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The Public Defense of the Doctoral Dissertation of

Andra Jugănaru

entitled

Family Double Monasteries in the Fourth and the Fifth Centuries: An Inquiry into the Theological Roots, Social Context, and Early Evolution of an Old Practice

will be held on

Friday, 8 June 2018, at 9:30 am

in the

Senate Room-Monument Building

Central European University (CEU)

Nádor u. 9, Budapest

Examination Committee

Chair	István Bodnár (CEU, Philosophy Department)
Members	Marianne Sághy, supervisor (CEU, Medieval Studies Department)
	István Perczel, co-supervisor (CEU, Medieval Studies Department)
	György Geréby (CEU, Medieval Studies Department)
External readers	Samuel Rubenson (University of Lund, Centre for Theology and Religious Studies), present
	Simeon Paschalidis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Pastoral and Social Theology), present

The doctoral dissertation is available for inspection on the CEU e-learning site.

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Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation

My dissertation is the first attempt to analyze and contextualize an ascetic trend which appeared simultaneously with the emergence of cenobitic monasticism in different regions of the Christian world. This inquiry involves an interdisciplinary approach, combining history, theology, philosophy, and philology. At the beginning of the fourth century, after Christianity changed its status from persecuted to official recognition in the Roman Empire, an "ascetic revolution" spread especially among the members of the high aristocracy and of the middle-class. Sometimes several members of the same family, men and women, embraced the ascetic enthusiasm, experimenting with different ascetic *modi vivendi* in proximity to each other or in cohabitation. While authoritative Church Fathers legitimized some of the newly emerging communities, at the same time, they rejected other forms of double-gender asceticism, which they labelled as chaotic and "unruly."

Family double monasteries are rooted in the pious Late Antique households, generally belonging to the high aristocracy, with one notable exception – precisely the very one that had set the tone for this practice. Relatives, men and women, shared their inclination towards asceticism in proximity to each other either on their own family estates, or in new places. They formed quarters of monks and nuns who belonged to the same monastic unit, sometimes having a unique guidance (often a woman), they were economically and liturgically interdependent, but they lived separately and their encounters were thoroughly regulated.

Thus, the flourishing communities which sprang from a family milieu and received the recognition of the Church Fathers are, in chronological order, the monastery of Tabennesi (Upper Egypt), founded by Pachomius and his sister, Mary (ca. 333-336); the monastery in Annisa (Cappadocia), which developed on the family estate of Macrina the Younger, her mother, and her brothers (ca. 345-356); the community founded in Bethlehem by Jerome, his brother, Paulinianus, and his spiritual daughter, Paula, together with the latter's daughter, Eustochium (386); the monastery of Nola, founded by Paulinus and his wife, Therasia (395-396), which became a magnet for other 'monastic spouses' and formed a monastic network; the monastery which emerged at Primuliacum due to Sulpicius Severus, his wife, and his mother-in-law, Bassula (396-403); and the monastery founded on the Mount of Olives by Melania the Younger, her husband, Pinianus, and her mother, Albina (431-436). At the same time, other spouses renounced their matrimonial relations and continued to live as spiritual siblings in their own pious households, which they slowly transformed into ascetic dwellings, or, rarely, fled elsewhere. Not all the monastic spouses founded new

communities, but some of them either joined already existent monasteries, or, after years of living in proximity, they separated. This thesis analyzed them as part of the double gender family asceticism which was recognized and legitimized.

In the secondary literature scholars have been using the *terminus technicus* "double monastery" almost indiscriminately, for all eras and for all the regions, with the meaning of a coenobitic establishment that hosted ascetic men and women in seclusion. Generally, the term was opposed to other types of double gender communities called "mixed monasteries," "neighbor monasteries," or "distant monasteries." Literature published from the nineteenth century until today distinguished two main stages of research, one lasting until the beginning of the twentieth century, and another one which started at the end of the 1980s. In this period, two disciplines, history and Church law, have been dealing with the problem of double monasteries. The syntagm "double monastery" cannot be easily applied to the fourth-century context, since the terms "duplex monasterium" and "διπλοῦν μοναστήριον" are first attested in 546, in Justinian's Novel 123, while sources never use the other terms proposed in scholarship. However, since in English no other syntagm is able to cover accurately the particularities of the fourth- and fifth-century communities that my dissertation scrutinizes, throughout my work I conventionally referred to them by adopting the formula "family double monasteries."

