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AN EASTERN CHRISTIAN SECT: THE ATHINGANOI

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TO THE MEMORY OF PROF. ANDRÉAS MICHAEL ANDRÉADÈS
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'ALL heresies issue out of your midst,' said Liutprand to the emperor and his court at Constantinople, and the statement was essentially correct. But he went too far in implying that they flourished without interference by the orthodox regime, so that it was left to the Latins to exterminate them in the course of their westward spread.¹ One could draw up a fairly long catalogue of sects which are known to have existed on Byzantine soil for a time, only to succumb to official persecution or to become extinct in some unrecorded manner. Practically all of these have passed on leaving no tangible trace of their peculiar beliefs or practices, yet a study of any one of them offers the opportunity of filling in to some extent the picture of life in the variegated Eastern Empire. The subject of this study is the latest of the several sects which arose in Phrygia, and despite a brief and limited history, did not disappear without having an emperor credited to it, nor without perpetuating its name in the variants whereunder the gypsies are known in Europe to the present day.

The handful of references relating to the external history of the Athinganoi deals principally with the activities of certain emperors before or after accession. We hear of them first at the opening of the ninth century in the chronicle of Theophanes. They appear here together with the Paulicians of Phrygia and Lycaonia as the favored supporters of Nikephoros (802-11), then general of the army in Asia Minor. The future

¹ *Relatio de legatione constantinopolitana*, xxii, ed. J. Becker. *Die Werke Liutprands von Cremona*, 3rd ed., Hannover, 1915, 186 f.

emperor was a native of that region, and the hostile chronicler frowns on his impious trust in the magical devices of the two sects.² Of course, Theophanes was an ardently orthodox Christian writing in a period when the struggle with the iconoclastic party was still smoldering, and although the reign of Nikephoros is not marked by any active steps on behalf of the latter, his tolerance toward it contrasted sharply with the policy of Irene, whose throne he usurped, and who had been imperial consort in 787, the year of the restoration of the icons. Hence, we can understand his condemnation of this emperor as a benighted heretic, without too readily accepting as fact his personal encouragement of the sects in question.³

The situation during the brief reign of the succeeding ruler, Michael I (811-13), was quite the reverse. For under the influence of such fanatics as Nikephoros, the patriarch of Constantinople, the death-penalty was decreed for all Paulicians and Athinganoi.⁴ But this extreme measure evoked serious opposition,⁵ particularly on the part of the great Theodore of Studion,⁶ so that the sentence was presently commuted to banishment and confiscation of property. The execution of this order on the Athinganoi was entrusted to Leo, general of the Anatolic theme,⁷ and, as will shortly appear, this probably meant the transference of a portion of the sect to the western provinces.

² Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. K. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883, 488, A. M. 6303: τῶν δὲ Μανιχαίων, τῶν νῦν Παυλικιάνων καλουμένων, καὶ Ἀθιγγάνων . . . φίλος ἦν διάπυρος, χρησμοῖς καὶ τελεταῖς αὐτῶν ἐπιχαίρων. . . . Cf. Kedrénos (12th c.), *Synopsis historion*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, CXXI, 924; Zonaras, *Epitome historion*, vol. III, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst, Bonn, 1897, 308. The latter expressly shows that Theophanes' epithet, 'Manichees,' does not apply to the Athinganoi.

³ See J. B. Bury, *A history of the Eastern Roman Empire*, London, 1912, 38; A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'empire byzantin*, Paris, 1932, I, 373.

⁴ Theophanes, 494 f., A. M. 6304. Ignatios, likewise a contemporary, states that a tract written by the patriarch influenced the emperor (presumably Michael I) to suppress the religions of the Jews, the Phrygians, and the Manichees. See the biography, ed. de Boor with the *Opuscula historica* of Nikephoros, Leipzig, 1880, 158 f. Bury, *op. cit.*, 40.

⁵ See E. J. Martin, *A history of the Iconoclastic movement*, London, 1932, 156. This writer takes the peculiar position that it was the patriarch who dissuaded the emperor from taking such extreme measures.

