The Unbounded Body in the Age of Liturgical Reproduction

DEREK KRUEGER

Miracle stories from the sixth and seventh centuries about irregular, accidental, and inadvertent Eucharists demonstrate God's unbounded and excessive material body. These traditions provide a counterpoint to ascetic emphasis on bodily discipline and limits. As narratives of divine abundance, these tales contain implicit theologies of the Eucharist and theories of ritual efficacy through the recitation of anaphoral prayers.

Much of the work on early Christian piety in the past twenty years has explored Christianity as a system for the regulation and control of bodies. Ascetic practices reshaped the body though discipline, while ascetic discourse celebrated the moral and salvific benefits of establishing and maintaining bodily limits. Christianity, it would seem, was an ascetic religion.[1] By the end of late antiquity, however, another discourse had emerged, primarily in hagiographical literature, a discourse of an unbounded body, surprisingly resistant to limits, a body utterly unascetic in its habits, and

The author acknowledges the generous support of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a research assignment from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

1. The literature is now enormous. See for example Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); Teresa Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998); Elizabeth Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Journal of Early Christian Studies 17:2, 267–279 © 2009 The Johns Hopkins University Press

yet entirely holy. This was the body of God, the unfailing product of liturgical reproduction at every Eucharistic celebration.

Accounts of irregular Eucharists in sixth- and seventh-century eastern Mediterranean texts reveal the shape of God's body in the late ancient and early Byzantine religious imagination. *The Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos, composed before his death in 619, relates a story about children on an estate near Apamea in Syria.[2] While pasturing their animals, they decided to play a game of church: "Let us have a service [σύναξις] and offer the holy sacrifice [προσφορά]!" (196).[3] Delighted, the children chose one to play priest and two others to play deacons. They found a flat rock and began their game. "They placed loaves on the rock which was to serve as an altar and some wine in an earthenware vessel." They took their places, and the one playing priest "recited the Prayer of Oblation [προσκομιδή]" while the other two beat the air with branches, simulating the liturgical fans that indicate the presence of angels. Having heard the prayer of consecration while attending church, the acting priest found that he knew the Prayer of Consecration, or ἀναφορά, by heart. As the story goes, "They did everything according to the custom of the church, but before they divided the bread, fire came down from heaven and consumed all the offering [τὰ προσκομισθέντα], burning up the entire stone."

Beyond the story's ability to amuse and terrify, this narrative confirms the efficacy of the anaphoral prayers as a technology for the production of God's body. If there were ever doubts about the results of "ritual play," or the ability to "do things with words," this incident dispels them.[4] Moschos does not say explicitly that the bread and wine had become the body and blood of Christ, but the fire from heaven that put an end to the children's game signals not failure but success and recalls the biblical story of Elijah's oblation, in which a heavenly fire burned up the prophet's offering and his stone altar (1 Kgs 18.38). The pretend-priest's words effected the liturgical production of Christ's body, an offering divinely consumed

2. John Moschos, *prat.,* PG 87.3.2851–3112; translation from John Moschos, *The Spiritual Meadow,* trans. John Wortley (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1992). Throughout this essay I have employed published English translations occasionally modified to emphasize aspects of the underlying Greek. For this and other miracles of the Eucharist, see Vincent Déroche, "Représentations de l'Eucharistie dans la haute époque byzantine," in *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron, Travaux et mémoires* 14 (2002): 167–80.

3. [Π]οιήσωμεν σύναξιν, καὶ προσενέγκωμεν προσφοράν (PG 87.3.3081).

4. For such models of ritual efficacy, see for example J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); Tom Driver, *The Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites That Transform Our Lives and Our Communities* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

before the children could enact the fraction and communion, the breaking of the divine body and its distribution. The ritual reenactment of this play-Eucharist ends with a reminder that this mimicry was both a children's game and more. When the offering was zapped, the children fell to the ground half dead; it was days before their parents could get them to tell what had happened.[5]

