

THE SACRAMENTALITY OF THE PETRINE MINISTRY

LAURENCE RICHARDSON

SUMMARY: I. *Introduction*. II. *The Witness of the First Christians*. III. *Scripture Roots*. IV. *Analogy of Time and Place*. V. *Conclusion*.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN 1995 Blessed Pope John Paul II made a plea for new ways to be found to explain the Petrine ministry.¹ This study is a response to that request which is of paramount importance both within the Church and with respect to Ecumenism.²

The focal point of this paper is the proclamation of Jesus: *Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν* (Mt 16:18: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church”).³ It would be an understatement to say that these words have been the subject of much theological polemic over the centuries.⁴ And much is still being said and written.⁵

This article does not intend to contribute to this debate simply by repeating well known speculative arguments, or by just adding a few more to the already

¹ Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint* (25-v-95), n. 95, AAS 87 (1995) 977-978.

² Cfr. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Considerations. The Primacy of the Successor of Peter in the Mystery of the Church*, «L'Osservatore Romano» (31-x-98, 7; English edn., 18-xi-98) 1; J. RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1996 (English translation of *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen: Kirche heute verstehen*, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 1991), 47.

³ New Testament Greek texts are taken from the *Greek-English New Testament* (27th edn.), NESTLE-ALAND, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 1998. Apart from the Septuagint, English quotations of Scripture and abbreviations for the texts are taken from *The Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition), Nelson, Walton-on-Thames 1966.

⁴ Cfr. D.J. GRIMES, *The Papacy and the Petrine Texts. A Study in the History of Biblical Exegesis (AD 800-1300)*, Dissertation Fordham University, New York 1981; J.A. BURGESS, *History of the Exegesis of Matthew 16:17-19 from 1781-1965*, Edwards Brothers, Ann Arbor 1976; an interesting review of the history of exegesis from the earliest times till the 1940s is provided by O. CULLMANN, *Peter. Disciple, Apostle, Martyr. A Historical and Theological Study*, SCM Press, London 1953 (English translation of *Petrus, Jünger, Apostel, Märtyrer*, Zurich 1952, 176-190), 158-170; G. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre Trajectoire d'une Péricope Évangélique*, Etudes Bibliques (10), Gabalda, Paris 1988, 11-45.

⁵ For example, the Vatican Symposium sponsored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2-4 December 1996). The proceedings were published under the title, *Il primato del successore di Pietro: atti del simposio teologico*, Lev, Città del Vaticano 1998. They even seem to have prompted the writing of the document published by the CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Considerations*, 1. For a comprehensive overview of the present state of the debate, including copious bibliography, see R. GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma y ministerio petrino*, Edusc, Roma 2002.

rather large collection. The methodological approach is mainly of an inductive nature: to collate and analyse the evidence present both in the texts of Scripture and that offered by their historical and archaeological context. From these sources I intend to show that the accumulative force of this evidence points towards an understanding of the Petrine ministry based on the sacramental principle exemplified by the Incarnation. In this context the term sacrament is used in an analogical way. For example, in a similar way that the Church of Jesus Christ has been traditionally referred to as being in the nature of a sacrament, both as a sign and effective instrument for his saving grace.¹

Some relevant opinions, drawn from the research of the more notable contemporary biblical scholars writing mostly after the Second Vatican Council, are incorporated in this study.² In general this period following the Council heralded a change of mentality among exegetes from being, more often than not, controversial to a more respectful approach and a genuine search for the meaning of the text.³

A superficial reading of the words, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18), can lead to a rather limited metaphorical interpretation. As if Jesus is just praising an attribute of Simon, his personal fidelity to him and his teaching. Such an interpretation can be supported by referring to the earlier report of the use of this same metaphor by Jesus: "A wise man who built his house upon the rock" (Mt 7:24-25; cfr. Lk 6:48). In turn this can lead to the conclusion that the Church was built solely on the personal faith of the Apostle Simon. Thus his role becomes reduced to simply that of being the designated leader of the Apostles, and with there being no particular implication regarding succession.

A more reflective approach that takes into consideration the contextual evidence together with the witness of both Jewish and early Christian theological tradition renders such a reductive interpretation untenable. This is also the opinion of scholars such as Oscar Cullmann, Donald A. Hagner and Rudolf Schnackenburg who affirm that Jesus is referring to his Church being built on the person of Simon the Apostle and not just his faith or confession.⁴

¹ Cfr. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium* (4-XII-63), n.5; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (21-XI-64), nos.1, 9, 48; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes divinitus* (7-XII-65), n.1; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World *Gaudium et spes* (7-XII-65), nos.42, 45; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos.738, 774-776, 780, 849, 932; JOHN PAUL II, *General audience* (27-XI-91), «Insegnamenti» 14/2, 1991.

² This includes scholars such as, Raymond Edward Brown, Chrys C. Caragounis, Gérard Claudel, Oscar Cullmann, John Duncan Martin Derrett, Joseph Fitzmyer, Pierre Grelot, Robert H. Gundry, Friedrich Hauck, Joachim Jeremias, Peter Lampe, Ulrich Luz, Alejandro Díez Macho, Martin McNamara, John Nolland, Rudolf Pesch, Joseph Ratzinger, Bernard P. Robinson, Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Rudolf Schnackenburg and Wolfgang Schrage.

³ Cfr. R.E. BROWN, K.P. DONFRIED, J. REUMANN (eds.), *Peter in the New Testament*, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1974. This book is particularly interesting because it represents the conclusions of a background study on the Petrine ministry for a National Dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics. Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 26-27.

⁴ Cfr. O. CULLMANN, in G. KITTEL (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT: English translation by Geoffrey W. Bromiley of the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*), Eerd-

II. THE WITNESS OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS

Evidence of early Christian tradition is reflected in the texts of the New Testament (NT) since they are the product of authors belonging to the first generation of the faith-living community.¹ These texts provide snapshots of this living tradition at the time of their final redaction. It is significant, as noted by Joseph Ratzinger and Rudolf Pesch, that all the major groups of NT texts make reference to the compound name “Simon Peter”.² This suggests that his role was recognized by the universal tradition of the early Church and not just in some of the various faith-communities.

As Cullmann points out, the term “Peter”, due to its long use as a proper name over the last two millennia has become such a familiar name that its original meaning can so easily be overlooked.³ This is especially the case with English versions of the NT that invariably render Πέτρος of the Greek texts as “Peter” rather than “rock” or “stone”, and usually with no word of explanation.⁴ On the other hand, the French Jerusalem Bible clearly reveals the play on words: *Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre je bâtirai mon Église* (Mt 16:18). In consideration of this observation by Cullmann I intend to use the term “Rock” rather than the name Peter in this paper to serve as a reminder as to its original meaning.⁵

It is only Matthew that records the words of Jesus as designating Simon Bar-Jona as his Rock (cfr. Mt 16:18). They are spoken at Caesarea Philippi in the context of the singular event occurring at the climax of his Galilean ministry and as such is also reported in the Gospels of Mark and Luke (cfr. Mk 8:27-29; Lk 9:18-20).⁶ When Jesus asks his disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:15), the Apostle Simon declares him to be the promised Messiah: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16). It is important to bear in mind that the solemnity attributed to this event constitutes the context within which we must consider the fuller version of the discourse of Jesus as found in Matthew.

This discourse, both in its construction and use of Semitic idiom, suggests

mans, Grand rapids from 1974, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (C, 4), 98-99; s.v. πέτρος, (C, 2, c), 108; IDEM, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 206; D.A. HAGNER, *Matthew 14-18*, Word, Dallas 1995, 470, 471; R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel of Matthew* (English translation by Robert R. Barr of *Matthäusevangelium: Mt 1:1 – 16:20 and Mt 16:21 – 28:20*), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids - Cambridge 1985, 159.

¹ The general approach to Scripture followed in this study is synchronic but not without being aware of its diachronic aspects, cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 45.

² Cfr. RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, 49, 53, 65; R. PESCH, *Simon-Petrus. Geschichte und geschichtliche Bedeutung des ersten Jüngers Jesu Christi*, Hiersemann, Stuttgart 1980, 135-152.

³ CULLMANN, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 20.

⁴ Πέτρος, is derived as a masculine form from πέτρα, “rock”, cfr. M. ZERWICK, M. GROSVENOR, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Roma 1988, 52; P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la langue grecque*, Klincksieck, Paris 1968, s.v. πέτρα, 892. When found in classical Greek πέτρος is almost invariably rendered as “stone”. This is also the case with its usage in the NT. I will use the capital Π when using this term to refer to Peter.

⁵ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (A), 101.

⁶ Cfr. C.C. CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1990, 76, 81.

that its origin maybe found in an oral or written source in Hebrew or Aramaic.¹ Both the style in which it is written and the vocabulary are consistent with the rest of his Gospel, and so bear witness to its authenticity.² The great solemnity of the moment is shown in several ways. Matthew includes the additional phrase where Rock declares Jesus to be, “The Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16).³ It is feasible that this affirmation would have reminded the first Christians of the various theophanies reported in the Gospels where Jesus is proclaimed as, “My beloved Son” (Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22; 9:35) and thus serve to enhance the solemnity of this event for them. In itself this phrase, evoking as it does the divinity of Jesus, also serves to emphasize the gravity of the words of Jesus when he addresses Simon.

Likewise his introductory phrase: μακάριος εἶ, Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ (Mt 16:17: “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona!”) adds even more to their importance. Although Jesus is reported as employing the term μακάριος on several occasions in the Gospels when referring to people in general (cfr. Mt 5:3-11; 13:16; Lk 6:20-22; 10:23; 11:28; Jn 13:17), this is the only recorded case where he uses it to refer to a particular person. Contextual analysis in the NT shows that this term refers to a person, or persons, as favoured by God, and indicating that they are recipients of a particular grace associated with the history of Salvation (cfr. Lk 1:45; 11:27-28).⁴ In this particular case greater emphasis is given to this implication with respect to Rock by Jesus choosing to address him by his patronymic, “Simon Bar-Jona”, which etymologically can be rendered as, “Simon, son of God-has-given-mercy”. By following this statement with the Semitic expression, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you” (cfr. 1Cor 15:50; Gal 1:16; Eph 6:12; Heb 2:14), Jesus draws attention to the human limitations of Rock. He makes it clear that his confession of faith was not the consequence of human wisdom, but the result of divine inspiration by adding: “But my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17).⁵ Noticing that this statement comes immediately after the indirect affirmation of the divinity of Jesus by Rock in his words, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16), enables us to speculate that it can be understood as a confirmation by Jesus that the prophetic role of his Rock is already operative. If we view the subsequent words of Jesus to Rock in the light of this context then it is possible to understand that he is implying that he is to be his

¹ For instance, the use of terms such as “blessed”, “Simon Bar-Jona”, “flesh and blood” (cfr. Gal 1:16), “gates of Hades” (Greek text), “keys”, “binding” and “loosing”, “on earth” and “in heaven”. Cfr. M. LAGRANGE, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Burns Oates, London 1938, I, 262-263; CULLMANN, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 185-186; BROWN, DONFRIED, REUMANN, *Peter in the New Testament*, 91; RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, 60; CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 318-320.

² Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέντρος, (C, 2, b), 106.

³ Matthew reports a similar statement on two other occasions (cfr. Mt 14:33; 26:63).

⁴ Cfr. F. HAUCK, TDNT, vol. 4, s.v. μακάριος, (D, 1), 367-369.

⁵ It is also of interest to note that elsewhere in his Gospel Matthew employs the phrase, “Father who is in heaven”, to denote the universal providence of God (cfr. Mt 5:16; 5:45; 6:1; 7:11; 7:21:10:32-33; 18:10; 23:9). However, in this case it would appear to be the only occasion where it implies that this providence is directed towards a particular person.

Rock through the mercy of God, it is to be through a specific grace and not as a consequence of his own merit.

