agitur, fratres; per gentes, per populos Christi retia nunc trahuntur, et ducunt confusas toto orbe credituras sine discretione personas.

This parable explains why Christ chose fishermen for his apostolate and made hunters of fish into fishers of human beings: because a type of divine judgement is demonstrated by the profession of fishing. The catch gathers together fish of many varieties, but their separation puts the elect into vessels. Thus, the Christian calling gathers together the just and the unjust, but divine election separates the good and the bad. **The kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea.**<sup>1</sup> To this sea of the world, swelling with ostentatious display, elevated with pride, undulating with sects, billowing with ignorance, noisy with disputes, roaring with anger, raging with storms, shipwrecked with sins, sunk in impiety, Christ sent his fishermen, that is Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who were approved in their profession, when he says: **Come before me, and I will make you into fishers of human beings.**<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he sent his fishermen out carrying nets woven with legal and gospel precepts, girded with the admonition to virtue, enlarged with the gifts of grace, gathering together a catch without end in the shelter of the gospel. This time, it should be done in this manner, brethren. The nets of Christ are now being dragged through nations and peoples, and they are bringing forth to belief persons of all kinds without discrimination.

### Notes

1. Matt. 13.37.
2. Matt. 4.19 and Mark 1.17.

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6. Isaac of Antiocheia (fifth cent. C.E.), Cantica Nova 1 = WS 59 = Ed. G. Bickell, S. Isaaci Antiocheni doctoris Syrorum opera omnia (Giessen, 1887), 3-4

(based on the German translation of L. Wehrhahn-Stauch) The hook was thrown into the world——this stormy sea——in order that human beings might be raised up to the high portal of heaven. The fishermen are the famous apostles; the net or the ship is the fishing church. Swallow the hook so that you, taken high up, will become an angel instead of a human

being. The church is the net that the apostle has thrown into the sea in order to fish. It is thrown in order that it might gather all types of fish, both good and bad, and bring them to the shore of the sea and in order that the bad might be separated and thrown away. In the church, the bad are together with the good at the same time, but, on the day of the second coming, they will be separated from one another.

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7. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 C.E.), Homiliae in euangelia 1.11 = WS 42 = PL 76:1116

**Rursus simile est regnum coelorum sagenae in mare missae dicitur, ex omni genere piscium congreganti, quae impleta ad littus educitur, et in vasis boni pisces eliguntur, mali autem proiiciuntur foras.**<sup>1</sup>

Sancta ecclesia sagenae comparatur, quia et piscatoribus est commisa, et per eam quisque ad aeternum regnum a praesentis saeculi fluctibus trahitur, ne in aeternae mortis profunda mergatur. Quae ex omni genere piscium congregat, quia ad peccatorum veniam sapientes et fatuos, liberos et servos, divites et pauperes, fortes et infirmos vocat. Unde per Psalmistam Deo dicitur: **Ad te omnis caro veniet.**<sup>2</sup> Quae sagenae, scilicet, tunc universaliter repletur, cum in fine suo humani generis summa concluditur. Quam educunt, et secus littus sedent, quia sicut mare saeculum, ita saeculi finem significat littus maris. In quo scilicet fine boni pisces in vasis eliguntur, mali autem proiiciuntur foras, quia et electus quisque in tabernacula aeterna recipitur, et interni regni luce perdita, ad exteriores tenebras reprobi pertrahuntur. Nunc enim bonos malosque communiter quasi permistos pisces fidei sagenae nos continet, sed littus indicat sagenae, id est sanctae Ecclesiae, quid trahebat. Et quidem pisces qui capti fuerint mutari non possunt; nos autem mali capimur, sed in bonitate permutamur. Cogitemus igitur in captione, ne dividamur in littore.

It is said that **again the kingdom of the heavens is similar to a net cast into the sea—a net which gathers every species of fish that is brought into shore when full. And the good fish are thrown in vessels, while the bad fish are thrown out.**<sup>1</sup> The holy Church is compared to a net, because it is bound up with fishermen. Through that net, each fish is reeled in from the waves of the present world to the eternal kingdom, lest it be drowned in the depths of death. It gathers every species of fish, because it calls to the forgiveness of sins both the wise and the foolish, the free and the enslaved, the rich and the poor, and the strong and the weak. Whereupon God says through the Psalmist: **Every fleshly thing will come to you.**<sup>2</sup> The net is surely filled with all things, since in its end the sum of the human species is included. They bring the net in, and afterwards sit on the shore, because, just as the sea signifies the world, so the shore of the sea signifies the end of the world. In that end, the good fish are put into vessels, but the bad fish are thrown out, because each of the elect is received into the eternal tabernacle, while the

condemned are utterly lost to the light of the inner kingdom and are dragged to the outer shadows. For now the net of faith contains us communally, both good and bad, like a variety of fish, but the net, which is the holy church that reels in the fish, indicates the shore. And indeed fish that are caught can no more be changed; we, however, are caught, but we are changed into the good. Let us think, therefore, of the capture, lest we be divided on the shore.

### Notes

1. Matt. 13.47-48.
2. Ps. 64.3 = Ps. 65.2.

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### II.E. The catching of fish in relation to Ezekiel 47.9-10

1. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Commentary on Ezekiel 14.47 (411-414 C.E.) = WS 25 = Dölger 5:319 = PL 25:474 = CCL 75 (M. Adriaen and F. Gloire, 1964)

Hoc totum non superfluo sed necessario dictum sit, quia mare Mortuum influente in se flumine Domini dicitur esse curatum. Super hoc mare . . . erunt piscatores, quibus loquitur Iesus: **Venite ad me et faciam vos piscatores**,<sup>1</sup> de quibus et Hieremias: **Ecce ego, inquit, mittam piscatores**;<sup>2</sup> et plurimae species immo genera piscium erunt in mari quondam mortuo, quos pisces ad dexteram partem iubente Domino extraxit Petrus et erant centum quinquaginta tres ita ut prae multitudine eorum retia ruperentur—aiunt autem qui de animantium scripsere naturis et proprie qui ἀλιευτικά tam latino quam graeco edidere sermone, de quibus Opianicus Cilex est poeta doctissimus, centum quinquaginta tria esse genera piscium—quae omnia capta sunt ab apostolis, et nihil remansit incaptum, dum et nobiles et ignobiles et divites et pauperes et omnes genus hominum de mari huius saeculi extrahitur ad salutem.

All of this was said not superflously, but necessarily, because it is said that the Dead Sea is healed by the river of the Lord which flows into it. Above this sea . . . there will be fishermen, to whom Jesus said: **Come to me and I will make you fishermen**;<sup>1</sup> concerning whom Jeremiah says: **Behold, I will send fishermen**.<sup>2</sup> And there will be many species, indeed many kinds of fish, in the sea which was once dead. At the command of the Lord, Peter brought them to the right side and there were one-hundred and fifty-three so that, because of their multitude, their nets broke. Those who write on the nature and characteristics of living creatures, which they publish in Latin and in Greek as Haliutica (and among them Oppian the Cilician is most learned) say that there are one-hundred and fifty-three kinds of fish. All of these have been caught by

the apostles, and nothing remains uncaptured, both noble and ignoble, both rich and poor. And all kinds of persons are brought from the sea of this world to salvation.

### Notes

1. Matt. 4.19 and Mark 1.17.
2. Jer. 16.16.

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2. Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c. 399-c. 466 C.E.), bp. of Cyrrhus, In Ezechielem 47.9 = WS 37 = PG 81:1244

With reference to Ez. 47.9

**Καὶ ἔσται, πάντα ψυχὴ τῶν ἐκζέοντων ἐπὶ πάντα ἐφ' ἐπέλθη ἐκεῖ ὁ ποταμὸς, ζήσεται.** Πᾶς γὰρ, φησὶ, τῶν σωτηρίων ὑδάτων ἀπολαύων τῆς σωτηρίας τεύξεται. Λέγει δὲ καὶ ἰχθύων πλήρες τοῦτο γενήσεσθαι τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ ἀλιέας ἔξειν πολλούς· πολλοὶ γὰρ οἱ διὰ τῶν ὑδάτων τούτων εἰς σωτηρίαν θηρώμενοι, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ τὴν ἀγρὰν ταύτην θηρεύειν πεπιστευμένοι. . . . Τὸ ψυγμὸς σαγηνῶν δὲ σημαίνει τῶν ἀλιέων οὐ μόνον τὸ πλῆθος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐπιμελές. Οὐ γὰρ ἀποστήσονται, φησὶ, τοῦ ἀλιεῦναι, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ διαναπαύσονται· τὴν γὰρ ἀνάπαυλάν ψυγμὸν σαγηνῶν ἐκάλεσεν, ἐπειδὴ τοῦ ἀλιεῦναι παύομενοι ἀλιεῖς ἀπλοὸν τὰς σαγήνας καὶ ξηραίνειν εἰώθασιν.

**And everywhere all the living creatures will live wherever the river goes.** For, it says, everyone enjoying salvific waters will come into salvation. And it says that the water was full of fish and many fishermen. For many were hunted for salvation by means of these waters and many have faith that they (i.e. the fishermen) will hunt for this booty. . . . The drying of the nets signifies not only the number of fishermen, but also their activity. For they do not cease, it says, from fishing, but there they take a rest. The drying of nets indicates rest, since, after stopping from fishing, they are accustomed to unfold the nets and to dry them.

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### III. REFERENCES TO THE SEA AS EQUIVALENT TO THE WORLD, LIFE, AND STRUGGLE

The texts catalogued below are an addition to the many references in the texts cited above in Section II of this appendix.

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1. Origen (c. 185-254 C.E.), Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 13.12 = GCS 40 (Greek ed., E. Klostermann, 1935)

With reference to Matt. 17.24-27

ἐρεῖς γὰρ τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν θαλάσῃ μὲν γεγονέναι, καὶ τοῖς ἀλμυροῖς τοῦ βίου πράγμασι, καὶ τοῖς κύμασι τῶν τῆς φιλαργυρίας φροντίδων καὶ μεριμνῶν . . .

For you say that this (fish) was born in the sea, both amidst the briny affairs of life and amidst the waves of care and concern for money . . .

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2. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Epistle 71.1 (398 C.E.) = WS 25 = Dölger 5:319 = PL 22:69 = CSEL 54 (I. Hilberg, 1910-18)

Reliquisti amarus fluctus, salsos gurgites, scissuras montium, et Leviathan regnantem in aquis cum Iesu deserta expetens contempsisti, ut possis propheticum illud canere: **in terra deserta et in via et in aquosa, sic in sancto apparui tibi**;<sup>1</sup> et iterum: **ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine. Expectabam eum qui salvum me fecit a pusillanimitate spiritus et tempestate.**<sup>2</sup>

You have abandoned bitter waves, briny whirlpools, and the crevices of mountains, and you have scorned Leviathan who rules on the waves. Instead, you seek after Jesus in the desert, as you can sing that prophecy: **In a land, which is deserted and trackless and waterless, so I have appeared to you in the sanctuary**;<sup>1</sup> and again: **I have travelled far away, I have fled, and I have remained in solitude. I will await that one who will save me from timidity and tempest of spirit.**<sup>2</sup>

#### Notes

1. Ps. 62.3 = Ps. 63.1

2. Ps. 54.8-9 = Ps. 55.7-8

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3. Augustine, (354-430 C.E.), Confessions 13.21 (c. 397-c. 400 C.E.) = WS 96 = PL 32:857 = Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (M. Skutella, H. Juergens, and W. Schaub, 1969)

. . . cum iam distincta sit terra fidelis ab aquis maris infidelitate amaris . . . terra non indiget, quamvis piscem manducet levatum de profundo in ea mensa, quam parasti in conspectu credentium; ideo enim de profundo levatus est, ut alat aridam. . . dum se abscondunt a facie tua et fiunt abyssus—sed operentur etiam sicut in arida discreta a gurgitibus abyssi.

Since the faithful earth was already separated from the waters of the bitter sea on account of its infidelity . . . the earth does not need (water creatures and birds), although it eats the fish raised from the sea in that banquet, which you have prepared under the watch of the faithful. For the fish is raised from the deep in order that it might nourish the dry land. . . . When they (the sons of Adam) hide from your face and make a watery abyss of themselves,<sup>1</sup> let them (our ministers) work on dry land separated from the whirlpools of the abyss.

#### Notes

1. The sons of Adam refer to people in general.

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4. Eucherius (d. c. 450 C.E.), bp. of Lyons (432-450 C.E.), Liber formularum spiritualis intelligentiae 4 = PL 50:748=WS 99 = CSEL 31 (C. Wotke, 1894), 3-62

Piscis autem assus, passionem significat; fluctus tentationes.

The roasted fish, however, signifies the passion; the waves signify temptations.

-----See also Ps.  
Athanasius above in Text # II.A.8. And also see the following below:  
Origen in Texts # VII.3, VII.4; Augustine in Texts # X.B.1, X.C.2, XIII.1; Maximinus the Arian in Text # XIII.4.

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#### IV. WATER AS A POSITIVE ELEMENT

1. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225 C.E.), *On Baptism* 3 = WS 58 = Dölger 1:6 = PL 1:1306ff. = E. Evans, SPCK (1960)

Huius memores pronuntiationis tamquam praescriptionis, nihilominus quam stultum et impossibile sit aqua reformari tractemus. Quid utique ista materia tantae dignationis meruerit officium, ut opinor, auctoritas liquidi elementi exigenda est. Atquin plurima subpetit et quidem a primordio. Nam unum ex his est, quae ante omnem mundi suggestum inpolita adhuc specie penes Deum quiescebant. **In primordio, inquit, fecit Deus caelum et terram. Terra autem erat invisibilis et inconposita et tenebrae erant super abyssum et spiritus Dei super aquas ferebatur.**<sup>1</sup>

Habes, homo, in primis aetatem venerari aquarum quod antiqua substantia, dehinc dignationem quod divini spiritus sedes, gratior scilicet ceteris tunc elementis. Nam et tenebrae totae adhuc sine cultu siderum informes et tristis abyssus et terra inparata et caelum rude. Solus liquor, semper materia perfecta laeta simplex de suo pura dignum vectaculum deo subiciebat. Quid quod exinde dispositio mundi modulatricibus quodammodo aquis deo constitit? Nam ut firma mentum caeleste suspenderet in medietate, distinctis aquis; ut terram aridam expanderet segregatis aquis expediit. Ordinato dehinc per elementa mundo cum incolae darentur, primis aquis praeceptum est animas proferre, primus liquor quod viveret edidit,<sup>2</sup> ne mirum sit in baptismo si aquae animare noverunt. Non enim ipsius quoque hominis figulandi opus sociantibus aquis absolutum est? Adsumpta est de terra materia, non tamen habili nisi humecta et sucida, quam scilicet ante quartum diem segregatae aquae in stationem suam superstite humore limo tempera<ra>nt.

Si exinde universa vel plura prosequare, quae de elementi istius auctoritate commemorem—quanta vis eius aut gratia, quot ingenia, quot officia, quantum instrumenti mundo ferat—vereor ne laudes aquae potius quam baptismi rationes videar congregasse, licet eo plenius non esse dubitandum, si materiam, quam in omnibus rebus et operibus suis Deus disposuit, etiam in sacramentis propriis parere fecit, si quae vitam ter<re>nam gubernat etiam caelesti procurat.

Mindful that this declaration is only an introduction, I will nevertheless deal with (the claim of) how stupid and impossible it is that water be transformed. In my opinion, the authority of the liquid element must at any rate be investigated in regard to what reason this substance deserves a function of such great dignity. It abounds, however, and indeed from the beginning. For it is one of those things which was silent in the presence of God and which was in as yet an unformed shape before the entire framework of the world was made. It says, **in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Yet the earth was invisible and inchoate, and shadows were over the abyss, and the spirit of God**

**hovered over the waters.**<sup>1</sup> Oh humanity, you have for veneration the age of the waters which is an ancient substance, and further the dignity that it is the seat of the divine spirit, which is surely more thankful to it than to other elements. For all the shadows were as yet formless and without the ornament of the stars; the abyss was grim; the earth was unfurnished; and heaven was irregular. This liquid alone—always a substance which was perfect, joyous, simple, and pure on its own—furnished a carriage to God. What of the fact that, beyond this, God determined that the disposition of the world was to be (established) through the regulating mediation of the waters. For in order that God might suspend the celestial firmament in the middle, God did so by dividing the waters. In order that God might separate out the dry land, God extricated it by dividing the waters. Furthermore, when inhabitants were given to the world, which was organized by its elements, it was the first to be commanded to bring forth living things.<sup>2</sup> And liquid was the first that produced what came to life. So it should be no wonder if the waters of baptism knew how to bring life. For was not the work of fashioning humanity achieved with the aid of the waters? Material was obtained from the earth, but the earth was not appropriate for it, unless the earth was humid and juicy—the earth that the waters, which were separated into their own place, surely tempered with the remaining moistness into mud before the fourth day.

Furthermore, if I pursue this evidence universally or in more detail, which I might cite for the authority of this element—how great is its force or its grace, how many its ingenious devices, how many its functions, how much of a tool it provides for the world—I fear that I would seem to gather the praises of water rather than the reasons for baptism, although I should teach all the more fully that it is not to be doubted that the substance, which God arranged in all God's things and works, God caused to obey even in God's very own sacraments and that what governed terrestrial life also acted as an agent for celestial life.