The audibility of the prayers of consecration during the Divine Liturgy and the proliferation of the technology for effecting the Eucharist provoked concern in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries.[6] Within the narrative, Moschos, or perhaps a later editor supplies, "As it was the custom, in some places, for the priests to recite the Prayer [of Consecration] out loud, children were found to learn it by heart from continually hearing it audibly recited" (196). The text also explains that it was customary for children to stand before the holy sanctuary [ἱερατεῖον] during the Divine Liturgy, or synaxis. In fact, Moschos writes in a period of transition with respect to the recitation of the holiest prayers of the liturgy. Already in the mid-sixth century, the anaphora had begun to be said silently in some places, but by no means all. Justinian issued a *novella* in 565 forbidding the silent recitation of the prayers of the divine oblation [προσκομιδή] and of baptism. This law thus attests both the spreading practice of the silent anaphora and imperial pressure against it.[7] By the end of the eighth century, the custom had changed. The earliest Byzantine liturgical manuscript, copied around 790, indicates that the priest is to recite the anaphoral

5. Perhaps a canon lawyer would object that a fire from heaven would never have consumed the true body of God, but Moschos clearly regards this as an important Eucharistic miracle. The children were subsequently sent to a monastery, and the bishop established a monastery at the place where the miracle occurred and built its church "on the spot where the fire had descended and erected the holy altar there" (196). This story of children playing church is not unique. In the following chapter (197), Moschos recounts a similar story set in the childhood of Athanasius of Alexandria, a narrative that derives from Rufinus, *HE* 14 (PL 21.486–88).

6. See now Robert Taft, "Was the Eucharistic Anaphora Recited Secretly or Aloud? The Ancient Tradition and What Became of It," in *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East,* ed. Roberta R. Ervine (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 2006), 15–57. Also Robert Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81): 56 n. 64.

7. Justinian, *nov.* 137.6; ed. Theodor Mommsen (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1899; rpt. 1989), 3:699. On the impact of an audible anaphora, see Derek Krueger, "The Liturgical Creation of a Christian Past: Identity and Community in Anaphoral Prayers," in *Unclassical Traditions: Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity,* ed. Christopher Kelly, Michael Williams, and Richard Flower (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, forthcoming 2009).

prayers μυστικῶς, "silently."[8] Knowing the right words made it possible to invoke the Holy Spirit and consecrate the host. But without the boundary of silence imposed upon these words, there was little control on the appearance of God's body.

As other chapters in the *Spiritual Meadow* reveal, Moschos does not question the authenticity of the irregularly eucharized offerings. Lack of ordination and proper training cannot prevent the production of the body of Christ. Moschos recounts a story that he heard while visiting the cells and monastery at Choziba about a brother who had learned by heart the words used at the offering of the Eucharist (25). (The text says that he had memorized "ἡ προσκομιδὴ τῆς ἀναφορᾶς"; this probably refers to the entirety of the canon prayer, not merely the words of institution—"Take, eat, this is my body"—or to the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or epiclesis.) "One day he was sent to fetch the [Eucharistic] oblations [εὐλογία] and, as he returned to the monastery, he said the offering prayer [προσκομιδή] according to the order of recitation [ἐν τάξει τῆς στιχολογίας]." The deacons placed this same offering on a paten in the sanctuary, but when the priest offered the gifts, "he did not perceive the coming of the Holy Spirit in the accustomed manner."[9] In his distress, the priest wondered whether he had committed some sin that prevented the Spirit's appearance. "He went into the sacristy in tears and flung himself face down." There, an angel of the Lord appeared to him to explain: "because the brother who was bringing the oblations here recited the holy prayer of offering [ἡ ἁγία ἀναφορά] on the way, they are already consecrated and made perfect."

This story asserts and confirms the power of the anaphoral prayer to produce the body of Christ regardless of whether the speaker has been ordained a priest, or whether the speaker recites the prayer in the proper venue or at the proper time. In this instance, the story results in the setting of a limit: "The elder laid down a rule that from henceforth nobody was to learn the holy anaphora unless he had been ordained; nor was it ever to be recited at any other time than in a consecrated place." (We note that he does *not* require the prayer to be said silently.) At the same time, this tale of inadvertent consecration underscores the sense that the body of God knew no bounds. Without the regulation of the clergy, the body would show up persistently and in places inconvenient to the maintenance of clerical authority.

8. *L'Eucologio Barberini gr. 336,* 2nd ed., ed. Stefano Parenti and Elena Velkovska (Roma: Edizione liturgiche, 2000), 65.

