

## Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.16-19

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### Chapter 16

#### ***The Anonymous Author and his Source, Miltiades, on the Heresy of the Phrygians***

1. Against the so-called Phrygian heresy, the power which always contends for the truth raised up a strong and invincible weapon, Apolinarius of Hierapolis, whom we have mentioned before, and with him many other men of ability, by whom abundant material for our history has been left. 2. A certain one of these, in the beginning of his work against them, first intimates that he had contended with them in oral controversies. 3. He commences his work in this manner:

"Having for a very long and sufficient time, O beloved Avircius Marcellus, been urged by you to write a treatise against the heresy of those who are called after Miltiades, I have hesitated till the present time, not through lack of ability to refute the falsehood or bear testimony for the truth, but from fear and apprehension that I might seem to some to be making additions to the doctrines or precepts of the Gospel of the New Testament, which it is impossible for one who has chosen to live according to the Gospel, either to increase or to diminish. 4. But being recently in Ancyra in Galatia, I found the church there greatly agitated by this novelty, not prophecy, as they call it, but rather false prophecy, as will be shown. Therefore, to the best of our ability, with the Lord's help, we disputed in the church many days concerning these and other matters separately brought forward by them, so that the church rejoiced and was strengthened in the truth, and those of the opposite side were for the time confounded, and the adversaries were grieved. 5. The presbyters in the place, our fellow-presbyter Zoticus of Otrous also being present, requested us to leave a record of what had been said against the opposers of the truth. We did not do this, but we promised to write it out as soon as the Lord permitted us, and to send it to them speedily."

6. Having said this with other things, in the beginning of his work, he proceeds to state the cause of the above-mentioned heresy as follows:

"Their opposition and their recent heresy which has separated them from the Church arose on the following account. 7. There is said to be a certain village called Ardabau in that part of Mysia, which borders upon Phrygia. There first, they say, when Gratus was proconsul of Asia, a recent convert, Montanus by name, through his unquenchable desire for leadership, gave the adversary opportunity against him. And he became beside himself, and being suddenly in a sort of frenzy and ecstasy, he raved, and began to babble and utter strange things, prophesying in a manner contrary to the constant custom of the Church handed down by tradition from the beginning. 8. Some of those who heard his spurious utterances at that time were indignant, and they rebuked him as one that was possessed, and that was under the

control of a demon, and was led by a deceitful spirit, and was distracting the multitude; and they forbade him to talk, remembering the distinction drawn by the Lord and his warning to guard watchfully against the coming of false prophets. But others imagining themselves possessed of the Holy Spirit and of a prophetic gift, were elated and not a little puffed up; and forgetting the distinction of the Lord, they challenged the mad and insidious and seducing spirit, and were cheated and deceived by him. In consequence of this, he could no longer be held in check, so as to keep silence. 9. Thus by artifice, or rather by such a system of wicked craft, the devil, devising destruction for the disobedient, and being unworthily honored by them, secretly excited and inflamed their understandings which had already become estranged from the true faith."

"And he stirred up besides two women, and filled them with the false spirit, so that they talked wildly and unreasonably and strangely, like the person already mentioned. And the spirit pronounced them blessed as they rejoiced and gloried in him, and puffed them up by the magnitude of his promises. But sometimes he rebuked them openly in a wise and faithful manner, that he might seem to be a reprover. But those of the Phrygians that were deceived were few in number."

"And the arrogant spirit taught them to revile the entire universal Church under heaven, because the spirit of false prophecy received neither honor from it nor entrance into it. 10. For the faithful in Asia met often in many places throughout Asia to consider this matter, and examined the novel utterances and pronounced them profane, and rejected the heresy, and thus these persons were expelled from the Church and debarred from communion."

11. Having related these things at the outset, and continued the refutation of their delusion through his entire work, in the second book he speaks as follows of their end:

12. "Since, therefore, they called us slayers of the prophets because we did not receive their loquacious prophets, who, they say, are those that the Lord promised to send to the people, let them answer as in God's presence: Who is there, O friends, of these who began to talk, from Montanus and the women down, that was persecuted by the Jews, or slain by lawless men? None. Or has any of them been seized and crucified for the Name? Truly not. Or has one of these women ever been scourged in the synagogues of the Jews, or stoned? No; never anywhere. 13. But by another kind of death Montanus and Maximilla are said to have died. For the report is that, incited by the spirit of frenzy, they both hung themselves; not at the same time, but at the time which common report gives for the death of each. And thus they died, and ended their lives like the traitor Judas. 14. So also, as general report says, that remarkable person, the first steward, as it were, of their so-called prophecy, one Theodotus who, as if at sometime taken up and received into heaven, fell into trances, and entrusted himself to the deceitful spirit was pitched like a quoit [a ring in a ring-toss game], and died miserably. 15. They say that these things happened in this manner. But as we did not see them, O friend, we do not pretend to know. Perhaps in such a manner, perhaps not, Montanus and Theodotus and the

above-mentioned woman died."