Several common conditions led to the gradual development of this model of monasticism. First, a charismatic ascetic man attached to his male monastery a community of pious women who followed him and he set up a set of rules which concerned both groups of ascetics and their interaction. In other instances, men and women relatives transformed their "pious households" into ascetic establishments. In this case, they did not cease to live in the same environment, but at a later stage in their evolution, groups of monks and nuns were secluded, and a set of rules established the legitimate contacts between them. Yet, in other situations, relatives founded a community for both monks and nuns in a different place than their household. Such a place attracted other ascetically oriented family members, creating 'monastic networks.' Finally, in some situations, spouses decided to renounce their family connections and to become ascetics. Sources describe several stages in the accomplishment of such a decision, which had noticeable consequences at the social level.

The sources pertaining, directly or indirectly, to the communities which my thesis investigates are mostly written. The hagiographies, letters, monastic rules, dialogues, homilies, sermons, and poems have their specific set of rules which concern their production, audience, and way of dissemination. Most of the sources belong to more than one category, a fact which is not surprising

for the fourth-century context. Moreover, all the texts have male authors, a detail which becomes essential when analyzing references to ascetic women. Besides the variety and complexity of the written evidence, an additional challenge is posed by the various scholarly approaches to the surviving texts. In some instances, the scholars' survey of monasticism is limited to small regions of the Christian world, thus missing the opportunity of analyzing the networks established due to the circulation of people and ideas. In other instances, the texts which have to be analyzed are passed through various filters of interpretation, more or less suitable to this kind of investigation. The scarce archaeological evidence which survived and has been explored at least to a small extent does not provide any substantial data.

Although the family double monasteries seem to raise exclusively theological questions, in fact they stand at the crossroad of an economical, a social, and a theological competition. The secular and ecclesiastical legislation on marriage brought changes to the traditional social order after the Constantinian turn. The choice of virginity instead of a marriage was a novelty which challenged the social expectations of the fourth century. The Church Fathers have always praised virginity, while their opinions on marriage varied, from a union allowed by God after the Fall to a choice leading to a smaller reward in the afterlife. Ideally, men and women alike would replace the earthly marriage with the mystical union with Christ, the only relation accepted as "spiritual." Authoritative Church Fathers rejected other forms of "spiritual marriages" between ascetically oriented men and women, although such forms of symbiosis had been present for centuries in Christian, Pythagorean, Essenian, or Gnostic communities. Renunciation to marriage and the choice of asceticism were followed by a set of practices which affected the social requirements. Women who refused to get married acquired the autonomy and social authority to transfer their wealth to the Church instead of transmitting it to their offspring and aristocrats used to renounce to the social benefits of their positions.

Sometimes, turning one's family to asceticism involved transforming the family's household (whose essential part was the *villa*) into an ascetic residence. Thus, the public-private border shifted, allowing for a larger private space dedicated to personal prayer. Aristocratic families directed their "building program" to ascetic settlements. Responsibility for one's household, including all its members, remained an essential duty, which, in an ascetic context, could lead to socially burdensome practices, such as the release of slaves, in accord with the Church Fathers who described a "theology of freedom," in which the necessity of renunciation to slavery has scriptural roots. Renunciation to one's wealth, another *topos* in the discourses of the Church Fathers, was another means of acquiring virtues. Besides its moral values, this practice was also a way of escaping the burdens of one's social

obligations. Renunciation to slaves and wealth could create social insecurity for the slaves who remained without master and could also raise additional questions of inheritance. Thus, when the wealth was exceeding the average, its disposal became a long-lasting and difficult process.