9. For a priest's ability to perceive the coming of the Holy Spirit during the recitation of the anaphora, see also John Moschos, *prat.* 150.

Antony of Choziba, writing just after 631, perhaps two decades after Moschos, narrates a similar story (or perhaps another version of the same story) in his *Miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God at Choziba,* suggesting that Choziba was a locus of concern about the extraordinary efficacy of the Eucharistic prayers.[10] This version tells of an elder who regularly sent the young Zeno to Jericho to obtain bread for the Eucharist (5). As the story goes, "One day the youth was standing near the apse of the church at the time of the Eucharistic sacrifice [προσκομιδή] when his spiritual guardian was making the offering, unguardedly [ἀφυλάκτως], so that his voice could be heard; the youth heard some of the words of the anaphora and remembered them." One Sunday, as he was returning from Jericho with the bread for the offering, he remembered the words he had heard. "He practiced saying these words over and over when suddenly the Holy Spirit descended and consecrated [ἡγίασε] both the offering and the youth." Back at the monastery, an angel appeared to the spiritual guardian and told him to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with the offering that the youth was bringing, "for it has already been sanctified."

When the youth returned, the elder questioned him about his thoughts while on the road from Jericho. After some time, the youth confessed, "I was practicing certain words that I had heard from you and memorized as you celebrated the Eucharist." The story ends also with the erection of an invisible boundary designed to prevent or deter the recitation of the Eucharistic prayers by the unordained: "From then on [the elder] no longer allowed him to approach the apse of the sanctuary while he was making the holy and bloodless sacrifice, for he knew that from this came the descent of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the holy offering." In an era long before the iconostases of the eleventh century, when the liturgical action would be hidden from view, the priest can only maintain a limit by requiring the young man to keep his distance.[11] Curiously, the Spirit does not consecrate Zeno as a priest, but rather as a brother. The following section relates that "from that time on the youth was an admired and illuminated and Spirit-bearing monk" (6). Reciting the prayers and effecting the body

10. Antony of Choziba, *Miracula Beatae Virginis in Choziba,* ed. C. Houze, *AB* 7 (1888): 360–70. English translation in Antony of Choziba, *The Life of Saint George of Choziba and the Miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God at Choziba,* trans. Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1994), 95–105.

11. On the history of the templon and the separation of the sanctuary from the laity, see *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West,* ed. Sharon E. J. Gerstel (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2007).

of Christ did not bring about his own clerical ordination. Indeed the elder would later forbid him from standing nearby during the anaphora. The story thus underscores the possibility of a priestless Eucharist.

In these three stories, the liturgically reproduced body of God seems remarkably undisciplined and raises questions about the boundaries governing the body of God. The irregulable and nearly indiscriminate appearance of the Eucharist in these tales offers a reversal of the ascetic model, a body without firm boundaries. Has God no self-control? These narrative discourses on the Eucharist lie far from the realm of systematic theology; even as they document the emergence of canon law controlling access to liturgical technology, they make little or no recourse to the technicalities of doctrine. Instead they engage what we might call a commonsense sacramentology. These narratives never doubt the reproducibility of the divine body, and in the process reveal an aspect of God's *habitus*.[12]

Christ's proclivity for material reproduction demanded further reflection. In the sixth century, the lectionary in use in Constantinople assigned the story of Jesus' multiplication of the loaves to the Wednesday between Ascension and Pentecost. In the work of the great hymnographer Romanos the Melodist, the inexhaustible generation of bread prompted an exploration of the Eucharist. Romanos associated the body of Christ with themes of surplus, excess, and abundance.[13] "For [Christ] ineffably / once nourished five thousand in the wilderness; / fearsome wonder [θαῦμα φοβερόν], full of all amazement" (13.4.2–4). The biblical narrative offers a type for the Eucharist through which humans are "lifted up in thought and attain what is on high / as partakers in Christ crucified. / For together they all eat

12. In imagining God to have a *habitus*, a general, commonsense way of doing things, I am tweaking the work of Pierre Bourdieu, especially his chapter "Structures, *Habitus,* Practices," in *The Logic of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford Uninversity Press, 1990), 52–65.