## Notes

1. Gen. 1.1-2.
2. Gen. 1.20.

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2. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.), Hexameron 4.4.7 (before 370 C.E.) = SCh 26 (S. Giet, 1949)

4. Ἄλλὰ τὴν μεγίστην καὶ τελεωτάτην συνδρομὴν τῶν ὑδάτων ὠνόμασε **συναγωγὴν μίαν**.<sup>1</sup> Καὶ γὰρ τὰ φρέατα συναγωγαὶ ὑδάτων εἰσι χειροποίητοι, ἐπὶ τὸ κοιλανθὲν τῆς γῆς τῆς ἐνεσπαρμένης νοτίδος ἐπιρρεούσης. Οὐ τοίνυν τὰ τυχόντα τῶν ὑδάτων ἀθροίσματα **ἢ** τῆς **συναγωγῆς**



ἐμφαίνει προσηγορία, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξέχουσιν καὶ μεγίστην, ἐν ἣ πάν τὸ στοιχεῖον ἀθρόον διαδεικνύται. «Ὡσπερ γὰρ τὸ πῦρ καὶ εἰς μικρὰ κατακερματισμένον ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῆς ὡδε χρείας, καὶ ἀθρόον ἐπὶ τοῦ αἰθέρος κέχυται· καὶ ὁ ἀήρ διηρηται μὲν καὶ κατὰ μικρὰ, καὶ ἀθρόως δὲ τὸν περιγίειον ἐκπεριεῖληφε τόπον· οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος, εἰ καὶ μικραὶ τινὲς εἰσι διηρημέναι συστάσεις, ἀλλὰ **μία** γέ ἐστι **συναγωγή** ἢ τὸ ἅλον στοιχεῖον τῶν λοιπῶν ἀποκρίνουσα. . . . Εἰ καὶ τὴν Ὑργανίαν οἰκονταί τινες, καὶ τὴν Κασπίαν περιγεγράφθαι καθ' ἑαυτάς· ἀλλ' εἰ γέ τι χρὴ τὰς τῶν ἱστορσάντων προσέχειν γεωγραφίαις, συντέτρηνται πρὸς ἀλλήλας, καὶ πρὸς τὴν μεγίστην θάλασσαν ἀπασαὶ συναναστόμωνται. Ὡς καὶ τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν φασὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐπέκεινα Γαδείρων συν-ἀπτεσθαι . . .

7. **Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι καλὸν** . . .<sup>2</sup> πρῶτον μὲν, ὅτι πηγὴ τῆς περὶ γῆν ἀπασῆς νοτίδος τὸ τῆς θαλάσσης ὕδωρ· τοῦτο μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἀφανέσι πόροις διαδιδόμενον, ὡς δηλοῦσιν αἱ σομφώδεις τῶν ἠπείρων καὶ ἠπαντροί, ὑφ' αἷς ἡ ῥοώδης διαυλωνίζουσα θάλασσα, ἐπειδὴν σκολιαῖς καὶ οὐ πρὸς τὸ ἄρθιον φερομένας ἐναποληφθῆ διεξόδοις, ὑπο τοῦ κινούντος αὐτῆς πνεύματος ὠθυμένη, φέρεται ἔξω τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν διαρρήξασα, καὶ γίνεται πότιμος ἐκ τῆς διηθήσεως τὸ πικρὸν ἰαθεῖσα. . . . Καλὴ τοίνυν ἡ θάλασσα τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ βάθει τῆς ἰκμάδος ὑποδρομήν· καλὴ καὶ διότι ποταμῶν οὕσα δοχεῖον, εἰς ἑαυτὴν τὰ πανταχόθεν καταδέχεται ῥεύματα, καὶ μένει τῶν ἄρῶν ἔξω τῶν ἑαυτῆς· καλὴ καὶ διότι τοῖς ἀερίοις ὕδασιν ἀρξὴ τις ἐστὶ καὶ πηγὴ. . . . Καλὴ δὲ καὶ ἄλλως παρὰ Θεῷ, ὅτι περισφιγγεῖ τὰς νήσους, ὁμοῦ μὲν κόσμον αὐτῆς, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀσφάλειαν παρεχομένη δι' ἑαυτῆς· ἔπειτα καὶ ὅτι τὰς πλείστον ἀλλήλων διεστώσας ἠπείρους συνάπτει δι' ἑαυτῆς, ἀκόλυτον τοῖς ναυτιλλομένοις τὴν ἐπιμίσξιν παρεχομένη· δι' ὧν καὶ ἱστορίας τῶν ἀγνωστομένων χαρίζεται, καὶ πλοῦτου πρόξενος ἐμπόροις γίνεται, καὶ τὰς τοῦ βίου χρείας ἐπανορθοῦνται ῥαδίως, ἐξαγωγὴν μὲν τῶν περιττῶν τοῖς εὐθηνουμένοις παρεχομένη, ἐπανόρθωσιν δὲ τοῦ λείποντος χαριζομένη τοῖς ἐνδεέσι.

But he names the largest and most complete councourse of waters, **one gathering**.<sup>1</sup> For the gatherings of well waters are hand-made, and the scattered moisture flows into the hollowed-out parts of the earth. Consequently, the designation of **the gathering** does not denominate the chance accumulations of the waters, but the most outstanding and largest gathering, in which every element of it is shown as one continuous mass. As a result, fire is broken up into small pieces for use here and pours forth into the air as one continuous mass. On the one hand, the air is divided into small sections, and, on the other, it surrounds the area near the earth in one continuous mass. So too it was in the area of the water, even if some small parts are separated, but it is **one gathering**, which sets the entire element apart from the others. . . . If some believe that the Hyrcanian and the Caspian seas are enclosed within their own boundaries, one must pay attention to the geographical accounts, showing that they pass by a channel to one another, and all open up into the great sea. And they say that the Red Sea attaches to points beyond Gadeira (Spain) . . .

**And God saw that it was good** . . .<sup>2</sup> first because the waters of the sea are the source of all the moisture around the world. It passes through hidden conduits, as show the spongy and cavernous parts of mainland areas, into which the flowing sea channels its path and is received into curved and sinuous canals, impelled by a moving breath. And it breaks through and is borne to the exterior, and what was bitter is corrected and made potable by filtration. . . . The sea was good to God on account of the permeation of the moisture into the depths. Because it is a receptacle of the rivers, it receives the streams from every side into itself, and it remains inside its boundaries. It is also (good) because it is the origin and source for air waters . . . (which, he explains, is the source of drinking water) . . . And it was also good to God, because it surrounds the islands: here furnishing an ornament for them, there furnishing safety for them. Then, (it is good) because it joins mainlands to itself at a great distance from one another. For this reason, it indicates unknown facts, and it becomes a patron of wealth for merchants; it easily supplies the needs of life, furnishes the export of superfluous items to the prosperous, and bestows a restoration of missing items for the needy.

#### Notes

1. Gen. 1.9.
2. Gen. 1.10

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3. Ambrose (c. 337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.1.1 (386-390 C.E.) = WS 20 = PL 219 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Vivificavit prius terra, sed ea quae spirantem animam non habebant. Aqua iubetur ea producere quae viventis animae vigorem dignitatemque praeferrent, et sensum acciperent.

Earth was first to give life, but it did not have a breathing life. Water is bidden to produce that which shows the strength and dignity of a living creature and that which would receive a sense of maintaining its security and of fleeing death.

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4. Ambrose (c. 337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.2.6 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 221-222 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Adde hanc gratiam, quod ea quae timemus in terris amamus in aquis. Etenim noxia in terris in aqua innoxia sunt, atque ipsi angues sine veneno. Leo terribilis in terris, dulcis in fluctibus. Muraena, quam ferunt aliquid habere noxium, esca pretiosior est. Rana horrens in paludibus, decora in

aquis, omnibus fere praestat alimentis. Plura si quis vult cognoscere, a diversis locorum piscatoribus quaerat; nemo enim potest omnia comprehendere. . . . Mustelae gravis in terris odor, in aquis suavis. Terrena se novit vindicta foetoris ulcisci haec non minorem habet gratiam capta, quam libera. Neque te inhonoratum nostra prosecutione, thymalle, dimittam, cui a flore nomen inolevit; seu Ticini unda te fluminis, seu amoeni Athesis unda nutrierit, flos es. Denique sermo testator, quod de eo qui gratam redolet suavitatem, dictum facete sit: Aut piscem olet aut florem; ita idem pronuntiatus est piscis odor esse qui floris. Quid specie tua gratius? Quid suavitate jucundius? Quid odore fragrantius? Quod mella fragrant, hoc tu corpore tuo spiras.

Quid loquar corvorum, quid etiam luporum teneritudines? Nescit hos lupos agnus temere. Tanta est aquarum gratia, quarum vitulos fugiant et leones, ut his propheticum illum dictum de Ecclesiae sanctitate jure conveniat: **Tunc lupe te agni simul pascentur, leo et hos simil paleas manducabunt** ut praedonum abluta nequitia cum innocentibus comparetur.<sup>1</sup> Quid etiam purpuras memorem, quae ornant regum convivia, amictus imbuunt? Aquarum est igitur quod in regibus adoratur; aquarum est species illa qua fulget. Adde porcos maris etiam Iudaeis gratos, quia nihil est commune quod non aqua abluat, et ideo communes eos sicut in terra editos aestimare non possunt.

Add to this the benefit that what we fear on land, we love on water. For poisonous things on earth are not poisonous in water, and (sea) snakes are without venom. The lion is terrible on land, sweet on waves. The lamprey, which they say is something poisonous, is a rather valued food. The frog is terrifying in swamps and decorous in water, and it excels almost all as a food. If someone wishes to know more, let that person seek it from fishermen in a variety of places; for no one can understand everything. . . . The mussel has an oppressive odor on land, a pleasant odor in water. As a land animal, it knows how to avenge itself with the defence of its stench. (As a marine animal) when captured, it has no less pleasure than when free. Nor do I cease honoring you with my mention, thymallus, whose name comes from a flower. Whether the water of the river Ticino nourishes you or the water of the lovely Adige river, you are a flower. Finally, what better expression bears witness to the fact that a pleasant sweetness is emitted from it than this witty statement: whether it smells like a fish or a flower, the odor of the fish is declared in the same way as the flower. What is more pleasing than your form? What is more pleasant than your sweetness? What is more fragrant than your odor? You breathe with your body, which smells of honey.

What should I say of ravens and what should I say of the tendernesses of wolves? Such is the benefit of water, whose lions flee calves, so that that prophetic statement on the holiness of the church is by law in accord with these: **Then the wolves and the lambs will pasture together; the lion and the ox will eat straw together.**<sup>1</sup> Nor is it any wonder, since water

acts even in the church, so that, when wickedness is washed away, guilt is perfectly clear to the innocent. Why should I even recall the purple, which decorates the feasts of kings and gives color to their garments? What is adored among kings is of water. What shines is that form of water. Add to this the sea pigs which are pleasing even to Jews, because nothing is so unclean that water does not wash it away, and they can not thus value the water animals as unclean as (they do) those produced on land.

## Notes

1. Isa. 65.25.

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5. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.7.17 (386-390 C.E.) = Stauch 22 = PL 226-227 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Nec te moveat, quod pro mari euangelium posui. Euangelium est, in quo Christus ambulavit; euangelium est, in quo, licet titubauerit Petrus, quando negavit, tamen per dexteram Christi fidei munimentum, stationis invenit gratiam; euangelium est, de quo martyr ascendit; euangelium est mare, in quo piscantur apostoli, in quod mittitur rete, quod simile est regno caelorum; euangelium est mare, in quo Christi figurantur mysteria; euangelium est mare, in quo Hebraeus evasit, Aegyptius interemptus; euangelium est mare, quia sponsa Christi ecclesia et divinae gratiae plenitudo, quae super maria fundata est, sicut dixit propheta: **ipse super maria fundavit eam.**<sup>1</sup> Exili super undas, o homo, quia piscis es. Non te opprimant saeculi istius fluctus. Si tempestas est, pete altum et profundum; si serenitas, lude in fluctibus; si procella, cave scopuloso litore, ne te in rupem furens aestus inlidat.

Do not let it disturb you that I have represented the gospel with the sea. The gospel is that on which Christ walked. The gospel is that on which, although Peter faltered when he made his denial, he still found a defence for faith on the right side and found the grace of the community. The gospel is that for which the martyr rose. The gospel is the sea in which the apostles are fished, into which the net is cast, which is similar to the kingdom of the heavens. The gospel is the sea in which the mysteries of Christ are signified. The gospel is the sea in which the Hebrews escaped and the Egyptians were destroyed. The gospel is the sea, because the church is the bride of Christ and is the fullness of divine grace, which was founded above the seas, as the prophet said: **He founded it above the seas.**<sup>1</sup> If there is a tempest, go into the high seas and the deep. If there is calm, play in the waves. If there is a storm, take heed of the rocky shore, lest the furious billowing dash you on to the rocks.

## Notes

1. Ps. 23.2 = Ps. 24.2.

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6. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.11.35 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 236 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Sicut iste in utero ceti, sic Iesus in corde terrae.<sup>1</sup> In utroque remedium; maius tamen in mari pietatis exemplum, quoniam exceperunt pisces, quem homines refutarunt, et quem homines crucifixerunt, pisces servarunt. Petrus quoque in mare titubat,<sup>2</sup> sed non labitur, et confessus in fluctibus, tamen negavit in terris.<sup>3</sup> Itaque illic quasi devotus manu apprehenditur, hic quasi oblitus aspectu censorio convenitur. Sed iam regemus Dominum, ut sermo noster quasi Jonas eiiciatur in terram, ne diutius in salo fluctuet. Et bene iam exivit cucurbita, quae obumbret nos a malis nostris. Sed et ipsa procedente sole arefacta admonet requiescendum, ne in terra, ne in terra aestuare incipiamus ingenio, et nobis etiam verba deficiant. Certe plus nobis quam Ninivitis data est in aquis remissio peccatorum.

Just as that one (Jonah) was in the womb of the whale, so Jesus was in the heart of the earth.<sup>1</sup> In each there is aid, but the greater example of piety is in the sea, since fish take him whom humanity rejected, and fish preserve him whom humanity crucified. Peter also faltered on the sea,<sup>2</sup> but he did not slip, and, once he confessed on the waves, he nevertheless denied on the land.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as one who is faithful, he is helped with a hand, while, as one has forgotten, he is met with a look of rebuke. But we will ask God that our discussion, like Jonah, be thrown on the earth, lest it float for a long time on the brine. And the gourd grows well, which shades us from our evils, but, with the sun advancing, the parched earth warns us to rest, lest we begin to feel hot on the earth in our mind, and our words fail us. Certainly water has been given more to us for the remission of sins than for the Ninevites.

## Notes

1. Matt. 12.40.
2. Matt. 14.30.
3. Matt. 26.69-75.

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## V. Fish Empathy

1. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.), Hexameron 7.3-6 (before 370 C.E.) = SCh 26 (S. Giet, 1949)

With reference to Ps. 103.25 = Ps. 104.25

3. Ἄλλ' ὅμως σοφή τις ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐτακτος διακόσμησις. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον κατηγορεῖν εἰχομεν τῶν ἰχθύων, ἀλλ' ἐστὶν α καὶ μιμησασθαι ἀξίον. Πῶς τὰ γένη τῶν ἰχθύων ἕκαστα τὴν ἐπιτηδεῖαν ἑαυτοῖς διανεμιάμενα χώραν, οὐκ ἐπεμβαίνει ἀλλήλοις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς οἰκείοις ὄροις ἐνδιατρίβει; Οὐδεὶς γεωμέτρης παρ' αὐτοῖς κατένειμε τὰς οἰκήσεις· οὐ τείχεσι περιέγραπται· οὐχ ὀροθεσίαις διήρηται· καὶ αὐταμάτως ἕκαστῳ τὸ χρήσιμον ἀποτετάκται. Οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ὁ κόλπος τὰδε τινὰ γένη τῶν ἰχθύων βόσκει, κάκεῖνος ἕτερα· καὶ τὰ ὕδατα πληθύνοντα, ἀπορα παρ' ἑτέροις. Οὐδὲν ὄρος ὀξείαις κορυφαῖς ἀνατεταμένον διίστησιν, οὐ ποταμὸς τὴν διάβασιν ἀποτεμένεται, ἀλλὰ νόμος τις ἐστὶ φύσεως ἵσως καὶ δικαίως κατὰ τὸ ἕκαστου χρεῖώδες τὴν διαίταν ἕκαστοις ἀποκληρῶν. 4. Ἄλλ' οὐχ ἡμεῖς τοιοῦτοι. Πόθεν; Οὐγε μεταίρομεν ὄρια αἰῶνια, α ἔθεντο οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν. Παρατεμνόμεθα γῆν, συνάπτομεν οἰκίαν πρὸς οἰκίαν καὶ ἀγρὸν πρὸς ἀγρὸν, ἵνα τοῦ πληθύνοντος ἀφελώμεθα τι. Οἶδε τὰ κτήνη τὴν ἀφωρισμένην αὐτοῖς παρὰ τῆς φύσεως διαίταν . . .

