

EX | FONTE

Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy

VOLUME 4 | 2025

Formlessness and Image
The Seal of the Spirit in
Nicholas Cabasilas's *The Life in Christ*

REGINALD LYNCH



exfonte.org

How to Cite

LYNCH, Reginald, Formlessness and Image. The Seal of the Spirit in Nicholas Cabasilas's *The Life in Christ*, in: *Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy* 4 (2025) 419–439.

DOI [10.25365/exf-2025-4-20](https://doi.org/10.25365/exf-2025-4-20)

Author

Reginald Lynch is Associate Professor of Dogmatic and Historical Theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC.

GND [1066599130](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-64888-p0011-9)

ORCID [0000-0002-2989-2028](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2989-2028)

Abstract

In *The Life in Christ*, Nicholas Cabasilas uses Paul's language of "sealing" and "forming" to describe the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation as means by which the sacramental recipient comes to participate in the life of Christ as a new creation. Relying on images of Christ being "formed" and "portrayed" within the believer, Cabasilas draws on the earlier work of Clement and Cyril of Alexandria, and especially Gregory Nazianzus, to advance a theology of sacramental divinization in which the Christian is progressively conformed to the mysteries of Christ.

Keywords

Baptism | Chrismation | Seal of the Spirit | Image of Christ | Deification | Nicolaus Cabasilas | Byzantine Theology

Formlessness and Image

The Seal of the Spirit in Nicholas Cabasilas's The Life in Christ

REGINALD LYNCH

In *The Life in Christ*, Nicholas Cabasilas († 1397/8) portrays the Christian life of sanctification as a participation in the life of Christ himself, effected by participation in the sacramental life of the Church's liturgy. For Cabasilas, participation in the sacramental mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist unites their recipients to Christ.¹ This union means a kind of participation not only in the liturgical ceremonies of the Church, but an “undergoing” of the experiences of Christ that allow us to “become all that he has”. For Cabasilas this union is patterned on the incarnation as a kind of extension of the communication of idioms, in which Christ deifies not only the flesh he assumed but the flesh of those who partake of his flesh; deification in this sense necessarily involves a sharing in Christ's death and resurrection.²

¹ Cf. Nicholas CABASILAS, *De uita in Christo libri septem* [UIC], 1, 1–6 et al. (SChr 355, 74–80; CONGOURDEAU).

² Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 2: “Ἐστὶ δὴ Χριστῷ συναφθῆναι διὰ πάντων ἐλθοῦσι δι’ ὧν ὁ Σωτὴρ ἦλθε καὶ πάντα παθοῦσι καὶ γενομένοις ὅσα ἐκεῖνος. Ἐκεῖνος τοίνυν ἠνώθη μὲν αἵματι καὶ σαρκὶ πάσης καθαρῶς ἀμαρτίας· φύσει δὲ ὧν Θεὸς αὐτὸς ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ τοῦτο τεθέωκεν ὃ γέγονεν ὕστερον, τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν φύσιν· τελευτῶν δὲ καὶ ἀπέθανε τῆς σαρκὸς ἕνεκα καὶ ἀνέστη. Δεῖ τοίνυν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτῷ μεταλαβεῖν καὶ τῆς θεώσεως μετασχεῖν καὶ τοῦ τάφου καὶ

For Cabasilas, Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist all have distinct roles to play in our participation in Christ's life, and Cabasilas identifies specific effects proper to each: in Baptism we participate in Christ's death so that we may rise again in his resurrection; in Chrismation we share in the royal anointing of Christ's deification; by feeding on the Eucharist we are sustained by "sharing the very Flesh and Blood" Christ assumed.³ In this regard, Cabasilas attributes a striking realism to the sacraments: it is clear that the sacraments here described are not simply outward signs, or "mysteries" similar to those of the ancient Greek and Roman religions, who used this same term to describe their own religious rites.⁴ For Cabasilas, Christian sacraments are qualitatively different from signs and rituals that *only* call to mind the reality they claim to symbolize.

τῆς ἀναστάσεως κοινωνῆσαι τὸν συναφθῆναι ζητοῦντα." (SChr 355, 136; CONGOURDEAU). English translation: *The Life in Christ* [trans. by Carmino DECATANZARO], Crestwood, NY 1974, 65. In-text translations of *The Life in Christ* are adapted from DeCantanzaro. – In this regard, Cabasilas' approach to Baptismal liturgy does not seem far removed from Paul's own approach. According to Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, for example, for Paul, "Baptism [...] is a re-presentation of Christ's own Baptism and its application to each convert [...] it is Christ's Baptism, illuminated by its fulfillment in His death and resurrection; hence it is an effective sign of the application of His saving work to the believer, and it is into Christ's βάπτισμα of death that the believer is incorporated". Geoffrey W. H. LAMPE, *The Seal of the Spirit*, London 1976, 57. On Deification and mystagogy in Cabasilas, see Nicholas DENYSENKO, *The Life in Christ by Nicholas Cabasilas. A Mystagogical Work*, in: *StLit* 38/2 (2008) 242–260; Daniel STAUFFER, *Deification in Nicholas Kabasilas and Reading The Life in Christ*, in: *JOCS* 5/2 (2022) 253–272. See also Job GETCHA, *La théologie sacramentaire byzantine. Les sacramentaire chez Nicolas Cabasilas et Syméon de Thessalonique (Théologie historique 133)*, Paris 2021, 139–196.

³ CABASILAS, UIC 2,3–8: "αὐτῆς μετέχομεν τῆς σαρκός, αὐτοῦ τοῦ αἵματος, τῶν τῷ Σωτῆρι προσειλημμένων" (SChr 355, 136–38; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 66).

