



Summary :

Baanes was born in Armenia in the mid-8th century. His father was of Jewish descent and had been proselytized into the Paulician community, and his mother was Armenian, a disciple of the Paulician Joseph-Epaphroditos. He studied under Joseph-Epaphroditos and succeeded him as a teacher of the Paulicians, clashing with another teacher, Sergios-Tychikos. He died between 800/801 and 834/5.

Other Names

The Filthy

Date and Place of Birth

c. mid-8th c., Armenia

Date and Place of Death

between 800/801-834/5, possibly at Kynochorion, close to Neocaesarea

Main Role

Teacher of the Paulicians

1. Birth - Family - Education

Baanes was born around in the mid-8th century in [Armenia](#). He was the offspring of an illegitimate affair between a [Jewish](#) - as it was claimed - disciple of Joseph-Epaphroditos, fifth teacher of the [Paulicians](#), and an [Armenian](#) disciple of his. His mother probably cared for him during his childhood, for he received an Armenian name (Vahan), and in contemporary and later historical sources he is mentioned as an Armenian. He studied under Joseph-Epaphroditos, receiving the dogmas of the faith both his parents believed in. His teaching took place before 778, the year of Joseph's death. Besides the above-mentioned, nothing else is known on Baanes upbringing and education.

2. Activity

Shortly after Joseph-Epaphroditos' death in 778,¹ Baanes succeeded him as the sixth teacher of the Paulicians. We do not precisely know the place the community of his disciples resided; possibly it was Kynochorion or Koinochorion (ancient Kainochorion, modern Mahala Kalesi), a town in the [Pontus](#), close to [Neocaesarea](#) (modern Niksar). Baanes taught for several years; his activity was probably coextensive with the entire reign of Empress [Irene the Athenian](#).

In 800/801 a new teacher of the Paulicians made his appearance, [Sergios](#); he was of Byzantine descent and had received the apostolic name Tychikos. His activity brought him in contact with Baanes, with whom he clashed due to differences over dogmatic issues. Furthermore, Baanes had been accused by his adversaries of leading a debauched life and succumbing to promiscuity; he was in fact given the sobriquet "the Filthy" for this reason.²

Baanes accused Sergios-Tychikos as an upstart who had joined the community belatedly and was not inculcated into the dogmas by any recognized teacher, whereas himself had been taught by Joseph-Epaphroditos and was considered his successor. Sergios, on the other hand, argued that he too had earned the right to teach among the Paulicians because of the many travels he made throughout [Asia Minor](#) in order to spread the faith, and also publicly accused Baanes of debauchery. As a result a schism developed in the Paulician community: some sided with Baanes, while others -the majority- sided with Sergios Tychikos. The responsibility for the schism was mainly attributed to Sergios, even by his own students, which suggests that Baanes remained in the consciousness of the Paulicians as an established teacher. The clash between these two groups was bound to greatly intensify after the death of the two teachers.



3. Death

Baanes died before Sergios and quite a few years after the latter had made his appearance as a teacher. Consequently, his death should be dated between 800/1 and 834/5 (the year of Sergios-Tychikos' death), perhaps in Kynochorion. His followers, known as "Baaniotes" or "Baanites", remained in this region until Sergios-Tychikos' death. A series of murders they committed caused a large wave of persecution against them by Sergios' followers. The bloodshed finally came to an end after the intervention of one of Sergios' disciples and successors, who averted the further extermination of the Baanites.

4. Assessment

Baanes was one of the very few teachers of the Paulicians to be intensely criticized by the members of his own community, mainly by the disciples of his opponent, Sergios-Tychikos. These accusations pertained to his demeanour in his private life, charges which probably gave rise to his sobriquet 'the Filthy'. We may suppose, however, that a part of the Paulician community (the minority) continued to support him, for his disciples remained united even after his death. Furthermore, contrary to Zacharias, the other controversial teacher of the Paulicians, not one of the Paulicians ever doubted the legitimacy of Baanes' succession or his status as the teacher of the community; under questioning they refused to anathematize him, exactly as they had done for their other teachers. Byzantine historians did little more than reiterate the accusation of Baanes' opponents concerning his supposedly immoral comportment and debauched life.

