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**Byzantine Poetry from Pisides
to Geometers**

Texts and Contexts

VOLUME ONE



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VERLAG
DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN

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FOREWORD

This book presents a survey of Byzantine poetry, secular and religious – but with one regrettable omission: hymnography, which deserves to be treated by someone with more expertise in musicology and liturgy than I can claim to possess. A survey must begin and end somewhere, and the choices made are by definition arbitrary: Pisides and Geometres are merely symbolic landmarks I have chosen to chart the history of Byzantine poetry before it reaches its peak with splendid poets such as Mauropous, Christopher Mitylenaios and Prodromos. As Byzantine culture is not confined to Constantinople and its hinterland, the survey also comprises poetry written in former parts of the Byzantine empire; however, poetry composed in languages other than Greek within the cultural orbit of Byzantium is not included. Although the epic of Digenes Akrites, the Song of Armoures and other heroic ballads certainly go back to a centuries-old oral tradition, I do not treat vernacular poetry because we still know too little about its remote origins.

I discuss Byzantine poetry “in the Vienna mould”: that is, genre by genre, just as the late Herbert Hunger did in his admirable handbook, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*. However, as I do not think that genres are static, the main thrust of this book is to demonstrate the importance of historical context. When this book was nearly completed, the late Alexander Kazhdan published the first volume of his equally admirable *History of Byzantine Literature*. As is well known, Kazhdan objected to Hunger's approach, because in his view the undue emphasis on genres and literary imitation turns Byzantine literature into a literature without any historical dimension, and Byzantine authors into writers without a personality of their own. Although I share Kazhdan's concerns, I do think that we can understand an author much better if we know something about the literary tradition he is part of and the generic rules he applies or changes or subverts (see Mullett 1992). Generic studies, such as the present one, simply provide decoding tools with which we may unlock the hidden door to the wonderland of Byzantine prose and poetry. Once the door is open, the key is no longer important, and then we may start to explore the literary vistas lying ahead of us. Grammar, vocabulary, metrics and genre are just tools – but without them it is obviously impossible to make any progress in the field of Byzantine literature.

This book is divided into three parts. The first part, *Texts and Contexts*, forms an introduction to the whole book, in which I present the manuscript evidence and explain the crucial concept of context. In the second and third

parts, *Epigrams in Context* and *Poems in Context*, where various kinds of Byzantine poetry pass in review, I analyze a large number of texts and attempt to situate them in their historical contexts. The book is also divided into two volumes: the present volume contains parts one and two; the second one, due to be published in 2006, will contain part three. Although I fully subscribe to the view expressed in the famous Callimachean maxim: μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν, I must confess that the book has become very voluminous indeed. And by dividing the bulk of the material into two volumes, I most probably would not escape the scorn of Callimachus, who would just point out that “two bulky books make two bulky evils”.

It is a great pleasure to thank all those who contributed, one way or another, to my research over the last few years and without whose invaluable help this book would have been quite different: Jean-Louis van Dieten, Wim Bakker, Eva de Vries-van der Velden, Paul Speck, Judith Herrin, Anthony Cutler, Ruth Webb, Alexander Kazhdan, Martin Hinterberger and Panagiotis Agapitos. I am most grateful to Kees Knobbe for meticulously checking my English. Thanks are also due to Johannes Koder and Otto Kresten for accepting this book for publication in the series of *Wiener Byzantinistische Studien*, and to Wolfram Hörandner for helping me in every possible way and introducing me into the mysteries of Byzantine poetry. I am most obliged to professors Koder, Kresten and Hörandner and to the anonymous readers of the *Akademie* for checking the text of the manuscript and correcting many silly mistakes and lapses of memory. Above all, however, there is one person to whom I owe more than words can express: Marjolijne Janssen, who has watched over the agonizingly slow composition of the book and has made it less agonizing with her love, her moral support and her exemplary patience. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the *Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie der Wetenschappen* for funding my scholarly research and to the *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* for funding the publication of this book.

As for the difficult problem of transliterating Greek names or terms, I have followed the example of the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* with three exceptions: Cephalas instead of Kephalas, Planudes instead of Planoudes, and Mitylenaios instead of Mytilenaios. In the case of Cephalas and Planudes I follow the example of classical scholars, such as Alan Cameron; in the case of Mitylenaios I follow the example of the Byzantines themselves as well of the editor, Eduard Kurtz.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AnBoll</i>	Analecta Bollandiana
<i>AB</i>	Anthologia Barberina
<i>AP</i>	Anthologia Palatina
<i>APl</i>	Appendix Planudea
<i>BCH</i>	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
<i>BF</i>	Byzantinische Forschungen
<i>BHG</i>	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca
<i>BMGS</i>	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
<i>BNJ</i>	Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher
<i>BollClass</i>	Bollettino dei Classici
<i>BollGrott</i>	Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata
<i>BS/EB</i>	Byzantine Studies/Études Byzantines
<i>BSl</i>	Byzantinoslavica
<i>Byz</i>	Byzantion
<i>BZ</i>	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
<i>CFHB</i>	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
<i>CIG</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum
<i>DChAE</i>	Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας
<i>DIEE</i>	Δελτίον της Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας της Ἑλλάδος
<i>DOP</i>	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
<i>EEBS</i>	Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
<i>EO</i>	Échos d'Orient
<i>EΦΣ</i>	Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος
<i>FM</i>	Fontes Minores
<i>GRBS</i>	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
<i>Hell</i>	Ἑλληνικά
<i>IRAIK</i>	Izvēstija Russkago Archeologičeskago Instituta v Konstantinopolě
<i>JHSt</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies
<i>JÖB</i>	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
<i>JÖBG</i>	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft
<i>Kriaras</i>	Λεξικὸ της μεσαιωνικῆς ἑλληνικῆς δημώδους γραμματείας
<i>Lampe</i>	A Patristic Greek Lexicon
<i>LBG</i>	Lexikon zur Byzantinischen Gräzität
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell-Scott-Jones
<i>NE</i>	Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων
<i>OCP</i>	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
<i>ODB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium
<i>PG</i>	Patrologia Graeca
<i>PO</i>	Patrologia Orientalis
<i>RAC</i>	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
<i>REB</i>	Revue des Études Byzantines
<i>REG</i>	Revue des Études Grecques

<i>RESEE</i>	Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes
<i>ROC</i>	Revue de l'Orient Chrétien
<i>RSBN</i>	Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici
<i>SBN</i>	Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici
<i>SC</i>	Sources Chrétiennes
<i>SicGymn</i>	Siculorum Gymnasium
<i>StT</i>	Studi e Testi
<i>ThGL</i>	Thesaurus Graecae Linguae
<i>TM</i>	Travaux et Mémoires
<i>VV</i>	Vizantijskij Vremennik
<i>WSt</i>	Wiener Studien
<i>ZRVI</i>	Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Alexander of Nicaea**
AP 21–22; 281
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 316 and 454
- Anastasios Quaestor**
AP XV, 28
 epigram
 epitaph
 satirical poem
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 282
 ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1900: 55
 ed. MERCATI 1929–30: 60
 ed. WESTERINK 1968: I, 322, 29–33
- Andrew of Crete**
 book epigram
 ed. HEISENBERG 1901: 508–512
- the Anonymous Italian**
 nos. 1–29
 ed. BROWNING 1963: 295–306
- the Anonymous Patrician**
 L. 47, 10–57, 7
 M. 415, 1–416, 48
 ed. LAMBROS 1922: 47–57
 ed. MERCATI 1927: 415–416
- the Anonym of Sola**
 nos. 1–8
 ed. SOLA 1916: 20–27 and 150–153
- Anthimos Chartophylax**
 poem
 ed. MERCATI G. 1937: 302–304
- Arethas of Caesarea**
AP XV, 32–34
 book epigram
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 284–286
 ed. WESTERINK 1968: vol. II, p. XV
- Arsenios**
 On Easter Sunday
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 670–675
- Arsenios**
 book epigram
 ed. FOLLIERI 1957: 116
- Bryson the Philosopher**
 On the Last Days
 ed. PERTUSI 1988: 162–166¹
- Christodoulos**
 satirical poem
 ed. SODE 2001: 128
- Christopher Protasekretis**
 hymns 1–2
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000b: 72–77
- Constantine Cephalas**
AP V, 1
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: I, 258
- Constantine the Rhodian**
AP XV, 15–17
 satirical poems 1–2
 satirical scholia 1–3
 dispute
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 266–268
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 624–626
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: II, 30; IV, 288 and 292²
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 627–632

¹ The poem consists of 181 lines, of which Pertusi published vv. 1–35 and 46–66.

² Written in the margin of the Palatine manuscript next to *AP* VII, 26, XV, 37 and 40.

- ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles
Constantine the Sicilian
AP XV, 13
 Psogos
 Apology
 poems 1–2
 monody
 Love Song
Corpus of Monastic Epigrams
 various gnomes
Dionysios the Stoudite
 book epigram
Elias Synkellos
 catanyctic alphabet
 Lamentation on Himself
Euphemios
 verse inscription
 satirical poem
Eustathios Kanikles
 riddle
Gennadios
 see: Corpus of Monastic Epigrams
George of Pisidia
 St. 5–106 and 108
 Q. 1–13
 In Heraclium redeuntem
 Expeditio Persica
 In Bonum Patricium
 Bellum Avaricum
 In Restitutionem Crucis
 Heraclias
 Hexaameron
 Contra Severum
 In Resurrectionem
 De Vanitate Vitae
 De Vita Humana
 In Alypium
 ed. LEGRAND 1896: 36–65
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 266
 ed. SPADARO 1971: 198–199
 ed. SPADARO 1971: 200–202
 ed. SPADARO 1971: 202
 ed. MONACO 1951: 458–462
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 693–696
 ed. ODORICO 1986: *passim*³
 ed. SPECK 1968: 307–309
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 6–16
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 20–30
 ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 302
 ed. PERTUSI 1952: 91
 ed. STERNBACH 1900: 291–293
 ed. STERNBACH 1891: 16–18 and 1892a: 51–68
 ed. QUERCI 1777: 1732–1740⁴
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 77–81
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 84–136
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 163–170
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 176–200
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 225–230
 ed. PERTUSI 1959: 240–261
 ed. GONNELLI 1998: 114–244
 ed. QUERCI 1777: 1621–1676
 ed. QUERCI 1777: 1374–1384
 ed. QUERCI 1777: 1581–1600
 ed. GONNELLI 1991: 123–130
 ed. STERNBACH 1891: 1–4⁵

³ For the contents of the Corpus of Monastic Epigrams, see chapter 8 (pp. 263–265).

⁴ The numbering is mine. Q. 1 = line 1; Q. 2 = lines 2–5; Q. 3 = lines 6–7; Q. 4 = lines 8–13; Q. 5 = lines 14–17; Q. 6 = lines 18–19; Q. 7 = lines 20–21; Q. 8 = lines 22–23 (=St. 61b); Q. 9 = lines 24–25 (=St. 61c); Q. 10 = lines 26–27 (=St. 78b); Q. 11 = lines 28–30 (=St. 84b); Q. 12 = lines 31–41 (=AP I, 120); Q. 13 = lines 42–54 (=AP I, 121).

⁵ Pisides' poems and epigrams can also be found in the edition of TARTAGLIA 1998. He reproduces the previous editions with some minor changes: see the "Nota critica" in his edition, pp. 58–60.

Ignatios the Deacon

AP XV, 29–31; 39a
 iconoclastic epigrams
 monody
 paraenetic alphabet
 Adam and Eve
 Lazarus and the Rich
 fables nos. 1–45

ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 282–284 and 288
 ed. *PG* 99, 436–437 and 476
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 42–54
 ed. MÜLLER 1891: 321–322
 ed. MÜLLER 1886: 28–32
 ed. STERNBACH 1897: 151–154
 ed. MÜLLER 1897: 264–281

Ignatios the Headmaster

AP I, 109–114

ed. BECKBY 1957–58: I, 172–174

John Geometres Kyriotes

Cr. 266, 1–352, 2
 S. 2–13
 Sa. 1–14
 dispute
 hymns on the H. Virgin
 Metaphrasis of the Odes
 Life of St. Panteleemon

ed. CRAMER 1841: 266–352
 ed. SAJDAK 1929: 196–198
 ed. SAJDAK 1930–31: 530–534
 ed. GRAUX 1880: 277–278
 ed. SAJDAK 1931: 61–78
 ed. CRAMER 1841: 352–366
 ed. STERNBACH 1892b: 3–41⁶

John Kommerkiarios

Life of St. Mary of Egypt

ed. STERNBACH 1900a: 319–321

John of Damascus

Drama of Susanna
 poem on the H. Trinity

ed. *PG* 136, 508 (two verses)
 ed. CANART 2000: 153–154

John of Melitene

epigrams 1–3
 epigram 4
 epitaph 1
 epitaph 2

ed. HÖRANDNER 1970: 115–116
 ed. MAGUIRE 1996: 21, n. 49⁷
 ed. LAUXTERMANN: Appendix III, 308–309
 ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 191

John the Grammarian

iconoclastic epigrams

ed. *PG* 99, 436 and 476

John the Syrian

see: Corpus of Monastic Epigrams

Kassia

A 1–160, B 1–27, C 1–97
 M 1–9

ed. KRUMBACHER 1897a: 357–368
 ed. MYSTAKIDIS 1926: 317

Kometas

AP XV, 36–38; 40

ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 288 and 290–292

Kyriakos of Chonai

catanyctic alphabet

ed. LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 101–102

Leo Choirosphaktes

epigrams 1–4
 epitaph
 monody
 epithalamia 1–2

ed. KOLIAS 1939: 130–132
 ed. MERCATI 1929–30: 60
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 66–70
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 76–82 and 86–88

⁶ There are also a number of epigrams and poems that may be attributed to Geometres, but these ascriptions are not certain: see pp. 301, 303–304 and 315–316.

⁷ For the ascription of these six epigrams to John of Melitene, see Appendix III.

- The Bath of Leo VI
 Thousand-Line Theology
 On Thermal Springs
Leo of Sardis
 book epigram
Leo the Philosopher
AP IX, 200–203, 214, 578; XV, 12
 satirical poems 1–2
 Job
Leo VI
 catanyctic alphabet
 poem on the lily
 homily no. 26
Mazarenos
AP I, 106–107
Methodios
 epigram on the Chalke
Metrophanes of Smyrna
 hymn
Michael Chartophylax
AP I, 122
Michael Synkellos
 hymn
Neilos the Younger
 book epigrams 1–4
Nicholas the Patrician
 gnomic epigrams 1–2
Nikephoros Ouranos
 catanyctic alphabet
 poems 1–2
Niketas the Philosopher
 epigrams 1–5
Paradeisos
 quatrains 1–99
Parthenios
 book epigram
Photios
 hymns 1–2
Ps. Constantine the Sicilian
 love poem
Ps. Leo Choirosphaktes
 epithalamium
Ps. Theodore of Stoudios
 epigrams 1–4
 poems 1–2
- ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 94–106
 ed. VASSIS 2002: 71–153
 ed. GALLAVOTTI 1990: 86–89
 ed. STERNBACH 1900: 305
 ed. WESTERINK 1986: 198–199
 ed. WESTERINK 1986: 200–201
 ed. WESTERINK 1986: 205–222
 ed. CICCOLELLA 1989: 21–24
 ed. MERCATI 1936: 497–498
 ed. ANTONOPOULOU⁸
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: I, 170–172
 ed. MERCATI 1920: 215–216
 ed. MERCATI 1929–30: 56–59
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: I, 180
 ed. CRIMI 1990: 29–34
 ed. GASSISI 1906: 53–54
 ed. STERNBACH 1900: 303–304
 ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1899: 68–70
 ed. MERCATI 1950: 569–571
 ed. STERNBACH 1902: 85–86
 ed. *PG* 106, 867–890
 ed. STERNBACH 1900: 305
 ed. CICCOLELLA 1998: 308–314
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 696–698
 ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 110–114
 ed. SPECK 1964a: 36–37
 ed. SPECK 1964a: 37–39

⁸ TH. ANTONOPOULOU, *Leonis Sexti Imperatoris Homiliae*. Due to be published in the *Series Graeca* of the *Corpus Christianorum*.

- Seneca Iatrosophistes**
AP I, 90
 ed. CAMERON 1983: 284–285
- Sergios**
 iconoclastic epigram
 ed. *PG* 99, 437
- Sophronios Iatrosophistes**
 hymn
 ed. GIGANTE 1957: 139–143
- Sophronios of Jerusalem**
 epigrams 1–3
 hymns 1–22
 ed. CAMERON 1983: 285, 290 and 291
 ed. GIGANTE 1957: 25–138
- Stephen Kapetolites**
 iconoclastic epigram
 ed. *PG* 99, 437
- Stylios**
AP 387c, v. 5
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 510
- Stylios**
 dispute
 ed. GRAUX 1880: 277–278
- Symeon the Metaphrast**
 catanyctic alphabet
 poems 1–2
 epitaph
 satirical poem
 monody
 erotapokrisis
 hymn
 ed. ALLATIUS 1669: 132–133 (no. I)
 ed. ALLATIUS 1669: 133–136 (nos. III–IV)
 ed. VASIL'EVSKY 1896: 577–578
 ed. VASIL'EVSKY 1896: 578
 ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 210–212
 ed. MOREL 1600: 1–3
 ed. KODER 1965: 133–137
- Symeon the New Theologian**
 hymns 1–58
 ed. KODER 1969–73: I, 156–301, II, 10–493;
 III, 10–309; and ed. KAMBYLIS 1976: 45–462
- Theodore of Kyzikos**
 book epigram
 ed. STERNBACH 1900: 306–307
- Theodore of Stoudios**
 nos. 1–123
 iconophile poems
 ed. SPECK 1968: 109–307
 ed. *PG* 99, 437–442
- Theodore the Paphlagonian**
 dispute
 ed. MATRANGA 1850: 627–632
- Theodosios of Dyrrachion**
 paraenetic alphabet
 ed. HÖRANDNER 1989: 143–145
- Theodosios the Deacon**
 The Capture of Crete
 ed. PANAGIOTAKIS 1960: 94–124; and ed.
 CRISCUOLO 1979: 2–39
- Theodosios the Grammarian**
 panegyric
 ed. LAMBROS 1884: 129–132
- Theodosios the Monk**
 epigrams 1–2
 monody
 ed. GALLAVOTTI 1987: 58, n. 11⁹
 ed. GALLAVOTTI 1987: 58
- Theophanes the Grammarian**
AP XV, 14; 35
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 266 and 286
- Thomas the Patrician**
AP 379
 ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 506

⁹ The original texts of these two book epigrams are lost, but we have Gaetani's translation in Latin.

Frequently quoted authors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries:

Christopher Mitylenaios

nos. 1–145

ed. KURTZ 1903: 1–100

John Mauropous of Euchaita

nos. 1–99

ed. LAGARDE 1882: 1–51

poem

ed. KARPOZILOS 1982: 71–74

Michael Psellos

nos. 1–92

ed. WESTERINK 1992: 1–464

Michael the Grammarian

nos. I and IV–IX

ed. MERCATI 1917: 115–117 & 128–135

Nicholas Kallikles

nos. 1–37

ed. ROMANO 1980: 77–128

Theodore Balsamon

nos. 1–45

ed. HORNA 1903: 178–204

Theodore Prodromos

poems I–LXXIX

ed. HÖRANDNER 1974: 177–552

nos. 80–250

list of works written by or attributed to Prodromos, in: HÖRANDNER 1974: 40–72

Tetrasticha 1–293

ed. PAPAGIANNIS 1997: 4–308

Theophylaktos of Ohrid

nos. 1–15

ed. GAUTIER 1980: 346–377

PART ONE:
TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Chapter One

BYZANTINE POETRY IN CONTEXT

In *The Secret of Eloquence*, a book on Arabic stylistics written in 1062 by the Syrian Ibn Sinan al-Khafaji, we read an amusing anecdote about a line of al-Mutanabbi († 965) which happened to come to the attention of the Byzantine emperor: “It is related that a certain Byzantine king – I believe it was Nikephoros – asked about the poetry of al-Mutanabbi. They recited to him the line:

It was as if the white-and-ruddy camels were resting on my eyelids: when they stirred, [my tears] streamed forth.

Its meaning was explained to him in Greek; but he did not like it. “What a liar this man is!”, he said. “How can a camel rest on a man’s eye?!” Now I do not believe that the reason for this lies in what I said before about translating from Arabic into other languages and the disparity in this respect; but there exist in our tongue metaphorical and other beautiful conventional expressions such as are not found in other languages”¹.

The beautiful line of al-Mutanabbi that baffled the emperor may seem absurd even to modern readers who have little or no acquaintance with the literary conventions of medieval Arabic poetry. In order to understand the bold metaphor of “camels on eyelids”, the reader certainly has to know that the sorrow of leaving one’s beloved or staying behind when someone else leaves, is usually expressed in Arabic poetry by portraying the caravan of camels trailing into the desert at dawn. The reader furthermore has to know that the verb *sala*, used in al-Mutanabbi’s line for the “streaming” eyes, is also often used to denote camels “moving in single file”². Thus there is a connection between weeping eyes and departing camels, which accounts for the striking metaphor used by the great al-Mutanabbi. Without this crucial information, however, the line is almost incomprehensible – which is why Nikephoros Phokas, if he is indeed the ignoramus who listened to the recital of al-Mutan-

¹ Translation by G.J. VAN GELDER, Camels on Eyelids and the Bafflement of an Emperor: a line of al-Mutanabbi “translated” into Greek, in: Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association. Spaces and Boundaries. Munich 1988, vol. III, 446–451.

² VAN GELDER (see footnote above), 447–448.

abbi's poetry, reacted as he did. As he was obviously not familiar with the conventions of Arabic poetry, the image of "white-and-ruddy camels resting on one's eyelids" seemed absolutely grotesque.

Over the last two decades scholars have been saying that it is time that we finally start to appreciate Byzantine literature³. In these papers written in defence of Byzantine literature, the black sheep of the flock of Byzantinists turns out to be Romilly Jenkins, whose damning comments on the subject are quoted time and again as the *non plus ultra* of short-sightedness: "The Byzantine Empire remains almost the unique example of a highly civilised state, lasting for more than a millennium, which produced hardly any educated writing which can be read with pleasure for its literary merit alone"⁴. The quote can be found in his book on the romantic poet Dionysios Solomos – the founding father of Modern Greek poetry, who Jenkins obviously greatly admired. From his critical comments it becomes clear that Jenkins looks at Solomos' poetry from a very Anglo-Saxon perspective: Keats, Shelley, Byron⁵. These poets represent the kind of poetry he is familiar with and has learnt -at public school presumably- to regard as the pinnacle of poetic achievement. It is against the background of the romantic movement and its literary values, too, that we should view Jenkins' biased and uncharitable verdict. What he expects from Byzantine poets and unfortunately does not get, is the sort of lyricism which he, born and bred on a wholesome diet of British romanticism, considers to be the essence of poetry. In this respect, Jenkins certainly resembles the Byzantine emperor who laughed at al-Mutanabbi's poetry simply because it was not like anything he was familiar with. However, before we start criticizing ignorant emperors and prejudiced scholars, let us first consider where we stand as modern readers at the turn of the twenty-first century. Our aesthetic value judgements are based on a corpus of texts promoted through the school system and sanctified by the literary popes of our time. Sadly enough, even if we wanted to, it is impossible for us to remain entirely unaffected by modern tastes and preferences. There is no point in denying that we look at things from a contemporary perspective. If we judge Byzantine poetry -say, the poems of John Geometres- on the narrow basis of our own literary preferences, it certainly falls short of our expectations. It is different, it does not fit into our literary canon, and it does not correspond to modern aesthetics. Some people (such as Jenkins) will stop reading Byzantine poetry once they see that it is not their cup of tea; others will try to appreciate it on its own terms. Appreciation presupposes knowledge. It also presupposes that we try to read

³ See, for instance, the various contributions in *Symbolae Osloenses* 73 (1998) 5–73.

⁴ R. JENKINS, Dionysius Solomos. Cambridge 1940, repr. Athens 1981, 57.

⁵ See, for instance, the first two pages of his book where we find these three names along with a rather embarrassing defence of the colonial hegemony of the British Empire.

with Byzantine eyes and allow ourselves to indulge in the pleasures of Byzantine literature – which is only possible by means of what Coleridge called “a willing suspension of disbelief”. It means that we will have to decipher the literary codes of Byzantine poetry and to understand it as the Byzantines would.

This is also what this book attempts to do. I do not think that we should apply modern literary criteria to a literature that follows its own set of rules. I do not think either that we should apply the precepts of classical scholarship to a literature that is not classical (although the Byzantines tried very hard to make us believe that they wrote as the ancients did). Here we have a fundamental hermeneutic problem. Krumbacher, Dölger and Hunger view Byzantine poetry from the angle of German *Altertumswissenschaft*. They recognize that the hallowed triad, epic-drama-lyric poetry, is of little help in defining the genres of Byzantine poetry; but they do not ask themselves why they should approach Byzantine poetry from this viewpoint in the first place. Having recognized that Byzantine poetry cannot easily be divided into these three categories, they react in different ways. Krumbacher refuses altogether to try and categorize Byzantine poems according to genre. That would be of little use, for “die schöne Gliederung nach Gattungen” which we find in ancient poetry, does not exist in Byzantium; “der eklektische Charakter der Dichter und der Mangel einer grossen, deutlichen Entwicklung innerhalb der einzelnen Arten” renders “eine strenge Durchführung der Eidologie” totally impossible⁶. Dölger (who finds in Byzantine poetry only “eine Aushöhlung des Gedankengehaltes und ein Erlahmen der Phantasie”, which often leads to “Geschmacklosigkeit”) expressly states that “das übliche literarische Schema der dramatischen, epischen und lyrischen Literatur” does not apply to Byzantine poetry. However, after this apodictic statement, Dölger goes on to say that the Byzantines did not write drama, but instead devoted themselves to two genres only: “Dichtungen in epischer Form” and “in lyrischer Form” – without so much as an explanation as to why he suddenly uses the terms “epic” and “lyric”, which he himself said did not apply to Byzantine poetry⁷. Hunger’s line of argumentation is even more peculiar. He fully subscribes to the verdict of Krumbacher, but “trotzdem” he thinks that a literary history, such as the one he is writing, cannot do without some form of classification: “Ausgangspunkt für eine Gliederung dieser Übersicht werden aber doch wieder die alten Genera sein müssen”. He cautiously adds that there are great differences between ancient and Byzantine poems and that it is often difficult to classify Byzantine poems according to the classical genre system: “Deshalb sollen die Gattungsbezeich-

⁶ KRUMBACHER 1897b: 706.

⁷ DÖLGER 1948: 13, 15, 15–17, 17–23 and 23–28.

nungen [namely, epic, dramatic and lyric poetry], zumindest in den Titeln, unter Anführungszeichen gesetzt werden” [as Hunger indeed does in the titles attached to the relevant chapters]⁸. The word “müssen” speaks volumes. We “*have to*” use these generic terms. But why should we? Why should we use terms that do not apply to Byzantine literature? Well, we *have to* because Hunger does not question the intrinsic validity of this system of classification. And neither do Krumbacher and Dölger. They merely repeat what they have learnt at school. In fact, it is questionable whether the classic triad holds true for any literature, including ancient Greek poetry. The concept ultimately goes back to Plato (*Rep.*, 392c–394c). But Plato has been misunderstood in modern times by Fr. Schlegel, Schelling, Hölderlin, and other exponents of the German romantic movement, for he does not speak about *genres*, but about “*modes of enunciation*”⁹. There are three modes: (1) plain narration – the author speaks *propria voce* (for instance, in the dithyramb); (2) imitation (mimesis) – the author does not speak himself, but lets his characters do the talking (for instance, in tragedy and comedy); and (3) a mixture of both – the author sometimes speaks with his own voice and sometimes lets his characters speak (for instance, in the Homeric epics). The example given by Plato of the first mode of enunciation (incidentally, the only sort of poetry he is willing to accept in his ideal republic), the dithyramb, has little to do with the modern concept of lyric poetry. In the dithyramb the poet usually narrates in the third person and speaks about the deeds of gods and men; in modern lyric poetry, the poet usually speaks in the first person and expresses his personal emotions. In fact, the Byzantine panegyric praising the deeds of noble emperors comes much closer to Plato’s definition of the first mode of enunciation than modern lyric poetry. Justice after all! The Byzantines wrote the sort of “lyric poetry” that Plato prescribed! But did they really? Once again, Plato is not interested in genres, but in forms of representation: the author’s voice, the character’s voice and the mixed voice. He gives a few examples of the kinds of poetry in which each of these voices can be heard, but he does not discuss ancient Greek genres. Thus, it is simply wrong to apply a totally misunderstood concept of Plato, the holy triad of arch-genres, to Byzantine or, for that matter, to any literature. The theories of German philosophers are quintessential to understanding the basic tenets of the romantic movement, but are utterly worthless for the comprehension of other literary periods and other cultures.

The term “*epigram*” is another splendid example of a much used, yet entirely misunderstood literary concept. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines

⁸ HUNGER 1978: II, 108.

⁹ See G. GENETTE, Introduction à l’architexte. Paris 1979 (repr. in: G. Genette et al., *Théorie des genres*. Paris 1986, 89–159). The term “mode of enunciation” is a literal translation of the term Genette introduces: *mode d’ énonciation*.

the term as follows: “A short poem leading up to and ending in a witty or ingenious turn of thought”. Here the epigram is characterized by two features: it is short and it has a “*pointe*” at the end. This procrustean definition more or less corresponds to what most people nowadays mean by the word “epigram”, but it would probably have made little sense to the Hellenes and the Byzantines. They would not have understood the definition for two reasons. First, their epigrams are not always “short”; secondly, their epigrams hardly ever end in a “*pointe*”. The modern definition of the term goes back to the Renaissance, when the humanists rediscovered the epigrams of Martial¹⁰. Martial’s epigrams are indeed often short and witty. And so are the epigrams of other first-century poets, such as Lucilius¹¹. Hellenistic and Byzantine epigrams, however, are not always as short as the ones of Martial, but may easily turn into full-length poetic texts¹². And although they can be quite witty, Hellenistic and Byzantine epigrams (in contrast to the early Roman ones) are not structured so as to bring about the effect of the big bang at the end. These epigrams certainly achieve poetic closure, but they end in a whisper, not with a theatrical exit accompanied by the slamming of doors. Thus the “Martalian” definition of the term, which we have wholeheartedly embraced in ordinary parlance, does not do justice to the Hellenistic or the Byzantine epigram. The question is: should we continue to give credit to a Renaissance interpretation of the term based on Martial, or should we try to understand the different phases of the history of the epigram? Should we cling to a basically unhistorical concept, or should we view the epigram as a genre that changed in the course of time? It will be obvious what my answer is. It will also be clear why I object to Kominis’ definition of the Byzantine epigram. Kominis rightly states that it is difficult to distinguish epigrams from poems and that brevity is not a useful criterion in sorting out the Byzantine epigram: “περὶ συντομίας (...) οὐδεὶς δύναται νὰ γίνῃ λόγος”. But strangely enough, he then continues by saying that one should regard as epigrams primarily those Byzantine poems that have a maximum length of 8 to 12 verses (the length of most epigrams in the *Palatine Anthology*), and exceptionally, poems of up to 20 verses if there is valid “internal evidence” (such as inscriptional use or inclusion in a collection of epigrams)¹³. This makes little sense. Kominis first rejects brevity as a characteristic of the Byzantine epigram and then uses the verse length of ancient

¹⁰ See P. LAURENS, *L’abeille dans l’ambre. Célébration de l’épigramme de l’époque Alexandrine à la fin de la Renaissance*. Paris 1989.

¹¹ For brevity as an essential feature of epigrams of the first century AD, see *AP* IX, 342 and 369.

¹² For the length of Hellenistic epigrams, see CAMERON 1993: 13. For the length of early Byzantine epigrams, see *AP* V, 294 (24 vv.), IX, 363 (23 vv.), and IX, 482 (28 vv.).

¹³ KOMINIS 1966: 19–20.

epigrams as a valid criterion. His notion of “internal evidence” looks much like a second line of defence. Quite unexpectedly we are told not only to count the number of verses, but also to pay attention to generic features. However, he does not clarify for what pertinent reasons Byzantine texts of more than 20 verses, which have those generic features, should not be called epigrams. For instance, is the famous verse inscription on the St. Polyeuktos (*AP* I, 10) not an epigram, simply because it consists of 76 verses? Is one of these internal criteria of Kominis in fact not the inscriptional use of epigrams? Thus, the absolute maximum of “20 verses and no more”, which Kominis is willing to accept if there are good reasons for it, is as arbitrary as the number of “8 to 12” he adopts because that is the “normal” length of ancient epigrams. What this means is that Kominis, even though he is well aware that Byzantine epigrams are not always short, still clings to the traditional, that is: Renaissance and post-Renaissance, definition of the term “epigram”.

These criticisms are by no means intended to belittle the outstanding achievements of scholars, such as Krumbacher, Hunger and Kominis, to whom I am much indebted. I hope to have made clear, however, that we should learn to question the validity of the literary terms we are familiar with and which we inadvertently apply even to literatures that are not like ours. We should learn to look at Byzantine poetry, not from a modern point of view nor from the angle of classical scholarship, but through the prism of Byzantine literary perceptions. When the emperor heard al-Mutanabbi's line, he ridiculed it because he did not understand the literary conventions of Arabic poetry and unwittingly applied his very Byzantine reading experiences to a literature that is not Byzantine. By using a literary terminology with which we are familiar, but which has really nothing to do with Byzantine literature, we run the risk of committing exactly the same error.

In order to understand what Byzantine poetry is really all about, there is basically only one way out of the dead-end maze of modern prejudices and traditional misunderstandings: to look at the texts themselves and at the contexts that generated them. What is needed above all is a historicizing approach. The main thrust of such a scholarly approach is to study Byzantine poetry as a historical phenomenon (which is, incidentally, not the same thing as seeing it merely as a mine of historical information) and to understand it on its own terms. Byzantine poems are poems that are Byzantine. They are not modern – how could they be? They are not classical – why should they be? The tautological definition of Byzantine poems being poems Byzantine, which I have chosen simply to put things straight, does not mean that I regard the Byzantine identity as something that did not change in the course of time. Everything changes – even perennial Byzantium, where time often seems to tick away so slowly that it can only be measured against the clockwork of eternity. That Byzantium looks so perfectly timeless and immutable, is an

accomplishment of great genius. It is in itself an astonishing work of art, manufactured by thousands of diligent Byzantines working in close co-operation to produce the effect of timelessness in their paintings, hymns and writings. It is what Yeats so eloquently dubbed “the artifice of eternity” in his famous poem *Sailing to Byzantium*. But an artifice it is, and we should not be fooled by it¹⁴. Things did change in the Byzantine millennium: political constellations, military situations, economic prospects, social structures and attitudes, religious views and cultural orientations. And of course, along with all these fundamental changes Byzantine literature changed as well. The pace of change may have been remarkably slow compared to the precipitous developments of the last two centuries, but then again, Byzantium was a medieval society. Seen from the perspective of the Middle Ages, Byzantium certainly kept pace with the equally slow developments in the medieval West. The gradual changes that we observe in Byzantine society and literature more or less evolved with the same slack rhythms and movements as in the West (it can hardly be a coincidence that in both cultures dark ages, cultural revivals, pre-Renaissance tendencies, religious backlashes and the beginnings of vernacular poetry took place in approximately the same periods). However slow the pace of these changes may have been, it is incorrect to view Byzantine culture as static – to do so would mean falling into a trap which Byzantium itself has prepared.

Since we know so little about Byzantine poetry, and since we continuously make the mistake of comparing the little we know to both classical and modern literature, it is time to broaden our horizon and become acquainted with the texts themselves. First the sources, and only then the theories. That is the only way to make progress, even if it means that we, like Baron von Münchhausen, have to drag ourselves by the hair out of the morass of modern misapprehensions. If we study the manuscript material at our disposal closely, there is enough evidence to reconstruct Byzantine literary perceptions. The evidence there is consists of the following: the classification system of collections of poems and anthologies, the lemmata attached to poems and epigrams, the texts themselves which often contain internal indications as to their original purposes, and occasional remarks in Byzantine letters, text books and rhetorical writings. I am convinced that what the Byzantines themselves report, is far more important than the opinions of modern scholars, myself included. Of course, their remarks on poetry and genres need to be interpreted and weighed against the evidence of the still extant Byzantine texts. They certainly can not be accepted at face value. However, a study that does not take into account what the Byzantines have to say about their own poetry, is by definition

¹⁴ See P. LEMERLE, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin*. Paris 1977, 251.

doomed to fail. The trite maxim “*ad fontes*” also holds true in this particular instance. If we want to understand Byzantine poetry, let us above all listen to the Byzantines themselves.

If the evocative anecdote about al-Mutanabbi’s line and the emperor’s negative response to it implicitly teaches us an important lesson, it is that any text, whether in Arabic, Byzantine Greek or another language, needs a context to be fully understood. Context is a vague concept. It includes anything relevant to the text one is reading, but which is not expressed in so many words and is therefore not entirely self-evident. It involves a number of questions: when, where, by whom, for which audience, what genre, at which occasion, for which purpose, and so forth. In this chapter I shall discuss three contextual aspects of Byzantine poetry: the function of the epigram, the relation between poets and patrons, and the forms of literary communication between poets and public.

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The Byzantine Epigram

The *Souda* presents the following explanation of the term “epigram”: “all texts that are inscribed on some object, even if they are not in verse, are called ἐπίγραμμα”¹⁵. It is rather surprising that the *Souda*, or the ancient source from which it culled this information, niggardly sticks to the etymology of the term and does not refer to the literary genre. This is all the more surprising because the lexicographers of the *Souda* made extensive use of the anthology of Cephalas and must therefore have known perfectly well what an ancient epigram was like. Whenever the *Souda* quotes a few verses of an epigram from Cephalas’ anthology, the text is invariably introduced by the standard formula: ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγράμμασιν¹⁶. Therefore the question arises: why does the *Souda* define the ἐπίγραμμα as an “inscription”, whereas elsewhere it uses the same term in connection with the literary texts found in the anthology of Cephalas?

¹⁵ ADLER 1928–38: II, 352, no. 2270: ἐπίγραμμα· πάντα τὰ ἐπιγραφόμενά τισι, κἂν μὴ ἐν μέτροις εἰρημένα, ἐπιγράμματα λέγεται. See also the definition in the *Λέξεις ῥητορικαί*, ed. I. BEKKER, *Anecdota Graeca*, I. Lexica Segueriana. Berlin 1814, 260, 7, and in the *Etymologicum Magnum*, ed. TH. GAISFORD. Oxford 1848 (repr. Amsterdam 1962), 358, 23: ἐπίγραμμα· οἱ πεζοὶ καὶ ἔμμετροι λόγοι ἐπιγράμματα καλοῦνται.

¹⁶ See CAMERON 1993: 294.

First of all, ἐπίγραμμα is not a frequently used term in the literary vocabulary of the Byzantines, except when they explicitly refer to ancient epigrams¹⁷. The epigrammatic genre was to all intents and purposes something formidably ancient, not the sort of thing the Byzantines themselves were wont to indulge in. It was something of the past they could read in the anthology of Cephalas and its various apographs: in short, the sort of literary texts found ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγράμμασιν. Since the term usually referred to ancient and not to contemporary epigrams, Byzantine lexicographers did not feel the need to go any further than a mere etymological explanation of the term. There was no reason to be more precise; it was more than enough to state rather tautologically that the noun ἐπίγραμμα originally derived from the verb ἐπιγράφω. The fact that this definition does not do justice to the various forms of ancient epigrammatic poetry, did not matter to the editors of the *Souda*. Ancient was good, but ancient was dead. And being a very dead corpse, ancient literature became a corpus of texts Byzantine lexicographers used, perused, and occasionally mis-used.

The second reason why the *Souda* interprets the term “epigram” in a rather strict sense, is that it does bear the meaning of “inscription” in a number of Byzantine sources. Let us look at four references to ἐπιγράμματα. The first example comes from the *Souda* itself: “Epigram on an ox and a goat depicted on a carved silver plate: (*Goat*) – How come that you, an ox, do not plough the furrows of the earth, but lie down like a drunken farmer? (*Ox*) – And you, goat, why do you not run to the pastures, but stand still like a silver statue? (*Goat*) – Well, so as to reprove you for your laziness”¹⁸. The epigram probably dates from the early seventh century for metrical and art-historical reasons. It is written in regular paroxytone dodecasyllables (such as we hardly find before the time of Pisides) based on typically Byzantine rules of prosody (τρυν in τρυνεῖς short). And furthermore, silver display plates, such as the one described in the epigram, appear to have gone out of use after the reign of Herakleios. The epigram was inscribed on the silver plate it describes, probably around its rim. It is not known whether the lexicographer of the *Souda* derived this epigram from an earlier (presumably seventh-century) source, or from his own autopsy of the silver plate; but it does not really matter. What is of great significance here is that the word ἐπίγραμμα is used for a Byzantine poem and clearly means “inscription”.

The second text where we find the word is a marginal scholion attached to one of the letters of Arethas of Caesarea: “[Arethas] makes fun of the epigram

¹⁷ See, for instance, Ps. Symeon Magister, 729, and Michaelis Pselli scripta minora, vol. II, eds. E. KURTZ & F. DREXL. Milan 1940, 9, epist. 8.

¹⁸ ADLER 1928–38: I, 487 (s.v. βοῦς ἔβδωμος). Also to be found in Athous 4266 [Ib. 146] (s. XVI), fol. 2^v, and Vindob. Phil. gr. 110 (s. XVI), fol. 515^v.

that was written above the kathedra of the Eparch in the Hippodrome on the picture of the four-horse chariot – an epigram by Anastasios, then quaestor, known as the stammerer, in which he ridiculously inveighs against Alexander the Macedonian as follows: *and lying prostrate as a trophy of inebriety*”¹⁹. The satirical poem by Anastasios Quaestor, of which we have only this verse, dates from 913. It was written shortly after Emperor Alexander’s tragic death from alcohol abuse in the Hippodrome, and was directed against the Macedonian dynasty and its claims to the throne; it indirectly canvassed political support for the faction of Constantine Doukas²⁰. In the scholion the word ἐπίγραμμα is used to stress the fact that the text of the satirical poem had, rather surprisingly, been inscribed.

The third text is found in Marc. gr. 524 (s. XIII). This manuscript is famous for its collection of ceremonial poems and inscriptional epigrams, all of which date back to c. 1050–1200. One of the poems is entitled: “epigram placed on the venerable cross that had been erected in the heart of the Hungarian land”. The cross had been erected by John Doukas, the military commander who led a successful expedition against Hungary in 1154–55²¹. In this lemma, just as in the two other instances I discussed above, the word ἐπίγραμμα clearly indicates that the epigram was inscribed on the cross.

The fourth example is Ambros. gr. 41 (s. XII), fol. 86^v. There we find the verses that were inscribed on the south and the north tympanon of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople after the earthquake of 869; some fragments of these verse inscriptions have been discovered *in situ*²². In the manuscript in Milan, the first of the four verse inscriptions is entitled: ἐπίγραμμα κάλλιστον. There can be no doubt what the term means in this particular instance. It is an inscription.

This specific meaning of the term ἐπίγραμμα, “inscription”, can also be found in Byzantine collections of poems: see, for instance, the lemmata attached to Theod. St. 25, 48, 58, 102, 104, 105a, 105c, 105e and 111; Chr. Mityl. 65; and Prodromos 29 and 41. It is only fair to admit, however, that the term is not much in evidence. Take, for instance, the anthology of Marc. gr. 524. It contains numerous epigrams that were inscribed on works of art, and yet, the word ἐπίγραμμα occurs only once. What does this mean? Does it mean that the epigram on the Hungarian cross presented the only genuine ἐπίγραμμα of the collection in the view of its anthologist? This is not very likely, since this particular epigram differs in no way from the other verse inscriptions that we find in Marc. gr. 524. What it probably indicates is that the term ἐπίγραμμα was

¹⁹ WESTERINK 1968: I, 322, 29–33.

²⁰ See LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 401–405.

²¹ Ed. LAMBROS 1911: 178–179 (no. 337).

²² See MERCATI 1922a: 282–288.

so unusual that, when the anthologist was composing his lemmata, it did not immediately spring to mind. Normally, a Byzantine lemmatist would simply write: εἰς ..., “on X”, which can have two totally different meanings. It either means “on the subject of X” or “inscribed on X”. For instance, εἰς τὴν βάπτισιν can mean: “on (the subject of) the Baptism” or “(written) on (a picture portraying) the Baptism”. Since the simple word εἰς already covers all the possible uses of an epigram, either as a purely literary text or as a verse inscription, the technical term ἐπίγραμμα is superfluous. Only when a lemmatist, for one reason or another, thought it necessary to emphasize that a given epigram was actually copied from stone, would he use the Byzantine term for “inscription”. But the need to do so seldom arose, for most often the Byzantines copied a manuscript text for its literary merits alone, and not out of some antiquarian interest in its former whereabouts or its original function. In the collection of Theodore of Stoudios’ epigrams the word ἐπίγραμμα can be found quite often because its redactor, who had to copy all these texts *in situ*, was obviously very proud of his scholarly accomplishments as an epigrapher. In other Byzantine collections of poems, however, the term is only rarely used because the epigrams they contain were not copied from stone, but circulated in manuscript form.

In Byzantine sources the word ἐπίγραμμα is also used in a quite different sense. I will give two examples. On the first page of Vindob. Theol. 212 (s. XVI), a manuscript of Theodoret of Cyrrhus’ *Cure of Pagan Maladies*, we find a dedicatory epigram, entitled ἐπίγραμμα. The epigram tells us that Peter the Patrician presented a copy of the *Cure of Pagan Maladies* to Emperor Leo VI on the occasion of the Brumalia. In vv. 1–12 Peter the Patrician writes that the book is a gift worthy of the μουσουργία of Leo VI, because it splendidly refutes all heresies and errors of the Hellenes; in vv. 13–21 Peter prays that the emperor may live long and victoriously, and expresses his hope that he may witness many other Brumalia in honour of Leo VI²³. The second example is an epigram found in two manuscripts containing the Greek translation of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, Vat. gr. 1666 (a. 800) and Ambros. gr. 246 (s. XVI). The epigram is entitled: ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τὸν μακάριον Γρηγόριον Πάπαν τῆς προεσβυτέρως Ῥώμης. In vv. 1–23 future readers are told that the *Dialogues* make good reading because these edifying stories, written by none other than the formidable Gregory the Great, present splendid examples of piety and fear of God, and in vv. 24–33 pope Zacharias is lavishly praised for making the *Dialogues* available to a Greek-speaking audience. The text of the *Dialogues* was translated in 748 by a certain John the Monk, who is probably also the author of this epigram²⁴.

²³ Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994b: 33–34.

²⁴ Ed. MERCATI 1919: 171–173. See also Appendix IX: no. 8.

In these two instances the term ἐπίγραμμα means “book epigram”. It is an epigram that accompanies a literary text, either as an introduction to it (see the translation of Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues*) or as a dedication (see Peter the Patrician’s gift to Leo VI). This particular meaning of the term ἐπίγραμμα probably dates from the Middle Ages, as it can only be found in Byzantine sources: see, for instance, Theod. St. 124, *AP* XV, 1, and Chr. Mityl. 69 and 83. The term is even used for book epigrams written in rhythmic prose. In ms. Athen. 56 (s. X), for instance, we read on fol. 1: ἐπίγραμμα. ἔλεος καὶ ὑγεία τῷ γράψαντι· δόξα καὶ ἔπαινος τῷ κτησαμένῳ· σοφία καὶ σύνεσις τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν (“epigram: mercy and health to the scribe; glory and praise to the owner; wisdom and understanding to the readers”)²⁵. If a book epigram is expressly meant to serve as an introduction to the literary text which immediately follows, in manuscripts it is sometimes called a πρόγραμμα: so, for instance, in Laur.VI 10 (s. XIV), fol. 1, where we find Euthymios Zigabenos’ prologue in verse to the *Dogmatic Panoply*²⁶; see also the following book epigrams in literary sources: Mauropous 27, 28 and 30, Ps. Psellos 54 and Prodromos 61²⁷. The words πρόγραμμα and ἐπίγραμμα have basically the same meaning: the former is a “pro-script”, the latter is an “ad-script” (cf. “prologue” versus “epilogue”).

To summarize, when the word ἐπίγραμμα specifically refers to a Byzantine (and not to an ancient) poem, it can have two meanings. It is either a “text written on (an object)” or a “text written next to (a piece of literature)”, or to put it in German for the sake of clarity, it is either an “Aufschrift” or a “Beischrift”. German terminology also provides another splendid and highly relevant term, namely “Gebrauchstext”. These so-called “Gebrauchstexte” comprise a wide range of literary, sub-literary or non-literary texts intended for practical use, such as law-books, painter’s manuals, astrological treatises, medical compendia, rhetorical textbooks, gnomologies, catenae, doctrinal handbooks, letters, messages on sign-posts, inscriptions, homilies and speeches, and so on²⁸. Since the term ἐπίγραμμα, on the few occasions it is used, denotes a text which serves a practical use (either as a verse inscription or as a book epigram), it falls beyond doubt into the category of what the Germans call “Gebrauchstexte”²⁹.

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, it is totally irrelevant what classicists and modern scholars think an epigram is; we need to know what the Byzantines themselves have to say. If the Byzantines unequivocally define the

²⁵ Ed. A. MARAVA-CHATZINICOLAOU & CHR. TOUFEXI-PASCHOU, *Catalogue of the Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts of the National Library of Greece*, vol I. Athens 1978, 1.

²⁶ Ed. BANDINI 1763–70: I, 115.

²⁷ Prodromos 26 is also entitled πρόγραμμα. I do not understand this title, unless Prodromos 26 is supposed to be an introduction to Prodromos 25.

²⁸ See A. GARZYA, *JÖB* 31, 1 (1981) 263–287.

²⁹ See VOLPE CACCIATORE 1982: 11–19 and HÖRANDNER 1987: 236.

ἐπίγραμμα as an inscription or a book epigram, then this is what a Byzantine epigram is. It follows, therefore, that the number of verses is not a valid criterion in establishing whether or not a Byzantine poem is an epigram. The verse inscription on the St. Polyeuktos (*AP* I, 10), which consists of 76 verses, is an ἐπίγραμμα according to the Byzantine definition of the term³⁰. The book epigram in ms. Basel B II 15 (s. IX) celebrating the wisdom of its owner, Sisinnios of Laodikeia, who had commissioned sixty-two Homilies of Chrysostom to be copied in a luxurious manuscript³¹, consists of no less than 102 verses. This poem, too, constitutes an ἐπίγραμμα in the eyes of the Byzantines. As for the sort of metre used in Byzantine epigrams, one cannot fail to notice that the elegiac distich (the metre of ancient epigrams) and the dactylic hexameter (a metre popular in late antique inscriptions) by and large disappear after the year 600. The usual metre is the dodecasyllable, either in its prosodic or unprosodic form. Almost all Byzantine epigrams make use of the dodecasyllable, with a few classicizing exceptions in hexameters or elegiacs. The Byzantine anacreontic is never used for epigrams³²; the political verse rarely, and only after the eleventh century.

In the second part of this book (chapters 4–9) I shall discuss the various types of the Byzantine epigram, including not only genuine “Gebrauchstexte”, but also purely literary imitations of the kinds of ἐπίγραμμα that were in use in Byzantium. It is often difficult to decide whether an epigram found only in manuscripts and not *in situ*, originally served a practical purpose, or whether it merely imitates the literary conventions of the Byzantine epigram. The problem is that there are so very few “matches”: Byzantine epigrams found both *in situ* and in manuscripts. There is ample material evidence for the re-use of epigrams on later Byzantine and post-Byzantine monuments³³, but unfortu-

³⁰ The church of the Panagia of Panori in Mistras, dating from the Palaeologan period, was inscribed with even more verses: 87 in total. See G. MILLET, *BCH* 23 (1899) 150–154.

³¹ Ed. G. MEYER & M. BURCKHARDT, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel*. Abt. B. Theologische Pergamenthandschriften, I. Basel 1960, 150–169. According to L. PERRIA, *RBN* 26 (1989) 125–132, the ms. dates from before 879–880.

³² In his *De metris pindaricis*, where he discusses a holospondaic type of the paroemiac, Isaac Tzetzes tells us that this metre can be detected in an inscription in the Hagia Sophia dating from the reign of Leo VI: see C. MANGO, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*. Washington 1962, 96–97. P. MAAS, *BZ* 24 (1924) 485–486, suggests that Isaac refers to unprosodic anacreontic hemiambs. If Maas’ interpretation is correct, this would be the only instance of the use of the anacreontic for Byzantine verse inscriptions; but it is questionable whether Isaac Tzetzes’ information is entirely trustworthy. Perhaps it was an inscription in prose, which, purely by coincidence, could be measured as if it constituted a variant of the paroemiac.

³³ See chapter 2, pp. 71 and 81, chapter 3, pp. 92–93, and chapter 5, pp. 149–150. See also E. FOLLIERI, *I calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo*. Brussels 1980, 218, n. 6, and HÖRANDNER 1987: 238, n. 12.

nately the number of epigrams still located in their original surroundings is fairly limited. This is mainly because the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, where most inscriptions were once to be found, has irretrievably disappeared under the building layers of modern Istanbul. Let me give an example. In the 1570s Theodosios Zygomalas wrote a long letter to Martin Crusius in which he reported having read an inscription in the church of the Pantokrator, of which he quotes the first ten verses³⁴. These ten verses form the beginning of a very long text (145 vv.) celebrating the inauguration of the Pantokrator complex in 1139–1143³⁵. The inscription Zygomalas spotted in the Pantokrator is lost for good; but we can still read the text in manuscript. Without Zygomalas' explicit testimony, few scholars would have guessed that this text is in fact an inscription, and even fewer people would actually have believed it. Nowadays there are only a limited number of epigrams that still survive in their original contexts. Whereas the Greek Anthology contains dozens of genuine Byzantine verse inscriptions, only few of these are still found *in situ*: parts of the long inscription on the St. Polyeuktos (*AP* I, 10), some of the epigrams on the late antique statues of charioteers (*AP* I 335–378 & *AP* XV, 41–51), and traces of the inscription on the decoration of the apse of the Hagia Sophia (*AP* I, 1)³⁶. In Byzantine manuscripts we find four ninth-century epigrams on the decoration of the walls of the Hagia Sophia, a few fragments of which are still extant³⁷. As regards the period after the year 1000, I know of only three epigrams that can be found both in manuscript and on stone: a dedicatory epigram celebrating the construction of a church of St. Peter and St. Paul on Corfu by George Bardanes³⁸, an epitaph “to himself” by the same George Bardanes³⁹, and an epitaph to the protostrator Michael Glabas by Manuel Philes⁴⁰.

³⁴ Published in: M. CRUSIUS, *Turcograecia*. Basel 1584, 74–98, esp. p. 95.

³⁵ Ed. G. MORAVCSIK, *Szent László Leánya és a Bizánci Pantokrator-monostor*. Budapest–Constantinople 1923, 43–47 (see also pp. 70–72). See G. DE GREGORIO, in: *Lesarten. Festschrift für Athanasios Kambylis*, ed. I. VASSIS, G.S. HENRICH & D.R. REINSCH. Berlin–New York 1998, 166–170.

³⁶ For *AP* I, 1 and 10, see chapter 3, p. 92, n. 32 and n. 33; for the charioteer epigrams, see CAMERON 1973: 65–95.

³⁷ See MERCATI 1922a: 282–286.

³⁸ Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 44. Guillou fails to mention that the epigram is also found in *Cryptensis Z α XXIX*, fol. 23, a ms. of the late 13th C. copied in Otranto (for the date of the manuscript, see P. CANART, *Scrittura e Civiltà* 2 (1978) 156, n. 134); ed. A. ROCCHI, *Versi di Cristoforo Patrizio editi da un codice della monumentale Badia di Grottaferrata*. Rome 1887, 67. See L. STERNBACH, *Eos* 5 (1898–99) 113–114.

³⁹ *CIG* 9438. Also to be found in *Cryptensis Z α XXIX*; ed. ROCCHI, 67 and STERNBACH, 114–117 (see footnote above).

⁴⁰ The inscription on the parekklesion of the Pammakaristos has been published numerous times: see the list of editions in HÖRANDNER 1987: 237, n. 6. The epitaph can also be found in manuscripts: see MILLER 1855–57: I, 117–118 (E 223). See also TALBOT 1999: 77.

Although the number of epigrams that are still to be found *in situ* is extremely limited, one should not forget that the exact opposite holds equally true: that is to say, only a very few of the verse inscriptions and book epigrams that are still extant today (see appendices VIII–IX), can be found in Byzantine collections of poems. True enough, given the poor quality of some of these verse inscriptions and book epigrams, it is hardly likely that all of these “Gebrauchstexte” were composed by competent poets, whose works were deemed worthy enough to be copied by future generations. But this hardly applies to all verse inscriptions and book epigrams. In fact, most of these texts definitely stand comparison with the literary epigrams found in Byzantine manuscripts and must surely have been written by professional poets. The reason why these excellent verse inscriptions and book epigrams have not survived in manuscript form, is simply that Byzantine poetry, even if it was as good as what we sometimes find *in situ*, was generally not copied. In other words, the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα finds itself in a sort of Catch 22 situation: since most inscriptions were lost in the course of time and since most epigrams were not copied, there are very few “matches”; consequently, with the lack of inscriptions and manuscript material still extant, it becomes extremely difficult to interpret the little we have on the basis of what is no longer there. But let us not get too pessimistic. By closely studying the Byzantine verse inscriptions and book epigrams that have come down to us, and by comparing this material with the texts found in manuscript, genres and generic rules pertaining to all sorts of epigrams can be outlined clearly. Evidence is scarce, and we have only some loose pieces of a gigantic jigsaw puzzle; but if these surviving pieces are put in the right place, a picture of the Byzantine epigram emerges.

In the second volume of this book, I shall discuss the remaining kinds of Byzantine poetry – all the poetic genres that do not fall into the category of the epigram. I refer to these non-epigrammatic texts simply as “poems”. “Poems” include, for instance, Byzantine satires, ekphraseis, panegyrics, catanyctic alphabets, riddles, and so forth. These various genres have nothing in common, other than the mere fact that they are not epigrams. There are two reasons for dividing the poetic output of the Byzantines into epigrams and poems, one of a practical and another of a more fundamental nature. First of all, the Byzantine epigram forms a clear-cut category of its own, with distinctive features allowing us to easily recognize and differentiate this type of poetry from all the rest. And moreover, as 30 to 50 % of the poetic texts we find in manuscripts belong to this category, the anxious classifier can comfort himself with the idea that with the Byzantine epigram alone, he already covers a substantial part of all verses written in Byzantium. “Though this be madness, yet there is method in it”. The second reason why I believe it makes sense to distinguish epigrams from poems is that some Byzantines at least made the very same distinction. In the second chapter (pp. 65–66), I shall point out that Pisides’

poetry book is neatly divided into epigrams and poems: the former are to be found at the beginning, the latter at the end of the collection. In his epitaph to Prodromos, Niketas Eugenianos praises the writings of his beloved master. Celebrating the poetic skills of his predecessor, he singles out two kinds of poetry in which Prodromos especially excelled: hexametric panegyrics, and epigrams inscribed either on works of art or tombs. He says that the former appeal to the ear and the latter to the eye. Both kinds of poetry are equally beautiful; but whereas the panegyrics please the eagerly listening audience, the epitaphs and epigrams carry a special cachet as splendid adornments of the tombs and icons on which they are inscribed⁴¹. Following the lead of these two Byzantine poets, Pisides and Eugenianos, who both differentiate between epigrams and poems, I believe this to be a fundamental distinction that may help us in sorting out the manuscript material.

* *
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Poets and Patrons

When we think of medieval poets, there is one figure that immediately springs to mind: the begging poet – a composite of various romantic types: poor Homer and other blind bards⁴², the wandering poets of the *Carmina Burana*, the minstrels in the medieval West, and the archetypal *Ptochoprodromos* in Byzantium. In fact, there is even some truth to the romantic idea of the poor poet eating the crumbs of the rich man's dinner, at which he performs his tricks and delivers flattering poems to the host. It cannot be denied that Manuel Philes and other Palaeologan poets, in a time when there were too many intellectuals and too few posts in the imperial and patriarchal bureaucracies, repeatedly begged for some reward. And even in the twelfth century, when there were certainly more opportunities to climb up the social ladder, shockingly explicit requests for remuneration, either financial or in the form of regular appointments, can be found time and again in the literary works of Byzantine authors⁴³. However, before the Comnenian age, such straightforward requests for money or lucrative posts in the administration are rarely encountered. In

⁴¹ Ed. C. GALLAVOTTI, *SBN* 4 (1935) 225–226 (vv. 135–159).

⁴² See, for instance, CL. FAURIEL's introduction to the *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (Paris 1824–25). Having never visited Greece, Fauriel imagined that all the singers of δημοτικά τραγούδια, quite like mythical Homer, had to be blind bards.

⁴³ See P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 346–352.

poem no. 16, Michael Psellos asks Emperor Michael IV (1034–1041) to appoint him as a notary; in a poem addressed to Constantine IX Monomachos shortly after 1047, John Mauropous requests the emperor to award him a position in the imperial bureaucracy suitable to his age and his merits⁴⁴.

But there is hardly any evidence to suggest that in the years between c. 600 and 1000, Byzantine poets expected to benefit from their literary products. There is no petitioning, bargaining, or pleading to be rewarded for services rendered. What are we to make of this? Does it mean that the rules of the game were different at that time? Did poets honestly not desire to be given their due and to be recompensed for their literary efforts? Before answering these admittedly difficult questions, let us first look at two tenth-century instances of poets expecting something in return from the person they are writing for. In his panegyric, *The Capture of Crete*, Theodosios the Deacon writes at the very end of the first *akroasis* (A 269–272): “Do not overlook the works of Theodosios written in honour of your majesty, so that his hand, urged to write on, may turn to the second panoply of your army”. He evidently means to say that, with a little encouragement from the emperor, he is ready to deliver the next *akroasis* in which he once again, for the second time, will praise the military feats of the emperor’s panoply on Crete. However, he does not specify what he wants from the emperor. Applause and cheerful encouragements to continue? Money? An official position somewhere? Whatever the case, in April 963, when Theodosios the Deacon finally delivered his panegyric in public, the emperor (Romanos II) had died and Theodosios’ hopes of gaining any substantial benefits from his panegyric were thwarted⁴⁵. As is well known, John Geometres lavishly praises Emperor Nikephoros Phokas in many of his poems, and many scholars therefore rightly assume that he must have been the poet laureate at the court between 963 and 969⁴⁶. However, in none of these poems written in honour of Nikephoros Phokas does the poet explicitly ask for any material rewards. True enough, there is a poem (Cr. 305, 1) in which Geometres praises Nikephoros for his generosity: “The right hand of our lord Nikephoros is like (the river) Paktolos flowing with gold”. But this poem is not a direct request for money⁴⁷. There can be little doubt that Geometres was one of the courtiers who benefited from this Paktolos of gold, but we do not know through what sort of channels the money flowed into his pocket. Did the emperor pay the poet in hard cash? Or did he reward the poet for his services by appointing him to a lucrative post? The latter option seems more likely. Geometres served in

⁴⁴ Psellos: ed. WESTERINK 1992: 238. Mauropous: ed. KARPOZILOS 1982: 71–74.

⁴⁵ See PANAGIOTAKIS 1960: 12–17.

⁴⁶ See SCHEIDWEILER 1952: 300–319 and CRESCI 1995: 35–53.