⁴ For the sacramental significance of *μυστήριον*, see Johann AUER, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist*, in: Johann AUER – Joseph RATZINGER (eds.), *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 6, Washington, DC 1996, 10 f.

As a 14th-century Byzantine text, *The Life in Christ* exhibits some influence from the later Latin tradition, distinguishing between Baptism and Chrismation as separate sacraments. Nevertheless, Cabasilas retains important aspects of the received Greek tradition inherited from Alexandria and the Cappadocians, applying the image of sacramental sealing to both Baptism and Chrismation. In the following, this article argues that Cabasilas' description of sacramental sealing in the context of Baptism and Chrismation is in continuity with existing Greek patristic traditions, originating in 3rd-century Alexandria, that use New Testament accounts of sealing (*σφραγίς*) to describe the effects of Christian initiation, and the rites by which these effects are conferred. Accordingly, this article is divided into three sections: The first examines Cabasilas' account of Baptismal forming and its dependence on New Testament accounts of *sphragis*, noting the likely influence of Gregory Nazianzus' Baptismal names (*Oration 40*). The second section places this approach in broader historical context by examining the earlier Alexandrian engagement with these same biblical texts and the implications of *sphragis* for Christology and sacramental theology in this period. Finally, the third section studies Cabasilas's application of this theology of sacramental sealing to Chrismation as a separate sacrament, with sacramental effects distinct from those of Baptism. Although Baptism and Chrismation were ritually united in earlier periods of Christian history, the shared theological and biblical rationale for these two sacraments has been retained by Cabasilas – now ritually distinct, Cabasilas continues to unite Baptism and Chrismation theologically as integral components of Christian initiation by appealing to earlier Greek traditions of sacramental sealing.

1 *Baptismal Forming and the Divine Image*

Cabasilas tells us that we know Baptism to be a birth according to Christ, from which we “receive our very being and nature”⁵ (*ἀρχὴ τοῦ εἶναι*). Cabasilas tells us that we know of this in three ways: first, because of the primacy of Baptism in relation to the other sacraments in the order of re-

⁵ CABASILAS, UIC 2, 8: “Ἔστι τοίνυν τὸ βαπτισθῆναι, αὐτὸ τὸ κατὰ Χριστὸν γεννηθῆναι καὶ λαβεῖν αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι καὶ ὑποστῆναι μηδὲν ὄντας.” (SChr 355, 138; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 66).

ception; second, because of the names by which Baptism is called, and third because of the structure of the liturgy itself.⁶ Concerning the first, since Baptism precedes the anointing with Chrism and Eucharistic participation, Cabasilas argues that it is clearly the beginning of the life that is received from Christ. Cabasilas describes Baptism as “birth” (γέννησις), “new birth” (ἀναγέννησις), “new creation” (ἀνάπλασις), “seal” (σφραγίς), “clothing” (ἔνδυμα), “gift” (χάρισμα), “illumination” (φώτισμα), and “washing” (λουτρόν).⁷ In *Oration 40*, Gregory Nazianzus uses a similar descriptive list: Baptism is “gift, grace, baptism, illumination, anointing, robe of incorruption, bath of rebirth, seal, everything honorable”⁸. Although he explains all of these images, for Gregory the primary analogy is that of illumination, in which a hierarchy of light allows for different modes of participation in divine light: God is seen as the first illumination, and secondarily humans and angels are seen as “illuminations” (φῶς) as well, because of their capacity to participate in the wealth of “radiance” (λαμπρότης) that “leaps forth” (χεόμενον) from the inner life of God, in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit contemplate this light. For Gregory, the human person is called “a light” (φῶς) because of his reason *and* his capacity for deification.⁹ Although he will also utilize the theme of illumination, Cabasilas’ governing image for Baptism is a kind of engraving or re-forming.

Cabasilas takes up each of Gregory’s images in turn: “birth”, “new birth”, and “new creation” all signify a kind of re-forming of the person through a second birth. Like an artist forming and restoring an image, Cabasilas tells us that Baptism effects a “form” (μορφή) within us. Baptism “engraves an image and imparts a form to our souls by conforming

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 2,10: “Τέννησιν καὶ Ἀναγέννησιν καὶ Ἀνάπλασιν καὶ Σφραγιδα αὐτὸ καλοῦμεν, καὶ Χάρισμα καὶ Φώτισμα καὶ Λουτρόν” (SChr 355, 140; CONGOURDEAU). Sources Chrétiennes lists “clothing” (ἔνδυμα) as a textual variant. See also PG 150, 524C / DECANTANZARO 67.

⁸ GREGORY NAZIANZUS, Or. 40, 4: “Δῶρον καλοῦμεν, χάρισμα, βάπτισμα, φώτισμα, χρίσμα, ἀφθαρσίας ἔνδυμα, λουτρόν παλιγγενεσίας, σφραγιδα, πᾶν ὃ τι τίμιον” (SChr 358, 202; MORESCHINI – GALLAY). Translation from *Festal Orations: St. Gregory of Nazianzus* [trans. by Nonna Verna HARRISON], Crestwood, NY 2008, 101.

⁹ Ibid. 40, 5 (SChr 358, 204; MORESCHINI – GALLAY / HARRISON 101).

them to the death and resurrection of the Savior”.¹⁰ In the same way, Baptism is like a “seal” (σφραγίς): “it conforms us to the image of the King and to His blessed form”. This reforming of the image is a union with Christ that is accomplished through Baptism, which conforms us to his death and resurrection. Life in Christ, which Cabasilas has made his subject in this work, is accomplished by a re-forming or refashioning through liturgical participation in Christ’s life: “To be baptized, then, is to be born according to Christ and to receive our very being and nature, having previously been nothing”¹¹.