Modern scholars repeat these charges against Baanes with some reservation, but attribute his clash with Sergios-Tychikos to other reasons. They believe that the root cause of this conflict was Baanes' conservatism; he had been nurtured in the traditional teachings of his predecessors and reacted against the ground-breaking nature of Sergios' reforms, refusing progress and remaining true to the community's old dogmas. Some even argue that this clash partly was due to 'ethnic' differences between the two opponents, the conservative and uneducated Armenian and the cultured and dynamic Greek-speaking Byzantine.

1. Garsoïan, N., *The Paulician Heresy* (The Hague-Paris 1967), p. 121, n. 34, dates Joseph-Eraphroditos' death and his succession by Baanes' to 783.
2. Lemerle, P., "L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques", *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), p. 69, n. 51, assumes that the sobriquet "the Filthy" may in fact be associated with the *mzlnethin*, an Armenian sect of the 5th century.

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	Χριστοφιλοπούλου Α. , <i>Βυζαντινή Ιστορία 2:1</i> , Θεσσαλονίκη 1993
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	Runciman S. , <i>The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy</i> , Cambridge 1947



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	Πέτρος Ηγούμενος , <i>Περί Παυλικιανών των και Μανιχαίων</i> , <i>Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure</i> , Astruc, C. et al. (eds), <i>Travaux et Mémoires 4</i> , Paris 1970
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Patriarch Photios, *Διήγησις της νεοφανούς των Μανιχαίων αναβλαστήσεως*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires 4* (1970), pp. 153.16-26, 163.31-167.10.

Quotations

Baanes succeeds Joseph, according to the description of Peter Sikeliotes:

Τούτου ἔτι ὑπάρχοντος, μαθήτρια τούτου εἰς Ἀρμενίαν γυνή τις, ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ μαθητῶν μοιχευθεῖσα, ἔσχεν υἷόν, ὡς φασιν, ἐξ Ἑβραίων, τὸν ἐπὶ κακία περιβόητον ὄντα Βαάνην. Οὗτος οὖν ὁ Βαάνης διαδέχεται τὸν Ἀφρόνητον· καὶ τὴν αἵρεσιν σώων, ἣν παρείληφεν παρὰ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ, τὴν πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας πλήρης, κατέχων, καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν ἀφρόνων εἰς τελείαν ἀπώλειαν ἄγων, γίνεται καὶ αὐτὸς τῆς κακίας διδάσκαλος.

Peter Sikeliotes, *Ιστορία*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires 4* (1970), p. 51.22-27.

Description of the conflict between Baanes and Sergios from Peter Sikeliotes:



Ἦνίκα δὲ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν οὗτος ὁ Σέργιος, θέλων ἐπισυνάξει πολλοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ ἀποσπάσαι τῆς ἐκκλησίας Χριστοῦ οὐκ ὀλίγους ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ πορεύεσθαι, δισσωῶς καὶ τρισσωῶς ἀντέστη κατὰ πρόσωπον Βαάνη τῷ ὄνταρῳ συμμαθητῇ καὶ συμμύστῃ αὐτοῦ· καὶ εὐλάβειαν ὑποκρινόμενος ἤρξατο ἐλέγχειν αὐτὸν εἰς ὑπήκοον πάντων, οὐ διὰ πίστιν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀτοπίαν τῶν ἀθεμίτων αὐτοῦ πράξεων. Ὁ δὲ Βαάνης φησὶ πρὸς αὐτόν· «Σὺ νεωστὶ κατεφάνης καὶ οὐδένα τῶν διδασκάλων ἡμῶν ἐόρακας ἢ συμπαρέμεινας, ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ κυροῦ Ἐπαφροδίτου μαθητῆς ὑπάρχω καί, καθὼς παρέδωκέν μοι ἀπαρχῆς, οὕτως καὶ διδάσκω». Ὁ δὲ Σέργιος διὰ τὸν δυσώδη βόρβορον, ὃν ἐδίδασκεν, βδελυξάμενος καὶ εἰς πρόσωπον καταισχύνας αὐτόν, ἔσχισε τὴν αἵρεσιν εἰς δύο· τοὺς δὲ συμπαραμείναντας αὐτῷ ἐκάλεσε Βανιώτας, κάκεϊνος Σεργιώτας τοὺς μαθητὰς ὠνόμασε Σεργίου. Μετὰ δὲ τὸν θάνατον Σεργίου, μὴ φέροντες οἱ αὐτοῦ μαθηταὶ ἑαυτῶν τὴν αἰσχύνην καὶ τὸν ὄνειδισμὸν ὃν παρὰ πάντων ὠνειδίζοντο, ἤρξαντο ἀποκτενεῖν τοὺς Βανιώτας, ὅπως ἐξαλείψωσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν τὸν ὄνειδισμὸν αὐτῶν. Εἰς δὲ τις Θεόδοτος ὀνόματι, ὁ συνέκδημος Σεργίου, λέγει. «Μηδὲν ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις· πάντες γὰρ μέχρις ἀναδείξεως τοῦ διδασκάλου ἡμῶν μίαν πίστιν εἶχομεν». Καὶ οὕτως τοῦ φονεῦν ἐπαύσαντο.