⁴⁷ In contrast to Chr. Mityl. 55, a poem in which the emperor is compared to the gold-flowing Paktolos as well: see C. CRIMI, *Graeca et Byzantina*. Catania 1983, 41–43.

the military from the late 950s to 985: his military rank is unknown, but at a certain point in his career he was awarded the honorary title of *protospatharios* (by Nikephoros Phokas?). As Geometres owned a luxurious mansion in the centre of the city and never refers to any financial problems (in his poems he complains about almost everything, but not about poverty), he must have been rather well-off. He may have inherited some of his possessions from his father, a “loyal servant of the emperor”, but the rest of his opulence will have accrued throughout his years of active service in the military⁴⁸. Thus I would suggest that Geometres did not directly depend upon financial gifts from the emperor, but that he was remunerated for his priceless literary services with a comfortable position in the Byzantine army.

To return to the initial question: why do Byzantine poets of the seventh through the tenth centuries hardly ever ask for any rewards, whereas later poets (especially from the twelfth century onwards) repeatedly beg to be paid for their services? Like Kazhdan⁴⁹, I believe that one should approach this problem from two separate angles: different forms of social stratification, and varying degrees of self-assertiveness. The Comnenian age is characterized by a political system in which a few families, related to each other by bonds of marriage and blood, effectively control the administration and the channels of promotion and demotion within the bureaucracy. As is only to be expected, in such a political system patronage plays a central role as the medium through which money, positions and favours are distributed. And this in its turn explains the sudden emergence of a social stratum of (supposedly destitute and mendicant) intellectuals who desire to enter the service of some patron in order to earn their bread. Before the year 1000, however, power is not yet as monopolized as in later centuries. The emperor was officially, and often also in practice, the main source from which power emanated; but even the emperor depended on the support of different factions at court. These factions changed all the time. They were not stable political pressure groups, but temporary coalitions of various individuals seeking (with the backing of their relatives) to protect their own interests. Allies would suddenly turn into bitter enemies; former enemies could become one's best friends. In this continuous power struggle, no one was to be trusted and no one was to be utterly rejected. This was a political system that did not favour patronage – at least not the kind of permanent patronage whereby the patron and his favourites depend upon each other in a sort of stable symbiotic relation. John Geometres is a splendid

⁴⁸ See LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 364–365.

⁴⁹ Kazhdan has put forward his theories in various publications: see, for instance, A.P. KAZHDAN & A. WHARTON EPSTEIN, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Berkeley–Los Angeles 1985, 130–133 and 220–230.

example of an intellectual serving different masters without ever feeling obliged to enter into their service. He writes what they like to hear because it serves his own interests, not because he feels any obligations towards them. Geometres writes poems for Nikephoros Phokas; but when the emperor is dead and no longer of any use, he writes poems for John Tzimiskes and Basil the Nothos – the very two persons responsible for the death of Geometres' beloved emperor. And when Basil the Nothos is ousted from power in 985 and Geometres is dismissed from active service in the military, he repeatedly begs Basil II to be given back his former position. Not a word about his former masters. Recognizing that Basil II is now in control, Geometres addresses his pleas to the very person who can make a difference if he so wishes. Is this sheer hypocrisy? No, from the viewpoint of tenth-century Byzantium it is not. One serves the interests of the (always temporary) master as long as necessary, and then one changes sides and serves the interests of the new -but equally temporary- master. There is no place here for permanent patronage, for whoever may seem to gain the upper hand, may very quickly lose it.

Then there is the factor of growing self-assertiveness on the part of Byzantine authors. In the second volume, I shall discuss this phenomenon in more detail. Among many other things, I shall try to explain why the term “individualism”, which many scholars use to describe this phenomenon, is not entirely correct. I have to admit that the term “self-assertiveness” is ugly, but it at least aptly describes what is going on. Starting from the mid-ninth century, Byzantine poets claim for themselves a gradually more prominent role in the literary universe of their own works. They begin to assert themselves. They begin to talk about themselves. Of course, the lyrical voice of the “I” reflecting on his “inner self” is as much a figment of the poets' imagination as all the other characters that come to life in their literary creations. And yet, it cannot be denied that the first-person narrator often appears to be identical to the poet – at least, that is how we moderns are usually inclined to interpret the word “I”. Although the notorious “intentional fallacy”(that is, the error of confusing the author with the first-person narrator) is always a clear and present danger to be reckoned with, there are many poems in which poets seem to be talking about themselves. In the poetry of Pisides and Sophronios the “I” who is speaking is almost anonymous: a rather faint voice telling us that he is the one who wrote the text we are reading, but not a figure of flesh and blood. In the *Psogos* and the *Apology* of Constantine the Sicilian, however, we hear quite a different voice: the *ipse dixit* of someone stating his personal beliefs and desperately trying to defend his ambiguous views on the issue of Byzantine classicism. In the years after c. 850, Byzantine poets increasingly intrude into the literary space they create in their poems, and their voices saying “I” become more and more clamorous. In the late tenth century, this gradual development eventually leads to the full-blown type of author manifestly

present in his own literary works – a tendency exemplified by the lyrical effusions of Symeon the New Theologian and the highly egotistical poems of John Geometres. See, for instance, Cr. 333, 10: “Tell me, John, who made you an expert on matters divine and profane already at the age of eighteen? The Holy Virgin. But not only that; she also gifted me with magnificent courage. Let Momos (Envy) be shattered to pieces”. Here we have young Geometres bragging about his superb talents. He is only eighteen, but he is already versed in theology and profane wisdom. He is also a courageous soldier. That is why he is the envy of all and sundry, but he really could not care less. Is this the recklessness of youth? Perhaps, but even in his more mature poems Geometres certainly shows no lack of headstrong confidence in his own talents: he is a great poet, a profound thinker and a military genius to boot⁵⁰. The tendency of Byzantine authors to assert themselves in their literary works becomes very clear in Psellos, Mauropous and Christopher Mitylenaios, who do not seem to grow weary of flaunting their superior talents and rumbustiously manifesting themselves in the various poems that have come down to us. The same can be said, to varying degrees, of such different poets as Kallikles, Theophylaktos, Prodromos and Balsamon, all of whom display a remarkably strong sense of self-esteem.

I would say that the growing dependency on influential patrons and the tendency to increasingly assert oneself (which is perhaps simply the reverse side of servitude, of needing a patron in order to procure a place for oneself) explain to a large degree why Comnenian poets repeatedly ask for favours, whereas poets before the year 1000 do not. This does not mean that poets before the year 1000 did not desire to receive something for their trouble. But there was not yet a highly developed system of patronage in which professional poets had to compete and to struggle to ingratiate themselves and curry their patron’s favour. The game was basically the same, but the rules were different. Even back then, in the seventh through the tenth centuries, poets did write on commission and poets did try to flatter the person for whom they were writing. Needless to say, these poets certainly hoped to benefit from their skilfully wrought panegyrics and other occasional poems. And yet, before the year 1000, Byzantine poets are rarely caught red-handed in the act of soliciting. If requests are made at all, they are made very discreetly. See, for instance, the panegyric *In Heraclium ex Africa redeuntem*, vv. 72–75: “O thee, provisioner of noble favours, favours that do not relate to transient matters but lead to the everlasting substance, accept this small (contribution) and teach me (how to deliver) greater (contributions)”. The poem was written in late 610 or early 611 by George of Pisidia, when he had not yet been enlisted into the service of

⁵⁰ See LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 360, 364–365 and 369–370.

Herakleios, the emperor whom he would faithfully serve throughout his remaining career⁵¹. In the verses quoted above, Pisides obviously asks to become the favourite court poet of Herakleios: he presents his “small” panegyric and humbly asks the emperor if he cannot be allowed the honour of writing “greater” panegyrics (δέχου τὰ μικρὰ καὶ δίδασκε κρείττονα). However, this straightforward request is introduced by a few complimentary words about Herakleios and his generosity, suggesting that the favours he distributes to his followers are not at all of a material, but of a spiritual kind. This is pure hypocrisy, of course. But it clearly shows that the barter economy of give and take -poems for money or jobs- had not yet become so normal that poets dared to ask shamelessly for material favours. Financial rewards are the sort of thing one does not discuss. In his later poetry Pisides never again overtly asked for any favours, but of course, by then he had become the poet laureate and no longer needed to beg for something he was already receiving.

It can hardly be a coincidence that almost all poets between c. 600 and 1000 belong to the upper echelons of Byzantine society. Most of them are either in the service of the emperor or the patriarch; a few poets (especially between c. 850 and 900) are teachers and a few others (especially between c. 800 and 850) are monks. Taking into account the great number of bishops, high civil servants and generals among the poets treated in this book, there can be but little doubt that poetry was very much the pastime of the Byzantine elite in those days. What is more, the language and style of these poems is often so obscure and recondite that it seems very unlikely that many people, other than the powerful mandarins at the top, could have understood what was being said. Did the members of the Byzantine elite (between c. 600 and 1000) write their poems when they were off duty, or did they write their poems during working hours? There is not much solid evidence to prove or to refute either option, but a few texts clearly indicate that some form of official patronage did exist even before the year 1000. Whether this patronage accounts for the high social position of some of the poets, is a quandary difficult to solve as there is so little material to work with. Did poets write poems in order to obtain a lucrative post, or did people at the top of the Byzantine bureaucracy feel obliged to flatter their employers? In other words, were poems meant to bring about a change in the social position of Byzantine poets, or did they simply serve the purpose of reinforcing the already existing situation? These are difficult questions to which there is no answer; it may suffice just to have articulated them.

In the *Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles*, Constantine the Rhodian writes: “O illustrious, purple-born Constantine, how can you order me to

⁵¹ PERTUSI 1959: 18–19 dates the poem to 619–620. But see STERNBACH 1891: 35 and F. GONNELLI, in: *La poesia bizantina*, ed. U. CRISCUOLO & R. MAISANO. Naples 1995, 116.

describe in words the marvellous beauty of the church of the Holy Apostles? How should I express in the iambic metre of harmonious songs this ineffable construction, the sight of which alone suffices to dumbfound me, so that I dare not speak and write about it?" (vv. 387–393). The poet expressly tells us that Emperor Constantine VII *ordered* him (πῶς οὖν κελεύεις) to write an ekphrasis. As the passage I have just quoted was part of the speech that Constantine the Rhodian delivered at the Byzantine court when he presented the text of his *Ekphrasis* to the young emperor (between 913 and 919)⁵², there is no need to question its veracity. However, as Constantine VII was certainly too young to have commissioned the poem himself, it is reasonable to assume that it was in fact by orders of the regency headed by Empress Zoe that Constantine the Rhodian undertook the difficult task of writing an ekphrasis of the church of the Holy Apostles. It is worth noticing that the prologue to the *Ekphrasis* (vv. 1–18) presents things somewhat differently. There the poet wants us to believe that he presented the *Ekphrasis* to the emperor merely as a gift (δῶρον) and that he had composed the text of his own free will, without any formal request from the emperor or his entourage (he calls himself an ὑπουργὸς αὐτόκλητος). Words like δῶρον or χάρις can be found in many Byzantine poems. The poet presents his poem as a *gift* to his patron, whom he asks to kindly *accept* his offer (δέχου or the like: see, for instance, Pisides' words quoted above: δέχου τὰ μικρά). There can be but little doubt that poets desire something in return for their generous gifts and that these requests to *accept a gift* involve more than simply showing gratitude for services rendered. In the prologue to the *Ekphrasis*, Constantine the Rhodian ends by saying that Constantine VII "is an emperor completely sympathetic to, and stepping into the breach for, those who labour hard". It does not require much imagination to understand what the emperor's "sympathy" stands for in this particular case: financial support for the poet who has served him so admirably. In an encomium on Basil the Nothos, written not long after 976⁵³, John Geometres also uses the "gift" metaphor: "now that the father [Basil the Nothos] hastened to help his sons [Basil II and Constantine VIII] and lovingly incited young musicians to sing, now, too, the farmer offers the first fruits of his labours to God and applauds loudly; likewise, now please accept and receive favourably (δέχου καὶ προσδέχου) these small first fruits of words (μικρὰς ἀπαρχὰς λόγων) that I offer to you" (Cr. 308, 3–8). In the late 970s, when he delivered this encomium, Geometres was anything but a young, inexperienced poet who needed the caring tutelage of a patron in order to start writing. In fact, by then he was in his early forties and he had already been writing court poetry for more than

⁵² See SPECK 1991: 249–268.

⁵³ See LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 373–375 and 377–378.

twenty years. There is no need, therefore, to interpret verse Cr. 308, 4 too literally: καὶ μουσικοὺς ἔθαλψεν εἰς ᾧδὰς νέους. The opening verses of the encomium are intended to create the impression of fatherly love. Just as Basil the Nothos eagerly assisted his “sons” (in fact, his great-nephews), so does he “foster” his cherished young poets. The verb ἔθαλψε is deliberately ambiguous. Basil not only “warms up” his young poets and “spurs” them to write poems, but he also “cherishes” them. To put it more mundanely, Basil commissions Geometres and other “young” poets to write poems in his honour and shows them his “loving care” by rewarding them for their encomia. The word ἀπαρχαί, “first fruits”, may indicate that this was the first encomium Geometres wrote on behalf of Basil the Nothos and that he implicitly promises to write more “fruits of words” if Basil is pleased with this particular product of his pen. If so, it would explain why Geometres uses the metaphor of fatherly care for young poets. He is no longer that “young”, but he wants to serve a “new” master (νέος can have both meanings). He is a poet in need of loving care from his new patron – that is, loving care in the form of a lucrative position in the army.

The most explicit references to the prevailing system of patronage can be found in Byzantine letters. In letter 32, Ignatios the Deacon writes to Constantine Asekretis that he must have been joking when he requested him to correct once again “the lame and halting rubbish of those iambics” – iambics written by an unnamed poet, which celebrated the restoration of the cult of the icons in 843, and exalted both empresses Irene and Theodora⁵⁴. Ignatios really cannot understand why his first correction was not good enough to be presented to “those who requested it” (τοῖς αἰτήσασιν). Well, says Ignatios, probably because “you and the one who bids you” (σύ τε καὶ ὁ καλῶν) prefer the laming iambics of the original version to the prosodically correct verses I have written. Here we clearly see the mechanisms of patronage. Constantine Asekretis is acting as the middleman. He is asked by unnamed persons in the higher bureaucracy (τοῖς αἰτήσασιν and ὁ καλῶν) to take care that empresses Irene and Theodora are praised in verses that do not fall short of the expectations of people at the court – prosodically correct iambics celebrating the cult of the icons. He hands this project over to Ignatios the Deacon, a writer of high repute, but with a fairly low social status at the time (being a former iconoclast, who had to make amends for his lapse into heresy). Ignatios does what he is told to do and returns the corrected version to Constantine, who in his turn shows Ignatios’ work to his employers. But they are not pleased with the result and send the papers back, ordering Ignatios to go over the text once again. In his letter Ignatios unfortunately does not make clear what he could expect to

⁵⁴ See MANGO 1997: 92–93 and 186–187.

gain from this whole rigmarole of drafting and redrafting corrected versions of someone else's poem. He works on commission from people high in the hierarchy -that much is clear- but what is his fee? The Anonymous Professor (c. 920–940), on the contrary, leaves no doubt as to the financial aspect of patronage. In a letter to Theodore Mystikos, he writes that his students need an incentive (τὸ παραπειθόν τι) to write encomiastic iambs in honour of Theodore and to post them on every street corner of Constantinople⁵⁵. Seeing that this impoverished schoolmaster time and again begs for money in his letters, there can be but little doubt that the “incentive” he requests (officially on behalf of his students, but in fact for himself) must have been of a financial nature.

So far I have only discussed panegyrics and other encomiastic occasional poems, where the relationship between poet and patron is fairly clear. Even when court poets, such as Pisides, do not explicitly clarify what they expect to gain from their literary “gifts” to their patrons, it is reasonable to assume that they desire some form of reward. There is clearly something in it for them. But what about epigrams and verse inscriptions written on behalf of powerful Byzantines? How does patronage work there?

In Athous Laura Ω 126, a manuscript dating from the first half of the eleventh century, we find a collection of eight dedicatory epigrams, all devoted to a silver bowl made at the behest of Constantine Dalassenos when he was governor of Antioch, after 1024⁵⁶. The first three epigrams are anonymous, the following five are attributed to a certain eunuch. The literary quality of the verses is very low and there would be no need to pay any attention to them, were it not for the fact that they look rather like rough drafts. What is so unusual about these epigrams is that they “are so similar, and are simply shuffling around the same words and conceits” (as Maguire puts it). The eunuch, for instance, uses the same stock phrases in all his epigrams: ἔτευξε Κωνσταντῖνος Ἀντιοχείας, ἄρχων δικαίως, Δαλασσηνῶν τὸ κλέος: 5. 3–4 = 6. 2–3 and 7. 2–3 (cf. 4. 2–3 and 8. 3–4); τεμπνὸν ἔργον: 4. 1 = 6. 1, 7. 1 and 8. 2 (cf. 5. 1–2); δίψης ἄκος: 4. 1 = 8. 2; and εἰς πόσιν: 5. 2 = 7. 1. Byzantine poets can certainly be quite tedious, but they are never that repetitious. They at least try to achieve some stylistic variation in their poems. That is plainly not the case here. Why then do the eunuch and the other anonymous poet constantly repeat themselves? Like Maguire, I would say that these epigrams were composed “as trial pieces for the patron to choose from”. “In these verses what we

⁵⁵ Ed. A. MARKOPOULOS, *Anonymi Professoris Epistulae* (CFHB 37). Berlin 2000, 83. See LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 404–405 (Markopoulos, p. 10*, n. 46, is not convinced by my arguments).

⁵⁶ Ed. MERCATI 1970: II, 458–461. On the manuscript, see J. DARROUZÈS, *Épistoliers byzantins du X^e siècle*. Paris 1960, 20–27; on Constantine Dalassenos, see J.-C. CHEYNET & J.-F. VANNIER, *Études prosopographiques*. Paris 1986, 80–82.

see, in effect, is the Byzantine poet ringing all the changes, in a somewhat desperate effort to find the right formula to please his patron”⁵⁷. Balsamon, no. 18, constitutes an interesting parallel. There we have three epigrams, celebrating a golden cup commissioned by Andronikos Kontostephanos. The quality of the verses is much higher, of course, but it cannot be denied that Balsamon, too, is “shuffling around the same words and conceits”. In epistle no. 7, addressed to Kontostephanos, a letter which accompanied the delivery of the epigrams, Balsamon tells him that the verses may not stand comparison with the beauty of the golden cup and may not deserve to be touched by the lips of Kontostephanos, but that they certainly will improve a great deal if Balsamon’s patron is willing to show his benevolence⁵⁸. All this is false modesty, of course. Balsamon is simply flattering his patron. He is asking for his *σμπάθεια*, his “benevolence”, which shows itself in financial or other favours to the poet. The oblique reference to Kontostephanos’ lips suggests that the verses Balsamon had written were meant to be inscribed on the golden cup from which Kontostephanos would drink his wine. If so, it follows that these three splendid epigrams, like the insipid verses in Laura Ω 126, were composed as trial pieces for the patron to choose from. For, whatever the size of the golden cup, it can hardly have borne the text of three different epigrams (of six lines each).

There are not that many Byzantine poems that survive in the form of rough drafts, with the exception of the poetic output of Dioskoros of Aphroditon written on the verso of his personal papyri⁵⁹ and some of the poems in Manuel Philes’ *Metaphrasis of the Psalms* (published after his death on the basis of the poet’s papers)⁶⁰. Apart from the verses in Laura Ω 126, there is only one instance I know of: the iconoclastic epigrams on the Chalke. As I shall discuss these propaganda texts in chapter 9 (pp. 274–278), it may suffice to point out that the epigrams we find in *PG* 99, 475b–477a, are mere “trial pieces”, which did not win official approval and were therefore not used as verse inscriptions (in contrast to the other iconoclastic epigrams in *PG* 99, 435b–437c, which were actually approved by the government committee in charge of the Chalke and the decoration of its facade). The iconoclastic epigrams that were eventually rejected by the committee in charge would normally have ended up in the waste-basket, were it not for the magnitude and societal repercussions of the debate on the cult of the icons. As iconoclasm remained the universal bogey even after 842, anything connected with the Chalke and its decoration was of

⁵⁷ See MAGUIRE 1996: 8–9.

⁵⁸ Ed. HORNA 1903: 185 (poem 18) and 214 (letter 7).

⁵⁹ See BALDWIN 1985: 100.

⁶⁰ The so-called “Zweitmetaphrasen”: see STICKLER 1992: 125–156 and M. LAUXTERMANN, *JÖB* 45 (1995) 371.

great interest to the iconophile opponents, even epigrams that never made it. The badly written verses in Laura Ω 126 survived because the manuscript was probably copied either at the behest of Constantine Dalassenos himself, one of his relatives, or one of his most intimate friends (given the fact that the date of the epigrams and the date of the manuscript practically coincide).

Rough drafts are extremely interesting because they highlight a pivotal phase in the production of epigrams, which is as important as it is difficult to pinpoint, namely the moment when the poet showed his work to the patron in order to get his approval. The majority of the epigrams that have come down to us, are final products carefully polished, and polished over again, until the poet and his patron were satisfied with the result. It is all this polishing that makes it difficult to understand the production process⁶¹. What went on between poet and patron before the epigram was inscribed on the object for which it was intended? What did the patron tell the poet when he asked him to write a nice epigram? What were the crucial details that the poet should absolutely not forget to mention? Well, above all, the name and the social status of his patron. See, for instance, the eunuch's epigrams in Laura Ω 126: the silver bowl was "made" by Constantine, who was a Dalassenos and who was the governor of Antioch. The poet also has to specify the type of object his epigram is inscribed on. That is of course why the eunuch uses the words εἰς πόσιν ("for drinking") and δΐψης ἄκος ("a remedy against thirst"). Furthermore, the poet needs to praise the work of art his patron has commissioned: the silver bowl is a τεῦκρον ἔργον ("a delightful piece"). These three elements -patron, object and praise- are characteristic of all Byzantine dedicatory epigrams.

The majority of the dedicatory epigrams must have been written by official poets working on commission for privileged patrons, and not by these patrons themselves. Unfortunately, many art historians appear to confuse patrons and poets. Take, for instance, the tenth-century illuminated Bible of Leo in the Vatican library (Reg. gr. 1), where we find epigrams on the frames of full-size miniatures. Its patron, Leo Sakellarios, is not only thought to have personally guided the artists who were working on the miniatures, but he is even credited with the composition of the epigrams in the illuminated manuscript that bears his name. Quite something for a patron! He is both artist and poet! There is no evidence to support this ridiculous theory, and it does not accord with the little we know about the production of epigrams in Byzantium. True enough, what we know is not much, but all the pieces and shreds of evidence clearly indicate

⁶¹ HÖRANDNER 2003–04 discusses an interesting verse inscription on a niello cross at Sinai, at the bottom of which we find a text in prose: καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ αὐτοῦ ("and the rest in his own drawing"). He rightly interprets this as a technical instruction to the artisan, which by mistake was engraved along with the verse inscription.

that high-placed Byzantines would normally turn to professional poets in order to ensure that the verse inscriptions on the works of art they had commissioned met the high literary standards they and their peers at court so much appreciated. Why should Leo Sakellarios have been any different? It is reasonable to assume that he not only hired artists and scribes to produce a luxurious manuscript, but also ordered one of the Byzantine literati, perhaps an employee working in his service, to write a few elegant verses. The artists, the scribes and the poet are all hired hands.

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Poets and Public

What about the reception of Byzantine poetry? What do we know about its reading public or, in the case of poetry that is declaimed, its audience? Very little, and the little information we have is clouded in darkness⁶².

In literature written before the year 1000, there are hardly any references to the way poetry was received by the public. In a letter to Naukratios, Theodore of Stoudios complains that his friend had not told him whether he thought that writing iambs against the iconoclasts is a good idea; and in another letter, to his brother Joseph, Theodore writes that he much regrets that Joseph's iambic pamphlet against the iconoclast heresy got lost in the mail⁶³. In the *Refutation of the Sacrilegious Poems*, Theodore inveighs against the iconoclastic iambs on the Chalke and proves that they are totally inappropriate⁶⁴. In poem no. 105d, the same Theodore of Stoudios praises a poet for composing beautiful iambs on some religious subject. And in his *Vita*, we read that certain disciples of Gregory Asbestas made fun of Theodore's poems because they considered them to be badly written⁶⁵. All these testimonies are hardly of any value because it is obvious that poems are praised or vituperated, not for their literary merits, but because of their contents. If you are in favour of the cult of the icons, any anti-iconoclastic poem is good (see Theodore's letters) and any iconoclastic piece of writing is bad (see the *Refutation*). If you are a good Christian, you like any form of religious writing as long as it

⁶² For an excellent introduction to the topic, see HÖRANDNER 1991: 415–432.

⁶³ FATOUROS 1992: II, 226 (no. 108, cf. I, 231*) and II, 474–475 (no. 333, cf. I, 350*–351*).

⁶⁴ *PG* 99, 435–478. For Theodore's criticism of the mesostich of these iconoclastic pattern-poems, see chapter 4, pp. 139–140.

⁶⁵ *Vita* B: *PG* 99, 312C–313B.

concorde with true orthodoxy (see poem no. 105d). And if you are a disciple of Gregory Asbestas and, therefore, support the cause of patriarchs Photios and Methodios, you cannot but loathe the Stoudites and despise anything written by that horrid Theodore of Stoudios (see the *Vita*).

After the year 1000, however, there are many texts that bear proof of a purely aesthetic, and not ideologically biased, appreciation of contemporary poetry and prose. For instance, in poem no. 27, Christopher Mitylenaios praises a certain Niketas of Synada for his splendid orations, religious treatises and epigrams. And to give another example: Kallikles celebrates the famous Theodore of Smyrna for a brilliantly written eulogy, which, in its portrayal of the characteristics of the recently deceased person, surpasses even the artistic skills of Pheidias, Lysippus and Apelles (poem no. 30). The main reason why literary skills are praised so abundantly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is that Byzantium by then had turned into a mutual admiration society, in which advancement on the social ladder by and large depended on the good will people had built up for themselves by flattering other, more important members of the intellectual elite. Flattery, then, is what we find in these encomiastic texts on other people's literary products. However, all this ostentatious flattering is certainly of great relevance inasmuch as it reveals to us the literary standards of the time, consisting primarily in a good style, impeccable metrics, familiarity with classical texts, a rich vocabulary and rhetorical pyrotechnics. When authors are criticized in Byzantine texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is almost always because they allegedly failed to live up to these high literary standards. In Chr. Mityl. 79, however, we hear another sort of criticism. In this poem Christopher Mitylenaios replies to criticism vouchered by a certain Peter the Grammarian, who had read Chr. Mityl. 77 (see Chr. Mityl. 78). Although the text of Chr. Mityl. 79 is badly damaged, it is clear that Peter was surprised that Mitylenaios could compose a beautiful monody to his sister, although he was grief-stricken by her death at a young age. If he really bewailed her untimely death, how could Mitylenaios write such a superbly constructed text? If he genuinely regretted her loss, how could he indulge in splendid rhetoric? This is hardly a veiled criticism. Peter praises Christopher Mitylenaios for his beautiful style and fine rhetoric, but takes him to task for not being sincere enough. Peter's criticism sounds almost modern. Sincerity is something we moderns value highly (although the art of artistic writing, of course, is to fake sincerity); but it is not an argument much used by the Byzantines.

The problem with these aesthetic value judgments is that style is not an entirely objective criterion by which we can measure whether a given text possessed all the literary qualities needed to please the audience. There can be little doubt that Metochites was a *bad* poet in the eyes of the Byzantines because he had no feel for the language, often erred in prosody, lacked stylistic

dexterity, and failed to achieve rhetorical grandeur. But we do not know if *good* poets, such as Christopher Mitylenaios or John Mauropous, were widely acclaimed in their time. Talent they certainly had; but did they have a large audience? There are dozens of texts in which one intellectual congratulates another for his sublime style, impeccable metrics and fine rhetoric, but these texts, I am afraid, do not help us much to understand the modes of literary communication in Byzantium. What these texts tell us is how the inner circle of intellectuals judged new literary texts, not how the much larger group of intended readers and listeners actually responded. Since Byzantine poetry was rarely copied, the circulation of texts is unfortunately not an argument on which a literary sociologist can build his case. Whereas the value judgments of contemporary critics constitute a sort of Byzantine literary review magazine, there is not a contemporary bestseller list to put things into perspective. In short: we know more or less what the Byzantine critics liked, but we do not know what the Byzantine public liked.

In the iambic preface to the *Cycle*, Agathias tells the public that if they want to read more epigrams than his anthology provides, they should go to the market-place and buy whatever they like (*AP* IV, 3. 39–41). In the sixth century there was still a flourishing urban culture, with bookshops and cultivated readers buying books. After the year 600, however, manuscripts are no longer an everyday commodity, the trade in books reaches rock-bottom, and we lose sight of the literary market. True enough, there are some references to prices in the manuscripts Arethas possessed and there are some inventories of personal libraries (such as the one of Eustathios Boilas), but one can hardly pretend that the book trade in Byzantium was a booming business. Of course, many texts were produced for oral performance and thus were not intended for consumption in the tangible form of a book. But what about all the other texts, the reading materials of the Byzantines? Given the scarcity of manuscripts containing Byzantine literary texts in prose and verse, it is highly unlikely that these texts were much read. The reason for this is probably that there were not that many readers interested in Byzantine literature – at least, not interested enough to spend large sums of money on the purchase of expensive manuscripts. Literary texts were not a marketable commodity and the book trade, as far as it existed, must have been bumping along the bottom of recession. Therefore, to speak of texts as “literary products” is rather an anachronism, because it conjures up the image of a lively industry and a large market of consumers. There is only one poem that one may perhaps call a “product”, inasmuch as it is a ready-made standard text that could be used by any Byzantine who had to give a speech. This encomium can be found in two southern-Italian manuscripts. In Vat. gr. 1257, fol. 57^v (s. X), the poem consists of 30 verses and addresses an unnamed Calabrian youth; in Vall. E 37, fol. 91^r (a. 1317), however, there are 86 verses and the poem addresses an

anonymous Sicilian⁶⁶. The poem is, even by Byzantine standards, a mediocre piece of writing. It excels in sterile verbosity with a lot of redundant adjectives and appositions. It contains hackneyed metaphors and images, such as virtues shining forth “like the sun, a radiant crown, the light at dawn, glittering diamonds”, etcetera. And it reveals stylistic clumsiness, such as, for instance, the elative *κατεξοχώτατος*, “most superbly eminent”, where the word *ἔξοχος* would have been more than enough. What is so interesting about this southern-Italian text is that the *laudandus*, the person so lavishly praised in no less than 86 verses, is not named at all. His name is left open in the second verse: θαυμαστέ, τερπνὲ καὶ λαμπρὲ κῦρι τάδε, “admirable, delightful and brilliant mister so-and-so”. For κῦρι τάδε any suitable four-syllable name can be supplemented: Κωνσταντῖνε, Ἰωάννη, κῦρι Μάρκε, κῦρ Ῥοδόλφε, κατεπάνω, and so forth. The name is a blank and the poem is a form to be filled in by future users. Whoever likes the poem can appropriate it for his own purposes. By good fortune we know of such an instance when the text was re-used: Vat. Pii II gr. 47 (s. XII), fol. 155^r, where we find vv. 1–5 and 29 of the laudatory poem and where the name has been supplemented as follows: [κῦρ νοτάρ] Ἰωάννη⁶⁷.

To return to the subject of readers and listeners, there are many poems that, either explicitly or implicitly, address an audience. In panegyrics, epithalamia and other occasional poems that are meant to be declaimed, the audience is almost always invited to participate actively in the festivities. See, for instance, the beginning of Theodosios the Grammarian’s triumphal ode celebrating the victory over the Arabs in 717–718: “Let us applaud with pious hearts our Lord Christ for the magnificent miracles we have witnessed of late! Now that we see the haughty spirit of hostile Ishmael lying on the ground, let us say right here, as is the custom to say at times of victory: “What God is great like Thou, O mighty creator of the world?”⁶⁸. In this fervently anti-Islamic *epinikion*, the orator invites the audience to join in by clapping their hands and repeating after him: “τίς θεὸς μέγας ...”. He even reminds them of the fact that it is customary to sing this psalm verse on the occasion of victorious celebrations. The use of the plural voice (“let us ...”, “rejoice, all ye faithful ...”, and so forth) is quite common in Byzantine declamatory poetry.

⁶⁶ Ed. MERCATI 1931: 364–365 (vv. 1–30) and 368–369 (vv. 31–86).

⁶⁷ See S.G. MERCATI, *Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 11 (1941) 65–72 (repr. MERCATI 1970: II, 17–23). When he declaimed the poem, the orator probably just pronounced the four-syllable name Ἰωάννη; but when he copied the text, he added the words κῦρ νοτάρ to ensure that other people who had not been present at the recital, would know who the *laudandus* was: the Honourable Mr. John the Notary.

⁶⁸ Ed. LAMBROS 1884: 129 (vv. 1–8); cf. on p. 144 the end of a synaxarion text similar to vv. 6 and 8. Read in v. 6: εἰπόμεν αὐτοῦ: “τίς θεὸς ...;” (instead of εἰπόμεν αὐτ’ “οὗ τις θεὸς ...”, as Lambros prints); cf. *Psalm* 76 [77], 14 and *Book of Ceremonies*, 611.

It is simply a trite poetic device that helps to ensure that all those present at the recital of a panegyric or another occasional poem feel obliged to take part in the universal merriment. Let us look, for instance, at the beginning of Leo Choirosphaktes' anacreontic celebrating one of Leo VI's marriages: "I unhooked and took my lyre, touching the right chord, when I saw the tender maiden below the sweet canopy. *All ye lads, weave garlands at once and chant a musical ode.* See the thorn of the rose, see the plectrum of desire; impart freshness to the flame and inflame the fresh desire"⁶⁹. In the first strophe of the anacreontic, the lyrical subject adroitly presents himself in the guise of a new Anacreon, who grasps his lyre as soon as he spots the lovely bride, and then intones the epithalamium that follows. The first strophe is self-referential. It describes the enactment of what is already taking place. In the intercalary distich (printed in italics), the poet addresses the choir of young men and urges them to participate in the singing. This refers once again to the actual performance of the poem, for the choir has been hired to sing the intercalary distichs, including this one (whereas the strophes are sung by a soloist). In the next strophe, the poet directly addresses the audience present at the recital of the poem and asks them to witness the wedding ceremonies. Look at the thorny rose of love, listen to the plectrum of desire! Bride and groom are all flames; temper their burning passion, yet kindle it lest it cool off! By using the imperative mood, the poet appeals for all those present to engage in the festivities, to look at what is going on before their eyes and to listen to his poem. Thus the purpose of the first two strophes and the intercalary distich is to set the stage for the performance of the epithalamium by introducing the lyrical subject (impersonated by the soloist), addressing the choir of young men and inviting the audience to participate.

The audience is also present on occasions of public mourning. The monodies that resound at funerals always address the audience. The monody on the death of Leo VI, for instance, begins as follows (in the metrical translation of Ihor Ševčenko)⁷⁰:

O ruling City, wail; remove thy queen's crown from thy forehead;
thy citizens bid to convene and to bemoan thy ruler.
O vanity triumphant.

Here the imperial city, Constantinople, is personified and figures as a symbol of loss and sad bereavement. It wails, it moans, it laments. It removes the wreath from its forehead. Emperor Leo is dead and the funeral rites are taking place. No wonder the citizens of Constantinople feel sad. As they are all

⁶⁹ Ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 76 (vv. 1–10).

⁷⁰ Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 201 (text) and 204 (translation).

gathered along the streets and on the central squares, they see the emperor's body escorted to its final resting-place in the church of the Holy Apostles. On seeing this, they are reminded of the fact that life is transient, for even emperors as glorious as the late Leo do not live for ever: "O vanity triumphant!" (as the refrain of the monody says). And then they cry and lament. In this monody, just as in the epithalamium I just discussed, the use of the imperative mood is not so much an exhortation to do something, but rather a description of something that is already happening. The mourners are told to mourn. The moaning citizens of Constantinople are urged to bemoan their dead emperor. Nonetheless, although it may seem superfluous to admonish the people to do what they are already doing, the use of imperatives helps to strengthen and increase the feeling of utter grief. It tells the audience that what it is doing is only appropriate: public display of grief and sorrow is the right thing to do when the emperor has died.

In poems meant to be declaimed or sung, the audience is always present and plays an important role in the performance, either by just listening and showing signs of approval of what is being said, by loudly cheering or crying, or else by joining in, humming the melody and singing the refrains. Reading these poems, there can be hardly any doubt that they directly address an audience. The audience is there. It actively participates in what is going on. And yet, despite its vociferous presence, it remains a vague category of people. Who are they? Who are the persons present at the recital of declamatory poems? In order to answer this question, we need to know more about the context of these poems, the actual circumstances and physical surroundings. Where did Theodosios the Grammarian declaim his *epinikion* in 718? In the Hagia Sophia, during an all-night vigil? In the Hippodrome, in the presence of thousands of people? Or perhaps in the Great Palace, for a select audience of court officials? As we cannot situate the *epinikion* in its original context and locate it along the co-ordinates of time and space, it makes no sense to speculate about its intended audience. The same goes for most of the declamatory poems. As the epithalamium celebrating the marriage of Leo VI appears to address the wedding guests, it is reasonable to assume that only members of the court were present at its recital. The monody on the death of Leo VI expressly addresses the whole population of Constantinople; but seeing that monodies were declaimed at the moment of the burial⁷¹, it is obviously impossible that all citizens were gathered in the church of the Holy Apostles. The persons assembled there must have been the imperial family, various court dignitaries, as well as some representatives of the people (notably, the factions and the guilds).

⁷¹ See LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 25.

As for poetry that is not declaimed or sung, but rather is intended to be read, it is again quite difficult to form an idea of its intended public. Since literacy was not widespread and education in general was meagre, the number of readers of highbrow poetry will have been limited. It is reasonable to assume that the readers belonged to the same intellectual milieus that created this kind of refined highbrow poetry, namely the imperial officials, the patriarchal bureaucracy and the monasteries. It is also clear that Constantinople, at least after the year 800, is the place where most literature was produced and consumed, and that even poetry written by provincial intellectuals, such as bishops, judges and generals, was usually intended to be savoured by the reading public back home, in the capital. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to get a clearer picture of the literary coteries and intellectual constituencies that made up the reading public in Byzantium. For instance, by whom exactly was a given satirical poem read? Only by the allies and direct opponents of the author? Or by the reading public at large? We do not know. In fact, most of the times we even do not know who these supposed allies and opponents of the author may have been. There is almost no group of people as difficult to get a firm hold on as that of the Byzantine readers: we have hardly any idea as to their exact numbers, their social composition, their reading habits and their literary preferences. In short, the Byzantine reader is a question mark.

There are some types of poetry that directly address the intended reader. Didactic poetry usually makes use of the second person. Ignatios the Deacon's paraenetic alphabet begins as follows: "Listen to my advice, lad, and pay attention to nothing else. Take my dear counsels to heart. Spend all and buy only wisdom"⁷². In this poem Ignatios the Deacon, who at some point in his life used to be a schoolteacher, addresses his pupils and urges them to listen to his wise counsels. Of course, only the sun shines for free: so, if they want to attend his lessons, they will have to pay his teacher's fee. Right at the beginning of his didactic poem, the *Thousand-Line Theology*, Leo Choirosphaktes gives the following advice to his readers: "If thou art skilled in the art of literary discourse, take me in thy hand and in the depth of thy knowledge; but if thou art ignorant of higher learning, leave what thou canst not understand to friends who do"⁷³. Two sorts of readers are singled out here: scholars equipped with all the literary baggage needed to interpret Leo's learned poem, and less knowledgeable readers who are in need of their friends' intellectual guidance. Since the ignorant readers are supposed to be acquainted with persons capable

⁷² Ed. MÜLLER 1891: 321 (vv. 1–4).

⁷³ Ed. VASSIS 2002: 73 (vv. 1–4). These four verses imitate a well-known book epigram to Thucydides (*AP* IX, 583; also found in Laur. LXIX 2 (s. X), fol. 512); cf. *AP* XV, 13, an epigram by Constantine the Sicilian.

of understanding Leo Choirosphaktes' didactic poem, there can be hardly any doubt that the *Thousand-Line Theology* addresses an inner circle of Constantinopolitan literati who possess the intellectual capacities needed to grasp the meaning of this difficult and often rather obscure poem. It is a poem for the few; a poem for the select group of people who could understand the drift of Leo's theological arguments.

Gnomic poetry, too, makes use of the second person. It is a collective "you". "You have to avoid evil company". "You should not drink or eat too much". "Do not gossip at all". "Do not listen to false friends". "Try to stay away from youngsters". "Let yourself not be fooled by the deceptive world". Although Byzantine gnomologies were usually composed in monastic milieus, the manuscript evidence suggests that this kind of literature also reached out to laics living outside the monastery but aspiring to live up to the high moral standards of true Christianity. Since gnomic epigrams essentially point out to all Christians the right conduct in life, it is rather difficult to define their intended public. Primarily monks, of course; but apart from the monks, who exactly were the pious Byzantines reading and memorizing this kind of poetry? This is something we do not know.

Epigrams and verse inscriptions often prescribe how the viewer should react when he is looking at a picture. Theodore of Stoudios' epigram no. 41, for instance, begins as follows: "Behold here, in the fabric of the image, the Creator incarnated and His mother, and stand in awe upon seeing how God is a mere child and does everything for the sake of mankind's salvation". The epigram was woven into a richly embroidered textile, an altar cloth depicting the scene of the Birth of Christ, which had been donated to the chapel of the Holy Virgin in the Stoudios monastery. Theodore of Stoudios invites the viewer to look at the depiction and to marvel at the awesome sight of God's incarnation. In the next two verses he explains God's motives for donning the garment of mortal flesh: "(... in order that He, by putting Death on trial and suffering Himself, will save created man through His divine authority)". This, of course, refers to Christ's redemptive death on the cross – the final stage of His earthly presence. In the last two verses we read what the female benefactor who had donated the altar cloth to the Stoudios monastery, hoped to gain by her gift: "In view of this, [she] presents her immaculate gift to the Theotokos for the redemption of herself and her husband"⁷⁴. Here the text comes full circle. The imaginary viewer is looking at an altar cloth that depicts the infant Christ and His

⁷⁴ See SPECK 1968: 190–191. The epigram misses its last verse or verses where the name of the female donor was mentioned: cf. vv. 7–8 τὸ δὴ φρονούσα τῇ Θεϊτόκῳ φέρεῖ πρὸς λύτρον αὐτῆς τ' ἀνδρὸς ἄχραντον δόμα. For the chapel of the Holy Virgin, see JANIN 1969: 439; see also the preceding epigram, no. 40.

mother. He is told to interpret this image as a symbol of God the Saviour, who became man on earth, put Death on trial and died in the flesh in order to save fallen mankind. Then he reads that the motive for donating the altar cloth had been this very aspect of salvation: the donor presented her immaculate gift to the immaculate one, so that she and her husband might be redeemed at the last judgment. In fact, the viewer is urged to follow the example of the female donor and to read the visual message of the image in the same symbolic manner as she did.

But who is this viewer? Who sees the altar cloth and reads its epigram? In this particular case, the answer is actually quite simple: the epigram was to be read only by the few monks and priests who had access to the sacrosanct space of the *bema*, where the altar cloth was on display. In order to understand who the readers of a given epigram might have been, the question of context is crucial. Where was the epigram to be found? Epigrams written next to splendid miniatures in luxuriously illustrated manuscripts can have been read only by the happy few; but verse inscriptions on the city walls of Constantinople address all those who can read and are willing to try to decipher the text. Between these two extremes, however, there is a whole range of epigrams and a whole range of intended readers, varying from a mere handful to dozens of people.

Chapter Two

COLLECTIONS OF POEMS

One late summer afternoon, at the turn of the millennium, a group of friends was making a pleasant boat trip on the Bosphoros. While the sun was setting, they sailed along the coast admiring from a distance the prosperous olive-yards and orchards. The water was purplish, soft breezes bellied out the sails and as the boat headed towards the Propontis, the sailors were singing shanties in time to their work. The waves were murmuring gently, the birds were warbling and nature as a whole was one sweet harmony. The passengers aboard were absolutely thrilled! Halfway on their voyage they even spotted some dolphins turning somersaults in the waves. It was almost as if these dolphins, the joyous “friends of the Muses”, were there to welcome them and encourage them to take part in the universal merriment. It was clearly the right moment for poetry, they thought, and since they had been imbibing substantial amounts of wine during the trip, they were also in the right mood for some literary entertainment. So the whole company started to recite by turns. They declaimed with great enthusiasm and all sorts of texts could be heard: “the sweet flowers of words”, ranging from the melodious rhythms of iambic poetry and the smooth harmonies of ancient epics to the well-balanced periods of rhetorical prose. They had a wonderful time and when they finally returned to Constantinople, after hours of declamation (the sun had already gone down), they felt they had enjoyed all that is good in life¹.

One might wonder what these literati, had they been able to read the magnificent book on their own species, the “*homo byzantinus*”, would have thought of the following verdict by the late Kazhdan: “(...) literature (...) was addressed primarily to the solitary reader”². There can be little doubt, though, that if they had been able to read this sentence, they would have read it *aloud*, alone or in the presence of friends. They would perhaps have memorized it and repeated it afterwards to others who did not know the text, and they might even have paraphrased it in the form of parody or learned allusion in one of their own declamations. Contrary to what Kazhdan maintained in various

¹ For the text of the poem, see SOLA 1916: 20–21.

² A. KAZHDAN & G. CONSTABLE, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*. Dumbarton Oaks 1982, 104.

publications, silent reading was not the rule in the Middle Ages³. I will give three arguments. Firstly, Byzantine texts contain numerous references to oral performance. The text of Pisides' panegyrics is divided into several ἀκροάσεις, "reading sessions"⁴. Likewise, saints' lives were read to the assembled monks in a number of sessions, which are also called ἀκροάσεις⁵. And most homilies and rhetorical speeches obviously address an audience. In the colophon of manuscripts Byzantine scribes often beseech the readers, but also the listeners (the ἀκροώμενοι) to pray for salvation on their behalf. We hear stories about reading circles, such as that of Photios⁶. Byzantine authors also refer to "*theatres*", a kind of literary club where people used to declaim texts to each other⁷. The literary boat trip mentioned above is in fact a sort of outdoor "*theatre*". Secondly, Byzantine authors pay much attention to the rhythmical structure of their poems and prose texts. The position of stress accents is regulated in rhetorical clausulae, in purely accentual metres (such as the political verse) and in the Byzantine equivalents of ancient prosodic metres (such as the dodecasyllable). Is this only for show? No, of course not. It is beyond any doubt that poems and prose texts were meant to be declaimed before an audience. Rhythm does not exist on paper. It comes to life only when it is heard⁸. Thirdly, it should be borne in mind that manuscripts were quite expensive in Byzantium⁹. The average Byzantine intellectual could not afford the huge sums necessary to acquire an extensive library for his personal use. There is ample evidence that intellectuals borrowed books from each other¹⁰, but I do not think that the exchange of a rare commodity, such as books undoubtedly were, can fully explain the undeniable erudition of a large group of literati. Given the fact that books were hard to find, reading cannot have been the only

³ On the subject of "reading *viva voce*", see H. EIDENEIER, Von Rhapsodie zu Rap. Aspekte der griechischen Sprachgeschichte von Homer bis heute. Tübingen 1999, 73–122, esp. pp. 73–75, and G. CAVALLO, *BZ* 95 (2002) 423–444, esp. pp. 423–429.

⁴ See the edition by PERTUSI 1959.

⁵ See, for instance, LAMBROS 1922: 54, 18 and MERCATI 1970: I, 312–313. See also D.R. REINSCH, in: XVIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Major Papers. Moscow 1991, 400–414, and S. EFTHYMIADIS, in: *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. CHR. HOGEL. Oslo 1996, 66–67.

⁶ See LEMERLE 1971: 197–198 and L. CANFORA, *REB* 56 (1998) 269–273.

⁷ See BROWNING 1968: 402–403 and P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993, 335–356.

⁸ See W. HÖRANDNER, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner*. Vienna 1981, 50; and H. HUNGER, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz. Die byzantinische Buchkultur*. Munich 1989, 125–129.

⁹ See the papers by N.G. WILSON and C. MANGO, respectively, in: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks 1975, 1–15 and 29–45.

¹⁰ See A. KARPOZILOS, *JÖB* 41 (1991) 255–276.

means of acquiring knowledge. Listening to literature, either in the classroom or among friends, must have been quite common in bookless Byzantium¹¹.

Most Byzantine poems are preserved in just a few manuscripts. Although a large quantity of manuscripts undoubtedly has been lost in the course of time, Byzantine poetry in general does not appear to have enjoyed a wide circulation in manuscript form. Take for instance the editorial fate of Pisides' poetry. The six panegyrics, for which he is nowadays best known, can be found in a few manuscripts only: 1, 5, 1, 4, 1 and 4 manuscripts, respectively. The poems *Contra Severum*, *In Resurrectionem*, *De Vanitate Vitae* and *De Vita Humana*, too, can be found in a limited number of manuscripts: 3, 4, 6 and 4 manuscripts, respectively. In sharp contrast to this apparent lack of interest in the panegyrics and other occasional poems, Pisides' didactic poem, the *Hexaemeron*, can be found in no less than 50 manuscripts¹². The *Hexaemeron* was widely read in Byzantium because of the useful information on the creation of the world it supplied to a Christian audience. It is a powerful account of the book of nature, which, if read correctly and with the right decoding tools, can be deciphered as God's own handwriting: things are as they are, because God intended them to be so¹³. But apart from all this theologizing, the poem provides all sorts of scientific information on man and animals, plants and herbs, and the universe in general. The poem is well-written, the style is eloquent and the verses run smoothly – but the same can be said for the rest of Pisides' poetry, which, however, did not attract the same attention, or at least did not circulate as widely, as the *Hexaemeron*¹⁴. There are ten times as many manuscripts of the *Hexaemeron* for the simple reason that the poem was in great demand, whereas the rest of Pisides' poetry was apparently not worth copying because it was of little use to future generations. It is simply a matter of plain economics. Why waste costly parchment on a panegyric on Herakleios,

¹¹ See M. MULLETT, in: *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. R. McKITTERICK. Cambridge 1990, 156–185, esp. pp. 159–160. See also E. PATLAGEAN, *Annales. Économie, Société, Culture* 34 (1979) 264–278.

¹² See A. PERTUSI, *Aevum* 30 (1956) 400–407. Pertusi's list is slightly outdated: whereas the recent editor of *De Vita Humana* makes use of four mss. (GONNELLI 1991: 121–122), Pertusi mentions only two of them; Pertusi counts three mss. of *In Resurrectionem*, but the poem is also found in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, fol. 46; Pertusi mentions 46 mss. containing the *Hexaemeron*, but F. GONNELLI, in: *La poesia bizantina*, ed. U. CRISCUOLO & R. MAISANO. Naples 1995, 137, n. 53, counts “almeno 50 ... codici” (and two translations). But although Pertusi's list is not entirely reliable and new manuscripts will undoubtedly be discovered, the overall picture will not change radically: the *Hexaemeron* was widely read, the rest of Pisides' poems were not.

¹³ On the *Hexaemeron*, see F. GONNELLI, *BZ* 83 (1990) 411–422.

¹⁴ The *Hexaemeron* was even used as study material in the Byzantine classroom: see LAUXTERMANN 1998b: 15–16 and 29.

an emperor long dead, when there are so many edifying or practical texts to be copied?¹⁵ In the ninth and tenth centuries Pisides' panegyrics were used by Theophanes as a historical source for the period of Herakleios' reign, and by the *Souda* as lexicographical material; but were they much read? The panegyrics were certainly known to Theodosios the Deacon and other literati, but I seriously doubt that the reading public at large was familiar with them. For most Byzantines George of Pisidia was the author of the *Hexaemeron*, a great poet and a great theologian; but his occasional poems were something of the past, brilliantly written but long forgotten.

By this I do not mean to suggest that Pisides' panegyrics and poems on theological and ethical issues are by any means less important than the *Hexaemeron*, at least not if they are studied in the light of the past and judged from a historical perspective. After all, seeing that Pisides was widely acclaimed in his own time and used to be the poet laureate at the court of Herakleios, there can be but little doubt that his occasional poems, when they first appeared, were highly appreciated by the audience. On two occasions Pisides alludes to certain rivals, who, like him, composed panegyrics in honour of Herakleios¹⁶, but their work has not come down to us, probably because they were not as successful as Pisides in gaining support from the court and keeping the audience enthralled. People at the court would have liked listening to Pisides, for he expressed their anxieties and hopes, told them what life is all about and made them understand the deeper meaning of things. Though there are no eyewitness reports to tell us what went on when Pisides was declaiming his poetry, it is reasonable to assume that the audience listened eagerly and reacted with much enthusiasm. However, as soon as the reading session was over and the applause had faded away, what remained of Pisides' poetry? Not much, probably, except for a few memorable verses kept alive in the collective memory of those present on the occasion. Of course, there was the author's autograph of the text of the poems, which subsequently would have been copied in a very restricted number of manuscripts at the behest of the emperor, the patriarch, and others. But since it would not have been easy to gain access to these manuscripts at the time and since these manuscripts were only sporadically copied in later periods, it is questionable whether Pisides' occasional poems were available to many readers.

Thus, to conclude, Pisides' occasional poems attracted a large audience of listeners, but only a select public of readers. This paradox holds true, I would say, for nearly all Byzantine poems (with a few exceptions, such as the *Hexae-*

¹⁵ See N.G. WILSON, in: *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks 1975, 11–14.

¹⁶ See PERTUSI 1959: 22. Incidentally, the few "iambic" fragments of a lost panegyric on Herakleios that Orosz "discovered" in Nikephoros' *Breviarium* (see PERTUSI 1959: 21–23), look like ordinary prose to me.

meron, Prodromos' *Tetrasticha* and Manasses' verse chronicle). Byzantine poems are very much products of their time and accordingly deserve to be studied as reflections of the historical context in which they came into being. The circumstances of composition and the audience's response are essential to the study of Byzantine poetry, for these two factors largely determine the form and contents of a poem and make it what it is: a literary moment in time. However, once we recognize that Byzantine poems constitute isolated moments in time, the problem of continuity arises: is it possible to write a literary history of Byzantine poetry if the life span of poems is rather limited? The modern concept of a "literary history" is based on the tacit premise that author Z is familiar with the literary works of the earlier authors A to Y, whom he either imitates or rejects. In his beautiful short stories Jorge Luis Borges often describes the universal library, a sort of magnificent labyrinth packed with millions of books, each of which refers to all the other books ever written. Though every new publication reshuffles the order in which the books are stacked and arranged, the library remains what it always was: a gigantic complex of literary cross-references. This is an excellent description of literature after the invention of the art of printing, but I doubt whether any medieval library was complete enough to satisfy the curiosity of the average reader. And hence it is highly unlikely that the average reader could have read most of the Byzantine literary works that can be found on the bookshelves of any modern specialist library. The Byzantines knew the classics because they were taught at school, and the Bible because it was read in church, but their knowledge of Byzantine literature will have been rather shallow unless they did thorough research in various state, monastic and private libraries. It is a mistake, therefore, to assume *a priori* that a given Byzantine author is familiar with the literary works of his predecessors. Only with the help of internal evidence, such as quotations and literary allusions, can we establish whether he has read earlier Byzantine authors or not; but it is not something we should take for granted. Consequently, it is simply wrong to regard the history of Byzantine poetry as an unbroken chain of literary responses. The present book, therefore, is emphatically *not* a literary history.

So, if it is not a literary history -at least not by modern standards-, what is it? It is simply an account of what we can find in manuscripts. It enumerates, it describes and it tries to provide explanations by recapturing the past and searching for the original context of poems. Byzantine poetry, as I see it, presents a random collection of snapshots: instantaneous exposures of non-recurring literary moments. The poems that we find in manuscripts are not written for eternity, but reflect a moment in time and deserve to be studied in their historical contexts. Each and every poem documents a single event and is the written record of a specific literary moment in the past, which often can be reconstructed by reading the text attentively, taking into account historical

factors and relying on plain common sense. Since Byzantine society is definitely not static, literary moments may differ strongly in terms of ideology and forms of communication. This is also why anonymous poems can often be dated, not only because of explicit references to historical persons or events, but also because of the style of writing or the sentiments expressed in these poems. In order to understand a poem fully, we should attempt to reconstruct the occasion for which it was composed, and reshape in our minds the literary communication between author and audience. In other words, texts need to be situated in their original contexts, both social, cultural and literary. Only then will it be possible to write a literary history that is not based on Borges' anachronistic idea of a universal library, but on the unstable contingencies of culture and time. However, seeing that so little is known about the context of poems, the present study only aims to provide all the historical evidence that is needed to write a real literary history of Byzantine poetry. To put it differently, the present book is simply a repository of texts and contexts – a receptacle of isolated literary moments that need assembling, so that all the bits and pieces make sense in combination.

In this chapter and the next, I will discuss Byzantine collections of poems. It should be borne in mind that manuscripts present a somewhat distorted image of Byzantine poetry. When a poem composed for declamation at a specific occasion is copied in manuscripts, it no longer serves its original function. Likewise, when an epigram that used to serve as a verse inscription on a monument starts to circulate in manuscripts, it immediately loses its original meaning. Poems and epigrams are out of context in manuscripts. Of course, without manuscripts we would hardly know anything about Byzantine poetry, but we should not be oblivious to the second-hand nature of manuscripts, which at best present mere transcripts of unique and ephemeral literary moments. "Literary moments" are, for instance, the specific occasion at which an encomium is declaimed, the specific social context for a didactic poem or a gnome, or the specific arcosolium on which an epitaph is inscribed. The problem with manuscripts, at least for us moderns, is that they appear to present these literary moments *sub specie aeternitatis* since we can still read them. However, by reading Byzantine texts in manuscripts in the same manner as printed texts in modern books, we run the danger of imposing our own reading experiences on texts that date from before the discovery of the art of printing. For us moderns, a text exists once it has been printed; but what if a text circulates only in a few manuscripts or does not circulate at all? Does it exist or is it non-existent? What is the status of a text that can only be read by a few people, or cannot be read at all? Is it dead or alive? These admittedly difficult questions are not answered satisfactorily by most modern editions, which present Byzantine texts as if they just awaited the moment when they could finally be printed. By printing a given Byzantine text, merely on the

basis of manuscripts and without further explanations, modern scholars fail to recreate the literary moment when the text came into existence. Manuscripts are important for the textual evidence they provide, but it does not suffice to publish a Byzantine poem merely as a written text, without trying to imagine the original circumstances of its composition.

The manuscript material can roughly be divided into two categories: collections of poems by a single author and anthologies containing poems by various authors. The two categories are interrelated, of course, but it is often difficult to unravel the ties that link them together. If a poem is found both in a single-author collection and an anthology, we do not always know for certain that the single-author collection is the ultimate source from which the anthology derives the poem. The poem may have circulated in manuscript before it was incorporated in the “edition” of the collected poems of its author, and may therefore have been transmitted independently. Likewise, if a considerable number of poems by the same author is only found in anthologies, there is no need to assume *a priori* that they derive from a single-author collection of poems that has disappeared. It certainly is a possibility¹⁷, but it is by no means a certainty. This is illustrated, for instance, by the text tradition of Prodromos’ poems. Despite the popularity of his literary works, which is reflected in the great number of manuscripts that have come down to us, it would appear that “es (...) eine komplette Gesamtausgabe der Werke des Prodromos nie gegeben hat”¹⁸. There are many manuscripts that contain a considerable amount of *Prodromea*, but the choice of poems and the order in which they are arranged differ from manuscript to manuscript (except for direct apographs, of course)¹⁹. The same holds true for Psellos. His poetry has been copied in dozens of manuscripts, but none of these manuscripts appear to go back to an edition of Psellos’ collected poems²⁰. The truth of the matter is that Prodromos and Psellos probably never bothered to publish an edition, both authorial and authoritative, of their poems. They composed their poems for specific occasions and specific audiences. They responded to the literary demands of their time. They did not write for posterity. Not that they would not have liked to see their works read by future generations, but the idea of posthumous fame was not their prime concern at the moment of writing. Once a poem had been presented to the public for which it was intended, it had served its purpose. If the public liked the poem very much, it stood a chance of being copied; but if the public did not think much of it, it was not copied. It is reasonable to assume

¹⁷ See the reconstruction of Kallikles’ collection of poems in ROMANO 1980: 44–45.

¹⁸ HÖRANDNER 1974: 166.

¹⁹ See HÖRANDNER 1974: 149–165.

²⁰ See WESTERINK 1992: VII–XXXII.

that we know only a small fraction of all Byzantine poems ever written, not only because of the loss of thousands of manuscripts, but also because most poems, especially those of poor quality, were never copied in the first place.

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Mauropous' Poetry Book

Mauropous' collection of poems is unique for various reasons. Firstly, because we know for certain that it was put together by the poet himself, as he tells us in the preface (poem no. 1). Secondly, because the preface is a kind of programme in which the poet explains what he intended to achieve by publishing his literary works. And thirdly, because the most important manuscript, Vat. gr. 676, copied when Mauropous was still alive or shortly after his death, is a direct and faithful apograph of the original collection²¹. For most collections of poems we do not know whether the version that has been preserved is complete and presents the poems in the original order, whether it was the poet himself or someone else who did the editorial work, nor what the methods of selecting and arranging the poems may have been. Mauropous put together the collection of his literary works at the end of his life. In the first poem of the collection, the "introduction to the whole book", he tells us that in accordance with the famous proverb, *πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον*, he selected only the best of his literary works – a small sample of what he had written in the course of his life, so that the reader may taste "just a few dishes from a lavish banquet". Whereas other authors dish out loads of words, his only desire has been to gratify his readers with a frugal literary meal. In another passage of the poem Mauropous criticizes his fellow poets for producing too many literary works, often badly written, purely for the ephemeral pleasure of being applauded. He will have no part in this editorial frenzy. Let them write all they want, he says, for they do not achieve anything of value and the plethora of words they produce has no substance. The true author is not only aware of his own limitations, but also knows very well that he should not strain the patience of his readers, as there is a limit to the amount of time people are prepared to spend on reading²². The concept of *μέτρον*, "due measure", is totally reversed in

²¹ See R. ANASTASI, *SicGymn* 29 (1976) 19–28 and KARPOZILOS 1982: 55–56 and 136.

²² On impatient Byzantine readers, see Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*, § 63, where he advises his son to read a book from the beginning to the end and not to follow the example of some lazy *σπερμολόγοι* who only thumb through a book and read a few selected passages.

the last poem of the collection (no. 99), which serves as a sort of colophon²³. There Mauropous writes that it took him much effort to prepare the edition of his works and “remedy their (literary) defects”, with the result that his health has suffered badly from this ἀμετρία κόπων. Thus we see that μέτρον is paradoxically achieved by ἀμετρία: finding the right proportions requires disproportional efforts. Both poems, the preface and the colophon, end by asking the readers to pray to God, the supreme *Logos*, for the spiritual salvation of Mauropous.

In these two poems, Mauropous seeks to present the edition of his literary works, together with a highly stylized self-portrait, to the reading public at large. Chary of giving much factual information, he only tells us that it is a collection of his selected works, which he has personally revised for the edition. Since we do not possess earlier versions of any of his literary works, it is impossible to tell what sort of changes Mauropous made in the process of revising his own texts. Were they minor stylistic adjustments, or radical changes in the text, such as we find, for instance, in the posthumous edition of the *Hymns* of Symeon the New Theologian²⁴? In his capacity of editor, Mauropous is understandably anxious to present himself to the readers as favourably as possible. He is afraid that publishing one’s own literary works might be interpreted by some as a sign of vanity, although it was not at all his intention to show off. Quite the contrary, he is actually a very modest person. He knows that God is the supreme *Logos*, the source from which all human *logoi*, including his own, ultimately derive. And moderation is a virtue he thinks highly of and tries to practise in daily life. This is also why μέτρον has been his guideline in selecting and revising his literary works, for he is convinced that a few products of his pen may suffice to show his ethos both as a person and as a writer. All this ostentatious display of humility strongly suggests, I would say, that it was not very common in Byzantium for an author to publish his collected works. Although Mauropous was certainly not the first nor the last Byzantine to prepare an edition of his literary works, there are only a few collections of poems that we can ascribe beyond any doubt to the author himself²⁵.