For Cabasilas, the contrast between formlessness and image is central to his Baptismal theology. Taken in the broad sense, both the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical traditions define form not only as that which gives purpose and intelligibility to matter but the fullness of being as well. Cabasilas’s statement that we receive our “very being and nature” from Baptism, “having previously been nothing” could be understood in this context. Although his reference to creation from nothing may be metaphorical to a certain extent, Cabasilas makes no attempt to qualify this here, and the central importance of the form in question here for the human person is clear – the image of Christ, engraved in Baptism, has an ontological effect on the person that reorders what has fallen into formlessness and chaos through the darkness of sin.

Continuing to explore Gregory’s Baptismal names, Cabasilas argues that Baptism as “clothing” (ἔνδυμα) should be understood according to this sense of birth and “forming” (μορφωθῆναι). In this respect, Cabasilas alludes to a Pauline text: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”¹². Although Cabasilas seems to attribute

¹⁰ Cabasilas uses the terms ἐγγράφει and μορφῆν to signify the “engraving” and “forming” of this image, cf. CABASILAS, UIC 2, 11 (SChr 355, 141; CONGOURDEAU). Interpreting Pauline Baptismal theology, Cabasilas argues that, “Παῦλος τὸ ἐνδυμα καὶ τὴν σφραγίδα πρὸς ταῦτόν φέρειν, νῦν μὲν ἐγγραφήναι καὶ μορφωθῆναι φησι τὸν Χριστόν” (UIC 2, 12; SChr 355, 142; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 67).

¹¹ CABASILAS, UIC 2, 8: “Ἔστι τοίνυν τὸ βαπτισθῆναι, αὐτὸ τὸ κατὰ Χριστόν γεννηθῆναι καὶ λαβεῖν αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι καὶ ὑποστῆναι μηδὲν ὄντας.” (SChr 355, 139; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 66).

¹² Gal 3:27 NABRE.

this text to (1 or 2) Corinthians, the text itself seems to be taken from Galatians.¹³ Interpreting Paul, “clothing” in the Baptismal sense is taken not as a kind of extrinsic shrouding but as a forming of the creature in Christ: as form gives shape to undifferentiated matter by “clothing” the material, Baptism gives form to those who have lost the form they once had.¹⁴ Cabasilas cites Galatians 4:19, which speaks of Christ being “formed” (μορφωθῆ) within us.¹⁵ Although this sense of “forming” could have philosophical overtones, it can also evoke the conception or “formation” of an embryo. Here, Cabasilas chooses a text from Galatians that seems to carry this latter significance, thus linking the concept of “form” or “formation” with birth: “My children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ be formed (μορφωθῆ) in you!”¹⁶ As a noun, μορφή can signify a form or shape, either in the philosophical sense or otherwise. In the New Testament, this is said of Christ in relation to his divinity and to the humanity he assumes (for example, see Phil 2:6–7, Mk 16:12). Beyond signifying “being formed” or “taking on” a shape or form, the verb μορφόω can signify metaphorically the “formation” of an embryo – this sense seems to be operative in Galatians 4:19, which Cabasilas associates with his concept of baptismal “forming”.¹⁷

¹³ Cabasilas’ text is as follows: “τὸ δὲ Κορινθίους· “Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε.” (CABASILAS, UIC 2, 12; SChr 355, 142; CONGOURDEAU). Gal 3,27: “ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε”. However, images of clothing do appear in 1 Cor 15:53 and 2 Cor 5:3 f.

¹⁴ CABASILAS, UIC 2, 12 (SChr 355, 142; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 67).

¹⁵ The text of Galatians 4:19 is quoted by Cabasilas as follows: “Τεκνία μου οὐς πάλιν ὠδίνω, ἄχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν” (ibid.). This differs only slightly from the modern critical edition of the Greek New Testament (Stuttgart), which substitutes μέχρις for ἄχρις. (The critical apparatus of the Stuttgart edition does not list this as a textual variant.) The Greek New Testament, ed. by Barbara ALAND – Kurt ALAND, Stuttgart 2012.

¹⁶ Gal 4:19 NABRE.

¹⁷ See μορφή, ἦς, ἡ and μορφόω in William F. ARNDT – F. Wilbur GINGRICH (eds.), A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Chicago 1971, 530; Walter BAUER et al. (eds.), A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Chicago 32000, 530.

Following this, Cabasilas links the concept of Baptismal formation-as-birth (Gal 4:19) to an earlier passage from the third chapter of Galatians (Gal 3:1), where Paul reminds the Galatians that they have seen Christ “portrayed” (προεγράφε) as crucified. Although the literal meaning of this text could suggest that the Galatians were visual witnesses of Christ’s crucifixion in some sense, Cabasilas seems to interpret this as implying that the image is portrayed *in* the Galatians. Building on the concept of inscription here implied, Cabasilas connects this to his notion of Baptism as “forming”. Baptism is not only a liturgical participation in Christ’s passion and death – it is a forming in the image of Christ as crucified and risen. For Cabasilas, the concept of Baptism as “seal” is intrinsically related to the “forming” of the person in the image of Christ. Notably, Cabasilas relies on a variation of the Greek text of Galatians 3:1 that seems to support this interpretation.¹⁸

The term “seal” or the act of “sealing” (σφραγίς, σφραγίζω) can mean many things in New Testament and early Christian usage. It can indicate an object fastened to another in order to seal (such as the stone the seals Christ’s tomb, cf. Mt 27:66); the sealing of something for secrecy; the physical marking of something for identification (such as animals), indicating not only ownership but that the thing sealed enjoyed the protection of the owner – Paul speaks of the seal of the Holy Spirit in this way in Eph 1:13 and 4:30.¹⁹ In addition, a “seal” can be taken to mean both the instru-

¹⁸ The Stuttgart edition of the Greek New Testament reads: “Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ’ ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος;” (Gal 3:1; ALAND – ALAND, Greek New Testament, 643). One contemporary English translation of the full verse reads: “O stupid Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?” (NABRE). However, Cabasilas’ version of this text reads: “Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς | προεγράφη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐσταυρωμένος” (CABASILAS, UIC 2, 12; SChr 355, 142; CONGOURDEAU [emphasis mine] / DECATANZARO 68). The Stuttgart edition does not list any textual variants that match Cabasilas’ rendition of this text, cf. ALAND – ALAND, Greek New Testament, 643.