⁶ See A. P. Dobroklonski, *Prep. Theodor ispovyednik i igumen Studiiskii*, Odessa, 1914, I, 715, with reference to PG, XCIX, 1485.

⁷ Theophanes, 497.

If the emperor had supposed that his will could so be carried out that no Athinganoi would be left behind in heresy-ridden Phrygia, he would have been quite mistaken. For we know from Genesis that they continued to flourish there, particularly in Amorion, the birth-place of Michael II (820-9). It was a soothsayer of this sect who was believed to have predicted his accession, while he was still an obscure army-officer. But notwithstanding the fact that Amorion seems to have been noted for its numerous Athinganoi, and that certain late sources emphasize the allegation that Michael was reared within the sect, neither Genesis nor the emperor's semi-contemporary, George the Monk, know aught of his participation in its life.⁸

Now although Michael as emperor did favor iconoclasm, the most recent studies have concluded that he did not persecute the orthodox party to any serious degree.⁹ Yet it was sufficient that he personally leaned toward the heretics and that he blocked the restoration of image-worship for later chroniclers to expand the few sober details furnished by Genesis into a veritable diatribe. We begin first with the anonymous continuator of Theophanes, who succeeded the former within very few years. In his account Michael is presented as an Athinganos by birth and upbringing, who manifested the influence of this sect in his imperial administration in a number of ways. But whereas Genesis saw no need to dwell on the idiosyncrasies of the sect, the popular purpose of our pious chronicler required that he enlighten his readers with respect to its unchristian character. The Athinganoi, he explained, were a sect of Judaizers, a circumstance resulting from the fact that Amorion, its chief seat, had long harbored a large community of Jews.¹⁰ (The latter notion was undoubtedly inspired by Genesis'

⁸ Genesis, Basileiai, PG, CIX, 1025-8: *οὐχ ἦττον δὲ καὶ ἐπίμωμος ἀπὸ τε τῆς πατρίδος αὐτοῦ Ἀθιγγάνων πληθὺν ἐκτρεφούσης*. (Written ca. 950.) Bury, *op. cit.*, 79 f. Based on this passage are the slightly later notices in Theophanes continuatus, PG, CIX, 57-9, 65; cf. also, Kedrénos, 953-6, and Zonaras, 337 f. The theory of H. Grégoire, *Byzantion*, IX, 1934, 202, that Genesis and Theop. cont. are dependent on a common source, has yet to be proved.

⁹ Dobroklonski, *op. cit.*, 849; Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 376.

¹⁰ *l. c.*, 56. Unlike Bury, *op. cit.*, 78, Martin, *op. cit.*, 199, interprets the passage to mean that the sect in question was a third group intermediate to the Jews and Athinganoi. It is true that the chronicler's language does not preclude this view, but why

casual reference to the local Jews.¹¹) In order to insure the influence of Judaism in their lives, each family secured for itself a Jew or Jewess as mentor, who lived with the household and managed all its affairs, both spiritual and temporal. The result was that the sect observed all the laws of Moses, though refraining from circumcision on the one hand, and practicing Christian baptism on the other. Having been raised in such an atmosphere, was it not, from the standpoint of the writer and his readers, readily understandable why Michael grew up to become a wretched iconoclast, who loved the Jews more than the Christians, and why he even declared the former tax-exempt?¹²

If such a wild tale could arise in the tenth century, we need not be surprised at the twelfth-century chronicler, Zonaras, who sums up the calumny against Michael II with the statement that 'he belonged to the Jews.'¹³ Then, toward the end of the century Michael the Syrian recorded the crowning calumny that the emperor was descended from a Jewish grandfather!¹⁴ The false, sensational tone of all of this material cannot fail to arouse some suspicion when the texts are thus confronted one with the other. Yet imperative as such a process of criticism would seem, certain scholars have totally neglected it and then proceeded to take the passage on the Athinganoi in the anonymous chronicler in all seriousness.¹⁵

look for precision in such a work? Ephraim, author of a rhymed chronicle in the 13th c., makes the emperor to have been only a friend of the Athinganoi; PG, CXLIII, 93, line 2195.