5. Εἶδον ταῦτα ἐγὼ, καὶ τὴν ἐν πᾶσι τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐθαύμασα. Εἰ τὰ ἀλογα ἐπινοητικά καὶ φυλακτικά τῆς ἰδίας αὐτῶν σωτηρίας, καὶ οἶδε τὸ αἰρετὸν αὐτῶ καὶ τὸ φευκτὸν ὁ ἰχθύς, τί ἐροῦμεν ἡμεῖς οἱ λόγῳ τετιμημένοι, καὶ νόμῳ πεπαιδευμένοι, ἐπαγγελίας προτραπέντες, Πνεύματι σοφισθέντες, εἴτα τῶν ἰχθύων ἀλογώτερον τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοῦς διατιθεμενοι; Ἐπερ οἱ μὲν ἵκασιν τοῦ μέλλοντός τινά ποιησθαι πρόνοιαν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ μέλλον ἀνεπιπιστίας δι' ἡδονῆς βοσκηματώδους τὴν ζωὴν ἀναλίσκομεν. Ἰχθύς τοσαῦτα διαμείβει πελάγη ὑπὲρ τοῦ εὐρασθαι τινὰ ὠφέλειαν· τί ἐρεῖς σὺ τῆ ἀργία συζῶν; Ἀργία δὲ, κακουργίας ἀρξή. Μηδεὶς ἀγνοίαν προφασίζεσθω. Φυσικὸς λογὸς οἰκειῶσιν ἡμῖν τοῦ καλοῦ, καὶ ἀλλοτριῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν βλαβερῶν ὑποδεικνύς ἐγκατέσπαρται. Οὐκ ἀφίσταμαι τῶν θαλασσιῶν ὑποδειγμάτων, ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ἡμῖν πρόκειται εἰς ἐξέτασιν. »Ἦκουσα ἐγὼ τῶν παραλίῳν τινός, ὅτι ὁ θαλάσσιος ἔχθνος, τὸ μικρὸν παντελῶς καὶ εὐκαταφρόνητον ζῷον, διδάσκαλος πολλάκις γαλήνης καὶ κλύδονος τοῖς πλέουσι γίνεται. <Ὅς ὅταν προῖδῃ ταραχὴν ἐξ ἀνέμων, ψηφιδά τινά ὑπελθῶν γενναίαν ἐπ' αὐτῆς, ὡσπερ ἐπ' ἀγκύρας, βεβαίως σαλεύει, κατεχόμενος τῷ βάρει πρὸς τὸ μὴ ῥαδιῶς τοῖς κύμασιν ὑποσύρεσθαι. Τοῦτο ὅταν ἴδωσιν οἱ ναυτικοὶ τὸ σημεῖον, ἵκασιν τὴν προσδοκομένην βίαιαν κίνησιν τῶν ἀνέμων. Οὐδεὶς ἀστρολόγος, οὐδεὶς Χαλδαῖος, ταῖς ἐπιτολαῖς τῶν ἀστρῶν τὰς τῶν ἀέρων ταραχὰς τεκμαιρόμενος, ταῦτα τὸν ἔχθνον ἐδίδαξεν, ἀλλ' ὁ θαλάσσης καὶ ἀνέμων Κύριος καὶ τῷ μικρῷ ζῷῳ τῆς μεγάλης ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐναργὲς ἤχνος ἐνήθηκεν. Οὐδὲν ἀπρονήτον, οὐδὲν ἡμελημένον παρὰ Θεοῦ. Πάντα σκοπεῖν ὁ ἀκοίμητος ὀφθαλμὸς. Εἰ ἔχθνον ἔξω τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἐπισκοπῆς ὁ Θεὸς οὐκ ἀφήκε, τὰ σὰ οὐκ ἐπισκοπεῖ . . . (followed by a description of the mating of the viper [male] and the lamprey [female] as an example that a wife must endure a vicious husband, that a husband should attempt not to be rough,

and that human beings should restrain themselves from adulterous unions)

3. Nevertheless, there is a certain well-ordered arrangement of (fish). For not only can we make accusations against the fish, but there are certain things among them worthy of imitation. How do the tribes of fish inhabit that place which is appropriate for them—not intruding into the territory of another, but remaining in one's own territory? No surveyor allots dwellings for them. They are not separated by walls, nor are they divided by set boundaries. And spontaneously they settle the needed area. For one bay feeds certain fish, and another feeds other fish. In one place, they are plentiful, and they are scarce in another. No mountain stretching upwards with sharp peaks distributes them, no river cuts off passage, but there is a certain law of nature which equally and justly allots the habitat that is needed for each. The sea monsters knew the habitats that were assigned to them by nature.

4. But not of such a kind are we. Why? We remove the eternal boundaries which our fathers have established. We cut off a part of the land, and we join house to house and field to field in order that we might take it way from our neighbors . . .

5. I knew these things, and I marvelled at the wisdom of God in all these things. If unreasoning creatures contrive and safeguard their own salvations, and each fish knows what to choose and to avoid, what do we say who are honored with reason, educated in law, encouraged by promises, made wise by the spirit, if we distribute things more unreasonably among ourselves than fish? If they have the foresight to know what is about to be done, yet we spend our lives in bestial pleasure, because we are hopeless about the future. Fish traverse innumerable seas not to gain any particular advantage. What do you say who pass your life in idleness? And idleness is the beginning of wickedness. No one alleges ignorance. Natural reason abides in us for the good, and it displays and implants in us an aversion for harm. I do not remove the examples of the sea, since these provide items for investigation. I heard from someone on the shore that the sea-urchin, a thoroughly small and negligible creature, is often a teacher to sailors of calm and rough water. Whenever it forsee a wind disturbance, it takes hold of a good pebble to itself, as of an anchor, and it clings firmly, and, with its weight prevents, itself from being easily dragged into the waves. Whenever the sailors see the sign, they know to expect the violent movement of the winds. No Chaldean, no astrologer, who judges the risings of the stars and the disturbances of the winds, taught the sea-urchin these things, but the Lord of the sea and of the winds put a visible footprint in this small creature of God's wisdom. Nothing is unplanned or unneglected by God. The unsleeping eye searches out all things. If God did not put the sea-urchin outside of his care, will he not have concern for your affairs? . . . (followed by a

description of the mating of the viper [male] and the lamprey [female] as an example that a wife must endure a vicious husband, that a husband should attempt not to be rough, and that human beings should restrain themselves from adulterous unions).

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2. Ambrose (c. 337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.3.7 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 221-222 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

With reference to large fish and sea mammals

. . . Quam cum ediderint partus, si quid forte insidiarum terrorisque praesentis aetatis pavorem materno affectu comprimant, aperire ora, at innoxio partus suos dente suspendere, interno quoque recipere corpore et genitali feruntur alvo abscondere.

Quis humanus affectus hanc piscium pietatem possit imitari? Oscula nobis satietati sunt; illis non satis est aperire viscera, natosque recipere ac revocare integros, atque iterum fotu quodam eos sui caloris animare, et spiritu alere, duosque in corpore uno vivere. Donec aut securitatem deferant, aut corpore suo objecto natos suos defendant a periculis. Quis haec videns, etsi possit obtinere, non tantae piscium pietati cedat? Quis non miretur et stupeat, ut servet natura in piscibus, quod not servat in hominibus? . . .

When they have brought forth their offspring, if they should by chance foresee some ambush or terror being undertaken near their calves, in order that they might support them or subdue with maternal affection the fear brought about by tender youth, it is reported that they open their mouths, attach their offspring to their harmless teeth, bring them inside, and hide them in their generative womb.

What human affection can imitate this piety of fish? We are satisfied with kisses. For them it is not enough to open up their insides, to receive their children, to bring them in unhurt, to give them life for a second time with the warmth of their heat, to nourish them with their breath, and to let live as two in one body. During that time, they bring safety or, with their body interposed, they protect their children from dangers. Who on seeing these things, even if they could obtain it, would not yield their superiority to the enormous piety of fish? Who would not marvel and be amazed that nature preserves in fish what it does not preserve in human beings? . . .

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3. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.10.29 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 332 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Commenting on the unity of fish swimming in mass



Divinae legis piscis obsequitur, et homines contradicunt. Piscis solemniter obaudit mandata coelestia, et homines irrita Dei praecepta. An contemptibilis tibi videtur, quia mutus est, rationisque expers? Sed vide ne tu tibi magis incipias esse contemptui, si irrationabili irrationabiliorprehendaris. Quid autem rationabilius hoc piscium transitu . . .

A fish follows the divine law, while human beings contradict it. A fish solemnly obeys the celestial mandates, while human beings void the commands of God. Does the fish seem contemptible to you, because it is mute and without reason? But see to it lest you begin to be contemptible to yourself, if you are found to be more irrational than the irrational. What is, however, more rational than this passage of fish . . .

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4. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.10.30 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 333-334 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Novit igitur piscis pariendi tempus, quod pro magno mysterio dixit Salomon in sapientia.<sup>1</sup> Novit tempus eundi atque redeundi; novit tempus perfunctionis et iactationis; et novit ut non queat falli, quia non rationis aestimatione, et disputationis argumento utitur, sed inspiratione naturae, quae vera est magistra pietatis. Denique omnes animantes praescripta habent pariendi tempora, homo solus indiscreta atque confusa. Reliqua genera clementiam temporis quaerunt, mulieres solae partus suos inclementer effundunt. Vaga enim et intemperans libido generandi vagam pariendi aetatem exhibet. Pisces tanta maria transmittunt, ut utilitatem aliquam generi suo quaerant. Nos quoque diffusa aequora transfretamus, sed quanto honestius, quod successionis amore, quam quod pecuniae aviditate suscipitur! Denique illis ad pietatem, nobis ad quaestum transmissio deputatur. Illi sobolem referunt omnibus mercibus chariorem; nos mercem longe imparem ad periculi vicem misera lucri cupidine reportamus. Itaque illi patriam repetunt; nos derelinquimus. Illis nando incrementum generis acquiritur; nobis minuitur navigando.

The fish, therefore, knows the time for giving birth, which Solomon said in Wisdom was an indication of a great mystery.<sup>1</sup> It knows the time to go and the time to return. It knows the time of performance and the time of display. It knows that it can not be deceived, because it does not use the method of disputation, but the inspiration of nature, which is the true teacher of piety. Finally, all living animals have prescribed times for giving birth, while humanity has undetermined and confused times for giving birth. For a wandering and intemperate lust for generation produces a wandering time for giving birth. Fish pass over numerous seas so that they might be of use to their species. We also pass over a variety of waters, but how much more honorable is it to undertake this for the love of progeny than for financial greed! In the final analysis, for fish the passage is esteemed out of piety, while for us it is esteemed for gain. They bring back offspring more valuable than all merchandise,

while we, with our wretched desire for profit, bring back merchandise a long way from being an equal recompense for the danger. Thus, these seek a homeland, while we abandon one. For by swimming, their species gains, while for us, by sailing, our species is diminished.

### Notes

1. Wisdom of Solomon 3.2.

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5. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, De sacramentis 3.1.3 = WS 63 = Dölger 5:317 = PL 16:450f. = edition by H. Chadwick (Studies in Eucharistic Faith and Practice, London, 1960)

Sed quid dicis quia in aqua mergis? . . . Imitare illum piscem qui minorem quidem adeptus est gratiam, tamen debet tibi esse miraculo. In mari est et super undas est; in mari est et super fluctus natat. In mari tempestas furit, stridunt procellae, sed piscis natat, non demergitur quia natare consuevit. Ergo et tibi saeculum hoc mare est. Habet diversos fluctus, undas graves, saevas tempestates. Et tu esto piscis ut saeculi te unda non mergat.

But what do you mean that you submerge yourself in the water? . . . Imitate that fish which, although it has obtained less grace, yet it ought to be a wonder to you. It is in the sea, and it is above the waters; it is in the sea, and it swims above the waters. The tempest rages in the sea and the storms howl, but the fish swims above the waves. It does not drown, because it is accustomed to swim. Therefore, this sea is the world for you. It has a variety of billows, heavy waves, and harsh tempests. And you be a fish so that the wave of the world does not drown you.

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6. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Amor Christi nobilis (hymn)

Turbante dum natat salo  
immobilis fide stetit.

Piscis bonus pia est fides  
mundi supernatans salum

While it swims on the turbulent brine,  
it stands immobile in faith.

The good fish is faith,  
swimming over the brine of the world

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## VI. FISH AND BAPTISM

See also the following passages above: Sedulius, Text # II.C.11.a-b; Theodoret, Text # II.E.2; Tertullian, Text # IV.1 (with an extensive discussion of the positive characteristics of water and its salutary relationship to baptism). See the following passages below: Origen, Text # VII.4 (where the scales of the fish mean that it is baptized); Optatus of Milevis in Text # XIII.2 (with his discussion of piscis and piscina); Clement, Text # XVII.1 (where fishing imagery on seal rings refers to baptism). In addition, see many of the references in Section II.

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1. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225 C.E.), On the Resurrection of the Flesh 52 = WS 59 = Dölger 1:6 = PL 2:872 = edition by E. Evans, (SPCK, 1960)

Commenting on Paul, 1 Cor. 15.39

**Non omnis caro eadem caro**, non ad denegandam substantiam communionem sed praerogativae peraequationem, corpus honoris non generis in differentiam redigens. In hoc et figurata subicit exempla animalium et elementorum elementorum: Alia caro hominis, id est servi dei qui vere homo est; alia inumenti, id est ethnici de quo et propheta **adsimilatus est**, inquit, **homo irrationalibus iumentis**; alia caro volatilium, id est martyrum qui ad superiora conantur; alia piscium, id est quibus aqua baptismatis sufficit . . .

**Not all flesh is the same flesh** (is said) not to deny the communion of substance, but rather the perfect equivalence of privilege, bringing back into difference the body, not in terms of species, but in terms of honor. For this reason, he (Paul) supplies the figurative examples of animals and of heavenly bodies: there is one flesh for a human being—that is, for the servant of God who is truly a human being; another flesh for pack-animals—that is, for the gentiles, of whom the Prophet says, **human beings are compared to irrational cattle**;<sup>1</sup> another flesh for winged creatures, that is, for martyrs who strive toward higher places; another for fish, that is, for those for whom the water of baptism suffices . . .

### Notes

1. Ps. 48.21 = Ps. 49.20.

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2. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225), On Baptism 1 = WS 58 = Dölger  
1:VII-VIII, 1:6, 1:42-44, 1:55-66, 2:60, 2:448, 2:487, 2:489-490 =  
PL 1:1306ff. = edition by E. Evans (SPCK, 1960) = Corpus Scriptorum  
Latinorum Paravianum (B. Luiselli, 1960)

Felix sacramentum aquae nostrae, qua ablutis delictis pristinae caecitatis in vitam aeternam liberamur! non erit otiosum digestum istud instruens tam eos qui cum maxime formantur, quam et illos quic simpliciter credidisse contenti non exploratis rationibus traditionum temptabilem per inperitiam portant. Atque adeo nuper conversata istic quaedam de Ca[n]ina haeresi vipera venenatissima doctrina sua plerosque raput in primis baptismum destruens, plane secundum natura: nam fere viperarum et aspidum ipsique reguli arida et inaquosa sectantur. Sed nos pisciculi secundum IXΘYN nostrum Iesum Christum in aqua nascimur, nec aliter quam in aqua permanendo salvi sumus. Itaque illa monstrosissima, cui integre quidem docendi ius erat, optime norat necare pisciculos de aqua auferens.

Happy is the sacrament of our water, by which our transgressions of early blindness are washed away, and we are liberated for eternal life. This treatise will not be superfluous, since it instructs those who are just now being formed, and, even more, those who are happy simply to have believed without having fully explored the traditions and who bear a faith, tried but inexperienced. And consequently a certain viper of the Cainite heresy was recently abiding in this area with his most poisonous doctrine and took away many. He was primarily destroying baptism, which was, of course, according to nature. For vipers and asps and snakes generally follow after dry and waterless places. But we who are little fish in relation to IXΘYN (fish), our Jesus Christ, are born in water. Nor are we saved otherwise than in permanent water. Thus, that monstrous creature, who had no right to teach even virtuously, knows best how to kill little fish by carrying them out of the water.

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3. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367 C.E.), Commentary on Matthew 6.2 = WS 13 = PL 9:1018 = CSEL 65 (A. L. Feder, 1916) and SCh 254, 258 (J. Doignon, 1978-79)

Nam cum nos, filiis piscem panemue poscentibus, non serpentem simus aut lapidem reddituri,<sup>1</sup> quanto magis nobis optimus ac praestantissimus pater Deus orantibus perfectae fidei munera largietur,<sup>2</sup> neque sit pro vitae cibo lapidem duritiae gentilis aut pro baptismi conservatione serpentem veneni haeretici praestiturus! Consummavit deinde omnia bonitatis exemplo universos amoris mutui pace coniungens, in eo legis et prophetarum mandata constituens, ut universorum in nos bonitatem optantes ipsi omnibus boni simus.<sup>3</sup>

For, since we are not about to give back a serpent or a rock, when friends ask for fish or bread,<sup>1</sup> how much more does our best and most preeminent father God lavish gifts of perfect faith to those who pray.<sup>2</sup> Nor is he about to offer the rock of gentile harshness in place of the food of life or the serpent of heretical poison in place of the conservation of baptism! Afterwards, he consummated all things in an example of goodness, by joining all persons in the peace of mutual love, so that they who hope for universal goodness among us are good to all.<sup>3</sup>

### Notes

1. Matt. 7.9-10.
2. Matt. 7.11.
3. Matt. 7.12.

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4. Zeno of Verona (bp. 362-371/2 C.E.) Tractatus 2.43 (Ad neophytos post baptisma 6) = PL 11:496 = WS 61

Varias atque innumerabiles nocendi artes habet, sed has omnes salutari profluens amne magnopere noster Aquarius delere conseruit; quem necessario uno sequuntur duo Pisces in signo, id est duo ex Iudaeis et Getilibus populi, baptismatis aqua viventes, in unum populum Christi uno signo signati.

It (Capricorn) has various and innumerable skills for causing harm, but our Aquarius (Christ), flowing without effort as a salubrious river, was accustomed to destroy all these. Two fish (Pisces) necessarily follow under one sign—that is two peoples from Jews and Gentiles, who live in the water of baptism and who with one sign are sealed together into one people of Christ.

See also Clement of Alexandria in Text # X.A.1, in which the two fish of the multiplication miracle refer to Jews and Christians.

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5. Severian of Gabala (d. after 408 C.E.), De mundi creatione 4.2 = WS 66 = PG 56:458

With reference to Gen. 1.20

Τῆ γῆ σπαρτὰ καὶ φυτὰ, τοῖς ὕδασι νηκτὰ καὶ πετεινά.  
**Ἐξά~γα~γέ~τω τὰ ὕδατα ἔρπετὰ ψυχῶν ζωσῶν, καὶ πε~τεινὰ πετόμενα.** Ἐρ~πε~τὰ καλεῖ τοὺς ἰχθύας, ἐπειδὴ μᾶλλον ερπει, ἢ περιπατεῖ. «Ὅθεν καὶ ὁ μακάριος Δαυὶδ ἀκολουθῶν τῇ νομοθέτῃ λέγει·  
**Ἀυ~τη ἡ θάλασσα ἡ μεγάλη καὶ εὐρὺχωρος· ἐκεῖ ἔρπετὰ ὧν οὐκ**

**εσ~τιν ἀριθμός.**<sup>1</sup> Ξένον πράγμα, ξένη διάταξις, ξένον τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἐπ~ἀγ~γελμα! Διατι; «Οτι πάντων ποιητής· οὕτως εχει πρὸ ὀφθαλ~μῶν τὰ τε προλαβόντα, καὶ τὰ ἐνεστώτα, καὶ τὰ μέλλον~τα, ὡς οὔτε ἡμεῖς τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν. Ἐπει οὖν εμελλε τὴν ζω~ὴν πρώτην διὰ τῶν ὑδάτων χορηγεῖν τῷ κοσ~μῷ, πρώτοις ἐπιτρέ~πει τοῖς ὕδασι ζωογόνον προ~ενέγκαι φύσιν, ἵνα μάθης πόθεν ἡ ρίζα τῆς ζωῆς. Ἐγὼ ἔταν ἰδοὺ τοὺς φω~τιζ~ο~μένους ἐξερχομένους ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων ὑδάτων—— εἰσελθόντας μὲν εἰς τὸ βάπ~τισμα μετὰ πολ~λῶν κα~κῶν ὡς ἐρπετᾶ, ἐξερχομένους δὲ μετὰ ζωῆς αἰωνίου—— ὁρῶ τὸν νο~μο~θέτην λέγοντα· **Ἐξαγαγέτω τὰ ὕδατα τὰ ποτὲ ἐρ~πετᾶ, νῦν ψυ~χὴν ζώσαν.** Πόθεν τοῦτο δῆλον ἦν γένηται; «Οτι οἱ προσ~ερ~χόμενοι τῷ λουτρῷ διὰ τὰ προτέρως ἀμαρτίας, τὴν τῶν ἐρ~πετῶν λαμ~βά~νουσι κλήσιν.