¹⁹ Eph 1:13. 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22. See also Jn 6:27. In these texts, the “mark” or “seal” in question implies more than simply a distinguishing mark but indicates an influx of heavenly power. See σφραγίζω and σφραγίς in BAUER et al., Greek-English Lexicon, 803 f.

ment which seals, and the impression left by the seal on an object. Taken in this sense, the Second Letter to Timothy uses the term to imply that this mark is a form of inscription.²⁰ Cabasilas' theology of Baptismal sealing seems to favor this last usage because it is so strongly ontological – Baptism as a “seal” clearly imparts a mark on the one who is baptized, to such a degree that this mark forms (or re-forms) them essentially, as a form lends shape and even ontic actuality to matter. The language of “forming” and “portraying” that Cabasilas finds in Galatians influences his understanding of “sealing” as a baptismal concept. In this way, for Cabasilas the “seal” of Baptism is intrinsically connected to the idea of *image*. Baptism is an act of sealing or forming that leaves the soul shaped and molded in the image of Christ – it is Christ crucified, or an image of Christ the king, that is not only imprinted within the person, but engraved in such a way that it comes to define the person.

2 *The Earlier Alexandrian Tradition*

The concept of “seal” (σφραγίς) was used as a term for Baptism by the Church as early as the sub-apostolic period, and appears in this role in *The Second Letter of Clement* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*.²¹ However, Cabasilas' emphasis on “re-forming” echoes particular themes from the Alexandrian tradition that emerged during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. For many of these authors, the *sphragis* is associated with God Himself (or the Logos) and is seen as imprinting itself on all of creation. In the specific case of the Baptismal *sphragis*, some Alexandrian fathers describe Christ and the Holy Spirit as the *sphragis*, imprinting their own divine image on the soul.²² Clement of Alexandria († 215) seems to use the terms “Baptism” and

²⁰ Cf. 2 Tim 2:19: “ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκεν, ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην”.

²¹ Cf. 2 Clem 7,6. 8,6 (TUCKETT 96 f.); SHEPHERD OF HERMAS, par. 93–94 (IX.16–17) (LCL 25, 430–432; EHRMAN); *ibid.* 108 (IX.31), 1–4 (LCL 25, 460; EHRMAN). On the restoration of the seal after sin, see *ibid.* 72 (VIII.6), 3 (LCL 25, 372; EHRMAN).

²² Cf. Jean GALOT, *La nature du caractère sacramentel*, Paris 1956, 29 (translation mine). Galot associates this approach with Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Didymus and especially Cyril (*ibid.*, 30).

“seal” interchangeably – implying not the outward rite of Baptism so much as its inward effect.²³ Clement speaks of the stamp of the *imago Dei* upon the soul as the image of a king impressed on a coin. The one who has received the seal of the Spirit has become God’s coin.²⁴ For Clement, the coin is not simply the inscription of a physical image or mark but is rather an illumination that assimilates the soul to God.²⁵ The conferral of this seal is especially associated with the invocation of the Trinity in Baptism. It is the Trinitarian name that is impressed on the soul through participation in the liturgical mysteries of Christian initiation.²⁶ In this understanding, the concept of *sphragis* as image and participation is deeply connected with the indwelling of the Spirit which is received through Baptism, closely associating the Biblical concept of the “seal of the Spirit” with the rite of Christian initiation.

For Cyril of Alexandria († 444), the baptismal *sphragis* as a kind of ontic participation in divine life. For Cyril, the *sphragis* is an impression not only of image but of the divine being itself that “configures us to the divine persons in such a way that we participate in their holiness”²⁷. For Cyril, the

²³ Cf. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Strom.* 5, 11, 73,2: “τῆ τρίτῃ δὲ ὁ νοῦς τὰ πνευματικὰ διορᾷ, διοιχθέντων τῶν τῆς διανοίας ὀμμάτων πρὸς τοῦ τῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ διαναστάντος διδασκάλου. εἶεν δ’ ἂν καὶ αἱ τρεῖς ἡμέραι τῆς σφραγίδος μυστήριον, δι’ ἧς ὁ τῷ ὄντι πιστεύεται Θεός” (GCS 15, 375; STÄHLIN). Cf. LAMPE, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 153.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 6, 7, 60,1: “ἦτοι ὡς ἄργυρος πολλάκις ἀποκαθαρθεῖς εἰς δοκίμιον καθίσταται ὁ δίκαιος, νόμισμα κυρίου γενόμενος καὶ χάραγμα βασιλικὸν ἀναδεξάμενος” (GCS 15, 461 f.; STÄHLIN).

²⁵ *Ibid.* 6, 12, 104,1: “οὕτως καὶ τῆ δικαία ψυχῆ θεία τις ἀγαθωσύνης δύναμις κατὰ τε ἐπίσκοπὴν κατὰ τε τὴν προφητείαν κατὰ τε τὴν διοικητικὴν ἐνέργειαν ἐγχριπτομένη οἷον ἀπαυγάσματος νοεροῦ καθάπερ ἡλιακῆς ἀλέας ἐναποσημαίνεται τι, δικαιοσύνης σφραγίδα ἐπιφανῆ, φῶς ἠνωμένων ψυχῆ δι’ ἀγάπης ἀδιαστάτου, θεοφορούσης καὶ θεοφορουμένης.” (GCS 15, 484; STÄHLIN).