16. He says again in the same book that the holy bishops of that time attempted to refute the spirit in Maximilla, but were prevented by others who plainly co-operated with the spirit. 17. He writes as follows:

"And let not the spirit, in the same work of Asterius Urbanus, say through Maximilla, 'I am driven away from the sheep like a wolf. I am not a wolf. I am word and spirit and power.' But let him show clearly and prove the power in the spirit. And by the spirit let him compel those to confess him who were then present for the purpose of proving and reasoning with the talkative spirit, those eminent men and bishops, Zoticus, from the village Comana, and Julian, from Apamea, whose mouths the followers of Themiso muzzled, refusing to permit the false and seductive spirit to be refuted by them."

18. Again in the same work, after saying other things in refutation of the false prophecies of Maximilla, he indicates the time when he wrote these accounts, and mentions her predictions in which she prophesied wars and anarchy. Their falsehood he censures in the following manner:

19. "And has not this been shown clearly to be false? For it is to-day more than thirteen years since the woman died, and there has been neither a partial nor general war in the world; but rather, through the mercy of God, continued peace even to the Christians."

These things are taken from the second book. 20. I will add also short extracts from the third book, in which he speaks thus against their boasts that many of them had suffered martyrdom:

"When therefore they are at a loss, being refuted in all that they say, they try to take refuge in their martyrs, alleging that they have many martyrs, and that this is sure evidence of the power of the so-called prophetic spirit that is with them. But this, as it appears, is entirely fallacious. 21. For some of the heresies have a great many martyrs; but surely we shall not on that account agree with them or confess that they hold the truth. And first, indeed, those called Marcionites, from the heresy of Marcion, say that they have a multitude of martyrs for Christ; yet they do not confess Christ himself in truth."

A little farther on he continues:

22. "When those called to martyrdom from the Church for the truth of the faith have met with any of the so-called martyrs of the Phrygian heresy, they have separated from them, and died without any fellowship with them, because they did not wish to give their assent to the spirit of Montanus and the women. And that this is true and took place in our own time in Apamea on the Maeander, among those who suffered martyrdom with Gaius and Alexander of Eumenia, is well known."

## Chapter 17

1. In this work he mentions a writer, Miltiades, [1603] stating that he also wrote a certain book

against the above-mentioned heresy. After quoting some of their words, he adds:

"Having found these things in a certain work of theirs in opposition to the work of the brother Alcibiades, in which he shows that a prophet ought not to speak in ecstasy, I made an abridgment."

2. A little further on in the same work he gives a list of those who prophesied under the new covenant, among whom he enumerates a certain Ammia and Quadratus, saying:

"But the false prophet falls into an ecstasy, in which he is without shame or fear. Beginning with purposed ignorance, he passes on, as has been stated, to involuntary madness of soul. 3. They cannot show that one of the old or one of the new prophets was thus carried away in spirit. Neither can they boast of Agabus, or Judas, or Silas, or the daughters of Philip, or Ammia in Philadelphia, or Quadratus, or any others not belonging to them."

4. And again after a little he says:

"For if after Quadratus and Ammia in Philadelphia, as they assert, the women with Montanus received the prophetic gift, let them show who among them received it from Montanus and the women. For the apostle thought it necessary that the prophetic gift should continue in all the Church until the final coming. But they cannot show it, though this is the fourteenth year since the death of Maximilla."

5. He writes thus. But the Miltiades to whom he refers has left other monuments of his own zeal for the Divine Scriptures, in the discourses which he composed against the Greeks and against the Jews, answering each of them separately in two books. And in addition he addresses an apology to the earthly rulers, in behalf of the philosophy which he embraced.

## Chapter 18

### *Apollonius on the Heresy of the Phrygians*

1. As the so-called Phrygian heresy was still flourishing in Phrygia in his time, Apollonius also, an ecclesiastical writer, undertook its refutation, and wrote a special work against it, correcting in detail the false prophecies current among them and reproving the life of the founders of the heresy. But hear his own words respecting Montanus:

2. "His actions and his teaching show who this new teacher is. This is he who taught the dissolution of marriage; who made laws for fasting; who named Pepuza and Tymion, small towns in Phrygia, Jerusalem, wishing to gather people to them from all directions; who appointed collectors of money; who contrived the receiving of gifts under the name of offerings; who provided salaries for those who preached his doctrine, that its teaching might prevail through gluttony."

