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“All you have created rightly gives you praise”

Re-thinking Liturgical Studies,
Re-rooting Worship in Creation

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Abstract

This essay challenges interpretations of Christian worship that have constricted the understanding of who worships in starkly anthropocentric ways. In conversation with some hitherto largely ignored early Christian ritual texts, the essay seeks to return liturgical studies to an earlier, arguably more foundational and primordial interpretation of worship, one that re-roots worship *in principio*, i.e., in God's primordial activity in creation. Recovering this understanding of worship is driven by contemporary realities, namely life (and worship) on a planet now clearly in peril, a peril that is anthropogenic no less.

Keywords

Creation | Liturgy | Eucharist | Traditio Apostolica | Testament of Adam

“All you have created rightly gives you praise”

*Re-thinking Liturgical Studies, Re-rooting Worship in Creation**

Teresa BERGER

1 Introduction: The Challenge

In this essay, I seek to challenge interpretations of Christian worship that have dominated the field of liturgical studies in modern times. The focus of this challenge is on interpretations that have constricted the understanding of who belongs to the worshiping assembly, narrowing it along anthropocentric lines. For example, over the course of the twentieth century, thinking about liturgy has centered on the encounter, in worship, between God and human beings, with this encounter often understood as a “dialogue”. I do not discount the liberating potential of this understanding, coming as it did in response to dominant images of worship as something akin to a court ceremonial, that is, an audience for lowly subjects who came to pay homage to their Sovereign, or as a school, where students gathered for instruction. Moving beyond all these images – i.e., liturgy as a “dialogue”, as a court ceremonial, or as a site of learning – I endeavor to return to an earlier, arguably more foundational and primordial interpretation of worship. This interpretation, retrieved through hitherto largely ignored early Christian ritual texts, re-roots worship *in principio*, that is, in God’s primordial activity in creation. My interest in recovering this under-

* This essay offers a version of a paper presented at the meeting of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Liturgiewissenschaftlerinnen und Liturgiewissenschaftler im deutschen Sprachgebiet* in Salzburg, Austria, in 2021. A German version of the paper is forthcoming in an edited volume that will appear in the series *Quaestiones Disputatae*.

standing of worship is driven by contemporary realities. We live (and worship) on a planet now clearly in peril, a peril that is anthropogenic, that is, human-made, no less. At the same time, new insights have emerged into human lives as part of a cosmic whole, and there is widening recognition of the agency of other-than-human beings as well as a broadening of the notion of personhood. Into this moment in time, an ancient vision of worship suddenly speaks afresh. Re-rooting worship in creation is also one possible response to the increasing number of our contemporaries who enter into creation-attuned and environment-attentive practices in their lives, ritual practices included, and who do so with sometimes astounding energy and devotion. The field of liturgical studies must confront its own historical occlusion of such practices in order to speak meaningfully into this world.

Before turning to some early Christian texts in earnest, it is worth noting that even contemporary liturgical books know this theme of the worship of God by everything created. A succinct formulation of it appears in the third Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Missal.¹ The Latin text says, in the Post-Sanctus: *merito te laudat omnis a te condita creatura*, which is rendered in the 2011 English-language Missal, with its decidedly Latinate style, as: “All you have created rightly gives you praise.”² Even if other vernacular translations are not quite as faithful to the original Latin (the German translation is a case in point), the Latin and English capture well the insight that all creation turns in worship to God, the Uncreated One. Rooted in that insight, one can then posit that the *ecclesia orans* has to be understood as a part of, and indeed embedded in the primordial worship of God by all that exists. To be precise here: This vision of creation-wide worship encompasses more than “nature”, or “Mother Earth”, or “the biotic community”. Creation, as a theological category, is broader than any of these terms, ultimately encompassing everything the Creator has called

¹ For more on this theme in the Missal, see Joris GELDHOF, *Fruit of the Earth, Work of Human Hands, Bread of Life. The Ordo Missae on Creation and the World*, in: Teresa BERGER (ed.), *Full of Your Glory. Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation*, Collegeville/MN 2019, 245–265.

² The Roman Missal. For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America. English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition, Collegeville/MN 2011, 650.

into existence: from sand to the seraphim, from stardust to the edges of the universe, and beyond.

An insistence on worship as the primordial posture of everything created and an endeavor to re-root Christian liturgy within that larger whole is clearly located within the manifold contemporary reflections on “Liturgy and Creation”.³ At the same time, I submit that this insistence on worship as the work of everything created is also the most radical claim within these contemporary reflections, in terms of a liturgical-theological foundation. Such insistence, after all, is not simply about creation as a theme in worship, or about praise and thanksgiving for creation in the liturgy. Rather, this insistence is about something more radical, namely a new – or better, ancient – understanding of who is included in the worshipping assembly. In this understanding, liturgical *communio* is inter-creaturely, and exercised in the praise of God offered by all that has been called into existence. Such an understanding of liturgy is not quite as new as it might seem, in the field of liturgical studies. Writing 40 years ago about the mention of animals in some newly-composed eucharistic prayer texts, Balthasar Fischer insisted that animals were not only objects of praise and thanksgiving, but were themselves liturgical subjects. Fischer spoke of a “co-operation” of animals in Catholic liturgy.⁴ He saw this phenomenon not as a fashionable trend, but rather as a part of an “ancient creation spirituality”, which he found in evidence in, for example, the Anaphora of St. James and the Apostolic Constitutions.