²⁶ Cf. LAMPE, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 155.

²⁷ GALOT, *La nature du caractère sacramentel*, 30: “Saint Cyrille conçoit donc notre sphragis de la manière la plus profonde, comme impression en nous de l’être divin, impression qui nous configure aux personnes divines et nous fait participer à leur sainteté.” See CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In ep. II Cor.*, in 1,21.22 (PUSEY 326 f.; PG 74, 921C. 924a–b); *id.*, *Thes.* 34 (PG 75, 609D).

sphragis is associated directly with the life of the Spirit, the breathing of whom into a person is likened to a kind of “engraving” of the divine nature. In this regard, Cyril is building on Philo and Tatian, who thought that the seal was impressed as a divine image in creation.²⁸ Interpreting the same text from Galatians 4:19 used by Cabasilas, in which Paul speaks of Christ being “formed” (*μορφωθῆ*) within Christians, Cyril of Alexandria attributes this to the unique action of the Holy Spirit, who is coequal with the Father and the Son.²⁹ Unlike a poem authored by a human writer, the engraving of the seal of the Spirit imparts the image of the divine essence on Christians by means of communion and likeness with the divine nature – this “re-drafting” or “redrawing” reconfigures the beauty of human nature in such

612A); ID., In Agg. 20, in 2,24: “Σὲ τοίνυν, φησὶ, λαβὼν τὸν δοῦλόν μου, τουτέστι τὸν ἐν δούλου μορφῇ πεφηνότα, πλὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἐλεύθερον, κατ’ ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ, καθ’ ὃν ἂν ἐλοίμην καθελεῖν δυνάστας ἀπὸ θρόνων, καὶ ἐκβαλεῖν ἀρχῆς· ὡς σφραγίδα θήσομαι.’ Σφραγὶς γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ὁ Υἱὸς, ὅλην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκραιφνή τὴν ὁμοίωσιν ἔχων, καὶ ἐν ἰδίῳ κάλλει τὴν τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀστράπτων φύσιν. Ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἡμᾶς εἰς ὁμοίωσιν ἰδίαν κατασφραγίζει Θεός. εἴπερ εἰς Χριστὸν μορφούμενοι, τὴν ὡς πρὸς Θεὸν εἰκόνα κερδαίνομεν. Σήμαντρον οὖν ἄρα τὸ ἀκριβὲς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ὁ Υἱὸς, καὶ αὐτὸν ἠρετίσατο, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, αἰρετὸν ἐποίησατο καὶ ἐξειλεγμένον. Καὶ γοῦν ἐπὶ τοῖς Ἰορδάνου νάμασιν αὐτὸν ὠμολόγει, λέγων· ‘Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα.’ Εὐδόκησε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ ἀναστοιχειῶσαι τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἀναγαγεῖν εἰς τὸ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, καὶ ὡς ὁ θεσπέσιος γράφει Παῦλος, ‘ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθα τὰ τε ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.’” (PUSEY 280–288, see also PG 71, 1061B–C).

²⁸ Cf. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, Dial. de trin. 7, 5, 638b: “Τὸ δὲ δὴ τὴν θεῖαν ἡμῖν ἐγχαράττον εἰκόνα, καὶ σημάντρον δίκην ἐμποιοῦν τὸ ὑπερκόσμιον κάλλος, οὐχὶ τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστιν;” (SChr 246, 162; DE DURAND); ID., Ador. 1,9 (TU 190, 184; VILLANI). Cf. LAMPE, The Seal of the Spirit, 249.

²⁹ Cf. ID., Thes. 34: “Τεκνία, φησὶ, οὐς πάλιν ὠδίνω, ἄχρῖς οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν.’ Εἰ διὰ μόνου τοῦ Πνεύματος μορφοῦται Χριστὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ τοὺς ἰδίους ὥσπερ ἐντίθησι χαρακτῆρας, ἀναζωγραφῶν εἰς τὸ τῆς θεότητος κάλλος τὴν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν, Θεὸς ἄρα τὸ Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, τὸ ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μορφοῦμενον, ἴδιον δὲ πάντων τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἔξωθεν ὑποστατόν.” (PG 75, 609A–B).

a way that the image of God shows forth, as human nature becomes a partaker in God.³⁰

Clearly, Cabasilas is the recipient of much of this tradition. His language of the seal as an engraving of the divine image resonates deeply with the Alexandrian approach to *sphragis*. Cabasilas seems to allude to this tradition, mentioning the image of the king, although he omits reference to the coin itself.³¹ In this, Cabasilas finds precedent in Cappadocian Baptismal theology. Basil makes perhaps the most of the Spirit's seal in his treatment of Baptism, but Gregory Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa also make ample use of the language of sealing as well.³² We have already established that Gregory Nazianzus' *Oration 40* plays a notable structural role in Cabasilas' treatment of Baptism. In the wider context of the *Oration*, however, Gregory describes the imprint of Baptism not as that of a coin, but as that of a ring pressed into wax, leaving its impression as a seal or mark.³³ Gregory extends this image in *Oration 45*, using explicitly the image of the royal coin.³⁴ In *Oration 40* itself, however, the ontological sig-