Mauropous’ poems are arranged in subtle thematic patterns, with a circular movement from beginning to end and back again (not unlike a serpent coiling

²³ For poem 99 as the colophon to the edition of Mauropous’ literary works, see KARPOZILOS 1982: 100.

²⁴ See KODER 1969–73: I, 47–50. For a radically different opinion, see KAMBYLIS 1976: CCXCIX–CCCIX.

²⁵ Christopher Mitylenaios’ collection of poems was probably put together by the author himself, since the poems in it are arranged in chronological order and it seems doubtful that a person other than the poet himself could have known the precise dates of the poems. See KURTZ 1903: XVI, CRIMI 1983: 15 and OIKONOMIDES 1990: 2–3.

up head to tail)²⁶. The author brings like to like, but does not attempt to achieve a rigid classification system. The collection is divided into three parts: nos. 2–42, 43–70 and 71–98 (no. 1 and no. 99 are the preface and the colophon, respectively). The first and the third parts have a thematic arrangement, the second part presents various poems without any formal similarities.

2–11	ekphraseis
12–26	epigrams on works of art
27–31	book epigrams
32–34	literary disputes ²⁷
35–42	epitaphs and monodies
71–80	epigrams on works of art
81–85	epitaphs
86–88	epigrams on works of art
89–93	poems eis heauton
94–98	book epigrams

Nos. 71–80 and 86–88 correspond to nos. 12–26; nos. 81–85 correspond to nos. 35–42; nos. 94–98 correspond to nos. 27–31. In poems 89–93 Maupous presents himself as a person, and in poems 33–34 as an author. Thus we see that Maupous seeks to weld his diverse poems into a cohesive whole by adopting the design of ring-composition. Although Maupous' poems had been written in the course of a lifetime and, therefore, had little features in common other than the individual stylistic preferences of the author, the thematic arrangement establishes an artistic unity linking the poems together associatively. In a modern poetry book the reader, more or less unconsciously, interprets a specific poem by comparing it to the rest and searching for similarities that link the poems together. However, if a poetry book groups diverse poems together thematically or otherwise, the course of this hermeneutic process is steered into a certain direction by the author at the helm. By placing his poems in a poetry book and arranging them in a thematic order, Maupous manipulates the perspective of his readers. Rather than seeing his poems as discontinuous and fragmented entities, the reader is invited to view them as parts of a meaningful whole. Thus Maupous is re-creating his literary persona: he is no longer the author of various poems written over the years for various occasions, but a self-conscious author with a coherent oeuvre reflecting his literary identity.

²⁶ See KARPOZILOS 1982: 77–106.

²⁷ No. 32 is an epigram on a work of art. The epigram was criticized by certain opponents of Maupous for a supposedly ungrammatical construction. Maupous responds to these criticisms in the following poem (no. 33).

The refined thematic structure of Mauropous' poetry book is without parallel in other Byzantine collections of poems, which either have no formal arrangement at all or employ simple methods of organizing the material (such as, for instance, the chronological order of Christopher Mitylenaios' collection of poems²⁸). If there is no cohesiveness of design in a collection, poems function as self-contained units of composition and sense, as loose elements that are to be read and interpreted in isolation. It is reasonable to assume that most Byzantine editors did not attempt to achieve organic unity in arranging the material at their disposal because of the prevailing practice in Byzantium of viewing poems as isolated instances. To repeat something I stated above, Byzantine poems constitute one-time events – “literary moments” that took place sometime, somewhere. Poems are like stills. They are frozen poses of the past. It's like thumbing through a photo album and looking at the pictures one by one. Each isolated photograph tells a story of its own, but all the photographs together do not present a coherent history. Likewise, in a Byzantine collection of poems that has no formal arrangement, each poem has its own particular relevance, but all the poems combined lack coherence.

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Byzantine Collections of Poems

The few collections of poems that were compiled between c. 600 and 1000 will pass in review in the following pages. Since the existing editions are not always as reliable as one could wish, and since the structure of Byzantine collections of poems has never been studied in detail, the following discussion, I regret to say, will necessarily assume a somewhat technical character. Without precise data, however, any discussion of poetry books would be pointless.

The short poems and epigrams of Pisides survive in two collections: (i) a small sylloge of eight poems copied along with the *Hexaemeron* in four manuscripts (Q. 1–7 and St. 108), and (ii) a large poetry book, of which we find two major excerpts in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 and some traces in the rest of the manuscript tradition (St. 5–106 and *AP* I, 120–121)²⁹. The small sylloge contains literary poems. The large collection, on the contrary, consists mainly of epigrams written for a practical purpose, either as verse inscriptions on works of art or as book epigrams. The few poems that have no connection with

²⁸ See FOLLIERI 1964b: 133–148, CRIMI 1983: 16–20 and OIKONOMIDES 1990: 2.

²⁹ See Appendix VII, pp. 334–336.

Byzantine art or books, are found at the very end of the collection³⁰. Thus Pisides' poetry book differentiates between epigrams composed for a practical purpose, on the one hand, and literary poems on various subjects, on the other. This differentiation is quintessential for understanding the Byzantine perception of poetic genres, which, to put it simply, is based on the question of functionality: what is the (potential) use of a poem? According to the Byzantine definition of the term ἐπίγραμμα (see pp. 27–30), epigrams serve, or may possibly serve, a practical purpose in close connection with the object they accompany or are supposed to accompany, either as verse inscriptions, colophon verses, or otherwise. It is interesting to note that Pisides' epigrams are found in the large collection, whereas his non-epigrammatic poems are relegated either to the small sylloge or to the tail end of the large collection. Pisides' example is not followed by other Byzantine editors. Though the distinction is essential, epigrams and poems are not neatly divided in the Byzantine collections of poems that have come down to us. The reason for this neglect of genre is quite simple. Once epigrams have been collected in manuscript form, they no longer serve their original purpose, but assume a totally new dimension as literary texts. In this new context it does not matter much whether a given poetic text used to serve as an epigram on a certain object or not. Byzantine epigrams tend to dematerialize in manuscript collections, which usually fail to indicate their former whereabouts as verse inscriptions. By losing their original function and being separated from their physical context, epigrams turn into literary poems. For Pisides or the person responsible for the edition of his poetical works, the distinction between epigrams and poems was evidently still very important, but later generations paid more attention to the literary character of collections of poems. Though the tension between functional purposes and literary merits was never completely resolved in Byzantine collections of poems, one observes a clear tendency to neglect generic distinctions and fuse epigrams and poems into one category of "literariness".

The collection of Sophronios' poems can be found in Barb. gr. 310 (s. X), fols. 8^r–65^v³¹. This precious manuscript has lost most of its pages, among which a whole quaternion between fol. 47^v and fol. 48^r. The missing quaternion contained almost the whole poem 14, the entire poem 15, and nearly all the verses of poem 16; the text of poem 14 fortunately has been preserved in other manuscripts³², but poems 15 and 16 are lost for good, except for their titles which are preserved in the index of Barb. gr. 310. The collection of Sophronios' poems consists of twenty-two anacreontics. The anacreontics can be divided

³⁰ See Appendix VII, pp. 336–337.

³¹ On this manuscript and the poems in it, see chapter 3, pp. 123–128.

³² See M. GIGANTE, *La Parola di Passato* 37 (1954) 303–311 (repr. in: idem, *Scritti sulla civiltà letteraria bizantina*. Naples 1981, 43–54).

into two parts: hymns (nos. 1–13) and occasional poems (nos. 14–22)³³. The first thirteen anacreontics are hymns on religious subjects. They deal with major liturgical feasts ranging from the Annunciation to the Last Supper (nos. 1–8), the apostles Paul and John (nos. 9–11), and the first martyrs Stephen and Thekla (nos. 12–13). The poems in the second part, nos. 14–22, treat “secular” topics and clearly have a more subjective character. No. 14 is a monody on the capture of Jerusalem, no. 15 a catanyctic poem, no. 16 an encomium on the relics of Egyptian saints, no. 17 an encomium on Narses, bishop of Askalon, no. 18 a panegyric on the return of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, nos. 19–20 an ekphrasis of a pilgrimage to the Holy Places, no. 21 a historical poem on the trial of Menas and no. 22 a monody on the death of a certain Maria. The order of nos. 19 and 20 is reversed in the manuscript. In these two poems Sophronios expresses his desire to visit the *loca sancta* and describes the itinerary he would like to make in geographical order. The imaginary voyage starts at various sanctuaries in Jerusalem and surroundings (no. 20), then leads to pilgrimage sites in other parts of Palestine (no. 19, vv. 1–56)³⁴ and concludes with a visit to Basil, a monk and spiritual father, whom Sophronios would very much like to meet again in person (no. 19, vv. 57–108)³⁵. The poems in the second part of the collection were composed for special occasions and were probably performed only once, whereas the first thirteen anacreontics were meant to be sung at recurrent religious feasts. To conclude, the collection of Sophronios’ poems differentiates between “sacred” and “secular”: the “sacred” is the domain of hymnody, whereas the “secular” themes are treated in occasional poems.

Since little poetry was produced after c. 630–640 until the beginning of the ninth century, there are no collections of poems dating from the dark ages of Byzantium. However, even in the ninth century when people started to produce large quantities of poetry once again, the number of collections of poems is rather limited. Ignatios the Deacon published an edition of his collected epitaphs, but the edition has not been preserved³⁶. The epigrams by Theodore of Stoudios were collected at the end of the century: see below, pp. 70–72. These are the only two ninth-century collections of poems known to us nowadays, though there undoubtedly will have been more. In the tenth century we are once again faced with a formidable lacuna in the available data, which renders it impossible to trace the history of Byzantine collections of poems in

³³ See NISSEN 1940: 28–32 and GIGANTE 1957: 13.

³⁴ See DONNER 1981: 7–11. Note the use of the connective δέ (*and*) in the first verse of poem 19, which clearly indicates that no. 19 is a sequel to no. 20.

³⁵ See DONNER 1981: 56–57, who suggests that Basil was a monk in the Theodosios monastery near Bethlehem (the last stop in Sophronios’ itinerary). On poem 19, vv. 57–108, see GIGANTE 1957: 14–15.

³⁶ See chapter 3, pp. 111–112.

detail. The small collection of poems by the Anonymous Italian dates from the beginning of the tenth century. It is a mixed collection of inscriptional epigrams and literary poems put together without any thematic structure; but its editor makes a clear-cut distinction between the poems the Anonymous Italian wrote for his own monastery (nos. 1–21), and the poems that he wrote on behalf of other monasteries (nos. 22–29)³⁷.

There are also two late tenth-century collections of poems: the collection of the Anonymous Patrician (c. 940–970) in Vat. Pal. gr. 367 (s. XIV in.), fols. 143^v–146^v³⁸, and the collection of Geometres' literary works compiled around the year 1000 and found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 (s. XIII), fols. 151^r–179^r, as well as in a few other manuscripts³⁹. The poems in these two collections are not arranged according to any formal design, such as the thematic structure of Maupous' collection of poems, or the chronological order of Christopher Mitylenaios' poems. Unlike the collection of Pisides, they do not distinguish between epigrams and non-epigrammatic poems, and unlike the collection of Sophronios' anacreontics, they do not differentiate between religious and secular themes. It is one gigantic chaos. It almost looks as if the two poets, or the editors of their poems, had a pile of loose sheets on their desk, picked one out at random, copied it, rummaged through the pile again, copied another poem, and so on. This disorderliness is characteristic of most Byzantine collections of poems.

The collection of Geometres' literary works in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 contains more than just the occasional poems on various subjects. The collection also includes the *Progymnasmata*, the *Hymns on the Holy Virgin* and the iambic *Metaphrasis of the Odes*. The *Hymns* and the *Odes* are separated from the occasional poems because of their length, and because they constitute poetic entities in their own right. In Byzantine manuscripts long poems of hundreds of verses and cycles of poems are often found either at the beginning or the end of poetry books, but they do not form part of these collections. The combination of prose texts (the *Progymnasmata*) and poems (the *Hymns*, the *Odes* and the occasional poems) may perhaps seem somewhat peculiar in the eyes of modern readers, but is certainly not without parallel in Byzantium. For instance, in the *Typikon of the Kosmosoteira Monastery* (a. 1152) Isaac Komnenos writes that he bequeathed to his monastery several books, among which a collection of his literary works, both in verse and prose: καὶ ἑτέραν βιβλον κατέλιπον, ἣν κόπῳ μακροῦ στιχιδίου ἥρωικοῖς τε καὶ ἱαμβικοῖς καὶ πολιτικοῖς καὶ ἐπιστολαῖς διαφόροις καὶ ἐκφράσεσι συντέταχα⁴⁰. And to give another example,

³⁷ See Appendix V, pp. 325–326.

³⁸ See Appendix IV, pp. 320–324.

³⁹ See Appendix I, pp. 287–290.

⁴⁰ Ed. L. PETIT, *IRAIK* 13 (1908) 69.

Mauropous' collection of literary works in Vat. gr. 676 contains, apart from his poems, also his letters and orations. In the poem that heads the collection, Mauropous writes that he selected the best of his λόγοι, both the "metric" and the "non-metric" ones (v. 27). The word λόγος denotes any text that appears to be structured according to the rules of rhetoric and that appears to have a certain literary quality. And hence it does not matter whether a λόγος is in prose or in verse, as long as it is worth reading.

Byzantine poetry books contain all sorts of poems: epigrams, monodies, catanyctic poems, encomia, ekphraseis, literary prayers, gnomes, epitaphs, and so on. The poems are usually composed in dodecasyllables, less frequently in hexameters or elegiacs, and occasionally in the anacreontic metre; political verse is rarely to be found before the end of the tenth century, but becomes increasingly popular after the year 1000. The level of style depends on the metre: dodecasyllables are fairly easy to read, whereas hexameters and elegiacs abound with obsolete words and Homeric forms. The length of the poems varies strongly. In the collection of Geometres, for instance, one finds numerous monostichs, but also various poems that have well over a hundred verses. The longest poems in dodecasyllable, hexameter and elegiac are: Cr. 342, 6, a poem of 193 dodecasyllables; Cr. 348, 16, a poem of 121 hexameters; and Cr. 336, 4, a poem consisting of 75 elegiacs (150 verses). Geometres' collection in Par. Suppl. gr. 352, a manuscript with two major lacunas, contains 2462 verses out of a total of 270 poems, the average length being nine verses per poem. However great the variations in verse length, metre and stylistic register, Byzantine poetry books present all poems indifferently as σίχοι. Only rarely do the collections of poems offer factual information on the genre to which a particular poem belongs: ἐπίγραμμα, σίχοι μονωδιχοί, σίχοι κατανυκτικοί, and the like. Lemmata usually only provide information on the subject matter of a poem: σίχοι εἰς ..., ἱαμβοί (or ἡρωελεγεία, etc.) εἰς ..., or simply εἰς ..., that is: (*verses, iambs, etc.*) *on X*. This is quite understandable from the perspective of the Byzantines. In the eyes of the Byzantines the subject matter constitutes the quintessential feature of a poem, for it is the topic that shapes the occasion and it is the occasion, in its turn, that defines the genre. In view of this orientation on subject matter, the collection of Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams is quite appropriately entitled: *iambs on various subjects* (ἱαμβοί εἰς διαφόρους ὑποθέσεις). The collections of poems by Christopher Mitylenaios and Manuel Philes bear similar titles: *various verses* (σίχοι διάφοροι) and *various verses on various subjects* (σίχοι διάφοροι ἐπὶ διαφόροις ὑποθέσεσι), respectively.

Two Late Ninth-Century Collections of Verse Inscriptions

The epigrams of Theodore of Stoudios can be found in a huge number of manuscripts – an extraordinary editorial success that obviously owes much to the fame of the author, a saint venerated by monks and laymen alike. However, in the light of Theodore's sainthood and the impact of the Stoudite movement on society in ninth-century Byzantium, it is rather surprising that his epigrams remained unedited until the end of the century, some seventy years after his death. Theodore's epigrams were published by a monk of the Stoudios monastery, Dionysios, as the long hexametric poem at the end of the collection indicates. In this poem Dionysios does not only praise Theodore of Stoudios, but also the person who commissioned the edition, Anatolios the Stoudite, who became abbot of the Stoudios monastery in the year 886⁴¹. The collection of Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams, then, was compiled in 886 at the earliest, if not later. But apparently not much later, since the Anonymous Italian, a poet who lived probably c. 900 AD, imitates certain epigrams by Theodore of Stoudios⁴². Furthermore, there is some intriguing evidence that Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams already circulated in southern Italy in the first half of the tenth century. The oldest text witness, Vat. gr. 1810, a Italian manuscript dating from 954, is linked to the hyparchetype through no less than five intermediary stages (β to ζ in Speck's stemma)⁴³; also, there is a large group of mid tenth-century manuscripts of Italian provenance containing Theod. St. 67, 72 and 66 at the beginning or at the end of Gregory of Nazianzos' homilies⁴⁴. All in all, it is reasonable to assume that Dionysios put together the collection of Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams at the end of the ninth century, that is, not long after 886.

However, whereas most Byzantines had to wait until 886 at the earliest to read Theodore's epigrams, the Stoudite monks had direct access to them; they only had to look at the walls of their monastery to read what their abbot had written. In fact, reading these inscriptions was not a free choice, but something they were supposed to do anyhow, as indicated by Theod. St. 103, entitled "on the careful reading of what is written on the walls": "While passing by, notice the inscribed parts (of the walls), for no divine word should go unheeded". The divine words his monks were to read attentively are probably not Theodore's own verse inscriptions, but biblical passages, patristic sayings and hymnal texts (such as can be found in any Byzantine or post-Byzantine church). In the

⁴¹ See poem 124 in the edition of SPECK 1968. See also P. SPECK, *Helikon* 3 (1963) 49–52 and SPECK 1968: 52–53.

⁴² See Appendix V, pp. 325–326.

⁴³ See SPECK 1968: 22, 60 and 62–63. The stemma can be found on p. 59.

⁴⁴ See S. LUCÀ, in: *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (Erice 1988), ed. G. CAVALLO. Spoleto 1991, 373–379, HÖRANDNER 1994b: 197–199, and SOMERS 1999: 534–542.

process of deciphering what was written on the walls, however, the Stoudite monks had ample opportunity to explore the written traces of Theodore's saintly existence. In his lifetime, but also after his death, Theodore was palpably present in the written messages he had left all over the monastery. There were inscriptions everywhere, on the entrance gates, in the dormitory, the workshops and the cemetery, on wall paintings and other works of art, in the corridors, in private cells, on the facade of the church, on the *bema*, in the kitchen, and so on. Looking at the sad ruins of the Stoudios monastery in Istanbul, it is hard to imagine that the building used to be adorned with numerous inscriptions, but the collection leaves no doubt that they were once there as visible signs of Theodore of Stoudios' omnipresence. But we may recapture and visualize the past to a certain extent by closely examining the *katholikon* of the Great Lavra on Athos and that of the Grottaferrata monastery, for there we find Theod. St. 46 on the entrance to the church⁴⁵. Theod. St. 32 used to be inscribed in the narthex of the Nea Mone on Chios, but the inscription is no longer there⁴⁶. And the second verse of Theod. St. 52 can be read on the fragment of a large cross made of stone (s. XII–XIII), which was discovered in Gaziköy (Ganos in Thrace)⁴⁷.

The collection of Theodore's epigrams consists almost exclusively of verse inscriptions; the exceptions that prove the rule are nos. 94, 96–101, 105b, 105d and 121–123⁴⁸. The editor, Dionysios the Stoudite, copied all these verse inscriptions *in situ*, with the possible exception of nos. 3–29, a group of epigrams on monastic rules that appears to have circulated in manuscript before 886⁴⁹. But since one of these monastic epigrams, no. 20, bears a lemma indicating the place where it was inscribed⁵⁰, we do not know whether Dionysios retrieved nos. 3–29 from a manuscript or copied them directly at the sites where they were inscribed. We can only guess where he found the few poems that were not inscribed: among the personal papers of Theodore of Stoudios (provided they were still there, for they may have perished or been dispersed after his death), or in one of the many manuscripts produced in the famous Stoudite scriptorium? However, given the fact that no. 96 is incorrectly ascribed to Theodore⁵¹, the latter appears to be the more likely option. For his collection, Dionysios did

⁴⁵ See G. HOFMANN, *OCP* 13 (1947) 235–236 and A. KOMINIS, *BollGrott* 13 (1959) 156.

⁴⁶ See E. FOLLIERI, in: *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger*. Heidelberg 1966, 184–195. Incidentally, the text of Theod. St. 32 misses its beginning, for in vv. 1–2 we find two feminine participles without corresponding nouns, and αὐτῶν in v. 4 has no antecedent.

⁴⁷ See C. ASDRACHA, *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 43 (1988) 226–227 (no. 3).

⁴⁸ See SPECK 1968: especially pp. 64–69, but also his commentary on the poems, pp. 110–307.

⁴⁹ See the texts of the three *Vitae* (A, B and C) in SPECK 1968: 114–115.

⁵⁰ See SPECK 1968: 66.

⁵¹ See SPECK 1968: 256–257.

not restrict himself to the verse inscriptions at Stoudios, but visited other monasteries as well. It is worth noticing that Dionysios' epigraphic survey can be traced back, almost step by step, by following the sequence of the epigrams in the collection. Dionysios naturally began his survey at the monastery of Stoudios, where most of the verse inscriptions could be found and where he himself was living: nos. 1–84⁵². In search of more material, he then went to Sakkoudion and other Stoudite monasteries, where he copied nos. 85–93⁵³. Then he interrupted his epigraphic survey for a while and searched for poems in manuscripts: nos. 94–103 (including three additional inscriptions: 95 and 102–103). On the road again, he travelled to monasteries and pious foundations that did not belong to the Stoudite monastic movement, but nonetheless had verse inscriptions, dedicatory or sepulchral, written by Theodore of Stoudios on behalf of their founders: nos. 104–105a, 105c and 105e–120⁵⁴. To this group of “non-Stoudite” verse inscriptions he added a few poems that he had found in manuscripts: 105b, 105d and 121–123.

The poem by Dionysios the Stoudite that accompanies the collection (no. 124), is written in dactylic hexameters and makes use of obsolete Homeric words, such as, for instance, *βολεμέως*, *ἀπέλεθρα*, *ἀπόερσεν*, *ἀερσιπότητα*, *ἴθματα* and *διαπρύσιος*. The language is often obscure and the style tortuous. The verses do not run smoothly – probably because Dionysios had to force his verses into the straitjacket of acrostic (*Διονύσιος Ἀνατολίῳ τῷ ὁμοπάτριδι*) and lacked the stylistic dexterity to maintain the acrostic with ease. Classicizing poems like this one, were much in vogue in the second half of the ninth century, as indicated by numerous examples in the Greek Anthology, such as Kometas' poem on the Raising of Lazarus (*AP* XV, 40) and Arethas' pompous epitaphs (*AP* XV, 32–34). However, Dionysios the Stoudite shared with the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology not only a predilection for a rather convoluted style, but a keen interest in epigraphy as well. One of the contributors to what was to become the Greek Anthology was Gregory of Kampsas, who is known to have collected ancient verse inscriptions. The epigraphic forays of Gregory presumably date from exactly the same period in which Dionysios travelled from monastery to monastery in search of Theodore of Stoudios' verse inscriptions. Their paths may even have crossed, for Gregory of Kampsas examined the monastery of Stoudios and copied a late antique verse inscription (*AP* I, 4).

⁵² Nos. 1–2: on holy relics and on the cell of Theodore. Nos. 3–29: epigrams on monastic rules inscribed in various parts of the monastery. Nos. 30–39: on icons. Nos. 40–41: on the chapel of the Holy Virgin. Nos. 42–47: on the narthex and the bema of the church. Nos. 48–60: on crosses. Nos. 61–84: on pictures of the holy fathers.

⁵³ See SPECK 1968: commentary on nos. 85–91. Nos. 92 and 93 are epigrams on works of art that probably were to be found in one of the churches mentioned in 85–91.

⁵⁴ See SPECK 1968: commentary on nos. 104, 105a, 105c, 105e–120.

Although Dionysios and Gregory were obviously not interested in the same kind of inscriptions, these two epigraphic projects constitute an interesting testimony to the vitality of the revival of the epigram in the late ninth century.

Gregory of Kampsas (in Macedonia) was headmaster at the school of the New Church in the 880s and the 890s; he was assisted by a younger colleague, Cephalas, the famous anthologist. In his anthology of ancient epigrams Cephalas incorporated a number of verse inscriptions, which had been copied from stone by Gregory of Kampsas. The manuscript of the *Palatine Anthology* contains two marginal scholia on the epigraphic exploits of Gregory of Kampsas: “this was copied from the tomb itself by Gregory the teacher of blessed memory” (at *AP* VII, 327), and “likewise copied by the late Gregory of Kampsas, whence Cephalas (derived it and) put it in his collection of epigrams” (at *AP* VII, 334). *AP* VII, 327 and 334 belong to a short series of epigrams, VII, 327–343, all of which (apart from nos. 339 and 341⁵⁵) are genuine verse inscriptions. The lemmata attached to the epigrams mention the places where they were found: 327 in Larissa, 330 in Dorylaion, 331–333 in small towns in Phrygia, 334 in Kyzikos, 337 in Megara, 338 in Magnesia and 340 in Thessalonica. Although Gregory of Kampsas will undoubtedly have collected more texts than just *AP* VII, 327–343, it is difficult to assess how many epigrams in the Greek Anthology ultimately derive from his collection of verse inscriptions. To ascertain whether an epigram in *AP* is inscriptional or not, it has to meet the following three requirements: (i) it must resemble inscriptions that are still to be found *in situ*, (ii) it must be anonymous and (iii) it must be equipped with a lemma noting its provenance⁵⁶. However, since the *Cycle* of Agathias, and perhaps also the *Garland* of Meleager, contained a few verse inscriptions, we have to reckon with the distinct possibility that some of the epigraphic texts in *AP* do not derive from Gregory of Kampsas, but rather from one of the ancient sources used by Cephalas. Therefore, to be absolutely sure, only continuous sequences of verse inscriptions should be taken into account in order to reconstruct the collection of Gregory of Kampsas. I have spotted the following series of verse inscriptions (occasionally mixed with a few non-inscriptional epigrams): *AP* I, 1–18, 91–99 and 103–122; VII, 327–343, 665–680 and 689–698; and IX, 670–699, 779–789 and 799–822⁵⁷. Thus some 140 verse inscriptions can be detected

⁵⁵ *AP* VII, 339 and 341 derive from the sixth-century *Palladas Sylloge*: see LAUXTERMANN 1997: 329, 335 and 337, n. 32.

⁵⁶ See CAMERON 1993: 110.

⁵⁷ AV. & A. CAMERON, *JHSt* 86 (1966) 23, suggest that the verse inscriptions written in honour of Justin II and Sophia, *AP* IX, 803, 804, 810, 812 and 813, were included by Agathias in his anthology “as a compliment to the new emperor”. But as R.C. MCCAIL, *JHSt* 89 (1969) 94, rightly observes, “in fact the whole series from 799 to 822 has the appearance of an inscriptional sylloge put together by Cephalas from non-literary sources”.

in *AP* I (the Christian epigrams), *AP* VII (the epitaphs) and *AP* IXb (the epigrams on works of art)⁵⁸. In view of the large number of genuine verse inscriptions not found in continuous series but dispersed throughout Cephalas' anthology, I would estimate that Gregory of Kampsas's collection originally contained up to 200 epigrams. The wide range of Gregory of Kampsas's epigraphic forays, from the Greek mainland to various places in Asia Minor, is quite remarkable. Naturally he copied most inscriptions back home in Constantinople, but he also visited many far-away places, such as Corinth, Argos, Larissa, Thessalonica, Assos, Caesarea, Ephesus and Smyrna. Although Gregory of Kampsas may have received a few copies of inscriptions from friends who shared his passion for epigraphy, the wide horizon of his peregrinations is something out of the ordinary in an age that is not conspicuous for its mobility or interest in matters far from home.

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Byzantine Anthologies

It is but a small step from single-author collections of poems to anthologies and small sylloges containing poems by various authors. As I stated previously, most Byzantine poems are out of context once they circulate in manuscript form. The poems are no longer in rapport with the immediate situational context for which they were composed. Verse inscriptions are brutally separated from the object they used to accompany, and occasional poems that were once intended to be declaimed, unfortunately become mute on paper. Poems dematerialize once they are recorded on paper. In this respect there is hardly any difference between a poem in a collection of poems and a poem in an anthology, for both are equally out of context. However, as for the delicate question of authorship, anthologies are usually less reliable than collections of poems. Whereas collections of poems for obvious reasons bear the name of their authors, Byzantine anthologies quite regularly suppress factual information on the issue of who wrote what. For instance, Marc. gr. 524, a thirteenth-century anthology⁵⁹, contains no less than forty-two poems by Christopher Mitylenaios: thirty-eight poems in four continuous series and four others on different pages

⁵⁸ On *AP* IXb: see pp. 85–86 and p. 153. *AP* 32–387 also belong to Cephalas' book of epigrams on works of art, but since Planudes thoroughly rearranged his sources, it is practically impossible to detect continuous sequences of verse inscriptions (but see, for instance, *AP* 42–48, 62–67 and 69–73).

⁵⁹ See the detailed description by LAMBROS 1911.

of the manuscript⁶⁰. Although the anthologist doubtless made use of the original collection of poems by Christopher Mitylenaios (seeing that the poems are arranged in the same order as in Christopher's collection), he does not mention the author anywhere. This is not a matter of mere negligence. The anthologist omitted to mention the name of Christopher Mitylenaios because it probably did not seem relevant to him. He copied a large number of Christopher's poems because he appreciated their literary quality and expected his readers to be equally thrilled, but he was not much interested in ascriptions. The anthology in Marc. gr. 524 contains hundreds of poems, often with detailed lemmata stating where a poem was inscribed or at which ceremonial occasion it was declaimed, but it hardly ever records the name of the author. This neglect of prosopographical data is typically Byzantine. Whereas we moderns want to know by whom a given text was written, Byzantines in general appear to be less interested in matters of ascription, at least as regards their own authors. Why do the Byzantines show so little interest in their own literary history? It is difficult to say, but I would suggest that it has to do with the fact that most Byzantine texts did not belong to the literary canon of the Byzantines. Byzantine authors, with a few exceptions, lacked the authoritative status that the classics and the church fathers enjoyed. Since the classics were taught at school and the church fathers were part of the orthodox baggage, they were awarded the sort of institutionalized literary prestige the average Byzantine author could only hope for in his wildest dreams.

In the next chapter I will discuss two tenth-century anthologies: the well-known *Palatine Anthology* (*AP*) and the regrettably little known *Anthologia Barberina* (*AB*). Since each individual anthology has its own characteristics in terms of formal design, principles of selecting, editorial strategies and ideological preferences, the account presented in the next chapter of *AP* and *AB*, their anthologists and their various methods of anthologizing is by no means exhaustive. The anthology in Marc. gr. 524, for instance, is totally different from the *Palatine Anthology* in its emphasis on "context", on the original function of a poem before it was anthologized. And the anthologies in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII)⁶¹, Vat. gr. 1276 (s. XIV in.)⁶², Laur. V 10 (s. XIV in.)⁶³ and other manuscripts, likewise display their own peculiarities. All these anthologies have their own methods of bringing order into the chaos of disorganized material, sorting out various poems, conjuring up thematic similarities and designing a cohesive unity. Therefore, Byzantine anthologies deserve to be

⁶⁰ See KURTZ 1903: XI–XII. Kurtz counted 41 poems, but did not notice Chr. Mityl. 4 on fol. 88^v (LAMBROS 1911: no. 120).

⁶¹ See ROCHEFORT 1950. See also Appendix VI, pp. 329–333.

⁶² See A. ACCONCIA LONGO & A. JACOB, *RSBN*, n.s., 17–19 (1981–82) 149–228.

⁶³ See J.N. SOLA, *BZ* 20 (1911) 373–383.

studied separately, each in its own historical setting: for instance, Par. Suppl. gr. 690 should be viewed against the background of intellectual life in the reign of the Komnenoi, Marc. gr. 524 in the light of the catastrophe of 1204, and both Vat. gr. 1276 and Laur. V 10 as reflections of Byzantine culture in far-away Apulia.

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Epigram Cycles

The so-called “cycles of epigrams”⁶⁴ are collections of epigrams that describe well-known pictorial scenes, mostly christological, in strict chronological order: say, from the Annunciation to the Anastasis. These collections are mostly anonymous, and hence it is usually impossible to establish whether an epigram cycle contains epigrams by one and the same author, or derives from various sources. The majority of the epigram cycles are still unpublished: see the various manuscript catalogues for “carmina ignoti auctoris in Christum”, “epigrammata εἰς τὰς δεσποτικὰς ἑορτὰς”, “versus εἰς τὰς ἑορτὰς τῆς Θεοτόκου”, and the like.

Two of these anonymous epigram cycles were published by Wolfram Hörandner in recent issues of the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. I refer to these collections as *DOP* 46 and *DOP* 48⁶⁵. *DOP* 46 is found in two closely related manuscripts dating from c. 1100⁶⁶. For a number of reasons, such as obvious scribal errors and the omission of certain well-known christological scenes, it is beyond any doubt that neither of these two manuscripts presents the original epigram cycle⁶⁷. The language, metre and style of the epigrams do not show any particular peculiarities and the few literary reminiscences that one may notice, some verses of Pisides⁶⁸, only confirm the self-evident conclusion that the

⁶⁴ The term was coined by HÖRANDNER 1992 (Ein Zyklus von Epigrammen, etc.) and 1994a (A Cycle of Epigrams, etc.).

⁶⁵ HÖRANDNER 1992 and 1994a. For the epigram cycle that he published in *DOP* 46 (1992), see also the edition by PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992.

⁶⁶ Marc. gr. 507 and Athous Vatop. 36: see HÖRANDNER 1992: 108. PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992 has discovered a third manuscript, Zagoras 115 (s. XVIII), a copy made by patriarch Kallinikos III of a manuscript that he had read in the library of the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Zagora manuscript presents the epigrams in the same order and with the same scribal errors and omissions as Marc. gr. 507 and Vatop. 36.

⁶⁷ See HÖRANDNER 1992: 114–115.

⁶⁸ See PAGONARI-ANTONIOU 1991–1992: 39 and her commentary *ad locum*, esp. p. 52 (nos. 22 and 23).

epigram cycle must have been compiled after the dark ages: perhaps in the ninth or the tenth, but more probably in the eleventh century. The second epigram cycle, *DOP* 48, is found in the famous anthology of Marc. gr. 524. Given the fact that all poems in this anthology date back to c. 1050–1200, it is reasonable to assume that *DOP* 48 was composed in approximately the same period⁶⁹.

The title of *DOP* 46, stating that the collection contains “various verses on the holy images of the feasts”, refers to the first 31 epigrams, which indeed describe the celebrated images of the Feast Cycle: from the Annunciation to the scene of Pentecost. The last 18 epigrams are also related to the New Testament, but describe other illustrated christological scenes, primarily of the Miracles of Christ. *DOP* 46 presents two or even three different epigrams for some of the scenes: for instance, the Annunciation is deemed worthy of two epigrams and Palm Sunday is treated in no less than three epigrams. The collection mainly consists of distichs, but there are also some epigrams with three or four verses. The presence of two or more epigrams on the same theme as well as the variation in the number of verses strongly suggest that *DOP* 46 is not a single-author collection, but a compilation of epigrams that derive from various sources⁷⁰. *DOP* 48, on the contrary, appears to be the work of a single author: “There are no double or triple versions, each epigram consists of three verses, and there is also a high degree of homogeneity concerning contents and composition that links the various pieces together”⁷¹. *DOP* 48 consists of twenty-one epigrams on the Lord’s Feasts as well as on a few scenes of the life of the Virgin (such as the Koimesis).

What purpose do these and similar collections serve? This is a difficult question to answer. Hörandner argues that *DOP* 48 “seems to reveal the hand of a poet who had been commissioned to furnish the captions to the illustrations of a New Testament manuscript (...) or to a fresco cycle in a church”⁷². For the use of epigrams in illustrated New Testament manuscripts he refers to the Gospel Book in Istanbul (cod. 3 of the Patriarchate), where similar epigrams can be found next to miniatures of the Feast Cycle. For the second possibility, the use of epigrams as verse inscriptions in a church interior, there is no material evidence, but we know for certain that fresco or mosaic cycles were occasionally adorned with explanatory verses: see, for instance, the epigrams that used to be inscribed in the church of the Holy Virgin of the Source (*AP* I, 110–114) or the inscriptional epigrams on the mosaics in the Argyros

⁶⁹ See HÖRANDNER 1994a: 123.

⁷⁰ See HÖRANDNER 1992: 114.

⁷¹ HÖRANDNER 1994a: 122.

⁷² HÖRANDNER 1994a: 122.

monastery⁷³. In the fifth chapter I shall discuss numerous epigrams and inscriptions that illustrate the close relationship between poetry and art in Byzantium, and I shall elaborate upon Hörandner's hypothesis that epigram cycles could be found in illustrated manuscripts and church interiors. In fact, the textual evidence leaves no doubt that the use of epigrams in Byzantine art was actually quite common. Therefore, given the fact that *DOP* 48 is the work of a single author and contains single epigrams on the images of the Feast Cycle, I see no reason to doubt that Hörandner is right in postulating that this particular epigram cycle used to be inscribed on a specific monument or to be written below the miniatures of a specific manuscript.

But *DOP* 46 is quite another story. Seeing that the epigrams in it derive from various sources and cannot be ascribed to a single author, it is out of the question that *DOP* 46 originally served as a cycle of epigrams that used to be inscribed on a single monument or written next to the miniatures of a single manuscript. True enough, it cannot be excluded that the anthologist of *DOP* 46 derived the epigrams from inscribed works of art rather than from literary sources, nor that he -like Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas- did some thorough epigraphic fieldwork, but the fact remains that his collection has no immediate connection to the works of art which the epigrams so vividly describe. If *DOP* 46 was a collection of verse inscriptions, one would expect the anthologist to mention their provenance and original context. Whereas the inscriptional collections of Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas essentially look back in time and present an image of the literary past, the epigrams in *DOP* 46 do not have a specific historical dimension.

To understand the original purpose of *DOP* 46, one should look at similar epigram cycles, such as the abridged versions of Prodrōmos' *Tetrasticha* and a still unedited collection of epigrams in Laura B 43. There are three time-planes on which Byzantine collections of epigrams can be situated: the past, the present and the future. The collections of verse inscriptions that were compiled by Dionysios the Stoudite and Gregory of Kampsas evidently hark back to the illustrious past. As *DOP* 48 is a collection of epigrams composed for a specific monument, it is situated in the present. The abridged *Tetrasticha*, Laura B 43 and *DOP* 46, on the contrary, constitute collections of epigrams with the potential to be used as verse inscriptions on future monuments. These three collections were compiled "on spec" as it were. That is to say, they were put together neither as reflections of the past nor in view of present needs, but rather from the perspective of future demands.

Prodrōmos' iambic and hexametric *Tetrasticha*⁷⁴ form a collection of epigrams on selected passages from the Old and New Testaments. Since the

⁷³ See chapter 5, pp. 182–186.

⁷⁴ See the edition by PAPAGIANNIS 1997.

narrative scenes that Prodromos selected possess the potential to be visualized and, in fact, were often represented in Byzantine paintings and miniatures, the poet undoubtedly had in mind contemporary forms of art when he composed the epigrams⁷⁵. The epigrams form a literary response to the visual forms of imagination with which Prodromos and his audience were familiar. Soon after the *Tetrasticha* had been published, they were excerpted in numerous manuscripts. These abridged versions, usually entitled: εἰς τὰς δεσποτικὰς ἑορτάς, only contain the epigrams that deal with the Feast Cycle⁷⁶. The abridged versions basically form collections of epigrams that may serve as verse inscriptions, and thus strongly differ from the original edition of the *Tetrasticha*.

Laura B 43 (s. XII–XIII), fols. 67^v–68^v, presents yet another epigram cycle. There we find a set of epigrams on the main events of the lives of Christ and the Virgin as well as a few epigrams on the Apostles. The epigrams are attributed to Geometres in the manuscript, but are in fact the work of various poets: Geometres, Mauropous, Kallikles, Prodromos (the iambic *Tetrasticha*) and a nameless throng of authors that I have not been able to identify (see pp. 299–301). The christological epigrams are arranged in chronological order, from the Hypapante to the Anastasis. The anthologist of the collection of Laura B 43 clearly presents the epigrams as texts that can be used as verse inscriptions on works of art, as the following three examples may demonstrate. (i) He radically changed the text of Geometres, Cr. 298, 14: in its original version, the poem is a satire on a certain Michael who must have belonged to the clergy of the church of the Holy Apostles, but in the version of the anthologist it turns into an inscriptional epigram on an image of the Disciples⁷⁷. (ii) He copied only vv. 1–4 of Mauropous 10, a long poem on the Ascension: the whole poem is a literary ekphrasis, but its first four verses can serve as a verse inscription. (iii) Ps. Psellos 90 is a literary poem that tells how each of the Disciples met his death: of the many manuscripts that contain the poem, Laura B 43 is the only one that states that it is a genuine verse inscription (allegedly found on the ἐξώφυλον of the church of the Holy Apostles)⁷⁸.

The collection of Laura B 43, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and *DOP* 46 are basically collections of epigrams, which were assembled as quarries for inscriptions. If a painter, or the patron for whom he was working, desired a neatly written epigram, he could consult collections of this kind. This hypothesis is not as bizarre as it may seem at first sight, if we take into account post-

⁷⁵ See LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 368–370.

⁷⁶ See PAPAGIANNIS 1997: 145–156.

⁷⁷ Cr. 298, 14 reads: (εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους ἀποστόλους) ὧν καὶ καθ' εἷς ἔσωσεν ἀνθρώπων ἔθνος, νῦν πάντες οὐ σώσουσι Μιχαὴλ μόνον. Laura B 43 reads: (στίχοι εἰς τοὺς ἀποστόλους) ὧν καὶ καθ' εἷς ἔσωσεν ἀνθρώπων γένη, νῦν πάντες οὐ σώσουσιν ἀνθρώπων γένη.

⁷⁸ See WESTERINK 1992: XXXI–XXXII and 461–462.

Byzantine painter's guides. The *Painter's Manual* of Dionysios of Phourna and especially the anonymous *Book of the Art of Painting*⁷⁹ offer numerous texts, in prose or verse, that the painter is supposed to write on the icon or the fresco he is painting: cult titles, Bible verses, sayings of the church fathers, liturgical and hymnal texts, but also epigrams. With the help of these inscriptions the viewer is able to identify the subject of a painting and respond accordingly. There can be but little doubt that written texts on pictures form part of the aesthetic experience of the Byzantines, seeing that icons are nearly always inscribed. Though it is obviously difficult to identify the sources whence the painter's guides derived the epigrams serving as suitable verse inscriptions, it is reasonable to assume that they ultimately go back to collections of potential verse inscriptions, such as we find in *DOP* 46, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and Laura B 43. It is worth noticing, for instance, that the *Painter's Manual* and the *Art of Painting* contain the texts of Prodromos' *Tetr.* 187a and *Tetr.* 230a⁸⁰. Seeing that the abridged versions of the *Tetrasticha* contain nos. 187a and 230a, and the Laura B 43 collection no. 187a, there appears to be some connection here – although not necessarily a *direct* connection, I would say. The *Tetrasticha* dealing with the Lord's Feasts were at first excerpted in epigram cycles, subsequently copied in numerous apographs, and then collected in post-Byzantine painter's guides. The manuscript tradition that leads from the epigram cycles to the painter's guides is unfortunately beyond reconstruction. However, looking back, the decisive moment for the editorial fate of the *Tetrasticha* on the Lord's Feasts was when the first anthologist saw the light and understood that these literary epigrams could easily be used as verse inscriptions. The abridged versions and the collection in Laura B 43 document this quintessential moment by presenting the *Tetrasticha* as possible verse inscriptions.

Painter's guides, such as the famous one by Dionysios of Phourna, are not a post-Byzantine invention, but go back to a centuries-old tradition, which, unfortunately, cannot be traced in detail due to lack of evidence⁸¹. Evidence is lacking because the practical information provided by painter's guides was of little interest to the literati and was therefore not copied in luxurious manuscripts, but in unpretentious cahiers that circulated in the workshops of paint-

⁷⁹ Both edited by A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ ἐργηγεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης. St. Petersburg 1909 (the *Book of the Art of Painting* on pp. 274–288).

⁸⁰ Ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, pp. 233 and 277.

⁸¹ See Oulpius Rhomaïos' treatise *On Physical Images*, ed. M. CHATZIDAKIS, *EEBS* 14 (1938) 393–414 and ed. F. WINKELMANN, in: *Festtag und Alltag in Byzanz*, ed. G. PRINZING and D. SIMON. Munich 1990, 107–127. For the history of painter's guides in general, see V. GRECU, *Byzantinische Handbücher der Kirchenmalerei. Byz* 9 (1934) 675–701 and M. BASILAKI, Ἀπὸ τοὺς εἰκονογραφικοὺς ὁδηγοὺς στὰ σχέδια ἐργασίας τῶν μεταβυζαντινῶν ζωγράφων. Athens 1995.

ers and ended up in the waste-basket once they were worn out by frequent use. Epigram cycles, such as the one in Laura B 43, survived because they were not only used by painters and patrons, but also appealed to the reading public at large. *DOP* 46, the abridged *Tetrasticha* and the epigram cycle in Laura B 43 are basically two-edged, for the epigrams can either be read as literary texts or be used as verse inscriptions. In fact, most of the time it is practically impossible to draw a strict dividing line between literary and inscriptional epigrams. The former may unexpectedly turn up on Byzantine murals or icons and the latter may widely circulate in manuscripts. The distinctions are blurred, as can once again be illustrated by the text history of Prodromos' *Tetrasticha*. The *Tetrasticha* originally formed a series of literary epigrams on well-known pictorial scenes; subsequently, in the abridged versions and in Laura B 43, some of the epigrams were excerpted because they had the potential to be used as verse inscriptions. The next stage, of course, was the actual use of these epigrams as captions to works of art. I know of two examples: *Tetr.* 229a can be found on an icon of the Crucifixion in Moscow⁸², and *Tetr.* 230a was written on a mural in the church of St. Stephen on the island of Nis in Lake Eğirdir⁸³. Thus, Prodromos' literary epigrams gradually evolved into genuine verse inscriptions, passing through the intermediate stage of the epigram cycles.

To recapitulate, *DOP* 48 is a collection of epigrams that used to be inscribed, and *DOP* 46 is a collection of epigrams that had the potential to serve as verse inscriptions. Most epigram cycles are as yet unpublished and a lot of scholarly work still needs to be done before we can reach a final conclusion based on solid textual evidence. However, textual evidence by itself, without a context to explain the original purpose of the texts, is quite meaningless. Manuscripts are obviously indispensable to philological research, but if we were to publish dozens of epigram cycles without figuring out what their original function may have been, I am afraid we would hardly make any progress. In fact, no manuscript text makes sense unless we ask ourselves: what is it and what is it for?

⁸² See A. FROLOW, *Cahiers Archéologiques* 6 (1952) 167; HÖRANDNER 1987: 237–239; MAGUIRE 1996: 6 and 23–24; and HÖRANDNER 2000: 80–82.

⁸³ See H. ROTT, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler aus Pisidien, Pamphylien, Kappadokien und Lykien*. Leipzig 1908, 89, and the “Reisebericht der Herren Michel und Rott” in: *BZ* 16 (1907) 717. See also LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 369–370.

Chapter Three

ANTHOLOGIES AND ANTHOLOGISTS

Between c. 850 and 950 many Byzantine intellectuals, among them brilliant scholars such as Leo the Philosopher, devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the study of ancient, late antique and contemporary poetry. These hundred years of Byzantine scholarship resulted in the compilation of two major anthologies: the *Palatine Anthology* (compiled shortly after 944) and the *Anthologia Barberina* (c. 919). The latter is a collection of Byzantine anacreontics and alphabets, which can be found in Barb. gr. 310 (see below, pp. 123–128). The former is essentially a copy of an earlier anthology of epigrams put together by Constantine Cephalas at the end of the ninth century. The anthology of Cephalas is not preserved, but we can reconstruct its structure in broad outline with the help of various collections of epigrams that derive from it, either directly or indirectly. Of these collections the *Palatine Anthology* is by far the most important because it closely resembles the original anthology of Cephalas.

The Palatine manuscript¹ was written by six different scribes². These six hands can be divided into two groups: B¹, B² and B³, and J, A¹ and A², respectively. Both groups of hands can be dated approximately to the second quarter of the tenth century: scribes B to c. 920–930, scribes J and A to c. 940–950³.

The oldest part of the manuscript, copied by scribes B¹, B² and B³, comprises the epigrams starting from *AP* IX, 563 to the end of *AP* XIV (pp. 453–642),

¹ After the Napoleonic wars the Palatine manuscript, with the exception of its last 100-odd pages, was sent back to Heidelberg (Pal. gr. 23); the remainder stayed in Paris (Par. Suppl. gr. 384). For the curious wanderings of the Palatine manuscript, see CAMERON 1993: 178–201.

² For a thorough description of the manuscript, see J. IRIGOIN, *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1975–76. Sect. IV. Sciences Historiques et Philologiques*, 281–295.

³ Thus IRIGOIN (see footnote above), 283–284, and A. DILLER, in: *Scripta Turyniana*, ed. J. HELLER. Urbana 1974, 520–521. M.L. AGATI, *BollClass*, t.s., 5 (1984) 42–59, dates both sets of hands a few decades later: scribes B about 940–950 and scribes J and A about 960–970. CAMERON 1993: 99–108 suggests that the two groups of scribes, albeit working in different scriptoria, cooperated in a joint venture under the guidance of the chief editor J; this theory has been refuted by J.-L. VAN DIETEN, *BZ* 86–87 (1994) 342–362.

as well as *AP* XV, 28–40 (pp. 705–706 and 693–695). Since the outside leaves of the last quaternion, no. 44 (pp. 691–706), were accidentally folded wrong during binding, the original order of the epigrams is as follows: *AP* XV, 40 and 28–39.

The rest of the manuscript (pp. 1–452, 643–692 and 696–704) was written by J, A¹ and A². It contains the first four books of Cephalas' anthology: *AP* V, VI, VII and IX, 1–562, plus the introduction to it, *AP* IV⁴. It also contains *AP* VIII (Gregory of Nazianzos' epitaphs), a book that does not belong to the original Cephalas, but was added to it in the early tenth century⁵. Before and after the anthology of Cephalas we find various long poems and collections of epigrams. The poems at the beginning of the Palatine manuscript are the following: Nonnos' *Paraphrase of the Gospel according to John* (no longer extant due to the loss of seven quires), Paul the Silentiary's *Ekphrasis of the Hagia Sophia and of its Ambo*, various dogmatic poems by Gregory of Nazianzos, a collection of Christian epigrams (*AP* I), Christodoros of Thebes' *Ekphrasis of the Statues in the Zeuxippos* (*AP* II), and a collection of inscriptions found in a temple at Kyzikos (*AP* III). At the end of the manuscript, after pp. 453–642 written by scribes B, we again find a hotchpotch of various poems: John of Gaza's *Ekphrasis of the World Map in the Winter Baths of Gaza*, a collection of epigrams (*AP* XV, 1–20 and 23), the Hellenistic *Technopaegnion* (*AP* XV, 21–22 and 24–27), and the *Anacreontea*. Then we have the last quaternion (no. 44), the first pages of which were copied by scribe B³; on the remaining pages scribe J copied various poems by Gregory of Nazianzos.

There can be little doubt that scribe J is the final redactor of the manuscript. Scribe J supplements lacunas, adds lemmata and ascriptions, and attempts to unite the various parts of the manuscript so that the seams do not show. In his magnificent book on the Greek Anthology, Alan Cameron convincingly proved that scribe J is none other than the famous tenth-century poet, Constantine the Rhodian, and demonstrated that the *Palatine Anthology* was compiled not long after 944⁶. The so-called Corrector examined the manuscript after it had already been executed, and made a great number of excellent corrections, for which he used an apograph of Cephalas' anthology made by

⁴ Incidentally, this also explains the scholion attached to *AP* IV, 1, stating that the anthology of Cephalas was divided into four categories *ἐν τῷ παρόντι πινυκτίῳ*: namely, erotic, anathematic, sepulchral and epideictic (= *AP* V, VI, VII and IXa). By this, scribe J simply means to say that *the present volume*, copied by himself and scribes A, contains only these four categories. The scholion does not apply to the rest of Cephalas' anthology, which was copied by scribes B.

⁵ See CAMERON 1993: 145–146.

⁶ CAMERON 1993: 108–116 and 300–307. See also P. ORSINI, *BollGrott* 54 (2000) 425–435, who, for no good reason, questions the validity of Cameron's arguments.

Michael Chartophylax⁷. On various pages of the Palatine manuscript we also detect a number of additional epigrams copied by a twelfth-century scribe, Σ^x .

The structure of the Palatine manuscript is fairly complex. It is reasonable to assume that the manuscript copied by scribes B did not only contain *AP* IX, 563 – *AP* XIV and XV, 28–40, but also the preceding books of Cephala's anthology. For one reason or another Constantine the Rhodian (scribe J) had obtained only the second part of the B manuscript and, desiring to have the whole Cephala, ordered scribes A to copy the rest under his guidance. This they did with the utmost diligence. For reasons unknown to us, Constantine the Rhodian separated the last few pages from the rest of the B manuscript by inserting three new quaternions (41–43) containing John of Gaza's *Ekphrasis*, the *Technopaegnia* and the *Anacreontea*. And since there were still a few pages left blank between the *Ekphrasis* and the *Technopaegnia*, he filled these spare pages (pp. 664–668) with various epigrams. Constantine placed the last few pages of the B manuscript at the very end, after quaternions 41–43. These pages originally formed a ternion. Constantine turned it into a quaternion and copied some poems by Gregory of Nazianzos on the pages left blank by scribe B³ and on the pages he had added himself.

Although we are greatly indebted to Constantine the Rhodian for his editorial work on the Palatine manuscript, it cannot be denied that Constantine was sometimes a somewhat sloppy editor. On the last pages of the manuscript Constantine copied 68 epigrams by Gregory of Nazianzos, apparently unaware of the fact that these same epigrams could be found in *AP* VIII, a book copied by his fellow scribe A¹. Only when the manuscript was already finished and he had begun checking the work of his fellow scribes, did he notice the duplication⁸. Constantine's negligence shows most clearly at *AP* IX, 583–584, where he failed to notice a major lacuna. If Constantine had checked other manuscripts of Cephala's anthology, he could easily have spotted the lacuna, but for one reason or another he did not closely examine the B manuscript in his possession. The exemplar used by scribes B must have missed three or four quaternions between *AP* IX, 583 and 584 containing some 450 epigrams on works of art. Most of these epigrams can be found in the *Planudean Anthology* (printed as book XVI, the "Appendix Planudea" (*AP* 32–387), in modern editions of the Greek Anthology), a few in the so-called *syllogae minores*, and some others in the Palatine manuscript itself as additions by the twelfth-century scribe Σ^x (for instance, *AP* IX, 823–827 and XV, 41–51). The manuscript that scribes B used did not only lack a considerable amount of epigrams, but also a title and a prooemium separating the epideictic epigrams (*AP* IXa

⁷ CAMERON 1993: 116–120.

⁸ CAMERON 1993: 107–108.

= *AP* IX, 1–583) from the epigrams on works of art (*AP* IXb = *AP* 32–387 + some epigrams in the *syllogae minores* and the additions of Σ^x + *AP* IX, 584–822)⁹.

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Constantine Cephalas

Little is known about Constantine Cephalas. In sources other than the Palatine manuscript he is mentioned only once: as *protopapas* at the Byzantine court in 917¹⁰. The scholia in the Palatine manuscript unfortunately do not supply us with much valuable information about his person or his activities, except for an intriguing note of the Corrector at *AP* VII, 429: “Cephalas propounded (προεβάλετο) this epigram in the school of the New Church in the time of Gregory the Headmaster of blessed memory”. The scholion informs us that Cephalas used to teach at the school of the New Church and that he once lectured on *AP* VII, 429, a πρόβλημα that his students had to solve¹¹. In the prooemia attached to *AP* V–VII, IX–XII and XIV, Cephalas addresses his students directly every time he introduces a new epigrammatic sub-genre: “you should know (...)”, “please notice (...)”, “you may find (...)”. The peremptory tone and the didactic tenor of these proems leave no doubt that the anthology of Cephalas came into existence in the context of the Byzantine educational system. Cephalas was a junior teacher at the school of the New Church; the headmaster (μαγίστωρ) was Gregory of Kampsas, whom we know to have compiled a collection of ancient verse inscriptions, which was incorporated in the anthology of Cephalas¹². Seeing that the New Church was inaugurated in 880¹³, the anthology of Cephalas was published at the earliest in the 880s, if not later. But apparently not much later, for the *Sylogae Euphemiana*, which

⁹ See LAUXTERMANN 1998c: 526–529.

¹⁰ See Theoph. Cont., 388–389 and Georg. Cont., 881. Κεφαλᾶς is a nickname and means “Bighead”, see Georg. Cont., 820.

¹¹ See CAMERON 1993: 109–110 and 137. For riddles as part of the Byzantine school curriculum, see N.G. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*. London 1983, 23.

¹² For Gregory of Kampsas and his collection of verse inscriptions, see pp. 72–74. For information on Byzantine schools and teachers, see LEMERLE 1971: 242–266 and SPECK 1974a: 29–73 (for Cephalas, see esp. p. 61, n. 28).

¹³ For the New Church, see P. MAGDALINO, *JÖB* 37 (1987) 51–64. The school of the New Church seems to have existed only for a short while, seeing that the letters of the Anonymous Professor, dating from 920–940, inform us that the clergy of the New Church sent their protégés to his school, see LEMERLE 1971: 206, n. 3.

derives its epigrams from the anthology of Cephalas, was compiled during the reign of Leo VI (886–912)¹⁴. Moreover, the collection of epigrams at the end of the B manuscript (*AP* XV, 28–40) provides an important chronological clue that has gone unnoticed. The original lemma attached to *AP* XV, 32 reads: “by Arethas the Deacon”, to which scribe J added in the late 940s: “who also became archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia”¹⁵. This clearly indicates that the original lemma was written when Arethas had not yet become archbishop: that is, before 902. Taken in conjunction, the above data suggest that the anthology of Cephalas dates from the last decade of the ninth century.

The anthology of Cephalas consisted of the following nine sections: (1) erotic (*AP* V), (2) anathematic (*AP* VI), (3) sepulchral (*AP* VII), (4) epideictic (*AP* IXa), (5) on works of art (*AP* IXb), (6) protreptic (*AP* X), (7) bacchic (*AP* XIa), (8) scoptic (*AP* XIb) and (9) pederastic (*AP* XII). It was followed by a collection of epigrams in unusual metres (*AP* XIII) and by a collection of riddles, mathematical problems and oracles (*AP* XIV). At the beginning of his anthology Cephalas placed the ancient prefaces in verse attached to the *Garland* of Meleager, the *Garland* of Philip and the *Cycle* of Agathias (*AP* IV)¹⁶.

The contents of the original Cephalan compilation do not fully correspond with the modern concept of an “anthology”, a collection of poems put together with the objective to bring like to like. It is worth noticing that Cephalas did not restrict his collection merely to epigrams, but also included two long poems that are certainly not epigrammatic, Nonnos’ *Paraphrase* and Christodoros of Thebes’ *Ekphrasis* (*AP* II). Likewise, Constantine the Rhodian added non-epigrammatic material at the end of the Palatine manuscript: John of Gaza’s *Ekphrasis*, the *Technopaegnia* and the *Anacreontea*. It is not known whether it was Cephalas or Constantine the Rhodian to whom we owe Paul the Silentiary’s *Ekphrasis* and Gregory of Nazianzos’ theological poems (found at the beginning of the Palatine manuscript), but it does not really matter. As I pointed out in the second chapter (pp. 68–69), Byzantine manuscripts may contain a hotchpotch of various kinds of poetry, varying from short epigrams to long poems. The medieval approach to poetry is not as rigid and priggish as that of the moderns, and it is certainly not based on any considerations of genre; anything of interest may be copied and, judging by the contents of Byzantine manuscripts, actually was copied. It is therefore hardly surprising that we find non-epigrammatic texts before and after the actual anthology. Cephalas and Constantine the Rhodian simply followed the editorial practice of their time.

¹⁴ See CAMERON 1993: 254–256.

¹⁵ See CAMERON 1993: 313.

¹⁶ See CAMERON 1993: 121–159.

As for the collections of epigrams found before and after the anthology of Cephala, it is not always clear who put them there: Cephala himself, Constantine the Rhodian or someone else. The collection of Christian epigrams in *AP* I was certainly to be found in Cephala, as will be shown in the next section. The short sylloge at the end of the B manuscript, *AP* XV, 28–40, may perhaps have been part of the original Cephala, but I am inclined to think that it is a later addition to the anthology of Cephala (see pp. 107–108). Constantine the Rhodian's own contribution to the Greek Anthology is the small sylloge of epigrams copied between John of Gaza's *Ekphrasis* and the *Technopaegnia* (see pp. 116–118).

For his anthology of epigrams (*AP* IV–VII and IX–XIV) Cephala made use of several sources, of which the five most important are: the *Garland* of Meleager (1st cent. BC), the *Garland* of Philip (1st cent. AD), the *Anthologion* of Diogenian (2nd cent.), the *Palladas Sylloge* (6th cent.) and the *Cycle* of Agathias (c. 567)¹⁷. Cephala's anthology did not contain contemporary epigrams. The only exceptions are Cephala's own preface to the book of erotic epigrams (*AP* V, 1), and some epigrams by Leo the Philosopher and Theophanes the Grammarian (see pp. 100–101 and 104–105). There can be no doubt that Cephala's main objective in compiling his anthology was to rescue from oblivion the epigrammatic legacy of the ancients. Cephala's scholarly pursuits are not “antiquarian” or “encyclopedic”, as some maintain¹⁸, but bear proof of the revived interest in classical literature in the ninth and tenth centuries. This cultural revival manifests itself in the many manuscripts copied in this period as well as in the direct quotations or indirect literary allusions with which contemporary writings are replete. Since he was an intelligent, though sometimes absent-minded editor, Cephala understood that his task went beyond the limits of mere copying, but involved above all a scholarly approach in sorting out the material at his disposal. That is why he did not copy the epigrams in exactly the same order as he found them in his manifold sources, but attempted to rearrange them (not always successfully) according to genre. His system of classification is essentially the same as that of Agathias, with the addition of two new categories: protreptic and pederastic¹⁹. Cephala's working

¹⁷ For the *Garlands* of Meleager and Philip, see CAMERON 1993: 49–65. For the *Anthologion* of Diogenian, see P. SAKOŁOWSKI, *De Anthologia Palatina quaestiones*. Leipzig 1893 and CAMERON 1993: 86–90. For the *Palladas Sylloge*, see A. FRANKE, *De Pallada epigrammatographo*. Leipzig 1899 and LAUXTERMANN 1997. For the *Cycle* of Agathias, see MATTSO 1942 and A. & AV. CAMERON, *JHSt* 86 (1966) 6–25.

¹⁸ LEMERLE 1971: 268 calls the anthology of Cephala “une encyclopédie épigrammatique”. Lemerle's “curiosa affermazione” was refuted by P. ODORICO, *BZ* 83 (1990) 5–6 and CAMERON 1993: 334–335.