¹¹ I.e., 1072 f.

¹² I.e., 61. Cf. the suspicion expressed by F. Dölger, *Die Frage der Judensteuer in Byzanz*, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XXVI, 1933, 11.

¹³ p. 339. Figuratively and literally orthodox writers believed that the instigators of the iconoclastic movement were Jews. See Martin, *op. cit.*, 24, and J. Starr, *An iconodulic legend and its historical basis*, *Speculum*, VIII, 1933, 501-3.

¹⁴ *Makhtebhānūth zabhnē* (Chronique), ed. and tr. J. B. Chabot. Paris, 1899-1924, IV, 522; tr. III, 72. Copied by Bar Hebraeus, *Makhtebhānūth zabhnē*, ed. P. Bedjan, Paris, 1890, 141. (Comparison with the former shows that *qashīsh* here cannot signify 'priest' as in the translation of E. A. W. Budge, *The chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj*, London, 1932, 129.)

¹⁵ Pre-eminently, G. Caro, *Ein jüdischer Proselyt (?) auf dem Thron von Byzanz*, *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, LIII, 1909, 576-80; S. Krauss, *Studien zur byzantinisch-jüdischen Geschichte*, Vienna, 1914, 41. Both limited to the account of the anonymous chronicler (n. 10).

Before entering into a consideration of the inner life of the sect, attention must be directed to a source which reveals that in the ninth century there were Athinganoi in Europe, specifically in Aegina, the home of the abbess Athanasia, who extended charity to them during a famine.¹⁶ The presence of this sect in this western region is undoubtedly due to the exile order executed in the reign of Michael I, rather than to the earlier transportations of heretics from Asia Minor.¹⁷ For the dating of this particular reference it is important to note that earlier in the life of Athanasia the island had been raided by Arabs (*Μαυρούσιοι*), who presumably had come by way of Crete. This gives us as the *post quem* approximately the year 830.¹⁸

Toward the middle of the succeeding century, the emperor Constantine VII (913–59) is commended by a contemporary theological writer for having engaged in disputations with representatives of this heresy as well as with Paulicians (*οὐκ ὀλίγους δὲ τῶν Ἀνθιγγάνων [sic] καὶ Παυλικιάνων διήλεγξας*). This statement occurs in the introduction to an anti-Monophysite tract composed at the emperor's behest by Demetrios, metropolitan of Cyzicus, and assuming that the reference to the Athinganoi is not due merely to association of ideas, its importance lies both in its indication of the survival of the sect to that time, and in its suggestion of the existence of certain doctrines peculiar to it.¹⁹ For, as will presently appear, the practices of the Athinganoi have been recorded, but not their theological views.

¹⁶ Latin version of the life, ed. J. Pien, *Acta Sanctorum*, Aug., III, 1867, 170. Cf. C. Loparev, *Vizantiiski Vremennik*, XIX (1915), 81; L. Bréhier, *Byzantion*, I, 1924, 186 f. On Athanasia see F. Rémy in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, IV, 1930, 1400.

¹⁷ See M. Wellnhofer, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXX, 1930, 481.

¹⁸ See A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, Brussels, 1935, I, 57.

¹⁹ G. Ficker, *Erlasse des Patriarchen von Konstantinopel Alexios Studites*, Kiel, 1911, 22, n. The body of the tract without the portion cited here is printed under false authorship in PG, CXXVII, 879–84. For certain reasons Ficker preferred to identify *δεσπότην Κωνσταντίνου καὶ αυτοκράτορος τοῦ Πορφυρογενήτου* as Constantine VIII (1025–8), since there is a contemporary writer named Demetrios, who was shortly thereafter appointed to the same metropolitanship. But the identification, which is surprisingly late for the Athinganoi as a living sect, has, because of the terms in which the emperor is addressed, not met with approval. See L. Petit, *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, IV, 264 f. (1911); R. Janin, *l.c.*, XII, 60 (1933).