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*: “Περὶ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸν λόγον ποιούμενος, “Ὡς καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἀκούσαντες, φησί, τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ Πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἁγίου, ὅς ἐστιν ἀρράβων τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν.” Εἰ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι σφραγιζόμενοι πρὸς Θεὸν ἀναμορφούμεθα· πῶς ἔσται γενητὸν τὸ δι’ οὗ τῆς θείας οὐσίας ἡμῖν ἡ εἰκὼν ἐγχαράττεται, καὶ τῆς ἀγενήτου φύσεως ἐναπομένειτὰ σήμαντρα; Οὐ γὰρ δήπου τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐν ἡμῖν σκιαγράφου δίκην τὴν θείαν οὐσίαν ζωγραφεῖ, ἕτερον αὐτὸ παρ’ ἐκείνην ὑπάρχον· οὐδὲ τοῦτον ἡμᾶς τὸν τρόπον εἰς ὁμοίωσιν ἄγει Θεοῦ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ Θεὸς τε ὑπάρχον καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ προελθὸν, ὥσπερ ἐν τινὶ κηρῷ ταῖς τῶν δεχομένων αὐτὸ καρδίαις ἀοράτως δίκην σφραγίδος ἐνθλίβεται, διὰ τῆς πρὸς ἑαυτὸ κοινωνίας τε καὶ ὁμοιώσεως, εἰς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον κάλλος τὴν φύσιν ἀναζωγραφοῦν, καὶ κατ’ εἰκόνα Θεοῦ δεικνύον αὐθις τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Πῶς οὖν ἔσται ποίημα, τὸ δι’ οὗ πρὸς Θεὸν ἡ φύσις ἀνασχηματίζεται, ὡς Θεοῦ γενομένη μέτοχος;” (PG 75, 609C–612A).

³¹ Cf. CABASILAS, UIC 2, 8 (SChr 355, 139; CONGOURDEAU).

³² Cf. Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *The Rites of Christian Initiation. Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Collegeville²2007, 135.

³³ Here Gregory is speaking of the minister of Baptism in relation to the imprint – rings of precious and non-precious metal leave the same mark, cf. GREGORY NAZIANZUS, Or. 40, 26 (SChr 358, 256–258; MORESCHINI – GALLAY).

³⁴ Cf. *id.*, Or. 45, 26 (PG 36, 660A).

nificance of this sealing is very clear: Gregory says that because Christ has assumed for us the “form of a slave”, now in Baptism “all the old imprints have withdrawn; Christ has placed himself upon us all as a single form”³⁵. Although the image of a coin that is found in the earlier Alexandrian tradition may have influenced Cabasilas to a certain extent, it is likely that the strongly ontological language found in Gregory Nazianzus’ *Oration 40* and *45* is a proximate source for Cabasilas’ own theology of sacramental sealing.

3 *Chrismation as Sealing*

In the early Church, the rites of initiation were often varied – the later division and ordering between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation being largely unknown. Some diversity in praxis emerged, however, as Baptism and Confirmation gradually came to be understood as separate “sacraments” in the West. As the Church expanded in numbers, this tendency began to emerge in Rome, where the confirming portion of the rites of initiation was retained by the bishop, and not delegated to subsidiary priests and even deacons. Of course, in the early Church it was the bishop himself who performed all of the initiation rites (and indeed most, if not all, of the other sacraments as well). With growth came change, however, and increasing numbers of Christians distributed over larger geographical areas resulted in only some of the sacraments being reserved to the bishop. The Eastern Churches dealt with this pastoral challenge differently, however, choosing to delegate Chrismation to local priests along with Baptism. The gradual separation of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation – each with distinct effects – took place in the Western Church between the 8th and 12th century.³⁶ As Confirmation emerged as a sacrament distinct from Baptism, Western theologians began to attribute separately distinguishable effects to each.

Although the rite of initiation did not undergo the same changes in the East as it did the West, other issues emerged early in the Eastern tra-

³⁵ Id., Or. 40, 27: “μιᾷ μορφῇ πᾶσι Χριστὸς ἐπιτέθειται” (SChr 358, 258; MORESCHINI – GALLAY / HARRISON 122).

³⁶ Cf. J. D. C. FISHER, *Christian Initiation. Baptism in the Medieval West*, Chicago 2004, 22.

dition concerning the ritual order of Chrismation and Baptism, and the theological significance attached to each. Although ritual unity was maintained, Chrismation was not always ordered last. The early Syrian tradition actually favored a *pre-baptismal* anointing, in which the Holy Spirit was imparted on those *to be* baptized. Maxwell Johnson argues that this chronological precedence gave a kind of theological priority to the concept of the “mark” of the Holy Spirit, such that this concept subsequently came to define the entirety of the rite of initiation.³⁷ Maxwell Johnson has argued that this Chrismal priority can be seen elsewhere in the Eastern tradition, even as late as the Cappadocian fathers, this time with implications for Trinitarian theology. Although post-Baptismal Chrismation became increasingly common, John Chrysostom’s writings reveal that in Antioch pre-baptismal Chrismation was also the practice.³⁸ Similarly, Jean Daniélou and others have argued that Gregory of Nyssa’s defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit against the semi-Arians implies a ritual priority within the rite of initiation itself.³⁹ Additionally, Bryan Spinks has argued that both Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus also indicate a pre-baptismal anointing.⁴⁰ Even if Gregory Nazianzus alludes to a *ritual* priority for Chrismation, in *Oration 40* it seems that he maintains a post-baptismal *theological* ordering for Chrismation. When introducing the nine-fold terminology that Cabasilas uses to structure his own treatment of Baptism,⁴¹ Gregory Nazianzus treats Baptism as a burying of sin in the water prior to his treat-

³⁷ For JOHNSON, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 59, this anointing is so theologically significant that “its Syriac term, *rushma*, translated correctly as ‘sign’ or ‘mark,’ becomes the way to refer to the whole of Christian initiation”.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 130 f. See JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom. bapt. 2*, 22–25 (SChr 50, 145–47; WENGER).