¹⁹ Cephala divided Agathias' fourth category, “on the devious paths of life, etc.”, into two “books”: epideictic (*AP* IXa) and protreptic (*AP* X), probably because one of the

methods are not entirely clear to us; he may have used file cards in order to avoid duplications and he may have had some assistance from fellow scholars, such as Gregory of Kampsas and the anonymous ἐκλεξάμενος whom the Corrector criticizes at *AP* IX, 16 for his stupidity. Cephalas has not been spared the scorn of modern schoolmasters, who crudely accuse him of aggravating negligence, ignorance and sloppiness. But taking into account the size of the material he was working with and the number of mistakes he could have made, but did not make, these criticisms hardly seem justified. In fact, the fortunes or mishaps of Cephalas' scholarly work should be judged, if at all, against the background of other ninth- and tenth-century compilations, such as the corpus of short poems attributed to Theognis or the various gnomologies compiled in this period²⁰. Short texts need to be rearranged in such a manner that an anthology or gnomology appears to assume a logical, almost natural coherence; but this seemingly coherent system of classification is, of course, the work of an individual anthologist, who superimposes his own interpretation of, and adds signification to, the texts he is rearranging. In the following, I shall try to characterize the various anthologists who contributed to the Greek Anthology.

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A Collection of Christian Epigrams: AP I

The Christian epigrams in *AP* I²¹ were copied by scribes J and A¹, who apparently cooperated and wrote the text in shifts. Taking into account the scribal error at *AP* I, 116, it is beyond doubt that the collection of Christian epigrams was not compiled by scribe J himself, but already existed in manuscript form. On pp. 61–62 we find the following epigrams: *AP* I, 115; 116. 1–2 (with an asterisk indicating that it should be deleted); 116. 3–4; and 30 (duplicated here). The text of *AP* I, 116. 1–2 should indeed have been deleted in modern editions. It begins with the first words of I, 30 and ends with the last words of I, 116. 3–4. Here we have a classic example of haplography, caused by

sources he used, the *Palladas Sylloge*, contained a great number of protreptic epigrams. Cephalas added the category of paederastica (for obvious reasons absent from the *Cycle* of Agathias) because of the many epigrams of this kind found in one of his sources, the *Boyish Muse* of Strato of Sardis. See LAUXTERMAN 1998c: 527–528 and 535–536.

²⁰ For the late ninth-century edition of Theognis, see M.L. WEST, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin–New York 1974, 44–45. For ninth- and tenth-century gnomologies, see ODORICO 1986: 3–28.

²¹ For studies on *AP* I, see especially WALTZ 1925, BAUER 1960–1961 and BALDWIN 1996.

the presence of the word ἄφθιτον both in I, 30 and in I, 116. 3–4. Scribe A made up for his mistake by rewriting *AP* I, 116. 3–4 in its original form, while scribe J, taking over on the next page, wrote down the text of *AP* I, 30. The original sequence of epigrams in the exemplar they were copying must have been as follows: *AP* I, 115; I, 30; and I, 116. 3–4. This also explains the heading attached to *AP* I, 116: “on the same”, i.e., “on Christ” – the subject matter, not of *AP* I, 115, but of *AP* I, 30.

The collection of Christian epigrams is not a later addition to the anthology of Cephalas, as most scholars seem to believe, but forms part of the original Cephalas. First of all, as Alan Cameron observed, at least four epigrams in *AP* I (nos. 33–36) derive from the *Cycle* of Agathias²². It seems very unlikely that Cephalas, while thumbing through his exemplar of the *Cycle*, would have skipped these beautiful epigrams only because they deal with archangels instead of pagan deities. In fact, the mere suggestion would question the ethics of the very person who was to become *protopapas* at the Byzantine court. Secondly, the collection of Christian epigrams was also to be found in two independent copies of Cephalas’ anthology: the Cephalan source used by the *Souda* for the numerous epigrams it quotes, and the apograph made by Michael Chartophylax and checked by the Corrector. The *Souda* quotes a few verses from epigrams in *AP* I²³, and the Corrector makes no less than fifteen corrections in the text of the Palatine manuscript. Most of these corrections are insignificant and may have been the Corrector’s own conjectures, but the excellent emendations: λύσσαν instead of λήθην (*AP* I, 10. 72) and ἀνίαχον instead of ἀνίσχον (*AP* I, 92. 3), indicate that the Corrector had a better text in front of him²⁴. Thus there were at least three tenth-century manuscripts combining the collection of Christian epigrams with the anthology of Cephalas: the Palatine manuscript itself, Michael Chartophylax’ apograph and the manuscript used by the redactors of the *Souda*. Thirdly, *AP* I contains a great number of verse inscriptions. As one would expect, most of these verse inscriptions were copied in Constantinople: *AP* I, 1–18, 96–98, 104, 106–107, 109–114 and 120–121; but the epigraphical survey also included other Byzantine cities, such as Ephesus, Caesarea and Cyzicus: *AP* I, 50, 91, 92–93, 95 and 103. As Gregory of Kampsas is known to have visited these cities for his collection of verse inscriptions, it is very likely that he is the epigrapher who contributed to what was to become *AP* I.

²² CAMERON 1993: 152–158. See also the interesting study by P. SPECK in: *Varia II (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 6). Bonn 1987, 357–362. BALDWIN 1996: 101–102 is not entirely convinced by Cameron’s arguments.

²³ See CAMERON 1993: 151.

²⁴ For the 15 corrections, see STADTMÜLLER 1894–1906: *ad locum*, *AP* I, 10. 51; 10. 72; 19. 3; 63. 2; 65. 1; 66. 1; 66. 2; 67. 1; 85. 1; 86. 2; 90. 1; 92. 3; 94. 6; 98. 4; and 116. 1.

Furthermore, there are also some interesting lemmata and scholia in *AP* I that indirectly indicate that the collection of Christian epigrams must have been compiled by Cephalas himself. *AP* I, 106–107, are two verse inscriptions celebrating the decoration of the *Chrysotriklinos* commissioned by Michael III; they date from 856–866. *AP* I, 109–114, too, are verse inscriptions; they were found in the church of the Virgin of the Source, which was decorated by Basil I and his sons Constantine and Leo in the years 870–879. Although verse inscriptions are destined by their very nature to remain anonymous, the anthologist of *AP* I duly records the names of the poets who wrote the above epigrams: a certain Mazarenos (*AP* I, 106–107)²⁵ and an equally obscure schoolmaster, Ignatios the Headmaster (*AP* I, 109–114)²⁶. From this we may infer that the anthologist had firsthand information on the two poets and their literary achievements in the 860s and 870s. Otherwise, how could he have known which poets out of many possible candidates had been commissioned to compose the anonymous verses he found inscribed in the *Chrysotriklinos* and the church of the *Pege*? It is reasonable to assume that the well-informed source used by Cephalas was none other than the collection of verse inscriptions compiled by Gregory of Kampsas. Gregory lived in exactly the same period as the two poets and there can be little doubt that he must have personally known at least Ignatios the Headmaster, a colleague of his. At *AP* I, 122 we find another name of a member of the circle of Cephalas: Michael Chartophylax, whose personal copy of Cephalas' anthology was used by the Corrector. At *AP* I, 10, a long verse inscription found in the church of St. Polyeuktos, we find the following curious scholion: μένουσιν, ἄριστε, πάντα μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἔτει πενταξοίοις. Since the church of St. Polyeuktos was built by Anicia Juliana between 524 and 527²⁷, the scholion appears to err in its arithmetic. However, if one follows the inaccurate dating provided by the *Patria*, according to which Anicia was the daughter of Valentinianus and the sister-in-law of Theodosius the Great²⁸, we arrive at a date in the late ninth century²⁹. The lemma attached

²⁵ For this name, see WALTZ 1925: 321–322, who suggests that the poet, or his family, came from a place called “Mazara”.

²⁶ Ignatios the Headmaster should not be confused with Ignatios the Deacon (born c. 780, died c. 850): *pace* MAKRIŠ 1997: 10 and 12; see WOLSKA-CONUS 1970: 357–359 and MANGO 1997: 13. As for Ignatios' title: μαγίστωρ τῶν γραμματικῶν, see the name of the school located in the Orphanage of St. Paul (s. XI–XII): σχολή τῶν γραμματικῶν, and the title of one of its principals (Basil Padiadites): μαῖστωρ τῆς σχολῆς τῶν γραμματικῶν, see P. LEMERLE, *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle*. Paris 1977, 233–234.

²⁷ C. MANGO & I. ŠEVČENKO, *DOP* 15 (1961) 243–247.

²⁸ Ed. PREGER 1901–07: 57. See P. MAAS, *Hermes* 48 (1913) 296, n. 2 and CAMERON 1993: 114. BALDWIN 1996: 98 finds it hard to believe that “the scribe (would have been) this obtuse”.

²⁹ Some fifty years later, scribe J tried to bring the scholion up to date by adding καὶ ...ξοντα, but afterwards erased his own addition.

to *AP* I, 7 states that an amount of money was found hidden in the church of St. Theodore. The same story is told in more detail by the *Patria*, from which we learn that the miraculous discovery of the treasure took place during the reign of Leo VI³⁰. Taken in conjunction, the above data can lead to one conclusion only: the collection of Christian epigrams was compiled at the end of the ninth century in the scholarly ambience of Cephalas.

The collection of Christian epigrams is of great interest to art historians, since it provides abundant information on Byzantine monuments that either no longer exist or remain only as sad ruins of glory and magnificence lost for ever. Two of the many verse inscriptions in *AP* I are still partially extant. Some traces of *AP* I, 1 can still be seen *in situ*: on the bema arch of the Hagia Sophia, above the famous mosaic depicting the Holy Virgin with Child³¹. Recent excavations at Saraçhane have brought to light a few fragments of *AP* I, 10, an encomiastic ekphrasis of no less than 76 verses which, despite its non-epigrammatical length, was actually inscribed on the walls of the church of St. Polyeuktos³². It is not always clear where Cephalas found the epigraphic material he used in his anthology. Did he read the Polyeuktos ekphrasis in a literary source or did Gregory of Kampsas provide him with a copy of the verse inscription? Neither of these two possibilities can be ruled out in view of *AP* I, 99 and *AP* I, 120–121. *AP* I, 99 is a genuine verse inscription, but Cephalas derived it from a literary source, the *Life of Daniel the Stylite*³³. *AP* I, 120 and 121 are two epigrams on the Blachernai church, which we know to have been written by George of Pisidia. Although one would expect that Cephalas culled these epigrams from the collection of Pisides' poems, the fact that the lemma attached to *AP* I, 120–121 notes their provenance, but not their author, strongly suggests that the two epigrams were copied *in situ*. The fate of *AP* I, 92 at the hands of modern editors is somewhat bizarre. This epigram can be found in standard editions of Gregory of Nazianzos (I, 1, 28), even though it is a dubious attribution resting on the slender evidence of two manuscripts, Par. gr. 1220 and Monac. gr. 416, where the epigram is written at the end of various *Gregoriana*. In the former manuscript the epigram is followed by Ignatios the

³⁰ Ed. PREGER 1901–07: 30. See G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des Patria*. Paris 1984, 155–156 and n. 116–117, MANGO 1986: 25–28, and BALDWIN 1996: 97.

³¹ See E.M. ANTONIADIS, "Εκφρασεις τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας. Leipzig–Athens 1907–1909, III, 29–31, and MERCATI 1922a: 280–282.

³² See C. MANGO & I. ŠEVČENKO, *DOP* 15 (1961) 243–247 and R. HARRISON, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*. Princeton 1986, I, 3–10 and 405–420. See also P. SPECK, in: *Varia III (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 11). Bonn 1991, 133–147, and C.L. CONNOR, *Byz* 79 (1999) 479–527.

³³ See CAMERON 1982: 247–252.

Deacon's anacreontic, in the latter by Ignatios' anacreontic and Pisides' *De Vanitate Vitae*, vv. 41–56: these two poems, too, have been included in modern editions of Gregory of Nazianzos as if they were his (Epit. 129 and I, 2, 18)³⁴. In Monac. gr. 416 *AP* I, 92 is not attributed to Gregory of Nazianzos, but to "Basil the Great"³⁵. This ascription is also incorrect. But it implicitly indicates from which source the two Gregorian manuscripts ultimately derive the epigram: the Greek Anthology, where it bears the following title: "in Caesarea in the church of St. Basil". *AP* I, 92 is in fact a verse inscription. The verse inscription still exists (unfortunately, in a rather garbled version), not in Caesarea itself, but in the nearby village of Sinassos, at the entrance of the church of the Holy Apostles, where it accompanies a tenth-century fresco depicting Pentecost³⁶. The epigram describes the miraculous intervention of Jesus Christ on the lake of Galilee. Its didactic purpose is to show the two natures of Christ. While the waters rage He sleeps like any other human being, but when He awakes He shows His divine nature by immediately calming the storm. The epigram would certainly have appealed to the pious monks of Cappadocia because of its iconophile emphasis on the two natures of Christ, but it is not entirely clear why they had it inscribed below a picture of Pentecost. To return to our subject, however, it is reasonable to assume that the Cappadocian monks copied the epigram in Caesarea, where it was inscribed in the church of St. Basil. *AP* I, 92 is a genuine verse inscription, which ended up in Par. gr. 1220 and Monac. gr. 416 via the Greek Anthology. And thus an anonymous verse inscription became a literary epigram supposedly written by Basil the Great or, if we are to believe modern scholars, Gregory of Nazianzos.

Verse inscriptions can be given approximate dates if they mention emperors or other prominent individuals, but metre and language are equally instrumental in assessing the probable date of a poem. Take for instance *AP* I, 105, "on Eudokia, Wife of the Emperor Theodosius", an epigram on a fresco or mosaic that depicted Eudokia venerating the Holy Sepulchre. Fifth-century, one would say a priori. But the metre, regular Byzantine dodecasyllables, obviously militates against such a dating. The verses cannot have been written before c. 600, and may even have been written much later, say in the ninth century. Do poem and picture perhaps form an indirect homage to the Empress Theodora, who showed her piety by restoring the cult of icons and

³⁴ See H.M. WERHAHN, in: *Studia Patristica VII*. Berlin 1966, 340–342. See also MERCATI 1908: 3–6, GONNELLI 1991: 120–121, and LAUXTERMANN 2003b.

³⁵ As was duly noted by H.M. WERHAHN, in: *Bibliotheca docet. Festschrift C. Wehmer*. Amsterdam 1963, 342–344, who nonetheless avers that "aus inneren Gründen (...) an die Verfasserschaft tatsächlich zu denken ist".

³⁶ See H. GRÉGOIRE, *Revue de l' instruction publique en Belgique* 52 (1909) 164–166.

could thus be presented as a spiritual pilgrim? The collection of distichs at *AP* I, 37–89 comprises an epigram cycle dating from c. 600: nos. 37–49 and 52–77, to which Cephala added various late antique and Byzantine epigrams (nos. 50–51 and 78–89)³⁷. Other epigrams in *AP* I cannot be dated, such as nos. 104 and 108: probably early Byzantine, but possibly written after 600. Generally, a certain chronological order may be detected in the arrangement of the epigrams. Book *AP* I has a tripartite structure: 1–36, 37–89 and 90–123, designed to create a mirror effect whereby beginning and end appear to correspond, with the collection of distichs at *AP* I, 37–89 in the middle. The first and the last parts contain a mixture of verse inscriptions and literary epigrams, but whereas the first 36 epigrams date from late antiquity (with the noteworthy exception of *AP* I, 1), most of the epigrams at the end of *AP* I were written after c. 600.

Since the spheres of the sacred and the profane intermingle in Byzantium and since God is never far away from the everyday experience of the Byzantines, the notion of a “Christian” epigram is in itself utterly unchristian, for it presupposes that there may exist another conceptual world lying beyond the horizons of Christendom. It is for this reason that Byzantine authors hardly ever specify that their literary works should be viewed as the products of a typically Christian ideology. Seen from the perspective of ninth-century Byzantium, the question whether a contemporary epigram is “Christian” or not is totally irrelevant. Of course, there had once been a world that had not known the blessings of Christianity, but was infested with uncanny superstitions, pagan cults and lascivious fantasies. That was the world of the Hellenes, about whom the Byzantines learnt at school. Although classical schooling was valued highly in ninth-century Byzantium, if only because it secured social prestige by distinguishing the man of letters from his less educated peers, there was still a psychological barrier to be crossed: a mental watershed between Byzantium and Hellenism, between “us” and “them”. Only in opposition to what is viewed as alien, not “ours”, does the definition of a Christian epigram assume relevance, but since no Byzantine scholar before Cephala seems to have given much thought to the problem, he had some difficulties in demarcating and outlining the domain of what constitutes a proper Christian epigram. Most of the epigrams in *AP* I deal with churches, religious images and artefacts; the remaining are personal prayers, dogmatic poems and book epigrams on Christian literary works. Though there can be little doubt that these epigrams are rightly labelled “Christian”, Cephala was not as consistent as one perhaps would have liked, for in *AP* IXb, the section dealing with works of art, we find a number of epigrams that are clearly Christian and should therefore

³⁷ See Appendix X, pp. 357–361.

have been put in *AP* I: *AP* IX, 615, 787, 806–807 and 817–819. But this type of misclassification is actually very common in the anthology of Cephalas; in fact, it is typical of Cephalas to forget or to neglect his original design. However, it is rather surprising that Cephalas excluded epitaphs from his collection of Christian epigrams. Whereas *AP* I does not contain any epitaphs, we find in the section of sepulchral epigrams no less than seven epitaphs that are undoubtedly Christian: *AP* VII, 667, 679–680, 689 and VIII, 1³⁸. Take for instance VII, 689: “Here Apellianus, most excellent of men, left his body, depositing his soul in the hands of Christ”³⁹. Perhaps Cephalas considered a poem like this inappropriate for his collection of Christian epigrams because it honours a specific individual at a certain point in space and time, and thus forms a memorial of little significance compared to God’s everlasting omnipresence. But there are scores of dedicatory epigrams in *AP* I that, seen in the light of eternity, are as much a product of their time as the Christian epitaphs. So, why did Cephalas not include epitaphs in his collection of Christian epigrams? There is no answer to this question, but it clearly indicates that an epigram with a Christian subject is not necessarily a Christian epigram, at least not according to Cephalas.

Although *AP* I properly speaking does not belong to Cephalas’ anthology of Hellenistic, early Roman and late antique epigrams (*AP* IV–VII and IX–XIV), it directly owes its existence to it. Cephalas decided to compile the collection of Christian epigrams as a defensive measure to clear himself beforehand of any suspicions of “paganism” that might be aroused by the “pagan” contents of his anthology. Part of this strategy was to begin the collection with an iconophile statement of faith: the famous verse inscription on the bema arch of the Hagia Sophia, above the splendid apse mosaic depicting the Holy Virgin with Child (*AP* I, 1)⁴⁰. The date for the apse mosaic and consequently its verse inscription is 867, the year in which Patriarch Photios delivered a magnificent, but rather abstruse homily on the mosaic and its pictorial meaning⁴¹. We may

³⁸ *AP* VIII, 1 belongs to *AP* VII, not to the collection of epitaphs by Gregory of Nazianzos in *AP* VIII. We owe this misclassification to the *editio princeps* of the *Palatine Anthology*.

³⁹ The translation is that of PATON 1918 (as are all the translations from the Greek Anthology in the following).

⁴⁰ The lemma attached to *AP* I, 1 states that the epigram was inscribed εἰς τὸ καυοῦρον. BALDWIN 1996: 97 assumes that the word καυοῦρον refers to the “cupola”: so do I, but it must be said that the word normally indicates the “baldachin”. P. SPECK, in: *Varia* II (*Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 6). Bonn 1987, 285–312, suggests that the epigram was originally to be found on the baldachin (built shortly after 843) and that it was afterwards re-used for the apse decoration of 867.

⁴¹ See C. MANGO, *The Homilies of Photios Patriarch of Constantinople*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1958, 282–286, and C. MANGO & E.J.W. HAWKINS, *DOP* 19 (1965) 113–151.

not know the name of the poet who wrote *AP* I, 1, but it is reasonable to assume that the verse inscription bears out the ideas of the person who commissioned it, the patriarch himself. The text of the epigram reads as follows: “The images that the heretics took down from here, our pious sovereigns replaced”. As the original sixth-century decoration of the Hagia Sophia did not include any figural representations, we must conclude that Photios either lied on purpose or did not care much about historical truth. Whether Photios rewrote history and distorted the facts intentionally or not, the message of the verse inscription and the mosaic itself is very clear: iconophily is back in town. That is, with a considerable delay of some 24 years, for the cult of the icons had already been restored in 843. The verse inscription emphasizes the orthodoxy of the reigning emperors by cleverly postponing the word *πάλιν*, so that it indicates not only that the sovereigns *replaced* the holy images, but also that these emperors were pious *again*, in contrast to the hideous iconoclasts who had ruled before them. Whereas all other ninth-century epigrams can be found in the last part of the collection (*AP* I, 90–123), Cephalas placed the Hagia Sophia verse inscription right at the beginning. By putting it there, he obviously intended to make clear from the start that his personal religious views were above suspicion.

Cephalas must have felt compelled to declare publicly his “orthodoxy” out of fear that people might think that he sympathized with the unorthodox contents of his anthology. To compile an anthology of ancient epigrams was in itself not objectionable, but it had to be done cautiously so as not to arouse suspicions. In Byzantium the classical heritage is usually approached from the narrow angle of utilitarianism: that is to say, the study of ancient literature is a laudable pursuit only if it serves the aim of acquiring stylistic skills necessary for the composition of Byzantine literary works. It is not so much the content as the varnish of things old that the Byzantines were supposed to value when they read Homer, Euripides or Plato. But since form and content are interrelated, to involve oneself with the ancients could be quite hazardous. And indeed, some Byzantine intellectuals, such as Leo the Philosopher and Leo Choirosphaktes, were accused of indulging in the ambiguous beauty of classical literature with far too much zeal. Since the ancient gods were dead and no one believed in them any more, there was no real danger there; but what was particularly offensive to the Byzantines, were sexually explicit texts. This explains the cautious tone of Cephalas in the prefaces to the erotic and the pederastic epigrams. The *paederastica* in *AP* XII are introduced as follows: “What kind of man should I be (...) if I were to conceal the *Boyish Muse* of Strato of Sardis, which he used to recite to those about him in sport, taking personal delight in the diction of the epigrams, not in their meaning. Apply yourself then to what follows, for ‘in dances’, as the tragic poet says, ‘a chaste woman will not be corrupted’.” If we are to believe Cephalas, Strato of Sardis

was not genuinely interested in boys, but wrote his epigrams only to show off his literary talents “in sport” Implicitly, we are told not to pay attention to *what is said*, but rather to *how it is said*. The preface to *AP V* tells us how we are to interpret the erotic epigrams: “Warming the hearts of youth with learned fervour, I will make Love the beginning of my discourse, for it is Eros who lights the torch for youth” (*AP V*, 1). Here the conceptualized figure of Eros is not unlike the winged creature of Plato guiding the intellectual soul into the spheres of pure contemplation. Cephalas’ students are admonished not to think of physical love, but to abstract themselves from profane thoughts by way of an intellectual process, “learned fervour”. Needless to say, this is pure hypocrisy. The problem for Cephalas was how to sell his product. Of course, he could have skipped the “pornographic” epigrams, as did Planudes, but his aim was to give a representative sample of the ancient epigrammatic art, including the *erotica* and the *paederastica*. Although he was well aware of the effect erotic epigrams might have on the reader, he attempted to present ancient eroticism as a quite innocent pastime. The erotic epigrams were to be read merely as exercises in the art of literary discourse, as magnificent words without substance. Still, Cephalas had good reason to doubt that his idea of a textual labyrinth of words referring to other words, and not to some obscene reality, would be embraced without protest by all the readers of his anthology. Knowing that he easily could be misunderstood despite the priggish prefaces to the two books of erotic epigrams, he felt obliged to pay lip service to orthodox fundamentalists by adding a collection of Christian epigrams.

This is also illustrated by Cephalas’ preface to the collection of Christian epigrams: τὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν προτετάχθω εὐσεβῇ τε καὶ θεῖα ἐπιγράμματα κἂν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀπαρέσζωνται, “Let the pious and godly epigrams of the Christians take precedence, even if the Hellenes are displeased”. The verb προτετάχθω is deliberately ambiguous in this context. It indicates not only that the collection of Christian epigrams is placed before the epigrams of the Hellenes (*AP IV–VII* and *IX–XIV*), but also that it takes the place of honour. The epigrams of the Christians deservedly rank first because they are Christian – which is a circular argument, of course, but one indicative of the dire straits Cephalas found himself in. He risked being stigmatized as a Hellene himself for publishing an anthology of pagan epigrams. Cephalas obviously felt the need to deny overtly any inclination towards “Hellenism”. The introduction to *AP I* and the Hagia Sophia epigram with which *AP I* begins, bear out the same unequivocal message: “I, Cephalas, have nothing to do with the Hellenes, I am really not one of them”. In ninth-century Byzantium all sorts of people were branded Ἕλην: iconoclasts, intellectuals, political opponents, and so forth⁴². There is no need

⁴² See I. ROCHOW, in: *Paganism in the Later Roman Empire and in Byzantium*, ed. M. SALAMON. Krakow 1991, 133–156.

to take these charges of paganism seriously. But to be victimized in such a manner was most certainly a quite serious matter for those who were being accused of supporting pagan ideas. Cephalas' petty fears are therefore quite understandable. In fact, seeing what had happened to one of the anthologists of the previous generation, Cephalas had good reason to be afraid.

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Leo the Philosopher, Constantine the Sicilian & Theophanes the Grammarian

The *Apology* of Constantine the Sicilian⁴³ provides an interesting parallel to the defiant words of Cephalas' prooemium: "This is the worthy plea for a worthy cause, which I, the patricide of an impious teacher, piously put on record, even if the Hellenes may fret with anger and rage in words along with the Telchines"⁴⁴. The *Apology* is a very curious text. In it, Constantine the Sicilian tries to defend himself against accusations of having shown a complete lack of piety towards his recently deceased teacher, Leo the Philosopher, when he publicly denounced him as a pagan. By good fortune we also possess the text of the very poem that Constantine's contemporaries found so repulsive: the *Psogos*⁴⁵. It is indeed a sort of spiritual patricide. Constantine heaps a load of bizarre allegations upon his former teacher. Leo did not believe in the triune Godhead of the Christians, but worshipped the ancient gods: lecherous Zeus married to Hera but always fooling around with his paramours, and all those other ridiculous divinities of whom Homer sings the praises. Now that Leo is dead and buried, Constantine wishes him a pleasant stay in hell where he may be punished together with those cursed Hellenes whom he so much admired: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, Epicurus, Proclus, Euclid, Ptolemy, Homer, Hesiod and Aratus. Constantine regrets dearly that he discovered the true nature of Leo's teachings only when it was already too late; but now that he has seen the light, he cannot but tell the world what his former master was really like. That is why he repeats his allegations in the *Apology*, adding some new damning evidence and declaring his adamant faith in Christianity with the fervour of a newly converted. Reading the two poems, the *Psogos* and the

⁴³ The lemma attached to the poem should be emendated into: ἀπολογία [Κωνσταντίνου κατὰ] Λέοντος Φιλοσόφου, καθ' ἣν Χριστὸν μὲν σέβει, τὰ Ἑλλήνων δὲ φαυλίζει, as MERCATI 1923–25: 235, n. 1, demonstrated. For the identification of the author, see LAUXTERMANN 1999a: 164–166.

⁴⁴ Ed. SPADARO 1971: 201, vv. 31–35.

⁴⁵ SPADARO 1971: 198–199.

Apology, we may understand what Lemerle meant when he wrote: “Nous ne serions pas trop surpris que l’auteur de ces deux pièces eût l’esprit un peu dérangé”⁴⁶. However, although one might question Constantine’s ethics, his splendid style and fine rhetoric clearly show that Leo the Philosopher’s lessons in the art of literary discourse had not been wasted on him. In fact, despite Constantine’s sincere regrets, his literary works undoubtedly bear the marks of his apprenticeship with Leo the Philosopher and the classicistic movement, of which Leo had been the leading figure until the moment of his death (shortly after 869)⁴⁷. Leo the Philosopher’s unreserved devotion to the ancients and their legacy deeply influenced the generation that came of age in the years 840–870 and studied at his school at the Magnaura⁴⁸. Constantine the Sicilian was one of them. He himself had once rallied to Leo’s ideal of an enlightened hellenism. This also explains the bitter tone of the *Psogos* and the *Apology*, for Constantine attacked what had once been dear to him and, in the process, had to deny his former self.

Leo the Philosopher and his students were interested in just about anything, ranging from the liberal arts to philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and natural sciences. One aspect of their various scholarly pursuits appears to be entirely unknown: namely, collecting and anthologizing ancient epigrams. None of these anthologies, except for the *Parisian Collection of Paederastica*, has been preserved; but if one studies the text history of the Greek Anthology attentively, there is ample evidence to prove that Cephalas followed in the footsteps of an earlier generation of scholars, whose work he incorporated in his own anthology. The final editor of the Palatine Anthology, Constantine the Rhodian, was apparently aware of Cephalas’ debt to these scholars, for at the end of his manuscript, where we find a small sylloge by his hand (see below, pp. 116–117), he indirectly paid homage to their scholarly work. There we find four poems by four ninth-century scholars: Michael Chartophylax (the scholar whose personal apograph of Cephalas’ anthology was used by the Corrector) and three members of the circle of Leo the Philosopher. In *AP* XV, 12 Leo the Philosopher, nicknamed ὁ Ἑλλην, expresses his belief as a true Epicurean that

⁴⁶ LEMERLE 1971: 175.

⁴⁷ On Leo the Philosopher, see the brilliant essay by LEMERLE 1971: 148–176. See also N.G. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*, London 1983, 79–84, ALPERS 1988: 353–359, V. KATSAROS, in: *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times*, ed. P.L. BUTZER & D. LOHRMANN, Basel 1993, 383–398, CH. ANGELIDI, in: *Εὐψυχία. Mélanges offerts à H. Ahrweiler*, Paris 1998, 1–17, and J. HERRIN, *Dialogos* 6 (1999) 27–31.

⁴⁸ Theoph. Cont. 185 and 192. See LEMERLE 1971: 158–160. The Magnaura school opened its gates shortly after 843: see SPECK 1974: 4–7. Whether it already existed during the reign of Theophilos in a different form, does not concern us here: see W. TREADGOLD, *The Byzantine Revival 780–842*, Stanford 1988, 374–375 and ALPERS 1988: 345–346.

happiness can only be achieved by tranquillity and peace of mind. He has no need of riches, fame or passions, but hopes to gain the magical plant, μῶλυ, that wards off evil thoughts. If only he could live up to these convictions of his till the day he dies! The poem is crammed with allusions to the *Odyssey*, referring not only to the mysterious “moly”, but also to the lotus-eaters, the gloomy cave of Circe and the enticing siren song. *AP* XV, 13 and 14 are two fiercely combative poems by Constantine the Sicilian and Theophanes the Grammarian. In the first poem Constantine brags about the professorial chair he holds. He proudly informs us that it is a seat of knowledge on which only highly educated people, like himself, are allowed to sit. His puffery is criticized by Theophanes in the next poem. “This chair of yours is no big deal. It is not of gold, not of silver, not of ivory. It is just a piece of wood. So, what are you bragging about? Anyone, scholar or fool, can sit on a wooden chair”. In the *Anthologia Barberina*, an early tenth-century collection of anacreontics and alphabets (see below, pp. 123–128), we find the same three names, Leo the Philosopher, Constantine the Sicilian and Theophanes the Grammarian, side by side in a section devoted to the anacreontics of ninth-century grammarians (nos. 58–64): Leo the Philosopher (58–59), Sergios and Leontios the Grammarians (60–61), Constantine the Grammarian [=Const. the Sicilian] (62–63) and Theophanes the Grammarian (64). Sergios and Leontios are mere names to us. Seeing that the title of Leontios’ anacreontic (no longer extant in the manuscript) clearly indicates that Leontios imitated an epigram of Agathias (*AP* V, 237)⁴⁹, there can be little doubt that the *Cycle* of Agathias was already known to the circle of Leo the Philosopher. In fact, it will become abundantly clear that Leo the Philosopher and his students not only read, but also edited ancient epigrams several decades before Cephala compiled his anthology.

In a recent article I pointed out that one of the major sources Cephala used for his anthology was the *Palladas Sylloge*⁵⁰. This sylloge contained a lot of Palladas, of course, but also a number of epigrams or epic fragments by Lucian, Nestor of Laranda, Julian the Apostate, Cyrus of Panopolis, Claudian and many others. The sylloge was put together in the sixth century, probably between 551 and 567, in response to the fashionable revival of the epigram that was to lead to Agathias’ compilation of the *Cycle*. However, Cephala did not have direct access to an original sixth-century manuscript, but made use of a ninth-century copy made by or for Leo the Philosopher⁵¹. Leo the Philosopher’s manuscript of the *Palladas Sylloge* also included a number of epigrams he had written himself: *AP* IX, 200–203, 214 and 578. These epigrams were

⁴⁹ See LAUXTERMANN 1999a: 166–167 and CRIMI 2001: 39–40.

⁵⁰ See LAUXTERMANN 1997.

⁵¹ See WIFSTRAND 1933: 169–170 and LAUXTERMANN 1999a: 161–163.

copied by Cephalas along with the rest of the *Palladas Sylloge*. Cephalas incorrectly ascribed to Leo the Philosopher two late antique poems, a cento and an epic fragment, because he found them next to authentic poems by Leo and erroneously assumed that they had been written by the same author. The cento consists of Homeric tags. It is a girl's complaint about the painful experience of her defloration (*AP IX*, 361). The scabrous subject of this epigram is without parallel in Byzantine poetry, for if the theme is touched upon at all (for instance, in the Maximo scene in the *Digenes Akrites*), it is always viewed from the angle of male superiority, not from the perspective of the girl. Furthermore, all the other centos in the Greek Anthology date from late antiquity⁵², and there is no evidence that Byzantine poets, apart from the enigmatic author of the *Christus Patiens*, dabbled in the art of cento-writing. True, there are some Byzantine poems that have a lot of Homeric reminiscences, such as *AP XV*, 12 (Leo the Philosopher), 28 (Anastasios Quaestor) and 40 (Kometas), but none of these poems are real centos. The second poem incorrectly ascribed to Leo the Philosopher, *AP IX*, 579, deals with Arethousa, the famous Sicilian water nymph. It is a fragment of a late antique mythological epic. As fragments rarely make sense, the poem is almost incomprehensible in its present form⁵³. The *Palladas Sylloge* contained many epic fragments of this kind, such as, for instance, some passages from the *Metamorphoses* of Nestor of Laranda, all of which deal with aquatic subjects: rivers, sources, and so on⁵⁴. The epic fragment on Arethousa might equally derive from the *Metamorphoses*⁵⁵, but even if it does not, it can safely be dated to the period of late antiquity and, therefore, cannot have been written by Leo the Philosopher.

These two false ascriptions leave no doubt that Cephalas read the *Palladas Sylloge* in an updated version of the mid-ninth century composed by Leo the Philosopher himself or copied at his behest. There are more shreds and pieces of evidence indicating that Leo the Philosopher was familiar with ancient epigrams and played a significant role in the text history of the Greek Anthology. In a satirical poem on a stuttering student⁵⁶ he coins the word

⁵² *AP IX*, 381–382 and *Appendix Barberino-Vaticana* no. 7 (ed. CAMERON 1993: 172). See also HUNGER 1978: II, 98–100.

⁵³ See WESTERINK 1986: 195–196.

⁵⁴ See the prooemium to the *Metamorphoses* (*AP IX*, 364); see also *AP IX*, 128–129 and 537.

⁵⁵ *AP IX*, 536, which is probably a fragment of the *Metamorphoses*, also deals with the well-known story of the river Alpheios who, desperately in love with Arethousa, glides under the surface of the Adriatic to turn up again in Sicily. *AP IX*, 362, another epic fragment, treats the same subject, but does not belong to the *Metamorphoses* as its hexameters are post-Nonnian (see WIFSTRAND 1933: 168).

⁵⁶ Ed. WESTERINK 1986: 200–201 (no. XI).

τραυλεπίτραυλος, which is formed by analogy with the neologism φαυλεπίφαιλος found in *AP* XI, 238. The early tenth-century *Sylloge Euphemi-ana* (see pp. 114–115) contains a poem by Leo, in which he derides his doctor for prescribing a regime of cold water in the middle of winter⁵⁷. The insertion of Leo's poem in a collection of ancient epigrams indicates, I think, that its redactor wished to pay tribute to Leo the Philosopher for his scholarly work on the Greek Anthology. Finally, the fact that two of his students, Constantine and Theophanes, published collections of erotic epigrams, strongly suggests that the Greek Anthology was one of the many scholarly pursuits to which Leo the Philosopher turned his attention.

The so-called *Sylloge Parisina* is divided into two parts deriving from two different sources. The first part contains a selection of epigrams from Cephalas' anthology. The second part is a collection of pederastic epigrams headed by Constantine the Sicilian's *Love Song* (ῥάδιον ἐρωτικόν)⁵⁸. This collection of pederastic epigrams is closely related to *AP* XII, one of the books of Cephalas' anthology. But since the collection contains many pederastic epigrams that cannot be found in *AP* XII, it appears to derive from a source other than Cephalas' anthology⁵⁹. This source I call *PCP* (*Parisian Collection of Paederastica*). The main difference between Cephalas and PCP is that the latter does not confuse gender, whereas Cephalas had some trouble distinguishing boys from girls and regularly misclassified erotic epigrams. Take for instance *AP* XI, 51 and 53, which Cephalas mistakenly placed among the gnomic epigrams because he failed to understand their elusive meaning. The redactor of PCP, however, had no problem in grasping the sexual innuendo of these two epigrams and rightly recognized their pederastic nature. To give another example, Cephalas placed the famous epigram on Agathon by Ps. Plato in the heterosexual section: "I stayed my soul on my lips kissing Agathon. The rascal had come to cross over to him" (*AP* V, 78). This is truly a stupendous blunder. The redactor of PCP, once again, rightly judged that what we have here is one male in love with another. Given the fact that PCP contains epigrams not found in *AP* XII and does not present the sort of misclassifications typical of Cephalas, there can be but little doubt that it does not derive from the anthology of Cephalas. The original PCP is beyond any secure reconstruction, because the second part of the *Sylloge Parisina* appears to contain only a few excerpts. However, as the

⁵⁷ Ed. WESTERINK 1986: 200 (no. X).

⁵⁸ For a thorough description of the *Sylloge Parisina*, see CAMERON 1993: 217–245. The sylloge can be found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 and Par. gr. 1630. For a description of these two manuscripts, see Appendix I, pp. 287–293, esp. pp. 291–292 and n. 21.

⁵⁹ CAMERON 1993: 224 and 238–253, on the contrary, argues that the epigrams lacking in *AP* XII but found in the *Sylloge Parisina* ultimately derive from the anthology of Cephalas. But see LAUXTERMAN 1999a: 163–164, for a refutation of Cameron's views.

second part of the *Sylloge Parisina* and *AP* XII often have the same epigrams in the same order⁶⁰, it would seem that PCP was one of the many sources used by Cephalas for the compilation of his anthology.

The redactor of PCP can doubtless be identified with Constantine the Sicilian since the pederastic epigrams in the *Sylloge Parisina* start with his delightful poem on Eros, the *Love Song* in anacreontics⁶¹. Constantine the Sicilian wrote the poem ἐν νεότητι παίζων, οὐτι σπουδάζων, as the lemma attached to it states. Born in c. 825–830⁶², Constantine will have written the poem when he was still a student at the Magnaura school or shortly afterwards; but he may have added it to PCP in a later stage. For obvious reasons PCP must have been compiled before c. 870, when Constantine suffered his *crise de conscience* and publicly disavowed his former teacher, Leo the Philosopher. In the *Love Song* Constantine describes an unfortunate encounter with Eros: one day he catches sight of him, chases him in vain, and is then struck “below the waist” by the arrows of the little devil. In need of moral support the poet begs the chorus of his companions to join in the singing: “My friend, spend sleepless nights like Achilles singing in sweet harmony with the warbling nightingales. I have experienced the charms of love, but I do not find anywhere the way out. Give me a companion along the paths of song, to sing with me of Eros”. Since all the epigrams in PCP can be said to celebrate the power of Eros, PCP is in a sense the fulfillment of Constantine’s appeal to his fellow poets “to sing with him of Eros”. Thus the ancient epigrammatists and Constantine meet in the timeless space of intertext, where poetry is a substitute for real life and a compensation for the sorrows of love. Love may be unattainable, but one may “spend sleepless nights” with one’s friends and confess to them one’s deepest desires. Constantine the Sicilian’s *Love Song* is an appropriate introduction to PCP, for it shapes a fictitious setting of unrequited love and male bonding, and thus provides a context in which homo-erotic poetry may be read, interpreted and relished. Though Constantine wrote the poem when he was still a young man, he shows a remarkable erudition for someone his age. The poem abounds with all sorts of literary reminiscences: Moschus’ *Runaway Love*, Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloë* and ancient *epithalamia*⁶³. The borrowings from Moschus’ delight-

⁶⁰ See CAMERON 1993: 242.

⁶¹ Ed. CRAMER 1841: 380–383 and MATRANGA 1850: 693–696. The lemma attached to the poem in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 does not mention the author. The index of Barb. gr. 310 preserves the original title: τοῦ αὐτοῦ (i.e. Κωνσταντίνου γραμματικοῦ) ὠδάριον ἐρωτικὸν δι’ ἀναρχέ[οντος], ὅπερ ἦσεν ἐν νεότητι παίζων, οὐτι σπουδάζων, ἔλαβεν δὲ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐκ μελωδίας τινὸς ἀδομένης ἐν γάμῳ: see GALLAVOTTI 1987: 39 and 49–51 and NISSEN 1940: 66–67.

⁶² See LAUXTERMANN 1999a: 170, n. 27.

⁶³ See R.C. MCCAIL, *Byz* 58 (1988) 112–122, CAMERON 1993: 249–252 and CRIMI 2001: 40–43.

ful *Runaway Love* are particularly interesting because the poem was included in the *Garland* of Meleager. This strongly suggests that Constantine the Sicilian was familiar with the contents of the *Garland* already at a young age, which may serve as an argument in favour of an early date for the compilation of PCP: say, in the late 840s or the 850s.

Erotic epigrams and anacreontics seem to have been popular in the circle of Leo the Philosopher. Theophanes the Grammarian is the author of an anacreontic entitled in the index of Barb. gr. 310: “how he loves his friend and how he is not loved in return because of his extreme affection”⁶⁴. Unfortunately, the anacreontic is not preserved in the manuscript, so we can only guess how Theophanes may have treated this daring theme without getting himself into trouble. Theophanes also wrote the following erotic epigram: “If only I could be a white lily so that you may put me close to your nostrils and satiate me still more with your skin” (*AP* XV, 35). The epigram is an obvious imitation of *AP* V, 83 and 84, the second of which reads in translation: “If only I could be a pink rose so that you may take me in your hand and put me between your snowy breasts”⁶⁵. In the Palatine manuscript Theophanes’ epigram can be found near the end, but originally, in the anthology of Cephala, it immediately followed *AP* V, 83–84⁶⁶. The beginning of *AP* V (nos. 2–103) contains a great number of epigrams deriving from the so-called *Sylloge Rufiniana*. This was a small sylloge of erotic epigrams by the first-century poet Rufinus; since the sylloge also contained a few “Diogenianian” authors, such as Gaetulicus, Cil-lactor and Nicarchus, it was probably compiled by the second-century anthol-ogist Diogenian⁶⁷. It is impossible to reconstruct the original *Sylloge Rufiniana*, but we can identify in *AP* V at least three sequences of epigrams deriving from it (with additional material from other sources): *AP* V, 14–22, 27–51 and 66–84. Theophanes’ epigram and the two epigrams that he imitated are found at the end of the last sequence. What exactly has Theophanes to do with the *Sylloge Rufiniana*? Not an easy question, but we should bear in mind the overall design of Cephala’s anthology. His anthology is basically a collection of Hellenistic, early Roman and late antique epigrams. That is why *AP* V–VII and IX–XIV do not contain contemporary poetry, with the tantalizing exception of a few

⁶⁴ See the index in GALLAVOTTI 1987: no. 64.

⁶⁵ For the text of these three epigrams, see CAMERON 1993: 283–285. Cameron supposes that *AP* V, 84 is also the work of Theophanes, but attaches too much importance to an incorrect reading in Arethas. He does not pay attention to the vocabulary. In *AP* XV, 35 Theophanes uses two Byzantine neologisms, χρυσή (see *ThGL*) and ἀργένναος; *AP* V, 84, on the contrary, is written in Hellenistic Greek.

⁶⁶ See CAMERON 1993: 283–285.

⁶⁷ See P. SAKOŁOWSKI, *De Anthologia Palatina quaestiones*. Leipzig 1893, 64–71, and CAMERON 1993: 84–90.

epigrams by Leo the Philosopher and Theophanes the Grammarian. Leo's epigrams are there because Cephalas used a ninth-century manuscript of the *Palladas Sylloge* copied by or for Leo the Philosopher. It is reasonable to conjecture that Cephalas included Theophanes' epigram for exactly the same reason: Cephalas made use of a copy of the *Sylloge Rufiniana* made in the mid-ninth century by Theophanes and faithfully transcribed the epigram Theophanes had written himself at the end of the sylloge.

Leo the Philosopher and his pupils evidently liked poetry, but while they were busy studying and copying epigrams, voices of dissent could be heard protesting against the mythological oddities and gross obscenities of ancient poetry. The entry on Theognis in the *Epitome of Hesychius* (c. 840–850) provides a good example: "Theognis also wrote gnomic epigrams, but among these you may find disgusting love poems on boys and many other things that are repugnant to those who live a pious life"⁶⁸. Photios is another dissenting voice. In general Photios does not have much to say on the topic of ancient poetry, but its conspicuous absence in the *Bibliotheca* strongly suggests that he had little taste for the poets. In the entry on Empress Eudokia's religious centos, however, Photios treats her with lavish deference and compliments her for telling the plain truth and not seducing the minds of young people with sweet lies⁶⁹. Truth is beauty, but beauty is not necessarily truth. Photios objects to ancient poetry because of its contents, false and full of illusions, acting counter to the incontestable truths of Christianity⁷⁰. In his view, classical poetry was at best only of secondary importance; it might provide students with the tools for acquiring a good style, but its role in the educational programme, as he envisaged it, had perforce to be ancillary⁷¹. This viewpoint is radically different from that of Leo the Philosopher. Leo and Photios are the greatest scholars of the ninth century, but apart from their immense erudition they really have

⁶⁸ See M.L. WEST, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin–New York 1974, 44–45. The *Epitome of Hesychius* is probably the work of Ignatios the Deacon: see W. TREADGOLD, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius*. Washington 1980, 31–32 and 36, and MANGO 1997: 4–5.

⁶⁹ Photius. *Bibliothèque*. Tome II, ed. R. HENRY. Paris 1960, 195–196 (cod. 183). See B. BALDWIN, *BMGS* 4 (1978) 9–14 (*Studies on Late Roman and Byzantine History, Literature and Language*. Amsterdam 1984, 397–402) and *Aevum* 60 (1986) 218–222 (*Roman and Byzantine Papers*. Amsterdam 1989, 334–338).

⁷⁰ See, for instance, letters 56 and 209 (Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia, ed. B. LAOURDAS & L.G. WESTERINK. Leipzig 1983–85, I, 103 and II, 109). See also ALPERS 1988: 357, n. 89, and 359–360.

⁷¹ See the comment by A. HEISENBERG, *Historische Zeitschrift* 133 (1926) 398: "Photios war weit davon entfernt eine klassische Philologie begründen zu wollen oder sich gar als Humanist zu fühlen". See also H. HUNGER, *Reich der Neuen Mitte*. Graz 1965, 361.

nothing in common⁷². It is not difficult to guess, therefore, who of the two is the author of *AP IX*, 203 bearing the following lemma: Φωτίου, οἱ δὲ Λέοντος. It is a laudatory epigram on Achilles Tatius' novel *Clitophon and Leucippe*. The story is very decent, so we are told, not at all improper to read, for in the end the two heroes are rewarded for their chastity with the pleasures of blessed marriage. Since the novel is criticized in the *Bibliotheca* for its utter immorality, it is out of the question that Photios could have written this epigram⁷³. Leo is a very likely candidate, not only because the erotic muse was much in vogue in the circle of Leo the Philosopher, but also because the *Love Song* by Constantine the Sicilian, one of his students, alludes to another ancient novel, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloë*.

Leo the Philosopher's enthusiasm for classical literature was certainly not shared by all of his contemporaries, but as long as the great man lived, he dominated the intellectual scene of Constantinople with his presence. But when he died, the petty Telchines eagerly grabbed the chance to make a clean sweep, and sweep they did. After c. 870 there are no erotic epigrams and anacreontics, and though classicism is still much in vogue, no one any longer dares to study the ancients on their own terms without making excuses for it to orthodox fundamentalists. Cephalas feels obliged to put a statement of faith at the beginning of his anthology and begins his collection of Christian epigrams with a verse inscription inspired by Patriarch Photios. The name Photios also pops up in connection with Constantine the Sicilian's "conversion" to orthodoxy. The *Psogos* and the *Apology* are followed by a third poem⁷⁴, in which Constantine claims to have discovered the source of salvation, albeit as an old man: now at last he knows that it is the Christian rhetoric of Photios that paves the way to heaven! The conflict between hellenism and orthodoxy also expresses itself in an unexpected source: the palindromes of the Greek Anthology. In the *Planudean Anthology*, but also in many other collections of ancient epigrams, we find a group of twelve palindromes: *APL* 387, nos. 1–4 and

⁷² J. HERGENROTHER, Photios, Patriarch von Konstantinopel. Sein Leben, seine Schriften und das griechische Schisma. Regensburg 1867, I, 323: "es scheint die Geistesrichtung beider Männer weit auseinandergegangen zu sein"; cf. Photios' letter to Leo the Philosopher: no. 208 (Laourdas & Westerink, II, pp. 107–108). See the excellent study by ALPERS 1988: 353–354 and 356–357.

⁷³ See H.-G. BECK, Byzantinisches Erotikon. Munich 1984, 110–115. On Photios and the ancient novels, see P. AGAPITOS, in: *Studies in Heliodorus*, ed. R. HUNTER. Cambridge 1998, 128–132.

⁷⁴ Ed. SPADARO 1971: 202. In the ms. the fourth verse reads: ὃς με γάλακτι ἔθρεψε θείων ναμάτων. WESTERINK 1986: 201 proposes the following excellent emendation: ὃς με γάλακτι ἔδων θρέψε θείων ναμάτων and suggests in the *apparatus criticus* to read ὁσίων instead of θείων.

10; two verses not copied by Planudes; *AP* 387, nos. 6, 5, 8, 7 and 9⁷⁵. Palindromes are totally nonsensical, of course, but may betray a certain mentality. Two of the palindromes deal with Photios and Leo the Philosopher, respectively: σοὶ τῷ φωτὶ σοφὸς ἵτω φώτιος and νῶ ἐλατὰ μὴ ὀνητὰ σοφὸς ἄτη νοήματα λέων⁷⁶. The texts can hardly be translated but mean something like: “Let the wise Photios come to you with his light” and “Useless thoughts forged by the mind are baneful, wise Leo”. By putting the word σοφός right in the middle, the author of the two palindromes makes clear that he is opposing two types of wisdom, religious and profane. There can be little doubt that the author sides with the camp of Photios. Photios is the light shining forth, Photios is the intellectual guide leading the way. Conversely, the profane wisdom of Leo the Philosopher is useless, if not downright pernicious.

Cephalas, Constantine the Sicilian and the anonymous author of the two palindromes pay lip service to the ideas of Photios. After c. 870 the Greek Anthology continues to be studied, but with the death of Leo the Philosopher dies the ideal of an enlightened hellenism. From that moment on, the legacy of hellenism has to be christianized in order to become acceptable.

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A Collection of Classicistic Epigrams: AP XV, 28–40

The small collection of epigrams copied at the end of the B manuscript, *AP* XV, 28–40, illustrates the ideological turnover from Leo to Photios, from unreserved enthusiasm for the ancients to a sort of classicism in Christian disguise. The collection was unquestionably compiled before 902, because the lemma attached to *AP* XV, 32 leaves no doubt that Arethas had not yet become archbishop when the collection was made. It cannot be excluded that the small sylloge was already to be found in the original Cephalas, but I am inclined to think that the epigrams were added to the anthology of Cephalas in what was undoubtedly one of its earliest apographs. The reason is the duplication of Theophanes' epigram at *AP* XV, 35. If the sylloge had been put

⁷⁵ See GALLAVOTTI 1989: 52–59 and 62–65, and STERNBACH 1900: 298–301. GALLAVOTTI 1989: 56–57 and 64 thinks that the initial collection consisted of 19 palindromes; however, since nos. 13–19 are not found in a fixed order in the manuscripts, I would suggest that they are later additions to the collection.

⁷⁶ There can be no doubt about the identity of this Λέων, for the last eight palindromes including the one on Λέων are entitled in the various mss. containing the collection: Λέοντος Φιλοσόφου.

together by Cephalas, it would mean that he had copied the epigram twice: first immediately after *AP* V, 83–84 and then again at *AP* XV, 35. Duplications of this kind are fairly normal in the anthology of Cephalas, but in practically all the instances of duplication the most likely explanation is that Cephalas found the epigram in two different copies⁷⁷. It is unlikely, however, that Cephalas found Theophanes' epigram in two different copies of the *Sylloge Rufiniana*. For when an epigram is repeated, it is usually found in its original context: a Meleagrian author among other epigrams deriving from the *Garland* of Meleager, etc. However, in *AP* XV, 28–40 Theophanes' epigram is "out of context": it is no longer part of the *Sylloge Rufiniana* where it originally could be found, but figures among contemporary epigrams. So, if *AP* XV, 35 is not an ordinary instance of duplication, why did Cephalas copy it twice? And why did he copy it the first time with the correct reading ῥῶσιν and then change it to χερσίν?⁷⁸ Regrettably, I cannot offer decisive proof, but I strongly suspect that *AP* XV, 28–40 was compiled by someone other than Cephalas.

Due to a binding error the order of the epigrams in the sylloge has been reversed⁷⁹. The original order is as follows: no. 40 and then nos. 28 to 39. The sylloge appears to have a thematic structure. It starts with two poems in pseudo-Homeric style by Kometas and Anastasios Quaestor (*AP* XV, 40 and 28). Then we have a number of epitaphs: *AP* XV, 29–31 by Ignatios the Deacon and *AP* XV, 32–34 by Arethas. This in its turn is followed by Theophanes' erotic epigram (*AP* XV, 35). The sylloge ends with six book epigrams: on an edition of Homer by Kometas (*AP* XV, 36–38), on a Homeric grammar by Ignatios the Deacon (*AP* XV, 39, v. 1 and vv. 2–3), and on Plato by an anonymous author (*AP* XV, 39, vv. 4–5).

The author of *AP* XV, 40, Kometas, is not entirely unknown to us. He was appointed professor of grammar at the Magnaura school in the 840s and produced a punctuated edition of the two Homeric epics⁸⁰. In *AP* XV, 36–38, epigrams that served as an introduction to this edition, Kometas emphasizes the magnitude of the problems he faced when he transliterated Homer from

⁷⁷ See CAMERON 1993: 43–48.

⁷⁸ See CAMERON 1993: 284.

⁷⁹ After the binding error had been made, scribe J rewrote in the top margin of p. 693 the first nine lines of *AP* XV, 28, which had become acephalous. In the lemma he added the nickname of Anastasios Quaestor: ὁ Τραυλός, and in v. 2 he supplemented a lacuna: ἔχων. There is no need to suppose that he used another manuscript to come up with these two insignificant additions.

⁸⁰ Theoph. Cont. 192, 19–20. On Kometas and his scholarly work on Homer, see LEMERLE 1971: 166–167, R. BROWNING, *Viator* 6 (1975) 22–23 (repr. in: idem, *Studies on Byzantine History, Literature and Education*, London 1977, no. 17), ALPERS 1991: 254–257, and G. CORTASSA, *Prometheus* 23 (1997) 222–228.

uncial to minuscule. Kometas might be slightly exaggerating, but as any modern editor knows, the problem of punctuation can indeed be troublesome, for it necessarily presupposes that one fully understands the text one is editing. Homeric Greek is not always easy to understand and Kometas is therefore likely to have made use of ancient commentaries or marginal scholia whenever he stumbled upon a difficult passage in Homer. Kometas' edition is not preserved, but in *AP* XV, 40 he quotes five lines from Homer in full, among which *Il.* 2. 87 (v. 35) with the reading ἄδινάων, "corrected" in all modern editions of the *AP* to ἄδινάων, although the breathing was recommended by the great Homeric scholar Aristarchus⁸¹. However, there are serious reasons to question Kometas' claim that he produced a reliable edition of Homer, for *AP* XV, 40 "is perhaps the single most unmetrical poem in the Anthology". Kometas has no feel for the hexameter and commits really awful prosodic errors – "poor qualifications for a 'restorer' of the text of Homer"⁸². Against *AP* XV, 37 and 40 Constantine the Rhodian scribbled in the margin a few satirical verses criticizing Kometas for his lack of poetical skills⁸³. The following is a good specimen of Constantine's talent to abuse: "Kometas, you were another Ther-sites. So, how did you dare to impersonate Achilles, you wretch? To hell with these products of an unpoetical mind! Off to the gallows, off to the pillory with these verses full of the rottenness of dung!". Constantine the Rhodian obviously objected to Kometas' claim to be an expert in Homer given the poor quality of his hexameters. But the histrionic metaphor in the second verse (Ἀχλλέως πρόσωπον εἰσέδυς) appears to indicate that there was yet another aspect to Kometas that Constantine found extremely offensive: his false pretence. In the view of Constantine, Kometas is putting on a mask in *AP* XV, 40. The poem simply lacks sincerity.

To understand Constantine's angry reaction, it suffices to take a closer look at *AP* XV, 40. It is a fifty-seven-line poem on the Raising of Lazarus. It paraphrases in Homeric Greek chapter 11 of the *Gospel according to John*; however, the author does not simply retell the biblical story, but expands on the theme⁸⁴. Kometas needs many verses to express what the Bible says in a few words. For instance, he turns the simple sentence: κύριε, εἰ ἥς ὥδε οὐκ ἄν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός (11: 21 and 32) into two highly elaborate verses: εἰ γὰρ τῇδε

⁸¹ See the commentary *ad locum* in: The Iliad, ed. W. LEAF. London 1900–1902 (repr. Amsterdam 1971).

⁸² CAMERON 1993: 309.

⁸³ Ed. BECKBY 1957–58: IV, 288 and 292 (at *AP* XV, 37 and 40). See F.M. PONTANI, in: Studi in onore di Aristide Colonna. Perugia 1982, 247–253, and CAMERON 1993: 309–310.

⁸⁴ See M. CAPRARA, *Kωνωνία* 24 (2000) 245–260, who argues that Kometas was familiar with Nonnos' *Paraphrase of the Gospel according to John* and owed his inspiration to this classic example of biblical paraphrase in verse.

ἔησθα, ἄναξ νεκάδων Ἀἰδωνεύς / οὐποτ' ἔτλη μείναι, ἐπεὶ ἡ πολὺ φέρτατος ἦσθα (vv. 43–44). The words of the two sisters of Lazarus, Maria and Martha, are highly emotional in the biblical version, but are devoid of any concrete meaning in Kometas' poem, and thus the deeply felt sorrow of bereavement evaporates into thin air. This is in general Kometas' problem: he keeps heaping up magnificent words, but none of these words signify anything else than a painful dearth of feeling. His poem is simply a bad poem, the product of a frigid muse. However, since it is certainly not the only bad poem written in Byzantium, one may wonder why Constantine the Rhodian reacted as he did. I think that his reaction is one of sincere disappointment. The story of Lazarus is fundamental to Christianity, for it epitomizes one of the quintessential tenets of Christian faith, namely the resurrection of the dead. It is the prelude to the Anastasis of Christ. Death is defeated, eternal life is near at hand. With all its theological connotations, the Raising of Lazarus is a story of hope and happy expectations – a moment of intense joy relived each year on the last Saturday before Easter. By turning the story into a sterile exercise in the art of rhetoric, Kometas failed to convey the message of this liturgical feast to his Byzantine audience.

The poem next in line is *AP* XV, 28 by Anastasios Quaestor, also known as the “Stammerer” (ὁ τραυλός)⁸⁵. Anastasios was born in the later ninth century and died after 922; he was a close friend of Leo Choiosphaktes and an adversary of Arethas; he took part in the Doukas revolt (913), was imprisoned in the Stoudios monastery and regained his former position when Romanos Lekapenos assumed power (919). Anastasios wrote an encomiastic epitaph on Metrophanes of Smyrna and a satirical poem on the death of Emperor Alexander. He is also the author of various iambic canons in the classicistic style of Ps. John of Damascus⁸⁶. *AP* XV, 28 describes the scene of the Crucifixion: Christ on the cross with the two thieves on either side, the Virgin Mary and John the Apostle, some wayfarers who make fun of Christ, and “the people of the Jews” offering Him sour wine to drink. The poet depicts the whole scene with short, vivid brushstrokes, painting as it were in words, and guides our mind's eye by presenting the participants and their reactions one after the other in a narrative sequence. In the first verses he uses descriptive imperfects, but when he portrays “the wicked and bloodthirsty people of the Jews”, he suddenly uses an aorist, ὥρξε ποτῆτα, and thus draws attention to their lewd action. He ends his description by saying that Christ, who is both Man and God, “was silent and resisted not”. The poem might well have ended here, but we find to our surprise three additional verses prescribing the appropriate viewer's response to the scene: “Who would be so stupid as to be full of pride when he reflects on

⁸⁵ On the tumultuous life of the author, see LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 401–405.

⁸⁶ Ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1900: 43–59.

this in his heart and sees it in pictures? For as God He prevails over us, but as Man He does not”⁸⁷. The poem is strongly anti-Semitic, but by the sudden twist at the end it becomes clear that arrogant Christians are in no way better than the Jews who jeered at Christ. When the viewer looks at the awesome mystery of the Son of God dying on the cross, his attitude should be one of humility. It is not clear whether Anastasios had a particular picture in mind when he wrote the poem, but the word γυμνός indicates that he was thinking of contemporary representations of the Crucifixion, in which Christ was seen wearing a loincloth instead of the earlier colobium. Anastasios’ poem is full of Homeric reminiscences, but where the similar experiment by Kometas failed, Anastasios succeeds in getting his poetic message across. The hexameters are almost flawless except for one or two venial slips. Homer is not the only source of inspiration, for Anastasios uses the Sophoclean word λύγδην (“in sobs”), the Hellenistic adjective διψαλέος, the rare form κρονάμενος, the poetic δρώμενος and the hapax αίματοχάρις. The poem is all in all a splendid example of a Christian theme treated in a classicizing manner.

AP XV, 29–31 are three epitaphs in elegiacs by Ignatios the Deacon, the well-known author of the first half of the ninth century⁸⁸. In its detailed entry on Ignatios the Deacon and his various literary works, the *Souda* mentions the following category: ἐπιτυμβίους ἐλέγους⁸⁹. The three epitaphs preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* belong to this category, but there can be but little doubt that the category comprised more than the three specimens still extant. The *Souda* clearly refers to a *collection* of epitaphs – a collection now lost, but still available to the person who compiled AP XV, 28–40⁹⁰. Ignatios may have conceived the idea of producing a collective edition of his epitaphs by analogy with the similar collection of Gregory of Nazianzos’ ἐπιτύμβια ἐπιγράμματα. The latter seems to have been quite popular in the middle Byzantine period, given the number of early manuscripts containing sepulchral epigrams by Gregory of Nazianzos: the Palatine manuscript (twice: AP VIII and the collection copied by J on the last pages), Bodl. Clark. 12 (s. X), Laur. VII 10 (s. XI) and Ambros.