13. *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica genuina,* ed. Paul Maas and C. A. Trypanis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 94–101. In the edition of Maas and Trypanis, this is Hymn 13. See also the edition of José Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes,* SC 114 (Paris: Cerf, 1965), 3:103–31. The translation of the hymn appears in Romanos the Melodist, *On the Life of Christ: Kontakia,* trans. Ephrem Lash (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995), 87–97. On Romanos see also, Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 159–88; Derek Krueger "Romanos the Melodist and the Christian Self in Early Byzantium," in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 2006*, vol. 1, *Plenary Papers,* ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 247–66; and Georgia Frank, "Romanos and the Night Vigil in the Sixth Century," in *Byzantine Christianity,* ed. Derek Krueger, A People's History of Christianity 3 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 59–78.

his body" (13.1.3–5). The text echoes the liturgical dialogue that preceded the anaphora in some eastern liturgies. Romanos's contemporary Cyril of Scythopolis records that the priest begins the Eucharist with the words "Let us lift up our mind and hearts," a form also known from the Syrian Liturgy of Saint James.[14] Romanos thus guides his listeners' experience of the sacrament. "Though to the senses it appears as bread / spiritually [νοητῶς] it makes [partakers] holy, for it is / *the heavenly bread of incorruption*" (13.1.8–10). The presence of the body of God lies beyond the limits of the ordinary senses of the communicants' body.[15]

Like the superabundant loaves, the body of Christ multiplies to feed all who hunger for it. In response to the apostles' observation that the assembled people had nothing to eat, Romanos's Jesus scolds them for their "misplaced worry" (13.14.7) saying "[d]o you not know that I offer myself ungrudgingly [πρόκειμαι ἄφθονος] to all as / *the heavenly bread of incorruption?"* (13.14.9–10). Jesus thus clarifies that he offers and reproduces himself. When the five loaves are brought to Christ, he takes the stance of a priest at the holy table, and looks upward toward the father (13.19.6). Then Christ blesses the loaves and says to them "with an unseen [but apparently not unheard] voice, / 'Increase perceptibly and multiply / and now nourish all those present here.' / At once the loaves obeyed the Lord. / They gave birth invisibly / as Christ told them to" (13.20.4–9).[16] Up to this point, Romanos has entwined the feeding of the five thousand, the Eucharistic celebration, and the last supper (with its institution of the Eucharist). Now he adds an additional theme of the incarnation. In the final stanza, Romanos compares the birthing of the loaves with the birth of Christ: "As for us, not knowing how the loaves gave birth, / how can we comprehend with human hearts / your birth, O Saviour, from her who

14. Cyril of Scythopolis, *v. Euthym.* 29; ed. Eduard Schwartz, in *Kyrillos von Skythopolis, TU* 49.2 (1939): 3–85; translation in Cyril of Scythopolis, *The Lives of the Monks of Palestine,* trans. R. M. Price and John Binns (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 43 and 89 n. 63. On the Liturgy of St. James see R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed,* 3rd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 88–90.

15. On preachers' attempts to shape communicants' experience of the sacrament in an earlier period, see Georgia Frank, "'Taste and See': The Eucharist and the Eyes of Faith in the Fourth Century," *CH* 70 (2001): 619–43.

16. As the Gospel of Matthew recounts, "Taking the five loaves and the two fish, [Jesus] looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples" (Matt 14.19). Within the narrative of the Gospel, this language already prefigures the description of Jesus at the Last Supper: "Jesus took the loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, 'take, eat: this is my body'" (Matt 26.26).

knew not wedlock" (13.23.5–7). Both of these material generations of the divine body—bread and flesh—remain at once perceptible and incomprehensible. Slipping between the gospel miracle and the liturgical altar, Romanos exclaims,

> No human mind can wholly reason out this wonder,
> how the visible loaves flowed on invisibly.
> Where did this ineffable increase occur—
> in the hands of the disciples or was it on the tables?
> (13.21)

The bread/body of Christ has form and shape but burgeons, seemingly without limits.