The study of our sect in its inner aspects is dependent on the information contained in the formula of abjuration appertaining to it, in an orthodox tract written concerning the heresy, and in a certain briefer statement of similar tenor. It seems appropriate to use the formula of abjuration ²⁰ as the starting-point, since it contains all the essential known facts. This document is, however, complicated by the unknown author's theory that the ancient Melkisedekites and Theodotians were so closely related to the latter-day heresy, that it was appropriate to provide but one formula for use in the baptism of a convert from either of the three sects. Nevertheless, it is clear that his main concern was the Athinganoi, and in the translation to be given here it will be best to exclude the briefer references to the other two groups.

. . . I also anathematize the successive teachers of the Athinganoi in each generation of the past, those of today, and those of the future.²¹ . . . I anathematize those who observe the Sabbath like the Jews, while contemning circumcision and baptism like the Gentiles. I anathematize those who resort to divination, charms, and magic, and promise to harm and to benefit men therewith. I anathematize those who invoke certain demons, the chief of them being Sōrou, Sochan, and Arche, and with their aid draw the moon to themselves, asking of it any questions they wish. I anathematize those who give the stars men's names, and who with their demonic fancy strive to incite them one against the other, saying thus: This star shall extinguish that, and this is greater and more propitious than all the others. I anathematize those who under pretense of purity teach misanthropy, considering all outside their faith defiled, and who, therefore, do not permit themselves to approach nor to be approached by any of those, nor to give nor to take anything by the hand of one of them. If by accident anything like that should occur, they immediately hurry away for their purifications and baths, as having been defiled and rendered impure. In addition I anathematize every other custom or ceremony or observance of the Athinganoi, practised secretly or openly by them.²¹

As a preface to the foregoing instrument certain manuscripts contain a tract entitled Concerning the Melkisedekites, the

²⁰ PG, CVI, 1033-6. For an old Slavic tr. of the 12th c. see A. A. Dimitrievski, *Bogoslushenie v russkoi tserkvi v XVI v.* Kazan, 1884, I, 55 f. Cited by V. N. Benschевич in *Evreiskaya Misl*, II, 1926, 212, n.

²¹ These are stereotyped statements, like several others omitted here, common to the several formulas. See V. V. Ermoni, *Abjurations*, in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, I, pt. 1, 98-103 (1907).

Theodotians, and the Athinganoi.²² This gives no new information of any value, and since it is designed for a less practical purpose than the formula, is not framed as concisely. With regard to Sabbath-observance and circumcision, our author differs somewhat in stating that 'when they are in the company of Jews, they pretend to observe the Sabbath, although otherwise they form part of the Gentiles, wherefore they shun circumcision and baptism.' He then describes how 'in the manner of the Thessalian witches of old,'²³ they direct incantations at the moon in order to compel it to descend from the heavens into the waters of a spring, bringing an answer regarding the fate of some individual. They may also 'give the stars in the western sky the names of those against whom evil is being sought. . . .' Again, by means of their incantations they can get the three demon-chiefs to cause a certain star to bring calamity down upon a person by extinguishing the light protecting him. Thus, they finally drag their clients down to destruction. In order to impress their observers they imitate the Novatians and their offshoot the Sabbatians, exclaiming, 'Touch me not, for I am pure!' Their name, we are told, derives from this peculiar attitude. But whether or not that etymology is admissible,²⁴ the analogy of the Novatians is false, and is suggested merely by the fact that the latter sect styled itself the *Kαθαροί*,²⁵ for entirely unrelated reasons.

Among the problems raised by the two foregoing writings is that of dating. With respect to the formula of abjuration, the question is bound up with that of the other materials in its

²² Text in G. Ficker, *Eine Sammlung von Abschwörungsformeln*, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XXVII, 1906, 450-2. Overlooked by G. Bardy, *Revue Biblique*, XXXVI, 1927, 38, who gives an abridged tr. from the ms.

²³ See Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, XXX, ii, 2. Cf. M. Summers, *The geography of witchcraft*, New York, 1927, 9.