Balthasar Fischer’s insistence leads to a first crucial point: There is a genealogy, a liturgical tradition behind a vision of worship in communion with everything created, and this genealogy is traceable in Jewish and Christian sources since earliest times. To sketch this very briefly: The conviction that the whole created world worships God is present in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Psalm 148) and in the Septuagint, especially in the *Bene-*

³ See, for example, the thematic issues of *Heiliger Dienst* 71/2 (2017): “Erfreue dich, Himmel, erfreue dich, Erde. Liturgie und Schöpfung”, and of *Liturgy* 27/2 (2012): “Liturgy and Ecology”.

⁴ Balthasar FISCHER, Die Känguruhs im Hochgebet. Zur Rolle der Tiere in den jüngsten Eucharistischen Hochgebeten der katholischen Kirche, in: Boris BOBRISKOV et al. *Communio Sanctorum* [Mélanges offerts à Jean-Jaques VON ALLMEN], Geneva 1982, 173–178, here: 177.

dicite found in the Greek additions to Daniel (Dan 3:52–90, LXX); it also marks the hymns in the last book of the New Testament, Revelation (Rev 4–5).⁵ The same theme is voiced at the end of Tertullian’s treatise on the Lord’s prayer: *orat omnis creatura*.⁶ It appears in the so-called *Apostolic Tradition*, in the Anaphora of St. James, and in the *Catechetical Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It is sounded again and again in hymnic texts, such as the *Phos Hilaron*, the *Te Deum*, and the *Gloria Laus et Honor*. The theme is present in medieval saints’ lives, best known from the life of St. Francis of Assisi, but Francis is not alone (and deserves to be rescued from the exceptionalism that is regularly forced upon his creation-attentive spirituality).⁷ The theme also finds expression in Hildegard of Bingen’s *Scivias*, and in Henry Suso’s *Life of the Servant*. The conviction that all creation praises the Creator continues to sound in a number of hymns from the 17th century onward and has found renewed expression in several contemporary hymns.⁸ The theme has also found entry into Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

The vision of creation-wide worship, however, continues to be ignored or misconstrued. Glimpses of this vision are dismissed as archaic, animistic, or, at best as “poetic” or “mystical” in nature. These descriptions all marginalize, in one way or another. I seek to offer an alternative interpretation of the vision of creation-wide worship, namely that this vision is a vital part of lived faith through the ages. In what follows, I highlight glimpses of this ancient vision in order to enable it to speak, in a constructive

⁵ For more on the biblical witness, see, *inter alia*, Richard BAUCKHAM, *Joining Creation’s Praise of God*, in: *Ecotheology* 7 (2002) 45–59; Terence E. FRETHEIM, *Nature’s Praise of God*, in: ID., *God and World in the Old Testament. A Relational Theology of Creation*, Nashville/TN 2005, 249–268; and Peter J. ATKINS, *Praise by Animals in the Hebrew Bible*, in: *JSOT* 44 (2020) 500–513.

⁶ TERTULLIAN, *orat.* 29 (EVANS 40).

⁷ To name just one other example: St. Benno of Meissen († 1106), disturbed in his contemplation by a frog’s croaking, commanded the frog to silence, but upon realizing that he had silenced another creature’s song of praise, encouraged the frog to continue croaking and praising God. The story is told in English translation by Helen WADDELL, *Beasts and Saints*, Grand Rapids/MI 1996, 65 f.

⁸ See, for example, the recent supplement to Evangelical Lutheran Worship titled *All Creation Sings* (Minneapolis/MN 2020).

retrieval. I begin with one of the best-known texts of early Christian liturgical history.

2 *An Ancient Vision: All Creation Worships*

2.1 *Traditio Apostolica 41.15 f.*

One of the most intensely studied liturgical texts of recent times, the so-called *Apostolic Tradition*, includes a mystifying passage that has received little notice to date. This passage is found across all versions of the ancient text, with minor variations between versions. The text is present in the Latin, the Sahidic dialect of Coptic, Arabic, and in Ethiopic versions, including a recently identified early Ethiopic version, now often referred to as Ethiopic I.⁹ The mysterious passage in question must have been a part of the original Greek text underlying the different versions (of which only a few fragments have ever been found) because it is present in the earliest translations, i.e., Latin and Ethiopic I. But the passage also appears in two derivatives of the *Apostolic Tradition*, the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Testamentum Domini*. A third derivative, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, lacks an attestation of this passage, but this is simply part of a larger lacuna in the text.