To the earth (God gives) seeds and plants, while to the waters (God gives) swimming things and winged things: **Let the waters abound in crawling and winged creatures.** (God) calls fish crawling creatures, since they crawl rather than walk. Wherefore the blessed David, who follows after the lawgiver, says: **This sea is great and ample. There are a countless number of crawling creatures.**<sup>1</sup> Amazing deed, amazing arrangement, amazing promise of the word! Why? Because (God) is the maker of all things. Thus, (God) has the past, the present, and the future before his eyes——which is not before our eyes. Since (God) was about to furnish for the world first life by means of the waters, (God) commands the first waters to bring forth generative nature in order that you might learn the origin of crawling creatures. Whenever I see those illuminated coming out from the holy waters——on the one hand, entering into baptism as crawling creatures with many evils, and, on the other, leaving with eternal life——I see the lawgiver saying: **Let the waters produce crawling creatures, but now let them produce a living soul.** Wherefore does (the lawgiver) make this clear to us? Because those coming to the washing on account of their former sins take the name of crawling creatures.

6. Eucherius (d. c. 450 C.E.), bp. of Lyons (432-450 C.E.), Liber formularum spiritalis intelligentiae 4 = PL 50:748 = CSEL 31 (C. Wotke, 1894), 3-62

In evangelio: **Et traxerunt plenum rete piscibus.**<sup>1</sup> Item in malam partem: **Malos autem foras miserunt.**<sup>2</sup> Rursus piscium nomine, fides non fleta exprimitur. Quemadmodum enim piscis sub tegumento aquarum nascitur, vivit, et alitur; sic et fides quae in Deum est, quae alterius vitae gaudia, per lamenta praesentia, fletusque irrequietos, in corde gignit. Invisibili gratia spiritus per aquam baptismatis consecratur; invisibili auxilio divinae protectionis, ne deficiat, nutritur; invisibili praemiorum intuitu, quaecumque valet, bona operatur.

In the gospel: **And they dragged in a net full of fish.**<sup>1</sup> Likewise (they drag it) into a bad part: **They threw the bad fish out.**<sup>2</sup> Again by the name of fish, a non-grieving faith is expressed. For just as a fish is born and lives and is nourished under the cover of the water, so also the faith which is in God, through present laments and through restless weeping, gains the joys of another life in the heart. By means of the water of baptism, the spirit is sanctified through an invisible grace; lest it be deficient, it is nourished through the invisible aid of divine protection; it concerns itself with good things through the invisible consideration of rewards, which are strong.

### Notes

1. John 21.11.
2. Matt. 13.48.

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7. Orientius of Gaul (mid-fifth cent. C.E.), Commonitorium carmina = Poems of Exhortation l. 145 (“Explanatio nominum Domini”) = WS 72 = Orientii commonitorium carmina orientio tributa (ed., C. A. Rapisarda, Università di Catania, Centro di Studi sull’antico Cristianesimo, 1958)

Piscis natus aquis: auctor baptismatis ipse est.

The fish born in the water is himself the author of baptism.

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8. Isidore (c. 540-636 C.E.), bp. of Seville (600-636 C.E.), Quaestiones in Veterum Testamentum 1.12 = WS 74 = PL 83:211

With reference to Gen. 1.20

Inter haec die quinta facta sunt in aquis reptilia animarum vivarum, homines, scilicet renovati in vitam per baptismi sacramentum. Facta sunt et volatilia, id est sanctae animae ad superna volantes.

Among these, on the fifth day were created in waters those living creatures which are reptile——namely human beings renewed for life through the sacrament of baptism. Also made were birds——that is, holy souls flying to the upper regions.

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**Do reptilia (crawling creatures mentioned in Gen. 1.20) refer to fish also?** In fact they do. For example see Severian of Gabala above in Text # VI.5 and the following text

9. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.), Hexameron 7.1 (before 370 C.E.) = SCh 26 (S. Giet, 1949), where he explicitly states that fish are included in Gen. 1.20

**Ἐξαγαγέτω τὰ ὕδατα ἔρπετά.** Ἐν τούτοις τοῖς μικροῖς ῥήμασι τί <οὐ> πα~ρέται γένος; Τί οὐκ ἐμπερείληται τῷ προστάγματι τῆς δημιουργίας; Οὐ τὰ ζωοτοκοῦντα, οἷον φῶκαι καὶ δελφίνες καὶ νάρκαι, καὶ τὰ ἰσομοῖα τούτοις τὰ σελάχη λεγόμενα; οὐ τὰ ὠτόκα, ἅπερ ἐστὶ πάντα σχεδὸν τῶν ἰχθύων γένη. . . Ἐν τούτοις ἐνὶ τὰ πελάγια, τὰ αἰγια~λώδη, τὰ βύθια, τὰ πε~τρώδη, τὰ ἀγε~λάα, τὰ σποραδικά, τὰ κήτη, τὰ ὑπέρογκα, τὰ λεπ~τό~τατα τῶν ἰχθύων. Τῇ γὰρ αὐτῇ δυνάμει, καὶ τῷ ἴσῳ προστάγματι, τὸ τε μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν μετα~λαγ~χάνει τοῦ εἶναι.

**Let the waters produce crawling creatures.** With these few words, what species is not present? What is not included in the command of the creator? Included are the viviparous (fishes), which are seals and dolphins and rays, and similar ones which are called selachian (i.e. cartilaginous). Included are the oviparous (fish), which roughly speaking comprise the entire species of fish. . . . Among these are contained the sea creatures—the creatures travelling on the shore, the creatures travelling individually, the creatures of the deep, the creatures on the rocks, the creatures travelling in groups, the creatures travelling individually, the sea monsters, the enormous and the tiniest of fish. For, by the same power and by an equal commandment, the great and the small have a share of existence.

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See also the discussion of water (i.e. baptism) as transforming bad things into good things in Sedulius, Text # II.C.12a-b; Ambrose, Texts # IV.4 and IV.6; and Hilary of Poitiers in Text # X.A.2.

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## VII. DIVISIONS BETWEEN THE FISH WITHOUT SCALES AND THE FISH WITH SCALES IN RELATION TO LEVITICUS 11.9-12

1. Epistle of Barnabas (early second cent. C.E) 10.5 = WS 1 = Dölger 2:26-27 = PG 2:753 = Florilegium Patristicum 1 (T. Klauser, 2nd ed., 1940)

Καὶ οὐ φάγη, φησὶν, σμύραιναν οὐδὲ πολύποδα οὐδὲ σπητιαν· οὐ μὴ, φησὶν, ὁμοιωθῆση κολλώμενος ἀνθρώποις τοιούτοις, ὁτινες εἰς τέλος



εἰσὶν ἀσε~βεῖς καὶ κεκριμένοι ἤδη τῷ θανάτῳ, ὡς καὶ ταῦτα τὰ ἰχθύδια  
μόνα ἐπικατά~ρατα ἐν τῷ βυθῷ νήχεται, μὴ κο~λυμ~βώντα ὡς τὰ  
λοιπά, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ γῆ κάτω τοῦ βυθοῦ κατοικεῖ.

And do not eat, he says, lamprey, octopus, or cuttlefish. Do not, he says,  
become similar to, or associate with, persons who are completely impious  
and are already condemned to death, just as also the little fish which  
move alone and accursed in the ocean deep—not swimming as the  
other fish, but dwelling in earth beneath the ocean deep.

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2. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 C.E.), Stromateis 2.15 = WS 2  
= Dölger 2:27 = PG 8:1005 = GCS 15 (3rd ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu)

With reference to Ps. 1.1

**μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὅς οὐκ ἐπορεύθη ἐν Βουλῇ ἀσεβῶν**, καθὼς οἱ ἰχθύ~ες  
πορεύον~ται ἐν σκότει εἰς τὰ βάθη· οἱ γὰρ λεπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες ὧν  
ἀπαγορεύει Μωυσῆς ἐφάπτεσθαι, κάτω τῆς θαλάσ~σης νέμονται.

**Blessed is the man who does not enter into the counsel of the  
impious**, just as fish go into the darkness of the deep. For those that do  
not have scales, which Moses forbids from being touched, graze beneath  
the ocean.

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3. Origen (c. 185-c. 254 C.E.), Homily on Leviticus 7.5 = WS 6 =  
PG 12:486 = SCh 286 (Homilies 1-7, M. Borret, 1981)

With reference to Matt. 13.47-50

Quoniam quidem lex etiam de ipsis munda esse quaedam et alia designat  
immunda, nihil in his, ut meis verbis credatur, exposco, nisi testes idoneos  
dederō. Ipsum vobis Dominum et Salvatorem nostrum Iesum Christum  
testem horum et auctorem dabo, quomodo pisces homines esse dicantur.  
**Simile est inquit regnum caelorum retiae missae in mare, quae ex  
omni genere piscisum colligit; et cum repleta fuerit, sedentes supra  
litus condunt eos, qui boni sunt, in vasis; qui autem male, foras mit-  
tuntur.** Evidenter edocuit eos, qui **retibus colligi** dicuntur **pisces**, vel  
**bonos** homines esse vel **malos**. Isti ergo sunt, qui secundum Moysen  
pisces vel mundi vel immundi nominantur.

Since the law designates certain ones (animals) among these as clean and  
since it designates others as unclean, if my words are to be believed, I can  
demand nothing of these, unless I cite the appropriate texts. I will cite  
the Lord and our Savior Iesus Christ himself as witness and author of the

interpretation, which says that fish are human beings. It says, **The kindgom of the heavens is similar to a net put forth into the sea, which collects every type of fish. And when it is full, they sit down on the shore. Those which are good, they put into vessels; those which are bad, they throw out.** This teaches that those **fish** which are said to be **collected in nets** are either good persons or bad persons. Thus, according to Moses, fish are either designated as clean or unclean.

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4. Origen (c. 185-c. 254 C.E.), Homily on Leviticus 7.7 = WS 7 = Dölger 2:27-28 = PG 12:491 = SCh 286 (Homilies 1-7, M. Borret, 1981)

With reference to Matt. 13.47-50

Haec quidem generaliter dicta sint de animalibus; illa vero, **quae in aquis sunt**, auia dicuntur, siquidem habeant **pinnas et squamas**, munda esse, si vero non habeant, immunda nec edi debere: illud in his ostenditur, ut, si quis est in aquis istis et in mari vitae huius atque in fluctibus saeculi positus, tamen debeat satis agere, ut non in profundis iaceat aquarum, sicut sunt isti pisces, qui dicuntur **non habere pinnas neque squamas**. Haec namque eorum natura perhibetur, ut in imo semper et circa ipsum caenum demorentur; sicut anguillae et huic similia, quae non possunt adscendere ad aquae summitatem neque ad eius superiora pervenire. Illi vero pisces, qui **pinnulis** iuvantur ac **squamis** muniuntur, adscendunt magis ad superiora et aeri huic viciniore fuunt, velut qui libertatem spiritus quaerant. Talis est ergo sanctus quisque, qui intra **retia** fidei conclusus **bonus piscis** a Salvatore nominatur et mittitur **in vas**, veluti **pinnas** habens et **squamas**. Nisi enim habuisset **pinnas**, non resurrexisset de caeno incredulitatis nec ad **rete** fidei pervenisset. Quid autem est quod et **squamas** habere dicitur, tamquam qui paratus sit vetera indumenta deponere? Hi enim, qui **squamas** non habent, velut ex integro carni sunt et toti carnales, qui deponere nihil possint. Si qui ergo habent **pinnas**, quibus ad superiora nitatur, mundus est; qui vero non habet **pinnas**, sed in inferioribus permanet et in caeno perversatur, immundus est.

These are the general things said about animals. Those, **which are in water**, it is said, are indeed clean, if they have **fins and scales**. If they do not have them, they ought not to be eaten. This means that, if anyone is in these waters and in the sea of this life and in the waves of this world, they nevertheless ought to behave so as not to be thrown into the depths of the waters, just as are these fish, who are said not to have **fins and scales**. Their nature affords them the opportunity to dwell always at the bottom and in the mud itself. Such are eels and other fish similar to them, which can not ascend and arrive at the top of the water or to some higher place. Indeed these fish, which are aided by **fins** and which are furnished with **scales**, ascend better to higher places and bring themselves nearer to the air, just as those who seek liberty of the spirit. Such is therefore each

saint, who amidst the **nets** of faith is named **good fish** by the Savior and is put into a vessel, as if having **fins** and **scales**. Unless it had fins, it could not be resurrected from the mud of disbelief nor could it arrive in the **nets** of faith. And what does it signify to have **scales**, except that it is ready to take off its old garments? For those who do not have **scales** are purely and totally of the flesh and can take nothing off. If therefore it has **fins**, with which it can swim to higher places, it is clean. If it does not have **fins**, but remains in lower regions and always spends its time in the mud, it is unclean.

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5. Hesychius of Jerusalem (mid-fifth cent. C.E.), In Leviticum 3.11 = WS 71

With reference to Lev. 11.9-12

**Haec sunt quae gignuntur in aquis, et vesci licitum est. Omne quod habet pinnulas et squamas, tam in mari, quam in fluminibus et stagnis, comedetis. Quidquid autem pinnulas et squamas non habet, eorum quae in aquis moventur et vivunt, abominabile vobis et exsecrandum erit. Carnes eorum non comedetis, et morticina vitabitis. Cuncta quae non habent pinnulas et squamas in aquis polluta erunt.**

**Haec sunt quae gignuntur in aquis, et vesci licitum est.** Intelliguntur per haec hi qui ex gentibus salvati sunt, utpote regenerationem habentes in aqua baptismatis.

**Omne quod habet pinnulas et squamas, tam in mari, quam in fluminibus et stagnis, comedetis.** Eadem etiam his qui ex gentibus sunt, de meditatione legis aliis praecepit verbis. Vult enim eo habere in meditatione legis pinnulas, vitamque sublimem atque coelestem, sed expositionem legis huic similem, propter quod non pinnulam habere, sed pinnulas eos vult. Quia autem ignorantia divinae Scripturae gentes obtinuerat, non enim susceperant legem, neque prophetas, nec alia in eis erat scientia divina. Ne ergo hoc morbo permanenti et perpetuo laborarent, squamas eos habere vult, quae facile auferrentur . . .

**quidquid autem pinnulas aut squamas non habet eorum quae in aquis moventur et vivunt, abominabile vobis et exsecrandum erit.** Sunt enim quaedam piscium genera, testam pro pelle habentia, quorum squama auferri non potest. Tales sunt qui nec squamas ignorantiae verbo Dei deponere, nec cultrum spiritus suscipere patiuntur. Ili etsi in mari inveniantur baptismatis, etsi in fluminibus poenitentiae, abominabiles sunt in omnibus quae moventur et vivunt in aquis. Et cum vitam sortiti sint in baptisate, vocationem tamen regenerationemque corruperunt. Dum pinnulas et squamas non habent, sublimem videlicet vitam, cognitionemque divinatorum, quae coelestis est, sed cor caecum in ignorantia detinent.

**Those which are acquired in water, it is legal to eat. All those which have fins and scales, as many as are in the sea, in the rivers, and in the lakes, you may eat. Whatever, however, does not have fins or scales, of those which move and live in the water, they will be abominable to you and they must be cursed. You may not eat their meat, and you will avoid their carcasses. All those things which do not have fins or scales in the water will be tainted.**

**Those things which are acquired on the waters, it is legal to eat.** Through these words, these (fish) are to be understood as those saved from among the gentiles, namely those who have a second birth in the waters of baptism.

**All those which have fins and scales, as many as are in the sea, in the rivers, and in the lakes, you may eat.** Likewise, these are those among the gentiles, whom he admonishes with other words concerning the contemplation of the law. For he wishes them to have fins for the contemplation of the law, and thus a sublime and celestial life. But for the exposition of the law, he wishes them to have not one fin, but many fins. Because ignorance of divine scripture preserves the gentiles, however, they do not take up the law, nor the prophets, nor anything else that is within divine knowledge. Lest they labor in this permanent and perpetual sickness, therefore, he wishes them to have scales, which may be easily shed . . .

**Whatever, however, does not have fins or scales, of those which move and live in water, they will be abominable for you and they must be cursed.** For there are certain kinds of fish, which have a shell instead of skin and whose scales cannot be easily shed. Such are those who do not let themselves put down the scales of ignorance for the word of God, nor let themselves take up the cultivation of the spirit. Although these ones are found in the sea of baptism in the rivers of penitence, they are all abominable which move and live in water. And yet, when they have life for baptism, they corrupt the calling and the second birth. As long as they do not have fins and scales, they clearly do not have a sublime life and knowledge of divine things, which is celestial, but they preserve their divine heart in ignorance.

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6. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 C.E.) Homiliae in evangelia 2.31 = WS 40 = PL 76:1232

With reference to Lev. 11.9ff.

Hinc rursus pisces qui pennulas non habent ab esu fidelis populi prohibentur. Pisces quippe qui pennulas squamarum habent, dare etiam saltus

super aquas solent. Quid ergo penatis piscibus nisi electae animae figurantur? Quae profecto solae in coelestis Ecclesiae corpus transeunt, quae, modo virtutum pennulis fultae, saltus dare per coeleste desiderium, ut superna per contemplationem appetant.

Here again fish that do not have fins are prohibited from being eaten by the faithful. For fish, which have scaly fins, are accustomed to jump even above the water. What are signified, therefore, by winged fish, except the souls of the elect? Into the celestial body of the church pass those souls alone, which, supported only by the fins of virtues, jump toward celestial desire so that they might seek the upper regions through contemplation.