²⁴ It is surprising that neither in this nor in the preceding document is the verb *θιγγάνειν* employed, as it is in Col. 2: 21. The present writer doubts whether the etymology given is trustworthy.

²⁵ See, e.g., E. Amann in *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, XI, 840 (1931). Herein may lie the explanation for the statement that Michael II was a Sabbatian, made in the life of the patriarch Ignatios by Nikéas Paphlagōn, PG, CV, 493. (For the disputed dating of this writing see N. Iorga, *Histoire de la Vie byzantine*, Bucharest, 1934, III, 202.) Cf., however, Martin, *op. cit.*, 199, n. 5.

class. However, inasmuch as no comprehensive investigation of this aspect of the subject has as yet been made, no definitive solution has been offered. One may cite the opinion of Beneshevich that the original formula for converts from Judaism was composed under Justinian, and was rendered into a more elaborate form in the beginning of the eleventh century.²⁶ The one for Moslems has been assigned to the latter eighth century or later by Henri Lammens,²⁷ an eminent authority on Islam. This estimate corresponds fairly closely to the generally accepted opinion which would place the formulas for Manichees and Athinganoi in the ninth century,²⁸ the period to which the datable references to the latter are limited. As for our anonymous tract, it seems just as likely for it to be an enlarged presentation of the material in the formula, as for the latter to be an adaptation of the former. To the mind of the present writer the first alternative seems preferable, but in the absence of definite proofs neither view can be considered sufficiently well-grounded. As a *terminus ad quem* for the tract the eleventh century seems appropriate, since it is at that time that we find the earliest use of the name of our sect as denoting the gypsies, as will be shown below.

In addition to the formula and the tract the peculiarities of the Athinganoi are related in very similar fashion in a passage included in a treatise on the heresies by one Timotheos of Constantinople, a presbyter of Hagia Sophia, and of the Church of the Virgin in Chalkoprateia.²⁹ On the basis of his reference to the Council of 553 and of the fact that he does not mention the Monothelites, this work has been generally dated between the former year and 622,³⁰ although some scholars have cast doubt

²⁶ See his Russian article referred to in n. 20.

²⁷ *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale de l'Université St. Joseph*, VI, 1913, 488-90.

²⁸ See the references in Ficker, l.c., 46-53; Beneshevich, l.c., ib. The Vatican ms. bears the rubric of a writing by the patriarch Methodios (843-7), printed in PG, C, 1300-25. (See Goar's note 1.) Unaware of the scribe's error, the authorship was so accepted by F. Miklosich, *Über die Mundarten und Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europas*, vi, *Denkschriften of the Vienna K. Akademie der Wiss., phil.-hist. Classe*, XXVI, 1877, 57 f.

²⁹ PG, LXXXVI, pt. 1, 33; tr. Bardy, l.c., 37.

³⁰ See the note of F. Combefis, PG, LXXXVI, pt. 1, 11, n. 1. Cf. O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altchristliche Literatur*, Berlin, 1932, V, 26.

on this as being too early.³¹ But even if the former view is accepted, it is a mistake to consider the passage in question our earliest reference, for it can be demonstrated that the section on the Athinganoi is a later insertion.

The treatise generally is divided into three distinct parts, the first dealing with those heretics who must undergo baptism upon conversion to orthodoxy, and the second with those who need only to be anointed with myrrh. The former concludes with the followers of Pelagius and Celestinus, after which the writer gives an explicit closing statement: *Οὗτοι οὖν ἅπαντες . . . τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ σωτηριώδους βαπτίσματος χρῆζουσιν*. Succeeding this we find not the beginning of the second section but instead the passage which concerns us, under the heading: 'There is yet another heresy, the Melkisedekites.' This appellation, we are informed, is now borne by the Athinganoi of Phrygia, who are neither Jews nor Gentiles, since they observe the Sabbath but refrain from circumcision. The etymology of their name is then given, much as in the anonymous tract, and the passage concludes with the rule that, like the other heretics listed up to this point, these must be baptized on conversion. Now it is most unlikely that the original author would have disturbed his plan in this fashion; hence, unless valid objection can be raised against the detection of this passage as a later addition, there is no reason to assume that it is of earlier authorship than the formula of abjuration.