The passage in question appears in the *Traditio Apostolica*'s recommended fixed cycle of daily prayers (ch. 41.1–18).¹⁰ This horarium, whose hours have been repeatedly and controversially discussed by scholars,¹¹ includes recommendations for two nighttime prayers, one at bedtime and

⁹ In what follows, I use the texts in Paul F. BRADSHAW et al., *The Apostolic Tradition. A Commentary*, ed. by Harold W. ATTRIDGE (Hermeneia), Minneapolis/MN 2002. "Ethiopic I" of the *Traditio Apostolica* was published by Alessandro BAUSI, *La nuova versione etiopica della Traditio Apostolica*. Edizione e traduzione preliminare, in: Paola BUZI – Alberto CAMPLANI (eds.), *Christianity in Egypt. Literary Production and Intellectual Trends [Studies in Honor of Tito ORLANDI]* (SEAug 125), Rome 2011, 19–69. Paul Bradshaw has now also offered an English text of a "reconstructed" *Apostolic Tradition*, in: Paul BRADSHAW, *The Apostolic Tradition Reconstructed. A Text for Students* (JLS 91), Norwich 2021.

¹⁰ The *Apostolic Tradition* includes other sections on daily prayer, but none is as developed as ch. 41, and none includes a reference to prayer at midnight. I therefore do not attend to these other sections here.

¹¹ See, most recently, Nathan CHASE, *Another Look at the 'Daily Office' in the Apostolic Tradition*, in: *StLi* 49 (2019) 5–25.

one in the middle of the night. The latter, prayer at midnight, is my focus here. The horarium of the *Apostolic Tradition*, in which this midnight prayer is recommended, names not only specific times for prayer but also offers warrants, most of them biblical, for the recommended hours. For prayer at midnight, these warrants include a potent cosmological claim. In the Latin version, the text is as follows:

Therefore it is necessary to pray at this hour. For the elders who handed [it] on to us taught us thus, because *at this hour all creation is still for a moment, so that they may praise the Lord* stars and trees and waters stop for an instant, and all the host of angels [that] ministers to him praises God at this hour together with the souls of the righteous. Therefore those who believe ought to take care to pray at this hour.¹²

What the Latin version and all other versions of the *Apostolic Tradition* as well as the derivative *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Testamentum Domini* share are three authorizing claims about the necessity of prayer at midnight. The first claim insists that midnight prayer is rooted in past practice, the knowledge of which is variously ascribed to elders, presbyters, or fathers. Essentially, this is an authorizing strategy grounded in tradition, although the specifics of this recourse to tradition remain shadowy (who exactly are these elders?). A second claim insists that midnight prayer joins human beings to a vast, primordial, cosmic communion of praise. Essentially, this is an authorizing strategy rooted in a specific understanding of the created order. It is not only human beings, or angels, or those who have gone before who worship, but the whole of creation pauses to praise God. Beyond the time stamp, namely midnight, the various categories of created entities mentioned in the different versions of the *Apostolic Tradition* are worth noting. They are stars, trees, plants, and waters – categories that deserve more attention, as do categories that are missing (e.g., animals). Following the vast claim that all creation worships is a third and last claim in the form of a biblical warrant. This warrant seeks to substantiate the importance of midnight prayer by linking it to Christ’s own instructions. The text references Christ invoking the hour of midnight in the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1–13). Here, the long-expected

¹² TrAp 41,15 (BRADSHAW et al. 200). Emphasis mine.

bridegroom finally appears at midnight, hence the importance of staying awake to encounter him. In the *Apostolic Tradition*, the authorizing labor this biblical reference is able to do seems tenuous; it hinges solely on mention of the hour of midnight. However, together with the earlier assertion of a venerable tradition for the practice of midnight prayer, a practice that unites one with the worship of all creation no less, this scriptural warrant adds biblical weight to prayer at midnight.

Given these solemn warrants in the text, why has this moment of prayer received comparatively little attention in scholarly work on the *Apostolic Tradition*? Or, more precisely, why has the notion of prayer in union with the whole creation received so little attention? One reason for the scholarly disinterest in the notion of midnight prayer as a communion in worship with all that exists might well be the seemingly archaic and animistic vision of such prayer. The immense scholarly work on the *Apostolic Tradition* in recent years has yielded comparatively little regarding this passage and its startling claims. In order to shed more light on the theme of worship as primordial, cosmic praise, one has to turn to additional data points for this vision. These data points do exist if one only looks for them. And look we must, today.

2.2 *The Testament of Adam*

A search for additional data points related to the vision of worship that is embedded in the horarium of the *Apostolic Tradition* leads to another horarium of sorts, this one embedded in a pseudepigraphical text titled the *Testament of Adam*. The text as a whole might well be from the third century, and was in all likelihood compiled by a Christian who drew on some older Jewish traditions. The original language of the *Testament of Adam* was probably Syriac, and recension 1 of the Syriac version could be the closest we have to the original.¹³ Like the text of the *Apostolic Tradi-*

¹³ Stephen ROBINSON, who translated and edited the Syriac and Greek versions of the text, argued for this in his *The Testament of Adam. An Examination of the Syriac and Greek Traditions* (SBLDS 52), Chico/CA 1972. Richard BAUCKHAM has questioned Robinson's assessment in his *The Horarium of Adam and the Chronology of the Passion*, in: Basil LOURIE et al. (eds.), *L'église des deux Aliances [Mémoire Annie JAUBERT (1912–1980)]* (OJC 1), Piscataway/NJ 2008, 39–68, here: 42.