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7. Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 C.E.), Moralia in Job 5.11.19 (c. 579-586 C.E.) = WS 41 = PL 75:689 = CCL 143 (M. Adriaen, 1979-85)

Hinc etiam per Moysen dicitur ut pisces qui pennulas non habent non edantur. Pisces namque qui habent pennulas, saltus dare super aquas solent. Soli ergo in electorum corpore quasi cibus transeunt qui in eo quod imis deserviunt, aliquando superna conscendere mentis saltibus sciunt, ne semper in profundis curarum lateant et nulla eos amoris summi quasi liberi aura contingat.

Here also it is said through Moses that fish without fins are not to be eaten. For fish with fins are accustomed to jump over the water. They alone, like food, pass into the the body of the elect, who, although they are rooted in the lower regions, at some time, with a leap of the mind, they know how to ascend to the upper regions, lest they are always hidden in the depth of cares, and no breath of the highest love, like free air, touches them.

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### VIII. FISH SWIMMING TOWARD THE LIGHT

1. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.) Homilia de fide 15.3 = WS 16 = PG 31:468

«Οτι διάνοια ἡ δυνηθεῖσα τῶν τε ὑλικῶν καθαρεῦσαι παθῶν, καὶ τὴν <α?>νοητὴν κτίσιν πᾶσαν καταλιπεῖν, καὶ οἷον τις ἰχθὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ βυθοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἄνω ἐπιφάνειαν ἀνανήξασθαι, ἐν τῷ καταρῶ τῆς κτίσεως γενομένη, ἐκεῖ ἔψεται τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἔπου Υἱὸς, καὶ ἔπου Πατὴρ.

For the mind was able to purify itself of material emotions and to leave behind an entirely unintelligible creation, just as a fish swims from the deep toward the light, which is in a pure creation. There it will see the holy Spirit, where are the Son and the Father.

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## IX. FISH EXPLICITLY SYMBOLIZING FAITH

1. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), Epistle 130.16 (after 411 C.E.) = Dölger 5:313 = PL 33:500 = CSEL 44 (A. Goldbacher, 1904)

With reference to Luke 11.11-12

Cum ergo secundum tria illa,<sup>1</sup> quae commendat apostolus, fides significetur, in pisce vel propter aquam baptismi vel quod in huius saeculi fluctibus integro est, cui contrarius est ille serpens, qui, ut non crederetur deo, venenosa fraude persuasis, spes in ovo, quia vita pulli nondum, se futura est nec iam videtur, sed adhuc speratur. . . . Charitas in pane. . . .

Since faith is signified in the fish according to these three things,<sup>1</sup> which the apostle commends, either because of the water of baptism or because it remains uninjured in the waves of this world. On the contrary is that serpent, which persuaded (human beings) with poisonous deceit that they do not believe in God. There is hope in the egg, because, although it is not yet the life of a chick and although it is not yet seen, it will be seen in the future and is still to be hoped for. . . . Charity is in bread.

### Notes

1. 1 Cor. 13.13

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See also Eucherius in Text # VI.8.

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## X. FISH AS FOOD AND THE ROASTED FISH

### X.A. The interpretation of the multiplication of loaves and fish

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 C.E.) Stromateis 6.11 = WS 3 = PG 9:316 = GCS 15 (third ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu)

With reference to John 6.1-15

τάχα που και ὁ κύριος τὸ πλῆθος ἐκεῖνο τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πόας  
κα~τακλιθέντων κατα~ντικρὺ τῆς Τιβεριάδος τοῖς ἰχθύσι τοῖς δυσι και  
τοῖς ε' τοῖς κριθι~νοῖς διέθρεψεν ἄρτοις, αἰνισ~σό~μενος τὴν  
προπαιδείαν Ἑλλήνων τε και Ἰου~δαί~ων πρὸ τοῦ θεί~ου πυροῦ τῆς

κατὰ τὸν νόμον γεωργουμένης τροφῆς· προπε~τεσ~τέρα γὰρ εἰς ὄραν  
θέρους τοῦ πυροῦ μάλλον ἢ κριθῆ. τὴν δὲ ἀνά τὸν κλύδωνα τὸν  
ἐθνικὸν γεννωμένην τε καὶ φερομένην φι~λο~σοφίαν Ἑλληνι~κὴν οἱ  
ἰχθύες ἐμήνυον, εἰς διατροφήν ἐκτενὴ τοῖς στι χαμαὶ κειμένοις  
δε~δο~μένοι· ἀυξήσαντες μὲν οὐκέτι καθάπερ τῶν ἄρτων τὰ κλάσματα,  
τῆς δὲ τοῦ κυρίου μετα~λαβόν~τες εὐλογίας τὴν ἀνάστασιν τῆς  
θειότητος διὰ τῆς τοῦ λόγου δυνάμεως ἐνεπνεύσθη~σαν. ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ  
πε~ρί~εργος εἶ, σκλαβε θάτερον τῶν ἰχθύων τὴν ἐγκύκλιον, τὸν λοιπὸν  
δὲ αὐτὴν ἐκεί~νην τὴν ἐπαναβεβηκυῖαν μηνύειν φιλοσο~φίαν.

Immediately the Lord fed with two fish and with five loaves of barley that  
multitude of those who were reclining there on the grass opposite  
Tiberias, (thus) hinting at the introductory teaching of the Greeks and the  
Jews before the divine wheat of nourishment, which was cultivated ac-  
cording to the law. For in the season of Summer (the time of the har-  
vest), barley is riper than wheat. The fish revealed the Greek philosophy  
that was produced and carried forward above the gentile wave—the  
fish who were given as abundant food to those reclining on the ground.  
Not yet increasing as the scraps of bread, but taking a share of the  
blessing of the Lord, they breathed in the resurrection of divinity through  
the power of the word. But if you are curious, understand one of the fish  
to reveal the curriculum and the other to reveal the philosophy which  
rises above it.

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2. Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367 C.E.), Commentary on Matthew  
14.10-11 = WS 89 = PL 9:1000 = CSEL 65 (A. L. Feder, 1916) and SCh  
254, 258 (J. Doignon, 1978-79)

With reference to Matt. 14.13-21

10: . . . sed erat omnis typica ratio explicanda. Nondum enim concessum  
apostolis erat ad vitae aeternae cibum caelestem perficere ac ministrare.  
Solos enim se quinque panes et duos pisces responderunt habere, quia  
adhuc sub quinque panibus libris legis continebantur et piscium duorum,  
id est prophetarum et Ioannis praedicationibus alebantur. In operibus  
enim legis tamquam ex pane et vita, praedicationis autem Ioannis et pro-  
phetarum in virtute aquae vitae humanae spem confouebat.<sup>1</sup> Haec igitur  
primum, quia in his adhuc erant, apostoli obtulerunt, sed ex his  
euangeliorum praedicationis profecta monstratur et his originibus deducta in  
maiores virtutis suae abundantiam crescit.

11: Acceptis igitur panibus atque piscibus, Dominus respexit ad caelum,  
benedixit et fregit Patri agens gratias post tempora legis ac prophetarum  
se in euangelicum cibum verti. Accumbere post haec supra fenum popu-  
lus iubetur non iam in terra iacens, sed lege suffultus et tamquam terrae  
feno fructibus operis sui unusquisque substernitur. Dei scilicet verbo ex

dotrina legis prophetarumque veniente multitudo satiatur et reservata gentium plebi ex aeterni cibi ministerio in duodecim apostolorum plenitudinem copia divinae virtutis exuberat. . . .

10: An entirely typological explanation must be used. For it was not yet granted to the apostles to attain to, and to serve, the bread of eternal life. For they responded that they had only five loaves of bread and two fish, because, under the five loaves of bread, they were restricted to the books of the law and because, with the two fish, they were nourished by the preaching of the prophets and John. For in the works of the law, as from bread, there was life. And the preaching of John and of the prophets warmed the hope of human life through the strength of water.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the preaching of the apostles is shown to have advanced from this point and, by moving away from that point, grows to a greater abundance of its strength.

11: Therefore after the loaves of bread and the fish were received, the Lord looked back to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave thanks to the father that, after the time of the law and of the prophets, they were changed into gospel food. After this, since they were not already lying on the ground, the people are ordered to recline on the grass, but they are supported by the law; and, as they are spread out on the grass of the earth, each one is spread out on the fruits of their labor. The loaves of bread are also given to the apostles, because through them the gifts of divine grace are to be returned. Then the masses feed on the the five loaves of bread and the two fish, and they are filled, and, while they are reclining, the scraps of bread and fish abound so as to fill twelve baskets. The crowd is clearly satisfied by the word of God which comes from the teaching of the law and of the prophets—the teaching which was preserved for the masses of gentiles and which, from the serving of the eternal food, abound to fill twelve apostles through the bounty of divine strength.

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3. Paulinus of Nola (c. 353-431 C.E.), Epistle 13.11 (396 C.E.) = Dölger 2:450 = PL 61:213-14 = CSEL 29-30 (W. Hartel, 1894)

This is a letter of consolation to his friend Pammachius, whose wife Paulina had just died. He had held a meal for the poor on her behalf.

Itaque patronos animarum nostrarum pauperes, qui tota Roma stipem meritant, multitudinem in aula apostoli congregasti. Pulchro equidem tanti operis tui spectaculo pascor. Videre enim mihi videor tota illa religiosa miserandae plebis examina, illos pietatis divinae alumnos tantis influere penitus agminibus in amplissimam gloriosi Petri basilicam per illam venerabilem regiam cerula eminus fronte ridentem ut tota et intra ba-



silicam et pro ianuis atrii et pro gradibus campi spatia coartentur. Video congregatos ita distincte per accubitus ordinari et profluis omnes saturari cibis, ut ante oculos euangelicae benedictionis ubertas eorumque populorum imago versetur, quos quinque panibus et duobus piscibus panis ipse verus et aquae vivae piscis Christus explevit, non vistato more cretura cibis hominum, sed novo munere iam paratos hominibus cibos gignens, cum operata manus divino suggestu visibiles epulas ministraret et in alimenta corporea spiritali fecunditate proflueret, ineffabilibus panis et carnis fontibus in spem ieunarum adhuc gentium esurientes fidem populos carnaliter satians et spiritaliter inrigans, indeprehensis auctibus comesta subplens, edenda subpeditans et ad morsus edentium fragmina subsiciva depromens, ut inter manus vel in ore sumentium crescentibus cibis sentirent potius escarum suarum copiam quam viderent morsibus redeunte consumpto et dentibus subeunte sumendo.

So you gathered a crowd of the poor, who are patrons of our souls and who out of all Rome deserved alms. Indeed, I feed myself on the magnificent spectacle of such a great effort of yours. For I seem to behold all the devout multitudes of the wretched masses, those adopted children of divine piety, who flow in lines through that venerable colonnade, which smiles at a distance with its azure facade, inside into the enormous basilica of glorious Peter, so that they are crowded into the entire area of the flat space inside the basilica and in front of the doors of the atrium and in front of the stairs. I see them gathered and arranged at separate tables, while all are filled with overflowing foods so that the bounty of the gospel blessing and the image of these people is turned before my eyes. Christ, the true bread himself and the fish of living water, filled them with five loaves of bread and two fish. He did this not in the normal custom where siftings of grain are obtained to serve as food for people, but he obtained with a new gift food already furnished for people. For, by means of divine provisions, a hidden hand served visible food, and the meal overflowed with spiritual fruitfulness in the midst of corporeal nourishment. From the unnamed sources of bread and meat, for the hope of those still starving gentiles, it satisfies physically, and waters spiritually, the people hungering for faith; it fills up the foodstuffs with unobserved increases; it supplies what is to be eaten; and it brings forth extra fragments for the chewing of those who are eating. Consequently, as the food grew in the hands and the mouths of those who took it, they felt the abundance of it rather than seeing it return while being masticated and taken up as it approached their teeth.

-----4.  
Prudentius (from Tarragon, Spain, 348-post 405 C.E.), Dittochaeon 37  
(or Double Nourishment, 390-402 C.E., a commentary on works of art)  
(ll. 145-149) = WS 92 = PL 60:106 = CCL 126 (1966)

Quinque Deus panes fregit piscesque gemellos,  
his hominum large saturavit milia quinque.

Inplentur nimio micararum fragmine corbes,  
bis seni, aeternae tanta est opulentia mensae.

God broke five loaves of bread and a pair of fish,  
abundantly satisfying these five thousand people.  
Twelve baskets are filled with an excess of broken morsels,  
so great is the wealth of the eternal banquet.

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**X.B. The interpretation of the second miraculous multiplication of bread and loaves (Matthew 15.32-38)**

1. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber I 61.4 (388-396 C.E.) = WS 28 = PL 40:51 = CCL 44 A  
(A. Mutzenbecher, 1975, 11-249)

With reference to Matt. 15.32-38

Et ideo secunda pastio populi, quae de septem panibus facta est, ad novi testamenti praedicationem recte intellegitur pertinere. Non enim ab aliquo evangelista dictum est quod isti panes hordeacei fuerint, sicut de illis quinque dixit Iohannes. Haec ergo pastio de panibus septem ad gratiam pertinet ecclesiae, quae notissima illa septenaria sancti spiritus operatione cognoscitur. Et ideo non hic duo pisces fuisse scribuntur sicut in veteri lege, ubi duo soli unguebantur, rex et sacerdos, sed pauci pisces, id est qui primi domino Iesu Christo crediderunt, et in eius nomine uncti sunt, et missi ad praedicationem euangelii, et ad sustinendum turbulentum mare huius saeculi, ut pro ipso magno pisce, id est pro Christo, legatione fungerentur, sicut Paulus apostolus dicit.

And thus, the second feeding of the people, which is composed of seven loaves of bread, is rightly understood to pertain to the preaching of the New Testament. For it is not said by any gospel writer that these loaves of bread were of barley, as John said of the previous five loaves. Therefore, this feeding of seven loaves of bread pertains to the grace of the church, which is well-known for that sevenfold working of the holy spirit. And thus, it was not written that there were two fish as in the old law, where two alone were anointed—king and priest. But there were a few fish, that is those who first believed in the lord Jesus Christ, in whose name they were anointed and sent forth for the preaching of the gospel and for the sustaining of the turbulent sea of this world so that, on behalf of that great fish—that is, on behalf of Christ—they may function as ambassadors, just as the apostle Paul says.

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## X.C. Eucharist

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See most especially Section I. See also Peter Chrysologus in Text # II.C.12 and X.D.2; Eznik of Kolb who denies the relation of the fish to the eucharist in Text # X.E.2; and Severian of Gabala in Text # XI.1.

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1. Augustine, (354-430), Confessions 13.21 (c. 397-c. 400 C.E.) = WS 96 = PL 32:857 = Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (M. Skutella, H. Juergens, and W. Schaub, 1969) = part of Text # III.3 in this appendix

. . . terra non indiget, quamvis piscem manducet levatum de profundo in ea mensa, quam parasti in conspectu credentium; ideo enim de profundo levatus est, ut alat aridam.

. . . the earth does not need (water creatures and birds), although it eats the fish raised from the sea in that banquet which you have prepared under the watch of the faithful. For the fish is raised from the deep in order that it might nourish the dry land.

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2. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), Confessions 13.23 (397-400 C.E.) = PL 32:859f. = WS 67 = Dölger 2:35 = Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (M. Skutella, H. Juergens, and W. Schaub, 1969)

Iudicat enim et approbat, quod recte, improbat autem, quod perperam invenerit; sive in ea sollemnitate sacramentorum, quibus initiantur quos pervestigat in aquis multis misericordia tua; sive in ea, qua ille piscis exhibetur, quem levatum de profundo terra pia comedit.

For he judges what is right and he condemns what he finds wrong, whether in the solemnity of the sacraments by which they (Christians) are initiated (i.e. baptism), whom your pity searches out in many waters; or in that sacrament in which the fish is displayed (i.e. the eucharist), which a pious earth eats after it has risen from the deep.

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X.D. **Christ as the fish roasted on the cross: the post-resurrection fish meal in John 21.9-10, Luke 24.41-42, and/or Tobit 6.1-9** (exclusively Latin)

1. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), In evangelium Ioannis 123.2 (early fifth century C.E.) = WS 95 = Dölger 5:218, 364 = PL 35:1966 = CCL 36 (R. Willems, 1954)

With reference to the fish on the charcoals in John 21.9-10

Piscis assus, Christus est passus.

The roasted fish is the suffering Christ.

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2. Peter Chrysologus (c. 380-c. 450 C.E.), bp. of Ravenna, Sermon 55.6 = WS 70 = Dölger 2:35, 2:450, 5:364-65 = PL 52:354 = CCL 44 (A. Olivar, 1975)

With reference to John 21.9

Adiecit aliam similitudinem: **aut numquid pro pisce serpentem dabit illi?**<sup>1</sup> Erat et piscis Christus Iordanis levatus ex alveo, qui carbonibus positus passionum post resurrectionem suis, id est, discipulis, escam praebuit tunc vitalem . . .

He adds another parable: **or would he give him a serpent instead of a fish?**<sup>1</sup> Christ the fish was raised up from the riverbed of the Jordan, and he was placed on the charcoal of the passion after the resurrection for his followers—that is, for his disciples. (And) then he offered a life-giving food . . .

#### Notes

1. Luke 11.11.

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3. Eucherius (d. c. 450 C.E), bp. of Lyons (432-450 C.E.), Liber formularum spiritualis intelligentiae 4 = PL 50:748 = WS 99 = CSEL 31 (C. Wotke, 1894), 3-62 = Text # III.4 in this appendix (1).

Piscis autem assus, passionem significat; fluctus tentationes.

The roasted fish, however, signifies the passion; the waves signify temptations.

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4. Ps. Augustine (probably fifth century C.E.), Sermon 205.1 = PL 39:2125, 223:855 = WS 32 = Dölger 2:33-34 = Text # II.A.9

With reference to Tobit 6.1-9

Est enim Chrisus piscis ille, qui ad Tobiam ascendit de flumine vivus, cuius iecore pre prunas passionis assato, fugatus est diabolus, et per amaritudinem fellis afflatus, et illuminatus est mundus.