The use of the first person singular with the verbs employed by Jesus to address Rock, “I tell you [...] I will build [...]”, and then, “I will give you” (Mt 16:18; 16:19) serve to enhance the solemnity of this formal declaration. Jesus, the Messiah and “the Son of the living God”, proclaims Simon as his Rock, and then proceeds to invest him with certain powers that will enable him to fulfil his mission.¹ The use of the future tense is relevant when considering the transmission of these powers from Simon to his successors. It is difficult to see how these words of Jesus, referring to the future, can be fulfilled if there were to be no transmission of these powers from one person to another.

The semantic structure of the words spoken and recorded by Matthew at Caesarea Philippi (cfr. Mt 16:13-20) exhibit a certain unity reinforced by the striking conceptual parallels present in the context of the confession of Rock with respect to Jesus and the declaration of Jesus with regard to Rock.² Jesus refers to himself as the “Son of Man” and then uses the full name of Rock, “Simon Bar-Jona”. Rock declares Jesus to be “The Christ”: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16) and then Jesus designates Simon to be Rock: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Mt 16:18).

These same conceptual parallels are mirrored in the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel where John describes the first meeting of Jesus with Rock. Jesus is referred to as Μεσσίας³ (a transliterated form of משיח: “anointed one”), who is the Χριστός (the translation of משיח), whereas Simon is affirmed as Κηφᾶς⁴ (a transliterated form of כִּיפָּא), who is the Πέτρος (the translation of כִּיפָּא): “He first found his brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ). [...] Jesus looked at him, and said, ‘So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas’ (which means Peter)” (Jn 1:41-42).

The unique use of the compound names “Jesus Christ” and “Simon Peter” in the NT appear to have followed the same semantic development.⁵ “Jesus Christ” (including the variant, “Christ Jesus”) appears 255 times. “Simon Peter” (or as “Simeon Peter”) is found on 20 occasions. This, seemingly deliberate comparison, is particularly striking in the Gospel of John whose redaction probably took

¹ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 352.

² Cfr. CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, 82-87; U. LUZ, *Matthew 8-20. A Commentary* (English translation by James E. Crouch), Fortress Press, Minneapolis 2001, 354-355.

³ Usually rendered in English as “Messiah”, and only found twice in the Greek NT (cfr. Jn 1:41; 4:25).

⁴ This term as found in the NT is derived from the transliterated Greek form augmented with a Greek masculine suffix of the Aramaic כִּיפָּא (cfr. Jn 1:42; 1Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1:18; 2:9; 2:11; 2:14), cfr. W. BAUER, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, University of Chicago, Chicago - London 1979, s.v. Πέτρος, 654-655. כִּיפָּא is the singular form of the emphatic (determined) state of the masculine noun כִּי (absolute state) meaning “rock”, “stone”, cfr. M. SOKOLOFF, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, Bar Ilan University - Ramat-Gan - Israel - The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore - London 2002, s.v. כִּי, 256.

⁵ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 142.

place at the end of the first century. The compound term “Jesus Christ” appears just twice, but “Simon Peter” occurs on 17 occasions. John appears to be suggesting that, just as the role of Jesus is to be “the Christ”, so that of Simon is to be “Rock”. Ratzinger comments on how the bonding of the words “Jesus” with the title of his role “Christ” as found both in the NT and in the early texts of baptismal Creeds demonstrates the understanding among early Christians that the person of Jesus together with his role were absolutely inseparable.¹ The parallel occurrence of the compound term “Simon Peter” can be seen as evidence of a similar understanding among the first Christians with respect to Rock: the Apostle Simon was perceived as being totally identified with that of his role as “Rock”.

This identification of mission and person in Jesus is also shown by the fact that the term Χριστός standing alone is used in the NT on some 300 occasions as a synonym for Jesus. The same phenomenon occurs with the terms Πέτρος and Κηφᾶς that are likewise used as single word synonyms for Rock. In this case Πέτρος occurs 135 times and Κηφᾶς on 9 occasions. In complete contrast Rock’s proper name Simon (including its other form Symeon) is only found on 31 occasions in the NT. This phenomenon that highlights the parallel between the terms “Christ” and “Rock” is given even greater importance when it is remembered that “Rock” is the one and only term in the NT that exhibits such a parallel relationship with that of the term “Christ”.

This statistical evidence reflected in this very early Christian tradition points towards the conclusion that, just as the term “Christ” denotes both the role and person of Jesus, so “Rock” is to be understood as both indicating the specific function as well as the person himself. John Duncan Martin Derrett also draws our attention to this striking parallel and comments rather emphatically: “Why have scholars not put two and two together? Right up to the brink of grasping what was meant [...] yet not arriving there”!² The fact that Jesus adds to his declaration of Simon Bar-Jona as Rock a detailed specification of this function serves to corroborate just such a conclusion (cfr. Mt 16:18-19).

The varied occasions in which the term Rock is reported in the Gospels raises the question as to whether it was already in use to refer to Simon before its solemn imposition by Jesus at Caesarea Philippi (cfr. Mt 10:2; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14; Jn 1:42). Augustine Stock, with no direct supporting evidence, claims that Simon already had this nickname before his meeting with Jesus.³ Even if Simon was referred to as Rock since the very beginning of his calling (cfr. Jn 1:42) the very solemnity of the event at Caesarea Philippi sets it apart in that this declaration by Jesus stipulates its reference to a specific role complete with a job description with respect to his Church.

¹ Cfr. J. RATZINGER, *Introduction to Christianity* (English translation of *Einführung in das Christentum*, Kösel-Verlag GmbH, Munich 1968), Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2004, 202-205.

² J.D.M. DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone, and Upon this Stone*, «Downside Review» 106, 365 (1988) 277.

³ Cfr. A. STOCK, *Is Matthew’s Presentation of Peter Ironic?*, «Biblical Theology Bulletin» 17 (1987) n.2, 64.

There is general agreement among scholars that the everyday language of Jesus would have been Aramaic and therefore suggest that this would have been the language of his discourse at Caesarea Philippi.¹ Ratzinger agrees with Joachim Jeremias that the presence of various Aramaic words as transliterated, rather than translated, in the Greek texts of the NT are indicative of Aramaic being the mother tongue of Jesus.² In two of the Pauline letters that are generally recognised to be among the earliest redacted texts of the NT we find the word Κηφᾶς on eight occasions that clearly refer to Rock (cfr. 1Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1:18; 2:9; 2:11; 2:14). This supports the supposition that the Aramaic word ܚܦܝܘܫ was used by Jesus at Caesarea Philippi. Furthermore, being masculine in gender, the play on words would have been very striking: You are ܚܦܝܘܫ and on this ܚܦܝܘܫ I will build my Church.³ Caragounis, in an interesting study on the various forms of word-play as a literary figure present in the Masoretic Text (MT), Septuagint (LXX) and the NT, shows that by using two different words in this pericope, πέτρος and πέτρα (both being derived from the same root), does not necessarily weaken the play on words.⁴ Claudel suggests that since the Aramaic origin would have been obvious there was no need for a more exact parallel in words.⁵ The Aramaic origin of this term, and its definitive change to Πέτρος, is exemplified at the beginning of the Gospel of John where his reason for mentioning the term Κηφᾶς seems to be to remind us of both it being the word actually used by Jesus and to its meaning: σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς, ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος (Jn 1:42: “ ‘You shall be called Cephas’ [which means Peter]”).

In the list of the Apostles reported in Mark we are informed that Jesus gave the name “Bo-aner’ges, that is sons of thunder” (Mk 3:17) to the brothers James and John. This metaphorical nickname appears to be as a consequence of their rather volatile characters (cfr. Lk 9:54). Peter Lampe and several other authors have pursued the line of considering the term “Rock” as of having no more significance than that of the nickname “Boanerges”.⁶ Such an hypothesis, however, has to contend with the evidence that this is the one and only mention of “Boanerges” in the entire NT. This fact rather suggests that this is because it had no further relevance. On the other hand, as has been mentioned, Rock appears nine times as Κηφᾶς and then, with its emphatic change to Πέτρος, on a further 135 occasions. Even if it was just a metaphorical nickname this evidence shows that it had certainly achieved a remarkable importance in early Christian tra-

¹ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 4), 98; IDEM, *Peter*, 185.

² Cfr. RATZINGER, *Introduction to Christianity*, 223; J. JEREMIAS, *Abba. Studien zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1966, 15-67.

³ The Syriac *Peshitta* shows this play on words since it renders Πέτρος as ܚܦܝܘܫ.

⁴ Cfr. CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, 44-57, 116.

⁵ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 338.

⁶ Cfr. P. LAMPE, *Das Spiel mit dem Petrusnamen – Mt 16:18*, «New Testament Studies» 25 (1979) 230, 243; DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone*, 277. Derrett refers to other authors of a similar opinion: H. Clavier, Rudolf Pesch, J.T. Rook, R. Buth and H.P. Rüger.

dition. Claudel strongly refutes Lampe's claim that this term is of no theological consequence.¹

The use of Πέτρος is particularly surprising since, as pointed out by scholars such as Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Ulrich Luz, up to the present no evidence has been forthcoming showing that it was employed as a proper name prior to its appearance in the NT to refer to Rock.² Chrys C. Caragounis is also in agreement, but does present some examples of names found in contemporary literature that were possibly derived from the same root as πέτρος. He concludes that this could be indicative that it may have been in use as a name at the beginning of the first century.³ In classical Greek literature before this time the most common word for "rock" was πέτρα.⁴ The LXX follows the same pattern, πέτρος is not found as a name, and the most frequent terms employed for various kinds of rocks and stones are πέτρα and λίθος respectively.⁵ Thus, apart from the earlier use of Κηφᾶς by Paul to refer to Rock, we find that Πέτρος becomes firmly entrenched in the texts of the NT to refer uniquely to Rock.⁶ At the same time it should be noticed that throughout the NT there is not one single case of πέτρος being used as a common noun in its literal sense. This clearly shows that early Christian tradition has adopted, in quite a deliberate way, this particular term to refer exclusively to Rock.

It was not unusual among Jews to have two names, even if both were of Semitic origin (cfr. 1Macc 2:2-5). Although there is no common agreement among scholars, the NT seems to provide us with several instances of this phenomenon: Levi is also known as Matthew (cfr. Mt 9:9; Mk 2:14; 3:18; Lk 5:27; 5:29; 6:15); Nathan'el as Bartholomew (cfr. Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Jn 1:45; Acts 1:13); also Acts 1:23; 4:36). There are also cases where a Semitic name gives way to one taken from the Greek or Roman culture, for example John, "Whose

¹ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 338-347.

² Cfr. BROWN, DONFRIED, REUMANN, *Peter in the New Testament*, 90, note 210; J.A. FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel. New Testament Studies* (chapter 4: *Aramaic kephā' and Peter's Name in the New Testament*), Crossroad, New York 1981 (this was originally published as a paper in E. BEST, R.M. WILSON [eds.], *Text and Interpretation. Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1979), 119. In his illuminating chapter on this topic Fitzmyer focuses specifically on the philological evidence towards a correct understanding of Κηφᾶς and Πέτρος, cfr. 114, 120. Also, cfr. LUZ, *Matthew 8-20*, 354, note 2, 358.

³ Cfr. CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, 18-25.

⁴ Beginning with Homer up to the first century AD, and including the writings of Flavius Josephus, πέτρος appears with its literal meaning as "rock". It usually denotes cliffs, crags, or a mass of rock, but is not employed as a personal name. Occasionally πέτρος is found to refer to a "stone", or on occasions as a stone used as a weapon, but not as a name. In contrast, the usual term for "stone" as worked by man, or as a substance, is λίθος. Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (A, 1), 95; H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford University, Oxford 1996, s.v. πέτρα; πέτρος; λίθος; CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. πέτρα, 892-893; s.v. λίθος, 640; BAUER, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. πέτρος, 654-655; CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 338, note 166; CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, 9-14.

⁵ However, πέτρος is found on two occasions to refer to stones used for throwing (cfr. 2Macc 1:16; 4:41).

⁶ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (A), 100.

other name was Mark” (Acts 12:12; 12:25; cfr. Acts 15:37) and Saul, “Who is also called Paul” (Acts 13:9; cfr. Acts 9:22, 24; 11:25, 30; 13:1, 2, 7, 9; 22:6, 13; 26:14). This is also the case of Rock who, apart from Simon is also known by the name “Symeon” (Acts 15:14; 2Pet 1:1: Greek).