tion, the *Testament of Adam* circulated quite widely. It is attested both in a number of languages and in different recensions, including three in Syriac and two in Greek (with ostensibly magical materials woven in). There are also Arabic, Karshuni, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Old Georgian versions.¹⁴ Moreover, a Latin author, Nicetas of Remesiana, seems to have known the text, thereby suggesting that it circulated in the West as well as the East.¹⁵ A tradition of Adam bequeathing a testament to his son Seth, and fragments of the *Testament of Adam*, including a reference to the horarium, also appear in some Islamic sources.¹⁶ And to name only one additional data point, the idea of primordial praise by everything created is powerfully woven into an early medieval Jewish text, the *Pereq Shirah*.

Of particular interest here is the first part of the *Testament of Adam*. This part consists of what scholars have termed a horarium, which is ascribed to Adam. Adam is presented as having passed on knowledge of these “hours” of worship to his son Seth. The text might well be of Jewish origin, but was joined by a Christian author to a clearly Christian prophecy

¹⁴ BAUCKHAM, Horarium of Adam, 39–41, lists the available critical editions of these versions. On the Arabic-Coptic versions in particular, see more recently Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA, *The Testament of Adam in Arabic Dress: Two Coptic-Arabic Witnesses of the Narrative Type ‘b’*, in: Lorenzo DiTOMMASO (eds.), *The Embroidered Bible. Studies in Biblical Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* [Festschrift for Michael E. Stone] (SVTP 26), Leiden 2018, 736–757.

¹⁵ See Nicetas’ sermon *De Psalmodiae Bono*, in: NICETAS OF REMESIANA, *Writings* (Fathers of the Church 7), Washington/DC 2010, 65–76. In this sermon, Nicetas seeks to offer biblical warrants for liturgical singing; he identifies the beginnings of such singing with Moses’ song after the crossing of the Red Sea. It is in this context – of his own preferred biblical warrant for psalmody – that Nicetas warns of a text with a different warrant. He disparages this text as “fictions about the singing of animals, fountains and the elements” (p. 67 f). This, of course, is precisely the theme of the horarium of the *Testament of Adam* – which has led scholars to argue that Nicetas was indeed referring to that particular text, albeit under a butchered title. Nicetas does not engage the text in any depth, simply claiming that it is “neither credible nor authentic” (p. 68). The passage is of some importance nevertheless, since it offers evidence not only for Nicetas’ knowledge of a text that argues for a form of primordial praise, but also the perceived need to disparage this text (and thereby offer it an audience!) in a sermon.

¹⁶ See ROBINSON, *Testament of Adam*, 14; and Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA, *Fragments from the Testament of Adam in Some Arabic Islamic Sources*, in: *JMIH* 4 (2004–2005) 13–21. I thank Dr. Ephrem Ishak for pointing me to this and other texts related to the *Testament of Adam*.

and an angelology, all together forming the *Testament of Adam* as we know it.¹⁷ In what follows, I offer an abbreviated paraphrase of Syriac I from Robinson's critical edition and translation into English:

1st hour of the night: praise of the demons (who in that hour do not harm humans)

2nd hour: praise of the doves

3rd hour: praise of the fish, of fire, and of all the depths below

4th hour: the Trishagion of the Seraphim (which Adam claims to have heard in paradise)

5th hour: praise of the waters above heaven

6th hour: the construction of clouds, and the great fear which occurs at midnight

7th hour: the viewing of their powers when the waters are sleeping

8th hour: spring up of grass while dew descends from heaven

9th hour: praise of the cherubim

10th hour: the praise of human beings; opening of the gates of heaven where the prayers of all living things enter, worship, and depart. Seraphim and roosters beat their wings.

11th hour: joy in all the earth while the sun is rising

12th hour: the awaiting of incense and silence ...

1st hour of day: petition of the heavenly beings

2nd hour: prayer of the angels

3rd hour: praise of flying creatures

4th hour: praise of the beasts

5th hour: the praise which is above heaven

6th hour: praise of the cherubim, and petition against human iniquity

7th hour: "the prayers of all that lives enter and worship and depart"

8th hour: praise of fire and of the waters

9th hour: supplication of those angels standing before the throne

10th hour: visitation of the waters, when the spirit is descending on waters and fountains

¹⁷ ROBINSON, *Testament of Adam*, 103, points out that the horarium of the *Testament of Adam* is basically free of Christian elements and argues that it might be excerpted from an earlier, larger Jewish work.

