

- Ταῦτα μὲν ἡ στρατήγισσα χαίρουσα ἐμελώδει.
 Ὁ δ' ἀμιρᾶς καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τῆς κόρης
 χαίροντες ἄμφω τῆς ὁδοῦ ἤρχοντο μετὰ μόχθου·
 ἠνίκα δ' ἐπλησίασαν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον,
 30 λαὸς πολὺς καὶ συγγενεῖς εἰς ἀπαντὴν ἐξῆλθον,
 εἶθ' οὕτως ἡ στρατήγισσα μετὰ δόξης μεγάλης.
 Τὴν δὲ χαρὰν τὴν ἄπειρον τὴν τότε γιναμένην
 τίς φράσαι ὄλως δυνηθῆ ἢ ὄλως παρεικάσαι;
 Τὰ τέκνα γὰρ ἠσπάζοντο μητέρα μετὰ πόθου
 35 καὶ ἡ μήτηρ εὐφραίνεται ἄληθῶς ἐπὶ τέκνοις·
 ἰδοῦσα δὲ καὶ τὸν γαμβρὸν περικαλλῆ τῷ ὄντι
 χάριν Θεῷ ἀνέπεμψεν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας,
 «Κύριε,» λέγουσα, «Χριστέ, πᾶς ὁ εἰς σὲ ἐλπίζων
 οὐκ ἀπέτυχε πώποτε τῶν ἐπιθυμουμένων.»
 40 Εἰς δὲ τὸν οἶκον φθάσαντες ἐποίησαν τοὺς γάμους
 καὶ τῷ θεῷ βαπτίσματι τὸν γαμβρὸν τελειοῦσι. 8v
 Ἡ δὲ χαρὰ ἐπηύξανε ἡ πάνδημος ἐκείνη·
 ἔχαιρε γὰρ ὁ ἀμιρᾶς τυχῶν τῆς ἐρωμένης·
 οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐρωτικῆς ἀγάπης χαρὰ κρείττων
 45 (ὅσον φλέγεται ὁ ἐρῶν ἐπὶ ἀποτυχία
 τοσοῦτον χαίρει ὁ ἐρῶν τυχῶν τῆς ἐρωμένης).
 Μετὰ δὲ τὴν συνάφειαν συνέλαβεν ἡ κόρη
 καὶ ἔτεκε τὸν Διγενῆ Βασίλειον Ἀκρίτην·
 ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἠύξανε τοῦ ἀμιρᾶ ὁ πόθος.
 50 Ἡ δὲ μήτηρ τοῦ ἀμιρᾶ γραφὴν ἀπὸ Συρίας
 θρήνου μεστήν ἐξέπεμψεν, ὄνειδισμοῦ καὶ ψόγου:
 53 «᾿ὦ τέκνον ποθινότατον, πῶς μητρὸς ἐπελάθου,

E219

E226

E227

E228

This is what the general's lady sang as she rejoiced.

- The emir and with him the girl's brothers,
 all rejoicing, set off on their way wearily.
 When they came near their own house
 30 a great retinue and their kinsmen came out to greet them,
 then so did the general's lady with great magnificence.
 The boundless joy that arose then,
 who can describe it completely or picture it completely?
 For the children embraced their mother with fervour,
 35 and the mother rejoiced truly in her children;
 and seeing that her son-in-law was exceedingly handsome,
 she gave thanks to God with all her heart,
 saying, "Lord Christ, no one whose hope is in you
 has ever failed to achieve what they desire."
 40 When they reached the house, they celebrated the wedding
 and administered holy baptism to the son-in-law.
 The universal joy grew and grew,
 for the emir rejoiced since he had won his beloved;
 for there is no joy greater than passionate love
 45 (and the more the lover is enflamed by lack of success,
 the more he rejoices when he wins his beloved).
 After the union the girl conceived
 and bore Basil Digenis Akritis, the Frontiersman of Double Descent,
 and the emir's desire increased yet more.
 50 But the emir's mother sent a letter from Syria,
 full of lamentation, reproach and blame:
 53 "Most beloved child, how could you have forgotten your mother,

26 The words of the general's lady just given contain more doubts than rejoicing, and hardly seem appropriate for song. Is this a clue to some stage in the performance history of the poem, or does it perhaps result from awkwardly juxtaposed material from oral sources?