Such customs, however, do not explain how Rock, first reported as being referred to as Κηφᾶς then became definitively known as Πέτρος. If Κηφᾶς was indeed a name would it not have been more reasonable to preserve the original Aramaic term, not only out of respect and reverence for the actual words of Jesus, but also out of consideration for the status of Rock in the Church? There are various examples of Hebrew or Aramaic words used by Jesus being preserved in a transliterated Greek form for such reasons (cfr. Mt 6:24; 27:46; Mk 5:41; 7:34; 14:36; 15:34). This suggests that if Jesus had intended ܩܝܦܐ to be a nickname then, as both Cullmann and Ratzinger have observed, we would have certainly expected the original Aramaic name to have been preserved in a transliterated form: “Proper names are not translated”.¹ As we have seen, Κηφᾶς appears once in the Fourth Gospel and on eight occasions in early letters of Paul. Apart from these specific occurrences it is not preserved but found in the translated form of Πέτρος. Such a deliberate and definitive translation from the Aramaic to Greek strongly suggests that early Christian tradition is affirming that it is the meaning of this term that is important above all other considerations. This is borne out, as we have seen, by the unique parallel usage of the term Πέτρος and Χριστός in the NT. Thus we have further evidence indicating that ܩܝܦܐ, and then Πέτρος, refer more to a role rather than just being titles to designate Rock. Moreover, since most probably Πέτρος was not employed as a proper name at the time, its use would have been particularly appropriate to symbolize the role of Rock. In addition, it would have provided a constant reminder for the Greek speaking Christians as to its original meaning.

Early Christian tradition provides a precedent for just such a linguistic phenomenon in the way that the terms ܡܫܝܚ and ὁ Χριστός are presented in the NT. Christians with a Jewish background would have been familiar with ܡܫܝܚ as an expression that can refer to the Messiah. However, as we have seen, it only appears in the last Gospel on two occasions in the transliterated form Μεσσίας, in order to explain its Greek translation, Χριστός (cfr. Jn 1:41; 4:25). Apart from these specific uses Χριστός is invariably used in the NT to refer to Jesus giving emphasis to his mission as the Messiah.

More supportive evidence for Πέτρος implying a particular role with a specific theological connotation is provided by the fact that Jesus associates this term directly with his disciples: καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν

¹ CULLMANN, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 19; RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, 55; cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (A), 101; J. RATZINGER, *Il Primato di Pietro e l'unità della Chiesa*, «Euntes Docete» 44 (1991) 162-163.

ἐκκλησίαν (Mt 16:18: “And on this rock I will build my Church”).¹ He establishes a clear relationship between his Rock and his ἐκκλησία.²

Since this text comes to us in Greek several scholars claim that it thus: “Eliminates the quest of the right Semitic word [...] behind ἐκκλησία”.³ Such a reductive approach runs the risk of ignoring possible evidence. Just such evidence is provided by Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Wolfgang Schrage.⁴ The most frequent term employed in the LXX to translate לְהִקָּרֵב of the Massoretic Text (MT) is ἐκκλησία.⁵ Contextual analysis of לְהִקָּרֵב in the MT and ἐκκλησία in the LXX shows that its usual context is that of the people of Israel as called together in the presence of God for a religious purpose (cfr. Deut 9:10; 10:4; 18:16; 23:1; 23:2; 23:3; 23:8; 31:30; Josh 8:35; 1Sam 17:47; 1Kg 8:14; 8:22; 8:55; and so on).⁶ Schmidt is of the opinion that it is an open question as to which word, in Hebrew or Aramaic, that Jesus would have employed to refer to “his Church” at Caesarea Philippi.⁷ He makes the case that when it came to be translated into Greek then it was ἐκκλησία because of its clear association through the LXX with the meaning of לְהִקָּרֵב in the MT.⁸ Consequently it is reasonably clear that whichever word Jesus used it would evoke this theological connotation in the minds of the Apostles and the first Christians familiar with the MT or LXX.⁹

Since Jesus refers specifically to “my Church” it suggests that his disciples were to be the people of God, called together, convoked, to be faithful to the New Covenant that he was about to establish. Luz seems to agree¹⁰ and Pierre Grelot goes so far as to affirm that the use of ἐκκλησία exhibits the continuity between the Old Testament (OT) and the NT, and that when Jesus refers to “my Church” it can be understood as an indirect affirmation of his divinity since לְהִקָּרֵב is so often found in the context of God, as in the phrase “לְהִקָּרֵב of the

¹ The term ἐκκλησία is found again in Matthew (Mt 18:17), but not in the other Gospels.

² As a noun ἐκκλησία implies an assembly duly summoned. It is derived from the verb, to call together, to convoke, cfr. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. καλέω, 484-485. It is also found in the NT, as in classical Greek, to refer to a socio-political assembly, cfr. Acts 19:32; 19:39; 19:41. Cfr. LIDDELL, SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. ἐκκλησία, 509.

³ R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew. A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1994, 335.

⁴ Cfr. K.L. SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, 501-536; W. SCHRAGE, TDNT, vol. 7, s.v. συναγωγή, 798-841.

⁵ The noun לְהִקָּרֵב is derived from the verb root לְהִקָּרֵב: to assemble, to gather, to call together, cfr. F. ZORELL, *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome 1989, 714-715; E. KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, Carta Jerusalem - University of Haifa, Jerusalem 1987, s.v. לְהִקָּרֵב, 564. In the first four books of the Torah this term is almost invariably translated in the LXX as συναγωγή. However, beginning with Deuteronomy, where eight of its 11 appearances are rendered in the LXX as ἐκκλησία the pattern is established where, with very few exceptions, לְהִקָּרֵב in the MT passes into the LXX as ἐκκλησία, cfr. SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (A-C), 501-518.

⁶ Cfr. CULLMANN, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 187-192.

⁷ Cfr. SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (E, 5), 524-525.

⁸ *Ibidem*, (C), 515.

⁹ Cfr. Acts 7:38; CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (C, 2, b), 106-107.

¹⁰ Cfr. LUZ, *Matthew 8-20*, 357.

LORD".¹ This also occurs with the use of the word ἐκκλησία both in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline corpus.²

Schmidt suggests that it would be rather superficial to think that the only reason that the term ἐκκλησία was adopted by the first Christians was to distinguish themselves from the Jewish Synagogue.³ He considers it of greater importance to bear in mind its genealogical and theological derivation from the LXX as just described.⁴ However, this distinction is a clear factor for the definitive choice by the first Christians of ἐκκλησία. Both Schmidt and Schrage explain how, by the first century AD, the usage of the term συναγωγή, had largely lost the universal connotation that it had in the LXX and was primarily by that time used to refer to the local congregation of Jews, and even for their buildings.⁵ On the other hand, ἐκκλησία was open to being understood both in a universal sense or to refer to the local community of believers as exhibited by its use in the NT.⁶ The word ἐκκλησία became part of Christian tradition as a theological term. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that when this term is rendered into Latin it is transliterated as *ecclesia* rather than translated.⁷ Likewise, it is also of interest to note that the same occurred with Πέτρος that became *Petrus* in the Latin versions of the NT. This would suggest that these words became embedded in Christian tradition as theological terms in a similar way as ἀπόστολος, ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος. This direct association of Rock with the term ἐκκλησία, that already had a specific theological association within Jewish tradition, supports the claim that the term "Rock" also had a specific theological connotation within early Christian tradition.⁸

After Jesus promises that no evil will ever overcome his Church he goes on to specify the role of Rock. Any detailed discussion of these specifications would exceed the objective of this paper. They are directed solemnly and exclusively to Rock in the presence of the other Apostles who serve as qualified witnesses. Their silence to this pronouncement of Jesus speaks eloquently as to their unequivocal and unanimous acknowledgement of this designation of Simon Bar-Jona as Rock. These specifications serve to highlight the unique role that Rock has been given together with the appropriate participation in divine power to exercise them in practice.

¹ Cfr. P. GRELOT, *Sur cette pierre je bâtirai mon Église (Mt 16:18b)*, «Nouvelle Revue Théologique» 109 (1987) 642-650.

² The people of God of the definitive Covenant are referred to as "ἐκκλησία of God". This term designates not only the liturgical assembly (cfr. 1Cor 11:18; 14:19; 14:28; 14:35) and the local community (cfr. Rom 16:1; 16:5; 1Cor 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 16:19; and so on), but also the totality of all believers, the universal ἐκκλησία (cfr. 1Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6). It is found 17 times in Acts with these same connotations (cfr. Acts 5:11; 8:1; 8:3; 9:31; 11:22; 11:26; 12:1; 12:5; 13:1; 14:23; 14:27; 15:3; 15:4; 15:22; 18:22; 20:17; 20:28).

³ Cfr. SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (D), 518; CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 319.

⁴ Cfr. SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (C), 515.

⁵ Cfr. *ibidem*, 516; SCHRAGE, TDNT, vol. 7, s.v. συναγωγή, (C, I, 1, b), 807.

⁶ Cfr. SCHRAGE, TDNT, vol. 7, s.v. συναγωγή, (D, II-III), 829-830.

⁷ Cfr. *ibidem*, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (C), 515.

⁸ Cfr. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 156.

Likewise, this paper does not allow for a general discussion on all the references to Rock found in the NT, or to consider how he is portrayed as fulfilling the specific function given to him by Jesus. However, since it is more relevant to the objective of this study in terms of corroborative evidence, I think it is warranted to comment briefly on the witness to the role of Rock as depicted in the Gospel of John. This is particularly in view of its redaction at the end of the first century that renders it as an apt witness of early Christian tradition.

The words Πέτρος, or as the couplet Σίμων Πέτρος, occur a total of 33 times in this Gospel. In comparison the frequency of these same terms in the Synoptic Gospels is: Matthew: 22; Mark: 19; and Luke: 18. The considerably higher occurrence exhibited in the Fourth Gospel can be understood as John wishing to emphasize the role of Rock within Christian tradition.

In this context, the solemn event reported at the end of the Gospel in which Jesus delegates Rock as his shepherd is of paramount interest (cfr. Jn 21:15-19). Just as in Matthew's account of the designation of Simon as Rock, solemnity is given to this event in John by Jesus choosing to address Rock by his patronymic "Simon, son of John" (Jn 21:15-17) on three consecutive occasions during this discourse. This emphasis is strengthened when it is remembered that John reports this also happening at the first encounter of Jesus with Rock: "'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Πέτρος)" (Jn 1:42). This clear parallel can also be seen as a deliberate attempt by John to draw our attention to the fact that it is the same Simon who is both Rock and the delegated shepherd of Jesus.¹ Cullmann suggests that it is feasible that we are being asked to associate this final event in the Gospel of John with both that at Caesarea Philippi and the prophetic words of Jesus to Rock at the Last Supper: "Satan demanded to have you, [...] and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren" (Lk 22:31-32).² Derrett alerts us to another possible parallel between John's reference to the Apostle Simon being called Rock and that at Caesarea Philippi. In both cases they occur in the context of Jesus being recognized as "the Christ" (cfr. Jn 1:41; Mt 16:16).³

Three times Jesus asks: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Three times Rock answers in the affirmative, and three times Jesus proclaims him to be his shepherd (cfr. Jn 21:15-17). This solemnity and conformity with Semitic custom is worth noting. Jesus commands Rock three times, in the presence of witnesses, to assume the role as his shepherd over his Church. According to this custom such a formal declaration was the most solemn legally binding way of orally conferring a particular public office on a person and implying delegation of authority (cfr. Gen 23:3-20).⁴ It should not be forgotten that it is only in the Gospel

¹ It can also be considered as one more example of *inclusion* in the Gospel of John.

² Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (B, 2), 103; (C, 2, a), 105.

³ Cfr. DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone*, 277.