11th hour: exultation and joy of the righteous

12th hour (evening): supplication of human beings¹⁸

This horarium of sorts – with Adam as the implied speaker – is a remarkable text. Its hours present a cosmologically-rooted schedule of daily prayer and praise, without any narrative framing.¹⁹ These hours offer a quite different vision of daily prayer from the *Apostolic Tradition*, since the hours of Adam are rooted in the rhythm of the heavenly luminaries: Sun and moon as created by God on the fourth day (Gen 1:14–19) govern the pattern of daily prayer. Their movements were set, after all, at the very beginning by the Creator.²⁰ Consequently, the hours of Adam follow the 24 hours of the night and of the day, which become the successive hours of prayer, offered in turn by different created entities. The exactness of the sequence has a theological purpose, uniting daily prayer with the created order established by God at the beginning of time. More specifically, a nocturnal cycle of twelve hours governed by the moon is followed by twelve hours of a diurnal cycle governed by the sun. In Syriac I and II, this cycle begins not with the day but with the first hour of the night, thereby following Genesis 1:5.²¹

Crucial for the present inquiry is that this horarium offers a glimpse of daily prayer as the work, the *opus Dei*, of all creation. The horarium offers this glimpse by assigning the successive hours of nightly and daily praise

¹⁸ ROBINSON, Testament of Adam, 53–59.

¹⁹ Narrative framing does appear in later recensions. The Coptic-Arabic manuscript edited by Monferrer-Sala frames the actual listing of hours of prayer with the following words of Adam to Seth: “Oh, my son! Understand the moment of the night and of the day, its names, how God is praised through them, how God must be called in [every] moment, and at what hour the request and the plea must [be done]. My Creator has showed me that, [...]”. MONFERRER-SALA, *The Testament of Adam in Arabic Dress*, 741.

²⁰ Jeremy PENNER has described this conviction, also present in Second Temple Judaism, in some detail in his *Patterns of Daily Prayer in Second Temple Period Judaism* (StTDJ 104), Boston 2012, 101–136. This conviction went hand in hand, especially at Qumran, with a conviction that angels offer worship to God at fixed times of the day governed by the heavenly luminaries. Here, cosmology and angelology are intertwined. The *Testament of Adam* shares these convictions.

²¹ For the somewhat ambiguous ways of reckoning the beginning of a day in the biblical record, see PENNER, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 112 f.

to a collection of creaturely worshippers, both heavenly and earthly, not to human beings alone. All creatures are agents of praise and worship, each at their own appointed hour. Human worshippers play a minor role in this daily round of creaturely praise, and they do not form the pinnacle of the list of creaturely worshippers either. Rather, human beings appear alongside others with whom they share the fact of being created and of being called to worship their Creator. What becomes visible here is akin to a liturgical inter-creaturely *communio* in praise. It bears emphasizing, however, that the horarium of Adam is not simply about “nature’s praise”, and certainly not in any romanticizing understanding of the term. The vision of creationwide worship in this text is more expansive than simply “nature” in that it includes seraphim, cherubim, “heavenly beings”, angels, “angels standing before the throne”, and demons.

The list of creaturely kin who offer worship in the horarium of Adam bears some resemblance to the list of everything created in Genesis 1.²² This is hardly surprising, given that the horarium professes to have been handed down by Adam,²³ thus tracing knowledge of this rhythm of praise by all creation to the πρωτόπλαστος, that is, the “first-formed” human. Adam was, for both early Jewish and ancient Christian writers, the authority par excellence with regard to the mysteries of the created order,²⁴ and a Christian redactor saw nothing inimical to the Christian faith in this text, working it into a composite, clearly Christian document, the *Testament of Adam*. In other words, the notion of daily prayer as primordial praise by representatives of the whole created order was quite acceptable to the world of this early Christian redactor, and through the *Testament of Adam* became part of the early Christian literary legacy. A closer look at a few of the details of this text are in order here. Granted, a host of elements are embedded in this horarium’s cycle of daily praise, and questions could be

²² ROBINSON, *Testament of Adam*, 145 lists elements common to both the *Testament of Adam* and Gen 1.

²³ In light of this link, Bauckham’s suggestion that the horarium may not have been ascribed to Adam until it was fused with a Christian prophecy and angelology to become the *Testament of Adam*, seems unconvincing, see BAUCKHAM, *Horarium of Adam*, 41.

²⁴ The *Testament of Adam* is part of a larger set of Adam texts and traditions that stretch from Second Temple Judaism into early Christian writings, Rabbinic materials, and beyond.

raised about any number of them. I will, however, have to leave aside most of these, in order to focus on some key points. The following stand out.

The first point concerns the genre of this horarium. It is a quite different category of hours of daily prayer than that of the *Apostolic Tradition*. Naming both texts “horaria” should not occlude fundamental conceptual differences between them. The two texts are also embedded in quite different genres of ancient writing. While the *Apostolic Tradition* belongs to a group of early Christian writings commonly called church orders (at least since the nineteenth century), the horarium of Adam as embedded in the *Testament of Adam* is much harder to situate. The *Testament of Adam* is a composite work, for one, and not a clear example of the literary form of a “Testament” either, although it does involve the story of a *Testament of Adam*. Given the fluidity of genres that make up the composite *Testament of Adam*, what can safely be said is that its horarium does *not* belong to the genre of a church order. The focus of the horarium, in fact, is not on a community of faith, whether Jewish, Christian, or Jewish-Christian, but on the community of creation. Fittingly, the reckoning of times for daily prayer is cosmologically-rooted, following the movements of the luminaries, sun and moon. And in contradistinction with where the *Apostolic Tradition* locates creationwide praise, namely at midnight, that hour in the horarium of Adam is not an hour of rest and praise, but a fear-filled time. A second point concerns the influence of biblical materials on the horarium of Adam. Biblical texts that resound in the horarium of Adam, other than the first creation story, are the psalms. This is unsurprising, since the link between cosmos, creation, and worship that is embedded in Genesis 1 reappears in some psalms as well as in other hymnic materials in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Second Isaiah). The horarium’s list of creaturely worshippers echoes two biblical texts in particular, themselves bearing echoes of Genesis 1. Interestingly, these two texts also play important roles in the emergence of early Christian patterns of daily prayer. They are Psalm 148, and the *Benedicite*, which might itself be an elaboration of Psalm 148’s list of creaturely worshippers.²⁵ But whatever the exact relationship between these texts might be, human beings in both are situated within a larger