Even the conceptual boundaries between body and bread remain playfully blurred, a theme we can see emphasized in earlier theological controversy. In his *Eranistes,* a dialogue with a heretic, the fifth-century bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus underscored that after the consecration, the bread and the wine are the body and blood of Christ. "[T]hey remain in their former substance, shape, and form, and are visible and tangible, just as they were before. But they are understood to be what they became, and they are the object of faith and worship, because they are what they are believed to be."[17] This assertion occurs in reponse to the heretic's attempt to distinguish Jesus' nature before and after the resurrection. "Eranistes" posits that in rising Christ's flesh changed into Godhead and ceased to be body, was indeed "God" but not "a body." Theodoret's spokesman for orthodoxy responds by identifying the resurrected body not only as body but as Eucharist: "[I]t is called, not only a body, but also bread of life. The Lord called it this [see John 6.48], and we name this very body a body that is divine and life-giving, a body that belongs to the master and Lord." This body seeks and acquires multiple identities and meanings.

Late ancient hagiography abounds in stories of miraculous feeding, typological reiterations of the gospel miracle.[18] Abba Apollo's prayers are answered with Easter banquets full of exotic foods (*HM* 8.38–41); he multiplies loaves, oil, and wheat for the poor (*HM* 8.44–47).[19] Symeon

17. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *eran.* 2; ed. Gerard H. Ettlinger (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 152; translation in Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes,* trans. Gerard H. Ettlinger (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 133.

18. See Peter Brown, "The Problem of Miraculous Feeding in the Graeco-Roman World," in *Center for Hermeneutical Studies: Colloquy 42* (Berkeley, CA: Graduate Theological Union, 1982), 16–24.

19. *HM,* ed. A.-J. Festugière, Subsidia Hagiographica 53 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1971).

the Fool produces multi-course meals out of nothing.[20] The cell that doubled as a larder at the monastery of Euthymios filled miraculously with loaves, wine, and oil.[21] As Daniel Caner has demonstrated, donations to monastic and church pantries could provide food to many in the name of God.[22] But, while the accounts of Eucharistic excess participate in this miraculous economy, and may even serve to ground the dispensation of victuals in a broader context of divine assistance to humanity, they also invoke a more complex theology of the divine body, a body resistant to human regulation by its very nature. Moreover, the Eucharistic body was always and everywhere the same body, identical and authentic.

Some narratives address the question of Eucharistic authenticity directly: how does one know that this host is real? and really God? Palestine and Syria were not the only regions in which hagiography exhibited concerns about the efficacy of Eucharistic performances. In Gregory of Tours's *Miracles of the Bishop Saint Martin* (2.1), composed in the 570s and 580s, the author narrates how once, when he was recuperating from a digestive illness, he ordered a poorly educated priest to celebrate mass. When this man "pronounced the words of the liturgy incorrectly," many members of the congregation began to laugh at him. The following night, Gregory had a vision in which a man said to him, "There must never be disagreement about the mysteries of God." Gregory thus charges his audience, "most beloved people, let no one dare to disagree about this mystery, even if it seems to be recited in an uncouth fashion, because in the presence of God's majesty pure simplicity is more effective than philosophical cleverness."[23] Even bad pronunciation cannot botch the consecration of the gifts.

Once consecrated, the Eucharist had the potential to define the limits of communal identity.[24] A number of Moschos's narratives seek to reinforce boundaries between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christians. Within his text, these divisions have less to do with doctrinal differences

20. *Léontios de Néapolis: vie de Syméon le fou et vie de Jean de Chypre,* edited by A.-J. Festugière, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 95 (Paris: Geuthner, 1974), 158–59, 163–64.

21. Cyril of Scythopolis, *v. Euthym.* 17.

22. Daniel Caner, "Towards a Miraculous Economy: Christian Gifts and Material 'Blessings' in Late Antiquity," *JECS* 14 (2006): 329–77.

23. Gregory of Tours, *Miracles of the Bishop Saint Martin,* ed. B. Krusch in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 1 (1885): 584–661; translation in Raymond van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 228.

24. See Volker Menze, "Priests, Laity and the Sacrament of the Eucharist in Sixth-century Syria," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 7/2 (2004): 1–21.

(which are rarely articulated) than with proper networks for the distribution of orthodox communion. Moschos tells of a monk who "would receive holy communion indiscriminately, in whatever church he happened to be" (178). Eventually, this monk had a dream in which an angel appeared to him asking whether he wanted to be buried like the monks of Egypt (presumably miaphysites) or the monks of Jerusalem. When he reported the dream to an elder, the elder warned him never to take communion "outside the holy catholic and apostolic Church in which the four holy councils are named," including Chalcedon.