Peter Sikeliotes, *Ιστορία*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), pp. 63.28-65.12.

Reference to Baanes and his position as teacher of the Paulicians:

ἔκτον τὸν Βαάνην τὸν ὄνταρὸν...

Peter Hegoumenos, *Περὶ Παυλικιάνων τῶν καὶ Μανιχαίων*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), p. 82.5-6.

A Byzantine text of the later 9th century includes Baanes among the teachers of the Paulicians:

Μάνεντα τοίνυν καὶ Παῦλον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἄλλους οὓς ἔάν τις εἴπῃ αὐτοῖς, προθύμως ἀναθεματίζουσιν. Κωνσταντῖνον δὲ τὸν Σιλουανὸν ἐπικληθέντα, καὶ Συμεὼν τὸν καὶ Τίτον, καὶ Γεγνέσιον τὸν καὶ Τιμόθεον, καὶ Ἰωσήφ τὸν καὶ Ἐπαφρόδιτον, καὶ Βαάνην τὸν ὄνταρὸν, καὶ Σέργιον τὸν καὶ Τυχικόν, ὡς διδασκάλους αὐτῶν οὐδαμῶς ἀναθεματίζουσιν, ἀλλ' ἔχουσιν αὐτοὺς ὡσπερ ἀποστόλους Χριστοῦ.

Peter Hegoumenos, *Περὶ Παυλικιάνων τῶν καὶ Μανιχαίων*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), p. 83.1-5.

Patriarch Photios refers to Baanes' descent and upbringing:

Ἔτι δὲ τοῦ τρισαλιτηρίου τῷ βίῳ παρόντος καὶ ἀκμάζοντος τὴν ἀσέβειαν, μία τις τῶν συνήθων αὐτῷ ἀνδρὶ διὰ γάμου ἠρμωσμένη ἐξυβρίζει μὲν τὴν ἀνύβριστον κοίτην, ἐκδοτος δὲ γίνεται μοιχεία. Τὸν δὲ διορύξαντα τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους γάμους ἓνα μὲν εἶναι τῶν μαθητῶν, φασὶ τοῦ πλάνου, ἐξ Ἐβραίων δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἄθεον θρησκείαν μεταβληθῆναι. Πλὴν ἐκ τοιαύτης ἀδίκου τε καὶ ἐβδελυγμένης μίξεως τίκεται τῇ μοιχαλίδι τὸ ἐπ' αἰσχρότητι καὶ βδελυγία περιβόητον ἄγος, ὁ ὄνταρὸς καὶ ἀκάθαρτος Βαάνης. Οὗτος οὖν τὴν κορυφὴν τῶν κακῶν ὁ χειρίστος διαδέχεται, τὸν εἰρημένον Ἐπαφρόδιτον ὁ Βαάνης, ὃς πάντα μὲν τὰ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ, οἷς συνεκροτεῖτο ἡ ἀσέβεια, στέργων, ἀκαθαρσία δὲ βίου καὶ σωμάτων μίξεσιν ἀργήτοις καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀθεμιτοῦργίαις τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν φιλονεικῶν ἀποκρῦψασθαι, διετέλει διδάσκων τοὺς πειθομένους τὴν ὀλέθριον μάθησιν.

Patriarch Photios, *Διήγησις τῆς νεοφανοῦς τῶν Μανιχαίων ἀναβλαστήσεως*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), p. 153.16-26.