⁴ Cfr. BROWN, in W.F. ALBRIGHT, D.N. FREEDMAN (eds), *The Anchor Bible*, Geoffrey Chapman,

of John that Jesus is reported as declaring himself to be: "The good shepherd" (Jn 10:11).¹

John's omission of an account of the Ascension in his Gospel permits us to speculate that his report of Jesus appointing Rock as his shepherd has been specifically chosen to provide the essential link between the foundation of his Church and its subsequent growth. By the end of the first century the Church has witnessed, not only the martyrdom of Rock, but also several successors who assumed his role in Rome. Thus John's singular inclusion of this report in his Gospel, whose final redaction was at the end of the century, can be seen as his way of endorsing early Christian tradition, as reflecting the reality of the succession of Rock as a guarantee of the unity and growth of the Church.²

The use of terms such as ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος, with their corresponding theological connotations in the NT, provides ample evidence of eventual successors to the Apostles being appointed to take on their function (cfr. Acts 1:15-26; 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; Eph 4:11; 1Tim 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17-19; 2Tim 1:6; Titus 1:5-9). At the same time, there is no report of any explicit indication to do so by Jesus. Of course, lack of evidence to this effect does not exclude its possibility. Similarly, the absence of any explicit mention of succession regarding Rock does not imply that it was not explicitly stipulated by Jesus.³ Since Πέτρος, as we have seen, became the theological term to indicate the specific role of Rock it enables us to place it among the ranks of the other terms having a theological connotation found in the NT, such as ἀπόστολος, ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος and ἐκκλησία. This provides at least contextual evidence that supports the plausibility of succession with respect to the role of Rock. History confirms that successors were appointed as bishops of Rome who did exercise the function of Rock.⁴

III. SCRIPTURE ROOTS

Attention is now turned to the investigation of possible theological associations that the term נָשִׂיב would evoke in the minds of the first Christians, especially those familiar with Jewish theological tradition. This tradition includes the special importance given to the meanings of names, and especially when Scripture reveals that God changes or gives a particular name to someone. Scripture reveals that when God changes or gives a particular name it can signify the bestowal of a specific role for that person in the context of his covenants within the history of Salvation.⁵ This can be seen, for example, in the case Abraham

London - Dublin - Melbourne 1971, vol. 29A, 1112; P. GAECHTER, *Das dreifache "Weirde meine Lämmer"*, «Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche» 69 (1947) 328-344.

¹ Jesus is the eternal good shepherd, cfr. Isa 40:11; Jer 23:1-6; Ezek 34:11-16; Jn 10:1-18; Heb 13:20; 1Pet 5:4; 1Jn 3:16; Rev 7:17. Cfr. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 159.

² Cfr. RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, 66.

³ Cfr. *ibidem*, 65-66.

⁴ Cfr. B.P. ROBINSON, *Peter and His Successors. Tradition and Redaction in Mt 16:17-19*, «Journal for the Study of the NT» 21 (1984) 98-99.

⁵ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρος, (B, 3), 103.

(cfr. Gen 17:1-8; Rom 4:16-17), Sarah (cfr. Gen 17:15-16), Isaac (cfr. Gen 17:19) and Israel (cfr. Gen 25:24-26; 32:28-30; 35:9-15; Hos 12:2-6).¹

As the time for the establishment of the definitive Covenant approaches we find that John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, receives his name from God through the angel Gabriel. He is to be the last prophet and herald for the coming of the Messiah (cfr. Lk 1:13-17). Jesus himself receives his name through the agency of God's messengers (cfr. Mt 1:20-1; Lk 1:31; Isa 62:2; 65:15). Matthew highlights this understanding in Jewish tradition of the link between God giving a name and a specific role in the history of Salvation when he records the words of the angel to Joseph: "And you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21).²

This theological tradition would have been familiar to Christians coming from a Jewish background and who therefore, at the very least, would have questioned whether the solemn designation by Jesus of Simon as Rock falls within this context. Moreover, they would have considered it perfectly plausible that the term he used had some theological association within the context of the history of Salvation. It is surprising that this aspect of Jewish theological tradition seems to have received less attention than it deserves among contemporary scholars of the Petrine ministry.

Apart from James and John being referred to as "Boanerges" the event at Caesarea Philippi is the only recorded occasion when Jesus solemnly changes the name of a particular person. As has been mentioned, Rock's confession of Jesus, not only as the Messiah but also as, "The Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16) adds an indirect allusion to the divinity of Jesus. This serves to increase the probability that we are to understand the declaration of Simon as Rock as falling within the biblical context of God giving or changing names.

Since, as we have seen, there is no clear evidence that Πέτρος was employed as a proper name at the time of Jesus it prompts us to question whether this was also the case with אֶפֶס. As with the term Πέτρος, Κηφᾶς is only found in the NT to refer exclusively to Rock. Fitzmyer is of the opinion that אֶפֶס was not used as a proper name in the first century and refers to other like minded scholars, such as Cullmann, A. Dell and Brown.³ Ernest Klein seems to stand alone in claiming that we may have a derivative name in that of "Joseph Caia-phas" (cfr. Mt 26:3; 26:57; Lk 3:2; Jn 11:49; 18:13-14; 18:24; 18:28, Acts 4:6).⁴ Peter Lampe does not agree and also incidentally affirms that אֶפֶס was not used as a proper name.⁵

Nevertheless, Fitzmyer does mention one example in an extra-biblical Ar-

¹ Cfr. FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel*, 114.

² The name Jesus is derived from the Hebrew verb יָשַׁע: to save, cfr. ZORELL, *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti*, 338; KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, 266.

³ Cfr. FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel*, 115-116; CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. Πέτρος, Κηφᾶς, (A), 100; IDEM, *Peter*, 18; BROWN, *Peter in the New Testament*, 90, note 210.

⁴ Cfr. KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. קַיָּפָאס, 283.

⁵ Cfr. LAMPE, *Das Spiel mit dem Petrusnamen*, 229, footnote 4.

amaic text dating from the fifth century BC where כִּיפָא is found as a proper name.¹ Walter Baumgartner associates this evidence with Κηφᾶς as present in the NT.² In the MT there are several examples of the word צוֹר,³ which can be rendered as כִּיפָא in Aramaic, being used as a proper name (cfr. Num 25:15; 31:8; Josh 13:21; 1Chr 8:30; 9:36) and as a possible hypocoristicon (cfr. Num 1:6; 2:12; 3:35; 7:36; 7:41; 10:18). This evidence at least suggests the feasibility that כִּיפָא was employed as a proper name at the time of Jesus. If כִּיפָא was in use at that time as a proper name then it would endorse the understanding of the words of Jesus to Simon as a deliberate Aramaic play on words.⁴

However, whether כִּיפָא, or indeed Πέτρος were then in use as proper names at the time does not prevent them being considered within the context of the tradition of God changing names to indicate the person as having a particular role to play in the history of Salvation. After all, the name Jesus was not original, and several forms of it are found in Scripture (cfr. Num 13:16; Ezra 2:2; 3:2; Col 4:11).

Being free to choose any word whatsoever with which to refer to Rock it is very probable that Jesus would choose a term in accord with the theological tradition already established in biblical Revelation and that it would have some theological association within Jewish tradition. This is also the opinion of T. Citrini and R. Goyarrola Belda.⁵ Such a term would enable the Apostles and first Christians to have a more profound understanding of the meaning and implications of the words of Jesus to Rock.

Recognition is growing among scholars that the Palestinian Targum (PTg) of the Torah was already in use, at least in an oral form, in the Jewish synagogue liturgy of the first century.⁶ Such scholars include Alejandro Díez Macho and Martin McNamara.⁷ If this is the case then the PTg can be considered as forming part of the theological tradition inherited by the Christians who came from the Jewish community.

The emphatic form, כִּיפָא, along with its absolute state, כִּי, appears in the PTg

¹ Cfr. FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel*, 116-118. He refers to a text that came to light in 1953 and published by E.G. KRAELING, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri. New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1953 (reprinted, Arno, New York 1969), 224-231.

² Cfr. L. KOEHLER, W. BAUMGARTNER, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Brill - Leiden, New York - Köln 1994, I, s.v. כִּי, 492.

³ Cfr. KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. צוֹר: rock, cliff, boulder, place of refuge, 544.

⁴ Cfr. FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel*, 118.

⁵ Cfr. T. CITRINI, *La ricerca su Simon Pietro. Traguardi e itinerari a trent'anni dal libro di Cullmann*, «Studi Ecumenici» 111 (1983) 544-545; GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma*, 174-175.

⁶ The PTg used in this article is the *Neofiti I, Targum Palestinense* (A. Díez Macho, ed.), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 5 vols., Madrid - Barcelona 1968.

⁷ Cfr. A. Díez Macho, *Neofiti I, Targum Palestinense I*, in the "Introducción general", 57, 95; M. McNamara, *Targum and Testament (Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible. A Light on the New Testament)*, Irish University, Shannon 1972, 16, 84-90, 167, 183-189; IDEM, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Roma 1966 (2nd printing with supplement 1978), 31, 63, 65-66; DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone*, 280.

in its various forms on 10 occasions.¹ Six refer directly to the “rock” from which Moses, at the command of God, provided water for the people of Israel during their journey from Egypt to the promised land (cfr. Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; Deut 8:15). Two relate to the theological type associated with this miraculous water-bearing rock and will be considered later (cfr. Deut 32:13). The remaining two occurrences refer to the literal meaning of this word and have no particular relevance to our investigation (cfr. Gen 49:22; Num 24:21).

In other words, we have eight appearances of כִּיף that are directly related to the miraculous water-bearing rock. Consequently, those Christians familiar with the PTg and aware that כִּיפָא possibly had a theological relevance in Scripture would readily associate it with the miraculous water-bearing rock.

This conclusion is further strengthened when it is recalled that Jesus gave כִּיפָא a specific relationship to “His Church” (Mt 16:18). The term קהל, as we have already seen, had acquired a specific theological connotation in the MT. This same word, as a Hebrew loan word and with the same meaning, had passed into the PTg.² During the course of the historical account of the miraculous water-bearing rock, as related in the book of Numbers of the PTg, כִּיף is found in one of its emphatic forms five times in the presence of קהל which appears on four occasions (cfr. Num 20:2-13). Hence, those Christians familiar with the PTg would also readily associate כִּיפָא with קהל which, as we have seen, had already acquired a theological connotation.

Another Aramaic term, טִינר,³ that has a very similar semantic range as כִּיף, is also found in the PTg. There are seven occurrences of this word and it is difficult to identify any clear semantic differences in meaning from כִּיף.⁴ However, on occasions it seems to have the nuance of implying “flint-rock”. This is supported by the fact that טִינר is used to translate צור of the MT, which can also imply this same emphasis in meaning. Four of these seven occurrences refer in some way to the miraculous water-bearing rock (cfr. Ex 17:6; Deut 8:15; 32:13). On two of these occasions a form of כִּיף is also present (cfr. Deut 8:15; 32:13).

Comparison of the PTg with the Torah of the MT shows that כִּיף is used to translate both צור, and סלע.⁵ Contextual analysis shows that צור and סלע have very similar semantic ranges. Both imply the different forms of rock as found in their natural state, such as cliffs, crags, boulders or mountainous places of refuge. On occasions צור carries the implication of being a stronghold or as suggesting the hardness of the rock. One difference that will be considered later

¹ This number does not include four occurring in marginal glosses and in obscure readings. In seven of the 10 appearances a less frequent form of the emphatic state is used. Instead of the usual א suffix, the ך suffix is found (cfr. Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; 24:21; Deut 32:13).

² Cfr. SOKOLOFF, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, s.v. קהל, 477; SCHMIDT, TDNT, vol. 3, s.v. ἐκκλησία, (E, 5), 524.

³ Cfr. SOKOLOFF, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, s.v. טִינר, 224.

⁴ This number does not include several that appear in marginal glosses.

⁵ Cfr. KOEHLER, BAUMGARTNER, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, I, 758; ZORELL, *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti*, s.v. סלע, 555; KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. סלע, 448.

in more detail is that צור is used as a metaphorical synonym for God far more frequently than סלע.