²⁵ Scholars continue to discuss the exact relationship between this canonical psalm and the hymnic addition in Greek Daniel.

community of praise. A third point worth noting is that the Trishagion appears in the horarium of Adam as part of a practice of primordial, daily prayer. With the vast amounts of scholarly energy expended on possible paths of entry of the Trishagion into Christian worship,²⁶ comparatively little attention has been paid to these daily practices. The Trishagion in the horarium of Adam is of particular interest, moreover, because it situates the Trishagion of humans and angels within that of all creation. It thereby corresponds with the occurrence of the Trishagion in the hymns of the book of Revelation (Rev 4:8), where the seer John of Patmos attends a heavenly liturgy that includes not only heavenly beings but the entire earthly creation too. In both the book of Revelation and the Hours of Adam, the Trishagion is not narrowly tied to human-angelic worship (often fêted as “cosmic”) but rather is part of a truly cosmic worship, one that includes everything created in the whole universe. Somewhat later in time, the eucharistic liturgy of Jerusalem will share this cosmic vision in its use of the Trishagion/Sanctus.

Finally, a brief look at the hours when humans do get to offer worship in the horarium of Adam is in order here.²⁷ The various recensions differ somewhat on this point. Syriac II, for example, includes a scribal gloss, in small letters, requesting prayer “for the sinner, the servant who writes”, at the second hour of the night,²⁸ thereby offering a glimpse of a human being behind at least that recension of Adam’s horarium. In order to render the complex material workable for my present purpose, however, I will here focus on Syriac I. In this recension, human beings first worship at the tenth hour of the night, long after demons, doves, fish and fire, the seraphim, the waters above heaven, clouds, waters below, grass, and cherubim have had their hour. What is designated as the tenth hour of the night represents the time of daybreak, an hour before sunrise. This tenth hour, in which humans finally get to worship, is a weighty hour, the one just be-

²⁶ For details, see Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *Recent Research on the Anaphoral Sanctus. An Update and Hypothesis*, in: ID. (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West. Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, Colledgeville/MN 2010, 161–188.

²⁷ BAUCKHAM, *Horarium of Adam*, 49 f., has mapped this. I mostly follow him here.

²⁸ ROBINSON, *Testament of Adam*, 69.

fore the great luminary, the sun, rises. This is the hour of the “opening of the gate of heaven [where] the prayers of all living things enter and worship and depart”.²⁹ The seraphim and roosters, too, beat their wings at this time, and the prayers of human beings are said to be granted. The second hour assigned for human prayer in Syriac I is the twelfth hour of the day, that is, the evening hour. This hour is given over to human supplication, without any further details or explanations. In addition to these two hours assigned for human praise and prayer, humans make brief appearances in three other hours. At the sixth hour of the day, human beings appear as ones who are being prayed against, when the cherubim petition “against the iniquity of our human nature”.³⁰ In more positive roles, priests make two brief appearances in the horarium. At the seventh hour of the night, when the waters are taken up, a “priest of God” is said to mix water and consecrated oil and anoint the afflicted. Priests also come into view at the twelfth hour of the night, when they burn incense.³¹ Human beings might also be included when “the prayers of all that lives” worship in the seventh hour of the day, and in the eleventh hour of the day when “the righteous” are said to rejoice. Overall, however, in the rich round of daily prayer that shines forth in the horarium of Adam, human beings are a rather insignificant part of the liturgical assembly.³² For most of the hours, human beings seemingly do nothing.

As singular as this vision of creation-wide worship in the horarium of Adam might at first seem to be, there are additional data points for this understanding of worship beyond the already mentioned *Traditio Apostolica*. Together, these data points demonstrate that the vision of cosmic, primordial praise is more than an isolated occurrence in the early Christian liturgical imagination. This understanding of worship surfaces even in the heart of eucharistic praying.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Bauckham has investigated these passages in detail: BAUCKHAM, *Horarium of Adam*, 49–60.

³² Most versions of the horarium also have human prayer at the first hour of the day, but not Syriac I (and Greek II).