⁸⁷ In the last verse I follow the interpretation of P.T. BRANNAN, *American Journal of Philology* 80 (1959) 396–399.

⁸⁸ For the life and works of Ignatios, see WOLSKA-CONUS 1970: 330–351, MANGO 1997: 1–24, MAKRIIS 1997: 3–22, LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 397–401, S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon. Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary. Aldershot 1998, 38–46, KAZHDAN 1999: 343–348, and TH. PRATSCH, *BMGS* 24 (2000) 82–101.

⁸⁹ Ed. ADLER 1928–1938: II, 607–608.

⁹⁰ Perhaps the collection of epitaphs was headed by Ignatios’ funerary anacreontic (ed. CICCIOLELLA 2000a: 42–54); cf. Constantine the Sicilian’s sylloge of pederastic epigrams (PCP), which also begins with an anacreontic.

gr. 433 (s. XI)⁹¹. What is more, Ignatios the Deacon did not hit upon the unusual idea of writing a sepulchral *eis heauton* (AP XV, 29) all by himself, but probably adopted the idea from Gregory of Nazianzos (cf. AP VIII, 80–84 and Greg. Naz. II, 1, 99). In AP XV, 29 Ignatios speaks to us from the grave, confesses his sins and prays to God for mercy⁹². AP XV, 30 and 31 are ordinary encomiastic epitaphs: the first praises a young man called Paul for the virtue and intellectual brilliance he displayed when he was still among the living; the second celebrates Samuel, a deacon of the Hagia Sophia, who showed his Christian zeal and piety by bequeathing his earthly possessions to the church. The language and style of these three epitaphs is obviously classicizing, but it is impossible to identify a particular literary model imitated by Ignatios: we find Homeric endings, such as -οιο, -ησι and -εσσι, but Byzantine elegiacs in general make use of Homeric forms; ὄμματι εὐμένει may be an imitation of ὄμμα εὐμένεζ in AP VIII, 248. 2 by Gregory of Nazianzos, but late antique and Byzantine poetry is fond of the word ὄμμα (“the eye of Justice, the Emperor, God Almighty”, etc.)⁹³; parallels for the rare expression ἐν λαγόνεσσι αἰῆς (“in the womb of earth”) can be found in ancient inscriptions⁹⁴, but was Ignatios familiar with these parallels? Ignatios does not make prosodic errors, but rather surprisingly treats the caesura of the pentameter as a full stop where hiatus and even *brevis in longo* are allowed (29. 6; 30. 2 (!); 30. 4; 31. 2). The two book epigrams AP XV, 39, v. 1 and vv. 2–3 clearly indicate that Ignatios the Deacon did some scholarly work on Homer: see their title: “on the same”, that is, on Homer (the subject of AP XV, 36–38), and see the phrase σοφῆς πολὺνιδρις ἀοιδῆς⁹⁵. Ignatios proudly states that he “has brought to light the science of grammar hidden in the ocean of oblivion” – which is probably a gross exaggeration, but at least gives a clue as to Ignatios’ precise contribution to the field of Homeric scholarship: grammatical epimerisms on Homer⁹⁶. Since Homeric

⁹¹ See H.M. WERHAHN, Übersichtstabellen zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung der Gedichte Gregors von Nazianz, in: W. HÖLLGER, Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Gedichte Gregors von Nazianz. 1. Die Gedichtgruppen XX und XI. Paderborn 1989, 34.

⁹² The last two verses were re-used by the scribe of Laur. LXX 20 (s. XI) as a token of his humility: ed. BANDINI 1763–70: II, 680 and COUGNY 1890: IV, no. 116. The epigram can also be found in Laur. XXXII 16 (see below, n. 119) and in Barb. gr. 74, Allatius’ collection of Byzantine poems (the source used by Allatius is the Palatine manuscript itself, which was in Rome at the time).

⁹³ See, for instance, ROBERT 1948: 17, 25 and 138.

⁹⁴ See CIG 7. 117 and 14. 2001.

⁹⁵ In Ignatios’ letters no pagan author is quoted as often as Homer: see the *Fontes* in MANGO 1997.

⁹⁶ On ninth-century Homeric epimerisms (by Choiroboskos?), see A.R. DYCK, Epimerismi Homerici. Pars prior epimerismos continens qui ad Iliadis librum A pertinent. Berlin–New York 1983, 5–7; Pars altera epimerismos continens qui ordine alphabetico traditi sunt. Berlin–New York 1995, 23–24.

epimerisms already existed in late antiquity⁹⁷, I suspect that Ignatios' "rediscovery of grammar" entailed little more than producing a faithful copy of a late antique manuscript with some additional information gathered from other sources.

The epitaphs by Arethas, *AP* XV, 32–34, are probably the worst poems ever written in ninth-century Byzantium. The poems on the death of his sister Anna, *AP* XV, 32–33, probably date from the 870s or the early 880s, seeing that she sadly died at the premature age of twenty-three. Unless we assume that he was much older, Arethas (born c. 850)⁹⁸ will have been in his twenties or his early thirties when his sister died. The epitaph on the nun Febronia, *AP* XV, 34, may date from the same period as well. We happen to know a certain Febronia, born about 810, who founded a monastery and was renowned for her piety and erudition⁹⁹. With all the erudition and poetic talents she is credited with, Febronia may have been capable of understanding and appreciating the tortuous style of Arethas, which is more than we can say for ourselves. Take for instance the second epitaph on the death of Anna written in dodecasyllables with harsh enjambments offending the ear (33. 3–4 and 9–10) and with ugly parentheses disrupting the natural flow of the verses (33. 2–3 and 7–8). It is impossible to recite the poem without faltering. A poem that cannot be heard is poetically dead – as dead as the sister whose passing-away Arethas bewails with many highfalutin words, but without ever convincing us that he truly mourns. The epitaph also lacks any reference to the spiritual salvation after death, for which the Byzantines longed so dearly. What are we to think of this? Did Anna not desire to be awarded a place in heaven? Did her family not care about her future in the hereafter? Of course they did. And so did Arethas, but he was more interested in words than in emotions. The epitaph on Febronia runs more smoothly than the two poems on Anna, but still lacks in stylistic dexterity. It begins as follows: "Febronia must surely have given some token of her sympathy to the spirits below likewise, if there, too, the poor have need of the wealthy". The idea that the dead dwell in the limbo of Hades is common in Byzantium, of course, but no Byzantine believed that the poor even needed charity in the nether world. Neither did Arethas, but he simply used a classicist oxymoron to emphasize Febronia's virtue. In the next verses Arethas presents his own version of the *Nekuia*: "For not even there do the souls of the

⁹⁷ On the Homeric epimerisms attributed to Herodianus, but dating from the sixth century, see DYCK, *o.c.*, II, 37–40.

⁹⁸ See KOUGEAS 1913: 1–9.

⁹⁹ See I. VAN DEN GHEYN, *AnBoll* 18 (1899) 234–236. The hagiographer praises Febronia for her erudition: ταῖς θεαῖς μελέταις, ἔτι δὲ ποιητικῇ καὶ γραμματικῇ καὶ τοῖς τῶν θεῶν πατέρων ἑμμέτροις πονήμασιν ἔγνω ἑαυτὴν ἐπιδοῦναι (234, 11–13), and he calls her ἐλλόγιμος καὶ πειραν ἰσχυράν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ἔχουσα (236, 6–7).

generous forget entirely their beneficence". This is Homer all over again: the souls of the dead remembering their former life on earth. But then Christianity brutally intrudes into the Homeric scene: Febronia is compared to the biblical virgins who kept their oil lamp burning while waiting for the divine bridegroom. Febronia kept her oil and wicking alight by her charity to the poor. That is why she reposes in her tomb deeply asleep, but certain of entering the bridal chamber of Christ. Arethas has no feel for the elegiac: verses without caesura (32. 1, 3, 11; 34. 1 and 9), ugly sounding spondaics (e.g. 32. 5; 34. 5), neglect of bridges (32. 13; 34. 3, 5 and 9), etc.

The classicistic sylloge of *AP* XV, 28–40 closes with an anonymous book epigram on a certain scholar who prepared an annotated edition of Plato or perhaps a commentary on the Platonic corpus (*AP* XV, 39, vv. 4–5). The poem probably dates from the late ninth century in the light of the fashionable revival of Plato at the time¹⁰⁰. It is highly unfortunate that the B manuscript does not record the name of the author of the epigram, because the odds are that he was the same person who compiled the classicistic sylloge and who owned the exemplar copied by the B scribes. For, as we shall see below, owners of a manuscript of Cephalas' anthology usually add epigrams of their own, thus allowing us to reconstruct the text history of the Greek Anthology.

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Constantine the Rhodian and Others

The anthology of Cephalas must have been a tremendous success right from the start given the great number of tenth-century manuscript copies; these are now all lost except for the Palatine manuscript, but there is ample evidence of them. The *Sylloge Euphemiana* contained various excerpts from the anthology of Cephalas rearranged in a new order. The original sylloge is lost, but we possess two independent sources that derive from it: a late fifteenth-century version of the sylloge (regrettably with substantial omissions) and the epigrams copied by the twelfth-century scribe Σ^π in the Palatine manuscript¹⁰¹. The *Sylloge Euphemiana* is named after the person to whom it is dedicated, Euphemios. Its author is unknown, but in the two dedicatory epigrams that accompany the sylloge, he informs us that he was born in Hypata in Thessaly

¹⁰⁰ See J. IRIGOIN, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 5 (1962) 287–292, LEMERLE 1971: 167–169, and ALPERS 1991: 260–267.

¹⁰¹ See CAMERON 1993: 254–277.

(Neai Patrai) and now resides in Constantinople where he loyally serves the Emperor Leo VI¹⁰². Fortunately, we know a little more about Euphemios, to whom the anonymous author dedicated “these few lilies from Helicon”. There is a verse inscription from Attaleia commemorating the construction of a second fortification wall in 911–912 built by the *mystographos* Euphemios at the behest of the reigning emperors, Leo VI and Constantine VII¹⁰³. There is also a satirical verse on Niketas Magistros quoted in the *De Thematribus*: γαροδοειδής ὄψις ἐσθλαβωμένη, “a Slavic face with a cunning look”¹⁰⁴. Euphemios, “the famous grammarian” as he is called, wrote this verse to make fun of Niketas Magistros who boasted about his noble descent, although he was born in the Peloponnese, a backward province that had been overrun by Slavic tribes. It is reasonable to assume that the satirical poem, of which only this verse has been preserved, dates from 928 or shortly afterwards when Niketas had fallen into disfavour with the Lekapenos clan¹⁰⁵. The *Sylloge Euphemiana* probably dates from the first decade of the tenth century: before 912 (the end of Leo’s reign) and after 890–900 (the date of Cephalas’ anthology). The sylloge contains three contemporary poems: the two dedicatory epigrams and a satirical poem by Leo the Philosopher directed against his nitwitted doctor.

The *Planudean Anthology* derives its epigrams from two tenth-century sources, both of them abridged versions of the original anthology of Cephalas: *Pla* and *Plb*. The first source used by Planudes, *Pla*, contained a group of dodecasyllabic epigrams on famous charioteers of the past (*APL* 380–387); these were headed by an epitaph in elegiacs on the tenth-century charioteer Anastasios (*APL* 379)¹⁰⁶. The epitaph was written by Thomas the Patrician and Logothetes tou Dromou, a well-known figure in the history of early tenth-century Byzantium: Logothetes in 907 and 913, a correspondent of Leo Choirosphaktes and Arethas, a relative of the historian Genesios, and an intellectual renowned for his knowledge of philosophy¹⁰⁷. It is reasonable to assume that *Pla* was a

¹⁰² Ed. COUGNY 1890: III, 256–257, WESTERINK 1986: 201, and CAMERON 1993: 255.

¹⁰³ Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 302.

¹⁰⁴ Ed. PERTUSI 1952: II, 6, 33–42. See also P. SCHREINER, in: Festschrift H. Bräuer. Köln 1986, 487.

¹⁰⁵ The precise date of *De Thematribus* is disputed, but I follow Kresten’s proposal for a date in the 960s (see I. ŠEVČENKO, in: Byzantine Diplomacy, ed. J. SHEPARD & S. FRANKLIN. Aldershot 1992, 185, n. 47): a dating supported by the word ἐξείνων in Εὐφήμιον ἐξείνων τὸν περιβόητον γραμματικόν, which indicates that the author of *De Them.* refers to the events of 928 as something of the past.

¹⁰⁶ The epigrams can be found in *Pla* IV, 6, which forms an appendix to *Pla* IV, 3 (the late antique charioteer epigrams, nos. *APL* 335–378 and *AP* XV, 41–50). On *APL* 380–387, see chapter 5, pp. 173–179.

¹⁰⁷ See A. MARKOPOULOS, *ZRVI* 24–25 (1986) 103–108 and CAMERON 1993: 319–320.

Cephalas manuscript copied at the behest of Thomas himself or one of his friends. The second source used by Planudes, Plb, is connected with the name of one of the most prominent scholars of tenth-century Byzantium, Alexander of Nicaea¹⁰⁸. Plb contained three epigrams written by Alexander: a witty epigram on a bath in Prainetos (*APL* 281)¹⁰⁹ and two epitaphs to Nicholas Mystikos (*APL* 21–22)¹¹⁰. Again, it is very likely that Plb was copied by or for Alexander of Nicaea. Pla and Plb derive from two early tenth-century manuscripts containing the anthology of Cephalas plus a few contemporary epigrams added by their rightful owners.

The *Palatine Anthology*, too, contains a collection of epigrams put together by the very person who had commissioned the manuscript and did the final editing, Constantine the Rhodian (scribe J). Constantine the Rhodian was born at Lindos in c. 880¹¹¹. His well-informed marginal scholia on Gregory of Kampsas and Cephalas, which tell us who did what, clearly indicate that he knew these scholars personally, and suggest by implication that he was a student at the school of the New Church in the 890s¹¹². Constantine definitely had a talent for verbal abuse, as borne out by the great number of satirical poems that go under his name. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the powerful court eunuch Samonas availed himself of Constantine's obliging services, made him his personal secretary and ordered him in 908 to write a libel against a favourite of Leo VI¹¹³. In the years 913–920 Constantine wrote the first version of the *Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles* for the entertainment and instruction of the young prince Constantine VII. In 927 he went on an embassy to the Bulgarians to negotiate peace, by which time he had obtained a post in the palace clergy as βασιλικὸς κληρικὸς¹¹⁴. Between 931 and 944 he wrote the second, enlarged version of the *Ekphrasis*, in which he praises the Lekapenoi¹¹⁵. Shortly after 944 he produced the *Palatine Anthology*. The date of his death is unknown.

On pp. 666–668, between John of Gaza's *Ekphrasis* and the *Technopaegnia*, Constantine the Rhodian copied as many epigrams as the available space permitted; and on pp. 670 and 673, below the *Technopaegnia*, he copied a few

¹⁰⁸ On this scholar, see MARKOPOULOS 1994c: 313–326.

¹⁰⁹ See P. MAAS, *BNJ* 3 (1922) 333–336 (repr. in: idem, *Kleine Schriften*. Munich 1973, 468–472).

¹¹⁰ See CAMERON 1993: 317–319. See also ŠEVČENKO 1987: 462.

¹¹¹ For the life of Constantine the Rhodian, see DOWNEY 1955: 212–221.

¹¹² See CAMERON 1993: 108–116.

¹¹³ Theoph. Cont. 376, 1–4. See R. JENKINS, *Speculum* 23 (1948) 234 (repr. in: idem, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries*. London 1970, no. 10).

¹¹⁴ Theoph. Cont. 413, 1–3.

¹¹⁵ On the two versions of the *Ekphrasis*, see SPECK 1991: 249–268.

more. Since *AP* XV, 1 belongs to the preceding *Ekphrasis*, the collection of epigrams compiled by Constantine the Rhodian begins only at *AP* XV, 2. The collection comprises the following epigrams: *AP* XV, 2–17; I, 122; IX, 400 and 180–181; XV, 18–19; X, 87; XV, 20; X, 95; XV, 23; and IX, 196–197. As the *AP* numbers already indicate, the collection contains a great number of duplications: epigrams that can also be found elsewhere in the Palatine manuscript. The reason for this is that Cephala (for his anthology) and Constantine (for his collection) made use of the same source: the *Palladas Sylloge*. The *Palladas Sylloge* is not only the source for these doublets, but also for epigrams XV, 9–10, 18–20 and 23. XV, 2–8 and 11, on the contrary, are verse inscriptions copied *in situ* by or for Constantine the Rhodian, and XV, 12–17 and I, 122 are Byzantine poems¹¹⁶. XV, 12–14 and I, 122 are poems by ninth-century intellectuals who contributed to the Greek Anthology: Leo the Philosopher, Constantine the Sicilian, Theophanes the Grammarian and Michael Chartophylax¹¹⁷. And XV, 15–17 are epigrams by Constantine the Rhodian himself, which he added to the manuscript because it was his own personal copy of Cephala's anthology. The manuscript was his, not only in terms of legal ownership, but also because he actually contributed to the copying and did the final editing. This is also why Constantine, like so many other Byzantine scribes, used the epithet *ταπεινός* in the lemma attached to *AP* XV, 15 as a means of signing his own work without appearing too vainglorious¹¹⁸.

Incidentally, I would like to point out that it is wrong to call *AP* XV a “book” and to treat it as if it were a homogeneous compilation of epigrams. In fact, this particular book is an invention of modern editors who bracketed together all the epigrams and short poems they found at the end of the Palatine manuscript with an utter disregard of palaeographical and codicological data. This so-called book was written by three different scribes: XV, 28–40 by B³ (c. 920–930), XV, 1–27 by J (Constantine the Rhodian, shortly after 944), and XV, 41–51 by Σ^π (twelfth century). The first part (XV, 1–27) and the second part (XV, 28–51) of this phantasmal book are divided by a quaternion containing the *Anacreontea*. Furthermore, the Hellenistic *Technopaegnia* (XV, 21–22 and 24–27) are not epigrams and were certainly not intended by Constantine the Rhodian to be viewed as such. At the tail end of his own manuscript Constantine put poems that were of interest to him: John of Gaza's *Ekphrasis*,

¹¹⁶ See LAUXTERMANN 1997: 329–330 and 334–335.

¹¹⁷ Treated above on pp. 99–100. CAMERON 1993: 307 asserts that the word *μαζάκιος* in the lemmata attached to XV, 13–14 indicates that Constantine and Theophanes “had only recently died”. But the word simply indicates that they are *dead* and that the lemmatist feels *respect* for them. See, for instance, Ambr. E 100 Sup. (s. XIII), fol. 135: τοῦ *μαζακίου* Ἰωάννου τοῦ Γεωμέτρου, a lemma written some 200 years after the death of Geometres.

¹¹⁸ See CAMERON 1993: 304.

the *Technopaegnia*, the *Anacreontea*, a number of poems by Gregory of Nazianzos as well as the collection of epigrams I just mentioned. Constantine the Rhodian had nothing to do with *AP* XV, 28–40 (copied some twenty years earlier by scribe B³) or with *AP* XV, 41–51 (copied some two centuries later by scribe Σ^π). There is no book *AP* XV. It is to be hoped that future editors will take this into consideration and future scholars will stop referring to *AP* XV as a separate book¹¹⁹.

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Byzantine Classicism and Modernism

Although the anthology of Cephelas was widely read in tenth-century Byzantium, and probably also in later periods¹²⁰, it had barely any impact on Byzantine poets and did not significantly influence the course of Byzantine poetry. Only few Byzantine poems display the epigrammatic concinnity, the sense of poetic closure, the elegant technique of the elegiac and all the other fine qualities that make the classical epigram what it is: grand poetry in miniature. Only rarely does one stumble upon obvious literary reminiscences and only rarely can one identify an ancient epigram as the direct literary model for a Byzantine poem. Cameron pointed out that Geometres borrowed the word ἄεσμα (Cr. 281, 17) from Gregory of Nazianzos (*AP* VIII, 9. 1 and 113. 1), imitated a pythian oracle in Cr. 281, 14, and adapted an epigram by Palladas (*AP* XI, 386) in Cr. 331, 6¹²¹. To this list of literary reminiscences one may add the following poems. The elegiac poem, no. Cr. 340, 25, which deals with the unlucky fate of a fawn that was hunted down, jumped into the sea and died there in fishing nets, obviously imitates an epigram by Tiberius Illustis (*AP* IX, 370). The satirical poem on a eunuch, Cr. 293, 2, imitates a well-known

¹¹⁹ Laur. XXXII 16 (a. 1280–83) contains two collections of epigrams: on fols. 3–6 and 381–384 (see CAMERON 1993: 201–216). The first collection ultimately derives from the Palatine manuscript, as shown by the following series of epigrams: *AP* XV, 9; epitaph to the wife of emperor Maurice; *AP* XV, 29. XV, 9 was added to Cephelas' anthology by scribe J; XV, 29 was copied by scribe B. The surprising combination of XV, 9 and 29 in Laur. XXXII 16 points in the direction of the Palatine manuscript as the most likely source.

¹²⁰ For the text history of the Greek Anthology in the twelfth century, see CAMERON 1993: 128–129 and 340–341. It should also be borne in mind that Planudes and other Palaeologan scholars may well have found their tenth-century sources in manuscripts of the eleventh or twelfth century.

¹²¹ See CAMERON 1993: 337–339. Geometres adapted Palladas' epigram also in his *Dispute*: ed. GRAUX 1880: 278 (no. 6).

epitaph to Homer: *AP* VII, 3. At Cr. 320, 14 Geometres quotes Menander, *Monostich* 231. Geometres' two poems on Summer (Cr. 316, 3 and 316, 11) borrow their imagery from epigrams on the beauty of nature (for instance, *AP* X, 1 and VIII, 129), and his long *Ekphrasis of Spring* (Cr. 348, 16) has much in common with a fourth-century ephrastic poem by a certain author called Meleager (*AP* IX, 363)¹²². Taking into account the sheer bulk of Geometres' poems, this list of reminiscences is hardly impressive. Sure enough, if one continues the search for parallels, the poetry of Geometres may provide more instances of literary imitation, but for every poem that is vaguely classicizing, there are dozens of poems that are certainly not. It is beyond doubt that Geometres was familiar with the anthology of Cephalas, but he had little taste for it, and the kind of poetry he wrote had little in common with ancient epigrams. The same is true for later Byzantine poetry in general: except for the occasional literary borrowing, there is no proof that it was influenced or even slightly affected by the ancient epigram. Most Byzantine epigrams do not classicize; they "modernize" ("modern" meaning anything written after c. 600, that is, "modern from a Byzantine perspective").

The ancient epigram exercised a strong influence over Byzantine poets only in the hundred years of classicism that began with Leo the Philosopher and ended with the compilation of the *Palatine Anthology*. Before c. 850 and after c. 950 ancient epigrammatic poetry has no place in the literary universe of the Byzantines; they may have read and even liked classical epigrams, but they did not feel the urge to imitate. However, in the hundred-year interval of c. 850–950 classicism is much in vogue. In the sections above, I treated this classicizing vogue in much detail and presented abundant evidence for it, so there is no need to discuss it again. It is perhaps worth noticing, however, that the classicizing vogue does not express itself only in literary epigrams, but also in verse inscriptions. The first example is the famous inscription in Skripou (the ancient Orchomenos), which dates from 873–874¹²³. The poem is written in almost impeccable hexameters¹²⁴ and its language is profoundly Homeric. See, for instance, ὦ πολύαινε Λέον formed by analogy with ὦ πολύαινε Ὀδυσσεῦ (*Il.* 9. 673); the Homeric construction: participle + περ ἔμπης (=καίπερ + participle); postponed ἐπεὶ in ἔργα ἐπεὶ... The Holy Virgin is called ἱφιάνασσα (!), probably by analogy with her cult title παντάνασσα, but also as a learned allusion to *Od.*

¹²² For a comparison of these two poems on Spring, see KAMBYLIS 1994–95: 33–40. For the date of the poem by Meleager (not the famous poet and anthologist of the first century BC!), see WIFSTRAND 1933: 168–170 and CAMERON 1982: 231–232.

¹²³ Ed. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ 1994: 483–484. Read πολυχανδέϊ (v. 2), ἐξετέλεσσας (v. 4) and ἔστατον (v. 7).

¹²⁴ But see the hiatus in v. 3: ἔργα ἐπεὶ, and the epic lengthening of a short vowel in v. 7: Χριστοῦ δ' ἐκατέρωθεν.

11. 284: (king Amphion) ὅς ποτ' ἐν Ὀρχομενῷ Μινυεῖω ἔφι ἄνασσεν [cf. v. 12: (Leo) χῶρον ἐπικρατέων τε παλαιφάτου Ὀρχομενοῖο]. The poet was also familiar with the Greek Anthology: θεοδέγμων, a hapax recorded in *AP* VII, 363. 4; καὶ οὐ λαλέοντα, cf. *AP* I 30. 4; ἐπ' ἀπείρονα κύκλα, cf. *AP* IX, 468. 3; μητρὸς ἀπειρογάμου, cf. *AP* I, 2. 3, 27. 3 and 99. 6; ἐξετέλεσσας, cf. *AP* I 43. 3 (in the same metrical position); σῶν καμάτων, cf. *AP* I, 9. 1; καὶ τόδε γὰρ τέμενος παναοίδιμον ἐξετέλεσσας, cf. *AP* I, 9. καὶ τόδε σῶν καμάτων παναοίδιμον ἔργον ἐτύχθη. Is this the work of a local poet? Perhaps, but given the superb literary quality of the verses it seems more likely that the palace official Leo the Protospatharios (the subject of the poem) commissioned a Constantinopolitan poet to compose this elegant verse inscription¹²⁵. The second classicistic verse inscription is an early tenth-century epitaph found on a sarcophagus in the vicinity of Galakrenai, the monastery of the Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos¹²⁶. The patriarch's synkellos, Michael, is commemorated in the epitaph. The poem is remarkable for its use of Nonnian phrases, Homeric tags and explicit borrowings from the Greek Anthology. See, for instance, the following two macaronic verses (vv. 3–4): ἄχθος ἀπορρίψας (*AP* VII, 19. 4) βεβαρηότα (Homer and later epic writers) δεσμὸν ἀλύξας (*Od.* 8. 353) / ποσσὶν ἐλαφροτάτοις (Nonnos, *Dion.* 28. 287, 32. 246, *Par. Ev. Ioh.* 19. 21) διέστιχεν (Nonnos, *passim*), ἤχι χορεύει (Nonnos, *Dion.* 3. 110)¹²⁷. Seeing that Alexander of Nicaea wrote two epitaphs on Nicholas Mystikos (*AP* I 21–22), he would be a likely candidate if one desired to attribute this classicistic verse inscription to a known author; at any rate, the poem “emanated from (...) the same competent literary milieu of high prelates gravitating around the Great Church”¹²⁸.

However, it must be said that all this classicizing between c. 850 and 950 was very much a Constantinopolitan thing. The epigrams of the Anonymous Italian, for instance, are not at all classicistic. And even in Constantinople, the classicizing vogue was not wholeheartedly embraced by all intellectuals. The epigrams by Leo Choirosphaktes, for instance, are not particularly classicistic. Strangely enough, though, the same Leo Choirosphaktes was accused of “hellenism” by Arethas of Caesarea, an author whom we know to have written extremely classicizing epitaphs. The above is merely intended as a cautious reminder not to stick stylistic labels on periods. Diverging styles, preferences and mindsets coexist in Byzantium at any given moment, sometimes peacefully, sometimes with a lot of sabre-rattling. No period is exclusively this or that. For instance, the art-historical concept of the “Macedonian Renaissance” may account for the classicistic style of the *Paris Psalter*, but ignores other,

¹²⁵ See also the comments by OIKONOMIDES 1994: 489–492.

¹²⁶ See ŠEVČENKO 1987: 461–468 and CAMERON 1993: 319.

¹²⁷ See the excellent commentary by ŠEVČENKO 1987: 462 and 464.

¹²⁸ ŠEVČENKO 1987: 462.

non-classicizing styles such as oriental motifs on Byzantine silks¹²⁹. Likewise, the hellenism of Leo the Philosopher and the christianized classicism of Photios and Cephalas should not be seen as the sole cultural forces in the ninth and early tenth centuries, but merely as determinant factors in an ongoing debate on Byzantium and the classical heritage. Debates are never won by any one party; at best the parties involved reach a meagre compromise, but if that is not possible, they keep on arguing for ever. Conflicts on the issue of hellenism kept flaring up in Byzantium from time to time, not because the Byzantines were constantly in some sort of identity crisis, but because they attempted time and again, with little success, to redefine the classical past in the light of their own experiences and needs¹³⁰.

Constantine the Rhodian annotated with obvious indignation at *AP* VII, 311: “on the wife of Lot, but the Hellenes say that it alludes to Niobe”. There can be little doubt that Cephalas is the target of criticism here, for the *Planudean Anthology* and the *Sylloge Euphemiana*, which both derive from the anthology of Cephalas, introduce the epigram as follows: “on Niobe”¹³¹. Constantine the Rhodian criticized Cephalas for failing to notice an obvious link with the biblical story of Lot’s wife turning into a pillar of salt. That the epigram obviously refers to the story of Niobe, was apparently of little concern to Constantine. In his view, it was a crying shame that Cephalas, who was to become *πρωτοπαπᾶς* (would you believe it), did not draw the parallel with Lot’s wife where he easily could have done so. Constantine the Rhodian did not object to classical literature, of course, for otherwise he would not have invested time and money in the compilation of what was to become the *Palatine Anthology*; but he certainly did not cherish an unreserved admiration for the classics. At *AP* VII, 26, a laudatory epigram on Anacreon, he wrote the following nauseated comment: “with filthy praises you crown a filthy man” – which clearly indicates that Constantine the Rhodian disapproved of Anacreon’s poems on wine and women. But strangely enough, the same Constantine the Rhodian filled a whole quaternion of his own manuscript with various *Anacreontea*. What are we to make of this? It does seem quite schizophrenic to rebuke Anacreon first for his utter immorality and then publish the poems that go under his name. But if we could ask Constantine the Rhodian for his views

¹²⁹ See H. BELTING, in: *Byzanz und der Westen. Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*. Vienna 1984, 65–83.

¹³⁰ See H. HUNGER’s interesting comments on the Byzantine anthologists and the classical heritage, in: 17th International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Major Papers. Washington 1986, 518–519.

¹³¹ The epigram is also mentioned in other sources. Eustathios at *Il.* 24. 614 and a scholion at Soph. *El.* 150 state that it refers to Niobe; Manuel Holobolos (ed. TREU 1893: 7) connects it with the story of the wife of Lot.

on the subject, I think that he would tell us that we really should learn to distinguish between form and content. Anacreon's poems are distasteful, no doubt about that, but he writes excellent verses and we moderns can learn a great deal from him. His style is really superb. Don't you recall that I, Constantine the Rhodian, used one of his impressive similes in my satire on wretched Theodore the Paphlagonian?¹³² Well, the same goes for all those ancient epigrams I copied myself or had copied by those scribes working for me. In many epigrams there is hardly anything I approve of, but let the truth be said: the ancients really knew how to write a poem.

In *AP* XV, 17, probably the best epigram he ever wrote, Constantine the Rhodian states his views on art in unmistakable terms. It is an epigram on a picture of the Holy Virgin, in which Constantine considers the problem of representativeness. As he observes, the Holy Virgin rightfully deserves to be portrayed with stars and luminaries, but since that is clearly beyond our capacity, the artist has to content himself "with the material that nature and the laws of painting afford". Since literature and art are two forms of imagination that interact and respond to each other, especially in Byzantium where artists paint in words and write in paint, and since the epigram is as much an artefact as the picture it discusses, we may interpret Constantine's words as his personal *ars poetica*. Poetry results from the lucky combination of sense and sensibility. That is to say, by observing the phenomena of nature and studying the rules of the art, a sensitive poet will learn how to write a good poem. But if he is intelligent enough, the accomplished poet will recognize the limitations of his art and will understand that there are things that cannot be fully expressed because they "do not yield to the voice of mortals". He will know that subjects that transcend the human mind (such as the subject of the Holy Virgin) demand to be treated with the help of substitutes: symbols, circumlocutions and metaphors that indirectly reflect the reality of the supernatural, such as, for instance, the colourful expression φωτὸς πύλη used by Constantine to address the Holy Virgin. The book of nature provides the poet with all the images he needs and the books of the ancients instruct him how to use these images adroitly. However, if the poet were to use the symbols of imagination purely for art's sake without referring to the divine secrets they reveal (as did Kometas in the eyes of Constantine), he would accomplish nothing. Reading the various poems of Constantine the Rhodian, there can be little doubt that he was well-read and knew both ancient and Byzantine poetry by heart. However, he never "classicizes". He does not plagiarize ancient texts word for word, but merely selects expressions and images that fit into the context of the poem and are suited to convey the poetical message. Without Constantine's

¹³² Ed. MATRANGA 1850: 628, v. 39. Cf. *Anacreon* 6, v. 7.

Palatine Anthology we would know hardly anything about the hundred years of classicism, but Constantine the Rhodian himself had nothing to do with this cultural movement. In fact, he definitely was an exponent of Byzantine “modernism” – the feeling of being Byzantine and the tendency to articulate this feeling in ways that run counter to the stifling rules of classicism.

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The Anthologia Barberina

The history of the Greek Anthology from Leo the Philosopher to Constantine the Rhodian, as sketched in the above, would certainly present a distorted image of the cultural life in Constantinople in the years between 850 and 950, if people were to think that the key concept of classicism suffices to explain all the cultural phenomena of this period. For, as I stated previously, divergent styles and ideological preferences co-exist in Byzantium without any presumption to be mutually exclusive. In the following I shall discuss an early tenth-century anthology that is definitely not classicistic.

Barb. gr. 310 is a small-size parchment manuscript of great beauty written in the second half of the tenth century¹³³. The manuscript is extremely precious, not only because of its elegant layout and handwriting, but also because of its contents. The manuscript used to contain a highly interesting collection of anacreontics and alphabets, which regrettably has not been preserved entirely because of the loss of some twenty-five quires. Fortunately, however, the index of the manuscript is still there to inform us what the manuscript contained before it was badly damaged. Some fifteen years ago the late Gallavotti produced an admirable edition of the index, together with a lucid and very learned commentary¹³⁴. I follow his numbering and I use the name that he invented to christen the collection of anacreontics and alphabets: *Anthologia Barberina* (*AB*).

The *Anthologia Barberina* is divided into two parts: nos. 1–80 and 81–160; the former contains anacreontics and the latter alphabets in accentual metres¹³⁵. The layout of the two parts of the manuscript differs strongly. The alphabets are not written line by line, but continuously, without any regard for the metrical structure; the musical mode to which they are set is indicated in the manuscript and the names of the authors are written in the margin. The

¹³³ See M.L. AGATI, *Byz* 54 (1984) 615–625 and 55 (1985) 584–588.

¹³⁴ GALLAVOTTI 1987.

¹³⁵ See GALLAVOTTI 1987: 60–70. See also CRIMI 2001: 28–51.

anacreontics, on the contrary, are written line by line, the musical mode is not recorded (with the exception of *AB* 24) and the names of the authors are mentioned in the titles attached to the poems. Whereas the index duly records the names of the authors of the anacreontics, it does not mention the authors of the alphabets by name, but rather niggardly introduces the second part as follows: ἀλφαβητάρια ἔτερα διαφόρων ποιητῶν, without telling us who these “various poets” are. That is a great pity, for almost all the poems of the second part have been lost, with the exception of *AB* 134–135 (by Christopher Protasekretis), *AB* 136–137 (by Photios) and *AB* 138 (anonymous)¹³⁶.

The first part of the *Anthologia Barberina* can be divided into five heterogeneous sections:

(a) the Palestinian school	<i>AB</i> 1–22	Sophronios Patriarch of Jerusalem
	<i>AB</i> 23	Sophronios Iatrosophistes
	<i>AB</i> 24–25	Elias Synkellos of Jerusalem
	<i>AB</i> 26	Michael Synkellos of Jerusalem
(b) Constantinopolitan poets	<i>AB</i> 27	Ignatios the Deacon
	<i>AB</i> 28–32	Arethas of Caesarea
	<i>AB</i> 33–38	Leo Choirosphaktes
	<i>AB</i> 39	Ps. Leo Choirosphaktes
(c) sixth-century grammarians	<i>AB</i> 40–46	John of Gaza
	<i>AB</i> 47–57	George the Grammarian
(d) ninth-century grammarians	<i>AB</i> 58–59	Leo the Philosopher
	<i>AB</i> 60	Sergios the Grammarian
	<i>AB</i> 61	Leontios the Grammarian
	<i>AB</i> 62–63	Constantine the Grammarian
	<i>AB</i> 64	Theophanes the Grammarian
(e) Anacreon	<i>AB</i> 65–80	

In its present state the manuscript preserves only the following anacreontics: *AB* 1–13; the beginning of 14; the end of 16; 17–27; the end of 35; 36–45; the end of 49; 50–57. The following anacreontics can be found in other manuscripts: *AB* 14, 27, 52, 62–63 and 65–80.

The second part of the *Anthologia Barberina* contains various hymns: penitential (nos. 93–123 and 146–154), on biblical and religious subjects (nos. 81–87, 89–92 and 126–132), and ceremonial (nos. 88, 124–125, 133–145 and 155)¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ Christopher Protasekretis: ed. CICCOLELLA 2000b: 72–77; Photios and the anonymous poem *AB* 138: ed. CICCOLELLA 1998: 308–315.

¹³⁷ *AB* 156–157 mention only the heirmos, not the subject. *AB* 158–160 are entitled νεκρώσιμον.

The ceremonial hymns are poems that were performed at the imperial court in order to celebrate a certain historical event. The five ceremonial hymns that are still extant in the manuscript (nos. 134–138), celebrate emperor Basil I: poems *AB* 134–135 deal with Basil's conversion of the Jews in c. 874, poems *AB* 136–137 refer to the council of 879–880 and Basil's attempts to put an end to the discord between the Photians and the Ignatians, and poem *AB* 138 is an anthem performed at Basil's coronation in 867. Some of the ceremonial hymns that are missing in the manuscript can be dated precisely: (139) a monody on the death of Basil's son Constantine in 879, (140–141) monodies on the fall of Syracuse in 878, (142) a monody on the fall of Thessalonica in 904, (143–145) monodies on the death of Leo VI in 912, and (155) a poem on Andronikos Doukas' revolt in 906–908.

As we can see, all the datable poems in the second part of the *Anthologia Barberina* were composed in the short period between 867 and 912. The only exception to this rule is *AB* 88, "on Constantine the Emperor". Likewise, none of the anacreontics found in the first part of the *Anthologia Barberina* were written after 912 (the death of Leo VI), again with one exception: *AB* 39.

AB 39 is an *epithalamium* on the marriage of Constantine VII and Helen in 919. In the manuscript the poem is attributed to Leo Choirosphaktes, but it is beyond any doubt that the ascription is incorrect. The poet of *AB* 39 plagiarizes Choirosphaktes' *epithalamium* on the second marriage of Leo VI (*AB* 36) almost line by line; on the rare occasions that he attempts to produce a verse of his own, he commits prosodic blunders such as Choirosphaktes, a competent author, would never have allowed¹³⁸. It is fairly easy to understand the error. As *AB* 39 follows immediately after other poems by Choirosphaktes (*AB* 33–38) and as it is just a cento of verses taken from an authentic *epithalamium* by Choirosphaktes, the scribe of Barb. gr. 310 quite understandably assumed that the poem should be attributed to the same Leo Choirosphaktes and therefore added the fateful words τοῦ αὐτοῦ.

Since *AB* 39 is the latest datable poem of the collection of anacreontics and alphabets in Barb. gr. 310, it is reasonable to assume that the *Anthologia Barberina* was compiled in 919 or shortly afterwards. If the anthology had been compiled in the second half of the tenth century (the date of the manuscript), one would expect to find numerous anacreontics and alphabets written in honour of Constantine VII, Romanos II, and other members of the Macedonian dynasty, but this is not the case. As for the identity of the anthologist, I would suggest that he is the same person who wrote *AB* 39, which is the only anonymous poem in the first part of the anthology – anonymous precisely because the author and anthologist did not want to sign his own literary

¹³⁸ See NISSEN 1940: 60–62, GIARDINA 1994: 9–22, and LAUXTERMANN 2003b.

composition out of pure modesty. The anthologist must have been a court dignitary of some importance, for he had access to the imperial archives, where the numerous hymns composed for performance at the imperial court were kept. For his anthology he selected only court poetry connected one way or another with the Macedonian dynasty. There are no ceremonial hymns in honour of Michael III or Theophilos, although they surely must have existed. The anacreontic part of his anthology is characterized by the same ideological bias. There is one poem on caesar Bardas (no. 58) and no less than seven poems on Basil I, Leo VI and Constantine VII (nos. 30–32 and 36–39). The pro-Macedonian orientation of the *Anthologia Barberina*¹³⁹ strongly suggests that the anthologist wished to flatter the reigning emperor by including anacreontics and hymns celebrating his illustrious forebears. It is therefore very likely that the anthology was compiled in honour of, or perhaps even on behalf of, emperor Constantine VII. The anthologist may have presented the manuscript of the *Anthologia Barberina*, together with the poem he had written himself, to Constantine VII on the occasion of the emperor's marriage to Helen Lekapene.

The index of the *Anthologia Barberina* reads as a literary history in short. It rightly begins with Sophronios, the first practitioner of the Byzantine anacreontic. Then we have three Palestinian poets who followed in his footsteps: Sophronios Iatrosophistes¹⁴⁰, Elias Synkellos¹⁴¹ and Michael Synkellos¹⁴². In the early ninth century the anacreontic left its native soil and was brought to Constantinople by Palestinian émigrés, such as Michael Synkellos. Ignatios the Deacon was the first Constantinopolitan to write anacreontics, just as he was the first poet to write classicizing elegiacs after c. 800. The compiler of the *Anthologia Barberina* then turns to the poets of his time: AB 28–39 are anacreontic compositions by Arethas, Leo Choirosphaktes and the anthologist himself. The next two sections in the *Anthologia Barberina* (40–57 and 58–64) are devoted to grammarians of the early sixth and the ninth centuries, respectively. It is worth noticing that all these poets are called γραμματικός, except for the arch-grammarian Leo the Philosopher. Thus the compiler of the *Anthologia Barberina*, whether correctly or not, connects these poets and their poems to the Byzantine school system. These products of the Byzantine classroom are followed by sixteen ancient *Anacreontea*, perhaps because they were read at school. These sixteen poems derive from a much larger collection of *Anacre-*

¹³⁹ See CRIMI 2001: 46–53.

¹⁴⁰ The author should not be confused with his more famous namesake: see TH. NISSEN, *BZ* 39 (1939) 349–350. Perhaps he is the Sophronios who used to teach in Edessa around the year 800: see A. MOFFATT, in: *Iconoclasm*, ed. A. BRYER and J. HERRIN. Birmingham 1977, 89, n. 32.

¹⁴¹ Elias Synkellos probably lived in the eighth century: see LAUXTERMANN 2003b.

¹⁴² On the life of Michael Synkellos (761–846), see CRIMI 1990: 5–11.

ontea, probably dating from the sixth century, a copy of which is found in the Palatine manuscript¹⁴³.

Without the *Anthologia Barberina* we would know practically nothing about the history of the Byzantine anacreontic. Though he never inspected the manuscript, Nissen's famous monograph on the Byzantine anacreontic is essentially a study of the *Anthologia Barberina*. It is an excellent account of the historical development of the anacreontic, but it could have been much better, had he studied the manuscript and its index instead of relying on unreliable editions (such as, notably, the *Anecdota Graeca* by Matrangola)¹⁴⁴.

The *Anthologia Barberina* has little in common with the Greek Anthology. Whereas Cephalas collected ancient epigrams, *AB* is basically an anthology of Byzantine poems. Cephalas stops at c. 600 (with some exceptions); *AB* literally begins at c. 600 with the anacreontics of Sophronios. Cephalas includes the epigrams of Agathias and his circle because they clearly imitate Hellenistic models; but *AB* contains the poems of John of Gaza and George the Grammarian because they form the prelude to the Byzantine anacreontic. And while the Palatine manuscript contains the collection of *Anacreontea* in full, *AB* has only a mere selection.

However, the most revolutionary aspect to the *Anthologia Barberina* is most certainly the inclusion of a large corpus of poems in accentual metres (the paired heptasyllable, the paired octosyllable, and probably also the political verse)¹⁴⁵. These alphabets were added to the collection of anacreontics because both categories, alphabets and anacreontics, were intended for musical performance¹⁴⁶. The *Anthologia Barberina* is in fact a collection of lyrics. It is a songbook without musical notation. The only parallel to this songbook in tenth-century Byzantium is the famous *Book of Ceremonies*, where we also find numerous librettos with hardly any indication of how these acclamations may have sounded¹⁴⁷. However, whereas the *Book of Ceremonies* contains texts for

¹⁴³ See M.L. WEST, *Carmina Anacreontea*. Leipzig 1984, X–XI.

¹⁴⁴ All the poems in Barb. gr. 310 have now been edited properly: GIGANTE 1957, CRIMI 1990, and CICCOLELLA 1998, 2000a and 2000b. But we still need a comprehensive edition of the *Anthologia Barberina*, including the index, all the poems still extant in the manuscript as well as the poems that are no longer there, but which can be found in other manuscripts.

¹⁴⁵ See LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 48–51.

¹⁴⁶ For the musical performance of the alphabets, see the lemmata attached to *AB* 134–138. Zonaras, *Life of Sophronios* (see NISSEN 1940: 5, n. 2), informs us that Sophronios' anacreontics were meant to be sung; cf. the title of Elias' anacreontic, *AB* 24; see P. SPECK, *Das geteilte Dossier*. Bonn 1988, 364–365.

¹⁴⁷ For a metrical analysis of some of the acclamations, see LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 61–65. For the musical performance of the acclamations, see J. HANDSCHIN, *Das Zeremonienwerk Kaiser Konstantins und die sangbare Dichtung*. Basel 1942 and E. WELLESZ, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*. Oxford 1961, 98–122.

recurrent festive occasions, most poems in the *Anthologia Barberina* were composed for a one-off event. Is the purpose of *AB* “antiquarian”? In various scholarly publications Constantine VII is praised for, or accused of, his alleged “antiquarianism” – which is rather an unlucky catch phrase to denote the various cultural phenomena of his long reign. The *Anthologia Barberina* is perhaps “antiquarian” inasmuch as it contains many poems that were composed for a specific moment in the past. But it is equally “modern”, as it provides models to be imitated for future occasions, such as the *epithalamium* on Leo VI (*AB* 36), which was re-used and adapted some twenty years later for the wedding of Constantine VII and Helen Lekapene (*AB* 39). More importantly, however, an anthology containing a large amount of poems in accentual metres is really without precedent in the ninth and early tenth centuries. It is precisely for this reason that the *Anthologia Barberina* should be viewed as a novelty rather than as a supposedly “antiquarian” enterprise. Seen from the viewpoint of tenth-century Byzantium, the *Anthologia Barberina* opens up new perspectives on the recent, but somehow ever distant past.

PART TWO:
EPIGRAMS IN CONTEXT

Chapter Four

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE EPIGRAM

While it is often difficult to date anonymous epigrams with absolute certainty, it is not difficult at all to establish whether an epigram was written before or after the year 600, as Byzantine and late antique epigrams differ in many respects¹. In fact, it is so easy that no one, not even the proverbial Homer occasionally nodding off, will be mistaken. And there is no excuse, therefore, for confusing the two.

First of all, most Byzantine epigrams make use of the dodecasyllable (the Byzantine equivalent of the iambic trimeter, but without metrical resolutions, with a strong caesura and with an obligatory stress accent on the penultimate)². In late antique epigrams, on the contrary, the elegiac distich is the norm, the dactylic hexameter an option, and the iamb an exception. This rapidly changes in the early seventh century. Whereas Sophronios still clings to the traditional elegiac, Pisides clearly prefers the iamb. The dodecasyllable becomes the norm after Pisides. In the ninth century some poets attempt to reinstate the iambic trimeter by allowing an occasional metrical resolution, but without any success. In the ninth century, too, a number of classicizing poets revive the elegiac distich and the dactylic hexameter from non-existence, and with considerable success too – if one overlooks the horrific prosodic errors most of these poets allow themselves. This vogue for elegiacs and dactylics, however, does not substantially change the overall picture. For even at the peak of the classicizing movement, in the ninth and early tenth centuries, the dodecasyllable is the usual meter for the composition of an epigram. The popularity of this meter continues unabated throughout the next centuries, until 1453, if not later.

Secondly, there is a change in contents. Although the poets of the *Cycle* (compiled by Agathias) are without exception devoted Christians, their epigrams are not particularly orthodox. In their epigrams they fantasize about luscious girls, bring offerings to the ancient gods and commemorate the dead without even so much as a cursory reference to the life hereafter. There is no

¹ On late antique epigrams in general, see ROBERT 1948, KEYDELL 1962, KAMBYLIS 1994–1995 and, especially, GALLI CALDERINI 1987. On the *Cycle* of Agathias, see MATTSON 1942.

² See MAAS 1903.

reason to believe that this kind of literature has anything to do with real life, genuine sentiments or particular persuasions. It is mere fiction, an exercise in the art of literary discourse. After the year 600 the concept of *mimesis* (literary imitation) remains as crucial as it was in late antiquity, but the freedom to express ideas that seem to be pagan or at least look rather controversial, ceases to exist in the seventh century. Poets still imitate the ancients, but they no longer dare to put on paper literary concepts that may seem offensive to the church, his royal majesty or other bigoted elements among the population. Erotic and anathematic epigrams disappear altogether. The bacchic epigram (the drinking song) vanishes as well. The satirical epigram turns into the genre of the personal invective. Epitaphs are christianized and gnomic epigrams express monastic wisdom. Book epigrams do not celebrate the pagan authors, but the church fathers, the evangelists and David the Psalmist. And epigrams on works of art no longer deal with Myron's celebrated statue of a heifer (*AP* IX, 713–742), but with the venerated images of the saints and the martyrs. It all becomes very Christian. It is the victory of reality over literature. In contrast to Agathias *cum suis*, Pisides, Sophronios and other seventh-century poets express the true feelings of Christendom at large, describe devotional customs and rites as they really were, and appeal to divine authority as the ultimate source of authentication.

Thirdly, the function of the epigram itself changes radically. It is no longer a literary genre that occasionally harks back to its remote origins as verse inscription, but it becomes instead a purely inscriptional genre that only rarely aspires to become grand literature. Whereas practically none of the verses published in the *Cycle* of Agathias serve any functional purpose, nearly all epigrams by Sophronios and Pisides are meant to be inscribed or at least clearly imitate authentic verse inscriptions. Around the year 600 the epigram basically becomes what it used to be before Callimachus and Asclepiades changed the rules: a practical text. In the early seventh century the epigram is a mere shadow of its former hellenistic self, protracting its abysmal existence in the margins of literary discourse. The epitaph turns into a written memorial, the book epigram into a colophon text, the gnome into a *memento mori* carved in stone, and the descriptive epigram either into a caption to a miniature or into a text inscribed on a mosaic, icon or artifact. In short, what we see is that the epigram becomes an ἐπιγραμμά in the Byzantine sense of the word: a verse inscription or a book epigram.

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Ex Oriente Lux

Between c. 640 and 790 the literary genre of the epigram ceases to exist altogether. There are a number of verse inscriptions, mostly unprosodic and in fairly simple language; but these ἐπιγράμματα have no literary pretensions whatsoever. This is obviously related to the so-called dark age crisis: the collapse of urban civilization as well as the social upheavals and fragmentation of traditional power structures, imperial and otherwise, in the seventh and early eighth centuries. The epigram flourished as long as there were people equipped with the necessary breeding and educational background to understand it, people who enjoyed enough leisure time to spend it on reading and who shared the same elitist, basically nostalgic cultural ideals as the poets who indulged in the composition of epigrams. But when the educated elite, eddying into the maelstrom of political and social turmoil, was swept away and vanished along with the culture it represented, the epigram immediately lost its rationale. There are no epigrams because there was no longer a public for them.

This does not mean the end of civilization, though. It merely indicates that there is a shift in literary interests. The school system remains unaltered and rhetoric continues to be as important as it was in late antiquity. Atticistic Greek is replaced by literary Koine. The style becomes less elitist, the narratives more popular³. Hagiography and folkloristic tales are in great demand. The genre of homiletics flourishes as never before. Hymnography reaches new heights with the canon. And in the field of theology we have marvelous authors, such as Maximos the Confessor, Anastasios Sinaites and John of Damascus⁴.

It is worth noticing, however, that most literature was produced by authors who either lived in the Middle East or had migrated from there to other places⁵. In late antiquity the production of literature was closely connected with urban centres throughout the Roman empire. In the seventh and eighth centuries, on the contrary, it is concentrated in the milieu of eastern monasticism, in places such as Edessa, Damascus and Jerusalem, and in monasteries such as Mar Sabas and St. Catherine's. It is an indisputable fact that when we speak of Byzantine culture during the dark ages, we are actually referring to the kind of culture that continued to exist under Arab rule in the former eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire.

³ See P. SPECK, in: *Varia VII* (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 18). Bonn 2000, 75–112.

⁴ On the kinds of literature produced in the “Dark Century” (c. 650–775), see KAZHDAN 1999: 137–165.

⁵ See C. MANGO, in: *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali*, ed. G. CAVALLI. Spoleto 1991, 149–160; M.-F. AUZÉPY, *TM* 12 (1994) 183–218; and G. CAVALLI, *BZ* 88 (1995) 13–22.

It is in the East, too, that we find the first signs of a renewed interest in forms of high-brow literature. In chapter eight (pp. 263–265) I shall discuss a corpus of monastic gnomes composed in Syria or Palestine in the seventh century. These epigrams, like all Byzantine ἐπιγράμματα, obviously serve a practical purpose as admonitions to young neophytes, telling them how they should behave themselves in order to become good monks. From a purely aesthetic point of view, however, these gnomes are much better than what we usually find in poems dating from the seventh and eighth centuries. The style is elevated, the prosody correct and the language quite elegant; the dodecasyllables run smoothly, enjambment is avoided, and the ethical concepts are neatly compressed in well-balanced periods and metrical units. This seventh-century corpus of monastic epigrams was one of the major sources of inspiration for Kassia, who regularly imitates these verses in her own collection of gnomes.

There are more indications that the cultural revival of the ninth century, incorrectly called “the Macedonian Renaissance”, is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Syro-Palestinian culture of the dark ages. I will give a few examples of eighth-century attempts to revive or to re-invent cultural traditions in the field of Byzantine poetry and metrics. To begin with, according to Eustathios of Thessalonica, John of Damascus wrote an “Euripidean” drama on the biblical subject of Susanna and the Elders⁶. Eustathios quotes the following two verses in which chaste Susanna bewails her misfortune (she was first sexually harassed and then slandered by the lascivious Elders): ὁ ἀρχέκακος δράκων / πάλιν πλανᾶν ἔσπευδε τὴν Εὐάν ἐμέ, “the serpent, the origin of evil, once again hastened to deceive me like Eve”. The word ἀρχέκακος (with the rare prefix ἀρχε- instead of ἀρχι-) is an Homeric quote: *Il.* 5. 63, where it refers to the commencement of the problems for the Trojans, but here it is used in a Christian sense, indicating that the devil is the root of all evil. The inveterate metrician will be delighted with the oxytone stress accent in the second verse and the anapestic resolution at the end of the first verse (-χεκακος- forms the fifth foot), but will surely be offended by the inexcusable hiatus between ὁ and ἀρ, which suggests that Eustathios of Thessalonica either quoted from memory or deliberately changed the text. What is of particular interest here, is that John of Damascus composed a play, entitled “The Drama of Susanna” (τὸ δράμα τῆς Σωσάννης), in

⁶ Eustathios refers to this play in his commentary on the *Pentecostal Hymn* by John Arklas (*PG* 136, 508b) as well as in his commentary on Dionysius Periegeta (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. MÜLLER, Paris 1861, vol. II, 387, lines 17–19). In the first source we find the two verses quoted (see the main text), the reference to the “Euripidean” character of the play, and the attribution to John Mansour (=John of Damascus); in the second source Eustathios tells us that the form Τίγριδος (instead of Τίγριος) is used by ὁ γράψας τὸ δράμα τῆς Σωσάννης, οἶμαι ὁ Δαμασκηνός, ὡς ἐκ τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς φαίνεται.

a period that is thought to be poetically barren. Some fifty years later, around the year 790, Stephen the Sabaite wrote a biblical play in verse, entitled “The Death of Christ” (ὁ θάνατος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), of which we know nothing apart from the title⁷. Since theatrical performances ceased to exist in late antiquity, it is out of the question that these two texts, *Susanna* and *The Death of Christ*, were genuine theatre plays. These two “plays” will have been poetic dialogues. In the early ninth century we have a poem by Ignatios the Deacon, *Adam and Eve*⁸, which treats a biblical theme in dialogue form and is replete with literary references to Euripides and Sophocles⁹. It is reasonable to assume that Ignatios the Deacon composed this “play” in direct response to eighth-century Palestinian experiments in the field of dramatic poetry, such as the poems by John of Damascus and Stephen the Sabaite.

Then we have the problem of the iambic hymns ascribed to John of Damascus. In two sources, Eustathios of Thessalonica and John Merkouropoulos (both dating from the late twelfth century), the *Pentecostal Hymn* is attributed to a certain John Arklas¹⁰. Seeing that so many texts, in prose or verse, are incorrectly ascribed to the famous John of Damascus, and taking into account the fact that no one would come up with the name of the obscure John Arklas unless there was some truth to it, it is reasonable to assume that Eustathios and Merkouropoulos had access to more reliable information than we have. Thus I see no reason to doubt that the *Pentecostal Hymn* (and in all likelihood also the two other iambic canons attributed to John of Damascus, which are quite similar to the *Pentecostal Hymn*) is in fact the work of John Arklas. But when did the poet live? Merkouropoulos informs us that John Arklas lived in the monastery of Mar Sabas, which clearly suggests an eighth-century date. Ronchey, on the contrary, avers that Arklas dates from the second phase of iconoclasm (815–843), because, according to her, Eustathios suggests by implication that his nickname (ἀρχαλᾶς = cabinetmaker) is some sort of anti-iconoclastic slur¹¹. As I fail to discover even the vaguest innuendo of this kind in Eustathios’ treatise, I see no good reason to doubt that Arklas lived in eighth-century Palestine. The iambic hymns incorrectly attributed to John of Damascus, but in fact the work of one John Arklas, were imitated by many celebrated authors, such as Methodios, Photios and Anastasios Quaestor, in the ninth and

⁷ See KRUMBACHER 1897b: 645.

⁸ Ed. MÜLLER 1886: 28–3.

⁹ See BROWNING 1968 and BALDWIN 1985: 134–141.

¹⁰ See KAZHDAN 1999: 87–88.

¹¹ See S. RONCHEY, *DOP* 45 (1991) 149–158; eadem, in: *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, eds. C. SODE & S. TAKÁCS. Aldershot 2001, 327–336. Cf. KAZHDAN 1999: 88.

early tenth centuries¹². Here then we have another form of classicizing poetry composed in eighth-century Palestine, which was subsequently imitated during the so-called Macedonian Renaissance.

The iambic hymns are of great importance for a number of reasons. First of all, it is a metrical tour de force to combine the complicated rhythmical patterns of hymnography with the prosodic demands of classicizing poetry. Arklas fully succeeds in this difficult task. With the exception of Pisides perhaps, there are hardly any dodecasyllables as prosodically correct as the verses of John Arklas. The prosodic perfection he achieved is the main reason why his iambic hymns were imitated by the following generations and became the subject of many learned commentaries in the Comnenian age. Secondly, as if this metrical tour de force was not enough, Arklas forced his verses into the straitjacket of acrostic. His iambic canon *On the Birth of Christ*, for instance, bears the following metrical acrostic:

Εὐεπίης μελέεσσιν ἐφύμνια ταῦτα λιγαίνει
 υἱά θεοῦ, μερόπων εἵνεκα τικτόμενον
 ἐν χθονὶ καὶ λύοντα πολύστονα πῆματα κόσμου·
 ἀλλ', ἄνα, ῥητήρας ῥύεο τῶνδε πόνων.

“In euphonic chant these hymnic verses sing of the Son of God, who was born on earth on behalf of men and who dissolved the mournful misery of the world. O Lord, save thy singers from these sorrows”¹³. This text falls into the category of the Byzantine book epigram (see chapter 6, p. 197). It is the first experiment after the early seventh century to revive the elegiac distich from the abyss of oblivion – a metrical experiment that apparently met with much approval, for it was enthusiastically embraced by many poets in ninth-century Constantinople, such as Ignatios the Deacon. And thirdly, the iambic hymns of Arklas are replete with strange compounds, the most notorious one being ἀκτιστοσυμπλαστουργοσύνθρονον σέθεν, “thine uncreated co-creator sharing the throne”¹⁴. In his commentary on the *Pentecostal Hymn* (PG 136, 716), Eustathios of Thessalonica rightly notes that this monstrous neologism disrupts the rhythmical verse structure and calls this kind of compound disparagingly τὰ πινακηδὸν ἀποτεινόμενα ἔπη, “words stretched out like ship-timbers”¹⁵. He also

¹² Methodios; ed. PITRA 1864–1868: vol II, 363–364; Photios; ed. A. LAURIOTIS, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια* 15 (1896) 220; and Anastasios Quaestor; ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1900: 45–51 and 53–59.

¹³ Ed. CHRIST & PARANIKAS 1871: 205–207.

¹⁴ For this and other compound words, see KOMINIS 1966: 80–81.

¹⁵ Eustathios obviously refers to Aristophanes, *Ranae* 823–825: (Aeschylus) βρυχώμενος ἦσαι / ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ, πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν / γηγενεῖ φυσηματι. The ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ are the sesquipedalian compound words of Aeschylus. In his commentaries on Homer, *Il.* Z 168 and *Od.* A 141, Eustathios refers to the same Aristophanic passage.

quotes another equally horrific example: ψευδοσεμνοκομπομυθοπλαστία. In a book epigram dedicated to Leo VI we find an almost identical twin: τὰς σεμνοκομποψευδομυθοπλαστίας¹⁶. In poetry dating from the ninth and tenth centuries, complex compound words are extremely popular: for anacreontics, see Leo Choirosphaktes, *De Thermis*, vv. 186–187: ἀναρχοφωτόμυστον / ἀρρητοληπτόπνευστον, and *On the Bath of Leo VI*, v. 14: ἀκροβλαστοχρυσομόρφους; for dodecasyllables, see the book epigram dedicated to Sisinnios of Laodikeia (c. 870–880), v. 6: θησαυροπλουτόχρηστον ἐσθλοφώνιαν, the tenth-century encomium on a Calabrian youth, v. 25: τοὺς πενταευροχορδολεπτοσυνθέτους, and Constantine the Rhodian, who in his two satirical poems presents no less than thirty-seven examples: for instance, καὶ ψευδομυθοσαθροπλασματοπλόκε¹⁷. Since most of the examples quoted are not used in a satirical context (with the exception of Constantine the Rhodian, of course), it is reasonable to conjecture that the sudden vogue for such colourful words goes back to the poetry of Arklas rather than directly to the arch-father of bizarre neologisms, Aristophanes.