It is of paramount importance for our investigation to notice that, in total contrast, the term אבן¹ in the MT has a different semantic range from that of צור and סלע. This includes “stones” in general, those used for throwing, precious stones, even stone-like objects, and all stone as a material that is used, or worked by man for all kinds of building purposes or art forms. This same word has passed into the PTg and covers the same semantic range.² This enables us to conclude that צור and סלע in the Torah of the MT have a very similar semantic range as כיה in the PTg. On the other hand, אבן, whether found in the Torah of the MT or in the PTg, has a quite distinct range.

Supporting evidence for צור, סלע and כיה having the same semantic range is shown by the use of the Hebrew word כה found in the MT as a derivation from the Aramaic כיה. As also noticed by Caragounis, it appears on two occasions in a plural form and has the connotation of an outcrop of rock or a cliff, typical of what can be found in mountainous terrain, or at the side of a dry river bed (cfr. Job 30:6; Jer 4:29).³

The term כיה appears in some of the Targum texts found among the treasures of Qumran. Both Claudel and Fitzmyer underline the importance of this evidence, coming as it does from the first century BC or even earlier, which confirms that it had the same semantic range as its Hebrew counterparts.⁴

Further corroboration of these words having a very similar semantic range is provided by noticing that צור, סלע, טינר and כיה are all rendered by the word πέτρα in the LXX. In contrast, אבן is found as λίθος in the LXX.⁵ It is crucial to our investigation to notice that this same difference in semantic range, between πέτρα and λίθος as found in the LXX, is also present in the Greek of the NT with very few exceptions.⁶

Claudel severely criticises Lampe for insisting that כיה is equivalent to “stone” rather than “rock” basing his conclusion on the Aramaic found in documents of later centuries.⁷ He concludes that in this way Lampe reduces its significance to the level of a nickname akin to that of “Boanarges”. Claudel accepts that in Aramaic texts later than the first century there is a certain semantic shift in the meaning of כיה towards “stone”. However, he insists that what is relevant here

¹ Cfr. KOEHLER, BAUMGARTNER, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1, 7-8; ZORELL, *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti*, s.v. אבן, 7-8; KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. אבן, 3.

² Cfr. KOEHLER, BAUMGARTNER, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, v, 1806; SOKOLOFF, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 16; S. KAUFMAN, M. SOKOLOFF, *A Key-word-in-context Concordance to Targum Neofiti (A Guide to the Complete Palestinian Aramaic Text of the Torah)*, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore - London 1993, s.v. אבן, 7-8.

³ Cfr. CARAGOUNIS, *Peter and the Rock*, 27; ZORELL, *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti*, s.v. כה, 369; KLEIN, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. כה, 283.

⁴ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 340, 342; FITZMYER, *To Advance the Gospel*, 115.

⁵ Cfr. BAUER, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. λίθος, 474; CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. λίθος, 640.

⁶ For example, ψήφος, cfr. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. ψήφος: small stone, pebble, precious stone, counter, 1289.

⁷ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 338-343.

is the evidence for its use in the first century and before, and especially in the PTg. He points out that Lampe also seems to ignore its relationship with both the term “Christ” and “Church”, as already discussed, and therefore of the consequent theological implications for the meaning of כִּיָּא.¹

Caragounis in his statistical comparison of the correspondence of these various terms as found in the MT, LXX and the Targumim in general, states that צור invariably corresponds to πέτρα and טינר in each respectively. Nevertheless, although he claims to have included the PTg in his research he omits in his results the three appearances of כִּיָּא in the PTg that do correspond to צור in the MT (cfr. Deut 8:15; 32:13). He also mentions that the word אבן, found on some nine occasions in the book of Proverbs of the MT, is rendered as כִּיָּא four or five times in the Targumim. At the same time, in a footnote he concedes that, apart from these particular cases found in Proverbs, אבן in the MT normally passes into the Targumim as אבן. In other words, this demonstrates that those few appearances of אבן (and only as found in the book of Proverbs) rendered as כִּיָּא in the Targumim are only rare exceptions to its usual appearance as אבן. Unfortunately these oversights on the part of Caragounis renders his conclusion invalid when he claims that his statistical results show that the semantic field of כִּיָּא is that of λίθος, “stone”, as found in the LXX. On the contrary, however, as we have just seen, צור and סלע in the Torah of the MT corresponding to כִּיָּא and טינר in the PTg, are all rendered as πέτρα in the LXX. Furthermore, אבן, both in the Torah of the MT and the PTg, is found as λίθος in the LXX. It is important to note that I have deliberately confined my research to the PTg due to its more probable earlier use rather than include the Targumim of the later centuries. That is to say, the greater likelihood that the PTg came into use, at least orally, in the first century makes it more reliable in terms of reflecting the semantic field of כִּיָּא at the time of Jesus, which is precisely our specific interest. Any semantic developments in the meaning of these terms found in later Targumim are not relevant to our research. Caragounis chooses to ignore this fact.

There are several exceptions in the LXX where πέτρα and λίθος are found together in the same context but whose presence can be explained on the grounds of poetic licence. As is typical in poetry, the author, wishing to repeat the same idea does so by using words of a similar meaning, but which are not necessarily employed normally in that particular context. Thus in the book of Wisdom, where reference is made to the miraculous water-bearing rock, the LXX employs πέτρα and then, in the same verse, λίθος: “When they thirsted they called upon thee, and water was given them out of flinty rock, and slaking of thirst from hard stone” (Wis 11:4).²

Given that the PTg only comprises of the Pentateuch the search for theological associations with כִּיָּא is necessarily limited. This is not of course the case with its Hebrew correlatives צור and סלע. There are some 72 appearances of the

¹ Cfr. *ibidem*, 339-340.

² Cfr. Isa 8:14; 1Pet 2:8.

word צור in its various forms in the MT. Among these it is possible to identify 44 occasions where it can be said to have a theological connotation as opposed to a simple literal sense. The most frequent of these, occurring 33 times, is its use as a metaphorical synonym for God, or serving as a metaphor for the saving power of God.¹ God is depicted as a “Rock” both in the Torah and the historical books. Moses, referring to God, says: “The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice” (Deut 32:4; cfr. Deut 32:15; 32:18; 32:30; 32:31; 1Sam 2:2; 2Sam 22:3; 22:32; 22:47; 23:3). In 14 of the Psalms it is used in the same way on 17 occasions: “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge” (Ps 18[17]:2; cfr. Ps 18[17]:31; 18[17]:46; 19[18]:14; 28[27]:1; 31[30]:2; 62[61]:2; 62[61]:6; 62[61]:7; 71[70]:3; 73[72]:26; 78[77]:35; 89[88]:26; 92[91]:15; 94[93]:22; 95[94]:1; 144[143]:1). It is also found in several of the books of the Prophets: “For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not remembered the rock of your refuge” (Isa 17:10; cfr. Isa 26:4; 30:29; 44:8; Hab 1:12). This metaphor, used with respect to God suggesting his fidelity, also implies that he is our salvation, our refuge and strength.

The use of סלע in the MT follows a similar pattern. It appears on some 53 occasions. In five it is used as a metaphorical synonym for God (cfr. 2Sam 22:2; Ps 18[17]:2; 31[30]:3; 42[41]:9; 71[70]:3). On the other hand, סלע (as opposed to צור) is not found with this usage either in the Torah or in the Prophets.

There is one exception where אבן is employed in the MT in this metaphorical way to refer to God rather than the usual צור or סלע (cfr. Gen 49:24). The context is that of Jacob bestowing his blessing on his sons before his death, and the use of אבן can also be understood as simply forming part of the poetic language employed in these blessings.

The second theological connotation associated with צור, occurring on 11 occasions, is that of its relationship with the miraculous water-bearing rock of Exodus. This second theological association can be further divided with respect to two different contexts. The first is its use when referring directly to the historical event of the miraculous water-bearing rock. The second context is when it refers to this same event, but which at the same time it can be understood as having a symbolic or typological sense portraying the ever-present providence of God towards his People.

In the first historical context it appears four times. In the account of the miracle it is used twice: “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink” (Ex 17:6). The third occasion is when the people of Israel, about to enter into the promised land, are reminded of this miracle in order to encourage them to have confidence in God, that he will continue his special providence towards them (cfr. Deut 8:15). It also appears in one of the Psalms that recounts the historical event (cfr. Ps 105[104]:41).

¹ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (A, 2), 95.

In the second context, as a type portraying the providence of God we find צור used on seven occasions. The first occurs within the historical framework just mentioned where Israel is reminded: “The LORD alone did lead him, [...] and he made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock” (Deut 32:12-13). This miracle is used in its typological sense on two occasions in the context of the Babylonian exile, when the people are being encouraged before setting out on their journey of return to Jerusalem: “They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he cleft the rock and the water gushed out” (Isa 48:21). In three Psalms צור appears four times with this same sense: “He smote the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed” (Ps 78[77]:20; cfr. Ps 78[77]:15; 81[80]:16; 114[113]:8).

The word טלע is found on eight occasions associated with the “miraculous water-bearing rock” and follows this same pattern. Six refer to its historical context (cfr. Num 20:8-11; Neh 9:15) and two occur with a figurative meaning (cfr. Deut 32:13; Ps 78[77]:16).

Another very relevant feature is that in three of the Psalms, where צור is found used in the typological sense with respect to the miraculous water-bearing rock, it is also clearly linked to the miraculous bread, manna (cfr. Ps 78[77]:20-25; 81[80]:16; 105[104]:40-41). The impression is given that in one of these Psalms the author takes for granted that these two types of God’s providence are so well known that he permits himself the poetic licence of linking them together in a metaphorical way: “I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you” (Ps 81[80]:16).

The book of Exodus describes the miracle of the manna and the water-bearing rock as if the one followed the other within a short time period (cfr. Ex 16:15-17:7). On the other hand, Numbers portrays these two miracles as occurring separately (cfr. Num 11:6-9; 20:2-13). In Deuteronomy the two are clearly linked as examples of God’s providence towards Israel. They are considered as signs that guarantee his future benevolence towards his people. In Nehemiah they are also found linked together as types of God’s continuous providence: “Thou didst give them bread from heaven for their hunger and bring forth water for them from the rock for their thirst” (Neh 9:15; cfr. Neh 9:20-21).

The miracle of the manna occurred on a regular basis, everyday except for the Sabbath (cfr. Ex 16:4-5; 16:15-30), during the sojourn of the people of Israel in the wilderness (cfr. Josh 5:12), and over a period of “forty years” (Ex 16:35). On the other hand, in the historical account of the miraculous water-bearing rock it is not made clear if it happened more than on one occasion (cfr. Ex 17:1-7; Num 20:2-13). When it appears in later Scripture linked with the manna then it is clear that we are to understand that it was also a miracle that occurred as often as was necessary during those forty years (cfr. Deut 8:15-16; Neh 9:15; 9:20-21; Ps 78[77]:15-16; 78[77]:20; 78[77]:23-25; 105[104]:40-41). This strongly suggests that not only were both miracles considered as symbols of God’s providence but also that, just as the manna supplied the daily requirements for food on their jour-

ney to the Promised Land, so God would also have provided water whenever it was needed. Jewish rabbinic tradition also reflects just such a conclusion.¹ Paul, not only echoes the link between these two types, but also this same tradition (cfr. 1Cor 10:3-4).

The high frequency of these two figurative types appearing together throughout the OT and even present in the NT as symbols of God's providence demonstrates that they were firmly rooted in Jewish theological tradition. Moreover, it shows that they were known not only among Jewish scholars but also by all who were familiar with the Scriptures. Jesus refers to the manna as a type for a sacrament when explaining that he will be the new, "Bread of life" (Jn 6:35; 6:48; cfr. Jn 6:31-34; 6:49-51). This fact, coupled with the clear theological link in Scripture between the manna and the miraculous water-bearing rock, thus permits us to speculate that the miraculous water-bearing rock may also be understood in this way as a sacramental type.