Men and women took equal part in asceticism, but the views on women varied. Church Fathers both praised then for their holiness and were concerned that their presence would bring temptations. Among the variety of ascetic practices which women assumed, some of them aimed at annulling the gender differentiation or at confirming that the ascetics were able to overcome bodily temptations. Such were women wearing masculine clothes and cutting short their hair or ascetic women and men who cohabitated. Disputes arose around the differentiation between genders and its preservation after the resurrection. The Church Fathers who persisted in recognizing the manifested ontological differentiation of men and women opposed both the theological speculations regarding the absence of gender in the afterlife and the cohabitation of ascetic men and women. Such experiments like *syneisaktism*, or ascetic communities in which men and women did not live separately, were perceived as challenging. The bishops condemned these, and got involved in the family double monasteries not only for legitimazing this form of asceticism, but also for limiting the participation of the ascetics in the public affairs.

In each family double monastery, the ascetics changed their views on their family ties while the communities to which they belonged were developing. Each community emerged from a pious household whose members replaced their fleshly family with an ascetic brotherhood of relatives in spirit who shared the monastic vocation while continuing to use the same vocabulary pertaining to the semantic field of "family." Consequently, the expectable hierarchy of a traditional family was also reshaped. In these new, ascetic arrangements, parents and children in flesh became spiritual siblings or, even more, parents became spiritual offspring of their earthly children. Marriage relations were severed and spouses became spiritual siblings. The earthly generations were also redefined. In a family double monastery, the "first generation" did not comprise anymore the eldest members, but those most advanced in asceticism. Consequently, unlike the traditional households, the members of these family double monasteries were ascribed new roles, duties, and, sometimes, hierarchical positions at odds with the tradition.

The simultaneous secluded closeness and closed seclusion of monks and nuns influenced several aspects of a family double monastery's daily life. Sources refer to ascetics using the landscape for the natural borders, such as rivers or mountains, which were able to seclude ascetic men from ascetic women. For the same purpose, the ascetics could use a certain arrangement of the buildings

either on their own family estates, or in the monasteries built in new places. The physical proximity of monks and nuns and their appurtenance to a spiritual family created complex relations between them. *Amicitia* stood apart, since the ascetics added a "monastic seal" to the Classical counterpart concept. Another innovation which family double monasteries brought was the authority of women, who were often described in sources as "teachers of philosophy." At the same time, monastic *paideia* heavily relied on the Scriptures and on the lives of the martyrs, but ascetics were acquainted with the Classical type of education as well. Liturgical practices were also adapted to the gender seclusion. The sources create exemplary portraits of holy women. Their presence in the written accounts had a prominent rhetorical function, besides its pedagogical role. Reassessing and reusing Classical motifs, such as Plato's Diotima, the male authors presented holy women as their omnipresent companions and leaders on the way to the philosophical-theological quest, which ended once the "true philosophy," that is the monastic life, was reached.

My dissertation did not aim at proposing a new terminology for the communities which are part of its study, but it argued that it is essential to be aware of the origin, history, and evolution of meaning which the term "double monastery" had. All the examples that it brought together succeeded in winning the competitions in which they had to engage. Thus, they showed that *it was possible* for kindred monks and nuns to lead their monastic vocation in close proximity, respecting a certain set of norms and being formally recognized by the authorities of their time. It is not surprising, though, that similar monastic arrangements continued to exist up to our days, in spite of repeated interdictions, without receiving the label "double monasteries."

Thus, the importance of these communities lies also in the model which they were able to transmit. Overcoming the fears arisen by the proximity of the two genders, their closeness being supported by the account of the mankind's Creation as man and woman and by the idea of a non-distinction between them in Christ, the fourth- and early-fifth-century family double monasteries were not burdened with the heavily negative connotation which they acquired in the legislation issued later on.

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Education
Since 2013: PhD candidate, Central European University (Budapest), Department of Medieval Studies
2012-2013: MA in Medieval Studies, Central European University
2010-2012: - MA in Medieval Studies, Faculty of History and Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest
 - MSc in Algorithms and Bioinformatics, Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Bucharest
2007-2010: - BA in History, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest
 - BSc in Computer Science, Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Bucharest.