3.2 *Eucharistic Thanksgiving: Creation-wide*

For the liturgy of early Jerusalem, two witnesses stand out. The *Mystical Catecheses* describe how the presider, after the introductory dialogue, calls on all creation to praise God:

we make memorial of heaven and earth and the sea, of the sun and the moon; of stars and all creation..., saying with authority as in David, “magnify the Lord with me”.³³

Similarly, the Liturgy of St. James depicts eucharistic praying in union with all that is in its long and detailed anaphoral praise. The presider addresses God, “the creator of all creation”, as follows:

[...] You are hymned by [the heavens and] the heavens of heavens and all their powers; the sun and moon and all the choir of stars; earth, sea, and all that is in them; the heavenly Jerusalem [...] angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, and awesome virtues. The cherubim with many eyes and seraphim with six wings [...].³⁴

The same theme albeit in shorthand appears in the West Syrian anaphoral tradition. Theodore of Mopsuestia, in his *Catecheses*, describes the presider’s prayer after the introductory dialogue:

Praise and adoration be offered to the divine nature *by all Creation*, and by the invisible powers (among them the seraphim), and we say with them, Holy, holy, holy [...].³⁵

Clearly, these anaphoral texts explicitly envision a praise *by* all creation – not merely *for* all creation, which is widely attested in other Eastern anaphoras. In the anaphoral texts quoted above, creation-wide praise opens the eucharistic prayer no less, thus situating all human as well as angelic praises within a larger, truly cosmic whole.

³³ R[onald] C. D. JASPER – G[oeffrey] J. CUMING, *Prayers of the Eucharist. Early and Reformed*, ed. by Paul. F. BRADSHAW – Maxwell E. JOHNSON, Collegeville/MN 42019, 137.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

3 *A Constructive Retrieval: Primordial Praise Amid Planetary Peril*

One might well ask: Why invest this hitherto neglected element of the liturgical tradition with such weight at this point in time? One reason is that the ancient texts probed above and their inter-creaturely vision of worship have the power to speak truth to human earthlings today. We are forced to focus on planetary realities because planet earth is in peril, a peril that is human-made. At the same time, recognition is growing that everything in the web of life is connected, and that all are interdependent. Pope Francis argues in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* that this interdependence moves believers to worship the Creator "in union" with all creatures and with all that exists.³⁶ In fact, this sense of a communion in worship with everything created runs through the whole encyclical. It comes to a highpoint in the Pope's claim that in the Eucharist, "the whole cosmos gives thanks to God".³⁷ With this and similar assertions of *Laudato Si'*,³⁸ one is close to the heart of the horarium of Adam. In what follows, I outline some links between this ancient text and contemporary concerns.

I begin with the ecological emergency of our time. This does not need to be spelled out; the evidence, the documentation, and the analyses are legion.³⁹ There is even a condition now identified by the American Psychological Association as a consequence of ever-increasing news of ecological degradation: eco-anxiety. More important for the subject at hand is that creation-attentive ritual activism has also intensified. I am thinking here, for example, of the ritualizing around the environmental movement Extinction Rebellion, or Sarah Kirkland Snider's "Mass for the Endangered", and the Living Chapel project in Rome.⁴⁰ The realm of Christian worship too has witnessed a flood of new, creation-sensitive worship materials

³⁶ Pope FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si' on Care for our Common Home* (May 24, 2015), no. 87. URL: <https://bit.ly/3vAtyJh> [accessed: April 22, 2022].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 236.

³⁸ See, especially, *ibid.*, nos. 89–92, 156, 216.

³⁹ See, for example, the most recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, readily available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/reports> [accessed: April 22, 2022].

⁴⁰ See <https://livingchapel.com> [accessed: April 22, 2022].

over the past few decades. These range from prayers, hymns, sermon aids, intercessions, blessings, lament, and entire rituals, to a whole new season in the Christian year dedicated to creation. Add to these ecologically-attuned ritual developments a fresh recognition, in a number of scholarly disciplines as well as in international law, of other-than-human beings as sentient creatures. Rethinking what constitutes the biotic community has, for example, led some countries to grant legal personhood status to rivers, or to nature more generally. Similarly, human earthlings have learned much about forests as sentient beings in recent years, with trees now recognized as interacting creatures that live in community, and nourish, support and protect each other. Rethinking the being and status of other-than-human creatures has affected thinking about the human also. In particular, human beings are now understood to be sharing with all other living creatures on planet earth a common genetic ancestry. We human creatures are genetic kin with all that is and ever has been. This thread of genetic similarity connects human beings, together with the roughly 10 million other species in existence today, to the history of life back to a single common ancestor. The very nature of the DNA code witnesses to this single origin of life more than 3.5 billion years ago. As Mary Evelyn Tucker from the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology has put it:

Our challenge, then, is to see ourselves as part of a vast evolving Universe where the Cosmos, too, is our home. Many cultures have embraced this perspective beginning with Indigenous peoples. Their cosmovisions continue to provide them with a rich sensibility of the stars as relatives and galaxies as luminous living presences. All humans are descendants of these heavenly bodies [...] the stars are our ancestors.⁴¹

So much for some insights emerging from within our own context. The question remains: How can this be said to relate to the horarium of Adam, or, more broadly, to a vision of worship that encompasses all that is as ritual subjects? The following points offer some suggestions that seek to bring these very different times and their insights into productive conversation. I articulate these suggestions in the form of questions here, not least to indicate their tentative and evolving character.