Returning to the word צור as used with a theological association, we find that there is one exception that neither falls within the context of being a synonym for God nor as referring to the miraculous rock of Exodus. This occurs in the book of Isaiah where it is given a metaphorical indicating the fidelity of Abraham and Sarah to God: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn, [...]. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you" (Isa 51:1-2). In the LXX it is rendered by the accusative of πέτρα. Although the faith of Abraham is mentioned on various occasions in the NT no references are made to this metaphor (cfr. Rom 4:12-13; 4:16; Gal 3:6-7; 3:9; Heb 11:8; 11:17; Jas 2:23). It is worth noting that this particular metaphorical allusion found in Isaiah did not prompt any of the writers of the NT to suggest that when Jesus called Simon his Rock, his intention was to draw a parallel between Abraham and Simon. This is especially noteworthy since Rabbinic tradition contains a rather apt reference to Abraham where God is reported as saying: "Behold, I have found a rock on which I can build and found the world".² Cullmann and Jeremias suggest that this would be an appropriate interpretation for "rock" as used by Jesus for Simon who is to be his foundation for his community of the New Covenant.³ However, the absence of any reference to this possible metaphorical use of the word "rock" in the NT suggests, as Luz points out, that Jesus did not have this particular theological association in mind on referring to Simon as his Rock.⁴

The multiple quotations taken from the LXX found in the NT bear witness to the fact that the first Greek speaking Christians were familiar with this version of Scripture. This factor also needs to be taken into account in the search for

¹ Cfr. *Tosephta* (Sukkah, 3, 3-14); CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 2), 97; McNAMARA, *Targum and Testament*, 7-8.

² *Jalqut*, 1, 766, quoted by CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 4), 99.

³ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 4), 99; J. JEREMIAS, *Golgotha und der heilige Fels*, Leipzig 1926, 74.

⁴ Cfr. LUZ, *Matthew 8-20*, 362.

the theological associations that the term Πέτρος would have evoked in their minds.

With respect to the 33 occasions that צור is used as a metaphorical synonym for God in the MT we find that it passes into the LXX in three different ways. On six occasions the word is not translated, that is to say, it is omitted (cfr. Deut 32:15; 2Sam 22:3; 23:3; Isa 26:4; 44:8; Hab 1:12). It is plausible that the translators considered its inclusion to be superfluous since it was only used as a synonym for “God”, which could already be understood from the context. This explanation would seem to be supported by the second way when, on 17 occasions, it is simply replaced by the word “God” (Deut 32:4; 32:18; 32:30; 32:31; Ps 18[17]:31; 18[17]:46; 28[27]:1; 31[30]:2; 62[61]:2; 62[61]:6; 62[61]:7; 71[70]:3; 73[72]:26; 92[91]:15; 95[94]:1; 144[143]:1; Isa 30:29). The third way, comprising of 10 appearances, is where צור is replaced with an alternative metaphor making reference to an attribute of God: “righteous” (1Sam 2:2); “creator” (2Sam 22:32); “guardian” (2Sam 22:47a); “keeper” (2Sam 22:47b); “helper” (Ps 18[17]:3b; 19[18]:14; 78[77]:35; 94[93]:22; Isa 17:10); “helper” (Ps 89[88]:26).¹ It comes as rather a surprise to find that on none of these 33 occasions is it rendered as πέτρα in the LXX.

As regards the five appearances of סלע used as a metaphorical synonym for God in the MT a slightly different pattern emerges. There are no cases of it being omitted or substituted with the word God. On four occasions it is replaced with an alternative attribute referring to God: “firm support” (Ps 18[17]:3a); “strength” (Ps 31[30]:4); “helper” (Ps 42[41]:10); “fortress” (Ps 71[70]:3b).

There is, however, one exception that occurs in the Second book of Samuel where it is translated as πέτρα. King David is praising God with one of the Psalms and says: κύριε πέτρα μου (2Sam 22:2: “The LORD is my rock”). Curiously when this same Psalm appears as just one more within the corpus of the Psalms in the LXX the translator follows the established pattern that we have just seen, and סלע is rendered by referring to an attribute of God: Κύριος στερέωμά μου (Ps 18[17]:3a: “The LORD is my firm support”). It is feasible that this one exception of a literal translation is the consequence of the respect that the translator had for these reported words of King David.

The lack of literal fidelity in the LXX in the translation of צור and סלע when they refer directly to God may be attributed to the appreciation of Jewish theological tradition, that has grown over time, for the transcendence of God. A certain reticence has been engendered in associating the being of God, even by way of a metaphor, with something so material as “rock”. Derrett, commenting on this literary phenomenon, comments that it was, “Obviously for fear of pagans’ sarcasms”.² As a consequence it is feasible that Christians, who were only familiar with the LXX but not with the MT, may not have been aware of

¹ The English translation of the LXX is that of C. LANCELOT and L. BRENTON, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha. Greek and English*, Bagster, London - Zondervan 1982.

² DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone*, 281.

the theological association of the word “rock” with God, unless they happened to remember the one exception just mentioned.

In total contrast, when צור or סלע are used in the MT to refer to the miraculous water-bearing rock whether in its historical or typological context, then on all 19 occasions, they are translated literally employing a form of πέτρα (Ex 17:6; Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; Deut 8:15; 32:13; Neh 9:15; Ps 78[77]:15; 78[77]:16; 78[77]:20; 81[80]:16; 105[104]:41; 114[113]:8; Isa 48:21). Thus Christians with a Jewish background, and who were more familiar with the LXX than the MT, would readily identify this particular theological association with πέτρα or its masculine form, πέτρος, used uniquely in the NT to refer to Rock.

It is significant to note that a similar pattern emerges when this same comparison is made with the PTg. Of the five occurrences of צור used as a synonym for God in the Pentateuch three are omitted in the PTg (cfr. Deut 32:4; 32:15; 32:31), and two are substituted for a metaphorical term, “strong one” (Deut 32:18; 32:30).

On the other hand, the four appearances of צור that refer to the miraculous water-bearing rock are found translated literally, either with some form of כִּי (on two occasions, cfr. Deut 8:15; 32:13) or with טִינָה (on two occasions, cfr. Ex 17:6). In a similar way, with respect to the six appearances of סלע that refer to the miraculous water-bearing rock, it is also translated literally with some form of כִּי (Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; Deut 32:13).

Therefore it is worth noting that, with reference solely to the PTg, we find that כִּי is used in one of its forms, not only to refer to the miraculous water-bearing rock in its historical context (on six occasions, cfr. Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; Deut 8:15), but also as a theological type (on two occasions, cfr. Deut 32:13).¹ This would imply that Christians familiar with the PTg rather than the MT would even more readily associate the term כִּיפָא with the miraculous water-bearing rock since it is not found in the PTg used as a synonym for God.

It is plausible that early Christians familiar with the MT, LXX and PTg were aware of the pattern just outlined above regarding the two possible theological connotations of the terms צור and סלע, that is to say, being used both as a synonym for God and for the miraculous water-bearing rock. In which case they may have associated the term כִּיפָא used by Jesus with either or both of these two connotations. Therefore it is possible to speculate that they may have understood the words of Jesus to Simon, “You are Rock, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Mt 16:18) in three possible ways. First, that the use of the term “rock” in both cases signifies “God” and in doing so leading to the implication that “Simon is God”. A conclusion that is hardly tenable!

¹ The *Onkelos* (Babylonian) Targum also confirms this phenomenon. It is probable that this Targum only came into general use after the fourth century. As a consequence it is not likely that it was known, even in an early oral form, in the first century. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that even here כִּי is used for the miraculous water-bearing rock, and occurs on five occasions (cfr. Num 20:8; 20:10; 20:11).

The second way would be that Jesus intends the theological association to be the miraculous water-bearing rock. This would imply that we should understand that he is designating Simon as his “miraculous water-bearing rock” on which he will build his Church, the community of the New Covenant.

The third possibility is that the first appearance of the term refers to the miraculous “water-bearing rock” while in the second case it refers to “God”. In other words, that Jesus is referring to himself as God on which his Church will be built. A certain feasibility is given to this interpretation by the fact that these words of Jesus follow immediately after Rock’s confession of him as, “the Son of the living God”.

Cullmann seems to allow for these last two possibilities when he says: “Rightly understood, Christ alone is πέτρα. If, then, Mt 16:18 forces us to assume a formal and material identity between πέτρα and Πέτρος, this shows how fully the apostolate, and in it to a special degree the position of Peter, belongs to and is essentially enclosed within, the revelation of Christ. Πέτρος himself is this πέτρα, not just his faith or his confession”.¹ Such an interpretation would serve to emphasize the nature of the role of Rock as being one of delegation.

As we have seen, Paul employed the term Κηφᾶς to refer to Rock in his early letters which was eclipsed in a definitive way by the use of Πέτρος in all other NT texts. Given that Πέτρος was most probably not used at that time as a proper name and that it would be clearly recognised as sharing the same root as πέτρα, it can then be seen as a particularly appropriate term to signify its theological association with the miraculous water-bearing rock. Another consideration is that the use of Πέτρος, rather than Κηφᾶς, would also serve to remind the growing majority of the Greek speaking Christians as to its meaning. Furthermore, if we bear in mind the possible theological connotation of “rock” as being a metaphorical synonym for God, then the change from Κηφᾶς to Πέτρος can be seen as being even more appropriate. The change in terms can be seen as highlighting the delegated nature of the role of Rock, since the occasional use of πέτρος in Greek literature had the connotation of a “lesser rock”, a “stone”. Luz appears to be thinking along these lines when he comments: “The play on words is shrewd in Greek, because it plays with various meanings of the same root”.² Such an emphasis on the delegated nature of the role of Rock would harmonise perfectly with John’s report of Jesus designating Rock as his “shepherd” (cfr. Jn 21:15-18).

When Paul gave a messianic interpretation to the miraculous water-bearing rock in his first letter to the Corinthians he may also have had in mind these two theological connotations of “rock”: “For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (1Cor 10:3-4). Cullmann comments that Paul is possibly thinking of Christ’s words as reported by John:

¹ CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 4), 99; cfr. *ibidem*, s.v. πέτρος, (C, 2, c), 108.

² LUZ, *Matthew* 8-20, 354, note 2.

“If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink” (Jn 7:37).¹ He also suggests that Paul, “Is not equating the rock directly with Christ”, but rather that he uses the term in the sense of the “spiritual (πνευματικός) reality” which permeates both the OT and NT.² If this is the case then it provides further confirmatory evidence for our conclusions since, when Jesus designates Simon as his Rock he is delegating to him a specific participation in his own messianic powers as pastor, prophet and priest. The role of Rock is to be a channel of grace for the Church of Jesus, who is forever the foundational “rock” of his Church (cfr. 1Cor 3:10-11).

As we have seen, צור, סלע and כף as found in the MT, together with their equivalents כִּי and טִינָה in the PTg, and πέτρα in the LXX and NT, all have a very similar and quite specific semantic range. That is to say, in their usual literal meaning they imply the different forms of rock as found in its natural state, such as cliffs, crags, boulders or mountainous places of refuge. In complete contrast, אבן, whether appearing in the MT or the PTg, has a semantic range quite distinct in meaning apart from very few exceptions (that have plausible explanations), and this together with its counterpart in the LXX and NT, where it is usually rendered as λίθος.³ This range includes “stones” in general, those used for throwing, precious stones, even stone-like objects, and all stone used as a material for all kinds of building purposes or art forms. Cullmann asserts that: “כִּיפָא carries with it the distinctive content of πέτρα, it is from the very first highly improbable that it is to be taken simply in the sense of λίθος”.⁴

The awareness of this specific difference in the semantic fields of these terms at the time of Jesus enables us to avoid certain misunderstandings with regard to discerning the theological roots of כִּיפָא. Some authors, who embrace the hypothesis that these key terms had acquired a much more flexible semantic range in the first centuries, have proposed alternative interpretations based on the messianic connotations associated with אבן in the MT, or that of λίθος in the LXX.⁵ J. M. Ford and Pesch have come to the conclusion that כִּיפָא can be construed as a nickname: “Precious Stone”. Such an interpretation, derived from symbolic language associated with Eastern culture, would imply that Rock is to be considered as a very important person.⁶ In a similar way, Derrett links Πέτρος with the foundation “stone” or “stones” of the New Jerusalem (cfr. Isa

¹ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 2), 97. These words associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit clearly point to the analogical meaning of “water” found prefigured in the OT (cfr. Isa 12:3-4; 44:3-4; Jer 2:13; 17:7-8; Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:8) and in the context of the NT where it can refer to the “grace” of God (cfr. Jn 3:5; 4:10-14; Rom 5:5; 1Cor 12:13; Titus 3:5-7; Rev 21:6; 22:1; 22:17).