30 The retinue and the throng of supporting kinsmen are elements in an aristocratic house necessary to maintain prestige; cf. Magdalino, 1989, 195.

40, 42 These verses are repeated in subsequent marriages in the poem (G3.25, 3.334, 4.932). The general's wife makes the arrangements since the general remains absent, presumably still in exile or on campaign (cf. G1.63, 1.270 above). This could be derived from a surviving oral story, or an indication that mixed-race marriage is easier to imagine in the absence of senior males from the previous generation. The emir's father too is dead.

48 As at E219, the poem's hero is introduced with all his mature heroic names, without explanation and with an apparent assumption that they are familiar to the audience. Since it is not clear whether 'Digenis Akritis' is a name or a title it has been translated here (and elsewhere).

28 ἄμφω G: ἀμα Legrand, cf. Z560

36 περικαλλῆ Legrand: περιχαρῆ G περιχαρῆς Mavrogordato

44 οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν Legrand: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν G

53, 52 reversed by Trapp, cf. Z596–8

- 52 τὰ ὀμμάτια μου ἐτύφλωσας καὶ ἔσβεσας τὸ φῶς μου; E229
 Πῶς ἀπηνήσω συγγενεῖς καὶ πίστιν καὶ πατρίδα
- 55 καὶ ἐγενήθης ὄνειδος εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν Συρίαν; E230
 Βδελυκτοὶ δὲ γεγόναμεν ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου
 ὡς ἀρνηταὶ τῆς πίστεως, ὡς παραβάται νόμου,
 ὡς μὴ τηρήσαντες καλῶς τοὺς λόγους τοῦ Προφήτου.
 Τί συνέβη σοι, τέκνον μου, πῶς αὐτῶν ἐπελάθου;
- 60 Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἐμνημόνευσας τὰς πράξεις τοῦ πατρός σου, E254
 ὄσους Ῥωμαίους ἔσφαξε, πόσους ἔφερε δούλους; E255
 Οὐκ ἐγένετο φυλακὰς στρατηγῶν καὶ τοπάρχων; E256
 Οὐκ ἐκούρσευσε θέματα πολλὰ τῆς Ῥωμανίας
 καὶ αἰχμαλώτους ἔφερον εὐγενικὰς ὠραίας;
- 65 Μὴ ἐπλανήθη ὡσπερ σὺ γενέσθαι παραβάτης;
 Ὅταν γὰρ τὸν ἐκύκλωσαν φουσσάτα τῶν Ῥωμαίων,
 οἱ στρατηγοὶ τὸν ὠμνον ὄρκους φρικωδεστάτους ἔ
 πατρίκιος νὰ τιμηθῆ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως,
 νὰ γένη πρωτοστράτορας, ἂν ρίψη τὸ σπαθὶν του.
- 70 Ἄλλ' ἐκεῖνος προστάγματα φυλάττων τοῦ Προφήτου
 δόξης μὲν κατεφρόνησε, πλοῦτον δὲ οὐ προσέσχε·
 καὶ μεληδὸν τὸν ἔκοψαν καὶ ἀπῆραν τὸ σπαθὶν του.
 Σὺ δὲ ἀνάγκην μὴ εἰδὼς πάντα ὁμοῦ παρεΐδες,
 τὴν πίστιν μὲν, τοὺς συγγενεῖς καὶ τὴν σὴν μητέρα.
- 75 Ὁ ἀδελφός μου, ὁ θεῖός σου, ὁ Μουρσῆς ὁ Καρόης E261
 εἰς Σμύρνην ἐταξίδευσεν εἰς τὸ παραθαλάσσιον,
 τὴν Ἀγκυραν ἐκούρσευσε, τὴν Ἀβυδὸν τὴν πόλιν,
 τὴν Ἀφρικὴν, τὴν Τάρανταν, καὶ τὴν Ἑξακωμίαν
 καὶ ταῦτα τροπώσαμενος ἐστράφη εἰς Συρίαν.
- 80 Σὺ δὲ ὁ δυστυχέστατος ἐποίησας ταξίδιον·
 ὅταν ἤθελες δοξασθῆναι παρ' ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν, E252
 τὰ πάντα προσαπώλεσας δι' ἀγάπην χανζυρίσσης E269
 καὶ κατάρτος γέγονας εἰς πάντα μασγίδιον.