Contrary to what one might expect however, the non-Chalcedonian rite, in and of itself, did not necessarily fail to produce an acceptable host. Moschos relates the story of a pure, holy, but simple-minded priest who had learned the Eucharistic rite from "heretics," but who nevertheless used to see angels standing to his right and to his left when he celebrated (199). One day a deacon pointed out that the prayers he recited during the consecration were not orthodox but "kakodox," that is, bad teaching. Yet, as his practice to this point demonstrates, even the prayers of heretics effect the Eucharist, at least when recited by someone who has not adopted false doctrines. The body of God thus transcends the boundaries of both ritual incompetence and ritual deviance.

Apparently this was not true of all sacramental rites. In contrast to the certitude and fascination surrounding instances of aberrant Eucharists, an aberrant baptism might have to be reperformed. Moschos relates a story about a baptism in the absence of both clerics and water (176). Ten friends fled to the wilderness of Palestine during a time of war. The one Jew among them grew gravely ill. He asked the others to baptize him. They protested that they were all laymen and that there was no water present in the desert. Then, taking initiative, one of the Christians got the sick man to his feet and stripped him. Filling his hands with sand and pouring it three times over the Jew's head, he said, "Theodore is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The man was cured. When the group arrived in Ascalon, they consulted the local bishop who, in turn, assembled the local clergy to determine "whether the effusion of sand" was a baptism or not. Although no one doubted the miracle, the ensuing debate reflected enough concern that the bishop sent Theodore to the Jordan for a proper baptism and ordained as a deacon the one who had shown initiative. The main problem for the clergy lay in their not being able to discern whether a canonical baptism had taken place. Moschos reveals no concern about the absence of a cleric, and one gets the impression that the real problem for the clergy is the efficacy of sand, a substance for which there is neither biblical nor patristic license.

Elsewhere, Moschos affirms the importance of the interior disposition of the baptizand.[25] Joining the body of Christ through baptism, and maintaining membership in that body through receiving orthodox communion functioned differently from producing the body of Christ in the anaphoral rites. In cases not involving the Eucharist, Moschos exhibits greater interest in the connection between ritual efficacy and proper ritual procedure because they do not involve the boundary-defying body of God.

Limits on participation in the Eucharist depended to a great extent on the interior self-examination of prospective communicants, and in fact discerning whether one was sufficiently pure to receive the body of God provided an important point of departure for the formation of the self. In his *Life of Euthymios* (29), Cyril of Scythopolis reports the saint's charismatic ability while distributing the Eucharist to discern the moral quality of each monk. "Frequently, when distributing the holy sacrament to the brethren," Euthymios told his companions, "I have seen some of those who approach illuminated by communion and others condemned." He therefore taught, "Attend to yourselves . . . and let each of you 'examine himself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup,' as the Apostle says, for he who does this unworthily 'eats and drinks judgment upon himself' (1 Cor 11.28–29)." The moral state of communicants cannot negate the efficacy or identity of the Eucharist. But contact with the Eucharist in a state of sin causes one harm:

> If anyone stinks of gluttony or consent to impure thoughts, if anyone has been blinded by hatred or resentment, if anyone is confused by envy or anger, if anyone one has been overcome by arrogance or boastfulness, he should not presume to approach this pure and holy fire before washing in meet repentance and cleansing himself 'from every defilement of body and spirit, making holiness perfect' (2 Cor 7.1). For these holy things are not for the profane but for the holy. (29; trans. Price, 43)

The boundary around the body of Christ now resides within the monk's conscience.[26] Cyril is not worried about the spiritually impure defiling the sacrament; its purity is beyond the threat of pollution.

25. See John Moschos, *prat.* 198. For a similar concern in the West, see Augustine, *Bapt.* 7.53.101–2, where he addresses the authenticity of baptisms performed in "mockery" or "in jest, as in a play." Augustine would like to accept all baptisms "received without deceit" and entered into "with some degree of faith," but lacking this, he proposes that one pray for a revelation of God's judgment on the matter. I thank an anonymous reader for this reference.