Indeed, Christ is that fish who rose while alive from the river to Tobit. Because his liver was roasted on the coals of his passion, the devil fled; and, because he was breathed on by the bitterness of the gall bladder, he illuminated the world.

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5. Quodvultdeus (d. c. 453 C.E.), Liber promissionum 2.39.90 = WS 97 = Dölger 1:66, 2:34, 5:364 = CC (R. Braun, 1976)

With reference to Tobit 6.1-9

. . . piscis sua in passione decoctus, cuius ex interioribus remediis cottidie inluminamur et pascimur.

. . . a fish cooked in its passion, from whose innards we are given sight and nourished with remedies.

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6. Gregory the Great (540-604 C.E.), Homiliae in evangelia 24.5 = Dölger 2:15 = PL 76:1187

Inter haec vero et hesterna sancti Evangelii lectio et hodierna nos admonet,<sup>1</sup> ut vigilanter debeamus inspicere cur Dominus et redemptor noster post resurrectionem suam piscem assum legitur comedisse. Non enim vacat a mysterio quod iteratur in facto. In hac etenim lectione panem et assum piscem, in illa vero quae hesterno die lecta est cum asso

pisce etiam favum mellis comedit. Quid autem signare piscem assum credimus, nisi ipsum mediatorem Dei et hominum passum? Ipse enim latere dignatus est in aquis generis humani, capi voluit, laqueo mortis nostrae, et quasi tribulatione assatus est tempore passionis suae. Sed qui piscis assus fieri dignatus est in passione, favus nellis nobis exstitit in resurrectione. An qui in pisce asso figurare voluit tribulationem passionis suae, in favo mellis utramque naturam exprimere voluit personae suae? Favus quippe mel in cera est, mel vero in cera est divinitas humanitate. Quod ab hac quoque lectione non discrepat, nam piscem comedit et panem. Qui enim assari ut piscis potuit ex humanitate, pane nos reficit ex divinitate, qui ait: **Ego sum panis vivus qui de coelo descendi.**<sup>2</sup> Assum ergo piscem comedit et panem, ut ipso suo cibo nobis ostenderet quia et passionem ex nostra humanitate pertulit, et refectionem nostram ex sua divinitate procuravit. Quod si vigilanter inspicimus, nobis quoque qualiter ad imitandum congruat videmus. Sic enim sua Redemptor indicat, ut imitationis viam nobis sequentibus sternat. Ecce in cibo suo Dominus noster pisci asso coniungere favum voluit, quia videlicet illos in suo corpore ad aeternam quietem suscipit, qui cum hic tribulationes pro Domino sentiunt, ab amore internae dulcedinis non recedunt. Cum asso pisce favus sumitur, quia qui hic afflictionem pro veritate suscipiunt, illic dulcedine satiantur.

Indeed, in regard to these matters, yesterday's reading, and today's, admonish us that we ought to consider vigilantly why our Lord and savior is said to have eaten a roasted fish after his resurrection.<sup>1</sup> For in the latter reading, he eats bread and a roasted fish; in the former reading, which was read yesterday, he ate wax from a honeycomb with roasted fish. For what is in fact repeated is not missing in mystery. What do we believe that the roasted fish signifies, except the mediator of God and the one who suffered for human beings? For he was worthy to hide in the waters of the human race; he wished to be caught in the snare of our death; and he was roasted in tribulation, as it were, in the time of his passion. But he was worthy to become a roasted fish in the passion, and for us the honeycomb stands for the resurrection. Did he, who by the roasted fish wished to signify the tribulation of his passion, wish to express by the honeycomb the nature of his person? Indeed, the honeycomb is in wax, and honey in wax is divinity in humanity. For he, who as a fish can be roasted by humanity and who refreshed us with bread by divinity, says: **I am the living bread who descended from heaven.**<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he eats a roasted fish and bread in order that, by means of his food, he might show to us why he endured the passion from our humanity and why he obtained our refreshment from his divinity. If we consider it vigilantly, we see that it is fitting for us to imitate him in some way. For thus the savior indicates that he spreads out a way of imitation to those of us who are following him. Truly, by his food, our Lord wishes to join a honeycomb with a roasted fish, because he clearly takes them (i.e. the imitators) up to eternal rest—they who, when they feel the tribulations on behalf of the Lord, do not withdraw from the love of inner sweetness.

When the honeycomb is taken with a roasted fish, those who take up affliction on behalf of truth are satisfied with true sweetness.

### Notes

1. John 21.9-10 and Luke 24.42.
2. John 6.41, 52.

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7. Clavis Melitonis (seventh cent.? C.E.) = Dölger 1:15 = Pitra, Spicilegium Solesmense 2-3.1 (Paris, 1855) = idem., Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata 2 (1884); and see Quasten, Patrology, 248

Piscis, Dominus Jesus Christus, tribulationis ignis assatus.

The fish, Lord Jesus Christ, who was roasted in the fire of tribulation.

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### X.E. The Marcionites who prize fish as a food

1. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225 C.E.), Adversus Marcionem 14 = WS 85 = Dölger 2:261-62 = PL 2:262 = CSEL 47 (A. Kroymann, 1906, 290-650)

Despicias terram, plane inimicae iam tuae carnis matricem, et omnes medullas eius victui extorques. Reprobas et mare, sed usque ad copias eius, quas sanctiorem cibum deputas.

You disparage the earth; yet, it is clearly the womb of your hostile flesh. And you wrench out all its marrow for food. And you disapprove of the sea, but you continually consider its riches a more holy food.

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2. Eznik of Kolb (fifth century C.E.), On God 412 = Dölger 2.259-62 = Patrologia Orientalis 28 (F. Graffin, 1959) in Armenian (the latter edition seems to be missing a few lines at the beginning)

(based on the French translation of F. Graffin) But if we find nowhere in the New Testament his remark, **you should not eat this**, so it is clear that he ate and drank with sinners, tax collectors, and the Pharisees. And on the Passover, he said to his disciples: **I have very much desired to eat with you on this Passover.**<sup>1</sup> Will they also say of the Passover that it was a fish and not a lamb? For, as it is clear in the Gospel, Christ ate all meals without distinction. But, if you say that Christ ate fish after his resurrection and not meat, on account of which we eat fish and not meat,

so one must say that they should not eat fish, but only first at their resurrection, as he also ate a fish after the resurrection, which he found with the fishermen. But that the fish is meat is completely clear. For that which has flesh and blood, fat and bones, must be meaty and alive. And there is one fish,<sup>2</sup> on whose side meat is attached in the form of a saddle as on the back of a pig, and blood comes out accordingly, as it does not come out from a sheep. And it eats bad foods, which even the beasts and the animals do not eat. And one must designate the fish all the more a wild beast, which consumes equally and without difference, and animals are much more pure than it. For sacrifices and burnt sacrifices of them are offered to God, but nothing of fish is offered. In addition, as a model and an example of the great mystery, which should be public, sheep and cattle are thought of—and not fish: as the lamb, through whose blood the first-born Israelites were freed from Egypt;<sup>3</sup> as the ram, which was killed in place of Issac,<sup>4</sup> was a model of the true lamb, which takes away the sins of the world; and as the calf, which was killed as a burnt offering outside of the enclosure,<sup>5</sup> after whose example Christ also suffered outside of the city.<sup>6</sup> And David says: **May it be pleasing to the Lord as young calves,**<sup>7</sup> and not as a soft fish. For the fish, although it is used as an example, is used as an example of the grave, but not of life, according to what the Lord says: **As Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so must the son of man enter into the heart of the earth and spend three days and three nights.**<sup>8</sup> And so we do not find in the holy scriptures that he sanctified the fish and gave it as food and commanded that it be avoided, as of something impure and objectionable.

#### Notes

1. Luke 22.15.
2. E.g. the tuna.
3. Ex. 12.13.
4. Gen. 22.13
5. Lev. 4.12
6. Heb. 13.11-12
7. Ps. 68.32 = 69.31
8. Matt. 12.40

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#### X.F. Fish as a good animal to eat

1. Isidore (c. 540-636 C.E.), bp. of Seville (600-636 C.E.), De ecclesiasticis officiis 1.45 = Dölger 5:368-69 = PL 83:778

Piscem sane, quia eum post resurrectionem accepit Dominus, possumus manducare. Hoc enim nec Salvator, nec apostoli retuerunt.

We can of course eat the fish, because the Lord accepted it after the resurrection. For neither the savior nor the apostles prohibited it.

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2. Irish Canon Collection—Hermann Wasserschleben, Die irische Kanonensammlung (Leipzig, 1885)—Cap. 8 (pp. 216-17) = Dölger 5:368-69

**Cap. 8 De esu piscium valde licito**

a. **Isidorus** ait:<sup>1</sup> Piscem sane possumus manducare, quem Dominus post resurrectionem comedit; hoc enim nec apostoli prohibuerunt. b. **Hieronimus**:<sup>2</sup> Esum piscium cum magna gratulatione suscipimus et laudamus, quia eum Dominus suscepit resurgens. c. **Agustinus**:<sup>3</sup> Una caro est, quae luxuriam non gignit, hoc est piscium, sed lex docet, aliquos pisces illicitos, ut inscamosos et pilosos et reliqua.

**Concerning the Very Lawful Eating of Fish**

a. **Isidore** said:<sup>1</sup> We can of course eat fish, which the Lord ate after the resurrection, since the apostles did not prohibit it. b. **Jerome**:<sup>2</sup> We accept and praise the eating of fish with great joy, because the Lord, when he rose again, accepted it. c. **Augustine**:<sup>3</sup> There is one meat which does not produce luxury—that of fish—but the law teaches that some fish are unlawful, such as those without fins and without scales, etc.

**Notes**

1. For the exact passage, see Text # X.F.1 in Appendix 1.
2. Original text is not extant.
3. Original text is not extant.

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**X.G. Fish as food**

Ambrose (c. 337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.2.6 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 221 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Muraena, quam ferunt aliquid habere noxium, esca pretiosior est.

The lamprey, which they say is somewhat poisonous, is a rather valued food.

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**X.H. Small fish as an indication of a modest (and therefore appropriately Christian) meal, especially when eaten by biblical heroes**

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 C.E.), Instructor 2.1 = WS 84 = Dölger 2:54-55, 5:315 = GCS 1 (third ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu, 1972)

Καὶ **Ἐτε ἐσθίετε**, φησὶν, **εἴτε πίνετε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ ποι~εῖτε**,<sup>1</sup> στοχαζόμενοι τῆς ἀληθοῦς εὐτελείας· ἦν μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ὁ Κύριος αἰνίσασ~θαι τοὺς ἄρτους εὐλογήσας καὶ τοὺς ἰχθύ~ας τοὺς ὀπτούς,<sup>2</sup> κατεσθίει τοὺς μαθητὰς, τῆς ἀπερι~έρ~γου τρο~φῆς καλὸν εἰσηγούμενος ὑπόδειγμα. Ὁ γοῦν ἰχ~θὺς ἐκεῖ~νος, ὃν κελ~εῦ~σαντος τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ Πέτρος εἶλεν, εὐκόλον καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ θε~ο~δώρητον καὶ σὺφρονα αἰνιττεται τροφήν· ἀφαι~ρεῖν γέ τοι ὑπο~τι~θεται διὰ τῶν ἐξ ὕδατος ἀνιόντων ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς δικαιο~σύνης δέλ~ε~αρ τὴν ἀσωτίαν καὶ τὴν φιλαργυρίαν, ὡς τὸ νό~μισμα τοῦ ἰχθῦος ἵνα χωρίσῃ τὴν κενο~δοξίαν· καὶ τὸν στατήρα τοῖς τελώ~ναις δοῦς, **τὰ Καίσαρος ἀποδοῦς τῷ Καίσαρι**, φυλάξῃ **τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ**.<sup>3</sup>

And it says, **whether you eat or drink, do all things for the glory of God**,<sup>1</sup> aiming for true frugality. It seems to me that the Lord hinted, at this, when he blessed the loaves of bread and the roasted fish,<sup>2</sup> and when he served a feast to the disciples——thus relating an excellent example of simple nourishment. In fact, that fish, which Peter caught at the command of the Lord, hints at an easily digestible, God-given, and moderate nourishment. Look how he admonishes you to take away prodigality and greed by means of those who rise up to the bait of righteousness, just as (he took away) the coin of the fish in order that he might separate out vainglory. And by giving the stater to the tax collectors——**by giving back what is Caesar's to Caesar**——he maintains **that which is God's for God**.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes

1. 1 Cor. 10.31.
2. Matt. 15.32-38, Mark 8.1-9.
3. Matt. 22.21.

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2. Zeno of Verona (bp. 362-371/72 C.E.) Tractatus 2.38 (Ad neophytos post baptisma 1) = WS 90 = PL 11:483-85

Post devotissima completa expiationis sacrae casta ieiunia, post clarissimae noctis suo sole dulces vigilias, post lactei fontis lavacro vitali in spem immortalitatis animas pullulantes, ex quo qui eratis aetate diversi, diversi natione, subito germani fratres, subito unigeniti emersistis infantes, hortor vos nativitatis tantae festa laeto convivio, sed non illo, in quo diversis epulis intrumentorum lenocinio saporis de summa certantibus, obrutum pectus saepe crudis atque acidis vomitibus inurgetur in quo musti vestri dulcedo saecularis, vini pridani exhalante foetore, corrumpitur, sed coelesti prandio, honesto, puro, salubri, atque perpetuo. . . . Petrus piscator recentes marinos affatim apponit cum sarda admi-

rabili. Tobias peregrinus fluvialis piscis interanea diligenter accurat et assat . . .

After a pure, devoted and complete fast, after the sweet vigils of the clearest night with its sun, after bringing forth souls in the hope of immortality in the life-giving basin of the milky spring—in which you were diverse in age, diverse in nation, but emerging as instantly related brethren and as instantly only-begotten infants—I urge you to celebrate such a major birth with a joyously celebrated feast. But (do) not (celebrate) the type of feast in which diverse couches with the allurements of tasty inrumentum compete for the most prominent position and where heartburn erupts in bloody and sour vomiting. In it (the feast) the sweetness of your new secular wine is corrupted by the exhaled stench of yesterday's wine. Instead, I urge you to celebrate with a heavenly feast, modest, pure, healthy and eternal . . . (there follows a list of biblical heroes who ate modestly) . . . Peter the fisherman served as a dish fresh sea fish along with a worthy sardine. Tobit the pilgrim carefully prepared and roasted the innards of a river fish . . .

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### X.I. Criticism of luxurious fish-eating

1. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.) Adversus Iovinianum 1.40 = WS 94 = Dölger 2:452 = PL 26:132

. . . accipenserem praeferat Christo . . .

. . . he (Jovinian) prefers the sturgeon to Christ . . .

This type of passage shows that an early Christian writer could think of fish both as a symbol of Christ (which he discusses later in other passages) and simply as a type of food. See the following passages: Text # II.A.4-5; II.D.3; XIV.1.

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2. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.1.2 (386-390 C.E.) = PL 220 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

Tibi suos fructus terra producit; tibi scaros et acipenseris, et omnes fetus suos generant aquae. Et, his non contentus, interdicta tibi alimenta gustasti.

The earth produces for you (humanity) its fruits. For you the waters generate bass, sturgeon, and all their progeny. And, not content with these, you have tasted food prohibited to you.

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3. Ambrose (337/339-397 C.E.), bp. of Milan, Hexameron 5.10.27  
(386-390 C.E.) = PL 332 = CSEL 32 (C. Schenkl, 1896)

. . . et piscium receptacula instruunt, ne convivia divitis mare non possit implere.

. . . and they build containers for their fish, lest the sea can not fill up the meals of a rich person.

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## XI. CHRIST AS FISH ENABLES THE RESURRECTION

-----See also  
Clement of Alexandria in Text # X.A.1 and Peter Chrysologus in Text # X.D.2.

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1. Sermo sancti Severiani episcopi (late fourth cent. C.E.) =  
Cod. Vat. 276, fol 1<sup>v</sup>f. (on the multiplication of loaves) = WS 23 =  
Bottari, Roma Sotteranea 3:30-32 (Rome, 1754) = Dölger 1:154, 2:28-  
29

Vidisti servum in urceo, attende dominum in deserto; licet servus in honore domini sui, qui est panis vitae, benedicat et panem. Ego sum, inquit, panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi. Piscis consecrat pisces. Si enim Christ non esset piscis, numquam a mortuis surrexit.

You have seen a servant (Elijah) in a water pot. Wait for the lord in the desert. A servant who is the bread of life may bless bread in honor of his lord. I who have descended from heaven, he says, am living bread. A fish consecrates fish. For, if Christ had not been a fish, he would not have been resurrected from the dead.

Compare to the statement in Origen in Text # VII.4.

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## XII. COMMENTARY ON TOBIT 6.1-9

See also Optatus of Milevis (Text # XIII.2), in which the fish of Tobit = Christ healing humanity; Zeno of Verona (Text # X.H.2), in which the fish of Tobit indicates a modest meal; and Ps. Augustine (Text # II.A.9).

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1. The Triple Reward of Christian Life, ll. 355-360 (late second century to early fourth century C.E.) = R. Reitzenstein (ed.) in ZNW 15 (1914): 60-90 = WS 88 = Dölger 2:33. For bibliography, see J. Quasten, Patrology 2:372.

Nam cum Tobias per angelum Sarram liberaret et patrem ab squalido contactu inluminaret <et cum cetum> ad similitudinem Christi piscis spiritaliter prosilientem revinceret, cuius carnem ad victum in Christi imagine sustulerunt, et fel ad inluminandum Tobias acciperet, haec lex ostensa, quae <cum> inluminat credentes, amaritudinem facit, sed dulcedine sanat.

For, when Tobit freed Sara by means of the angel, when he brought sight to his father (who was blind) from a dirty infection, when he conquered the sea monster which sprung forth spiritually in the image of Christ as fish, whose meat in the image of Christ served as nourishment, and when Tobit took the gall bladder in order to regain his sight, this law shows that, when one brings sight to the faithful, one creates bitterness, but heals by means of sweetness.