² Cfr. *ibidem*, 97.

³ Cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 341.

⁴ CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 4), 99; cfr. CLAUDEL, *La Confession de Pierre*, 340-342.

⁵ For example, when the MT employs אבן we find λίθος in the LXX of Ps 118(117):22: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner” (cfr. Isa 28:16; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33; 10:11; Eph 2:20-22; 1Pt 2:4-7). Also, cfr. Dan 2:34-35; 2:44-45.

⁶ Cfr. J.M. FORD, *The Jewel of Discernment (a Study of Stone Symbolic)*, «Biblische Zeitschrift» (new series) 11 (1967) 109-116. This article is based on Isa 28:16; 8:14-16 in the light of 1Pet 2:4-8; PESCH, *Simon-Petrus*, 30; R. AGUIRRE, *Pedro en el Evangelio de Mateo*, «Euntes Docete» 47 (1989) 350.

28:16; 54:11-12).¹ Such conclusions, based almost entirely on linguistic speculation, can only be classified as feasible or as hypothetical indirect allusions, unless they can also be shown to be in accord with evidence found in Jewish or Christian tradition. Moreover, confronted with the evidence presented in the next section such alternative interpretations are even less tenable.

As a general conclusion to this section I think it is highly probable that Jesus did intend the Apostles to understand אפיס as just outlined within the context of Jewish theological tradition and their familiarity with the MT, and also probably with the PTg.

IV. ANALOGY OF TIME AND PLACE

The focus now changes to a consideration of the archaeological and historical evidence related to Caesarea Philippi. Quite often such evidence is overlooked in research related to the Petrine ministry. Its importance lies in the fact that, apart from being historically related, it can be considered in the main as evidence independent from that as found in Scripture. It will be seen that it corroborates in a very convincing way the conclusions that have already been proposed.

Mount Hermon, rising to some 9,000 feet (2,814 metres) above the plain of Galilee and the lake of Gennesaret, dominates the north-eastern tip of the land of Israel of today and is by far the highest mountain in the region. The region that Matthew refers to as, "The district of Caesare'a Philippi" (Mt 16:13) and Mark talks of as, "the villages of Caesare'a Philippi" (Mk 8:27), is located in the foothills of Mount Hermon some 25 miles to the north-east of the lake of Gennesaret.

Divine Revelation takes place within the continuum of time and space in which God freely chooses those he wishes to associate with his plan of Salvation together with the time and place where events are to occur. On occasions, the choice of time and place can be clearly seen as having a relevance, albeit in an analogical way, to the understanding of this Revelation. Any such relevance needs to be borne in mind when interpreting the words and deeds of Jesus.

The event of the Transfiguration of Jesus provides us with an appropriate example of such relevance (cfr. Mt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36). The didactic impact of this Revelation is proportional to it being perceived in the context of the previous theophanies on Mount Sinai (Horeb) to Moses and Elijah. Jesus chooses the Apostles Simon, James and John as qualified witnesses to this event (cfr. 2Pet 1:16-18). The time chosen is within the framework of the series of dramatic revelations that constitute the turning point in his Galilean ministry and herald his final journey to Jerusalem. It occurs some days after the revelation at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah, and the announcement that he is to be the suffering Messiah as depicted in Isaiah (cfr. Mt 16:21-23; Isa 53).

¹ Cfr. DERRETT, *Thou Art the Stone*, 277-282; GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma*, 175-176, 180-182; R. MINNERATH, *De Jérusalem à Rome. Pierre et l'unité de l'Église apostolique* (Théologie Historique 101), Beauchesne, Paris 1994, 272-273, 460-461.

Taking place as it does, away from the crowds and on "A high mountain" (Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2; cfr. Lk 9:28), Jesus provides, in a deliberate way, an analogical parallel with the theophanies on Mount Sinai (cfr. Ex 19:11; 19:18-20; 24:15-16; 1Kings 19:8-18). The awareness of this parallel facilitates our perception of this event as that of the glorified Jesus, greater than Moses and Elijah, the "Beloved Son" (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7; cfr. Lk 9:35) of the Father. In other words, this particular choice of time and place serves to shed more light on our understanding of this revelation.

In a similar way the consideration of the chosen time and place of Caesarea Philippi provides additional light for our understanding of the theological content of the words of Jesus to Rock. As already mentioned, each of the Synoptic Gospels portrays this event as the climax and dramatic turning point in the Galilean ministry of Jesus. We are given to understand that Jesus decides that now is the appropriate time, before embarking on his final journey to Jerusalem, to reveal to his Apostles that he is the Messiah and also, according to Matthew's account, that he is, "The Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). This revelation will be followed with the further clarification that he will be the suffering Messiah prophesied by Isaiah and then by the event of his Transfiguration, where he and his Kingdom are seen as both glorious and triumphant. It is within this chronological framework of climactic revelations that Jesus chooses that now is also the precise moment to reveal that the Apostle Simon Bar-Jona is to be the Rock of his Church. This chronological context prompts us to give to this event a similar importance as the other fundamental revelations made at this time with respect to his Kingdom.

The significance of Caesarea Philippi is brought into sharp focus when we remember its geographical and historical background. It was located some two and a half miles (4 km) east of the city of Dan at the foot of the south-west extremity of Mount Hermon (Jebel-esh-Sheikh) at 984 feet (300 m) above sea level. Topographically it was situated between the steep foothills of Mount Hermon towards the north and the ascending slopes of the Golan Heights to the east and south. It rested at the northern edge of a triangular shaped basalt and travertine plateau. The base line of this triangular shaped plateau is approximately one mile (1.5 km) in length and where the horizontal height of this triangle is about 1.2 miles (2 km).¹ To the west this plateau looks out onto the northern region of the Jordan valley and Galilee. The eastern edge ends in a topographic step, a sheer rock cliff face some 197 feet (60 m) at its highest point above the immediate surrounding ground level. From about the third century BC Greek settlers had been attracted to this spot by the presence of a spring of fresh water that gushed from the mouth of a natural cavern located at the foot of the cliff face. At this point the cliff is about 100 feet (30 m) high, and runs in a straight line

¹ Topographical and archaeological details are taken from Z.U. MA' OZ, *Banias*, in E. STERN (ed.), *The New Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Jerusalem 1993, I, 136-140.

for some 262 feet (80 m). This spring of water is one of the four major sources, originating in the snows of Mount Hermon, that eventually feed the river Jordan before it pours into the Sea of Galilee. Ancient Greek culture deemed that such wonders of nature be sacred and be dedicated to the god of fertility, Pan. Thus giving rise to its original name, *Paneas* (*Panium*) that is known today as Banyas.¹

We are indebted to Flavius Josephus for providing us with considerable historical details, contemporary with the time of Jesus, about Caesarea Philippi and its sacred grotto dedicated to Pan.² He describes the cliff face at the base of which was a large cavern containing a very deep pool integral with the water source. He tells how Herod the Great (c. 20 BC) had a temple built of white marble at Paneas, just to one side of the cavern and dedicated to the deified Emperor Augustus.

Evidence gathered from archaeological excavations, some as recent as 1990, corroborates the information provided by Josephus.³ The cavern, at the present level of the surface of the water, is roughly rhomboid in shape measuring some 85 feet by 98 feet (26 m by 30 m). It towers some 56 feet (17 m) above the surface of the water and extends below the surface for about 39 feet (12 m). At the base of the cliff face there is a rock terrace that formed part of the sanctuary of Pan. It protrudes from the cliff for some 66 feet (20 m) and runs for its entire length. Zvi Uri Ma'oz suggests that during the Roman period there may have been a large artificial lake at the foot of the cliff fed by various water sources in the vicinity.⁴ If this were so it would have provided a convenient separation of the sanctuary area, together with the site of the king's palace, from that of the town.

There are signs showing that the original geological structure of the cavern with its water source has been somewhat modified over the centuries due to the effects of several earthquakes that have occurred in the region.⁵ It is plausible that what remains today of this spring and grotto is only a pale reflection of its natural grandeur in the Greek and Roman periods.

Philip Herod (cfr. Lk 3:1) was the son of Herod the Great by one of his wives, Cleopatra of Jerusalem. On the death of his father (4 BC), in accordance with his will and by courtesy of the Emperor Augustus, Philip became Tetrarch of the northern part of his late father's kingdom. This included the regions of Batanea, Trachonitis (Trachon), Auranitis (Hauran) and Gaulanitis (Golan). It was at Paneas that he decided to establish the power base for his new kingdom (AD 2). Ma'oz suggests it was possibly the first settlement of any considerable size to

¹ Banyas, the English form of its name in Palestinian Arabic, bears witness to its original name in Greek since Arabic does not distinguish phonetically between *b* and *p*.

² Cfr. F. JOSEPHUS, *War*, I, nos.404-405; II, nos.94-95, 168; III, nos.443-444; VII, nos.23-24; *Antiquities*, XIV, n.330; XV, nos.344-364; XVII, nos.189, 319; XVIII, n.28; XX, n.211; *Life*, nos.51-61, 74.

³ Cfr. MA'OZ, *Banias*, 140-141.

⁴ Cfr. *ibidem*, 137. Sacred lakes of this kind are associated with Phoenician temples at Amrit and Afqa in Lebanon.

⁵ Cfr. *ibidem*, 138, 140.

be built on the site.¹ Philip gave it the name of Caesarea Philippi in honour of the Emperor Tiberius, and adding his own name to distinguish it from Caesarea Maritima located on the Mediterranean coast. Josephus praises the rule of Philip whose subjects were mainly from the Syrian Province of the Roman Empire. Caesarea Philippi was a town imbued with Greek culture centred round the cult to Pan. Paneas was an ideal location for a town with its perennial abundance of fresh water for drinking and irrigation, and where the cliff itself provided a convenient natural wall of defence. It also had a certain strategic military relevance being as it was situated in close proximity to the *Via Maris*, a major Roman road at the time, and with the road from Tyre to Damascus passing through it.²

Caesarea Philippi commands a magnificent view of Galilee with its lake and the Jordan valley that can be seen stretching away towards the southern horizon leading to the Dead Sea. For the religious Jew it typified the pagan worldliness and idolatry characteristic of Hellenistic culture. According to Josephus, at the time of the Jewish war, there were only a few sparsely populated Jewish communities settled in the surrounding region.³ These may have existed at the time of Jesus. It is reasonable to suppose, since there is no further information in the NT to the contrary, that Jesus did not make this relatively long journey from Galilee to Caesarea Philippi with his Apostles either to enjoy the view or for the purpose of preaching. There is no mention as to whether Jesus actually entered into this pagan town.

Bearing in mind this context of time and place it can be readily understood why Jesus deliberately took his Apostles up to Caesarea Philippi. This seat of worldly power would provide a wonderful physical analogy with which Jesus could compare and contrast the nature of his own Messianic Kingdom. He would be able to emphasize the radical difference between his Church and that of this worldly kingdom. However, if this was the only reason then we must ask why come to this location in particular. There were many other towns dominated by Hellenistic culture both in Galilee and along the Mediterranean coast that would have served equally well for this purpose, and at the same time have been far more convenient in terms of distance. This leads us to conclude that Jesus chose this specific place because of its unique relevance to the revelation that he wished to give. Caesarea Philippi provides an ideal visual aid to help the Apostles to understand his words. Before their eyes they would behold this great wall of rock forming a dramatic backdrop to the town complete with its spectacular natural spring of abundant fresh water surging from its base. It should also be borne in mind that, then as now, this extensive water-system comprising the tributaries feeding the river Jordan before its entry into the Sea of Galilee, this inland lake itself, and the continuation of the river Jordan that

¹ Cfr. *ibidem*, 138.