³⁹ Cf. Jean DANIÉLOU, *Chrismation prébaptismale et divinité de l’Esprit chez Grégoire de Nysse*, in: RSR 56 (1968) 177–198; Georg KRETSCHMAR, *Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der alten Kirche*, in: Karl F. MÜLLER – Walter BLANKENBURG (eds.), *Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes*, vol. 5: *Der Taufgottesdienst*, Kassel 1970, 1–348; JOHNSON, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 136.

⁴⁰ Cf. Bryan D. SPINKS, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*, Burlington, VT 2006, 47–51. See also JOHNSON, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 136.

⁴¹ Cf. CABASILAS, *UIC 2*, 10 (SChr 355, 140; CONGOURDEAU). See note 7.

ment of anointing; despite this terminological ordering, however, Gregory presents all these things as different aspects of the one gift given by Jesus Christ. Within this framework, it is difficult to associate the concept of sealing in the divine image with one part of the rite over and against another; rather, it seems to be understood as the divinizing effect of Christian initiation itself.⁴² This reflects not only a ritual unity, but therefore also a unity of theological meaning.

In his *The Life in Christ*, Cabasilas treats Baptism and Chrismation as separate sacraments, with discrete, discernable effects. While their ritual unity remains clear, distinctions emerge concerning theological meaning and effect. At the beginning of his treatment of the three sacraments, he briefly enumerates these effects: Baptism is birth, Chrismation gives movement or energy: “Baptism reconciles man to God, the Chrism makes him worthy of the gifts from on high; the power of the table communicates the Flesh and Blood of Christ to him who is initiated”⁴³. Later, he enumerates these effects in greater detail. Cabasilas dedicates the third book of *The Life in Christ* to “what the holy chrism *contributes*” (καὶ τίνα συντέλειαν αὐτῇ παρέχεται τὸ θεῖον μύρον.). At the outset, he associates this “contribution” liturgically with the anointing with oil, and the laying on of hands; he refers to it as a “rite” in itself and associates it directly with Pentecost.⁴⁴ This seems to imply an effect which “contributes” something to the already existing effect of Baptism; this “effect” is associated liturgically with anointing. For Cabasilas, this anointing is rooted in the anointing of kings and priests in the Old Law⁴⁵ and finds its culmination in Christ, whose incarnation itself is seen as a kind of anointing of the flesh with divine chrism.⁴⁶ Drawing on the rite of Chrismation itself, Cabasilas describes its effect as an a “seal of spiritual gift” (πνευματικῆς δωρεᾶς σφραγιδα). For Cabasilas the chrism represents a participation in divine nature – as Christ’s flesh was deified by the union of divine and human nature: “chrism

⁴² See GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, Or. 40, 4 (SChr 358, 202–204; MORESCHINI – GALLAY).

⁴³ CABASILAS, UIC 2, 3–8 (SChr 355, 136–138; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 66).

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.* 3, 1–3 (SChr 355, 236–238; CONGOURDEAU / DECATANZARO 103).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 3, 2 f. (SChr 355, 238–240; CONGOURDEAU).

represents Christ as the point of contact between both natures; there could be no point of contact were they still separate"⁴⁷.

In his treatment of anointing, Cabasilas continues to draw on elements of the Eastern tradition, using the language of *sphragis* to refer to the role of the Spirit.⁴⁸ Although he retains the ritual unity of Baptism and Chrismation, his tendency to separate the effects of Chrismation from the *sphragis* of Baptism does not seem to have a clear source in the East. The Eastern tradition before him tended to associate the meaning of *sphragis* with the whole rite of initiation, and Cabasilas also retains a certain conceptual unity with regard to the theological naming of *sphragis* as associated with the spirit and with Christic divinization. Although he never advocates for a liturgical separation of Chrismation and Baptism, he does show a tendency to attribute separate effects to different parts of the ritual whole. For Cabasilas, anointing gives us a participation in the Spirit, for which Baptism prepares us: "The cross released us from sin. Since Baptism then has the efficacy of His cross and death, we go forward to the chrism, the participation in the Spirit"⁴⁹. Cabasilas retains many features of the Eastern doctrine of *sphragis* in his treatment of Chrismation. Like Clement, Cyril and Gregory, Cabasilas describes the *sphragis* as a mark or image imparted by Baptism which intrinsically re-forms the person in the likeness of Christ. However, none of these men distinguish the effects of Chrismation in a way similar to Cabasilas; on the contrary, their tendency was to associate the gifts of the Spirit precisely with the divine indwelling

⁴⁷ CABASILAS, UIC 3, 5: "Ἐπει δὲ σὰρξ ἐθεώθη, καὶ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ὑπόστασιν αὐτὸν ἔλαχε τὸν Θεόν, τὸ τειχίον μύρον ὑπῆρξεν ἡδὴ· καὶ ἡ διαφορὰ ἐκείνη χώραν οὐκ ἔχει, τῆς μιᾶς ὑποστάσεως τοῦτο μὲν οὔσης, ἐκείνο δὲ γενομένης, ἢ τὴν διάστασιν τῆς θεότητος καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἀναιρεῖ, κοινὸς ὅρος ἐκατέρας φύσεως οὖσα, ἐπεὶ τῶν διεστώτων οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο κοινὸς ὅρος." (SChr 355, 240; CONGOURDEAU / DECANTAZARO 105).

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 3, 6: "τὴν γὰρ ἀμαρτίαν ὁ σταυρὸς ἔλυσε. Διὰ τοῦτο μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα τὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ δυνάμενον ἐκείνου καὶ τοῦ θανάτου, ἐπὶ τὸ μύρον χωροῦμεν τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος κοινωνίαν." (SChr 355, 242; CONGOURDEAU / DECANTAZARO 105).

effected by the mark of the *sphragis* upon the soul.⁵⁰ Like many of the Eastern fathers referenced here, Cabasilas uses the term *sphragis* to describe the effect of the Spirit in Christian initiation. Unlike his predecessors, however, Cabasilas' language of "sealing" in reference to Chrismation has been distinguished theologically from the *sphragis* of Baptism.