62 τοπάρχων G: τρομάρχων Oikonomidēs, 1979, 384

69 πρωτοστράτορας Legrand: πρωτοστάτωρας G

72 τὸ Legrand: τὸν G

76 εἰς Σμύρνην Legrand: εἰς μύρνην G

78 Ἀφρικὴν G: Τεφρικὴν Karolidis, 1905/6, 227 Τάρανταν Mavrogordato: Τέρενταν

G

- 52 blinded my eyes and extinguished my light?
 How could you renounce your kinsmen and faith and country
- 55 and become a reproach to all Syria?
 We are abominated by all men
 as deniers of the faith, as law-breakers
 and for not having observed well the Prophet's words.
 What has happened to you, my child? How have you forgotten these things?
- 60 How could you not remember your father's deeds,
 how many Romans he slew, how many he carried off as slaves?
 Did he not fill prisons with generals and toparchs?
 Did he not plunder many of the themes in Roman territory
 and carry off beautiful high-born girls as prisoners?
- 65 Was he not pressured, like you, to become a renegade?
 For when the Roman armies encircled him,
 the generals swore him most terrible oaths
 that he would be honoured as a patrikios by the emperor
 and become a protostrator, if he were to throw down his sword.
- 70 But he kept the Prophet's commandments,
 spurned renown and paid no attention to wealth,
 and they hewed him limb from limb and took away his sword.
 But you, not even under compulsion, have abandoned everything at once,
 your faith, your kinsmen and me, your mother.
- 75 My brother, your uncle, Moursis Karoīs,
 made an expedition to Smyrna, to the sea-board;
 he plundered Ankyra, the city of Abydos,
 Aphrike, Taranta and Hexakomia,
 and when he had won these victories he returned to Syria.
- 80 You too, most miserable man, have made a campaign.
 When you were about to be honoured by all Syria,
 you destroyed everything for the love of a pig-eater
 and have become accursed in every mosque.

52–98 Cf. E228–91. Here the emir's mother's letter gives the Arab point of view with an aristocratic dignity equal to the Christian: the emir's betrayal of faith and family is firmly censured.

69 On these titles see the Introduction, pp. xxxviii–xxxix.

75–9 The reference appears to be to the expeditions of the Paulicians Chrysocheir and Karbeas, as listed in, e.g., Genesios 4.35–7 or Theophanes Continuatus 4.16, 5.37–45; see the Introduction, pp. xxxiv–xxxvii.