The point has now been reached where it is appropriate to survey the principal characteristics of our sect, in terms of the surrounding culture. It is clear that the Athinganoi practiced an exaggerated levitical purity, that they indulged in astrological, demonic, and magical pursuits, and that they observed the seventh day as the Sabbath.³² With regard to baptism the sources give conflicting testimony. But an indication of what was most likely the true situation may be derived by considering this question as it relates to the Paulicians. Here too the

³¹ Ficker, l.c.; Beneshevich, l.c., 201, contended that the author of this work was really Nikon of Raithu (ca. 1050), without attempting to prove the point. In view of the fact that the latter had compiled a table of contents to this work of Timotheos (PG, LXXXVI, pt. 1, 70), the idea seems untenable.

³² The anonymous chronicler (n. 10), however, charges Michael II not with resting

orthodox critics maintained that the heretics rejected baptism, not because this was indeed the case, but because the sacrament was postponed until the attainment of adulthood.³³

As has been seen, the Athinganoi are represented as the successors of the Melkisedekites, and among modern scholars some have accepted³⁴ while others suspected the authenticity of the connection.³⁵ The former view assumes that the earlier sect survived until the rise of the later one. But the latest references to the existence of the Melkisedekites are of the fifth century, four hundred years before we hear of their alleged successors.³⁶ It appears that our writers were somewhat troubled by the fact that the Athinganoi had no known heresiarchs nor any theological doctrines, and the gap was filled in by bringing them into relation with the Melkisedekites and Theodotians. It should also be observed that the reports concerning our heresy differ from the others of this period in not attributing to it any of the weird and depraved practices such as are, for instance, related of the Euchites of Thrace.³⁷

The peculiar trait from which our sect reputedly got its name is one which characterized a group among the Ebionites several centuries earlier, and is traceable to Samaritan influence. It appears, moreover, in Christian literature in the account of the Samaritans, particularly the followers of Dositheos,³⁸ and, in-

on the Jewish Sabbath but with declaring it a fast-day. In Ephraim, l.c., line 2199, this becomes 'he delighted in Sabbaths and New Moons.' But it is nowhere stated that he decreed Sabbath-observance in the Jewish sense, as is said by L. Bréhier, *La querelle des images*, Paris, 1904, 45.

³³ See F. C. Conybeare, *The key of truth*, Oxford, 1898, xxxiv, xlviii.

³⁴ E.g., G. Bart in *Eleutheroudake Enkyklopaedikon Lexikon*, I, 405 (1928). Another writer represents the Athinganoi as revering Melkisedek as an ascetic hero; G. Wuttke, *Melchisedech der Priesterkönig von Salem*, Giessen, 1927, 35.

³⁵ See Bardy, l.c., 35 f.

³⁶ I. von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, Munich, 1890, I, 31-3; Bardy, *Rev. Bib.*, XXXVI, 36, 39.

³⁷ See Wellnhofer, l.c., ib.

³⁸ Epiphanius. *Panarion haireseōn*, ix, 3, x, 13, xxx, 2, ed. K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, Leipzig, 1915, I, 200, 205 f., 334. Well analyzed by J. Thomas, *Les Ebionites Baptistes*, *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, XXX, 1934, 270-5. See also K. Kohler, *Dositheus the Samaritan heresiarch*, *American Journal of Theology*, XV, 1911, 413, 419 f., 434. For the Semitic evidence (especially Koran 20: 97) respecting the Samaritans, see I. Goldziher, *Lā Misāsa*, *Revue Africaine*, LII, 1908, 23-8; B. Heller, *Al-Sāmīri*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, IV, 135 f. (1925).

deed, an eleventh century source dubs some gypsies (*Ἀρσίγκανοι*) in Constantinople members of the Samaritan race.³⁹ Seeing that the two groups manifest a similar attitude toward outsiders, one modern scholar has actually been led to conjecture that the original Athinganoi had been Samaritans who were converted to Christianity.⁴⁰ Such an aetiology would, however, be extremely odd, and there are, of course, divers other ways in which the Christian heretics of Phrygia might have become what they were.