⁴¹ Mary E. TUCKER, *Cosmos as Home. Evolution as Context* (June 10, 2021). URL: <https://bit.ly/3FfujMo> [accessed: May 5, 2022].

First, what would it look like to situate practices of human, and specifically Christian worship within the much older, more ancient practice of primordial praise – a praise that first arose “when the morning stars began to sing”, as the creation story embedded in Job 38 has it. Human prayer and praise are late-comers in this cosmic praise, entering this jubilant primordial chorus only very recently in the roughly 13.8 billion years old universe. Now living on a planet in peril, do we really want to continue to focus, in our liturgical lives, on the worship of God that emerged only with homo sapiens, a species that is now destroying the planetary habitat, no less? One theological alternative is to think within a *longue durée* of worship and to conceive of something akin to the praise and worship of God *ab principio*. Obviously, such a claim would require a substantial amount of theological work and reconfiguration, but allowing one to imagine it surely is a first step.

A second question ponders the power of “createdness”, as a theologically equalizing force. If, according to contemporary genetic anthropology, all that exists is genetic kin, then we might assert, theologically, that all are creaturely siblings. That is to say, all stand in the same, foundational relationship to God, namely as having been created by God. As the hours of Adam suggest, there is no (clear) hierarchy inscribed into the primordial, cosmic turn to the Creator in praise and worship. Richard Bauckham has put this equalizing force of shared createdness thus:

when humans join in the whole creation’s praise of God [...] there is no hierarchy or anthropocentricity. Here all creatures, including ourselves, are simply fellow-creatures expressing the theocentricity of the created world.⁴²

Incidentally, such a vision might also put an end to the often-repeated theological claim that human beings fulfill a *priestly* role vis-à-vis creation, namely in mediating creation’s praise of God.⁴³ In light of the hours of Adam, this claim seems to be anthropocentric conceit indeed.

⁴² BAUCKHAM, *Joining Creation’s Praise of God*, 48.

⁴³ To cite only one example: “God made men and women in his own image to be the priests of creation and to express on behalf of all creatures the praises of God, so that through human lips the heavens might declare the glory of God.”

A third question centers on the potential of a creation-attuned vision of worship to open up a space of encounter between the church's liturgical life and contemporary culture. For many of our contemporaries, established ecclesial practices have become either deeply suspect or simply irrelevant. These same contemporaries, however, not infrequently turn – with surprising faith! – to a host of diffuse, ostensibly ancient, often nature-based or planetary rituals and visions of the world. Why not build a bridge to that kind of contemporary religiosity, from within the liturgical tradition itself? A note of caution, however, is in order here: retrieving creation-attentive strands of the Christian tradition must not happen in the form of a facile recourse to an imagined “nice nature”-past.⁴⁴ Rather, such a retrieval must engage the multifaceted, often fearful engagement with the cosmos, the earth, and natural elements that is deeply woven into the liturgical past.

Finally, there is a (self-critical) question for the field of liturgical studies. Why has a creation-encompassing vision of Christian worship remained invisible or on the margins for so long? In part, the answer to that question lies in the fact that the dominant understanding of worship – and with it the field of liturgical studies – is co-constituted by what is excluded, or theorized as deficient. Such understandings and their attendant practices of excision have shaped the discipline of liturgical studies not least with regard to forms of popular religiosity, which were variously seen as primitive, syncretistic, superstitious, and “non-liturgical”. The very construal of what came to be thought of as “the liturgical tradition” thus excised what was conceived of as animism or magic from written, authorized belief. One only has to consider the attention given, for example, to eucharistic praying in the fourth century to realize that a daily, creation-wide way of marking the hours with prayer, as it is embedded in the *Testament of Adam*, seemed, in comparison, somewhat abstruse, certainly nature-based, and all too wedded to an outdated cosmology. Today, the time has come

James B. TORRANCE, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, Downers Grove/IL 1996, 13.

⁴⁴ Nathan J. Ristuccia has shown this in relation to contemporary retrievals of the medieval ritual practices surrounding Rogation days, see Nathan J. RISTUCCIA, *Rogationtide and the Secular Imaginary*, in: Teresa BERGER (ed.), *Full of Your Glory. Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation*, Collegeville/MN 2019, 165–185.

to question the almost unquestioned anthropocentricity of the field of liturgical studies. This anthropocentricity is surely one of the hidden "dogmas" that exist in all scholarly fields. They need to be un-earthed and scrutinized – even if in the end they were to be affirmed again in one way or another. The particular trouble with anthropocentricity, at this point in time, is that it is making the very existence of life on planet earth uncertain. In face of this planetary emergency, proceeding with liturgical studies as before is akin to "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic", as the saying goes – or maybe, more on topic: praying the Divine Office on an ocean liner about to collide with a melting iceberg.

Abbreviations

JLS	Joint Liturgical Studies
JMIH	Journal of Medieval and Islamic History
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
OJC	Orientalia Judaica Christiana
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series
SEAug	Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum
StLi	Studia Liturgica
StTDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TrAp	Traditio Apostolica

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