The conflict between the disciples of Baanes and Sergios as described by Patriarch Photios:



Ἦνίκα δὲ Σέργιος τοῦ διδασκαλικοῦ τῆς ἀποστασίας ἐπέβη θρόνου, θέλων πολλοὺς ἀποπλανῆσαι τῆς καθολικῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίας, σχίζεται μὲν περιφανῶς, μέχρι τότε καιροῦ συναγελαζομένων ἀλλήλοις, τοῦ ὄνταρου Βαάνου, ἀναδέχεται δὲ κατενώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν καὶ τὴν κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ φιλονεικίαν καὶ μάχην, καὶ ἡ στάσις αὐτοῦ δραματοποιεῖται δημοσίῳ θεάτρῳ, δι' ἧς ἐτέχναζεν δελεάζειν καὶ τῆς οἰκείας πλάνης ἔλκειν ὀπίσω ἄλλους τε ὅσους ἠδύνατο καὶ οἵτινες ἠταίριζοντο τὸν Βαάνην. Ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ σκηνη ἀρετῶν προβεβλημένη μέγα δέλεαρ τῶν προσιόντων, καὶ ταπεινὸν ἦθος, καὶ δεξιώσεως κατεσηματισμένος τρόπος, καὶ ἡμερότης οὐ τοὺς οἰκείους ὑποσαίνουσα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τραχύτερον διακειμένους ὑπολαίνουσά τε καὶ συλαγωγούσα. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τὸ μὲν ὄνταρον τῶν μιαιῶν πράξεων τοῦ ἀντιστασιώτου Βαάνου σπηλιτεύειν τε καὶ ἀποπέμπεσθαι, μάλιστα γὰρ κατὰ τὸ ἐμφανές, μελέτην εἶχεν, πρὸς δὲ τὰ δυσσεβῆ τῶν δογμάτων κατ' οὐδὲν ἀντιπίπτων οὐδὲ διαφερόμενος ὤφθη. Ὁ μὲν οὖν Βαάνης ἀσυνήγορον ἔχων τὴν τῶν ἐκθέσεων ἔργων ἐπίδειξιν, ἐπὶ τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ μόνον κατέφευγεν καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν προσώπων ποιότητος, ὡς ἐνόμιζεν, τὸ κίβδηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεστηγμένον τοῦ φρονήματος συνεκρότει τε καὶ ἀπεσέμνυνεν, μαθητὴν ἑαυτὸν τοῦ Ἐπαφροδίτου εἶναι μεγαλαυχῶν, καὶ τὴν ἐκείνου τιμῶντα παράδοσιν πρὸς τὰς ἀποτροπαιούς τῶν πράξεων καὶ βδελυράς οὐδένα δισταγμὸν ἢ ἐρύθημα φέρειν, ὡς οὐ χρή πράττεσθαι. Νεοφανῆ δὲ τὸν Σέργιον ἐλοιδορεῖτο καὶ μηδένα τῶν ἐπισήμων διδασκάλων μῆτε ἰδεῖν μῆτε ἀκροατὴν χρηματίσαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μηδὲν ἐκείθεν σπάσαντα φωτὸς ἐν πλάνῃ καὶ ἀπάτῃ διαπορεύεσθαι. Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐξάριστος Βαάνης τούτοις τε τὸν ὁμοτέχνην καὶ ἀντιστασιώτην ἔβαλεν καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἐμεγάλυνεν, τὸ δὲ ποικίλον θηρίον ὁ Σέργιος, τῷ μὴ βεβυθίσθαι περιφανῶς οὕτως τῶν πράξεων τῷ βορβόρῳ, μὴδ' οὕτως ἀπόζειν ὥσπερ ὁ Βαάνης τὴν ἀκαθαρσίαν, ἀλλὰ πολλοῖς ταύτην καὶ ὀρημάτων καὶ φασμάτων παρακαλύμμασι περιστέλλειν, ἔλαβεν ἰσχὺν εἰς δύο τὴν ἀποστασίαν σχίσαι καὶ τοὺς μὲν ὅσοι τῆς μερίδος ὤφθησαν τοῦ Βαάνου αὐτὸς διαπτύων