3. He writes thus concerning Montanus; and a little farther on he writes as follows concerning his prophetesses:

"We show that these first prophetesses themselves, as soon as they were filled with the Spirit, abandoned their husbands. How falsely therefore they speak who call

Prisca a virgin."

4. Afterwards he says:

"Does not all Scripture seem to you to forbid a prophet to receive gifts and money? When therefore I see the prophetess receiving gold and silver and costly garments, how can I avoid reproving her?"

5. And again a little farther on he speaks thus concerning one of their confessors:

"So also Themiso, who was clothed with plausible covetousness, could not endure the sign of confession, but threw aside bonds for an abundance of possessions. Yet, though he should have been humble on this account, he dared to boast as a martyr, and in imitation of the apostle, he wrote a certain catholic epistle, to instruct those whose faith was better than his own, contending for words of empty sound, and blaspheming against the Lord and the apostles and the holy Church."

6. And again concerning others of those honored among them as martyrs, he writes as follows:

"Not to speak of many, let the prophetess herself tell us of Alexander, who called himself a martyr, with whom she is in the habit of banqueting, and who is worshiped by many. We need not mention his robberies and other daring deeds for which he was punished, but the archives contain them. 7. Which of these forgives the sins of the other? Does the prophet the robberies of the martyr, or the martyr the covetousness of the prophet? For although the Lord said, 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, neither two coats,' these men, in complete opposition, transgress in respect to the possession of the forbidden things. For we will show that those whom they call prophets and martyrs gather their gain not only from rich men, but also from the poor, and orphans, and widows. 8. But if they are confident, let them stand up and discuss these matters, that if convicted they may hereafter cease transgressing. For the fruits of the prophet must be tried; 'for the tree is known by its fruit.' 9. But that those who wish may know concerning Alexander, he was tried by Aemilius Frontinus, proconsul at Ephesus; not on account of the Name, but for the robberies which he had committed, being already an apostate. Afterwards, having falsely declared for the name of the Lord, he was released, having deceived the faithful that were there. And his own parish, from which he came, did not receive him, because he was a robber. Those who wish to learn about him have the public records of Asia. And yet the prophet with whom he spent many years knows nothing about him! 10. Exposing him, through him we expose also the pretense [1641] of the prophet. We could show the same thing of many others. But if they are confident, let them endure the test."

11. Again, in another part of his work he speaks as follows of the prophets of whom they boast:

"If they deny that their prophets have received gifts, let them acknowledge this: that if they are convicted of receiving them, they are not prophets. And we will bring a multitude of proofs of this. But it is necessary that all the fruits of a prophet should be examined. Tell me, does a prophet dye his hair? Does a prophet stain his

eyelids? Does a prophet delight in adornment? Does a prophet play with tables and dice? Does a prophet lend on usury? Let them confess whether these things are lawful or not; but I will show that they have been done by them."

12. This same Apollonius states in the same work that, at the time of his writing, it was the fortieth year since Montanus had begun his pretended prophecy. 13. And he says also that Zoticus, who was mentioned by the former writer, when Maximilla was pretending to prophesy in Pepuza, resisted her and endeavored to refute the spirit that was working in her; but was prevented by those who agreed with her. He mentions also a certain Thraseas among the martyrs of that time. He speaks, moreover, of a tradition that the Saviour commanded his apostles not to depart from Jerusalem for twelve years. He uses testimonies also from the Revelation of John, and he relates that a dead man had, through the Divine power, been raised by John himself in Ephesus. He also adds other things by which he fully and abundantly exposes the error of the heresy of which we have been speaking. These are the matters recorded by Apollonius.

## Chapter 19

### *Serapion on the Heresy of the Phrygians*

1. Serapion, who, as report says, succeeded Maximinus at that time as bishop of the church of Antioch, mentions the works of Apolinarius against the above-mentioned heresy. And he alludes to him in a private letter to Caricus and Pontius, in which he himself exposes the same heresy, and adds the following words:

2. "That you may see that the doings of this lying band of the new prophecy, so called, are an abomination to all the brotherhood throughout the world, I have sent you writings of the most blessed Claudius Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia."

3. In the same letter of Serapion the signatures of several bishops are found, one of whom subscribes himself as follows:

"I, Aurelius Cyrenius, a witness, pray for your health."

And another in this manner:

"Aelius Publius Julius, bishop of Debeltum, a colony of Thrace. As God liveth in the heavens, the blessed Sotas in Anchialus desired to cast the demon out of Priscilla, but the hypocrites did not permit him."

4. And the autograph signatures of many other bishops who agreed with them are contained in the same letter. So much for these persons.