As for the combination of astrology with demon-control, this may be a survival from pagan days,⁴¹ and it would constitute a significant step toward the solution of our problem if one could discover the source of the demons *Sōrou* and *Sochan*.⁴² It is interesting to find a corroboration of this interest in an *Oneirocriticon* attributed to the patriarch Nikephoros, the arch-enemy of heretics, wherein a dream in which Athinganoi are seen is interpreted to mean that demons are at hand.⁴³ Similar practices are found among the Throndakians, a Paulician group in Armenia.⁴⁴ It is this reputation for fortune-telling and magical ability, moreover, which explains how the name of our sect came to be transferred to the gypsies upon their appearance in the empire.⁴⁵ As a parallel to such a transfer one

³⁹ See the life of Giorgi Mthatsmidel of Mt. Athos cited in a translation from the Georgian by M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, Petrograd, 1849, I, 338. Cf. Miklosich, l.c., 58 (Period of Constantine IX, 1042-55). However, the allusion to Simon Magus accounts for the condemnation of these gypsies as Samaritans. An earlier date (855) for the first appearance of the gypsies in the empire was proposed by M. J. de Goeje, *Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie*, Leyden, 1903, 74 f. But this has not been accepted; see J. Sampson, *On the origin and early migrations of the Gypsies*, *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 3rd s., II, 1923, 157.

⁴⁰ J. Halévy, *Les Samaritains dans le Coran*, *Revue Sémitique*, XVI, 1908, 423 f. (in reply to Goldziher, l.c.; overlooked by Heller, l.c.).

⁴¹ See the remark of Michael Psellos (11th c.), PG, CXXII, 877. Cf. K. Svoboda, *La démonologie de Michel Psellos*, Brno, 1927, 34 f.

⁴² The third one, *Ἀρχε* = *Ἀρχαι*, seems to be nothing more than a common term used in the special sense of 'demon-chiefs.'

⁴³ F. Drexler, *Das Traumbuch des Patriarchen Nikephoros*, Festgabe A. Ehrhard zum 60. Geburtstag, Bonn-Leipzig, 1922, 101, line 4: *Ἀθιγγάνους νόησον δαίμονας πέλειν*. Erroneously taken as a reference to the gypsies, by F. Kattenbusch, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, XLVIII, 1923, 201 f.

⁴⁴ See Wellnhofer, l.c.

⁴⁵ Contra de Goeje, op. cit., 75, who accounts for the transfer on the ground that the

may cite the manner in which the appellation *Mardaïtai*, originally denoting certain troops on the Syrian frontier, came to be applied, honorifically in this instance, to a part of the army in Greece.⁴⁶ It is, of course, also possible that a good part of the heretics merged with the gypsies.

A concrete illustration of the strong similarity between this particular aspect of the practices of the Athinganoi and those of their namesakes is supplied by Balsamon at the end of the twelfth century. The snake-charmers and ventriloquists who are called Athinganoi, he writes, engage in less tangible wonder-working as well. They cast horoscopes, tell fortunes, and, in general, foretell the future, putting them in the same class as the *kritriai* (?), the false prophets, and the 'hermits.'⁴⁷

There remains now the question of Jewish influence on the Athinganoi, as depicted by the anonymous chronicler cited above, and alluded to in the tract. It was maintained in the discussion of the former source that a comparison with Genesios showed it to be an artificial and untrustworthy representation. But at first blush the observance of the Jewish Sabbath would seem to negate this conclusion. It is true that the direct influence of Jewish neighbors is manifested in that custom, when adopted by certain pagan and Christian groups back in the fourth century⁴⁸ and possibly somewhat later. And it is not to be denied that the fight of the Church against the substitution of the seventh day for the Lord's Day had to be continued for

gypsies were 'étrangers d'aspect et de moeurs singuliers, dont on évitait le contact.' Sampson, l.c., 167, supposes that it was due to the fact that the new group came in by way of Phrygia. See also L. Wiener, Gypsies as fortune-tellers and as blacksmiths, l.c., 2nd s., III, 1909, 15 f.; J. Walker, *Nūrī*, Enc. of Islam, III, 963.