Apart from the iambic canon and the dialogue in verse form, there is a third kind of poetry which we know migrated from eighth-century Palestine to ninth-century Constantinople: the classicizing anacreontic, composed κατὰ Σωφρόνιον, “à la Sophronios”¹⁸. Elias Synkellos of Jerusalem (s. VIII)¹⁹ makes no secret of the fact that his own anacreontic poetry owes a great deal to Sophronios. At the end of his *Lamentation on Himself*, he urges the pious congregation listening to his song to join in and lament along with him:

μερόπων εὐσεβέες, συμπαθεῖς ἄλγος
ἐπ’ ἐμοὶ Σωφρονίου δέιξατε θρήνοις,

“Pious men, show your compassion by pitying me with Sophronian laments”²⁰. What we see in the poetry of Elias Synkellos as well as that of one of his successors, Michael Synkellos of Jerusalem (761–846), is a deliberate attempt to revive the anacreontic and to follow in the footsteps of Sophronios. Michael Synkellos was sent on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople in 813,

¹⁶ Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994b: 33 (v. 4). P. LAMBECK, *Commentariorum de Augustissima Bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonensi liber IV*. Editio altera studio et opera A.F. KOLLAR. Vienna 1776, 399–402, prints: [...]μυθοπλαστίας.

¹⁷ Leo Choirosphaktes, *De Thermis*: ed. GALLAVOTTI 1990: 89; *On the Bath of Leo VI*: ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 94. Sisinnios: see below, Appendix IX, no. 17. Calabrian encomium: ed. MERCATI 1931: 364. Constantine the Rhodian: ed. MATRANGA 1850: 624–625 (vv. 5–28) and 626 (vv. 13–25).

¹⁸ See GALLAVOTTI 1987: 57–59, CRIMI 1990: 9–11, and CICCOLELLA 2000a: XXVI–XXVIII.

¹⁹ For the date of Elias Synkellos, see LAUXTERMANN 2003b.

²⁰ Ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 31 (vv. 91–92).

but never returned to his native soil. People such as Michael Synkellos, the Graptoi and other Palestinian émigrés, probably brought to the capital the cultural baggage of the East, the eternal *lux ex oriente*. In connection with the iambic canon and the dialogue in verse form, I have already mentioned Ignatios the Deacon as the first Constantinopolitan to imitate Palestinian authors of the eighth century. It is hardly surprising, then, that the same Ignatios the Deacon was also the first Constantinopolitan author to write a poem in anacreontics, not so much κατὰ Σωφρόνιον, but rather in the manner of Elias Synkellos, whom he repeatedly plagiarizes²¹.

The metrical treatise by Elias Monachos, another Palestinian author living around the year 800, is also worth noticing²². Not only is it the first metrical treatise written after the sixth century, but it is also remarkable for its attempt to teach ancient metrics by using examples taken from Byzantine authors. The difficult rules of the iamb are taught by citing verses of Pisides as examples and the proper use of the anacreontic is illustrated with Sophronian quotes only. It is beyond doubt that Elias Monachos influenced the school curriculum and thus the literary canon of the Byzantines: by using the poetry of Pisides and Sophronios as didactic material, he enhanced their literary status enormously. What this means in practice, is that no author after c. 800 can afford to neglect these two authors because they have become almost classic. If you write a poem in dodecasyllable, Pisides is the source to turn to; if you compose an anacreontic, it is a good idea to first check your Sophronios.

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The Rediscovery of the Epigram

In the same period that we witness all sorts of burgeoning experiments in the field of poetry and metrics in Palestine, Constantinople is deeply asleep. It is almost as if it hibernates, in order to recover from the shock of seeing its glorious empire reduced to a few territories and the barbarians standing before the gates of the holy city. When the Byzantine empire finally awakes from its protracted winter sleep, it finds itself in a culturally inferior position in comparison to the Carolingians in the West and, especially, the Abbasids in the

²¹ Ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 40–55. For Ignatios' debt to Elias Synkellos, see *ibidem*, XLIII.

²² Ed. G. STUEMUND, *Anecdota Varia Graeca et Latina*, vol I. Berlin 1886, 170–184. See L. VOLTZ, *Dissertationes Philologicae Argentoratenses* 11 (1894) 7–14; C. MANGO, in: *Scrittura, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali*, ed. G. CAVALLO. Spoleto 1991, 156–158; and LAUXTERMANN 1998b.

East. The Carolingians are reclaiming the legacy of the Roman Empire and the Abbasids even dare pretend that the cultural heritage of the ancient Greeks is now rightfully theirs. As Paul Speck amply demonstrated in various publications²³, the Byzantines react to these challenges by denying the impact of the dark age crisis, by consciously attempting to revive the literary legacy of late antiquity, and by blaming the iconoclasts for Byzantium's cultural inferiority. In the mythical self-image of ninth-century Byzantium the key word is continuity. Nothing has fundamentally changed in the course of time; true enough, culture has fallen to a remarkable low, but that is just a temporary setback due to the barbaric iconoclasts. It is in the context of this nostalgic irredentism that the epigram, along with many other kinds of highbrow literature, will be rediscovered in the course of the ninth century.

In his *Refutation* of the iconoclast epigrams on the Chalke as well as in a letter to one Litoios²⁴, Theodore of Stoudios proudly states that his own verses are superior to those of the iconoclasts, because he puts the mesostich (the acrostic in the middle of the verse) exactly at the beginning of the seventh syllable, and not somewhere in the middle as the iconoclast poets inadvertently do. The iconoclasts are not only bad theologians, but they are also bad poets. In the *Life of Michael Synkellos*²⁵ we read that the iconoclast emperor Theophilos, when he had to deal with the obstinate iconophile monks Theodore and Theophanes (the Graptoi), supposedly ordered that scurrilous iambs should be branded on their foreheads – quite an achievement if one reckons that the poem in question consists of no less than twelve verses! Theophilos allegedly told the poet, a certain Christodoulos, that he should not worry whether his verses were correct or not²⁶, at which point someone else, guessing what the emperor meant to say, exclaimed: “My lord, these persons do not deserve that the iambs should be any better”. The hagiographer also states, almost in parenthesis, that the emperor feared that the Graptoi might ridicule the verses, as they were widely celebrated for their metrical expertise and poetical skills. The story about Theophilos and the Graptoi is a legendary tale, of course, but it is particularly interesting because it clearly shows both the concerns of ninth-century Byzantium and the mechanisms of the iconophile propaganda

²³ See SPECK 1998: 73–84. On p. 75, n. 9, Speck refers to his earlier publications on the topic.

²⁴ PG 99, 437; FATOUROS 1992: no. 356 (II, p. 490).

²⁵ Ed. M.B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*. Belfast 1991, 84–86 and 160–161. The story is of course an iconophile myth, see SODE 2001: 86–89 and 127–131. Equally legendary is the story about an exchange of flattering epistles in verse form between the Graptoi and Methodios (ed. I. SAKKELION, *DIEE* 2 (1885–1889) 586 and S. VAILLÉ, *ROC* 6 (1901) 624); see SODE 2001: 272–273.

²⁶ As noted by BALDWIN 1985: 142 and 144, there is indeed a serious metrical error in the third line.

machine. Poetry has to be prosodically correct. Metrical errors are inexcusable because of the potential danger that they may undermine and blow to pieces the myth of an uninterrupted cultural tradition linking Byzantium to late antiquity. For the idea of continuity presupposes, of course, that Byzantine poets follow in the footsteps of their late antique colleagues and compose their verses exactly as they did – that is, without any prosodic flaws. However, as it unfortunately cannot be denied that Byzantine poetry often presents metrical blunders, there must be a culprit responsible for allowing such gross errors. As always, the iconoclasts serve as scapegoats. They are the ones who allow poetic licences that are absolutely unheard of, they are the ones who commit metrical errors on an unprecedented scale. It goes without saying that the iconophiles, true heirs to the cultural heritage of the ancients, never err and never commit the metrical atrocities the hideous iconoclasts are guilty of. The myth of political correctness in matters of theology and metrics, which we find in iconophile sources of the later ninth century, is already in the making at the time of Theodore of Stoudios. Theodore already suggests that his own impeccable epigrams are much better than those of the iconoclasts, not only because they tell the plain truth, but also because they are ingeniously constructed, whereas the iconoclasts are not even capable of producing a decent acrostic according to the rules of the art. Theodore of Stoudios is the first Byzantine poet after the seventh century to stress the importance of artistic form and to judge the quality of poetry, not only on the basis of content, but also from an aesthetic viewpoint.

However, despite Theodore of Stoudios' interesting comments on the formal aspects of the acrostic, it is incorrect to attribute to him the rediscovery of the epigram. Theodore wrote many verses that belong to the genre of the Byzantine *ἐπιγράμμα*, but he certainly did not endeavour to rediscover the rules of the literary epigram nor to link up with the cultural traditions of late antiquity. His verses have nothing in common with the epigrams of Agathias or Paul the Silentiary, but basically hark back to the literary experiments of the seventh and eighth centuries: to Pisides, Sophronios and others. Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams are *ἐπιγράμματα* in the Byzantine sense of the word – verses that serve a practical purpose, such as epigrams on works of art, epitaphs, book epigrams and gnomes. It is worth noting that his epigrams were published only after 886 (see chapter 2, p. 70), whereas most of Theodore's literary works appeared on the market much earlier. The reason for this remarkable editorial delay is simply that until the late ninth century no one considered Theodore of Stoudios' verses, however brilliantly written, to be worth copying. As his epigrams served a purely practical purpose, they did not have any literary status or intrinsic value other than the fact that they had been composed by the great Theodore of Stoudios. His epigrams languished in editorial limbo for so long because they were not considered to be literature.

This changed when the epigram as a literary genre became fashionable once again as a result of the revived interest in the Greek Anthology. It can hardly be a coincidence that Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams were published in exactly the same period Constantine Cephalas was strenuously involved in compiling the anthology of ancient and late antique epigrams that bears his name. The Stoudite movement reacted to the fashionable revival of the epigram by claiming that their own Theodore, too, had excelled in this kind of literature, as proof of which they produced a somewhat belated edition of his epigrams. What we see is that the literary status of Theodore of Stoudios' verses was upgraded in the course of the ninth century. Initially they were just ἐπιγράμματα. Only in the late ninth century did they become literary epigrams.

But this was possible only after the epigram had been rediscovered. Theodore of Stoudios did not re-invent the genre, despite claims to the contrary by Stoudite monks stepping into the breach in his defence. The Byzantines themselves at least were not fooled by these ludicrous attempts to present Theodore of Stoudios in a more favourable light, as a lone ranger standing at the forefront of the literary movement that was to rediscover the epigram as a genre in its own right. The fact that none of his epigrams can be found in the Greek Anthology says it all. In the eyes of the Byzantine scholars to whom we owe this marvelous compilation, Theodore of Stoudios cannot be ranged among the ninth-century authors who rescued the legacy of the ancient epigram from oblivion.

If we are to believe Paul Speck, there was a sort of literary rivalry between Theodore of Stoudios and Ignatios the Deacon, both trying to score points off each other by reviving literary traditions that had become extinct during the dark age crisis²⁷. As for the epigram, there can be little doubt that if such a rivalry existed, Ignatios the Deacon must have gained a sweeping victory over his opponent. While Theodore had to wait some seventy years to see his epigrams published, Ignatios himself produced an edition of his collected epitaphs, entitled "*Sepulchral Elegies*". And once again in contrast to poor Theodore, Ignatios managed to obtain a place in the literary gallery of the Byzantines, the Greek Anthology, where we find three of his epitaphs (*AP* XV, 29–31). It is not difficult to understand why the scholars who compiled the Greek Anthology appreciated the epitaphs of Ignatios the Deacon, and viewed them as prime examples of the Byzantine epigram. The metre is the elegiac, the language is Homeric, the style is elevated. It all looks distinctly ancient, although it is difficult to pinpoint any direct literary influences. The connoisseur of the epigrammatic genre will immediately recognize that Ignatios' epi-

²⁷ See P. SPECK, in: *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*. New Rochelle 1986, 555–576; and idem in: *Varia 2 (Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 6)*. Bonn 1987, 253–283.

taphs are thoroughly Byzantine, but will surely rejoice at seeing so much effort invested in creating the deceptive patina of things old. The literary epigram comes to life again in the poetry of Ignatios the Deacon. Although his epitaphs still serve a practical purpose as written memorials and therefore belong to the category of the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα, it cannot be denied that Ignatios adds a new dimension to the genre by writing in a highbrow style and that he attempts to re-establish a connection with the late antique epigram.

In the field of Byzantine poetry Ignatios the Deacon holds a place of honour. He is the first Constantinopolitan poet to pay attention to the poetry produced in Syria and Palestine during the dark ages. He imitates the anacreontics by Elias Synkellos and the dialogues in verse form by John of Damascus and Stephen the Sabaite, and he is initiated into the metrical mysteries of the elegiac by John Arklas. He is also the first ninth-century author to consciously revive the rules of the literary epigram. It all begins with Ignatios the Deacon.

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Redefining the Byzantine Epigram

In the years between c. 840 and c. 900, starting with the enigmatic figure of Leo the Philosopher, we have a number of classicizing poets and scholars who prepare editions of ancient epigrams and write poetry themselves. In the third chapter I dealt with this scholarly movement in extenso, so there is no need to repeat here what happened during those years of effervescent classicism. It is interesting to note, however, that the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology went much further in their reappraisal of the epigrammatic genre than Ignatios the Deacon was willing to do. However innovative he may have been, Ignatios the Deacon meticulously clung to the codes of the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα, which he merely made fashionable as a literary genre in its own right by adroitly using the metre and the stylistic register of the ancient epigram. But he did not feel the urge to revive the erotic or the epideictic or the satirical epigram. And why should he? Why resuscitate a dead corpse, if there are so many other interesting things to write about, all very much alive in the conceptual world of the Byzantines? In the Greek Anthology, however, we find a number of ninth-century poems that do not fall into the category of the ἐπίγραμμα – which indicates that some people at least tried to redefine the margins of what constituted, properly speaking, a Byzantine epigram. Theophanes the Grammarian, one of the students of Leo the Philosopher, composed an erotic epigram (*AP* XV, 35), which is the first of its kind after the sixth century. Constantine the Sicilian, another student of Leo, is the first to

compose an epideictic epigram after the dark ages (*AP* XV, 13). This text was ridiculed by Theophanes the Grammarian in an amusing poem (*AP* XV, 14), which is the first satirical epigram to be written after the period of Agathias and his friends. Leo the Philosopher himself wrote an *eis heauton* (“a poem to himself”), which despite its thoroughly Byzantine title has nothing to do with other examples of the genre. Instead of repeating the stock motives of religious penitence, which is a characteristic feature of the Byzantine *eis heauton*, Leo the Philosopher expresses his wish to live peacefully, without a care in the world, and at a safe distance from the madding crowd (*AP* XV, 12). Although Leo’s verses are without parallel, it should probably be viewed as an epideictic epigram – compare, for instance, an epideictic epigram by Ptolemy, also entitled εἰς ἑαυτὸν (*AP* IX, 577), in which the poet expresses the sentiments of sheer delight and ecstasy he experiences when he stares up at the starry firmament. The epigrams by Leo the Philosopher, Theophanes the Grammarian and Constantine the Sicilian are deliberate attempts to pump new life into the genre of the epigram and to revive the legacy of the ancients as another phoenix from its ashes.

However, the generic classification system of the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology is occasionally at variance with that of the ancients. There are, for instance, three Byzantine poems in the Greek Anthology that would not have seemed particularly epigrammatic to the ancients: a prayer to Christ (εὐχὴν, *AP* I, 118), a paraphrase of chapter 11 of the *Gospel according to John* (*AP* XV, 40) and an invective directed against a stupid doctor²⁸. For the ancients these poems constitute a hymnal invocation, a rhetorical metaphrasis and a psogos, respectively. They are definitely not epigrams. The scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology, on the contrary, appear to be willing to accept any poetic text as an epigram, as long as it is dignified enough to pass for something the ancients could have written. They are so thrilled with their rediscovery of the epigram that they occasionally forget what exactly it was they rediscovered.

It is worth noticing that Dionysios the Stoudite, the scholar who shortly after 886 put together the collection of “*Iambs on various subjects*” by Theodore of Stoudios, also tries to extend the boundaries of the Byzantine epigram. Living in the same age as Constantine Cephalas, Dionysios is as anxious as the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology to rediscover the epigram, even where nothing specifically epigrammatic can be found. Dionysios is really fond of the word ἐπιγράμμα. Sure enough, most of the texts he publishes are authentic ἐπιγράμματα, but he also includes a poem no other Byzantine would ever have called an epigram: Theod. St. 97. This is a catanyctic poem in which Theodore

²⁸ Ed. WESTERINK 1986: 200. The poem is to be found in the *Sylloge Euphemiana*, a collection of epigrams that derives from the anthology of Cephalas: see pp. 114–115.

of Stoudios admonishes his own soul to be aware of the proximity of death and to prepare itself for the last judgment, when it will be brought to account for its misconduct²⁹. The poem bears the curious title: ἐπίγραμμα εἰς ἑαυτόν. The title is a conflation of two different generic terms: “epigram” and “eis heauton”. There are numerous catanyctic texts that are quite similar to the poem by Theodore: hymns, anacreontics, longer poems, short lyrical effusions and contemplative musings. These various catanyctic texts are usually entitled: εἰς ἑαυτόν, just like the poem by Theodore of Stoudios. None of these poems, not even the shorter ones, are ever called ἐπίγραμμα. By Byzantine standards, then, the catanyctic poem by Theodore of Stoudios does not constitute an epigram, but is simply an *eis heauton*.

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Re-defining the Byzantine Epigram

Despite all their efforts to link up with the literary tradition of the epigram as it existed before the dark age crisis, the scholar-poets of the late ninth century met with remarkably little success in the end. They managed to convince Dionysios the Stoudite, not one of Byzantium’s brightest lights, to search for the epigrammatic even in an *eis heauton* written by the champion of Byzantine monasticism, Theodore of Stoudios. But apart from this meagre success, there is not the slightest trace of evidence that they succeeded in convincing their fellow Byzantines to venture beyond the traditional limits of the ἐπίγραμμα and to rediscover the *terra incognita* of the ancient epigram. As soon as Theophanes the Grammarian rediscovered the erotic epigram, it disappeared altogether never to return again. Epideictic and satirical epigrams, such as we find in the Greek Anthology, continued to be written after the late ninth century, but the Byzantines no longer regarded such texts as epigrams. And the same goes for the prayer, the metaphrasis, the invective and the *eis heauton* – all these kinds of poetry the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology attempted to redefine in the light of the rediscovery of the epigram. They continue to exist, but not under the brand name of “epigram”. They are just poems. In order to understand what constitutes a Byzantine epigram, the Greek Anthology is not a very reliable guide, as it merely forms a failed experiment to reshape the hazy outlines of the epigram in the context of a short-lived vogue for anything classical.

²⁹ See the excellent commentary by SPECK 1968: 258–261.

The tenth century is the period in which the literary legacy of the Byzantines themselves is rediscovered. Shortly after 919, an anonymous scholar put together a collection of anacreontics and alphabets, the *Anthologia Barberina*, which is marked (to put it in a negative way) by a total lack of interest in the classical. This anthology is constructed so as to provide a survey of the Byzantine anacreontic, which begins with Sophronios and other Palestinian authors, then moves on to Ignatios the Deacon, and from there to the literary circle of Leo the Philosopher, and finally culminates in the poetry of Arethas and Leo Choirosphaktes. True enough, the anthology also contains a number of sixth-century anacreontics and a selection from the ancient *Anacreontea*, but it presents these poems merely as the prelude to the authentic Byzantine anacreontic. Among the alphabets in unprosodic meters we find a great number of ceremonial poems that were performed at the court of the Macedonian dynasty. The remaining alphabets also appear to date from the ninth and early tenth centuries. In this section of the *Anthologia Barberina* there is not a single poem dating from the period of late antiquity. It is not difficult to note the differences between this collection of anacreontics and alphabets and the famous Greek Anthology, although only twenty years have passed between Constantine Cephalas and the anonymous scholar who compiled the *Anthologia Barberina*³⁰. I think that these obvious differences are related to a fundamental changeover in mentality and literary predilections, which dates from the early tenth century. It is then, I would say, that the classicizing vogue gradually recedes into the background, while a “byzantinizing” trend, equally gradually, comes to the fore instead.

It is worth noticing, for instance, that Leo Choirosphaktes, an author who can often be caught red-handed in the act of wilfully “classicizing”, occasionally writes poems that look typically Byzantine. His epigrams are a good example. The style is elevated, there are hardly any metrical or grammatical errors, and the metaphors and figures of speech bear proof of much poetic versatility. But whereas it is fairly easy to point to Byzantine parallels, it is rather difficult to trace these epigrams back to any classical antecedent. Let us look, for instance, at the epitaph he wrote for his beloved teacher, Leo the Philosopher:

Θεωρίας ὕψωμα, γνώσεως βάθος,
πλάτος λόγων, φρόνησις, ἀπλότης, πόνος,
θρηνοῦσιν, οἰμώζουσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐν βίῳ
Λέοντα νῦν βλέπουσιν· ὦ τῆς ζημίας!

“The height of contemplation, the depth of knowledge and the breadth of reasoning, along with wisdom, sincerity and industry, lament and wail, for now

³⁰ For the *Anthologia Barberina* and its contents, see chapter 3, pp. 123–128.

they no longer see Leo alive. Oh, what a great loss!”³¹. Although one would expect that an epitaph to Leo the Philosopher, the leading figure of the classicizing movement in ninth-century Byzantium, should be as classicistic as Leo the Philosopher’s own poetry, this is not the case. The epitaph is certainly not the run-of-the-mill kind of thing one normally finds in Byzantine poetry, but it does not look particularly classicistic either. It makes abundant use of the metonymic figure of speech called personification: all the excellent qualities for which Leo the Philosopher was celebrated, lament because he is gone. This figure of speech is very common in Byzantine epitaphs: see, for instance, John Geometres’ epitaph to Theodore Dekapolites (Cr. 297, 29), where it is said that Lady Justice (Δίκη) wishes to be buried in the same grave as Dekapolites, who was noted for his expertise in legal matters. To express his sense of bereavement, Choirosphaktes adroitly uses harsh *asyndeta*, which sever the syntactical period into short, rapid clauses: it is almost as if he gasps for air and searches for the right words because he is overcome by grief. This is a stylistic device (called *gorgotes* by the rhetoricians³²) which Byzantine poets often employ in moments of eloquent passion. Though grief-stricken, Choirosphaktes tries to assuage the emotional tension he has built up with all these *asyndeta* by making his verses as smooth and rhythmical as possible. The rhythm is invariably heptasyllabic and proparoxytone in the first, pentasyllabic and paroxytone in the second hemistichs. The two last verses of the quatrain have rhyme before the caesura: οἰμώζουσιν – βλέπουσιν. Rhyme is not a feature of ancient poetry, but is very common in Byzantine rhetorical prose. The epitaph is in fact a splendid piece of Byzantine rhetoric, carefully constructed so as to convey to the readers the idea of deeply felt grief.

The first line of the epitaph is vaguely reminiscent of a late ninth-century book epigram celebrating an anonymous scholar who produced an edition of Plato or a commentary to the Platonic corpus (*AP* XV, 39b): τὰ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξερευνήσας βάθη, τὰ τῶν λογισμῶν ἐξερίζωσας πάθη [note the rhyme], “by exploring the depths of Plato, you have uprooted the passions that disturb reasoning”. But the most interesting parallel is undoubtedly a Byzantine epigram dedicated to the Holy Virgin, which begins with almost the same *incipit* as the epitaph to Leo the Philosopher: θεωριῶν ὕψωμα, δογματῶν βάθος, “height of contemplations and depth of dogmatic truths”³³. As the epitaph reveals close parallels with other Byzantine poems and is constructed according to the rules of Byzantine rhetoric, we can draw but one conclusion: it is not particularly classicizing. It has little in common with the ancient epigram nor

³¹ Ed. KOLIAS 1939: 132.

³² See LAUXTERMANN 1998b: 25–28.

³³ The epigram is still unpublished. It can be found in Athous 4418 (Ib. 288) [s. XVI], fol. 1^r.

with the literary movement of Leo the Philosopher, even though he is the subject of the poem.

The literary vogue for anything classical did not die out all of a sudden by the year 900, but it gradually withered and then passed away, leaving no traces of any significance in subsequent stages of the Byzantine epigram. True enough, there are still a few poetic texts that obviously imitate ancient epigrams, but the feverish passion of the scholar-poets of the Greek Anthology has become something of the past. The epigrams of John Geometres and other tenth-century poets are usually not classicizing, but “byzantinizing”, just like the epitaph by Leo Choirosphaktes.

In sharp contrast to the literary experiments of Leo the Philosopher and his followers, the tenth-century epigram is basically a return to the tradition of the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα, with only one significant difference, to wit: a dignified and manneristic literary style has become an absolute prerequisite. The highly rhetorical epitaph by Choirosphaktes is an example of this mannerism and fastidious refinement, and I could quote many other examples – but what would be the point of repeating the obvious? Vastly more important is the fact that all the epigrams by Leo Choirosphaktes are either epitaphs or epigrams on works of art. He does not write erotic or epideictic or satirical epigrams, like the literary circle of Leo the Philosopher. Instead, he favours the traditional kind of epigram, the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα. The same can be said about other tenth-century poets, such as Constantine the Rhodian, the Anonymous Patrician and John Geometres, whose epigrams are composed in a highbrow style, and yet fit neatly into the category of the Byzantine ἐπίγραμμα.

To summarize, the history of the Byzantine epigram can be charted in the form of a diagram that presents a single, straight line with one dip and one peak. Imagine a line with three dots: Pisides, Ignatios the Deacon and Leo Choirosphaktes, all three of them at the same level. In the intervals between these equidistant dots the epigram first falls to a remarkable low during the dark ages, and then climaxes with the classicizing movement of the ninth century. After the third dot, Leo Choirosphaktes, the line runs straight on without any further curves, declivities or sharp rises. In retrospect, the history of the Byzantine epigram looks strikingly like a variation on the poetic theme of “paradise lost, paradise regained”. The epigram is lost, regained, redefined and re-redefined. In the tenth century, after a very chequered history, the epigram finally winds up being what it used to be in the time of Pisides: a literary ἐπίγραμμα. The genre has come full circle.

Chapter Five

EPIGRAMS ON WORKS OF ART

In the church of the Panagia Phorbiotissa at Asinou, on the island of Cyprus, a fresco that depicts the trial of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia freezing to death in an icy lake, bears the following verse inscription:

Χειμῶν τὸ λυποῦν, σὰρξ τὸ πάσχον ἐνθάδε·
προσσχὼν ἀκούσεις καὶ στεναγμὸν μαρτύρων·
εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσεις, καρτεροῦσι τὴν βίαν
πρὸς τὰ στέφη βλέποντες, οὐ πρὸς τοὺς πόνους¹.

“Winter it is that causes pain, flesh it is that suffers here. If you pay attention, you may even hear the groans of the martyrs; but if you do not listen, they will still endure the violent cold, looking to their crowns and not to their toils”.

The fresco (along with other murals) was donated to the church at Asinou by a local official, Nikephoros Magistros, in the year 1105–06. The text he had inscribed on it, however, is considerably older than the fresco itself, for it is an epigram by the late tenth-century poet John Geometres, which can be found in many manuscripts². Although the epigram was not written especially for this particular image of the Forty Martyrs, it “is certainly very appropriate to the image at Asinou, for the fresco graphically shows the suffering flesh of the martyrs, who hug themselves for warmth. One of the martyrs, depicted third from the left in the second row from the top, even covers his mouth with his hand, as if to stifle the groans that are mentioned in the poem. At the same time, two of the martyrs at the top point upwards, as if, in the words of the last verse, they were looking to their crowns and not to their toils”³. The fact that Geometres’ epigram is found on a much later fresco at Asinou may perhaps

¹ Ed. W.H. BUCKLER, *Archaeologia* 83 (1933) 340, M. SACOPOULOU, Asinou en 1106 et sa contribution à l’iconographie. Brussels 1966, 56, and H. MAGUIRE, *DOP* 31 (1977) 152, n. 156. The text printed here is that of Sajdak’s edition (see following footnote); the inscription is illegible at certain spots and presents a rather garbled version of the epigram: τῇ βίᾳ (v. 3) and βλέπουσιν (v. 4).

² Ed. STERNBACH 1897: 157, and SAJDAK 1929: 197 (no. S. 8). See below, Appendix II, pp. 298–299.

³ MAGUIRE 1996: 12.

seem somewhat surprising, but this sort of second-hand use of epigrams is not without parallel in Byzantium⁴. However, the problem is that we hardly ever know by which devious paths an epigram may unexpectedly turn up centuries later as a verse inscription. As for the verse inscription in the Panagia Phorbiotissa, there are basically two possible avenues of transmission. Either Nikephoros Magistros, thumbing through his copy of Geometres' collection of poems, spotted a suitable literary epigram on the Forty Martyrs and copied it, or alternatively, he derived the epigram from a specific late tenth-century work of art, for which Geometres had been commissioned to write an appropriate caption and which served as the direct model for the fresco at Asinou. Neither of these two possibilities can be ruled out; but as evidence is lacking, neither of the two can be proved beyond any reasonable doubt.

Byzantine anthologies and poetry books contain thousands of epigrams on well-known pictorial scenes, such as David and Goliath, the Annunciation, the Koimesis, the Forty Martyrs, and so forth. In marked contrast to the abundance of manuscript material, the number of epigrams actually found on Byzantine works of art is rather limited⁵. In Appendix VIII, where I enumerate the verse inscriptions on works of art, the patient reader will find 83 entries only; since some of the works of art bear more than one verse inscription, the number of epigrams amounts to a total of 122. If one closely examines the epigraphic material, one immediately notices that almost all inscriptions are found either on stone or on luxury objects. This is only to be expected. Inscriptions on stone do not easily wear out and luxury objects (such as ivories, reliquaries and illustrated manuscripts) are too precious to be handled without care and to disappear into the careless wastebasket of time. In contrast, the number of verse inscriptions on mosaics, frescoes and paintings is limited because these are basically perishable materials, and thus the chances of survival to the present day are fairly low. Furthermore, as the Muslim world objects to religious images, the Ottoman Turks understandably (at least from their viewpoint) ruined most of the Byzantine monuments in Istanbul. This iconoclastic enterprise was particularly damaging to mosaics and frescoes, which were either whitewashed or destroyed altogether. In the secluded province of Cappadocia, where most of the rock-cut churches and monasteries have survived, many murals can still be found. But what if these murals and the inscriptions on them had disappeared, as happened in other parts of the Ottoman Empire? And vice versa, would our view on Byzantine epigraphy not have been different if medieval Constantinople had turned into Ottoman Istanbul without significant damage to the monuments?

⁴ See above, chapter 1, p. 31, and see HÖRANDNER 1987: 237–238.

⁵ See MANGO 1991: 239–240.

The majority of Byzantine verse inscriptions on works of art are dedicatory texts in which the donor presents his pious oblation to Christ, the Holy Virgin, or one of the many saints, and prays that his munificence may be rewarded in the hereafter. The material evidence once again presents a somewhat distorted image of the kinds of epigrams that were inscribed on Byzantine monuments and artefacts. Luxury objects and expensive buildings bear the name of their pious donors for an obvious reason: if a person spends a fortune hoping to obtain spiritual salvation, he understandably wants people to know who paid for the expenses (just like modern sponsors usually demand that the scientific programme they are funding, the sports event they are sponsoring or the public building they are financing bears their name). Dedicatory inscriptions are inscribed on stone or other sorts of material that do not wear out easily, such as ivory or precious metals. Epigrams that describe a specific work of art, on the contrary, are usually inscribed on mosaics, frescoes and icons – materials that do not last as long as stone. It is precisely because of this material aspect that descriptive inscriptions are rare, whereas there are dozens of dedicatory inscriptions⁶. However, the manuscripts, and especially the lemmata attached to the poems, leave no doubt that Byzantine works of art were often inscribed with descriptive epigrams. Most of these works of art and their inscriptions have disappeared, but the texts found in manuscripts may help us in recapturing the past and reshaping in our minds the visual world of the Byzantines. And this is precisely why art historians should pay special attention to epigrams⁷. For the epigrams that we find in Byzantine manuscripts, may fill in some of the formidable lacunae in the epigraphic material, and may occasionally provide evidence for monuments that have been lost.

I certainly do not mean to suggest that all the epigrams on works of art we find in Byzantine collections of poems and anthologies were once intended to be inscribed. There are simply too many epigrams and too few monuments. In my view, the majority of epigrams on works of art should not be regarded as genuine verse inscriptions, which by some unlucky quirk of fate can no longer be found *in situ*, but rather as purely literary poems. However, as the “literary” epigrams closely resemble the “inscriptional” ones, usually it is almost impossible to establish whether an epigram was originally meant to be inscribed or not. Lemmata may provide some circumstantial evidence, and words like βλέπω and ἐνθάδε may indicate that an epigram describes a specific work of art (see, for instance, the first verse of Geometres’ epigram: “Winter it is that causes pain, flesh it is that suffers *here*”). But if an epigram is not

⁶ See also TALBOT 1999: 89.

⁷ See C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire (312–1453). Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs 1972, 182.

equipped with a lemma noting its provenance and does not contain any internal clues, such as verbs of perception and adverbs of place, we do not know whether it is an original verse inscription or simply a literary response to the visual message of an image or iconographic type. And even if an epigram expressly tells us to look at a particular scene and imagine the awesome mysteries revealed in it, we cannot be absolutely certain that we are dealing with a genuine verse inscription rather than with a literary text that makes clever use of the usual *topoi* of the genre. For this is what it is: a genre in its own right and with its own formal characteristics – a kind of poetry that aims to express forms of visual imagination and to render in words mental perceptions of the visible⁸.

This genre I call *epigrams on works of art*. Since we often do not know whether an epigram on a work of art served as a verse inscription or not, the term I have chosen is deliberately vague, indicating either an epigram that was actually inscribed *on* a specific work of art or a literary poem *on* the subject of a certain Byzantine iconographic type. The term is perfectly Byzantine. For in manuscripts the usual heading attached to an epigram on a work of art is simply: εἰς ... (εἰς τὴν ἀνάστασιν, εἰς τὸν Θωμᾶν, εἰς τοὺς μ' μάρτυρας, etc.). The meaning of the preposition εἰς is ambiguous: it either indicates the subject matter or the object on which the epigram is to be found⁹. For instance, the lemma εἰς τὴν ἀνάστασιν can be interpreted in two totally different ways: the epigram deals with the subject of the Resurrection of Christ or the epigram is inscribed on a picture of the Anastasis. As for the two other terms of my definition, *epigram* and *work of art*, I have to confess that neither of the two is specifically Byzantine. As stated in chapter 1 (pp. 27–30), the term ἐπίγραμμα is not much in evidence in Byzantine manuscripts, but when the word is used, it indicates a close relation between an epigram and the specific object on which it is found. The generic term “work of art” is never used because Byzantine lemmatists always specify what the subject of a given epigram is.

In various scholarly publications, the Byzantine epigrams on works of art are labelled differently. They are either called “epideictic epigrams”¹⁰ or “ec-

⁸ For epigrams on works of art in Latin, see A. ARNULF, *Versus ad picturas. Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*. Berlin 1997. See also C.B. KENDALL, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and their Verse Inscriptions*. Toronto 1998.

⁹ See SPECK 1968: 66–67. Cf. the lemmata attached to *AP* I, 109–114: εἰς τὸν ναόν etc., εἰς τὸν αὐτόν, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ναῷ, εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ναόν, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ναῷ and ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ναῷ: here εἰς and ἐν mean exactly the same thing, namely that the epigrams were inscribed *in* the church of the Source.

¹⁰ See, for instance, GALLI CALDERINI 1987: 119–123 and KAMBYLIS 1994–95: 28 and 31.

phrastic epigrams”¹¹. Both terms are incorrect. The error results from blindly relying on the classification system that modern editions adopt in presenting the epigrams of the Greek Anthology. These editions basically present the epigrams in the same order as they are found in the Palatine manuscript, and ignore the textual evidence of other sources. The problem here is that scribes B, who copied the second part of the anthology of Cephalas, made use of a manuscript that had a serious lacuna between *AP* IX, 583 and 584. Fortunately, with the help of the *Planudean Anthology* and the so-called *syllogae minores*, we can reconstruct what this part of the anthology of Cephalas originally looked like. Originally there were two separate books: (IXa) epideictic epigrams (*AP* IX, 1–583) and (IXb) epigrams on works of art (*AP* 32–387 + a number of epigrams found in the *syllogae minores* + *AP* IX, 584–822)¹². As the two books were clearly separated in the original Cephalas, it is obviously incorrect to label the epigrams on works of art “epideictic”, for the term “epideictic epigram” only refers to *AP* IXa (nos. 1–583), and not to *AP* IXb where the epigrams on works of art are found. Since the Cephalian title and prooemium to the book of epigrams on works of art are missing in the Palatine manuscript (because of the lacuna in the exemplar that the scribes used), we do not know which term Cephalas used for these epigrams. But it is highly unlikely that he would have labelled the epigrams on works of art “ecphrastic”. First of all, none of the Byzantine sources use this term. In his anthology Planudes introduces the epigrams as follows: “this fourth book, containing the epigrams on statues of gods and men, pictures of animals and sites, is divided into the following sections: images of honourable men, etc.”. Although Planudes was one of the leading rhetoricians of his time, he does not employ the technical term “ekphrasis” for this kind of epigrammatic poetry, but rather vaguely refers to ἐπιγράμματα εἰς ... Secondly, the rhetorical exercise of ἔκφρασις is not a plain description of art, as many people appear to think, but involves much more. In the second volume of this book the formal aspects of literary ekphraseis in verse will be discussed. One of these aspects is the sheer length of such poems as a result of the large-scale development of ecphrastic themes in terms of emotional depth and narrative width. As epigrams on works of art are usually quite short, they only rarely display this sort of rhetorical elaboration¹³.

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¹¹ The term is used by many scholars. I regret to say that I, too, adopted this term in my dissertation: *The Byzantine Epigram in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*. Amsterdam 1994, 21–70.

¹² See LAUXTERMANN 1998c: 526–527. See also chapter 3, pp. 85–86.

¹³ See LAUXTERMANN 1998c: 528–529.

Two Epigrams from the Greek Anthology

The anthology of Cephalas, especially its first book (*AP* I), contains many Byzantine epigrams that are of great art-historical interest. Here I shall discuss two little-known texts which can be found in IXb, the Cephalan book of epigrams on works of art: namely, *AP* IX, 818 and IX, 815.

AP IX, 818 is one of a series of three dedicatory epigrams (IX, 817–819) celebrating the donation of liturgical objects by a certain Peter to a church that probably adjoined the hospice of Euboulos¹⁴. The first of these three epigrams was written on an altar cloth embroidered with pictures of martyrs¹⁵. The second and third ones were inscribed on a *diskopoterion* (paten and chalice), probably made of silver or gilded metal. The epigrams probably date from the early seventh century, seeing that they follow the Pisidian rules of versification. The epigrams are written in prosodic dodecasyllables, with an obligatory stress accent on the penultimate; but IX, 819. 2 has a resolution in the first metrical position. The text of IX, 818 runs as follows:

Καὶ Πέτρος ἄλλος τὸν τάφον τοῦ Κυρίου
τὸν ζωοποιὸν εἰσιδεῖν μὴ συμφθάσας
ἔγλυψα δίσκον, μνήματος θείου τύπον,
ἐν ᾧ τὸ Χριστοῦ σῶμα κύψας προσβλέπω.

“I, another Peter, not having arrived in time to behold the life-giving tomb of the Lord, engraved this paten, a symbol of the holy sepulchre, in which, bowing down, I see the body of Christ”. Peter the donor compares himself to Peter the apostle: just as the apostle could not keep up with his companion and arrived with some delay only to find the grave empty (Joh. 20: 3–9), so the donor was not able to see the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem with his own eyes. In order to compensate for the missed opportunity of going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Peter produced this paten, which, although not the real thing, may be viewed in a symbolic sense as a representation of the holy sepulchre because the Eucharist, once it is consecrated, turns into the body of Christ itself. The meaning of the word κύψας is deliberately ambiguous. It not only denotes the priestly gesture of bowing the head and the upper part of the body as a sign of reverence to the mystery of Christ’s transubstantiation, but it is also an

¹⁴ *AP* IX, 816 is a late antique epigram on a *μυσώγιον* (*missorium*, platter) τῶν Εὐβούλων (on this hospice, see Malalas, 411, *Chronicon Paschale*, 622 and Theophanes, 165). The lemmata attached to *AP* IX, 817–819 possibly indicate that the three objects were also found in the hospice: 817 εἰς ἐνδύτην ἑαυτοῦ (sic), 818 εἰς δίσκον ἄλλον ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ and 819 εἰς ποτήριον ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ. See also P. WALTZ, *REG* 58 (1945) 105–117.

¹⁵ The epigram is not mentioned in P. SPECK’s two lists of *endytai*: *JÖBG* 15 (1966) 323–375, and *Varia* II (*Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 6). Bonn 1987, 331–337.

oblique reference to the Gospel text stating that the Apostle Peter, when he arrived at the tomb, bent over (προσκύψας) to look inside. However, whereas the apostle did not find the body of Christ there, Peter can actually see it, right in front of him, in the form of consecrated bread. Though he was born too late to be a disciple himself and witness the godly presence of Christ, he outdoes his namesake in a certain sense, for he is able to see what the apostle could not: the body of Christ in the holy sepulchre. By paying much money for what was undoubtedly an expensive object¹⁶, and by having it engraved with his own dedicatory inscription, the paten and also the Eucharist itself become his – at least in a symbolic sense. He is there to witness the Resurrection of Christ, he takes part in it every time the Eucharist is celebrated. His personal involvement in the enacting of this divine mystery also explains why the text of this epigram, in contrast to most verse inscriptions, makes use of the first person. It also accounts for the somewhat tautological statement: “I, another Peter, (...) engraved this paten” – tautological, of course, because the text he had engraved is the epigram itself. What Peter is actually saying is that the donation of the paten establishes a sort of personal pact between himself and Christ. By his pious oblation Peter somehow turns into one of the disciples who witnessed the earthly presence of the Lord. His reward for donating this paten is being there, at the holy sepulchre which he never visited in person, to peer inside and look at the body of Christ.

The second epigram to be discussed is *AP IX*, 815. As the number already indicates, it can be found immediately before the epigrams Peter had inscribed on the liturgical objects that he donated to a church. The text reads as follows:

Ξεῖνε, τί νῦν σπεύδεις ὁρόων ἀκεσώδυνον ὕδωρ;
 εὐφροσύνης τὸ λοετρόν· ἀπορρύπτει μελεδώνας,
 μόχθον ἐλαφρίζει· τόδε γὰρ ποίησε Μιχαήλ,
 ὃς κρατερῆς βασιληίδος αὐλῆς ἡγεμονεύει.

“Stranger, what is the rush now when you have the water that cures pain nearby? This is the bath of joy; it washes away sorrows, it lightens labour. It was built by Michael, who is in command of the mighty imperial court”. The epigram is written in elegant hexameters and since the versification is almost Nonnian (see also the tell-tale compound adjective ἀκεσώδυνος), it is usually dated to the fifth or the sixth century¹⁷. As the use of hexameters κατὰ στίχον, instead of elegiacs, is fairly normal in late antique inscriptions¹⁸, nothing would

¹⁶ For a comparable object bearing an inscription, see, for instance, the *diskopoterion* commissioned by Basil the Nothos and now to be found in the treasury of St. Mark's in Venice: GUILLOU 1996: nos. 74–75 and plates 71–73.

¹⁷ See, for instance, KEYDELL 1962: 561.

¹⁸ See WIFSTRAND 1933: 155–177.

seem to contradict this dating. However, the medial caesura in the fourth verse (a metrical phenomenon typical of Byzantine poetry) certainly does not support the traditional dating. This is why most modern editors emendate the verse and print: (...) ἀλῆς βασιλίδος (...). But, one might ask, is this emendation justified? Is this really a late antique verse inscription? Let us look at the text. Firstly, one may notice that the epigram stresses the curative powers of the bath Michael had built: it “cures pain”, “washes away sorrows” and “lightens labour”. Late antique epigrams (see, for instance, *AP* IX, 606–640) rarely state that going to a public bath is a hygienic necessity. Of course, the ancients knew perfectly well that lack of personal hygiene is detrimental to health, but they viewed bathing above all as a pleasant social event. The Byzantines did not see it that way. Since nudity was held to be disgraceful, taking a bath was only done to avoid getting ill¹⁹. It is for this reason that Byzantine epigrams on the subject of bathing invariably stress that it is good for one’s health²⁰. Secondly, the word εὐφροσύνη in the second verse is rather peculiar. In ancient and late antique epigrams the key-word is χάρις, indicating both “grace” and “favour”. The public bath is a graceful, delightfully structured building adorned with statues and mosaics, which the city could afford thanks to the munificence of an illustrious citizen²¹. It is a χάρις. It is not a χαρά, however much the ancients enjoyed taking a bath. The word “joy” (εὐφροσύνη, χαρά and other synonyms) appears to belong to the Byzantine vocabulary for balneary experiences. In Chr. Mityl. 53, for instance, the poet first sums up the therapeutic properties of baths and then concludes by saying that “when you come to think of it, taking a bath also produces joy, for nature itself truly takes pleasure in clean bodies”. Thirdly, the fourth verse poses a serious problem. Who exactly “is in command of the imperial court”? The magister officiorum? The master of ceremonies? Possibly, but since late antique and Byzantine epigrams never omit to stress that magistrates owe their high position to the benevolence of the reigning emperor, it looks like a gross insult to the emperor to bluntly state that these officials are “in command of the imperial court”. Let us look at the text once again. What if we printed the unusual word εὐφροσύνης with a capital E and then translated likewise: “This is the bath of Euphrosyne”? Then all the pieces of the puzzle would fall into place. The Michael who built this public bath is Emperor Michael II (821–829), who was married to a lady called Euphrosyne in c. 823–824. Seeing that the epigram treats the subject of bathing in a truly Byzantine manner, and in light

¹⁹ See A. BERGER, *Das Bad in der byzantinischen Zeit*. Munich 1982.

²⁰ See, for instance, the poem published by WESTERINK 1992: 427–428 (no. 60).

²¹ See *AP* IX, 606–640; ROBERT 1948: 78–81; and S. BUSCH, *Versus Balnearum*. Leipzig–Stuttgart 1999.

of the typically Byzantine metrical ‘error’ in the fourth verse (the medial caesura), a ninth-century date perfectly squares with the facts²². And the fact that the epigram is composed in almost flawless hexameters, should be viewed from the perspective of the fashionable classicistic vogue of the ninth century. The substitution of the name Εὐφροσύνη for the key-word χάρις is also the sort of double entendre the Byzantines were particularly fond of, because Euphrosyne is not only the name of the wife of Michael II, but also that of one of the three Graces, the famous Χάριτες holding hands while they dance.

Thus, by carefully reading the text of two epigrams found in the anthology of Cephalas, we may reconstruct their original setting: their place in time. We also may see the differences between private donations and public buildings. The bath that Michael II had built and that bore the name of his wife must have been a public one, for the “stranger” who passes by²³, can see the bath right in front of him; he only has to stop on his way through Constantinople, look at the building and read the dedicatory inscription. The paten Peter commissioned, however, could only be seen by the few members of the clergy, who celebrated Mass in the church where the paten was stored. One of the few people who could see the object and its inscription, was Peter himself; he had only to bend over when the Eucharist was celebrated, and look at his own verse inscription. The epigram on the bath of Euphrosyne addresses all those who can read, and emphatically states that taking a bath serves public health. The epigram on the paten, however, stresses that Peter is the person who paid for it and in return received the unique favour of witnessing the body of Christ. The former epigram is a public message, the latter a personal statement of faith.

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²² R.C. McCail, *JHSt* 89 (1969) 94, too, dates the epigram to the early ninth century, but without providing any arguments. Incidentally, the scribal ‘error’ by scribe B of the Palatine manuscript, Μισαήλ (sic) instead of Μιχαήλ, appears to indicate that the scribe, too, identified Michael with Michael II and made a typically Byzantine pun by changing the name of this iconoclast emperor, Μιχαήλ (“he who is like God”), into Μισαήλ (“he whom God hates” or “he who hates God”).

²³ For the literary *topos* of the stranger passing by and looking at a public building, see, for instance, two late antique verse inscriptions: *AP* IX, 686 and 787.

Dedicatory Epigrams

As there are many dedicatory epigrams, a few specimens only must suffice here. I shall begin with an epigram by John Geometres (Cr. 319, 6–9):

Τὴν παρθένον καὶ σῶμα καὶ τὴν καρδίαν
ὁ σῶμα καὶ νοῦν τοῖς πόνοις ἐφθαρμένος
Ἰωάννης ἔγραψεν ἄμφω ῥωννύειν.
χρυσός, λίθοι γῆς· ἡ δὲ τέχνη σοῦ, Λόγε.

“His body and spirit worn out by hardships, John depicted her who is immaculate in body and soul, so as to regain his health and good spirits. Gold and stones belong to the earth, but the art is thine, O Word”. The donor is probably John Geometres himself since in many poems written at the end of his life, the poet complains about his bad health²⁴. In 985–986 Geometres was forced by order of Basil II to abandon active service in the military. Infuriated because of the injustice done to him, but also secretly hoping to regain his former position, the poet wrote many poems against his opponents at the court, in which he ventilates his anger in bitter words and repeatedly states that he is suffering, both physically and mentally, from the envy of others²⁵. The last verse of the epigram reveals to us what the portrait of the Theotokos he had donated was made of: χρυσός and λίθοι, gold and stones – in other words, a mosaic with the Virgin in full colour and the background glittering with golden tesserae. He had this mosaic made in the hope of regaining his health. In the epigram Geometres cleverly contrasts the immaculate nature of the Holy Virgin with his own afflictions: whereas she is not affected by any form of corruption and decay, he is a sinner subjected to the corroding effects of our earthly existence. However, by using the passive voice (ἐφθαρμένος) and indicating the agent (τοῖς πόνοις), he distances himself in a certain sense from the corruption of body and soul he confesses to have fallen prey to. It was not really his fault; if only circumstances had been different, he would not have committed sinful acts and his health would not have suffered. He donates the mosaic to the Holy Virgin because she is the mother of Christ, who is mentioned in the last verse: being so close to the Word Incarnate, she must surely be able to mediate on behalf of Geometres and explain to her Son that he does not deserve to suffer as much as he does. The invocation of the *Logos* in the last verse also serves to strengthen the appeal by referring back to the epigram itself. Geometres donates a mosaic depicting the Theotokos, but the *logos* inscribed on it, the epigram, makes clear how this particular mosaic should be

²⁴ See Cr. 287, 17–18; 292, 2; 295, 23–28; 336, 28–31; 338, 30 – 339, 22; and 351, 8–11.

²⁵ See LAUXTERMAN 1998d: 367–373.

interpreted. “The art is thine, O Word”. Images need words. The mosaic is adorned with a verse inscription because that is the best way to ensure that the Divine Word listens to Geometres’ plea, which is not only visualized in art, but also expressed in poetic words.

It is worth noticing that Geometres uses the active voice (ἐγγραψε) to indicate his role in the manufacturing of the mosaic that he commissioned. As it is out of the question that an army officer, such as Geometres, had the technical ability to make a mosaic, the verb does not mean that he himself produced the mosaic, but that he ordered artists to make it and paid for the costs. This would seem obvious enough, but regrettably many scholars confuse donors and painters because Byzantine epigrams and verse inscriptions do not distinguish between “having something made” and “making something”²⁶. The active voice (“he/she painted”, “he/she built”, etc.) nearly always indicates that the person who is said to have made a work of art, made it possible by providing the money for it. There are very few exceptions to this rule. For instance, there is an epigram that tells us that Thomas the Painter donated an ὑελουργία to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in the early ninth century²⁷. Since he is called a ζωγράφος, it is reasonable to assume that he himself made the work of glass (either a mosaic or an enamel²⁸).

Since we have very little information, other than the works of art and the inscriptions themselves, on the way artefacts were manufactured in Byzantium, it is impossible to establish precisely what the act of commissioning a work of art actually entailed, and what the initial stage of production was like. Say that a donor ordered a portrait of St. Nicholas: did he just place his order and then leave the atelier, or did he give detailed instructions to the artist telling him what the portrait should be like and what its pictorial message should be? This is something we do not know. The term “patronage” should therefore be used with extreme caution. If the term simply indicates that a specific donor

²⁶ See, for instance, N. OIKONOMIDES, in: *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au moyen âge*. Paris 1986, 47–48 (repr. in: idem, *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade*. London 1992, no. XI), who attributes the painting of an icon to Emperor Romanos Argyros. In fact, Romanos Argyros is not the famous emperor, the icon is not painted but in mosaic, and the donor did not produce the mosaic himself, but commissioned it. For the epigrams on the mosaics in the Argyros monastery and their donor, see pp. 184–186 and 323.

²⁷ See A. FROLOW, *Bulletin des Études Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas* 11 (1945–46) 121–130 and E. FOLLIERI, *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti* 371 (1974) 1–21.

²⁸ It is difficult to understand what the Byzantines mean exactly when they say that a work of art is made of glass. See, for instance, Geometres, Cr. 301, 1–8, where he describes a picture of the archangels in glass: is this a mosaic of glass cubes, an enamel or a window of stained glass?

commissioned a work of art and paid for it, there is nothing wrong with it. However, if it implies that the donor is to be credited with the invention of refined iconographic programmes (in the mould of Renaissance *maecenatism*), the term would be misleading. Dedicatory epigrams may provide useful information on the donor's intentions and motives, but they do not tell us much about the actual work of art. Thus it is a grave error to assume that we can reconstruct the appearance of a lost work of art simply by reading what the accompanying epigram has to say. Works of art and epigrams constitute two autonomous forms of imagination. They respond to each other, but they speak in different tongues. Let us look again at the epigram of John Geometres. The epigram tells us what the picture of the Holy Virgin that Geometres donated was made of: "gold" and "stones", and we understand that it must have been a mosaic depicting the Theotokos against a golden background, such as we find in many Byzantine churches. The epigram also discloses what Geometres' motives for donating this particular image had been: he was suffering from bad health and hoped that the Holy Virgin could provide a cure. But what the epigram regrettably does not tell us is what the image looked like. Was her face slightly turned away, or directed towards the viewer? Was she looking at him with a stern expression? Was she smiling gently, perhaps even with an air of complacency? Or did her eyes express a feeling of sorrow and compassion with fallen mankind? Even if we knew the answers to these questions, the epigram by Geometres would still tell us only what he read, or hoped to read, in the picture that he had paid for. It would express his own emotions toward the Theotokos, not the emotions that the artist rendered visible in the mosaic. It would reveal to us how he looked at the picture, but not how the picture looked at him. Epigrams often do not describe the actual mosaic or painting, but rather elaborate on the holy figure depicted. Epigrams on pictures of the Theotokos, for instance, usually do not pretend to comment upon the images themselves, but rather treat the Holy Virgin's role in the salvation of mankind. Although we would expect that the mosaic donated by Geometres showed the Holy Virgin with a sorrowful expression on her face as a sign of compassionate understanding, she may have faced the sinful world with a look of austerity or have stared down at us with a Mona Lisa-like smile. Pictures and epigrams do not necessarily correspond. Epigrams are important as textual evidence inasmuch as they tell us how poets responded to the visual arts, but what epigrams do not reveal is the actual appearance of the images they describe.

Dedicatory verse inscriptions can be divided into two categories: texts on public buildings and texts on churches, monasteries and religious works of art²⁹.

²⁹ On dedicatory inscriptions, see A. and J. STYLIANOU, *JÖBG* 9 (1960) 97–128; P. ASEMAKOPOULOU-ATZAKA, in: Ἀρχαῖος. Τιμητικὸς τόμος στὸν καθηγητὴ Ν.Κ. Μουτσόπουλο. Thessalonica 1990, I, 227–267; S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor

The first category is regrettably small in number, the second extremely popular. Epigrams and verse inscriptions on public buildings mention the donor (usually the emperor, occasionally a high-powered official) and the public building or construction that he had made: a city-wall, a bathhouse, a bridge, a fortress, and so forth³⁰. The recipient of the donation is usually not mentioned, but in the rare cases that an epigram does mention the beneficiary, it invariably turns out to be the city population at large. For instance, in the elegant verse inscription that commemorates the construction of the walls of Ankyra by Michael III in 859, the city itself is directly addressed and urged to cooperate with the emperor in his efforts to restore it to its former beauty³¹. Likewise, in epigrams that omit to mention who exactly benefits from the imperial donation, there can be little doubt that the public building or construction is presented to the people for the common good. The real absentee in inscriptions on public buildings is God Almighty. Whereas dedicatory epigrams on churches and icons invariably invoke God or one of His divine representatives, the donor of public buildings does not require His help. God is mentioned only rarely, and then in a rather casual and perfunctory manner, as a reminder that the public building the emperor presents to the population at large has God's blessing.

In all other Byzantine dedications, however, God is omnipresent as the ultimate authority in matters of the soul. To make his voice heard, the donor needs a divine intermediary who will intercede on his behalf. As he cannot approach God directly, the donor makes use of a middleman (or a 'middle-woman': the popular Theotokos or one of the many female saints) to ensure that his plea will be heard at the divine court³². In the epigram treated above, for instance, Geometres addresses the Holy Virgin in the hope that she will present his plea for salvation up above, where the real decisions are made. In fact, in most dedicatory epigrams God is not mentioned by name, but is only implicitly referred to. God is the supreme judge presiding in heaven, far from ordinary people. Fortunately, however, He is inclined to listen to the pleas of those who are closest to Him: His immaculate Mother above all, but also the celestial host of angels, apostles, martyrs and saints. Thus the patronage of the arts paradoxically entails another sort of patronage: a divine clientele system in which the donor needs patron saints to intervene on his behalf.

Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece. Vienna 1992; and G. SUBOTIS and I. TOT, *ZRV* 36 (1997) 99–108.

³⁰ For verse inscriptions on public buildings, see Appendix VIII, nos. 20–42.

³¹ Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1927–28: 439.

³² See N. PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, in: *Byzance et les images*, ed. A. GUILLOU & J. DURAND. Paris 1994, 255–285.

The smallest artefacts on which verse inscriptions can be found are lead seals³³. The texts usually consist of one or two verses; quatrains appear on a few lead seals dating from the Comnenian age and the late Byzantine period³⁴. Metrical seals make use of the dodecasyllable³⁵. The texts are cliché and embroider on standard formulae, such as γράφᾱς σφραγίζω or Θεοτόκε βοήθει, the only fanciful element being the Byzantine gusto for puns and wordplay³⁶. Early Byzantine lead seals only bear the name and title of their owners. In the late tenth century, family names start to appear, and in the Comnenian age, there is a clear tendency to increasingly mention aristocratic affiliations. Due to these changes in the official nomenclature, the length of verse inscriptions gradually expands and monostichs eventually evolve into distichs. It is difficult to establish exactly when inscriptions in metre (instead of prose) became fashionable in Byzantium. The eleventh-century date that Laurent proposed in his seminal book *Les bulles métriques*³⁷ is certainly too late, but it is not entirely clear whether the popularity of metrical seals started in the tenth century or at some earlier date. Seals usually carry representations of Christ, the Theotokos, apostles, martyrs and saints – holy figures to whom the owner of the seal prays for salvation. See, for instance, the following verse inscription: Κρήτης πρόεδρος, Χριστέ, σῶζοις Ἀνδρέαν (“Christ, save Andrew, Bishop of Crete”). This lead seal has been attributed to the famous eighth-century hymnographer, Andrew of Crete; if the identification is correct, it would be the oldest metrical seal known to us³⁸.

Given the fact that the works of art currently on display in museums, private collections and libraries form just a small, and perhaps not even representative, selection of Byzantine art, the number of luxury objects commissioned by Basil the Nothos is truly exceptional. Basil’s donations include

³³ There are also a few ceremonial coins that bear verse inscriptions: for instance, Δέσποινα σῶζοις εὐσεβῆ Μονομάχον (Const. IX), ed. PH. GRIERSON, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. III. Washington, D.C., 1973, 745–746.

³⁴ See M. MARCOVICH, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 14 (1974) 171–173.

³⁵ See H. HUNGER, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 2 (1990) 27–37. Recent attempts to discover the political verse and other metres on metrical seals (see, for instance, E. McGEER, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 4 (1995) 63–69) are hardly convincing: the combination of standard formulae and family names may produce discordant ‘metrical’ patterns, but these ‘metres’ are purely coincidental.

³⁶ See H. HUNGER, *Die metrischen Siegellegenden der Byzantiner*. Vienna 1988 (Sonderausgabe aus dem Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 125. Jahrgang).

³⁷ V. LAURENT, *Les bulles métriques dans la sigillographie byzantine*. Athens 1932.

³⁸ Ed. V. LAURENT, *Le corpus des sceaux de l’ Empire Byzantin*, V. Paris 1963, no. 619, and G. ZACOS & A. VEGLERY, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. I. Basel 1972, no. 1293.

the following: a reliquary of the head of Symeon the Stylite, a reliquary of the head of St. Stephen, a *diskopoterion*, the precious staurotheca of Limburg an-der-Lahn, the manuscript of the *Naumachika* and two other splendid manuscripts (Epistles of St. Paul and Homilies of St. John Chrysostom) as well as the monastery of St. Basil in Constantinople³⁹. The text of the verse inscription on the reliquary of St. Stephen's head (now lost, but still extant in the seventeenth century in a Franciscan monastery on Crete) reads as follows:

Τὴν σὴν κάραν, πρόταθλε, μαρτύρων κλέος,
 ἦν μαρτυρικοὶ πρὶν κατέστεψαν λίθοι,
 στέφω κἀγὼ νῦν ἐξ ὕλης χρυσσαργύρου
 δῶρῳ πενιχρῷ δεικνὺς ὄλβιον πόθον,
 οὗ χάριν αἰτῶ τῆς ψυχῆς σωτηρίαν,
 ὁ βασιλικὸς σὸς Βασίλειος, μάκαρ,
 γαμβρὸς κρατοῦντος καὶ βαΐουλος μέγας
 καὶ παρακοιμώμενος ἐκ τῆς ἀξίας.

“O champion and glory of the martyrs, your head, which the stones of martyrdom once crowned, I too now crown with the material of gold and silver, thus showing my lavish devotion with a humble gift, in reward for which I request the salvation of my soul, I the imperial servant, who am the brother-in-law of the emperor and the *megas baioulos* and hold the office of *parakoimomenos*, I your Basil, O Saint”⁴⁰.

Basil the Nothos was the brother-in-law of Emperor Constantine VII, served as his *parakoimomenos* and was officially the tutor of Romanos II (*megas baioulos*, an honorary title). The precise course of Basil's career in the imperial administration between 945 and 959, the years of the sole reign of Constantine VII, is not entirely clear⁴¹, but it does not really matter for the present purpose. Far more important than the precise date of the epigram is what the poet explicitly and implicitly states about Basil's motives for donating the reliquary. The epigram does not mention the church or the monastery to which Basil the Nothos donated his “humble gift”, but it is reasonable to assume that he donated the relic to the monastery that he had founded himself, St. Basil's. Basil had a reliquary made to put the precious relic in; as the reliquary was decorated with gold and silver, it must have been quite expensive. Although the poet calls Basil's donation a δῶρον πενιχρόν, there can be

³⁹ See H. BELTING, *Corsi di cultura sull' arte ravennate e bizantina* 29 (1982) 52–57 and BOURA 1989.

⁴⁰ Ed. FOLLIERI 1964a: 455–464.