26. The development of the conscience in late antique Christianity remains a problematic topic, especially in the East. See David Brakke, "Making Public the Monastic Life: Reading the Self in Evagrius Ponticus' *Talking Back*," in *Religion and the Self in*

The lack of concern to establish firmer boundaries around the Eucharist, to protect it from either sinful or heretical persons, may surprise those familiar with more recent Eucharistic practice and canon law. Moschos recounts the story of a Severan Monophysite heretic named Kosmiane who tried to worship at the Church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem. When she attempted to enter the holy sepulcher, the Theotokos appeared before her in a visible form, confronting her and saying, "Since you are not one of us, neither enter [here], nor join us" (48). Defending Chalcedonian space, the Virgin protects the purity of the shrine, preventing its pollution by a heretic. Kosmiane realized "that she would not be allowed in until she joined the holy catholic and apostolic Church of Christ our God." The tag quotation from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (a text used by both the followers of Severos and the followers of Chalcedon) emphasizes, I suspect, not a point of doctrine, but rather of ritual practice. Kosmiane "sent for the deacon, and when the holy chalice arrived, she partook of the holy body and blood of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus she was found worthy to worship unimpeded at the holy and life-giving sepulcher." From a Chalcedonian perspective, the critical aberrant practice of the rejecters of Chalcedon was their refusal of Eucharistic species consecrated by Chalcedonian priests. Kosmiane's Eucharist marks the boundary between heresy and orthodoxy, to be sure, but not in the way one might expect. The Chalcedonian Eucharist has the power to join Kosmiane to the proper religious group and allow her to cross a communal and spatial threshold. Hers is the body that must be purified: before she can enter sacred space, the properly consecrated host must enter her. In a similar story about a woman attempting to visit the monastery at Choziba, ingesting the body of God cures the "deadly disease of heterodoxy."[27] In entering and purifying these heretical women, God's body crosses boundaries to restore the bodies of others. Indeed the Eucharist functions to

Antiquity, ed. David Brakke et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 222–33; Philip Rousseau, "Knowing Theodoret: Text and Self," in *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography,* ed. Dale Martin and Patricia Cox Miller (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 278–97; and Krueger, "Romanos the Melodist and the Christian Self." For another instance of self-reflection before approaching the Eucharist, see Barsanuphios and John, *resp.* 170; translation in *Letters from the Desert: A Selection of Questions and Responses,* trans. John Chryssavgis (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 93.

27. For these and related stories see Derek Krueger, "Mary at the Threshold: The Mother of God as Guardian in Seventh-Century Palestinian Miracle Accounts," in *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium,* ed. Leslie Brubaker and Mary Cunningham (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming).

replicate orthodoxy through ingestion, assimilating other bodies in the expansion of its own bodily form.

* * *

In titling this essay "The Unbounded Body in the Age of Liturgical Reproduction," I acknowledge a debt to Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."[28] Benjamin argued that new technologies like lithography, photography, and film permitted the dissemination of art unmoored from the primacy of the original. In the modern age, mass production created an economy of the copy without regard for authenticity. My survey of sixth- and seventh-century Eucharistic lore uncovers a parallel economy of reproduction: the technology of the liturgy produces endless repetitions of the original. But there is here also a critical difference from the modern proliferation of the copy, for each instance of liturgical reproduction produced a copy identical with the original; each iteration was again the body of God. As the story of the children's game of church shows, even the simulation produces the real.[29] This is, if you will pardon the pun, a rather different sort of "mass" production.

Stories of irregular, inadvertent, and even incompetent Eucharists reflect widespread and commonly held ideas about the surprising and often miraculous unboundedness of the material body of God. The art of producing this body was so effective that clergy and monastic leaders alike needed to discipline their own practice in order to regulate the appearance of this body. In the age of liturgical reproduction, the reproductive technology for the multiplication of these loaves—for the birthing of the divine bread—would know only the boundaries that clerics could impose on themselves.

Derek Krueger is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

28. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217–51.

29. On the ability of simulacra to produce the real, see also Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of the Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1–42. The reiteration of the real in the Eucharist contrasts with theories undergirding the emerging cult of icons. Unlike images of the saints, the consecrated host was not a mere imitation or representation of the body of God; rather the Eucharist is what Marie-José Mondzain (*Image, Icon, Economy: The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary*, trans. Rico Franses [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005], 72) has called "pure similitude without relative resemblance"; in the Eucharist, "there is no icon."