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2. Quodvultdeus (d. c. 453 C.E.), Liber promissionum 2.39.90 = WS 97 = Dölger 1:66, 2:34, 2:451, 5:364 = CC (R. Braun, 1976) = Text # X.D.5 in this appendix (1)

With reference to Tobit 6.6-9

Misticum vero actionis huius hoc est quod ex interioribus piscis est daemon fugatus et Tobis inluminatus. Hoc egit piscis magnus ex passione sua Christus, purgans Mariam a qua expulit septem daemonia,<sup>1</sup> animae sic captae desperationem tollens . . . qui tributum pro se et pro Petro et caecato lumen reddidit Paul, satians ex se ipso in litore discipulos et toti se offerens mundo. IXΘΥΣ namque, latine piscem, sacratis litteris maiores nostri hoc interpretati sunt: IXΘΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ, ex Sibyllinis versibus colligentes quod est "Iesus Christus filius Dei salvator," piscis sua in passione decoctus, cuius ex interioribus remediis cottidie inluminamur et pascimur.

In fact, the mystical interpretation of this action is that a demon fled from the innards of a fish and Tobit regained his sight. The fish does this as Christ, who is great because of his passion and who purged Mary (Magdalene), from whom he expelled seven demons.<sup>1</sup> Thus, he removed the hopelessness of the captured soul; . . . he returned his payment on behalf of himself and on behalf of Peter, and he returned the light to Paul, satisfying the disciples by himself and offering himself to the entire world. For our ancestors interpreted this IXΘΥΣ—in Latin “fish”—by gathering the initials from the Sybilline verses, which is “Jesus Christ son of God savior,” a fish cooked in its passion, from whose innards we are given sight and are nourished with remedies.

### Notes

1. Mark 16.9 and Luke 8.2.

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### XIII. IXΘΥΣ AS ACRONYM AND AS PART OF ACROSTIC COMPOSITIONS

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See also the clear use of IXΘΥΣ as an acronym in Tertullian in Text # VI.2 and in Augustine in Text # XIV.1; and as part of an acrostic composition in the funerary inscription of Pectorius of Autun in Text # I.2.

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1. Sibylline 8.217-250 (ed. J. Geffcken, GCS, 1902, 153ff)

- I** δρώσει γὰρ χθῶν, κρίσεως σημεῖον ὅτ' ἔσται·  
**H** ξει δ' οὐρανόθεν βασιλεὺς αἰῶσιν δ' μέλλων  
**Σ** ἄρκα παρῶν πᾶσαν κρῖναι καὶ κόσμον **α**παντα,  
220 **O** ψονται δὲ Θεὸν μέροτες πιστοὶ καὶ **α**πιστοὶ  
**Y** ψιστον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἐπὶ τέρμα χρόνιο  
**Σ** αρκοφόρων ψυχᾶς δ' ἀνδρῶν ἐπὶ βήματι κρῖνει.
- X** ἔρσος **ο**ταν ποτε κόσμος **ο**λος καὶ **α**κανθα γένηται,  
**P** ἰψωσιν τ' εἰδῶλα βροτοὶ καὶ πλοῦτον **α**παντα,  
225 **E** κκαύση δὲ τὸ πῦρ γῆν οὐράνον ἠδὲ θάλασσαν,  
**I** χνεθον ρήξη τε πύλας εἰρκτής Ἀΐδαο.  
**Σ** ἀρξ̄ τότε πᾶσα νεκρῶν ἔς ἐλευθέριον φάος ἤξει,  
**T** οὺς ἁγίους ἀνόμους τε τὸ πῦρ αἰῶσιν ἐλέγξει,  
**O** πποσα τις πράξας **ε**λαθεν, τότε πάντα λαλήσει.  
230 **Σ** τηθεα γὰρ ζοφόντα Θεὸς φωστήρσιν ἀνοίξει,
- Ξ** ρήγος τ' ἐκ πάντων **ε**σται καὶ βρυγμὸς ὀδόντωνον.  
**E** κλείψει σέλας ἡελίου **α**στρων τε χορείας.  
**O** ὑρανὸν εἰλίξει μήνης δὲ τε φέγγος ὀλείται.  
**Y** ψώειδὲ φάραγγας, ὀλεῖ δ' ὑψώματα βουνῶν.
- 235 **Y** ψος δ' οὐκ **ε**τι λυγρὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι φανέται,  
**I** σὰ τ' **ο**ρη πεδίοις **ε**σται, καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα  
**O** ὑκ ἔς πλοῦν εἴξει· γῆ γὰρ φρυχθείσα κεραυνῶ  
**Σ** ὑν πηγαῖς ποταμοὶ τε καχλάζοντες λείψουσιν,
- 240 **Σ** ἀλπιγξ̄ δ' οὐρανόθεν φωνὴν πολύθρηγον ἀφήσει,  
**Ω** ρνουσα μύσος μέλεον καὶ πῆματα κόσμου,  
**T** αρταρόεν δὲ χάος δείξει τότε γαῖα χανοῦσα  
**H** ξουσιν δ' ἐπὶ βῆμα Θεοῦ βασιλῆες **α**παντες.  
**P** εὔσει δ' οὐρανόθεν ποταμὸς πυρὸς ἠδὲ θεείου.
- 245 **Σ** ἦμα δὲ τοι τότε πᾶσι βροτοῖς ἀριδείκετον, οἶον  
**T** ὀ ξύλον ἐν πιστοῖς, τὸ κέρασ τὸ ποθοῦμενον  
**ε**σται·  
**A** νδρῶν εὐσεβέων ζωῆ, πρόσκομμα τε κόσμου,  
**Y** δασι φωτίζον κλητοὺς ἐν δώδεκα πηγαῖς·  
**P** ἄβδος ποιμαίνουσα σιδηρεῖη γε κρατήσει.  
**O** ὕτος δ' νῦν προγραφεις ἐν ἀκροστιχίοις Θεὸς ἡμῶν  
250 **Σ** ωτῆρ ἀθάνατος βασιλεὺς ὁ παθῶν ἐνεχ̄ ἡμῶν.

The earth will sweat, when there is a sign of  
judgement.

An eternal king will come from heaven who will  
judge all flesh and all the world, when he is  
present.

Faithful and unfaithful mortals will see  
the most high with the saints at the end of time,  
and he will judge the souls of flesh-bearing men on  
the tribunal.

When all the earth is dry and filled with thorns,  
and mortals throw down idols and all wealth,  
and fire burns the earth and the sea,  
while pursuing the hunt, he will break the prison of  
Hades.

Whatever deeds they hid, they will say everything.  
For God will open a light on dark breasts,  
and everyone will lament, and there will be  
gnashing of teeth.

The light of the sun and the companies of the stars  
will be eclipsed.

He will roll up heaven, and the light of the moon  
will be destroyed.

He will elevate ravines, and he will destroy the  
tops of hills.

No longer will mournful height appear among human  
beings,

and the mountains will be equal to the fields, and  
the entire sea

will not be able to be sailed. For the earth will  
be parched by lightning

with its springs, and bubbling rivers will fail.

A much-lamenting trumpet will let forth its sound  
from heaven——

a trumpet which wails for the wretched defilement  
and the calamities of the  
world.

The gaping earth will show the abyss of Tartarus.

All kings will come to the tribunal of God.

A river of divine fire will flow from heaven.

It will then be a glorious sign to all you  
mortals——

a sign which will be wood (i.e. the cross)  
among the faithful and the  
desired horn——

the life of pious men, a stumbling block for the



world,  
and a light in the waters among the twelve  
springs.  
An iron rod of shepherds will conquer.  
God now proclaims this in our acrostics——  
as immortal savior, king who suffers on our  
behalf.

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2. Optatus of Milevis (d. before 400 C.E.), De schismate Donatistarum  
3.2 (c. 365 C.E.) = WS 64 = Dölger 1:153-54, 2:33 = PL 11:990f. =  
CSEL 26 (C. Ziwsa, 1893)

Et tamen horum omnium nihil actum est cum voto nostro, nihil cum consilio, nihil cum conscientia, nihil cum opere, sed gesta sunt omnia in dolore dei amare plorantis et in ultionem aquae, quam contra interdictum iterum movistis transducentes ad vos aquam antiquae piscinae, sed nescio an cum illo pisce, qui Christus intellegitur, cuius fel et iecur tulit Tobias ad tutelam feminae Sarae et ad inlumptionem Tobiae non videntis: eiusdem piscis visceribus Asmodeus daemon a Sara puella fugatus est, quae intellegitur ecclesia, et caecitas a Tobia exclusa est, hic est piscis, qui in baptisate per inocationem fontalibus undis inseritur, ut quae aqua fuerat, a pisce etiam piscina vocitetur,<sup>1</sup> cuius piscis nomen secundum appellationem graecam in uno nomine per singulas litteras turbam sanctorum nominum continet, IXΘΥΣ, quod est latinum: “Iesus Christus, dei filius, salvator,” hanc...piscinam, quae in omni catholica per totum orbem terrarum ad vitam generis humani salutaribus undis exuberat . . .

And yet nothing of these things was done with our (i.e. Catholic) prayer, nothing with our advice, nothing with our conscience, nothing with our labor, but all things were done to the bitter grief of a weeping God and to the punishment of water. Against the prohibition, for a second time you have set into motion the water of an ancient fish pool,<sup>1</sup> but probably with that fish which is understood as Christ, whose gall bladder and liver Tobit took for the care of his wife Sara and for his recovery of sight after he could not see. By means of the entrails of this fish, the demon Asmodeus fled from the girl Sara, by whom is to be understood the church. And by means of it, blindness was removed from Tobit. This is the fish, which is implanted by invocation in spring waters so that what was water is, by means of the fish, to be called a fish pool, whose name “fish” contains in one name through individual letters the crowd of holy names according to the Greek appellation IXΘΥΣ, which in Latin is “Jesus Christ, son of God” . . . this pool, which for every Catholic throughout the world abounds in water that is salvific for the life of the human species.

## Notes

1. That is, the Donatists rebaptize Catholics who enter into their community; this is considered unlawful in orthodox tradition.

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3. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), De civitate Dei (413-426 C.E.) 18.23 = WS 29 = Dölger 2:34-35 = PL 41:579 = CCL 14.2 (1955)

Eodem tempore nonnulli Sibyllam Erythraeam vaticinatam ferunt. Sibyllas autem Varro prodit plures fuisse, non unam. Haec sane Erythraea Sibylla quaedam de Christo manifesta conscripsit; quod etiam nos prius in Latina lingua versibus male Latinis et non stantibus legimus per nescio cuius interpretis imperitiam, sicut post cognovimus. Nam vir clarissimus Flaccianus, qui etiam proconsul fuit, homo facillimae facundiae multaeque doctrinae, cum de Christo conloqueremur, Graecum nobis codicem protulit, carmina esse dicens Sibyllae Erythraeae, ubi ostendit quodam loco in capitibus versuum ordinem litterarum ita se habentem, ut haec in eo verba legerentur: Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ, quod est Latine, “Jesus Christus Dei filius salvator.” Hi autem versus, quorum primae litterae istum sensum, quem diximus, reddunt, sicut eos quidam Latinis et stantibus versibus est interpretatus, hoc continent:

I Iudicii signum tellus sudore madescet.  
H E caelo rex adveniet per saecula futurus,  
Σ Scilicet ut carnem praesens, ut udicet orbem  
O Unde Deum cernent incredulus atque findelis  
Y Celsum cum sanctis aevi iam termino in ipso  
Σ Sic animae cum carne aderunt, quas udicat ipse,  
X Cum, iacet incultus densis in vepribus orbis.  
P Reicient simulacra viri, cunctam quoque gazam,  
E Exuret terras ignis pontumque polumque  
I Inquirens, taetri portas effringet Averni.  
Σ Sanctorum sed enim cunctae lux libera carni  
T Tradetur, sontes aeterna flamma cremabit  
O Occultos actus retegens tunc quisque loquetur  
Σ Secreta, atque Deus reserabit pectora luci.  
⊙ Tunc erit et luctus, stridebunt dentibus omnes.  
E Eripitur solis iubar et chorus interit astris.  
O Volvetur caelum lunaris splendor obibit;  
Y Deiciet colles, valles extollet ab imo.  
Y Non erit in rebus hominum sublime vel altum.  
I Iam aequantur campis montes et caerula ponti  
O Omnia cessabunt, tellus confracta peribit:  
Σ Sic pariter fontes torrentur fluninaque igni.  
Σ Sed tuba tum sonitum tristem demittet ab alto  
Ω Orbe, gemens facinus miserum variosque labores,  
T Tartareumque chaos monstrabit terra dehiscens.  
H Et coram hic Domino reges sistentur ad unum.  
P Reccidet e caelo ignisque et sulphuris amnis.

In his Latinis versibus de Graeco utcumque translatis ibi non potuit ille sensus occurrere, qui fit, cum litterae, quae sunt in eorum capitibus, connectuntur, ubi "Y" littera in Graeco posita est, quia non potuerunt Latina verba inveniri, quae ab eadem littera inciperent et sententiae convenirent. Hi autem sunt versus tres, quintus et octavus decimus et nonus decimus. Denique si litteras quae sunt in capitibus omnium versuum conectentes horum trium quae scriptae sunt non legamus, sed pro eis "Y" litteram, tamquam in eisdem locis ipsa sit posita, recordemur, exprimitur in quindue verbis: "Iesus Christus Dei Filius Salvator"; sed cum Graece hoc dicitur, non Latine. Et sunt versus viginti et septem, qui numerus quadratum ternarium solidum reddit. Tria enim ter ducta sunt novem; et ipsa novem si ter ducantur, ut ex lato in altum figura consurgat, ad viginti septem perveniunt. Horum autem Graecorum quinque verborum, quae sunt Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ, quod est Latine "Iesus Christus Dei Filius Salvator," si primas litteras iungas, erit ἰχθῦς, id est piscis, in quo nomine mystice intellegitur Christus, eo quod in huius mortalitatis abysso velut in aquarum profunditate vivus, hoc est sine peccato, esse potuerit.

Some record that in that time the Erythraean Sibyl was prophecying. Yet Varro reports that there were many Sibyls, not just one. Clearly the Erythraean Sibyl wrote things that concern Christ. I first read these verses in bad Latin and in bad metre composed by some unskilled interpreter, as I later learned. For Flaccianus, a Vir Clarissimus, who was among other things proconsul, a man of fluid eloquence and of profound learning, when we were talking about Christ, showed me a Greek codex, saying that they were the poems of the Erythraean Sibyl. There he pointed out to me the order of the letters at the beginning of the verses, so that these words might be read in it: Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ, which in Latin is "Jesus Christ Son of God Savior." Indeed these verses, whose first letters gave this meaning, which, I have stated, contain the following verses in Latin and in metre:

(verse translation of the acrostic by Henry Bettenson in Augustine, Concerning the City of God. Harmondsworth England: Penguin Books, 1972)

In token of the judgement day the earth shall  
drip with sweat  
Eternally to reign, a king shall come from  
heavenly seat,  
Strictly to judge all flesh in power, to judge  
the world in might.  
On this, belief and unbelief shall have our God  
in sight,  
Uplifted with his saints on high when this  
world's end has come  
So shall all souls in flesh attend before his

throne of doom.

**CH**oked with thick briars and all untilled the  
earth now lies forlorn

**R**ejected all man's idols now, his treasures  
turned to scorn:

**E**ach land shall be consumed by flames that  
search both sea and sky,

**I**nfernal gates of loathsome hell in fiery ruin  
lie.

**S**alvation's light shall be shed forth on saints  
exempt from blame:

**T**o guilty men that day shall bring the ever-  
lasting flame.

**O**bscurest acts shall be revealed, his secrets  
each impart,

**S**o shall God bring all thoughts to light, un-  
locking every heart.

**T**hen all shall gnash their teeth, the sound of  
wailing shall arise,

**E**xtinct the sun's bright ray, the dance of  
planets in the skies.

**O**'erhead the sky shall roll away, quenched be  
the moon's bright glow;

**U**plifted shall the valleys be, the hills shall  
be laid low,

**U**ntil in all the world remains no eminence or  
height;

**I**nto the plains subside the hills; the seas of  
azure bright

**O**n a sudden cease; the earth itself shall  
perish, riven and rent,

**S**prings shall likewise be parched by fire, the  
streams by heat be spent.

**S**adly the trumpet then shall blare, and sound  
its mournful strains

**O**n high, lamenting deed of woe and mortals'  
varied pains.

**T**artarus shows its vast abyss, as earth gapes  
open wide.

**E**nthroned sits God, and kings shall stand for  
judgement side by side;

**R**ivers of fire and brimstone stream from heaven,  
a fearful tide.

(my translation resumes) In these Latin verses, translated in one way or another from the Greek, the right meaning can not emerge—which depends on the fact that the letters at the beginning (of each verse) are connected, where (for example) the letter “upsilon” was indicated in the Greek—because no Latin words can be found which begin with this letter and are appropriate for the meaning. There are in fact three verses of this kind—the fifth, the eighteenth, and the nineteenth. If we connect the letters which are written at the beginning of all the verses, except for those three which we do not read—but, instead of an “upsilon,” another letter is put in these places—I recall that it is expressed in five words: “Jesus Christ Son (of) God Savior.” There are twenty-seven verses, which gives the sum of three cubed. Three times three makes nine, so that from width to height the number rises to twenty seven. Out of these five words, Ἰησοῦς Χρῆστὸς Υἱὸς Σωτῆρ, which in Latin is “Jesus Christ Son (of) God Savior,” will be “fish” (ἰχθῦς), if you join the first letters. That is, it is a fish, in whose name is mystically understood Christ, because while living he could be without sin in the abyss of this mortal condition, as if entering into the depths of the waters (i.e. a fish).

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4. Maximinus (the Arian, born c. 360-365 C.E.; he debated with Augustine of Hippo in 427/428 C.E., but he is not Maximus of Turin), Contra paganos 4 = PL 57:789 = Dölger 1:67

Iste Jesus Christus [ . . . ] in principio erat Verbum apud Deum [ . . . ] a Sibilla IXΘΥΣ, Graeco nomine, quod significat “piscis” operatus est, eo quod mundi vel saeculi huius mare ingressurus esset. Nam et litterarum ipsarum Graecarum considera ingens mysterium IXΘΥΣ: I iota, hoc est Jesus; X chi, id est Xptos; Θ theta, Theu; Y Yios, Σ sigma, Soter; quod Latine explanatur “Jesus Christus Dei Filius Salvator,” in capite harum quinque litterarum Graecarum mysterium hoc est. . . .