⁴¹ See V. LAURENT, *EEBS* 23 (1953) 193–205, and W.G. BROKKAAR, in: *Studia Byzantina et Neohellenica Neerlandica* (Byzantina Neerlandica 3). Leiden 1972, 199–234.

but little doubt that the economic value of the reliquary and the relic inside must have been considerable (which is also the reason, of course, why it was stolen by the crusaders and subsequently donated to the Franciscans). Basil's supposed 'modesty' is contradicted by the words that follow immediately afterwards, stating that Basil, with this humble gift, shows his "lavish devotion", ὄλβιον πόθον. These words are difficult to translate, but easy to understand for anyone familiar with Byzantine inscriptions. Inscriptions usually state that the donor donated a precious object or a church ἐκ πόθου, πόθῳ ζέοντι, or the like: "with burning desire", because he shows his devotion to God, the Theotokos or one of the saints by his pious donation. The adjective ὄλβιος is also very common in Byzantine inscriptions. It is used as an attribute to the object donated: the monastery of Lips, for instance, is called an ὄλβιον ἔργον because of the costs involved in having it built and because God's blessing rests on it⁴². In Basil's epigram, however, it is not the object itself that is ὄλβιος, but the pious devotion Basil shows by donating the object. The poet clearly juggles with words and the reason for doing this is merely to mask Basil's false modesty, the feigned embarrassment of riches that shows through in the whole epigram. If Basil was really as modest as he pretends to be by calling his donation a δῶρον πενιχρόν, why should he enumerate the titles and offices that he holds, and mention his imperial lineage? And why should he explicitly state that the reliquary was adorned with gold and silver? The large amounts of money that Basil invested in the purchase of the relic and the production of the reliquary are transformed into a sort of spiritual capital by the very act of donating the object to a religious institution⁴³. Basil will cash in his reward in the form of spiritual salvation. It is worth noting that the salvation of his soul is not something Basil hopes for, but expects to obtain. The verb αἰτῶ says it all. Ordinary people do not "request" salvation, they beg for it. However, the highest official in the imperial administration, the *parakoimomenos*, is so close to the emperor and therefore, by implication, so close to God that he can file a petition for admission to heaven⁴⁴. Of course, even a high-powered dignitary, such as Basil the Nothos, needs an intermediary to take care of his petition and deliver it into the hands of God Almighty. This is the task of St. Stephen. The

⁴² Ed. C. MANGO & E. HAWKINS, *DOP* 18 (1964) 300–301.

⁴³ On the economic aspects and symbolic value of donations, see A. CUTLER, in: *Byzance et les images*, ed. A. GUILLOU & J. DURAND, Paris 1994, 287–325.

⁴⁴ The inscription on the tenth-century staurotheca in Lorch (ed. FROLOW 1961: no. 126) states that its donor, a certain Theophanes, viewed the reliquary as a προσευκτικὸν σκήνωμα τῶν αἰτημάτων. Since the word αἶτημα, "request", is quite arrogant, and since reliquaries are expensive, Theophanes must have been a high-powered dignitary. I would suggest that he is the famous *parakoimomenos* of Romanos II.

phrase σὸς Βασίλειος (“your Basil”) implies a special bond between Basil and St. Stephen. As Basil has “crowned” the head of the Protomartyr once again, this time not with stones, but with precious metals, he deserves to be rewarded a service in return. Just as Basil is an “imperial servant”, so is he in the service of St. Stephen. And being the servant of the saint, he rightfully expects to be redeemed accordingly. It is essentially a relationship of give and take. Basil pays. Basil gets something in return. That is how the system of divine economics works.

In spite of all cynicism, however, there can be little doubt that the Byzantines, perhaps with the exception of Basil and a few other presumptuous donors, were not aware of the economic mechanisms that regulate the process of production and consumption of religious luxury objects. Spiritual salvation was of great concern to them, and they honestly believed that pious donations might secure them a place in heaven. Byzantine donors longed for redemption in the life hereafter and their acts of munificence were genuinely inspired by religious motives. Dedicatory inscriptions invariably emphasize that the donor longs for spiritual salvation; see, for instance:

Χαίροις, Γαβριὴλ πρωτάγγελε Κυρίου,
ὁ τὴν Παρθένον προσκομίσας τὸ Χαῖρε·
ἔτευξα τὴν σὴν ἐμφέρεϊαν τοῦ εἵδους
πρὸς λύτρον ψυχῆς, Λεόντιος ὁ τάλας.

“Hail to thee, Gabriel, for being the first to announce (the birth of) the Lord and for conveying (the words) “Hail Mary” to the Virgin; I, wretched Leontios, made the likeness of thine appearance for the redemption of my soul”⁴⁵. The epigram is written beneath a splendid tenth-century painting of the Archangel represented full-size, his wings spread out, his left hand stretched out and his face directed towards the Theotokos, who is painted on the opposite side of the sanctuary; in the middle, right above the altar, is a medallion that shows the bust of Christ. Leontios addresses the Archangel with the very greeting that the latter uttered when he brought the good tidings to the Virgin: “Hail”. He also explains why the Archangel deserves to be hailed, for Gabriel is the πρωτάγγελος, the first messenger of God, the angel who announced to the Holy Virgin that she would give birth to Christ. The somewhat awkward circumlocution in the third verse, τὴν σὴν ἐμφέρεϊαν τοῦ εἵδους, instead of τὴν σὴν εἰκόνα, alludes to the problem of representing angels. As angels are incorporeal, how can we portray them in the flesh, in human form? Well, Leontios answers, I certainly do not pretend to have portrayed Gabriel as he really is: his authentic image (for that is beyond our capacity), but I

⁴⁵ Ed. N. THIERRY, in: MARKOPOULOS 1989: 238–243.

simply painted “the likeness of his appearance”, the corporeal shape in which he once presented himself to the Holy Virgin. Leontios commissioned this particular wall painting, hoping that he, though a wretched sinner, might be redeemed at the Last Judgment. The holy figures that have to intercede on his behalf are Gabriel the Archangel and the Holy Virgin, whom he had depicted on the triumphal arch. As they are the first two protagonists to play a role in the incarnation of God, they must surely be able to mollify Him by their entreaties. And as Christ in the medallion is looking benevolently upon the scene of the Annunciation depicted in the sanctuary, there is surely hope for Leontios. Moreover, whenever Mass is celebrated, the faithful looking at the bema and its decoration will remember “wretched Leontios” and commemorate him in their prayers. The collective devotion of the faithful assembled in the church that Leontios had decorated ensures that his plea will be heard in the heavenly abodes each time the Incarnation of God is re-enacted upon the altar. To put it otherwise, in modern terms, the money he invested in the decoration of the sanctuary will undoubtedly pay itself back with interest. For Leontios has made sure that his plea for salvation will be heard in heaven, and as Christ normally listens to the intercessions of His mother and Gabriel as well as to the prayers of ordinary people, Leontios can certainly hope for divine forgiveness.

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The Paraklesis

The Paraklesis is a well-known iconographic type of the Theotokos standing upright, her face turned slightly in semi-profile and her left hand holding a text scroll. The earliest picture of the Virgin Paraklesis known to us is a ninth-century mosaic in the church of St. Demetrios in Thessalonica, but this particular mosaic does not yet have the standard feature of later depictions of the Paraklesis: the epigram on the text scroll. The epigram turns up for the first time on three pictures dating from the twelfth century: on a fresco in the church of the Virgin Arakiotissa in Lagoudera on Cyprus, on another fresco in the church of the Anargyroi in Kastoria, and on the icon of the Virgin Paraklesis in Spoleto⁴⁶. The epigram is a dialogue between the Holy Virgin and Jesus Christ:

Τί, μήτερο, αἰτεῖς; τὴν βροτῶν σωτηρίαν.
παρώργισάν με· συμπάθῃσον, υἱέ μου.

⁴⁶ See S. DER NERSESSIAN, *DOP* 14 (1960) 72–75 and MERCATI 1970: II, 509–513.

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπιστρέφουσι καὶ σῶσον χάριν.
ἔξουσι λύτρον· εὐχαριστῶ σοι, Λόγε⁴⁷.

“What do you want, mother?”. “The salvation of mankind”. “They have angered me”. “Forgive them, my son”. “But they do not repent”. “Well, save them anyway”. “They will have their redemption”. “I thank you, Christ”.

There is some interesting evidence indicating that these verses, and presumably also the iconographic type of the Virgin holding a text scroll, were already known in the tenth century. Among the poems of the Anonymous Italian (c. 900) we find two epigrams that form a dialogue in which the Theotokos pleads on behalf of mankind (no. 5), and her Son responds saying that He always listens to the entreaties of His mother (no. 6)⁴⁸. The first epigram appears to describe a painting of the Virgin Paraklesis and the second one a painting of Christ responding to her plea. The two pictures were probably found at the two opposite piers of the bema, to the left and the right of the altar. The epigrams tell us that the Virgin raised her hands in supplication and pleaded for all men, and that Christ listened to her plea and showed his willingness to forgive mankind. Each of the two epigrams consists of four verses, just like the Paraklesis dialogue, and the words *μητερ, καλῶς ἤτησας* (no. 6, v. 1) definitely recall the beginning of the Paraklesis text: *τί, μητερ, αἰτεῖς*. Although it cannot be proved with absolute certainty, it would appear that the Anonymous Italian was familiar with the text of the Paraklesis epigram.

The Anonymous Patrician (c. 940–970) is the author of six epigrams on a picture, or set of pictures, showing the Holy Virgin, Jesus Christ and Constantine VII⁴⁹. The fourth epigram is a dialogue between Christ and His mother, which begins with the famous words of the Paraklesis epigram: *Τί, μητερ, αἰτεῖς συμπαθῶς κινουμένη...* (“What do you ask, mother, moved by compassion?”). The picture that Constantine VII commissioned is, properly speaking, not an authentic Paraklesis since the Virgin Paraklesis intercedes on behalf of the whole of mankind and not of a specific individual. However, there are some parallels in later Byzantine art for the intrusion of donors in pictorial scenes

⁴⁷ For a somewhat different version of the epigram, see Διονυσίου τοῦ ἐκ Φουρνᾶ Ἐρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, ed. A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS. St. Petersburg 1909, 280. The *Painters' Manual* omits the fourth verse and inserts an unprosodic verse at the beginning: *δέξαι δέησιν τῆς σῆς μητρός, οἰκτιροῦν*. This version is used by many painters of the late Byzantine and post-Byzantine period.

⁴⁸ Ed. BROWNING 1963: 296, cf. p. 307. See the comments by BALDWIN 1982: 10–11.

⁴⁹ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 47, 10 to 49, 10 (nos. 1–5) and MERCATI 1927: 415, 1–6 (no. 6). Lambros' no. γ actually consists of *two* epigrams: L. 48, 21–24 and 49, 1–4. For all the epigrams edited by Lambros, see the excellent commentary by MERCATI 1927: 412–414.

that derive their imagery from the original Paraklesis composition, such as the well-known dedicatory representation of George of Antioch in the Martorana in Palermo. There we see the Holy Virgin in a Paraklesis pose, George kneeling at her feet and Christ in an aureole, extending His arm in blessing⁵⁰. The Theotokos holds a scroll in her left hand, on which we do not read the usual plea for salvation of mankind, but a dedicatory epigram asking for the protection and redemption of George of Antioch. Similarly, in the Patrician's epigrams the Holy Virgin intercedes on behalf of an individual, the emperor, whose private concerns she conveys to her Son, asking that he may be granted a long and blessed life and be pardoned in the life hereafter. And just as Christ in the Martorana shows His approval of His mother's request by a gesture of blessing, the above-mentioned epigram beginning with the standard phrase: τί, μήτεο, αἰτεῖς, ends with the comforting words: εἰσακούσω, Παρθένε ("I will grant your wish, Virgin"). The only difference between the mosaic in the Martorana and the pictorial composition described by the Anonymous Patrician is that, whereas George of Antioch kneels down to show his humility, Constantine VII is depicted standing upright in front of the Theotokos (L. 48, 24: ἑστῶτα (...) ἄντικρυς ταύτης). But these divergent poses, of course, correspond to the hierarchical difference in status between the admiral of the Norman fleet and the emperor of the Byzantine state. While I do not mean to suggest that the Patrician's epigrams necessarily describe a picture that had more or less the same iconographic features as the one in the Martorana, I do think that it showed the Virgin in a Paraklesis pose interceding on behalf of Constantine VII. The epigrams do not disclose how Christ was depicted: in an aureole as in the Martorana, or standing full-size to the left of the Theotokos or possibly, on the opposite side of the bema or the narthex entrance, facing the dedicatory picture of the Virgin Paraklesis and Constantine VII. It is not entirely clear either, whether Constantine VII was depicted next to the Theotokos (as I am inclined to think) or on a separate picture close to the Virgin Paraklesis. These problems need to be addressed by art historians more equipped in matters of iconography than I am; as a philologist, however, I would like to emphasize that the Patrician's epigrams leave no doubt that the

⁵⁰ See LAVAGNINI 1987 and E. KITZINGER, *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo*. Washington, D.C., 1990, 197–206. See also the miniature in Laura A 103 (s. XII) depicting a kneeling donor, the Virgin Paraklesis and Christ in a medallion: I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden 1976, 78–79 and fig. 45. At St. Catherine's on the Sinai there is an icon of St. Nicholas with two monks, Klemos and Poimen (the donors); in the upper part of the icon we see a Deësis, in which the Holy Virgin -again in a Paraklesis pose- holds a scroll with an epigram on it, the first verse of which reads: τί μήτεο αἰτεῖς καὶ τίνος δέη, φράσον: see G. and M. SOTIRIOU, *Εἰζόντες τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ*. Athens 1956–1958, I, fig. 173 and II, pp. 160–161.

famous Paraklesis epigram and the picture it accompanies were already known in the tenth century, long before the first pictures known to us of this particular iconographic type.

One of the six epigrams on the picture, or pictures, of the Virgin Paraklesis, Christ and Constantine VII (no. 5: L. 49, 5–10) is particularly interesting:

Ἄνθρωπε, πρόσσχε· ζῶν γὰρ ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνο·
 ὁ βασιλεὺς νῦν προσλαλεῖ τῇ Παρθένῳ,
 μεσῖτιν αὐτὴν τῷ θεανθρώπῳ Λόγῳ
 ὥσπερ καταλλάπτουσιν αὐτὸν προσφέρων.
 εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσεις, τὴν τέχνην μὴ φαυλίσῃς·
 ψυχοῦν γὰρ οὐ δίδωσιν αὕτη ζωγράφους.

“Pay attention (and listen), O man. For the emperor, alive in the picture, now speaks to the Virgin, presenting her as his intermediary to the Word who is both God and Man, since she (knows how to) placate Him. But if you do not hear (his plea), do not blame the art, for it is beyond the capacity of painters to give soul (to inanimate objects)”. This is not a very elegant epigram and as badly written texts are usually difficult to translate, I can only offer a provisional translation. But if we ignore the lack of stylistic dexterity and look at what the poet is trying to say, we may notice a few interesting details. First of all, the Anonymous Patrician clearly imitates the epigram by Geometres quoted at the beginning of this chapter – the epigram on the Forty Martyrs inscribed in the Panagia Phorbiotissa at Asinou. There we read: *προσσχὼν ἀκούσεις* (v. 2) and *εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσεις* (v. 3). The Patrician borrows the latter phrase word for word (see v. 5) and renders the former phrase in a slightly different form: *πρόσσχε* (v. 1), which has more or less the same meaning as *προσσχὼν ἀκούσεις*: “pay attention (and listen)” versus “if you pay attention, you may hear”. Secondly, the reference to the “art” (*τέχνη*) may perhaps seem peculiar, but is not without parallel in tenth-century poetry. See, for instance, the two verse inscriptions on the Warsaw ivory diptych which admonish us not to admire the art (*μὴ τὴν τέχνην θαύμαζε*), but God himself, who is responsible for the miracles and marvels depicted on the diptych⁵¹; or the beautiful epigram by Constantine the Rhodian on the Theotokos (*AP XV, 17*) telling us that since she cannot be portrayed with lights and luminaries, as she rightly deserves, we have to depict her “with the material that nature and the laws of painting (*γραφῆς νόμος*) afford”. And thirdly, the Patrician’s epigram plays with the well-known *topos* that pictures are so lifelike that the viewer has the impression that the figures depicted are almost alive, for they seem to speak and to move in space. However, the *topos* is presented with a twist. For, at the

⁵¹ Ed. P. RUTKOWSKA, *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 6 (1965) 96.

very end, we are told to our surprise that “the art” does not allow painters to breathe life into inanimate material: to “animate” (ψυχοῦν) is beyond their capacity. But if painters cannot make pictures come to life, as the poet overtly declares, how is it possible that the emperor appears to be “alive” (ζῶν)? The answer is that the picture is what the viewer reads in it. If the viewer looks at the picture and listens to its message attentively, he may see the emperor addressing the Holy Virgin and asking her to present his petition to her Son; but if he only casts a casual glance at it and does not perceive its message with proper care, the picture remains mute. Pictures are lifeless as they are, but may come to life if viewers read the pictorial message they convey. It is a matter of mental and visual imagination. Images need to be seen through imaginative eyes.

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Theodore of Stoudios, no. 67

Epigram cycles are groups of epigrams that constitute a cohesive whole and describe the pictorial programme of a specific monument or the miniatures of a specific illuminated manuscript. In the second chapter (pp. 76–81) I discussed a number of epigram cycles, either consisting of authentic verse inscriptions or assembled from various sources as quarries for inscriptions; special emphasis was placed on the manuscript evidence in general. In the following pages, until the end of this chapter, I shall examine several epigram cycles in more detail.

Let me begin by saying that there are two epigram cycles that I will not discuss, the reason being that Ševčenko and Speck have already admirably studied these two collections. Ševčenko published a highly interesting collection of tenth-century epigrams that were inscribed on the door panels (made of ivory or inlaid bone) of the Chapel of the Burning Bush in the monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai; the panels showed various scenes of the life of Moses as well as the Transfiguration⁵². And Speck convincingly proved that epigrams nos. 61–84 of Theodore of Stoudios, which describe pictures of saints, monks and church fathers in the Stoudios monastery, constitute a cohesive whole and form an epigram cycle⁵³.

⁵² ŠEVČENKO 1998: 284–298. See also J. GROSSMANN, *JÖB* 50 (2000) 243–265 and I. ŠEVČENKO, *JÖB* 52 (2002) 177–184.

⁵³ See SPECK 1964b: 333–344 and 1968: 211–217.

However, before we turn to the epigram cycles, let us first look at one of these epigrams of Theodore of Stoudios, no. 67 (“on St. Gregory the Theologian”):

Βροντῶν τὰ θεῖα τῇ βοῇ τῶν δογμάτων
ἤχησας ὄντως τὴν ὑπ’ οὐρανόν, μάκαρ·
καὶ πάσας ἀπριῖξ μωράνας τὰς αἰρέσεις
τὸν κόσμον ἐστήριξας ἐν τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις⁵⁴.

“Thundering the divine doctrine with the roar of dogmas, your voice truly resounded all over the earth, O saint, and by making all heresies at once look foolish, you fastened the world to the anchor of your words”. The epigram is difficult to translate because Theodore of Stoudios uses a very poetic diction, which here and there infringes upon the rules of Greek syntax: βροντῶ plus direct object is most unusual, and the transitive use of the verb ἤχῳ is unique⁵⁵. The adverb ἀπριῖξ ordinarily means “tightly” and is used in combination with verbs: “to hold tight”, “to cling to something tightly”; but here it appears to modify the meaning of the determiner πάσας: “all ... together”, “all ... without any exception”, “all at once”⁵⁶. The epigram alludes to certain Biblical passages: for τὴν ὑπ’ οὐρανόν, see Luke 17: 24; for μωράνας, see Paul, 1 Cor. 1: 20; and for τὸν κόσμον ἐστήριξας, see the beginning of the book Genesis. Gregory of Nazianzos’ thundering is a theme that also occurs in other epigrams on this church father: see, for instance, Geometres, Cr. 302, 11: βροντῆς λόγων πληροῦσα γῆν τε καὶ πόλον (“filling heaven and earth with the thunder of your words”), or an anonymous ninth-century epigram that begins as follows: Γρηγόριος βροντῆς νοεῶς γόνος ἐστίν (“Gregory is the descendant of the spiritual thunder”)⁵⁷. Gregory is said to be “thundering” because he is primarily known to the Byzantines as “the Theologian” (a honorific title which was awarded to him at the Council of Chalcedon). The “theologian” among the apostles is St. John. Byzantine epigrams on John the Apostle usually emphasize that he was “the

⁵⁴ Speck prints τὴν ὑπουρανόν (v. 2) by analogy to τὴν ὑφήλιον (SPECK 1968: 95); but if the word was a compound adjective, it would have to be accentuated as follows: *ὑπούρανος (cf. ὑπουράνιος).

⁵⁵ Cf. the Anon. Italian, no. 12 (ed. BROWNING 1963: 298), vv. 3–4: λόγοι δὲ πᾶσαν ὡς Θεοῦ φωναὶ κτίσιν βροντῶσι, see BALDWIN 1982: 13–14.

⁵⁶ Theodore uses the adverb twice, here and in epigram 38, 4: (Christ is) διττὸς ἀπριῖξ τὴν φύσιν (“er ist seiner Natur nach *untrennbar* doppelt”, as Speck rightly translates). The lexicon of Hesychios derives ἀπριῖξ from πρῶ, “to saw”. This false etymology, “indivisible”, accounts for Theodore’s use of the adverb in 38, 4. It also explains how the adverb is probably to be interpreted here. The adverb goes with πάσας: “all ... together”, “all at once”, i.e., Gregory refuted *all* heresies, *none excluded* or *at one blow*.

⁵⁷ See SAJDÁK 1914: 270.

son of thunder” (after Mark 3: 17) and that he “thundered” while preaching his divine words to the world⁵⁸. It is this very parallel between the two theologians (the apostle and the church father) that explains why Theodore of Stoudios refers to the thundering power of Gregory’s dogmatic doctrines in epigram 67. The metaphors βροντῶν, βοῇ and ἤχησας all derive from this analogy.

It is also worth noticing that Theodore of Stoudios quotes himself. His hymn on St. Gregory begins as follows: Τὰ σοφώτατα / τῆς φλογερῆς σου γλώττης ἔπη, / ἀστραπτόμενα / ἐκ τοῦ ἀρρήτου φάους, λάμπων, / τὴν οἰκουμένην / κατελάμπρυνας, / Γρηγόριε, / βροντήσας φρικτῶς / τῆς Τριάδος τὸ δόγμα, / καὶ πάσας ἀπρίξ / τὰς αἰρέσεις μωράνας, / ἱεράρχων / ὁ θεολογικώτατος⁵⁹. Τὴν οἰκουμένην = τὴν ὑπ’ οὐρανόν, βροντήσας (...) τὸ δόγμα = βροντῶν τὰ θεῖα τῇ βοῇ τῶν δογμάτων, and καὶ πάσας ἀπρίξ / τὰς αἰρέσεις μωράνας = καὶ πάσας ἀπρίξ μωράνας τὰς αἰρέσεις. Of course, it is difficult to decide which text was written first, the hymn or the epigram, but it does not really matter. For vastly more important than the question of priority is the fact that what sounds right in a hymn can also be used for the composition of an epigram on a work of art, or the other way around. How do we account for this interchange of genres? How can a text move from one genre to another? It has doubtless something to do with Byzantine perceptions of the literary and the artistic, but since there is no good study of Byzantine aesthetics⁶⁰, it is difficult to provide an answer. As Maguire pointed out, hymnography and art relate to each other in Byzantium: hymns are visualized in paint and paintings are transformed into the metaphorical language of hymnography⁶¹. In Byzantium there is no fixed boundary between literature and art. Language visualizes and the visual turns into words. Since the visual language of icons is reflected in the imagery of hymns, it is hardly surprising that these literary images in their turn reverberate in epigrams on works of art. It is a sort of domino effect. But whereas there is always a primal cause for the domino effect, a wave of falling pieces from one end of the row to the other, here we see all sorts of influences going in opposite directions. Hymns, art, epigrams – all these are interrelated and influence each other, with the result that they intertwine into an undisentangleable maze of reciprocities.

The epigram is also found in a number of mid tenth-century Italian manuscripts containing the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos⁶², where it no longer serves its original purpose as a verse inscription on a picture of the saint, but

⁵⁸ See KOMINIS 1951: 274–278; FOLLIERI 1956: 77, 80, 152 and 154; HÖRANDNER 2000: 79.

⁵⁹ Ed. PITRA 1876–88: I, 351 (no. VIII). See SPECK 1968: 224.

⁶⁰ G. MATHEW, *Byzantine Aesthetics*. London 1963, is outdated; S. AVERINCEV, *L’ anima e lo specchio*. Bologna 1988, is too speculative to be of any use.

⁶¹ See MAGUIRE 1981: *passim*, esp. pp. 5–8.

⁶² See HÖRANDNER 1994b: 197–199 and SOMERS 1999: 533–542.

in fact functions as a book epigram celebrating the author of the homilies. One certainly cannot pretend that the epigram was re-used indiscriminately, simply because it floats from one context to another⁶³. For, with all its emphasis on Gregory's doctrinal expositions, the epigram perfectly fits into its new context. It is actually quite an appropriate homage to the author of the homilies, for if we had not known what its original purpose was, no one would have suspected that it was not an authentic book epigram.

Thus we see that the text of Theod. St. 67 serves as part of an encomiastic hymn, as an epigram on a work of art, and as a book epigram. The words remain practically the same, but the contexts differ. Since the context largely determines how a poetic text should be interpreted, we are faced with three totally different interpretations of the same text, all three of which can be equally defended.

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Byzantine Charioteer Epigrams

The *Planudean Anthology* contains a series of Byzantine epigrams that describe images of famous sixth-century charioteers, which were depicted on the ceiling of the imperial gallery at the Hippodrome⁶⁴. This epigram cycle (*APL* 380–387) does not derive from the original anthology of Cephalas, but from one of its oldest apographs: *Pla* – an apograph produced at the behest of Thomas the Patrician and Logothete tou Dromou in the first quarter of the tenth century⁶⁵. The epigrams are written in paroxytone dodecasyllables that are prosodically correct according to Byzantine standards, but deviate from the rules of ancient Greek prosody: for instance, the short iota in Κωνσταντῖνος (384. 1; 385. 1) or the long upsilon in Πορφύριος (380. 3; 381. 2). The epigrams elaborate on the typically Byzantine theme of ‘pictorial liveliness’: the pictures are so true to nature and so lifelike that you would almost think that the

⁶³ This ‘re-using’ of epigrams is not without parallel in Byzantium. For instance, Marc. gr. 53 (a. 968) contains four hexametric distichs on Basil the Great’s homily *In S. Christi generationem*: ed. RUDBERG 1961: 63–64. These four book epigrams, I would suggest, originally served as epigrams on pictures of the Nativity. See, for instance: δέορξο παρθένον ὧδε γάλα προχέουσας ἀνάνδρως / καὶ περάτων τίττουςαν ἀπειρόχρονον βασιλῆα (“Behold the Virgin here, as she, untouched by a man, pours forth milk and gives birth to the timeless Lord of the universe”).

⁶⁴ See CAMERON 1973: 188–200.

⁶⁵ See chapter 3, pp. 115–116.

charioteers have come to life again and are ready to continue their races. The epigrams were probably composed in the short period after the completion of Cephalas' anthology and before they entered the manuscript of Thomas the Patrician: that is, between c. 900 and 925.

Since there seems to be no reason why the famous charioteers of the past, however celebrated they were during the reigns of Anastasius, Justin and Justinian, would have been portrayed in the imperial gallery as late as 900–925, Alan Cameron surmised that the portraits of the charioteers themselves date from the period of their glorious triumphs and that the epigrams merely form a literary description of late antique art⁶⁶. This is certainly an imaginative theory, but it entails a few serious problems. Firstly, why should a tenth-century author write epigrams on works of art produced some four hundred years earlier? And secondly, how likely is the scenario of late antique pictures surviving unaltered in the imperial gallery of the Hippodrome for the next four centuries? Does not every emperor wish to see his own imperial programme reflected in the sacrosanct spaces he frequents?

If we examine the epigrams closely, there can be little doubt that the epigrams are, in fact verse inscriptions on *contemporary* works of art. First of all, all the epigrams comprise precisely the same number of verses: five. If these epigrams merely served a literary purpose, there would really be no reason why the poet should confine himself to quintets. But if the epigrams served as verse inscriptions, the poet would have every reason to force his texts into the straitjacket of five verses, for the size of verse inscriptions is obviously predetermined by the space available on the works of art they are supposed to accompany. Secondly, and more importantly, the epigrams themselves leave no doubt that they describe contemporary works of art. See, for instance, *API* 386:

Χεῖρ, ἴδε, γεννᾷ τοὺς πάλαι τεθνηκότας·
 Ἰουλιανὸς καὶ γὰρ ὥς πάλαι σθένει
 ἔλκων, μεθέλκων Ῥουσίου τὰς ἡνίας·
 καὶ νῦν γραφεῖς ἔστηκεν ὑψοῦ σὺν δίφρῳ·
 τὸ νεῦμα χεῖρ μένει δέ· τὴν νύσσαν δότε⁶⁷.

“Look, the hand (of the artist) gives life to those who passed away long ago, for Julian is as strong as of old, pulling the reins of the Reds hither and thither. And now he stands depicted up there, along with his chariot. His hand awaits the signal. Give him free course!”. The epigram emphasizes that the picture of Julian standing on his chariot is so lifelike that it is as if he is only waiting for

⁶⁶ See CAMERON 1973: 201–204.

⁶⁷ The ms. reads ἴδε γεννᾷ; modern editions print οἶδε γεννᾷν *metri causa*. This emendation is not necessary in view of the casual way Byzantine poets handle the *dichrona*.

the signal, and off he will go. Julian and the other three charioteers are long dead, but come to life again in the pictures as strong and glorious as they once used to be. The words καὶ νῦν γοαφεῖς clearly refer to the present and indicate that the making of Julian's picture coincides chronologically with the moment in time that the epigram came into being: that is, *now*.

Cameron argues that the pictures date from the early sixth century because the epigrams seem to offer first-hand information on the charioteers, especially on their age and the colours they sported⁶⁸. I would suggest, on the contrary, that the Byzantine poet obtained all his information from the late antique epigrams on the statues of the charioteers (*APL* 335–378 and *AP* XV, 41–50). His source was the anthology of Cephalas itself. Let us imagine him sitting at his writing desk and opening his copy of Cephalas at the page where the series of charioteer epigrams begins. He only has to read the first four of the thirty-two epigrams on Porphyrius (*APL* 335–362 & *AP* XV, 44, 46–47, 50) to get all the information he needs: Porphyrius is the son of Kalchas; he is a young man; and he races for the Blues (*APL* 335–338, cf. *APL* 380–381). The poet also borrows two phrases that appeal to him: Πορφύριον Κάλχαντος (*APL* 335. 1) = Πορφύριος Κάλχαντος (*APL* 381. 2); πρῶτον ἱουλὸν ἔχων (*APL* 336. 6) = ἱουλὸν ἀνθῶν πρῶτον (*APL* 381. 1). Then he turns to the next charioteer, Faustinus (*APL* 363–364, cf. *APL* 382–383). Unfortunately, the late antique epigrams do not mention the colour he sported. But our poet is not put off by a problem as trivial as that. For having mentioned the Blues (the team of Porphyrius), he now simply needs the opposite colour: Green, and thus Faustinus becomes a Green charioteer. And since the late antique epigrams he was reading tell us that Faustinus was an old man, the poet, too, emphasizes that the charioteer used to compete in the Hippodrome at an advanced age. The next charioteer is Constantine (*AP* XV, 41–42, *APL* 365, *AP* XV, 43 and *APL* 366–375, cf. *APL* 384–385). The late antique epigrams again do not tell us for which team Constantine used to race, but since our poet already has a Blue and a Green charioteer, he now needs someone to compete for the Whites (a subdivision of the Blues). Well, Constantine will do! The poet imitates one of the epigrams on Constantine: see *APL* 365. 1–3 ἐξότε Κωνσταντῖνος ἔδου δόμον ᾿Αἶδος εἴσω, / πλήτο κατηφείης ἵπποσύνης στάδιον, / τερπωλὴ δ' ἀπέλειπε θεήμονας and *APL* 385. 3–5 ἀφ' οὗ δὲ τοῦτον ἤρπασεν Χάρων, ἔδου / τὸ φῶς ἀμίλλης ἱππικῶν δρομημάτων / καὶ πᾶσα τέρψις τοῦ θεάτρου καὶ τέχνη. The poet now only needs a Red charioteer to complete the four colours. However, the charioteer that is next in line, Uranius (*AP* XV, 49, *APL* 376–377, *AP* XV, 48 and *APL* 378), used to compete for the Blues and the Greens, as the first epigram informs us. So our poet cannot use him. But fortunately for him, the last charioteer of the series of late antique

⁶⁸ See CAMERON 1973: 202–203.

epigrams, Julian (*AP* XV, 45, cf. *APL* 386–387), is not attributed a specific colour in the sole epigram written in his honour. Perhaps the poet even read a typically Byzantine innuendo in the first verse of the epigram stating that Julian was a “nursling of Tyre”. As Tyre was famous for its purple dye, the poet may have thought that Julian was “purplish”, that is, “red”.

In short, seeing that the Byzantine epigrams present the charioteers in the same order as the late antique ones and contain obvious literary reminiscences, there can be but little doubt that the tenth-century poet was familiar with the late antique epigrams on the charioteers. Since he only needed to know a few iconographic details, he read the late antique epigrams rather superficially. He just haphazardly thumbed through his copy of Cephala and picked out the first few epigrams on each of the charioteers. If he had read more carefully, he would have seen that Porphyrius regularly changed team and did not only race for the Blues, but also for the Greens. He then would also have seen that two of the epigrams on Uranius make it abundantly clear that his colleague Constantine used to compete for the Greens (*AP* XV, 48. 1–3 and *APL* 376. 4). In fact, the tenth-century poet committed a grave error by arbitrarily assuming that Constantine used to race for the Whites. But then again, the poet was not interested in historical accuracy. It did not matter for which teams the charioteers were once racing. The poet simply wanted four famous names and four matching colours. If the first epigrams on Porphyrius had stated that he sported the colour Green, the poet would just as easily have portrayed Porphyrius as a Green charioteer. And then he would have stated that Faustinus once used to compete for the Blues, simply because he needed the opposite colour of the Greens. The early tenth-century epigrams do not provide, and more importantly, do not purport to provide, accurate historical information on the charioteers of the past, but rather constitute a literary reflection of the late antique epigrams found in the anthology of Cephala.

The poet of these Byzantine epigrams must have been the very person who told the artists how they should portray the ancient charioteers on the ceiling of the *παράκλυτον*, the gallery in the Kathisma above the level of the imperial box⁶⁹. While it was the poet who came up with the iconographic programme for the decoration of the *παράκλυτον*, it was the emperor who made it possible by providing the necessary funds. It is reasonable to assume that the poet tried his best to please his patron and that the pictures of the ancient charioteers were precisely what the emperor desired to see when he was sitting in his imperial box in the Hippodrome. It is not known who was the reigning emperor at the time: Leo VI, Alexander, young Constantine Porphyrogenitus or Romanos I. Epigram *APL* 385 begins with a rather awkward phrase possibly indicating that

⁶⁹ See CAMERON 1973: 200–201.

when the epigrams and the pictures were produced, young Constantine was the ruling emperor: Κωνσταντῖνος γ' ἦν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς πάλαι χρόνοις / λευκῆς χροᾶς τέθριππον ἔλκων εὐστρόφως ("This was Constantine, but in the old days, when he skilfully drove the four-horse chariot of the Whites"). It cannot be ruled out, however, that this is simply a clumsy expression and that the poet with the connective ἀλλὰ only wanted to stress that Constantine lived *very* long ago: "This was Constantine in the days of yore, when he, etc".

It may perhaps seem somewhat peculiar that the tenth-century decoration of the *παράκλυτον* was inspired by late antique poetry. It is well known that some forms of Byzantine art, such as classicizing miniatures in illuminated manuscripts, go back to Hellenistic, early Roman or late antique works of art⁷⁰. And some of these ancient models, in turn, derive their inspiration from literature: Homer, Euripides, Menander, and, in late antiquity, Nonnos. But did ancient and late antique secular literature directly influence Byzantine art? The wall paintings in the early eleventh-century monastery of Eski Gümüş provide an interesting parallel to the decoration of the imperial gallery. In a rock-cut chamber above the narthex we find a few paintings depicting Aesopic fables with *tituli* in dodecasyllabic verse⁷¹. As this "Aesopic" decoration is without parallel both in Antiquity and in Byzantium, there is no need to assume in the Weitzmannian mould that the painter imitated some late antique model which -alas!- no longer exists. The painter must have directly drawn his inspiration from the reading of the fables themselves. Likewise, the poet of *API* 380–387 came up with the idea of the iconographic programme after having read the late antique epigrams in the anthology of Cephalas.

However, there is still one essential question that needs to be addressed: why was the imperial loge adorned with pictures of late antique charioteers in the early tenth century? First of all, this is undoubtedly related to the classicizing movement of the time, of which the anthology of Cephalas forms a splendid example. Given the large number of copies of Cephalas' anthology in circulation in the first half of the tenth century, ancient and late antique epigrams must have been much in vogue at the time. Secondly, as noted by many scholars, even at the peak of the classicizing movement the Byzantines do not appear to be much interested in the classical legacy itself, but rather in its shadowy reflections in late antique art and literature. The Byzantines see themselves as heirs to the christianized Roman empire. And their emperors see

⁷⁰ The Paris Psalter, the Bible of Niketas, evangelists looking like ancient philosophers, ivories depicting *putti*, silver plates with dionysiac scenes, etc., etc. – in short, all the imitations of classical art, on which the concept of the so-called Macedonian Renaissance is based.

⁷¹ See M. GOUGH, *Anatolian Studies* 15 (1965) 162–164. See also chapter 8, p. 259.

themselves as new Constantines and new Justinians. Therefore, the image of imperial victory, as reflected in the glorious feats of Porphyrius and other charioteers of late antiquity, was much more familiar to the Byzantines than, say, the victory of an ancient athlete at the Olympic Games. And thirdly, when the Byzantines and their emperors were present at a spectacle in the Hippodrome, they could see the remnants of their glorious past on the *spina*: the Theodosian obelisk, for instance, but also the statues of the famous charioteers. Porphyrius and the other charioteers were there to remind them of the glory that was Rome: the “new Rome”, that is, in its heyday before the Arabs and the “barbarous” iconoclasts despoiled it of its former splendour. Again as noted by many scholars⁷², the classicizing movement of the ninth and tenth centuries is basically a reaction to the disasters of the dark ages. When the military, economic and cultural crisis was over, the Byzantines tried to link up with late antique traditions by simply pretending that the links with the past had never really been severed, not even by the intermediary period of cultural decline, for which they blamed the iconoclasts. The cultural revival of the ninth and tenth centuries is a nostalgic return to the legacy of late antiquity. And the indisputable fact that ninth-century Byzantium was quite different from sixth-century Byzantium did not stop the Byzantine irredentists from dreaming that the glorious past could be recovered if people just tried hard enough.

It is against the background of these ideological preferences, literary vogues and cultural illusions that one needs to view the early tenth-century decoration of the imperial gallery. In sharp contrast to the sixth-century emperors who allowed the circus factions to erect statues of contemporary charioteers, and to Constantine V who allegedly ordered that his own favourite charioteer Ouraniakos should be depicted on the ceiling of the Milion⁷³, here we have an early tenth-century emperor desirous of representing the charioteers of the past rather than those of his own time. This is quite peculiar. In fact, it rather perversely shows that the idea of imperial *renovatio* popular in the ninth and tenth centuries was nothing but a hollow sham. While earlier emperors granted their charioteers the prerogative of sharing in the glory of imperial victory (as long as it did not diminish their own authority), the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty apparently did not tolerate any infringements on their sovereign power. They did not wish to look at pictures of living champions. But pictures of charioteers long dead are another matter, of course. It is not just that dead charioteers cannot possibly claim a share in imperial victory, but the fame of their illustrious exploits also relates to the imperial institution itself,

⁷² Above all Paul Speck in numerous publications: see, for instance, SPECK 1998.

⁷³ See: *La Vie d' Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre*, ed. M.-F. AUZÉPY. Aldershot 1997, 166 and 265, n. 411–412.

the historical continuum of the past and the present. The late antique chariot-eers were there, on the ceiling of the imperial gallery, to remind viewers of the everlasting imperial grandeur – dim figures of the past, but alive in the present. Who they really were and what they had actually achieved in times past, was utterly irrelevant as long as appearances were kept up and people could pretend that nothing had changed in the course of time. The pictures of the charioteers in the imperial gallery had no historical dimension, but merely served to emphasize the concept of imperial victory at its brightest and to highlight the imperturbability and permanence of the imperial institution itself.

It is not known what the pictures looked like. In almost all the epigrams the pictures of the charioteers are said to be so lifelike that it is as if the charioteers are poised to race upwards, straight into heaven where they will receive their crowns. And in *APL* 382. 1 and 384. 2 the ceiling on which the charioteers were depicted is called a δόμος, a vault⁷⁴. It would seem, therefore, that the four charioteers were depicted each in one quarter of the inside of a vault, with their chariots and their horses moving upwards⁷⁵. There is no need to assume that the tenth-century artists imitated late antique art, only because the pictures they made portrayed famous charioteers of the past. Since those responsible for the iconographic programme of the imperial gallery were not interested in historical accuracy, there is no reason why the late antique charioteers should have been depicted exactly as they were represented in the Hippodrome. And although the decoration of the παρακλυπικόν formed an artistic response to the literary movement of classicism, the pictures were not necessarily classicizing. The “oriental” representations of charioteers on eighth- and ninth-century silks (the Aachen-Cluny textile and, especially, the beautiful Münsterbilsen textile)⁷⁶ probably form a splendid illustration of the kind of pictures that could once be found on the ceiling of the imperial gallery. On the Münsterbilsen textile we see four horses lifting their front legs and the charioteer raising his hands upward. There is a perpendicular movement in this picture, just as required by the text of the Byzantine epigrams on the charioteers. Up they go, ascending to heaven.

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⁷⁴ See CAMERON 1973: 201 and 205.

⁷⁵ Compare, for instance, the vault mosaic in the Capella Arcivescovile of the Cathedral of Ravenna, where we see four slender angels rising upwards to support the chi-ro medalion in the centre: see J. LOWDEN, *Early Christian & Byzantine Art*. London 1997, fig. 66.

⁷⁶ See CAMERON 1973: figs. 26 and 27. Cf. the eighth-century solar table in the Vatican Ptolemy (Vat. gr. 1291), showing the emperor/sun and his four-horse chariot at the centre of the zodiac.

Three Christological Epigram Cycles

As I shall explain in Appendix VII, Par. Suppl. gr. 690 contains two excerpts, the first on fols. 64^v–65^v and the second on fols. 116^r–117^r, from a major collection of epigrams and poems by George of Pisidia, which is no longer extant. Part of this collection was an epigram cycle on christological scenes, which was only partially copied by the scribe. In the first excerpt he copied six epigrams: St. 29–34; in the second excerpt he not only copied ten other epigrams: St. 50–59, but also three doublets (epigrams also found in the first excerpt): St. 29, 30 and 32. Because of these three doublets, it is fairly easy to reconstruct the original order of the epigrams: namely, St. 50, 29, 51–52, 30–31, 53–55, 32–33, 56, 34 and 57–59. It is beyond any doubt that the original epigram cycle contained more than these sixteen epigrams, but since we can only guess what is missing, it would be a mere waste of time and energy to speculate on the original contents of Pisides' epigram cycle.

The sixteen epigrams deal with the following iconographic subjects: Herod and the Magi (St. 50), the Adoration of the Magi (St. 29), the Flight into Egypt (St. 51), the Hypapante (St. 52), the Baptism (St. 30–31 and 53)⁷⁷, the Healing of the Lame (St. 54), the Entry into Jerusalem (St. 55), the Betrayal (St. 32), Christ in Fetters (St. 33)⁷⁸, the Crucifixion (St. 56 and 34), the Entombment (St. 57), the Anastasis (St. 58) and the Chairete (St. 59). Seeing that the Baptism is treated in three different epigrams and the Crucifixion in two, it does not seem very likely that the epigram cycle was originally intended to be inscribed on a specific monument, or served as captions to the miniatures of a single illuminated manuscript. For there is no good reason why a monument or an illuminated manuscript should bear more than one depiction of the Baptism and the Crucifixion. However, the mere fact that the christological scenes are presented in a purely chronological order, from the Magi to the Chairete, doubtless indicates that at the time Pisides was writing, Byzantine artists were already exploiting the device of iconographic cycles of the life of Christ, such as we find in later art (usually in the abbreviated form of the feast cycle).

⁷⁷ The text of St. 53 may seem somewhat obscure at first sight, but “the axe that is near” and “the trees that will be burnt” undoubtedly refer to the words of John the Baptist to the Pharisees (Matt. 3: 10, Luke 3: 9), which he uttered immediately before Jesus arrived at the Jordan to be baptized. The lemma of St. 53, εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν, does not refer back to St. 52 (εἰς τὴν ὑπαπαντὴν), but to St. 30–31 (εἰς τὴν βάπτισιν).

⁷⁸ Entitled: εἰς τὴν ἀπαγωγὴν, on the leading-away. This is probably the scene of Christ in shackles being led before Pilate (Matt. 27: 2, Mark 15: 1) or possibly the Way of the Cross (see HÖRANDNER 1994a: no. XIII, p. 129 and n. 53).

The most interesting feature of this epigram cycle is the presence of an epigram on the Anastasis as early as c. 610–630. The epigram (St. 58) reads:

“Αἰδὼν πατήσας ἔξανέστης τοῦ τάφου
καὶ τὴν πεσοῦσαν ἔξανέστησας φύσιν.

“Having crushed Hades underfoot, you rose from the grave and raised the fallen nature (of mankind)”. In early Byzantine art the awesome mystery of the Resurrection is not shown directly, but rather alluded to in the form of the *Myrrhophoroi*, either depicted next to the empty tomb (Women at the Tomb) or meeting the resurrected Christ who welcomes them (*Chairete*). The earliest pictures of the Anastasis date from the early eighth century. The image of the Anastasis shows Christ bursting the gates of Hell and releasing Adam from the shackles of death. The representation of the Anastasis may assume divergent forms, such as Christ walking over the bolts of Hell’s gates or trampling on the figure of Hades, Christ striding toward Adam and Eve or dragging them from the grave, and so forth. Despite all these important iconographic differences, the central theme of the Anastasis remains essentially the same in all the images and epigrams that have come down to us: victory over death. Hades is vanquished and the faithful are redeemed by the resurrection of Christ. In her excellent book on the Anastasis⁷⁹, Kartsonis connects the genesis of the image to late seventh-century theological disputes between Anastasios of Sinai and various heretical sects, such as the Theopaschites who claimed that God, too, had suffered on the cross – a theory clearly opposed to the orthodox view that the two natures of Christ are not to be confused and that Christ had suffered in the flesh as any other mortal being. That the pictorial scene of the Anastasis came into being under the influence of debates concerning the complex relationship between the two natures of Christ, seems indisputable. I do not think, therefore, that the epigram by Pisides on the Anastasis undermines the central thesis of Kartsonis’ book, but the epigram leaves no doubt that the origins of the Anastasis should be dated at least some fifty years earlier. The *Hodegos* by Anastasios of Sinai as well as the Acts of the Quinisext Council in Trullo (691–692) provide extremely valuable evidence on the theological background of the Anastasis, but should not be seen as its starting point. These two texts are merely documents testifying to the lively theological debates of the preceding decades, which crystallized into the iconographic type of the Anastasis.

St. 58 is not the only epigram by Pisides on the theme of the Anastasis. There are three more epigrams: St. 75, 103 and 104. In St. 75 Pisides calls the liturgical feast of the Anastasis “the grace that manifests itself most clearly among all feasts”. Since “light” and “clarity” are the key words in this partic-

⁷⁹ A. KARTSONIS, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image*. Princeton 1986.

ular epigram, I suspect that it does not describe the Anastasis in the classic sense of the word, but rather the late antique iconographic type of the Resurrection that shows the tomb of Christ blazing with light⁸⁰. St. 103 and 104 form part of a short series of epigrams on the Great Feasts: Annunciation, Nativity, Crucifixion, Palm Sunday, Ascension and Anastasis (St. 96–104). The text of St. 104 is particularly interesting as it mentions most of the iconographic elements traditionally associated with the scene of the Anastasis: “Appearing in the grave, you have broken the gates of Hades and bound him in fetters; and victorious you take off, bringing Adam and Eve to life again. The whole world worships your power”. Here we have the shattered gates of Hell, the figure of Hades lying in fetters and Christ hastily emerging from the grave (ἐκτρύχεις), and literally bringing (φέρων) Adam and Eve to life again. Clearly the epigram describes the image of the Anastasis. Pisides particularly emphasizes the aspect of triumphant victory. Christ is victorious (νικηφόρος) and all people bow down respectfully (προσκυνεῖ) at the sight of His sovereign power, as they would do before the emperor.

The epigrams by Ignatios Magistor on the decoration of the church of the Virgin of the Source (the *Pege*) can be found in the Greek Anthology (*AP* I, 109–114)⁸¹. The church was adorned with mosaics by Emperor Basil I between 870 and 879, when his sons Constantine and Leo were officially co-emperors: see the dedicatory epigram, no. 109. Epigrams 110–114 describe the Ascension, the Anastasis, the Transfiguration, the Presentation in the Temple and the Chairete. The lemma attached to no. 111, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ναῷ εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν, poses a serious problem. The text of the epigram reads:

Ὁ νεκρὸς Ἄιδης ἐξεμεῖ τεθνηκότας,
κάθαρσιν εὐρών σάρκα τὴν τοῦ δεσπότη.

“Dead Hades vomits up the dead, after having been purged by the flesh of the Lord”. The unsavoury metaphor of vomiting Hades can be found in many Byzantine epigrams on the Anastasis: see, for instance, Prodromos, *Tetr.* 231a, vv. 2–3: ναί, πλῆττε τὴν ἀπληστον Ἄδου γαστέρα / ἕως ἂν οὖς πέπωκεν ἐξαναπτύση (“keep on punching Hades in his insatiable stomach until he will spit out those whom he has devoured”). So, seeing that no. 111 appears to be an epigram on the Anastasis, how do we account for the lemma? In her book on the Anastasis,

⁸⁰ See KARTSONIS (footnote above), 21–23.

⁸¹ MAKRI 1997: 12–13, argues that epigrams *AP* I, 115–118 were also inscribed in the church of the Source. But whereas 109–114 are written in dodecasyllable, 115 and 116. 3–4 [epigram 116. 1–2 is spurious] are written in hexameter and probably date from the fifth or sixth century. Moreover, whereas the lemmata of 109–115 explicitly state that these epigrams were inscribed in the church of the Source, the lemmata attached to the following epigrams do not mention their place of provenance.

Kartsonis assumes that the epigram describes either an extremely rare type of the Crucifixion, in which the cross is firmly planted in the stomach of Hades, or an equally unusual iconographic composition which combines the Crucifixion and the Rising of the Dead⁸². It is worth noting, however, that the epigram does not refer to the cross. If the cross is the emetic that makes Hades vomit, why does the poet not mention it expressly? And why do later Anastasis epigrams, such as the one by Prodomos, use the metaphorical image of vomiting Hades if it actually refers to the Crucifixion? Is the lemma incorrect? Byzantine scribes were sometimes rather absent-minded, especially at the end of a hard day's work. The epigrams on the decoration of the church of the Source can be found at the lower half of page 62 of the Palatine manuscript. This was the last page copied by scribe A (the following pages were written by his fellow scribe J). When he reached page 62, scribe A was evidently getting very tired, as a few scribal errors clearly indicate: he put the lemma of 114 above 113 (but having discovered his mistake, erased it and wrote the correct title) and conflated the texts of 30 and 116 by way of haplography (a mistake which he afterwards deleted)⁸³. The scribe's fatigue probably also accounts for the puzzling lemma attached to epigram no. 111. Between the epigrams on the Ascension and the Anastasis there must have been an epigram on the Crucifixion, of which he copied only the title, but forgot to copy the text. He then turned to the text of the next epigram (on the Anastasis), which he faithfully copied. In other words, because of his scribal error due to fatigue, scribe A provided the lemma, but not the text of the epigram on the Crucifixion, and the text, but not the lemma of the epigram on the Anastasis⁸⁴.

Epigrams nos. 109–114 (and the epigram on the Crucifixion that is missing) were inscribed on the walls and the dome of the church of the Virgin of the Source, as indicated by the lemmata attached to them. The lemma attached to 110 even specifies where the epigram was situated in the church: εἰς τὸν τοῦδ' ἄλλον, "in the dome". The epigrams focus on the major liturgical feasts. They are epigrams on the pictures of the feast cycle. This particular church programme of decoration became popular in the middle Byzantine period. The earliest surviving examples date from the eleventh century. By good fortune, however, we have a few literary descriptions of church decorations demonstrating that the feast cycle was already introduced in Byzantine monumental art in the second half of the ninth century⁸⁵. Although the twelve-feast cycle

⁸² A. KARTSONIS, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image*. Princeton 1986, 146–150.

⁸³ See chapter 3, pp. 89–90.

⁸⁴ See STADTMÜLLER 1894–1906: I, p. XVI.

⁸⁵ See the texts in: C. MANGO, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*. Englewood Cliffs 1972, 199–201 (the decoration of the church of the Holy Apostles dating from the reign of Basil I) and 203–205 (the church of Zaoutzas dating from 886–893).

appears to have been the standard iconographic formula, there are very few churches that have all twelve. Furthermore, there are considerable variations even in the selection of the twelve feasts that are depicted. Every church will have an Anastasis or a Crucifixion, but the inclusion of the Incredulity of Thomas, for instance, is merely an option⁸⁶. Epigrams on the Great Feasts usually follow a purely chronological order: say, from the Annunciation to the Koimesis. This is not the case in *AP* I, 110–114, where we first have the Ascension, and then various scenes from the life of Christ before He ascended to heaven. The reason for this is obvious. Gregory of Kampsas, the epigrapher who collected these verse inscriptions, copied the epigrams in the exact order in which he first saw them. On entering the church he noticed the dedicatory verse inscription above the main gate or above the narthex entrance to the nave: no. 109. Inside the church, the magnificent cupola adorned with a mosaic of the Ascension was the first thing to attract his attention: no. 110. Only then did he turn his eyes to the mosaics on the walls of the church: the Crucifixion, the Anastasis, the Transfiguration, the Hypapante and the Chairete (nos. 111–114). It is not known whether Gregory of Kampsas copied all the verse inscriptions found in the church, nor whether the scribe of the Palatine manuscript omitted only the epigram on the Crucifixion. Since either of the two, the epigrapher or the scribe, may possibly have overlooked some vital evidence, we cannot be absolutely certain that the walls of the church were adorned only with these five major pictures of the Great Feasts. Nor can we establish on which walls the five pictures were to be found. In churches the chronological sequence of the pictures of the feast cycle is normally from the south-east to the north-east squinch of the *naos*, but there are so many exceptions to this rule that it is simply impossible to follow Gregory of Kampsas in every move he made. Did he first look at the northern church wall where he spotted the Crucifixion and the Anastasis, or were these two pictures in fact to be found at a different spot in the church? We simply do not know. But what we know for certain is that the order of the epigrams at *AP* I, 109–114 by and large corresponds to Gregory's first impressions. It is through his eyes that we decipher the original context of these epigrams.

The Anonymous Patrician (c. 940–970) is the author of a group of nine epigrams on various christological scenes: Transfiguration, Nativity, Hypapante, Baptism, Pentecost, Washing of Feet, Anastasis, Crucifixion and Descent from the Cross⁸⁷. These pictures were in mosaic: *παγχρυσόμουσόςπιττα*

⁸⁶ See E. KITZINGER, *Cahiers Archéologiques* 36 (1988) 51–73.

⁸⁷ The last three were edited by LAMBROS 1922: 49, 13 – 50, 6 (=L.) [unfortunately, with some errors, see the corrections by MERCATI 1927: 416–417]; the first six were edited by MERCATI 1927: 415, 7 – 416, 48 (=M.). The manuscript of the poems and epigrams of the Anonymous Patrician, Vat. Pal. gr. 367, quite often offers dubious readings and skips

(M. 415, 16), and had been donated by a certain Romanos Argyros who held the function of *kensor* (M. 415, 15–16; M. 416, 41–42; and L. 49, 16–17)⁸⁸. Since later historical sources mention the existence of a monastery called μονή Ἀργυρῶν or τοῦ Ἀργυροπώλου, it seems likely that he donated these mosaics to the monastery that bore his name. The epigrams do not follow a strict chronological order: the Transfiguration should have been placed after the Baptism, and both the Anastasis and the Pentecost after the Descent from the Cross. This ‘disorderliness’ is caused by the same organic factors as the ones applying to the seemingly deviant decoration of the church of the Virgin of the Source. In monumental art the position of each of the pictures of the feast cycle is dictated by circumstantial architectonic factors, such as the size and the form of the church, the available space on the walls, the iconographical programme, and so forth. It is for this reason that authentic verse inscriptions, such as the epigrams by the Anonymous Patrician, do not follow the life of Christ step by step, but are arranged according to the architectonic design of the church in which they were to be found. The frequent use of verbs of perception and the addressing of the viewers in the second person leave no doubt that the epigrams on the decoration of the katholikon of the Argyros monastery served as verse inscriptions. See, for instance, the epigram on the Washing of Feet (M. 416, 43–48):

Ἄνθρωπε, φρίξον οὐρανοῦ τὸν δεσπότην
 πόδας μαθητῶν ἐκκαθαίροντα βλέπων,
 καὶ πᾶσαν ὀφρὺν συγκατασπάσας κάτω
 ἄνω πρόβαινε πρὸς πόλον τῷ μετρίῳ·
 ὁδῶν γὰρ ὕψος ἐκδιδάσκων ὁ πλάσας
 ἐκὼν βροτοῦται καὶ βροτῶν νίπτει πόδας.

“O man, tremble at the sight of the Lord of the Heavens cleansing the feet of His disciples! And having subdued all haughtiness ascend to heaven with humility! For (here) the Creator willingly becomes man and washes the feet of men, and thus shows the path that leads upward”⁸⁹. The poet plays with the

words or even whole verses. It also misquotes the text of the epigram on the Baptism: M. 415, 17–20 should be placed before 415, 13–16; these two quatrains should not be separated, but form one poem (see καὶ in M. 415, 13, referring back to M. 415, 19); the following words should be added: ἄστρον γε (415, 17), χεῖρ νῦν (415, 18) and ἐκπλήττεται δέ (415, 13); and the following emendations are necessary: τιμῶν (415, 15) and γράφει (415, 16).

⁸⁸ He is not the famous emperor by the same name: see Appendix IV, p. 323. Read in M. 416, 41: πίστις Ῥωμανοῦ (instead of πιστὸς Ῥωμανός, cf. the genitive forms in the next verse).

⁸⁹ I am not familiar with the adverbial use of τῷ μετρίῳ (“with moderation”, “with temperance”, “with humility”), instead of μετρίως or τὸ μέτριον.

words ἄνω and κάτω. Christ is called the Lord of the Heavens, who by His own volition became Man on Earth. He shows His humility by bending down and washing the feet of His disciples. This is an awesome spectacle to behold. It is also a sight that shows us the way. When the viewer looks at the image of the Washing of Feet and understands its message, he will know that haughtiness leads us nowhere. Only by way of humbling ourselves can we ascend to the Kingdom of Heavens. To go upward presupposes that we first go downward. The poet invites the viewers to participate in Christ's humility. By looking at the picture, probably from the ground level and thus with their faces turned upward, the viewers participate in the spectacle of heaven becoming earth and earth aspiring to become heaven. They become part of the picture.

The three epigram cycles on christological scenes by George of Pisidia, Ignatios Magistor and the Anonymous Patrician are of great relevance to art historians interested in the development of the iconography of New Testament scenes. The epigram cycle of Pisides still includes a number of Infancy scenes, a Miracle scene and a few other christological scenes that do not belong to the feast cycle. The epigram cycles of Ignatios Magistor and the Anonymous Patrician, however, concentrate on the venerated pictures of the feast cycle, which by the end of the ninth century, if not earlier, had begun to dominate the decoration of church walls in Byzantine monumental art. Although the sad remnants of Byzantine monumental art are not adorned with inscribed captions to the pictures of the feast cycle⁹⁰, these two epigram cycles leave no doubt that verse inscriptions on christological scenes once decorated the walls of Byzantine churches. The closest parallel to these inscribed epigram cycles can be found in two illuminated manuscripts. In ms. 3 of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, a twelfth-century Gospel book, we may admire seven splendid miniatures of the Great Feasts ranging from Nativity to Pentecost⁹¹. These miniatures bear captions in verse, such as, for instance, the text on the Crucifixion:

ὦ φρικτὸν ἔργον, ὃ κατὰ πληκτος θέα·
Θεὸς δι' ἡμᾶς ὡς βορρὸς πάσχει ξύλῳ.

⁹⁰ Except for the (no longer existing) church of St. Stephen on the island of Nis in Lake Egridir, where in the early 1900s Rott spotted some *tituli* below the pictures of the feast cycle: H. ROTT, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler aus Pisidien, Pamphylien, Kappadokien und Lykien*. Leipzig 1908, 89. Of these texts he quoted only one caption. This caption is an epigram by Prodromos, see LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 369–370.

⁹¹ See R.S. NELSON, *Text and Image in a Byzantine Gospel Book in Istanbul* (Ecumenical Patriarchate, cod. 3). New York 1978, and A. PALIOURAS, in: *Τὸ οἰκουμενικὸ πατριαρχεῖο. Ἡ μεγάλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησία*. Athens 1989, 137–141 and figs. 119–134.

“O dreadful deed! O amazing sight! Because of us God suffers in the flesh on the cross”⁹². In an illuminated Syriac manuscript in Paris, ms. Bibl. Nat. Syriacque 355 (s. XII–XIII), we also find a number of epigrams written below the pictures of the Feasts of the Lord⁹³. The epigram on the Entrance into Jerusalem, for instance, reads in translation: “This is the (divine) Majesty humbly sitting on the back of a donkey in Zion. The children welcome Him with hosannas, palm leaves and olive branches”⁹⁴.

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Preaching the Gospel

In the first book of the Palatine Anthology we find a long epigram cycle which dates from c. 600: see Appendix X, pp. 357–361. This epigram cycle, *AP* I, 37–49 and 52–77, can be divided into four parts: infancy of Christ (37–43), feast cycle (44–49 and 52–56), Old Testament iconography (57–73) and miracle scenes (74–77). It is difficult to establish what these epigrams actually describe. Pictures, of course, but what sort of pictures? Miniatures or wall paintings? It seems unlikely that the epigrams were inscribed on the pictures

⁹² In Vindob. Iur. gr. 15 (s. XIV in.), fols. 163^v–164^r, an epigram on the Passion of Christ, consisting of 8 lines, bears the same incipit: see PAPAGIANNIS 1997: I, 22 and G. VASSIS, *Hell* 50 (2000) 163.

⁹³ See J. LEROY, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient*. Paris 1964, 268–280.