⁴⁶ See K. Papparegopoulos, *Historia tou Hellenikou ethnous*, 5th ed., Athens, 1925, IV, pt. 1, 48.

⁴⁷ PG, CXXXVII, 720 f., 741. Cf. L. Oeconomus, *La vie religieuse dans l'empire byzantin au temps des Comnènes et des Anges*, Paris, 1918, 223, n. 3. On the other hand Ficker took this as proof of the late survival of the sect, *Die Phundiagiagiten*, Leipzig, 1908, 272, n. 1. On the 'hermits,' see Wiener, l.c., 275 f.

⁴⁸ With respect to the Hysistarioi of Cappadocia, see, e.g., G. Bareille, *Dict. de Théol. cath.*, VII, 572 (1922). Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea (ca. 380) forbade 'Judaizing and resting on the Sabbath'; C. J. Hefele and Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles*, Paris, 1907, I, 1015.

a number of centuries, but that is no proof that the observers of the Jewish Sabbath as late as the ninth century were Judaizers.⁴⁹ For there are Seventh Day Adventists among us today, who are far removed from any suspicion of Judaism, and it cannot be supposed that the line between the adherents of the two religions was less rigidly drawn in ninth-century Byzantium than it is in the modern western world. It must be recognized that although the Jewish neighbors of the Athinganoi *may* have influenced the heretical practices of the latter, we cannot share the certainty of the anonymous sources respecting the alleged relationship of the two groups.

The opinion is fairly widespread that the Athinganoi were a branch of the Paulician sect,⁵⁰ which is mentioned first by an Armenian writer in the eighth century. This seems to be dependent in part on a superficial reading of certain lines in Kedrenos and Zonaras, unchecked by the passage in Theophanes on which alone both are based. Nevertheless, there is some significance in the fact that the external history of the two groups, as we have seen, shows them sharing the same vicissitudes. We should, consequently, expect the Athinganoi, like the larger group, to have shared the viewpoint of the Iconoclasts, with whom Theophanes in one instance does, indeed, associate them.⁵¹ And undoubtedly this feature, as well as the Sabbatizing, operated on the mind of the anonymous chronicler who attributed Judaizing influences to Michael II. Yet this inference is somewhat weakened by the latest results of research on this movement, which indicate that by the ninth century it had lost much of the support which it commanded in the preceding

⁴⁹ A similar view with respect to the West is expressed by H. Vogelstein and P. Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, Berlin, 1896, I, 169.

⁵⁰ For the earlier expressions of this theory see F. A. A. Pluquet, *Dictionnaire des Hérésies*, Paris, 1847, I, 470 f.; J. H. Blunt, *Dictionary of sects, heresies, ecclesiastical parties, and schools of religious thought*, Philadelphia, 1874, 58. More recently, e.g., Bréhier, *Dict. d'hist. et de géog. eccl.*, V, 51 (1931). With reference to the anonymous chronicler's description (n. 10), Dobroklonski, *op. cit.*, 849 f., n., simply substitutes the name of the Paulician sect, apparently due to the fact that the original signification of the term Athinganoi was not clear in his mind; cf. *ib.*, 710.

⁵¹ 496. Bréhier, *La querelle*, 40. Cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, 157, who, however, misrenders the passage: 'The two Iconoclastic heresies of the Paulicians and the Athinganoi.' On this agreement between the groups in question see also *ib.*, 275-8.

one among the population of the eastern provinces.⁵² At all events, it must be borne in mind that our sect receives coordinate standing with the Paulicians everywhere, with the exception of certain secondary material, so that the ground for considering it only a branch of the latter is quite inadequate.

⁵² Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, 380.