This Jesus Christ [ . . . ] was in the beginning the Word with God [ . . . ] (who was) honored with the Greek name IXΘΥΣ from the Sibyl, which means a “fish” that was about to enter the sea of the world/age. Also consider the huge mystery of these letters IXΘΥΣ: “iota” is Jesus; “chi” is Christ; “theta” is God; “U” is son; “sigma” is savior. In Latin this is to be explained as Jesus Christ Son of God Savior. In sum, this is the mystery of these five letters. . . .

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5. Quodvultdeus (d. c. 453), Liber promissionum 2.39.90 = WS 97 = Dölger 1:66, 2:3, 5:364 = CC (R. Braun, 1976) = Texts # X.D.5 and XII.2 in this appendix (1)

With reference to Tobit 6.1-9

qui tributum pro se et pro Petro et caecato lumen reddidit Paul, satians ex se ipso in litore discipulos et toti se offerens mundo. IXΘΥΣ namque, latine “piscem,” sacratissimis litteris maiores nostri hoc interpretati sunt: IXΘΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ, ex Sibyllinis versibus colligentes quod est “Jesus Christus filius Dei salvator,” piscis sua in passione decoctus, cuius ex interioribus remediis cottidie inluminamur et pascimur.

He returned his payment on behalf of himself and on behalf of Peter, and he returned the light to Paul, satisfying the disciples by himself and offering himself to the entire world. For our ancestors interpreted this IXΘΥΣ—in Latin “fish”—by gathering the initials from the Sybilline verses, which is “Jesus Christ son of God savior,” a fish cooked in its passion, from whose innards we are given sight and nourished with remedies.

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#### XIV. THE FISH EQUALS CHRIST

1. Jerome (c. 342-420 C.E.), Epistle 7.3 (398) = Dölger 1:83 = PL 22:339 = CSEL 54 (I. Hilberg, 1910-18)

Bonus, ut scribitis,<sup>1</sup> quasi filius ἰχθῦος, id est, piscis, aquosa petit.<sup>2</sup>

As you write (in your letter),<sup>1</sup> Bonus seeks after watery things, as if he were a son of ἰχθῦος, that is a fish.<sup>2</sup>

#### Notes

1. Aquosa could possibly refer to both baptism and retirement; see comments of T. C. Lawler in ACW 33:198-99.

2. Referring to Chromatius, Iovinus, and Eusebius.

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#### XV. FISH ATTACHED TO BIBLICAL FIGURES

1. Greek Physiologus 17 (200-300 C.E.) and Latin Physiologus 30 (translated from Greek in the early fourth century C.E., but preserving traditions that are probably sometimes even older than the Greek version) = Dölger 5:318-19

Greek: Περὶ ἀσπιδογελῶνης

1. . . . ἔστι τοῖνυν κήτος ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ἀσπιδοχελώνη καλούμενον· δύο φυσι~κάς ἐνεργείας ἔχει. πρώτη αὐτοῦ φύσις αὐτή. ἔαν πει~νάσῃ, ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάσα εὐωδία ἐξέρχεται ἐκ τοῦ στό~ματος αὐτοῦ. καὶ συνά~γον~ται οἱ μικροὶ ἰχθύες εἰς τὸ στόμα αὐ~τοῦ στοιβαζόμενοι, καὶ κατα~πί~νει. τοὺς δὲ γε μεγάλους καὶ τε~λει~ους ἰχθύας οὐχ εὐ~ρίσ~κει μὴ προσεγ~γίζον~τες αὐτῷ. οὕτως καὶ ὁ διάβολος καὶ οἱ αἰρετικοὶ διὰ τῆς χρηστολο~γίας καὶ ἀπά~τῆς τῆς δοκούσης εἶναι εὐ~ω~δίας δελεάζουσι τοὺς νηπιώδεις καὶ ἀτε~λεῖς τὴν διάνοιαν. τοὺς δὲ τελείους τὸ φρόνημα ἀκατασχέ~τους ἔχουσι. οἷον Ἰὼβ τέλειος ἰχθύς, Μωϋσῆς, Ἰερემίας, Ἡσα~ίας, καὶ πᾶς ὁ χορὸς τῶν προ~φη~τῶν. ὡς ἔσωσε φυγεῖν Ἰου~δίθ τὸν Ὀλο~φέρην, Ἐσθῆρ τὸν Ἄρταξέρ~ξην, Σωσάννα τοὺς πρεσ~βυτέρους, Θεέκλα τὸν Θάμυριν.

1. . . . Indeed there is a large creature in the sea, called aspidochelone. It has two natural activities; this is its first nature. If it is hungry, it opens its mouth, and an altogether sweet fragrance comes from its mouth. And the small fish join in closely packed fashion as they enter into its mouth, and it swallows them up. Yet, we do not discover those large and perfect fish approaching it. In this way, the devil and the heretics lure those whose minds are foolish and imperfect through fair speaking and an apparently sweet fragrance. But they are not able to hold back the minds of the perfect. Of such a kind are the perfect fish: Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and all the chorus of the prophets. In a similar fashion, Judith fled Holofernes, Esther fled Ataxerxes, Susannah fled the elders, (and) Thecla fled Thamuris.

Latin: De Ceto id est Aspidocelon

2. . . . Aliud naturale habet cetus. Si autem esurierit, multum adaperit os suum, et omnis odor bonus per os eius procedit. Odorantes autem pusilli pisciculi secuntur eius odorem, et conponant se in ore magni ceti illius. Cum autem impletum fuerit os eius, concludit os suum, et gluttit pusillos omnes illos pisciculos, hoc est modicos in fide. Maiores autem et perfectos pisces non invenimus adpropriare ad cetum. Consummati enim sunt perfecti. Etenim Paulus apostolus dixit: **Non enim eius versutias ignoramus.**<sup>1</sup> Iob perfectissimus piscis est, Moises et reliqui alii prophete; Ioseph effugit cetum magnum, principis mulierem, sicut in Genesis scriptum est;<sup>2</sup> sicut et Thecla Thamyrudum, sicut Susanna duos senes Babylonicos iniquos; Hester et Iudit effugerunt Artaxersen et Ologernem; tres pueri Nabuchodonosor regem, magnum cetum; et Sarra filia Raguelis Nasmodeum (sicut in Tobia). Bene ergo Phisiologus dixit de aspidocelon cetu magno.

The whale has another nature. If it grows hungry, it opens its mouth wide, and an entirely good fragrance proceeds through its mouth. Tiny little fish, which catch the scent, follow it and put themselves in the mouth of that great whale. When its mouth is full, however, it closes its

mouth, and swallows all these tiny little fish—that is, those weak in faith. In contrast, we do not find the larger and perfect fish approaching the whale. For the perfect ones have achieved the highest degree. As Paul the apostle has said: **For we are not ignorant of his cunning.**<sup>1</sup> Job fled the great whale, the wife of the prince, as it was written in Genesis;<sup>2</sup> just as Thecla fled Thamyris and just as Susanna fled the two old unrighteous Babylonian men; Hester and Judith fled Artaxerxes and Holofernes; the three boys fled king Nebuchadnezzar, the great whale; and Sara, the daughter of Raguelis, fled Nasmodeus (as in Tobit). Physiologus spoke well, therefore, of the aspidoceleon, the great whale.

### Notes

1. 2 Cor. 2.11.
2. Gen. 39.

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2. Cena Cypriani (= Pseudo-Cyprian, probably c. 400 C.E.) = Dölger 5:357-58 = PL 4:1007-14

Describes an imaginary banquet, in which biblical figures participate and take a particular fish that is associated with them

Item Jacobus et Andreas intulerunt: sustulit itaque asellum Jesus, labeonem Moyses, lupum Benjamin, mugilem Abel, muraenam Eva, pellamidem Adam, locustam Joannes, gladium Cain, captionem Absalon, polypum Pharaon, turpidudinem Lia, auratam Thamar, scarum Agar, cantharidem David, halecem Joseph.

Likewise, James and Andrew brought in (fish): Jesus took a donkey fish; Moses took a lip fish; Benjamin took a bass; Abel took a grey mullet; Eve took a lamprey; Adam took a tuna; John took a crawfish; Cain took a swordfish; Absalon took a captio; Pharaoh took an octopus; Lia took a ray; Thamar took a gilthead; Hagar took a parrot wrasse; David took the black bream; (and) Joseph took allec (a type of fish sauce).

Dölger commentary: donkey fish, because Jesus rode a donkey in to Jerusalem (John 12.14: “et invenit Jesus asellum, et sedit super eum”); a lip fish because of the poor oratory of Moses (Ex. 6.12, 30: “cum incircumcisis sim labiis”); a pike—or literally wolf fish—because Benjamin was greedy as a wolf (Gen. 4.4: “Beniamin lupus rapax”); the choice of a mullet is not clear; the lamprey, because it is similar to the snake, and Eve was closely associated with the snake in the Garden of Eden; the pelamys, because it is a mud fish (Festus, De verborum significatu, p. 225, ll. 13f.: “Pelamys genus piscis dictum, quod in luto moretur quod Graece dicitur πηλόζ”), and humanity was created from the mud (Gen.



2.7, “formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae”); a crawfish—or literally locust fish—because John the Baptist ate locusts (Mark 1.6: “et locustas . . . edebat”); a swordfish, because Cain was a murderer, and the “sword” (gladium) was associated with murder; a captio, because Absalon prepared traps for his father; an octopus, because Pharaoh (like the octopus) was associated with evil; the choice of a ray is not clear (despite Dölger’s explanation); a gilthead, because it was beautiful like Thamar (2 Sam 13.1: speciosissima); the choice of a parrot wrasse is not clear; cantharus because it is similar to cantare (“to sing”), and David was well-known for singing; and the choice of allec is not clear.

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## XVI. THE LARGE SEA CREATURES

1. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379 C.E.), Hexameron 7.6 (before 370 C.E.) = SCh 26 (S. Giet, 1949)

6. Ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὰ κήτη τὰ μεγάλα. Οὐκ ἐπειδὴ καρίδος καὶ μαινίδος μείζονα, διὰ τοῦτο μεγάλα εἰρηται, ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ τοῖς μεγίστοις ὄρεσι τῷ ὄγκῳ τοῦ σώματος παρισά~ζε~ται. Ταῦτα μέντοι τηλικαῦτα ὄντα οὐ περι~τάς, οὐδὲ αἰγαλοὺς διατρί~βει, ἀλλὰ τὸ Ἄτλαν~τι~κὸν λεγόμενον πέλαγος ἐνοι~κεῖ. Τοιαῦτά ἐστι τὰ πρὸς φόβον καὶ ἐκπληξιν ἡμετέραν δημιουργ~γη~θέντα ζῷα. Ἐὰν δὲ ἀκούσης ὅτι τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πλοίων ἠπλωμένοις ἰστίοις ἐξ οὐ~ρι~ας φερόμενα τὸ μικρότατον ἰχθύδιον ἢ ἐχενίς οὕτω ῥα~δί~ως ἰσ~τη~σιν, «Ὡστε ἀκίνητον ἐπὶ πλείστον φυλάσσειν τὴν ναὺν ὡσπερ κα~ταρριζωθεῖσαν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ πελάγει, ἄρ’ οὐχὶ καὶ ἐν τῷ μικρῷ τοῦ~τω τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς τοῦ κτι~σαν~τος δυνάμεως λαμβάνεις ἀπόδειξ~ιν. Οὐ γὰρ μόνοι ξιφία, καὶ πρίονες, καὶ κύνες, καὶ φάλαινα καὶ ζῦγαινα, φοβερὰ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρυγόνος κέντρον τῆς θαλασσι~ας, καὶ ταύτης νεκράς, καὶ λαγῶς ὁ θαλάσσιος, οὐχ ἥττον ἐστὶ φοβερὰ, ταχεῖαν καὶ ἀπαραίτητον τὴν φθορὰν ἐπι~φέ~ροντα. Ὁῦτω σε διὰ πάν~των ἐγρηγορέναι ὁ κτίστης βού~λεται, ἐν τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν ἐλπίδι τὰς ἀπ’ αὐτῶν βλάβας ἀπο~διδράσκεις.

And God made the great sea monsters. Not because they are larger than a shrimp and a sprat, are they called great, but because they are equal in the bulk of their bodies to mountains. They do not pass on the coasts or on the shores, but they inhabit the sea, which is called the Atlantic. Such are the creatures created for our fear and for our consternation. If you hear that the very tiniest fish, the remora, easily stops the largest of ships that is borne along by a fair wind with sails spread out, so that it keeps the ship immovable for a long time, as if rooted in the ocean, do you not have proof in this little fish of the conquering power of the creator? For not only are swordfish, sawfish, sharks, whales, and hammerheads to be

feared, but also the spike of the sting-ray, even when dead; and the sea-hare, which is not less fearful, brings swift and inevitable death. Thus, on account of all this, the creator wishes you to be awake in order that, through hope in God, you may flee the harm that comes from them.

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## XVII. THE USE OF FISH IN ICONOGRAPHY

1. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215 C.E.), Instructor 3.11 = WS 56 = Dölger 1:15-16 = PG 8:634 = GCS 1 (third ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu, 1972)

αἱ δὲ σφραγίδες ἡμῶν εἴστων πελειᾶς ἢ ἰχθύος ἢ ναῦς οὐριοδρομοῦσα, ἢ λύρα μουσική, ἢ κέχρηται Πολυκράτης, ἢ ἀγκυρα ναυτική, ἢ Σέλευκος ἐνεχαράττετο τῇ γλυφῇ; καὶ ἀλιεύων τις ἢ ἀποστόλου μεμνήσεται, καὶ τῶν ἐξ ὕδατος ἀνασπωμένων παιδίων. οὐ γὰρ εἰδώλων πρόσωπα ἐναποτυπωτέον, οἷς καὶ τὸ προσέχειν ἀπειρήται· οὐδὲ μὴν ξίφος, ἢ τόξον τοῖς διώκουσιν ἢ κύπελλα τοῖς σωφρονούσιν.

Our seal rings should consist of doves or a fish or a ship running with a fair wind, or a musical lyre which Polycrates used, or a nautical anchor which Seleucos had engraved on his device. If someone is fishing, it will remind one of the apostle and of the children rising up from the water (i.e. baptism). So one should not mould the faces of idols, away from which attention should be taken away. Nor should our seal rings consist of a dagger or a bow, since we follow peace, nor should they consist of a drinking cup, since we follow moderation.

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## XVIII. THE OCCUPATION OF FISHING

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215), Instructor 3.10 = WS 4 = Dölger 5:314 = PG 8:634 = GCS 1 (third ed., O. Stählin and U. Treu, 1972)

<καλή> καὶ ἡ ἀλεία, ὡς τῷ Πέτρῳ, εἰ σχολὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν λόγῳ μαθημάτων ἀγοιμεν.

(The profession of) fishing is good, as it was for Peter, if we have leisure time from the study of the word.

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## XIX. FISH DYING OUT OF WATER

1. Antony of Egypt (c. 251-356 C.E.), Sententiae = WS 15 = Dölger 2:60, n. 2 = PG 40:1086

Here showing that early Christians can identify themselves with fish

Quemadmodum educti extra aquam pisces emoriuntur; ita accidit monacho quoque, si diu morabitur extra cellam suam.

Just as fish die when taken out of the water, so this also befalls the monk, who dallies for a long time out of his cell.

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2. Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379) In Hexameron 7.1 (before 370) = SCh 26 (S. Giet, 1949)

»Ἐδειξέ σοι τὴν φυσικὴν τῶν νηκτῶν πρὸς τὸ ὕδωρ συγγένειαν, διὸ μικρὸν οἱ ἰχθύες χωρισθέντες τοῦ ὕδατος διαφθεῖρονται.

He showed you the natural union of swimming creatures with water, since fish die when they are separated for a short time from the water.

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## XX. THE BIRTH OF THE ANTICHRIST FROM THE SMALL FISH

1. Apocalypse of Daniel 11.1-13 = edition of K. Berger in Die griechische Daniel-Dieges (with some changes made by me)

Βασιλεύοντος δὲ τοῦ Δαν ἐξελεύσεται ὁ ἀντίχριστος ἀπὸ τῶν καταχθονίων τῆς ἀβύσσου ὑπὸ βάραθρων καὶ ὑπὸ βρυχῶν τῆς γῆς. καὶ ἐλεύσεται εἰς ἰχθὺν γαρίδιον μικρὸν καὶ ἀνέλθῃ ἐν τῇ εὐρυχώρῳ θαλάσσει. (καὶ μεγαλυνθήσεται) καὶ ἀλιευθήσεται ὑπὸ ἀλιέων δώδεκα. καὶ ἔκμανεῖς γενήσονται οἱ ἀλιεῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους. κατακυριεύσει αὐτῶν ὁ εἷς, οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Ἰούδας καὶ λαβὼν ἰχθὺν εἰς κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ ἔλθων εἰς χωρίον ὄνομα Γουζηθ πωλήσει τὸν ἰχθὺν εἰς τριάκοντα ἀργύρια. καὶ τὸ ὄψαριον ὠνήσεται κόρη παρθένος ὄνομα αὐτῆς Ἀδικία διότι ἀδικίας υἱὸς μέλει τεχθῆναι ἐξ αὐτῆς. τὸ δὲ ἐπώνυμον αὐτῆς εἶσται ἀπώλεια. αὐτὴ γὰρ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ ἰχθύος ἀπομένη (οἱ ἐπομένη) σγκυος εὐρεθήσεται. καὶ τεχθήσεται δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς ὁ ἀντίχριστος. τεχθήσεται δὲ τριμνιότης.

In the reign of Dan, the Antichrist will come from the lower regions of the abyss beneath the pits and bellowings of the earth. And one particular tiny garos fish will come and head up into the wide open sea. And he will increase in size and will be fished by twelve fishermen. And the fish-

ermen will grow angry with one another. One of them will prevail, whose name is Judas, and taking the fish as his inheritance and going into a place named Gouze, he will sell the fish for thirty silver pieces. And a virgin girl will purchase the fish, her name being Injustice, because the son of injustice will be born from her. Her surname will be destruction. For by touching the head of the fish she will be found pregnant. And the Antichrist will be born from her. In three months he will be born.