Research interests: Early monasticism, cult of the saints, hagiography, Late Antiquity

Language skills
Modern languages: Romanian native speaker
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Publications (selection)
• "Macrina and Melania the Elder: Painting the Portraits of Holy Learned Women in the Fourth-Century Roman Empire," to be published in *"Set Me as a Seal upon Thy Heart." Constructions of Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Andrea-Bianka Znorovszky, Teodora Artimon (Trivent Publications)
• "The Double Monastery as an Historiographical Problem," co-authored with Alison Beach – to be published at Cambridge University Press
• "The Function of Miracles in Gregory of Nyssa's Hagiographical Works," *Studia Patristica* 95 (2017): 355-366.
• "Emmelia, Nonna, Monica: Mothers as Philosophers," in *Porphyra. Proceedings of the « VIIes Rencontres Annuelles Internationales des Doctorants en Etudes Byzantines »* (2014) ed. L. M. Ciolfi et J. Devoge [Confronti su Bisanzio 3] (June 2016)
• "Living like Angels in the Near East: Men, Women, and the 'Family' Double Monasteries in Late Antiquity," in *Annual of the Medieval Studies Department*, CEU 23 (2014): 3-25.

Conference presentations (selection)
• "The Use of Aristotle's *Akolouthia* as *Techne* in Gregory of Nyssa's Theory of the Holy Trinity," at "Νέες τάσεις στην έρευνα για τον Αριστοτέλη (New Tendencies in the Research on Aristotle)," Department of Theology, Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, 16-17 December 2017

- " 'The Virgin bears the Light and is not corrupted.' Gregory of Nyssa's Mariology, at "Images of the Theotokos - International Conference on the All-Holy Virgin," Budapest, Metropolis of Austria, Exarchate of Hungary and Central-Europe, 8-9 September 2017
- "God between Target of *Desire* (*Epithymia*) and *Enjoyment* (*Apolausis*). *Epektasis* in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa," at "Senses, Emotions and the Affective Turn – Recent Perspectives and New Challenges in Cultural History, ISCH Annual Conference on Cultural History," Umeå, Sweden, 26-29 June, 2017.
- "Theological and Monastic Reform in the Fourth-Century Near-East," at 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 21-27 August 2016
- „Utánozni a földön az angyalok kórusát": A „*vita angelica*" – ról szóló diskurzus céljai a 4. századi szerzetességben ("To Imitate on Earth the Chorus of Angels." Functions of the Discourse on *Vita Angelica* in the Fourth Century), Magyar Patrisztikai Társaság XVI. Konferenciája (16th Conference of the Hungarian Patristic Society), Nyíregyháza, June 30 – July 2, 2016
- "Around the Legacy of Origen: the Early Dissemination of the Rules of Pachomius and Basil of Caesarea," at *Transfer of Knowledge II: Ideas and Norms Workshop*, FOVOG, Dresden, 31 May 2016
- "Macrina's Portrait in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa," at *VIIIes Rencontres internationales des doctorants en études byzantines*, Paris, 2-3 October 2015
- "Explaining the Beginning of Time: Gregory of Nyssa's *Apology in Hexaemeron,*" at "Time and Culture. ISCH Annual Conference on Cultural History," Bucharest, 7-10 September 2015
- "The Function of Miracles in Gregory of Nyssa's Hagiographical Works, " at *XVII. International Conference on Patristic Studies*, Oxford, 10-14 August 2015
- "Ascetic Women and Learning in the Fourth-Century Roman Empire," at *CEMS Fourth International Graduate Conference, Ideology, Knowledge, and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean*, 4-6 June, 2005, Central European University, Budapest
- "Linking Cappadocian Monasticism to the Latin West. The Transmission of Basil's Asketikon," at *Linking the Mediterranean. Regional and Trans-Regional Interactions in Times of Fragmentation (300-800 CE) International Workshop*, 11-13 December 2014, Austrian Academy, Vienna;
- "Family Saints and Monastic Reform: The Cult of the "Kindred Martyrs" in Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa," at *Church Reform and the Cult of the Saints*, 17-21 September 2014, Zadar;

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