² Cfr. *ibidem*, 138. This importance is also shown by the fact that the Crusaders (c. 1129) built a fortress on this site.

³ Cfr. JOSEPHUS, *Life of Moses*, 13; SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 157.

eventually empties itself into the Dead Sea, constitutes an essential source of water for both human and much of the animal and plant life in Israel. The analogy to be found at Caesarea Philippi was far more than just that of providing the contrast between the Kingdom of Jesus and one based on the vain glory of pagan worship backed by the Imperial might of Rome whose vassal king had turned it into the seat of his earthly power. This analogy would serve to illustrate the role of Rock: to him would be delegated the power of Jesus as the divine "rock" that would bring forth the living water of his grace whenever it was needed to sustain and nourish the life of his Church.

The event at Caesarea Philippi would have reminded the Apostles and the first Christians with a Jewish background of God convoking the elders and the people of Israel, his *קהל*, to witness the original miracle depicted in Exodus. Here, in sight of the water-bearing rock at Caesarea Philippi, a natural wonder of God's providence, Jesus is convoking his elders, his embryonic Church, to witness the establishment of a new miracle of a "grace-bearing rock". Jesus delegates his messianic power to his Rock. It will be through this Rock that he will channel graces necessary to nourish and sustain his Church on its pilgrimage journey through time. God's loving providence, demonstrated and typified in the water-bearing rock for the people of the Mosaic Covenant, now gives us his "grace-bearing Rock" for the people of his New Covenant, the Church.

This physical evidence, the majestic rock cliff face with its impressive cavern from which flows abundant fresh water is there to be seen by all who visit Banias today. Still clearly visible on the same rock face to the right of the cavern are the niches carved out to house the images of Pan and other gods. In contrast, however, with the passage of time all that is left of that once proud pagan seat of worldly power complete with its marble temple are a few scattered stones.¹

V. CONCLUSION

The fact that the designation of Simon by Jesus as his Rock forms an integral part of Matthew's account of the solemn occasion when Simon confesses his faith in Jesus as both the Messiah and the "Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16) serves to emphasize the importance of such an appointment. At the same time it highlights the clear literary parallel being made between the terms "Christ" and "Rock".

This parallel is echoed throughout the texts of the NT in the usage of the

¹ Cfr. Ma'oz, *Banias*, 138-139. On the death of Philip Herod his territory was ruled by Iulius Agrippa (AD 37-44) it then came under direct Roman administration as part of the Province of Syria. Later it was entrusted to Agrippa II (AD 53-92 or 93) and then became known as Neronias in honour of the Emperor Nero. Afterwards it reverted to direct Roman rule forming part of the Province of Syria-Phoenicia. During the second and third centuries it became known as Caesarea Panias and then simply as Panias. Following the Roman period, possession passed from one local potentate to the next. With the departure of the Crusaders it fell into decline providing building material for the dwelling places of the local inhabitants.

compound terms “Jesus Christ” and “Simon Rock”, and that of “Christ” and “Rock”, as single word synonyms for Jesus and the Apostle Simon respectively. This reflects the presence in early tradition among all the Christian communities of this theological parallel between the role of Jesus and that of Rock.

Given that there is still no clear evidence that Πέτρος was used as a name in the first century, together with the fact that it is found throughout the texts of the NT reserved exclusively to refer to Rock, provides supportive evidence for this conclusion. The apparent deliberate and definitive change from the term Κηφᾶς to Πέτρος indicates a priority being given to its meaning, and therefore to the role that it signifies.

The Fourth Gospel, ending as it does with the account of Jesus appointing Rock as his delegated shepherd to watch over his flock, provides further evidence for the term Rock implying a specific function. Furthermore, such an interpretation is in harmony with the fact that, already by the end of the first century, there had been several successors of Simon Rock as Bishop of Rome. In turn this illustrates that early Christian tradition acknowledges the instrumental nature of this role.

The search for theological associations in Scripture for the term אֶבֶן as found in the PTg was prompted by the high probability that Jesus would follow the Jewish theological tradition of God giving specific meanings, related to the history of Salvation, when he gives or changes names of his chosen protagonists.

Hebrew equivalents of אֶבֶן found in the MT reveals two clear theological connotations. The first is that of the miraculous water-bearing rock of Exodus, both in its historical context and with its posterior use as a theological type symbolizing God’s continuous providence towards his people. In addition we find a clear association of the miraculous water-bearing rock with that of the miraculous manna. This serves to corroborate its interpretation as a sign and symbol of God’s providence as embedded in Jewish tradition. The second connotation is the use of the word “rock” in the MT as a metaphorical synonym for God.

This opens the way for two possible interpretations of the words by Jesus to “Simon Bar-Jona”. Jesus is appointing him with the function, symbolized by the “miraculous water-bearing rock”, of being a sign and an effective instrument of God’s “grace”, his ever present providence towards the people of his definitive Covenant. On the other hand, the second use of the term “rock”, as in, “On this rock I will build my Church”, can be understood as referring to Rock himself or as a metaphorical synonym for God. Such an interpretation would give a certain emphasis to the delegated nature of the role of Rock while maintaining Jesus considered as the eternal “Rock”.

The deliberate intention of Jesus to show his disciples the visual aid of the water-bearing rock at Caesarea Philippi provides us with independent evidence that serves, in a powerful way, to confirm our conclusions drawn from the evidence found both in Scripture and within Jewish and early Christian theological tradition. The accumulative force of this evidence provides a solid foundation

on which to base theological speculation of an understanding of the Petrine ministry as being in the nature of a sacrament.

As stated in the introductory remarks to this paper, the use of the term sacrament in this context is to be understood in an analogical way similar to its application to the mystery of the Church as being of the nature of a sacrament. Another such example found in more recent Magisterium is that of sacred Scripture also being described as of the nature of a sacrament.¹ Obviously, when speaking of the sacramental nature of the Petrine ministry, no specific reference is intended with the Sacrament of Holy Orders. However, it does seem to open up a feasible avenue for such research.² After all Simon is both Rock and an Apostle.

The Petrine ministry was instituted by Jesus Christ with the person of Rock as its outward sign both in terms of being the bedrock for the building of the Church and as an instrumental channel for his grace according to the analogy with the miraculous water-bearing rock. It is a delegated ministry of Jesus who is forever the divine “rock” and source of all graces (cfr. Jn 4:13; 7:37-39; 1Cor 3:11; 10:4).³ In this sense it can be said that Rock is a “sacrament” of Jesus Christ, he is the Vicar of Christ.⁴ The Petrine ministry is an instrument for the implementation of the external graces as stipulated by Jesus at Caesarea Philippi for the building up of his Church.

There is ample scope for further research to show that this “sacramental” delegation of Christ’s power constitutes a specific participation in the Messianic mission of Jesus as Shepherd, Prophet and Priest (cfr. Jn 14:6; 21:15-19). In this case the Petrine ministry can be seen as providing the grace to ensure unity and solidarity within the Church as a communion through legislation and law, to guarantee unity of faith through teaching in terms of a safe-guarding and constant clarification of divine Revelation, and to ensure unity in liturgical worship and order with respect to the Sacraments. This grace serves to foster the building up of the Church both from within, in terms of encouraging the living of a truly Christian life among her faithful, and with respect to the promotion of apostolic endeavours throughout the world for the growth of the Church.

It is of interest to view the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ in the light of the Petrine ministry as of the nature of a sacrament. Just as Jesus is the Head of his Mystical Body so Rock, through the delegation of Christ’s messianic powers, becomes the focal point and instrument for unity in the Church both as bishop with respect to the college of bishops and with regard to the rest of the faithful. In this way the role of Rock can also be perceived as an essential and

¹ Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio* (14-IX-98), n.13, AAS 91 (1999) 16; BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (30-IX-10), n.56, AAS 102 (2010, 11) 735-736.

² Cfr. GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma*, 237-239.

³ Cfr. CULLMANN, TDNT, vol. 6, s.v. πέτρα, (C, 2), 97; GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma*, 180-182.

⁴ Cfr. GOYARROLA, *Iglesia de Roma*, 211.

complementary element to the Church herself being considered of the nature of a sacrament: "As the universal sacrament of Salvation".¹

The close association of the two theological types clearly exhibited in the OT, the manna and the miraculous water-bearing rock, also provides more light in the understanding of the Petrine ministry as being of the nature of a sacrament. Together these types passed into Jewish tradition as symbols of God's providence towards his people. Pope Benedict XVI refers to the close association of these types as having become an expression of messianic hope within Jewish tradition.² It is reasonable to suppose that their fulfilment in the New Covenant would also exhibit a distinctive relationship and as manifesting the continuity of God's providence.

The miraculous manna as a theological type is fulfilled in the NT through the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Jesus becomes, "The bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever" (Jn 6:58). In his providence God provides us with the "food" for our journey of faith to eternal life. The Sacrament of the Eucharist is an ever present essential element for the ongoing sustenance and building up of the Church.

The corresponding fulfilment of the miraculous water-bearing rock as a theological type in the New Covenant can be seen in Christ's designation of Simon as his Rock. Thus, it is to be expected that in a similar way it would form a constitutive element, a permanent instrument of God's continuous providence for his Church, and not only for the duration of Simon's lifetime. This provides us with a theological basis for showing the necessity of a continuous succession of the Petrine ministry throughout time.

The close association of these two types in the OT emphasizes their importance in being the focal points and elemental sources that provided the means for the people of Israel to make their journey to the Promised Land. The fulfilment of this association in the New Covenant can be seen as endorsing the understanding of the Eucharist and the Petrine ministry as being focal points of unity and as sources for God's grace. The Eucharist, in effecting sacramental unity with Christ, produces that communion with him and with one another that is the Church (cfr. 1Cor 10:17), the Mystical Body of Christ (cfr. Rom 12:4-5; 1Cor 12:27). It is both the centre and source of our lives as Christians.³ Likewise, the Petrine ministry, considered as of the nature of a sacrament, points towards it also being a constitutive element of the Church that serves as an effective means for unity, and as a source of grace for the health and growth of the Church.

¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 48.

² Cfr. BENEDICT XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, I (English translation by Adrian J. Walker of the German, *Jesus von Nazareth*), Bloomsbury - Doubleday, London 2007, 241, 244.

³ Cfr. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 10; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 7-XII-65, n. 6.

The sources of research for this paper were necessarily limited to those provided by Scripture and archaeological evidence. An integral investigation would not be complete without both an examination of the witness given by the Fathers of the Church and with that of the function of the Petrine ministry throughout the history of the Church. By way of encouraging such an endeavour I cannot resist concluding with a quotation from the writings of St Ephraim (c. AD 306-373). This Syrian Father and Doctor of the Church, known as the Lyre of the Holy Spirit, may have had in mind the role of Rock as of the nature of a sacrament when he placed on the lips of Jesus the following words:

Simon, my follower, I have made you the foundation of the holy Church. I betimes called you Cepha, because you will support all its buildings [...]. You are the head of the fountain from which my teaching flows, you are the chief of my disciples. Through you I will give drink to all peoples, yours is that life-giving sweetness which I dispense.¹

ABSTRACT

The quest for antecedent theological associations in Scripture of the Aramaic כִּפָּא (*kephā*) suggested by the words of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18), leads to the miraculous water-bearing rock of Exodus. Later texts of Scripture show this miracle portrayed as a theological type of the continuous providence of God towards his chosen people. Furthermore, this type is found as linked to that of the manna. Early Christian tradition as depicted in the New Testament and archaeological evidence at Caesarea Philippi corroborate these conclusions. The accumulation of this evidence opens the way for an explanation of the Petrine ministry as that of being in the nature of a sacrament.

¹ EPHRAIM, *Homily*, 4, 1, in T.J. LAMY (ed.), *St Ephraem Syri hymni et sermones*, 4 vols., Mechlin 1882-1902, 1, found in *Sermones in hebdomadam sanctam, diem resurrectionis et dominicam novam*, 399-566.

NOTE