78 The emir's uncle, like his father and uncle at E258, is envisaged as having made a broad sweep across Asia Minor.

- Εἰ μὴ παρέλθης γὰρ ταχὺ καὶ ἔλθης εἰς Συρίαν,
 85 οἱ ἀμιράδες βούλονται ἐμὲ ν' ἀποταμήσουν, E286
 τὰ τέκνα σου νὰ σφάξωσιν ὡς πατὴρ ἀποστάτου,
 E286
 τὰ τερπνὰ σου κοράσια νὰ παραδώσουν ἄλλοις,
 E287
 ἃ καὶ στενάζουν διὰ σέ, ὑπομονὴν οὐκ ἔχουν.
 ὦ τέκνον μου γλυκύτατον, οἰκτεῖρησον μητέρα·
 90 μὴ καταγάγῃς γῆρας μου εἰς Ἅδου μετὰ λύπης
 καὶ μὴ θελήσῃς τέκνα σου τοῦ σφαγῆναι ἀδίκως,
 μηδὲ παρίδῃς δάκρυα τερπνῶν σου κορασιῶν 9v
 καὶ ἐκδαφίσῃ σε Θεὸς ὁ μέγας ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου.
 Ἴδου ἔστειλά σοι, ὡς ὄρξ, ἐπίλεκτα φαρία·
 95 τὴν βάδεαν καβαλλίκευε, παράσυρε τὴν μαύρην,
 E275
 ἢ δαγάλ' ἄς ἀκολουθῇ, καὶ οὐδεὶς οὐ μὴ σε φθάσῃ.
 E279-80
 Λάβε καὶ τὴν Ῥωμάϊσσαν, εἰ δι' αὐτὴν λυπείσαι·
 εἰ δὲ καὶ παρακούσῃς μου, ἔση κατηραμένος.»
 E291
 Λαβόντες δὲ τὰ γράμματα ἐκλεκτοὶ Ἀραβῖται
 100 διὰ πολλῆς ταχύτητος ἦλθον εἰς Ῥωμαίαν.
 E292
 Ἦν δέ τις οἴκου μήκοθεν τόπος ἡ Λακκοπέτρα·
 E293
 ἐκεῖσε ἠμπλικεύσασι τοῦ μὴ φανερωθῆναι,
 οἱ καὶ τούτῳ ἐδήλωσαν διὰ γραμματηφόρου:
 «Τὸ φέγγος λάμπει ὅλονυκτί, ὀδεύσωμεν, εἰ βούλει.»
 E297
 105 Ὡς δὲ εἶδεν ὁ ἀμιράς τὴν γραφὴν τῆς μητρὸς του,
 ἐσπλαγχνίσθη κατὰ πολὺ ὡς υἱὸς τὴν μητέρα,
 τὰ τέκνα κατηλέησε καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν μητέρας.
 Ζήλος ἀνήφθη εἰς αὐτὸν εἰ περιλάβουν ἄλλους·
 E287
 οὐ γὰρ ποτε λανθάνεται ἀρχαιότερος πόθος·
 110 τοῦτον δὲ κατημαύρωσεν ἡ ἀγάπη τῆς κόρης·
 πόνος γὰρ ὁ σφοδρότερος ἀμαυροῖ τὸν ἐλάσσω.
 Καὶ ἴστατο διαπορῶν τί θέλων διαπρᾶξαι.
 Εἰς τὸ κουβούκλιον δ' εἰσελθὼν λέγει τὴν ποθητὴν του:
 «Λόγον τινὰ ἀπόκρυφον βούλομαί σοι θαρρῆσαι
 115 ἄλλὰ φοβοῦμαι, πάντερπνε, μὴ οὐκ ἔνι εἰς ἀρεστόν σου·
 ἰδοὺ καιρὸς ἐφέστηκε τὸ βέβαιον νὰ μάθω,
 ἔαν ἀγάπην εἰς ἐμὲ ἔχῃς καθαρωτάτην.»
 Ἦ δὲ ταῦτα ἀκούσασα ἐδήχθη τὴν καρδίαν 10r

85 ν' ἀποταμήσουν Tsoranakis, 1960, 82: νὰ ποταμίουν G, Prombonas, 1985, 215
 νὰ ποταμήσουν Legrand ν' ἀποτομήσουν Kalonaros ν' ἀποτομίσουν Trapp
 101 οἴκου Μανρογορδάτο: οἶκος G
 109 ἀρχαιότερος πόθος Trapp, cf. Z659: ἀρχὴ ἐτέρου πόθου G
 111 σφοδρότερος Trapp, cf. Z661: σφοδρότατος G
 112 τί θέλων Eideneier, 1970, 304, cf. Z662: θέλων τι G

- If you do not leave quickly and come to Syria,
 85 the emirs intend to behead me,
 and kill your children since their father is a rebel,
 and to give to others your delightful girls,
 who are lamenting for you and are losing patience.
 My sweetest child, pity your mother;
 90 do not send me in my old age to Hades in sorrow,
 do not allow your children to be slain unjustly,
 do not ignore the tears of your delightful girls
 and let God in his greatness remove you from the world.
 Look, I have sent you, as you see, choice horses.
 95 Mount the chestnut, lead the black,
 let the bay follow and no one will catch you.
 Bring the Roman girl too, if you are upset because of her,
 but if you disobey me, may you be accursed."
 Picked Arabs took the letter
 100 and came with great speed to Roman territory.
 There was a place, Lakkopetra, far from the house.
 They encamped there, so as not to be seen,
 and told the emir by means of the letter-carrier:
 "There is moonlight shining all night, let us make our journey if you
 wish."
 105 When the emir saw his mother's letter,
 he was filled greatly with the compassion a son feels for his mother,
 he pitied his children and their mothers.
 Jealousy seized him, should they embrace others,
 for a former passion is never forgotten
 110 though love of the girl had quite blotted it out,
 for the more intense pain blots out the lesser.
 And he was left wondering what he was to do.
 Going into their chamber, he said to his beloved,
 "I wish to entrust some secret information to you,
 115 but I am afraid, my dearest, that it may not be to your liking.
 See, the time has come for me to know for certain
 if the love you have for me is quite pure."
 When she heard this, she was pierced to the heart

88 Mention of wives and children (cf. E240) is at variance with the picture of the emir's devotion to Digenes' mother at the beginning of Book I, implying an idealised first love.