Conclusions

In *The Life in Christ*, Nicholas Cabasilas uses the concept of "sealing" to describe the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation as means by which the sacramental recipient is united to the life of Christ in love. In this context, the Incarnation serves as a template for the divinization of the person who participates in the sacraments. For Cabasilas, this new life in Christ is described in ontic language that is intended to capture the reconstitution of the person in the likeness of Christ, in such a way that the very being of the sacramental recipient is remade as a participation in Christ's life.

Broadly considered, many aspects of Cabasilas' approach to sacramental sealing reflect the instincts of earlier theologians, especially those of the Alexandrian tradition. In particular, however, it seems that Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration 40* has exerted a direct influence on Cabasilas' own text, providing a template of baptismal names that provide a conceptual lexicon for the theology of Christian initiation. In his treatment of Chrismation, Cabasilas adopts an innovative appropriation of the Eastern theology of sealing that he has already employed, continuing to apply the concept of sealing to the effect of Chrismation as a sacrament distinct from Baptism in a way that stands in continuity with his Greek sources. For Cabasilas, both Baptism and Chrismation participate in the form of Christ's incarnate humanity, sealing and re-forming the human person in the image of God as a new creation in Christ.

⁵⁰ While some earlier authors did attribute a more active role to Chrismation, Cabasilas remains distinct in his association of Chrismation with the "gifts of the Spirit", cf. LAMPE, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 215–217.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GCS | Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte |
| JOCS | Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies |
| LCL | Loeb Classical Library |
| NABRE | New American Bible. Revised Edition |
| PG | Patrologia Graeca |
| RSR | Recherches de Science Religieuse |
| SChr | Sources Chrétiennes |
| StLit | Studia Liturgica |
| TU | Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur |

Bibliography

Primary Sources

ALAND, Barbara – ALAND, Kurt (eds.), *The Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart 2012.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Strom.*

Clemens Alexandrinus, vol. 2: *Stromata Buch I–VI*, ed. by Otto STÄHLIN (GCS 15), Leipzig 1906.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Agg.*

In Aggaeum prophetam commentaries (PG 71, 943–1022).

–, *In ep. II Cor.*

In epistolam II ad Corinthios, in: *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis evangelium accedunt fragmenta varia necnon tractatus ad Tiberium diaconum duo*, vol. 3, ed. by Philippus E. PUSEY, Oxford 1872, 320–360; PG 74, 915–952.

–, *Thes.*

Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali trinitate (PG 75, 9–1190).

–, *Ador.*

KYRILL VON ALEXANDRIEN, *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate Buch 1. Einführung, kritischer Text, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen*, ed. by Barbara VILLANI (TU 190), Berlin 2021.

–, Dial. de trin.

CYRIL D'ALEXANDRIE, Dialogues sur la Trinité, 3 vols., ed. by Georges M. DE DURAND (SChr 231. 237. 246), Paris 1976–1978.

GREGORY NAZIANZUS, Or.

GRÉGOIRE DE NAZIANZE, Discours 38–41, ed. by Claudio MORESCHINI – Paul GALLAY (SChr 358), Paris 1990; English translation: ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, Festal Orations [transl. by Nonna Verna HARRISON], Crestwood. NY 2008.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Hom. bapt.

JEAN CHRYSOSTOME, Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites, ed. by Antoine WENGER (SChr 50), Paris 2005.

NICHOLAS CABASILAS, UIC

CABASILAS, Nicolas, La vie en Christ, ed. by Marie-Hélène CONGOURDEAU (SChr 355 [books 1–4]. 361 [books 5–7]), Paris 1989–2009; older edition: De vita in Christo (PG 150, 491–726); English translation: The Life in Christ [transl. by Carmino DECATANZARO], Crestwood, NY 1974.

THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS, Par.

The Apostolic Fathers, vol. 2, ed. by Bart D. EHRMAN (LCL 25), Cambridge 2003, 174–473.

Secondary Literature

ARNDT, William F. – GINGRICH, F. Wilbur (eds.), A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Chicago 1971.

AUER, Johann, A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist, in: Dogmatic Theology, vol. 6., ed. by Johann AUER – Joseph RATZINGER, Washington, DC 1996.

BAUER, Walter et al. (eds.), A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Chicago 32000.

DANIÉLOU, Jean, Chrismation prébaptismale et divinité de l'Esprit chez Grégoire de Nysse, in: RSR 56 (1968) 177–198.

DENYSENKO, Nicholas, The Life in Christ by Nicholas Cabasilas. A Mystagogical Work, in: StLit 38/2 (2008) 242–260.

FISHER, J. D. C., Christian Initiation. Baptism in the Medieval West, Chicago 2004.

GALOT, Jean, La nature du caractère sacramentel, Paris 1956.

- GETCHA, Job, La théologie sacramentaire byzantine. Les sacramentaire chez Nicolas Cabasilas et Syméon de Thessalonique (Théologie historique 133), Paris 2021.
- JOHNSON, Maxwell E., The Rites of Christian Initiation. Their Evolution and Interpretation, Collegeville ²2007.
- KRETSCHMAR, Georg, Die Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes in der alten Kirche in: Karl F. MÜLLER – Walter BLANKENBURG (eds.), Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. 5: Der Taufgottesdienst, Kassel 1970, 1–348.
- LAMPE, Geoffrey W. H., The Seal of the Spirit, London ²1976.
- SPINKS, Bryan, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent, Burlington, VT 2006.
- STAUFFER, Daniel, Deification in Nicholas Kabasilas and Reading The Life in Christ, in: JOCS 5/2 (2022) 253–272.