Βανίτας ἐκάλει, ἐκεῖνος δ' ἀμειβόμενος τὴν ὕβριν ἀποτροπαιούς τε οὐς ἡ μοῖρα εἶχεν τοῦ Σεργίου ἐποιεῖτο καὶ Σεργιώτας ὠνόμαζεν ὁμοίως. Καὶ ἦν μὲν αὐτοῖς ἡ ἔρις καὶ ἡ στάσις καθ' ἡμέραν αὐξομένη τε καὶ κραταιομένη καὶ τὰς μιαιῶν μερίδας εἰς ἄσπονδον ἔχθραν καθιστῶσα. Χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον θανάτῳ τὸν βίον καταστρέψαντος Σεργίου, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον οἱ τούτου μαθηταὶ εἰς τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Βανίτας ἀνεργάγησαν μάχην, ὡς οὐκέτι λόγοις καὶ λοιδορίαις, ἀλλὰ καὶ χερσὶν καὶ ξίφεσιν κρίνεσθαι τὴν ἔριν καὶ πολὺν φόνον τῶν Βανιτῶν ῥύηται. Ἐπεκράτει γὰρ ἡ μερίς Σεργίου τῷ τε πλήθει καὶ ὅτι τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὀπλιτικῆς δυνάμεως ὁ ἄρχων τῆ δόξη προσαπέκλινεν Σεργίου, καὶ ἂν εἰς τέλος, ὥσπερ ἦν ἄξιον, οἱ Βανίται ὑπὸ τῶν ὁμοδόξων καὶ ὁμοφύλων χειρῶν ὠλοθρεύθησαν, εἰ μὴ τις Θεόδοτος ὄνομα, δυσσεβῆς εἰ καὶ τις ἄλλος τὴν θρησκείαν, συνέκδημος Σεργίου λεγόμενος, τὸν φόνον ὀξέως ῥέοντα ἀνέσχευε τε καὶ ἀνέκοψεν ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖς αἰμυλίοις λόγοις καὶ τὸ κοινῇ συνοῖσον εἰσηγούμενος, φάμενός τε καὶ διατεινόμενος καὶ πολλοῖς κατασκευάζων ἔργοις καὶ λόγοις τὸ προτεινόμενον ὡς ἑκατέρω μερίδι τῆς αὐτῆς εἰσὶν βλαστήματα σποράς καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἔθεσι συνηυξήθησαν, καὶ κοινῇ τὴν δίκαιαν εἶχον καὶ ὁμονοία περιετειχίζοντο οὐδὲν μέγα περὶ τῶν ἀμφιβαλλομένων στασιάζοντες, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκράτει χρόνοις πολλοῖς μέχρι τῆς τοῦ διδασκάλου Σεργίου ἀναδείξεως, καὶ ὡς οὐ χρή οὐ μὲν οὖν τὴν ἐν τοσοῦτοις χρόνοις σύμπνοιάν τε καὶ συνάφειαν εἰς αἵματα καὶ σφαγὰς διαλύσαι, οὐδὲ τοὺς εἰς αὐτὰ τὰ καιρία καὶ νῦν συνημμένους τε καὶ ὁμοφρονούντας διὰ τινος προσφάτως ἀναρριπισθείσας διαφορὰς ὡς ἑτεροπίστους παντελῶς καὶ ἀθέους εἰς τὸν διὰ ξίφους ὄλεθρον ἀφειδῶς παραπέμπειν. Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τοιούτοις τισὶ ὀρημασι τὸν κατ' ἀλλήλων ὡς εἶθε μὴ ὠφελεν οὐ γὰρ ἂν ὁ ψυχόλεθρος πλείους ἐπενεμήθη ψυχὰς- ἔστησε φόνον.

Patriarch Photios, *Διήγησις τῆς νεοφανοῦς τῶν Μανιχαίων ἀναβλαστήσεως*, ed. Ch. Astruc et al., "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *Travaux et Mémoires* 4 (1970), pp. 163.31-167.10.

Chronological Table

mid-8th c.: Baanes is born in Armenia.

before 778: Baanes studies under Joseph-Epaphroditos.

soon after 778: Baanes becomes the sixth teacher of the Paulicians.

between 800/801 and 834/5: Baanes passes away, probably in Kynochorion