⁹⁴ For ninth- and tenth-century illuminated manuscripts bearing captions in verse, see Appendix VIII, nos. 72–83. For later examples of miniatures with captions, see the following three illuminated Psalters: the Theodore Psalter (a. 1066) [see S. DER NERSESSIAN, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge*. II. Londres Add. 19352. Paris 1970], ms. Brit. Mus. Add. 36928 (c. 1090) [see A. CUTLER, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*. Paris 1984, 48–49 and 167–178] and the Berlin Psalter (s. XI–XII) [see G. STUHLFAUTH, *The Art Bulletin* 15 (1933) 311–326]. See also the epigrams on the miniatures of the Odes in ms. Dumb. Oaks 3 (s. XI) [S. DER NERSESSIAN, *DOP* 19 (1965) 153–183 and HÖRANDNER 1992: 114, n. 40], the monosticha on the miniatures of the twelfth-century Vatican Octateuch (and its copy, the Vatopedi Octateuch) [J. LOWDEN, *DOP* 36 (1982) 115–126; for instance, figs. 15 and 16], and the fourteenth-century Hippitrica manuscript, Par. gr. 2244 [for instance, the miniature on fol. 54: στίχ(ος) ὁρθοῦσιν οἶδε παραγωγὴν αὐχένος: see ST. LAZARIS, *Études Balcaniques* (Cahiers Pierre Belon) 2 (1995) 185, fig. 3]. For epigram cycles on small artefacts, see the Vatopedi reliquary of St. Demetrios [A. XYNGOPOULOS, *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς* 1936, 101–136] and the ex-voto silver sheets re-used for the book cover of Brit. Mus. Add. 28815 [CH. WALTER, *Studies in Byzantine Iconography*. London 1977, nos. V and VI].

they describe. First of all, there are a number of doublets: epigrams dealing with the same iconographic scene (see nos. 37–40, 54–55 and 69–70). As works of art usually do not bear more than one verse inscription, it is reasonable to assume that these redundant doublets are simply epigrams that play with the literary conventions of the genre. Secondly, the highly individualistic character and the personal touch of many of the epigrams are not very appropriate for verse inscriptions. In many epigrams, especially those on the Old Testament, the lyrical subject of the epigrams participates actively in the scenes that are depicted. There is an “I” that intrudes into the pictorial scenes: an obtrusive “eye” gazing at the pictures and interpreting their message in a highly personal manner. The poet is emotionally involved in what he sees: for instance, “O Passion, O Cross, O Blood that dispels the passions, cleanse my soul from all wickedness” (no. 54) or “On the threshold of my soul is the redemptive blood of the Lamb. Away, pernicious Satan, come not near” (no. 57).

In many of the Old Testament epigrams the poet addresses us directly. Do we not understand what we see? Can we not grasp the meaning of the picture? It is a *τύπος*. It is a *prefiguration* of Christ’s presence on earth – a faint shadow of what will only become manifestly clear in the New Testament. This is illustrated, for instance, by no. 65 (on Abraham): “Abraham takes his son to be sacrificed to God. Be merciful! What sacrifice does the mind see, of which this picture is a type?” The answer is, of course, the sacrifice of the Son of God. For another example, see no. 58 (on Gideon’s Fleece): “First the fleece is moist and gives dew to the bowl, but then this very fleece is dry. Hide hidden things in your mind”. Despite the cautious reminder not to reveal what the fleece stands for, most Byzantine readers will have immediately recognized its symbolic meaning: the immaculate virginity of the Mother of God. Typology is a commonplace hermeneutic stratagem of Byzantine theologians to explain away the sometimes unorthodox and, therefore, potentially subversive stories of the Old Testament. This is why epigrams on Old Testament scenes usually allude to the symbolic interpretations which became attached to its iconography over time. However, there are only a few epigrams as explicitly “typological” as the ones at *AP* I, 57–73. Time and again the poet invites the viewers to read the message of the Old Testament pictures symbolically, so often that when he finally returns to New Testament scenes, he warns them at no. 75 (on the Samaritan Woman) that here a symbolic interpretation is really not necessary: “No *type*, but a God and bridegroom here saves his Gentile bride, whom he saw beside the water”.

Epigram no. 75 refers back to nos. 61 and 69–70, on the wife of Moses and on Rebecca, respectively. Like the Samaritan woman, Rebecca and Moses’ wife are expressly identified as “Gentile brides”. It is remarkable to see how often the poet uses the words *ἔθνος* and *ἔθνικός* or selects biblical figures of non-

Jewish extraction in the Old Testament epigrams. The subject of the Gentiles, the non-believers, is clearly of great concern to the poet. In a most unusual epigram he explains why this is the case: no. 63 (on Hagar)

Ἐξ ἐθνῶν καὶ Ἄγαρ· τί δὲ ἄγγελος; ἢ τί τὸ ὕδωρ;
ἐξ ἐθνῶν καὶ ἐγὼ· τοῦνεκεν οἶδα τάδε.

“Hagar, too, is of the Gentiles. But what is the angel? Or what is the water? I, too, am of the Gentiles, therefore I know these things”. The second verse comes as a great surprise. As far as I know, there are no other examples of Byzantine poets claiming to be one of the Gentiles. In a Christian context, this curious confession can mean only one thing: the poet was born into a family of pagans. Since he evidently was a true believer when he wrote this epigram, he had been converted to the Christian faith and had been baptized later in life. It is absolutely impossible to tell what form of religion he adhered to prior to his conversion. Was he a pagan pre-Islamic Arab (as the reference to Hagar possibly indicates), a Zoroastrian, one of the few heathens who still worshipped the ancient gods, a Manichaean or a Gnostic?

The epigram refers to the well-known story of Hagar, the slave of Sarah and concubine of Abraham, who, heavily pregnant, fled to a nearby water well because she could no longer stand the sly harassments of her jealous mistress. There the angel of God appeared to her and told her that she should return to her former servitude. He comforted her by saying that she would give birth to a son, Ishmael, untamed like a wild donkey and at odds with the rest of the world. Then she praised the Lord who had presented Himself to her: Σὺ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιδὼν με (in the Septuagint version, Gen. 16: 13), “you are the God that has watched over me”. This phrase provides the answer to the rhetorical question the poet puts forward in the epigram: “What is the angel?” Since Hagar recognizes God himself in the messenger whom He sends, the answer can only be: God. But what about the water? “What is the water?” Once again, the answer is quite simple. In the New Testament the trinitarian God presented Himself in the water of the river Jordan, where He, that is to say: the Son in His hypostatic union with God the Father, was baptized while the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The water is the water of Baptism. It is with this water that all those who belong to the Gentiles but are converted to Christianity, like the poet himself, are to be baptized. Once we understand the paramount importance of the concept of Baptism, we cannot fail to notice that “water”, “dew”, “fluids”, “wells”, “rivers”, and the like, are crucial words in the vocabulary of our poet: see nos. 47, 53, 58–59, 61–64, 70, 72 and 74–76.

“Blood”, “slaughter”, “sacrifice”, “bread”, “wine”, and the like, are also among the poet’s favourite words: see nos. 43, 53–54, 57, 65–66, 72 and 76. All these words refer to the Eucharist. See, for instance, no. 53 (on Easter): “Christ abolished the Lamb of the Law and provided an immortal sacrifice, Himself

the priest and Himself the victim". The epigram describes a picture of the Last Supper and centres on the meaning of the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. By His redemptive death on the Cross, by sacrificing Himself for the sake of fallen mankind, God has renewed the covenant with humanity. That is why the venerable Jewish custom of slaughtering lambs at Passover is no longer necessary. For Christ is the lamb of the new covenant. And Christ is also the high priest offering the self-sacrificing sacrifice to God. When He broke the bread -His body- and poured the wine -His blood- at the Last Supper, only a few days before He died on the Cross, the old became new again and bloody Passover turned into bloodless Easter. The famous king-priest Melchisedech is the Old Testament prefiguration of the Eucharist (no. 66): "Melchisedech, king and priest, when you offer bread and wine, what are you? A symbol of truth".

The water of Baptism and the blood of Redemption are the two fluids of salvation that streamed from the body of Christ when He was dying on the Cross. The poet wants us to take part in this divine mystery. He wants us to look at the pictures and discover their inner meaning, as he did when he was converted to Christianity. When he was baptized with the water, he was saved by the blood of Christ. Once a pagan, he now participates in the Eucharist that brings salvation. Can we share his vision with him? Are we willing to be converted to the majestic truth that he has discovered? He speaks to us in his epigrams. He addresses us directly. He asks us if we can see the light as he did.

These epigrams are without parallel in Byzantine poetry. Since later Byzantine poets address an audience of believers, there is no need to use the medium of poetry as a vehicle of missionary activities. There is no one left to be converted. True enough, there is no shortage of heretics, which is why so many Byzantine poems serve as dogmatic weapons directed against religious opponents, but that is not the same thing. Here we have an attempt to address the non-believers, whereas later Byzantine poetry lashes out against heterodox believers. The circle rapidly closes after c. 600. The "outsider" disappears from sight. And theological disputes become self-centred, addressing only the inner circle of believers. The main difference between the culture of Late Antiquity and that of medieval Byzantium, wherever precisely one would like to draw the line, is the definition of the "outsider". In Late Antiquity the cultural boundaries between "us" and the "others" are not yet clearly outlined, so that frequent contacts across the lines, interchange of ideas and crossovers from one side to another are still possible. The Byzantine world, however, is safely entrenched behind its own culturally and intellectually sterile demarcation lines of "ours" and "not ours".

The Bible of Leo Sakellarios

In the 940s a senior official in the imperial administration, Leo Sakellarios, donated a two-volume illuminated manuscript of the Bible to a monastery of St. Nicholas which had been founded by his brother Constantine⁹⁵. The second volume is no longer extant. The first volume contains Genesis through Psalms (plus the biblical Odes) and is adorned with several full-page miniatures. Epigrams are written on the frames of these miniatures. On fol. 1^v there is an interesting editorial note about the purpose of these epigrams: “Please note that in each history, that is, on the historiated images of each history in the two volumes, metric iambic verses run around on the four sides of the frame explaining the meaning of the historiated scenes clearly and concisely”⁹⁶. The text is difficult to translate because the scholiast plays with the ambiguous meaning of the words *ιστορία* and *ιστορῶ*. The books of the Old and the New Testaments form “histories” inasmuch as they recount the story of God’s providence from the beginning of time to the establishment of early Christianity. The miniatures that serve as frontispiece to these books, form “histories” as well – “historiated images” encapsulating in well-chosen, significant vignettes the story of divine providence.

It is worth noticing that the first epigram, on the book of Genesis, focuses on the concept of time. There God is said to have made heaven and earth “timelessly” (*ἄχρόνως*), but to have created man “within time” (*ὑπὸ χρόνον*)⁹⁷. Thus time starts with the creation of man, and all that follows afterwards in the Bible bears proof of God’s unrelenting efforts to save mankind. In the second epigram, a book epigram on the whole Leo Bible, the poet makes much of the significance of the Incarnation for the salvation of mankind. The entire Bible, he writes, tells us the story of the Logos who is both God and Man and who “arranges all things for man’s salvation as He alone knows”⁹⁸. Look at the Old Testament, he says: the stories in it form prefigurations (*ἐν τύπῳ*) of what was only to become apparent after the Incarnation, and show how God was

⁹⁵ For the identification of the donor and the date of the manuscript, see MANGO 1969. For a thorough description of the manuscript and its miniatures, see: *Die Bibel des Patricius Leo. Codex Reginensis Graecus I B. Einführung von S. DUFRENNE & P. CANART*. Zurich 1988.

⁹⁶ Δεῖ εἰδέναι ὅτι καὶ καθ’ ἐκάστην ἱστορίαν ἡγουν εἰς τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς ἱστορηθείσας ἐν τοῖς δυοῖ βιβλοῖς ἐν ἐκάστη ἱστορίᾳ στίχοι ἑμμετροὶ ἱαμβικοὶ περιέειν ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσι γωνίαις τῶν περιφερῶν (sic), τῶν ἱστορηθέντων νοῦν ἐν ἐπιτομῇ σαφέστατα δηλοῦντες (MATHEWS 1977: 99).

⁹⁷ MATHEWS 1977: 124. Read in v. 3 τοῦτον (not πόντιον) referring back to τὸν χοῦν in v. 1 (=Adam).

⁹⁸ MATHEWS 1977: 124, vv. 12–13. Read in v. 12 λουπόν (not λείπων). Also edited by PITRA 1864–68: I, 659. See also OLSER 1994: 437–438.

always there, among His people, even when He had not yet manifested himself as clearly as He did in the person of Jesus Christ. The poet uses a rather unusual metaphor to indicate the presence of God throughout time. Before the Incarnation we have the εἰσοδοί, the “entrances” through which God manifested himself in the Old Testament. After the Incarnation we have the ἐκβάσεις – the “exits”, the fulfillment of God’s providential schemes⁹⁹. The abstruse metaphor of God’s “entrances” results from the poet’s desire to show that God “came forth” (προῆλθε) in this world not on one, but on two occasions: not only when the Son was born, but also at the creation of man¹⁰⁰. The whole Bible is a story of God’s presence. This is aptly illustrated, as the poet informs us, by all the books of the Old and New Testaments. In his enumeration of these books the poet introduces each separate entry by the word οὕτω(ς), “likewise”. What he means to say by the repetitive use of this word, is that all books together essentially tell the same story of how God provided for mankind, both before and after the Incarnation¹⁰¹.

Thus we see that the editorial note at the beginning of the Leo Bible on the whole corresponds with the poet’s interpretation of the biblical stories. To summarize: in the first two epigrams the poet writes that time began with the creation of man and that the Bible presents the story of God’s providence and loving care for mankind. The poet views the relationship of God and man from a historical perspective. Although God’s benevolence toward fallen mankind remains unaltered throughout (οὕτω, οὕτω, and once again οὕτω), the history of mankind, as presented by the Bible, evolves within time’s brackets from the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise to the glorious moment when Christ, by His redemptive death on the cross, reopened the gates of heaven for the new Adam and the new Eve. The historical dimension of God’s providence splendidly accounts for the use of the words ἱστορία and ἱστορῶ in the editorial note. However, there still remains the problem of what these words mean exactly. Does the concluding sentence of the editorial note imply that the epigrams reveal “the meaning of the historiated scenes” (as I translated) or does it mean that they elaborate on “the meaning of the histories (that is, the books of the Bible)”)? This is not an easy question to answer, especially as much research has

⁹⁹ MATHEWS 1977: 124, vv. 1–15. The syntax of these verses is somewhat complicated. The object τὰς ἐκβάσεις in v. 5 repeats the object construction of vv. 1–3. The relative pronoun δι’ ὧν in v. 10 refers back to the antecedent τὰς εἰσόδους in v. 6 (vv. 7–9 form an adverbial clause: “as Genesis (...) and the book of Deuteronomy teach us with great wisdom”).

¹⁰⁰ See v. 10 (on God before the Incarnation) and vv. 32–34 (on God after the Incarnation).

¹⁰¹ MATHEWS 1977: 124, vv. 16–39. The epigram concludes with Leo’s dedication of the Bible to the Holy Virgin and St. Nicholas: vv. 41–60. As for v. 40, I can only repeat the words of PITRA 1864–68: I, 659: “Quid v. 40 sibi velit, me fugit”.

yet to be done on late antique and Byzantine theological hermeneutics¹⁰². However, the frequent use of verbs of perception and words like “painter”, “image” and “to depict” strongly suggests that the epigrams comment upon the miniatures themselves. The picture at the beginning of the book of Numbers, which shows the census taking of the twelve tribes of Israel, is also interesting. In this miniature Joshua plays a prominent role in the census, although the book of Numbers does not mention his presence. Since the epigram focuses on Joshua and the twelve tribes as prefigurations of Jesus and the twelve disciples, it is beyond doubt that the epigram does not refer to the book of Numbers, but to the miniature itself.

As there is no reliable edition of the epigrams of the Leo Bible, unfortunately it is impossible to reach a solid verdict on their literary quality. The syntax is often awkward, the prosody often incorrect, and the metrical structure often shaky, with numerous harsh enjambments, instances of hiatus, and neglect of stress regulation. But is the poet to blame, or the editor? For instance, on a photograph of the miniature on fol. 2^v, I read ἐμφρόνῳ (not ἐμφρόνως), θεητόκῳ (not θεοτόκῳ) and προκρίτους (not προοκρίτους); the syntax, prosody and vocabulary of this particular epigram improve a great deal just by following the readings of the manuscript. However, it is only fair to admit that even with these corrections the epigram still presents a few unusual features: oxytone verse ending in ν. 4 (θεῶ), postponed πλὴν (ἐκ πίστεως πλὴν, “but out of faith”), asyndeton: ἐσθλὸν εὐτελέες, and the demotic plural of the third person: σπένδουν (cf. προγράφουν in the epigram on fol. 85^v).

Let us look, once again, at the editorial note. It peremptorily states that the epigrams of the Leo Bible “explain the meaning of the historiated scenes (τῶν ἱστορηθέντων, the miniatures) clearly and concisely”. “Concisely” (ἐν ἐπιτομῇ): the epigrams on the frames of the miniatures consist of four or six verses (with the exception of the one on fol. 2^v: 7 vv.). “Clearly” (σαφέστατα): a somewhat exaggerated statement, seeing that a thorough schooling in biblical exegesis is undoubtedly a prerequisite for a complete understanding of the message of most epigrams. “Explaining the meaning (of the images)” (τῶν ἱστορηθέντων νοῦν ... δηλοῦντες): this phrase is only partially true. There are quite a number of epigrams that explain how the poet (and presumably, also the donor, Leo Sakellarios, who had hired the poet) interpreted the visual message of the miniatures; but there are also epigrams that simply describe the scenes portrayed on the miniatures. These purely descriptive epigrams do not explain anything.

¹⁰² But see OLSTER 1994: 429–436 and 440–445, who discusses the historical development of theological hermeneutics as regards the figure of Moses, which in post-iconoclastic art led to a remarkable change in the iconography of the scene of Moses receiving the Law.

Purely descriptive, for instance, is the following epigram found next to the frontispiece of the book of Job:

Γυμνὸν τὸν Ἰώβ, σάρκας ἐκτετηκότα,
 ἔδειξεν ἡμῖν ὁ γραφεὺς ἔλκους πλέων·
 οἶκτον γὰρ ἔσχεν οὐδαμῶς πολυστόνου,
 ἄνδρὸς πόνους δ' ὕφηνε καὶ ταῖς εἰκόσι¹⁰³.

“Here we see Job naked, his body emaciated and full of festering wounds, as the painter represented him; for he did not pity at all the much troubled one, but even wove the sufferings of this man into the image”. This epigram does not offer an interpretation of the image. At best it may be said that the epigram implicitly suggests that the viewer has to feel compassion when he looks at the miniature depicting the sufferings of Job. The implicit injunction to pity poor Job may perhaps orchestrate the appropriate viewer response to the image, but it does by no means constitute an explanation of its visual message.

There are many epigrams, however, that do provide a theological interpretation of the miniatures. This theological interpretation always involves a symbolic reading of the Old Testament stories in the light of the revelation of the New Testament. In these interpretative epigrams there is an intricate play of metaphors, symbols and analogies, which, as in a dark mirror, reflect the immanent truth of Christianity. See, for instance, the epigram on the book of Judith:

Σκόπει τὸ λύτρον καὶ ξενίζου τὸν τύπον·
 θῆλυ ξίφος γὰρ ὧδε καὶ Θεοῦ σθένος
 τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τίθησι τὴν σωτηρίαν·
 ἐκ θήλεως αὐθις δὲ Θεοῦ Σοφία
 Χριστὸς προήλθε σταυρὸν ὡς ξίφος φέρων,
 δι' οὗ Σατὰν καθεῖλε τὴν πανοπλίαν¹⁰⁴.

“See the redemption and marvel at the prefiguration, for here a female sword and God’s might bring salvation to Israel. It was from a woman, too, that the Wisdom of God, Christ, came forth bearing the cross as a sword, by which He subdued the panoply of Satan”. In this epigram the sword by which

¹⁰³ MATHEWS 1977: 132 (fol. 461^v). Mathews reads *καὶ ταῖς εἰκοσι* and translates “twentyfold” (sic). The form *ἐκτετηκότας* (v. 1) is grammatically incorrect: not only is *σὰρξ* a feminine noun, but because of *γυμνόν* and *πλέων* an acc. sing. is required. For a more correct edition, see HÖRANDNER 1991: 420.

¹⁰⁴ MATHEWS 1977: 132 (fol. 383^v). Mathews reads *σκοπεῖ* in v. 1. The ungrammatical form *θήλεως* (instead of *θήλεος*) should be retained *metri causa*.

Judith killed Holophernes is compared to the sword of Christ, who, born of a woman, died on the cross and by His death on the cross (his sword) annihilated the power of Satan. The point of comparison, femininity, is rather far-fetched: Israel was saved by a “female sword” and mankind was saved by the cross of Him who “came forth from a woman”¹⁰⁵. As Christianity looks upon women as feeble creatures, the potentially dangerous concept of female courage is neutralized by presenting Judith merely as an instrument of God – a female sword of which He makes use. Likewise, the Holy Virgin’s contribution to the salvation of man is reduced to the act of giving birth to Christ. Christ is one hundred percent male, of course, but in the epigram He appears in “feminine” form as the Wisdom of God (Θεοῦ Σοφία). The poet hereby implicitly suggests, I would say, that in the story of Judith it is the feminine side of masculinity that liberates and brings salvation. As Judith’s female strength is merely a reflection of the masculine might of God, the epigram reads as a playful, but hardly subversive inversion of traditional gender roles. She is he.

The epigram on Judith is not directly related to the actual physical appearance of the miniature, which shows her leaving her home town, going to the camp of the enemy and killing drunken Holophernes in his tent, and which also depicts the final stage of this biblical historiette: the victory of the Israelites. Only verses 2 and 3 to some extent correspond to the image: θῆλυ ξίφος refers to the representation of Judith clutching Holophernes by the hair and swaying a bloodstained sword, and the σωτηρία of Israel alludes to the combat scene in which the Israelites are clearly winning. With the word σωτηρία, however, the poet already moves away from pure description and introduces an element of interpretation. The Israelites do not simply win a crushing victory over their enemies, but obtain spiritual salvation. In the first verse the viewer is already exhorted to interpret the image as a τύπος and to read it as a story of redemption (λύτρον). Through this symbolic reading of the visual message, spelt out in great detail in the epigram, the poet guides the viewer through the maze of biblical exegesis and instructs him how he is to look at the image. The sword is the cross of Christ, Judith resembles the Holy Virgin, the victory in combat amounts to spiritual salvation, and the enemy is the panoply of Satan.

Thus the epigram presents a symbolic interpretation of the image. It can hardly be said to describe the actual miniature. The words of the epigram do not have any bearing on what the image expresses in its composition, forms, lines and palette. But then again, why should the poet have to be so obtuse as to try and convey in words what the painter so admirably expressed in paint?

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Luke 2: 25–35, the prophetic speech of Symeon when he sees the Child in the Temple. In verse 35 he tells Mary: καὶ σοῦ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία – which probably refers to the grief she will feel when her Son dies on the cross.

Words and images are two entirely separate forms of language, which both have a semiotic relationship to reality, but communicate through different media. Of course, this does by no means exclude the possibility that visual and verbal forms of imagination may correspond to a certain degree and may influence each other. But whatever mutual influence the two may have on one another, it is never a straightforward one-on-one relation. The poet of the epigrams in the Leo Bible provides tools to decode and to read the visual message of the miniatures in a symbolic manner. His interpretation does not necessarily agree with the intentions of the painter – but the painter's intentions are totally irrelevant to the hermeneutic problems posed by the epigrams. We should not confuse painter and poet, art and poetry. The epigrams of the Leo Bible merely tell us how an individual in the 940s looked at the miniatures and what he read, or thought he read, in their visual signs and pictorial language. They also tell us how the poet wanted others to look at the images, for the frequent use of the imperative (“see!”, “marvel at ... !”) naturally presupposes that he assumes that future users of the Leo Bible will follow his lead. Therefore, the great significance of these epigrams is not so much a question of what they have to say about the miniatures themselves, but what they reveal about Byzantine attitudes in the tenth century toward the visual world of the arts. The epigrams provide a unique opportunity to view tenth-century miniatures through a Byzantine looking-glass and to understand how Byzantine viewers responded to contemporary forms of art.

Chapter Six

BOOK EPIGRAMS

The odes of Byzantine canons, a form of hymnography that came into being in the early eighth century, are often linked together by a metrical acrostic, usually a dodecasyllable, sometimes a hexameter¹. These metrical acrostics consist of one line. However, in the rare type of the iambic canon, where the acrostic is formed by the first letters not of the strophes but of the verses, the pattern is that of a quatrain consisting of two elegiac distichs. See, for instance, the acrostic of the iambic hymn on the Annunciation by Anastasios Quaestor:

Ἄγγελος οὐρανόθεν πολυήρατον ἄρτι καταπὰς
παιδοφόρον Μαρίη φθέγγετο γηθοσύνην,
ἦ δ' ὑποκυσσαμένη Θεὸν ἄμβροτον εἰς φύσιν ἀνδρὸς
παρθενικῶ τοκετῷ κοσμοχαρῶς ἐχάρη².

“The angel, just descended from heaven on wings, brought tidings of a lovely, childbearing gladness to Mary, whereupon she conceived God Everlasting in the nature of man and joyfully rejoiced in her virginal delivery”. Anastasios’ epigram is a splendid example of the classicizing vogue of the late ninth and early tenth centuries: impeccable elegiacs, a sublime and elevated style of writing, and epigrammatic concinnity. In Byzantine manuscripts acrostics, like this one, are written in full at the beginning of the hymn, so there is no need to decipher them line by line. Acrostics serve two entirely different functions. Not only do they form the internal structure of hymns, the framework on which the texts are patterned, but they also introduce the hymns to which they are attached. In the latter capacity, metrical acrostics serve as book epigrams.

Book epigrams are poems that are intimately related to the production of literary texts and manuscripts. The scribe may sign his work after completion, his verses forming the colophon of the manuscript. The *ktetor*, on whose behalf the manuscript has been copied³, may record his name and possibly his dona-

¹ See W. WEYH, *BZ* 17 (1908) 1–69.

² Ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1900: 55–59. See CAMERON 1993: 312.

³ For the term *κτίτωρ*, see K. KRUMBACHER, *Indogermanische Forschungen* 25 (1909) 393–421.

tion (if he presents the book to a third party) in a dedicatory book epigram. The author of the text or texts found in the manuscript may be praised abundantly for his literary talents: such poems are laudatory book epigrams. The first two categories, colophon verses and dedicatory book epigrams, are so closely related to the process of copying and manufacturing manuscripts that they hardly ever manage to break away from their original contexts and gain recognition as purely literary texts. Colophon verses are never found in Byzantine collections of poems; dedicatory book epigrams only rarely. Since the literary quality of some of the dedicatory epigrams is fairly high, it is reasonable to assume that they were written by professional poets working on commission for a wealthy patron. And yet, whereas the collections of the major Byzantine poets contain numerous dedicatory epigrams on works of art or other pieces of occasional poetry, dedicatory book epigrams are extremely rare. The book epigrams that we do find in Byzantine collections of poems are almost always laudatory texts praising literary figures of high esteem, such as the evangelists, David the psalmist, the church fathers (especially Gregory of Nazianzos) and the ancient authors.

Since accomplished poets like Pisides and Geometres are known to have composed laudatory book epigrams, there is a clear tendency on the part of Byzantine scribes to attribute anonymous texts to famous authors. Unless a book epigram is also found in a collection of poems, such ascriptions are highly suspect. In some Byzantine Gospels, for example, a number of epigrams on the evangelists are attributed to Niketas David Paphlagon, a prolific writer in the first half of the tenth century: three epigrams on Matthew, Mark and Luke that belong to a set of four (including John), and two epigrams on Luke, one in hexameter and the other in dodecasyllable⁴. These epigrams are ascribed to Niketas only in manuscripts dating from the twelfth century and later. In the earliest manuscripts, however, they do not bear a heading mentioning their author: the set of four epigrams on the evangelists is anonymous in *Lips.Bibl. Univ.* 6 (s. X)⁵; the hexametric epigram on Luke can be found in many manuscripts, dating from the tenth century and later, of which only a few Palaeologan ones mention Niketas⁶; and the dodecasyllabic epigram on Luke does not bear a heading in *Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery cod. W 524* (s. X in.)⁷. Seeing that the earliest manuscripts, some of which were copied during

⁴ For the three epigrams on Matthew, Mark and Luke, see KOMINIS 1951: 264 (no. 5), 267 (no. 5) and 271 (no. 3); for the complete set, see SODEN 1902: 380–381 (nos. 24–27). For the two epigrams on Luke: see KOMINIS 1951: 270–271 (nos. 2 and 4).

⁵ See C. TISCHENDORF, *Anecdota Sacra et Profana*. Leipzig 1855, 20–29.

⁶ See FOLLIERI 1956: 72–75.

⁷ See NELSON 1980: 77–78.

the lifetime of Niketas David Paphlagon, do not attribute these epigrams to anyone, it is highly unlikely that the ascription to Niketas is correct. If an explanation is required (errors of this kind are common in manuscripts), it is reasonable to assume that the epigrams on Luke were the first to be attributed to Niketas as he was well-known for his catena on the gospel of precisely this evangelist and that once the error had been made, it contaminated a branch of the manuscript tradition.

Another error that is often made is to assume that book epigrams are the work of the author of the book they introduce. The epigram that introduces the *Miracles of Sts. Kyros and John*, for instance, is ascribed to Sophronios of Jerusalem, the author of the book, in the Greek Anthology (*AP* I, 90). However, in Vat. gr. 1607 (s. X ex.), by far the most important manuscript of the *Miracles*, the heading attached to the epigram reads: “by Seneca the Iatrosophist”⁸. In two manuscripts we find at the end of the *Hexaemeron* a long-winded epigram exalting its author, George of Pisidia⁹. In Par. gr. 1302 (s. XIII) the epigram is anonymous; in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII) it bears the heading: τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς ἑαυτὸν (“by the same on himself”). There can be no doubt that this lemma is incorrect. In a poem *eis heauton*, the lyrical subject speaks in the first person about his personal life, his dire troubles, his brief moments of joy, his expectations and his firm belief in God. The epigram, however, makes use of the third person and tells us that Pisides is a great writer and a profound thinker. It is not in any sense an *eis heauton*. It is simply an ordinary book epigram. The fact that this book epigram can be found in two manuscripts only (out of a total of some fifty manuscripts containing the *Hexaemeron*), renders the ascription to Pisides even less credible. If Pisides had written an epigram recommending the *Hexaemeron* to its future readers, why is it not to be found in the other forty-eight copies of this text? Book epigrams are usually copied along with the text they praise. True enough, not always; but two out of fifty is really a bad score. As the epigram is prosodically correct, with a resolution in v. 20 and three proparoxytone verse endings in vv. 10, 27 and 33, it may have been written either by a contemporary of Pisides or by a scribe living in the ninth century when classicism was much in vogue.

The genre of book epigrams has a long history and a lasting popularity. It is impossible to establish a date for book epigrams, so absolutely fossilized is the genre. Epigrams on the evangelists in Palaeologan Gospels, for instance, may have been written centuries earlier, in the Comnenian age or during the so-called Macedonian Renaissance. The manuscripts can be dated, but not the book epigrams they contain. In some late Byzantine and post-Byzantine man-

⁸ See CAMERON 1983: 284–285.

⁹ Ed. STERNBACH 1892a: 66–68 (no. 107) and TARTAGLIA 1998: 424.

uscripts of Achilles Tatius' *Clitophon and Leucippe*, such as Laur. Conv. Soppr. 627 and Athen. 2142, we can find the elegant book epigram Leo the Philosopher wrote in defence of this novel which was notorious for its indecent passages: *AP* IX, 203. And in the Palaeologan manuscript Laur. XXXII 40, which contains the tragedies of Sophocles, we read a flattering distich written in honour of the tragedian by none other than John Geometres: Cr. 309, 21. These two book epigrams, however, are not attributed to their respective authors in the above-mentioned manuscripts. Therefore, had they not been preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* and Geometres' collection of poems respectively, it would have been impossible to date them with any accuracy.

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Colophon Verses

Colophon verses most often come at the end of Byzantine manuscripts; however, sometimes they are placed at the very beginning, or even somewhere in the middle. In colophon verses the scribe, having completed the manuscript after months of hard labour, signs his work. The scribe does not usually reveal his name, but uses instead one of the standard colophon verses, found in numerous other Byzantine manuscripts¹⁰. See, for instance, these two popular epigrams:

Ἡ μὲν χεὶρ ἣ γράψασα σήπεται τάφῳ
γραφή δὲ μένει εἰς χρόνους πληρεστάτους.

“The hand that wrote rots in the grave, but the writing remains till the end of time¹¹.”

¹⁰ Examples of colophon verses can be found in: V. GARDTHAUSEN, *Griechische Palaeographie*, vols. I–II. Leipzig 1911–13; R. DEVREESSE, *Introduction à l'étude des manuscrits grecs*. Paris 1954; B. ATSALOS, *La terminologie du livre-manuscrit à l'époque byzantine*, vol. I. Thessalonica 1971, and B. ATSALOS, *Hell* 24 (1971) 5–32 and 25 (1972) 78–102; E. MIONI, *Introduzione alla paleografia greca*. Padova 1973; *La Paléographie grecque et byzantine* (Paris 1974). *Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique*. Paris 1977; H. HUNGER, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz. Die byzantinische Buchkultur*. Munich 1989; and KOMINIS 1966: 38–45.

¹¹ This distich has attracted much attention in recent decades. The most important studies are the following: G. GARITTE, in: *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem A.M. Albareda*. Vatican 1962, 359–390; K. TREU, *Scriptorium* 24 (1970) 56–64; and B. ATSALOS, in: *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (Erice 1988). Spoleto 1991, vol. II, 691–750.

“Ὡσπερ ξένοι χαίρουσιν ἰδεῖν πατρίδα,
οὕτως καὶ οἱ γράφοντες βιβλίου τέλος.

“Like travellers rejoice upon seeing their homeland, so too do scribes upon reaching the end of the book¹².

However, some of the colophon verses we find in Byzantine manuscripts are less formulaic and have a more personal touch. Let us look, for instance, at Par. gr. 1470, a manuscript containing patristic and hagiographic texts, which according to the colophon was copied in the year 890. The scribe, a monk called Anastasios, wrote two epigrams at the end of the manuscript. The first reads as follows:

Ἐπαυσε Χριστὸς δημιουργεῖν σαββάτῳ
κάμοῦ δὲ παύει τοὺς πόνους ἐν σαββάτῳ.

“On Sabbath Christ completed His creation and rested; on Sabbath, too, He puts my labours to rest”.

The second epigram is far more interesting because it appeals to the future readers of the manuscript and urges them to pray for the salvation of the scribe:

Μνήσθητι, σῶτερ, δημιουργὲ τῶν ὅλων,
ταῖς τῆς ἀχρόαντου εὐκτίαις Θεοτόκου
τοῦ ἐμπόνως γράψαντος Ἀναστασίου
τὴν βίβλον ἥνπερ ταῖν χεροῖν μου νῦν φέρω
καὶ τάξον αὐτὸν ἐν δικαίῳ τῇ στάσει
πολλῶν παρασχὼν ἀμπλακημάτων λύτρον.

“O Saviour, Creator of the Universe, remember, through the prayers of the Immaculate Mother of God, Anastasios who diligently wrote the book I now am holding in my hands, and award him a place among the just, acquitting him of his many sins”¹³. Here, as in so many other epigrams¹⁴, the Byzantine reader is asked to reward the scribe for his time-consuming labours by praying on his behalf to God Almighty.

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¹² See K. TREU, in: *Studia codicologica*, ed. K. TREU, Berlin 1977, 473–492.

¹³ Ed. Φ. ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΑΤΟΥ-NOTAPΑ, *Σημειώματα ἑλληνικῶν κωδίκων ὡς πηγὴ διὰ τὴν ἔρευναν τοῦ οἰκονομικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ βίου τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἀπὸ τοῦ 9ου αἰῶνος μέχρι τοῦ ἔτους 1204*. Athens 1982², 123–124.

¹⁴ See B. GRANIĆ, *Byz* 1 (1924) 251–272.

Two Psalter Epigrams

Laudatory book epigrams can be found in hundreds and hundreds of Byzantine Gospels, lectionaries, copies of the Praxapostolos, Psalters, manuscripts of the church fathers and other texts¹⁵. However insignificant these usually badly written epigrams may appear from a purely literary point of view, they are important to the philologist interested in the manuscript tradition of a certain text. Since book epigrams tend to be copied along with the text they introduce, it is sometimes possible to distinguish branches of the manuscript tradition just by paying attention to these marginal scribblings. Unfortunately, however, as most editors ignore these seemingly dull and uninspired epigrams and consider them of little interest, much work has yet to be done in this field of research. Take, for instance, the most important book of European civilization: the New Testament. The splendid edition of Nestle-Aland succeeds fully in reconstructing the original text of the Gospels, but it omits to tell us what the text the Byzantines actually read may have been like. There must have been numerous “*recensiones*” of the Gospel text in Byzantium, each with its own particular readings. If we want to understand Byzantine culture in all its aspects and dimensions, we cannot, and should not, ignore the text history of the New Testament throughout the centuries. Pisides may have read a different version of the text of the Gospels from the one available to Geometres, and even a different version from the one known to his close contemporary, Sophronios of Jerusalem. As long as the text history of the New Testament throughout the Byzantine millennium has not been properly recorded, we are left in the dark hoping for simple answers. Just like the other marginalia we find in Byzantine Gospels (prefaces, evangelist symbols, canon tables, and so forth), the book epigrams on the four evangelists, if studied properly, may shed light in this frustrating darkness. It is not my intention to perform this task here (such an investigation into the text history of the Byzantine Gospels deserves a book of its own), but I do think that the epigrams on the evangelists deserve to be recalled from the editorial limbo to which they have been relegated so mercilessly. These epigrams should not be studied in isolation, but in connection with the manuscript tradition of the New Testament. For they may

¹⁵ For epigrams on the evangelists, see SODEN 1902: 377–384, KOMINIS 1951, FOLLIERI 1956, and NELSON 1980: 25–27 and 76–79; for the Praxapostolos, see SODEN 1902: 385–387, *PG* 108: 31–34, and K. STAAB, *Die Pauluskatenen nach den handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht*. Rome 1926, 117–118. For Psalter epigrams, see PITRA 1876–1888: II, 440–441, S.G. MERCATI, *OCP* 21 (1955) 272–273, FOLLIERI 1957, and FOLLIERI 1964a: 465–467. For epigrams on Gregory of Nazianzos, see SAJDAK 1914: 256–280 and 306–307, F. LEFHERZ, *Studien zu Gregor von Nazianz. Mythologie, Überlieferung, Scholiasten*. Bonn 1958, 99–101, and SOMERS 1999. For epigrams on Basil the Great, see RUDBERG 1961.

bring light where darkness reigns, and evidence where evidence is so much needed.

The same holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, for epigrams on the Psalter, the Praxapostolos, Gregory of Nazianzos and Basil the Great. It is pointless to study these verses without taking into account the manuscript tradition. Say that fifteen manuscripts of the Psalter have the same laudatory book epigram complimenting David for his divine lyre-playing. Then we may assume that all these Psalters, or at least the majority, are closely interrelated. However, as long as the text history of the Byzantine Psalter remains a mystery and important manuscripts have yet to reveal their contents, it makes no sense to study just one of the popular book epigrams on the Psalter. For, of the hypothetical fifteen manuscripts, only three are known to us; the existence of seven more is signalled through the incipits in manuscript catalogues; and the remaining five, alas, entirely escape our notice. In order to understand the text history of a Psalter epigram, we need to know all the manuscripts – not only those that contain the epigram, but also the manuscripts that do not. Only then can we establish its context: the particular branch of the manuscript tradition to which the epigram belongs. Without a clear picture of the manuscript tradition we have only a text – but not a context.

In the following I shall treat two Psalter epigrams that differ from all the rest, because they are not anonymous and can be found in a restricted number of manuscripts only. These two epigrams give us an indication of their original contexts. The first text is Pisides St. 72:

Τέτιξ προφητῶν, ἡ λύρα τοῦ πνεύματος,
ὁ γῆν ἄπασαν ἐμφορῶν μελωδίας·
ὦ πραότης, γνώριμα τῆς ἐξουσίας¹⁶.

“Cicada among the prophets, lyre of the Spirit, filling the whole world with thy melody: o gentleness, the hallmark of power”. The epigram can be found not only in Pisides’ collection of poems, but also in a tenth-century Psalter, Barb. gr. 340¹⁷. Although it cannot be ruled out that the scribe of Barb. gr. 340

¹⁶ The epigram can be found in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII), fol. 116^v, and Par. gr. 1630 (s. XIV), fol. 166^r; the latter ms. omits the last verse. In Par. Suppl. gr. 690 the lemma reads: εἰς τὸν προφήτην (not εἰς τὸν πρωτομάρτυρα as STERNBACH 1892a: 61 avers); in Par. gr. 1630 it reads: εἰς τὸν Δαβίδ. In a paper presented at the International Byzantine Congress in Paris in 2001, G. Papagiannis suggested to change ὦ (v. 3) into ὧ, “for whom (gentleness is the hallmark of power)”.

¹⁷ On fol. 14^r. This is the source from which PITRA 1876–1888: II, 441 derived the epigram. The reading πρώτης (v. 3) in his edition is a typographic error. In v. 2 the ms. reads: μελωδίας (so also Par. gr. 1630); the reading of Par. Suppl. gr. 690, μελωδίας, is grammatically more correct.

read the epigram in Pisides' collection of poems, the fact that he does not mention the author strongly suggests that he copied it from an earlier manuscript: perhaps the very Psalter for which Pisides had written his epigram, or one of its copies. Pisides' epigram is certainly not a masterpiece of fine rhetoric and splendid versification. But although it falls short of our expectations, the epigram deserves some comment, if only because it is the earliest datable Psalter epigram we have. First, there is the celebrated lyre. David is "the lyre of the Spirit". In Psalter miniatures we see David playing the lyre and in Psalter epigrams David is usually compared to the famous musician of the ancients, Orpheus, who made animals listen to his music and silenced the natural elements through the divine sounds of his lyre. Secondly, the equally famous "cicada": the little creature harmoniously buzzing in foliage and thickets, never growing tired of its endless singing, never craving for anything else than pure musical delight. The image of the poet singing like the cicada, not for any material reward, but simply because he has to sing, is as old as Greek civilization itself. The lyre and the cicada symbolize the musical talents of the Psalmist. By adding the words: "among the prophets" and "of the Spirit", however, Pisides makes clear that David is divinely inspired. Whereas the ancient poets, like mythical Orpheus, did not yet know the immanent truths of Christianity, David the Psalmist touches his lyre to praise God and is therefore superior to all the other pagan singers. Thirdly, David's "gentleness", which is "the hallmark of power". David is not only a divine singer, he is also a king. And being a king, anointed by God, he displays that royal quality of *πραότης* which characterizes all good rulers. Byzantine emperors like to compare themselves to the biblical David, especially when their rise to power was as unexpected as that of David, once a poor shepherd and then a mighty king. Emperor Herakleios was certainly no exception to this rule; in fact, in artefacts produced during his reign and in panegyrics written in his honour, Davidic symbolism plays a prominent role¹⁸. Seeing that "gentleness" and other royal qualities traditionally associated with David are not highlighted in any other Psalter epigram, it is reasonable to assume that there is a connection between Pisides' epigram on the Psalter and the Davidic mania of Herakleios' reign. It is for this reason that I would suggest that Pisides wrote his epigram as a dedication to a Psalter commissioned by the emperor himself: a fine tribute to the imperial qualities of Herakleios.

Some forty years ago Enrica Follieri published an epigram on the Psalter that can be found in two manuscripts, Ambros. M. 15 sup. (s. XI) and Vallicell. E 37 (s. XIV)¹⁹. Its author, a certain Arsenios, is otherwise unknown, but in her

¹⁸ See J. TRILLING, *Byz* 48 (1978) 249–263.

¹⁹ FOLLIERI 1957.

excellent commentary Follieri established on metrical grounds that the epigram probably dates from the ninth century²⁰. She also pointed out that lines 24 to 26 are almost identical to the last three verses of an epigram that can be found in many Psalters²¹. But what she did not notice was that both epigrams plagiarize Pisides, *De Vanitate Vitae*, vv. 139–141. Let us look at the texts: first Arsenios, then the anonymous Psalter epigram, and finally Pisides.

καὶ τῶν παθῶν τὰ θράσέα κωφεύεις ἅμα,
ὄτ' ἐκτραπείσα τοῦ δέοντος ἡ φύσις
πρὸς θηριώδεις ἂν σφαλῇ δυσμορφίας.

“And you also silence the bold passions, when nature turning away from what is right slips into beastly monstrosities” [you=David].

σιγᾶν δὲ ποιεῖ τῶν παθῶν τὰ θηρία,
ὅταν σφαλεῖσα τοῦ πρέποντος ἡ φύσις
πρὸς θηριώδεις ἐκτραπῇ δυσμορφίας.

“And he puts the animal passions to silence, when nature deviating from what is seemly falls into beastly monstrosities” [he=David].

καὶ τῶν λογισμῶν ἡρεμῶσι θηρία,
ὅτε σφαλεῖσα τοῦ πρέποντος ἡ φύσις
πρὸς θηριώδεις ἐκτραπῇ μετουσίας.

“And then our thoughts come to rest, which are like animals when nature deviating from what is seemly falls into hybrid forms of bestiality” [we=mankind].

²⁰ ODORICO 1988 published a long book epigram by a certain Arsenios Patellarites, whom he identifies with Follieri's Arsenios because both poets supposedly adopt the same “archaic” metrical rules. However, none of the corrections he proposes in order to prove that Patellarites, like Arsenios, allowed metrical resolutions is convincing. For instance, in v. 38 the ms. reads: αὐθις διατμῶν τοὺς Ἰορδάνου ῥόας, which he needlessly emends into: αὐθις διατεμῶν τοὺς Ἰορδάνου ῥόους: ῥόας is acc. pl. of ῥοῦς (ῥοός, ῥοί), cf. νόας (νοῦς, νοός) and διατμᾶω is a neologism coined by analogy to the Homeric form διέτμαγον (with loss of the intervocalic gamma, cf. Modern Greek λέω: ἔλεγα, φυλάω: φύλαγα); see also the *Muses* attributed to Alexios Komnenos, II, 24: συντμωμένων (ed. P. MAAS, *BZ* 22 (1913) 361).

²¹ Ed. FOLLIERI 1957: 107. In Ambros. B 106 sup. (a. 966–67) the epigram is attributed to a certain Ignatios; given the obvious plagiarism (see main text) this author cannot be Ignatios the Deacon, as Follieri tentatively suggests on pp. 107–108. Besides, as book epigrams are almost always anonymous and as all the other mss. omit to mention the author, the lemma attached to the epigram in the Ambrosian ms. does not seem very trustworthy.

It is beyond any doubt that the anonymous Psalter epigram almost literally plagiarizes the three verses of Pisides' *De Vanitate Vitae*, and that Arsenios in his turn imitates the text of the Psalter epigram, with a few minor changes (δέοντος, metathesis of σφάλλομαι and ἐκτρέπομαι, τὰ θράσέα instead of τὰ θηρία). And as this obviously implies that the anonymous Psalter epigram antedates Arsenios' encomium on David, it is reasonable to conclude that the epigram was composed between the time of Pisides and the early ninth century. But why did the anonymous poet of the Psalter epigram use Pisides' *De Vanitate Vitae*, vv. 139–141? Why did he turn to a source that has nothing to do with the Psalter? In the passage from which he derived these verses, Pisides compares the human soul and body to the lyre which, if its chords are well-strung, is an organ of perfect harmony and blessed music: "and then our thoughts come to rest ...". The poet of the Psalter epigram, reading these verses in truly Byzantine fashion, translated this symbol of the human lyre into a concept that was much more familiar to him: divine David playing on his lyre who, like ancient Orpheus, silenced animals and beastly passions. Thus the harmony of contrasts and counterparts so dear to Heraclitus, Plato and Pythagoras turned into a Christian symbol: the lyre of David. Pisides christianized the concept of the well-tempered lyre, but he did not have David in mind when he wrote his verses. The poet of the Psalter epigram took the decisive step and identified the harmonious lyre with that of the psalmist. And Arsenios merely worked out a poetic concept that appealed to him, although he had absolutely no idea of its remote origins.

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Two Dedicatory Book Epigrams

Laur. LXXIV 7 is an illuminated handbook on surgery which was executed around the year 900 under the direction of a physician by the name of Niketas²². On fols. 7^v, 8^r and 8^v there are three encomiastic epigrams praising Niketas for the production of this luxuriously illustrated manuscript – a useful tool for all physicians, but especially for young students who need to be instructed in the art of medicine²³. Here I will discuss the first epigram in detail. In lines 1–5 the

²² On the manuscript, see N.G. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*. London 1983, 136–137, and T.S. MILLER, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*. Baltimore 1983, 180–182.

²³ Ed. H. SCHÖNE, *Apollonius von Kitium. Illustrierter Kommentar zu der hippokratischen Schrift περὶ ἁρθρῶν*. Leipzig 1896, pp. XII–XIV.

poet addresses Hippocrates, Galen, Rufus and mythical Cheiron, “the quadruplet that soothes pain”, and tells them to rejoice and to applaud. As a Byzantine encomium usually begins with a *synkrisis*, comparing the laudandus to illustrious figures of the past, the subtext of the opening passage is that Niketas as a physician stands comparison with these four ancient doctors. In the next nine lines (vv. 6–14) we learn why this ancient quadruplet should be rapturous: their writings had been forgotten in the course of time and were ignored as if they had never existed, but Niketas, the new Hippocrates, fortunately rescued them from oblivion and provided an illustrated commentary. This is the mythology of the so-called Macedonian Renaissance in a nutshell. In numerous tenth-century editions we read that the arts and sciences had fallen into oblivion until genius so-and-so (Constantine Porphyrogenitus is a favourite name) took decisive action against the corroding effects of ruthless Time and made the knowledge of the ancients available to the reading public²⁴. There is no reason to take these pieces of self-advertisement very seriously. Lines 15 to 23 explain why Niketas’ book is so useful to future practitioners: see the text and the translation below. In lines 24 to 30 the poet admonishes all physicians, young and old, to praise Niketas as a benefactor of the arts and to crown him with a garland of musical flowers. Of course, the concept of the literary garland is familiar to any scholar interested in ancient epigrams²⁵. The poet, however, does not derive the motif from Meleager’s or Philip’s *Garlands*, but from another, more Byzantine tradition: book epigrams²⁶. In the book epigram attached to Clemens of Alexandria’s *Paedagogus* we read: “From a virginal meadow I bring thee, O Pedagogue, this garland which I plaited with words”²⁷. The anonymous book epigram on Pisides’ *Hexaemeron* states: “And he presented to God a flowery garland from the virginal meadow of the universe, which he plaited with variegated songs of divine contemplation”²⁸. And

²⁴ See I. ŠEVČENKO, Rereading Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in: Byzantine Diplomacy, eds. J. SHEPARD & S. FRANKLIN. Aldershot 1992, 168–169, 176, and n. 19. See also the following three book epigrams: TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST, *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*. Berlin 1906, 3; A. CAMERON, *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 256–260; and M. BERTHELOT, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*. London 1963, 3–4.

²⁵ See CAMERON 1993: 6–7.

²⁶ In book epigrams the motif of the garland ultimately goes back to Euripides, *Hipp.* 73–74; but it is questionable whether Byzantine poets derive the *topos* directly from Euripides rather than from other book epigrams.

²⁷ Ed. O. STÄHLIN, Clemens Alexandrinus. *Protrepticus et Paedagogus*. Berlin 1936, 339 (vv. 1–3).

²⁸ Ed. STERNBACH 1892a: 66–68 (no. 107, vv. 9–11) and TARTAGLIA 1998: 424–425, n. 2. The *topos* of the literary garland is also used in poems that are not book epigrams: see Pisides, *Exp. Pers.* III, 374–380 (ed. PERTUSI 1959: 132) and Constantine the Rhodian, *Ekphrasis*, vv. 12–14 (ed. LEGRAND 1896: 36).

the epigram celebrating Niketas' surgical handbook tells all future readers: "Crown the composer of this text with flowers and plait a garland of musical words". In the last four lines of the epigram (vv. 31–34) the poet asks Niketas to accept this book epigram benevolently as the first of many tributes to his learning and wisdom. In the manuscript the epigram is followed by two more poetical "tributes" to Niketas' wisdom. As these two last epigrams are written in a different handwriting to the first, and as there are also considerable differences in style, language and metre, it is reasonable to assume that the three epigrams were written by different authors²⁹. The first of these three book epigrams is quite an elegant piece of writing: see vv. 15–23

οὐκοῦν ἐάν τις εὐθετεῖν σκελῶν βάσιν
 θραύσεις τε μηρῶν, ἐμβολήν τῶν σπονδύλων,
 χωλοὺς ἀνιστᾶν καὶ τελεῖν δρομηφόρους
 ποδαλγιῶντας, ἐκροῆς τῶν ἰσχίων
 τὸ ῥεῦμα δεσμεῖν καὶ κρατύνειν τοὺς πόδας
 ἄλλην τε τοῦ σώματος ὁστώδη θέσιν
 θραύουσιν εἰς σύμπληξιν ἀρμόσαι θέλοι,
 ὧδε σκοπεῖτω τῆς γραφῆς τὰς εἰκόνας
 καὶ πᾶσαν εὐρήσειε τῶν παθῶν λύσιν.

"Therefore, if one wishes to set legs, femoral fractures and dislocated vertebrae, to make the lame stand up and turn those who suffer from gout into runners, to stem the flow of the humours in the hip-joints, strengthen the feet and solidly join together all other bony parts of the body that are broken, one may look at the pictures in this book and find a treatment for each injury".

Par. gr. 1640 contains two historical works of Xenophon, the *Cyropaedia* and the *Anabasis*. The manuscript (dating from c. 1320) derives, either directly or indirectly, from a copy produced in the early tenth century, which was presented to Leo VI³⁰. On fol. 123^v, between the *Cyropaedia* and the *Anabasis*, we find a long book epigram, which ends with the wish that the emperor may live for many years to come³¹. In another manuscript presented to Leo VI, the dedication on the front page concludes with a strikingly similar wish for longevity: there we read that Peter the Patrician, who donated a copy of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Cure of Pagan Maladies* to Leo VI on the occasion of his Brumalia, hopes that his beloved emperor may live happily ever after³². The

²⁹ See SCHÖNE, Apollonius von Kitium, p. XV.

³⁰ See A. HUG, *Commentatio de Xenophontis Anab. codice C* i.e. Parisino 1640. Zürich 1878, and MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 194–195.

³¹ Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 195 (vv. 27–30).

³² Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994b: 33–34 (vv. 13–16).

similarity between the two book epigrams indicates that the Xenophon manuscript, just like the *Cure of Pagan Maladies*, was probably donated to Leo VI on the occasion of the feast of the Brumalia when it was customary to give presents. Unfortunately, however, the book epigram attached to the copy of Xenophon does not reveal the name of the person who surprised Leo VI with such a generous gift as a costly manuscript doubtless was. But taking into account the considerable costs involved in the production of such a manuscript and the fact that the anonymous donor, as I will show, was well informed about the latest gossip and court intrigues, it is reasonable to assume that Leo VI received the manuscript as a gift from someone quite high-up.

The first sixteen lines of the epigram read in translation: “Nothing is as pleasant as an ancient text oozing with Attic eloquence, especially if it lucidly shows the truth and depicts the state of affairs; then it teaches the wise and renders them even wiser so that they know what to do in life. For it provides courage (ἀνδρεία) and readiness for action (προθυμία), procures the most accurate insights (ἀτρεχεστάτη φρόνησις) and renders the young more mature and aged through its lessons in ancient lore. Speak up, Xenophon, in support of what I am saying! For I have in mind our lord Leo, the bright splendour of the empire, who, having culled intimate knowledge about the world from his study of ancient writings, is the eye of the whole universe”³³. The epigram refers to Leo VI’s legendary wisdom. Through his study of ancient texts Leo the Wise has become even wiser than he already was. And although he is only in his thirties and therefore still relatively young, he displays all the signs of wisdom and prudence that usually come with age. There are two things he has learnt especially from his extensive reading and scholarly research: the virtues of ἀνδρεία (combined with προθυμία) and φρόνησις. In the following ten verses, the poet provides negative examples to demonstrate that the lack of φρόνησις and ἀνδρεία can lead to catastrophic results:

τίς γάρ θεωρῶν ἔνθα Κῦρον τὸν νέον
τὸν μυρίαν τάξαντα κείνην ἀσπίδα
καὶ χεῖρας ὀπλίσαντα πρὸς πρῶτον Κῦρον,
οὐκ εὐθὺς ἔγνω πῆμα τὴν φιλαρχίαν;
θυμὸν γάρ αὐτὸς ἐμπνέων καὶ πικρίαν
σφύζων τε πολλὰ καὶ διὰ ττων ἀσκόπως
ὀρμαῖς ἀτάκτοις συμπλακείς ἀνηρέθη.
δοκεῖ δέ μοι Κλέαρχος, ὁ κλεινὸς Λάκων,
σφῆλαι τὰ πάντα συσχεθεῖς ἀτολμία
Κύρου σοφὸν βούλευμα φαυλίσας τότε.

³³ Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 195 (vv. 1–16).

“For, whoever sees Cyrus the Younger here as he deploys his shield of ten-thousand men and takes up arms against Cyrus the Elder, would he not immediately understand that the lust of power is fraught with disaster? In a fit of blazing anger and spite, rushing at full speed but without any sense of direction, he was killed, a victim of his own undisciplined impulses. Yet I think that Clearchus, the famous Spartan, ruined the whole enterprise by his cowardice, thus thwarting the wise strategy of Cyrus”³⁴.

In his *editio princeps*, Hug drily comments: “in his versibus, quos Byzantinae farinae esse cum aliis rebus tum ex inscitia et stupore versificatoris adparet, quo v. 19 dicit Cyrum minorem Cyro maiori bellum intulisse, ...”³⁵. Is the poet indeed as obtuse and stupid as Hug thought he was? Of course, Cyrus the Younger did not wage war against Cyrus the Elder, but against his own brother Artaxerxes. Yet it is hardly likely that the Byzantine courtier who presented to Leo VI a copy of the *Cyropaedia* and the *Anabasis*, would not know what the texts were about. He had only to thumb through the manuscript to discover that Cyrus the Elder (the subject of the *Cyropaedia*) and Cyrus the Younger (the subject of the *Anabasis*) did not fight against each other. Furthermore, it is well known that the Macedonian dynasty, with the help of a fictitious pedigree concocted by Photios, claimed to descend from illustrious forebears, the Arsacids, an imperial family of which Artaxerxes was held to be one of the forefathers³⁶. In the light of the genealogical preoccupations of Leo VI and his entourage, not to know who Artaxerxes and Cyrus were would not only have been a gross blunder, but also a gross insult to the reigning emperor. So, seeing that *inscitia* and *stupor* can be ruled out as possible explanations for the grotesque oddities of the epigram, what are we to make of this puzzling text? Why is Artaxerxes called *Kūros ὁ πρῶτος*?

The Persian name Kuruš is rendered in Greek as *Kūros*, not only because it is very close to the original name, but also because, by coincidence, it suggests the concept of supreme power (cf. *τὸ κῦρος, ὁ κύριος*, etc.). By means of this false analogy the name *Kūros* assumed the meaning of “sovereign lord”, and this is how the Byzantines usually understood the name. It is for this reason that I would suggest to interpret the name *Kūros ὁ πρῶτος* as “the senior emperor” and the name *Kūros ὁ νέος* as “the junior emperor”. If we decode the epigram in this way, the pieces of the puzzle fall into place. *Kūros ὁ πρῶτος* is Leo VI and *Kūros ὁ νέος* is Alexander. It is no secret that Leo VI suspected his younger brother Alexander, officially co-emperor, of plotting to take the throne, especially after the Mokios incident in 903, when Leo was nearly killed

³⁴ Ed. MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 195 (vv. 17–26).

³⁵ HUG, *Commentatio*, p. 2.

³⁶ See MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 197.

by an Oswald allegedly operating on his own³⁷. Whether Alexander was actually implicated in any sinister conspiracy against his own brother or not, is of little importance; what matters is that Leo VI thought he was. Leo VI's suspicions and fears of what his little brother was up to were known to all and sundry, at least to those that were close enough to the Byzantine court at the time³⁸. The emperor feared that his younger brother, Alexander, suffered from *φύλαρχία* – from “lust for power”, or to use the Byzantine term, from “tyranny”. This is why Leo VI, rightly or wrongly, assumed that Alexander was conniving to seize power. The book epigram tells him that his fears are justified. Beware of *φύλαρχία*. With all your *φρόνησις*, which makes you as wise as the legendary Cyrus the Elder, you will certainly know that your brother, Cyrus the Younger, is scheming against you. But your brother's plans will come to naught because he is simply too rash and impulsive. He is fickle. His endeavours are aimless. But still, take care!

Once we understand that the epigram refers to contemporary court intrigues by comparing figures of the past to figures of the present, we can attempt to decipher the last three lines of the passage quoted above. In v. 26, the same young Cyrus who was killed because of his lack of prudence, is said to have devised a “wise strategy”, which, unfortunately, was thwarted by the cowardice of Clearchus. The word *σοφόν* refers to the wisdom of Leo VI. Whereas in the previous lines *Κῦρος ὁ νέος* symbolically stood for power-mad Alexander, here he quite unexpectedly changes masks and turns into the figure of Leo the Wise. It is worth noting that the famous Clearchus, before he became the general who commanded the Greek mercenaries hired by Cyrus the Younger, used to be the military governor of ancient Byzantium during the Peloponnesian war. This is hardly a coincidence, of course. The poet cleverly makes use of biographical data provided by Xenophon and assumes that his readers are as familiar with the *Anabasis* as he himself is and that they are capable of reading between the lines and grasping all the subtle innuendoes. Clearchus, the famous Spartan, is in fact a “Byzantine” general. Can we identify “Clearchus”? Let us look at the Greek. The word *ἀτολμία*, which I translated as “cowardice”, literally means “lack of daring”. The most notorious instance of *ἀτολμία* displayed by any general during the reign of Leo VI is certainly that of Himerios in the summer of 904 when, as the commander of the Byzantine navy, he pursued the Arab fleet at a safe distance, but dared not engage the enemy into combat. Himerios probably had sound strategic reasons

³⁷ See S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People*. Leiden 1997, 223–227.

³⁸ See, for instance, the *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP.*, ed. P. KARLIN-HAYTER. Brussels 1970, 55, 20–57, 10 and 66, 23–26. See also A. SCHMINCK, *Studien zu mittelbyzantinischen Rechtsbüchern*. Frankfurt 1986, 105–107.

for keeping his distance and not attacking, but the sad result of his ἀτολμία was that the Arabs captured Thessalonica and sacked the city. The (temporary) loss of Thessalonica, the second city of the empire, was a severe blow to Leo VI and a terrible shock to the Byzantines³⁹. Since Byzantine emperors are always wise and never fail, the traumatic experience of the sacking of Thessalonica could not be the fault of the emperor, of his σοφὸν βούλευμα. And so Himerios gets all the blame for the major catastrophe. It was his gross ἀτολμία that led to disaster. However, seeing that Himerios remained commander-in-chief of the Byzantine fleet in the years after 904, and with considerable success, it is questionable whether Leo VI himself believed in the official version of events and whether he gave any credence to the rumours about Himerios' cowardice.

The book epigram attached to the copy of Xenophon which Leo VI received as a present appears to date from 904, since it implicitly presents Alexander, the emperor's brother, as a would-be usurpator and Himerios, the emperor's general, as a dangerous coward. As the book was probably presented to Leo VI on the occasion of his Brumalia celebrated on the 4th of December, it is reasonable to assume that the epigram was written in the autumn of 904: that is, soon after the sacking of Thessalonica. The Xenophon epigram is absolutely fabulous. It is Byzantium at its best. In the first sixteen verses Leo the Wise is lavishly praised because he has studied the ancients and has learnt from them the virtues of ἀνδρεία and προθυμία as well as ἀτρεξεστάτη φρόνησις. Then the poet presents examples *a contrario* of the lack of φρόνησις (vv. 17–22) and the lack of ἀνδρεία/προθυμία (vv. 23–25). Since Leo VI is as wise an emperor as the famous Cyrus the Elder, he obviously does not need to be told what the lack of these cardinal virtues can lead to. But a small warning won't hurt and therefore the poet cautiously warns him against the φιλαρχία of Alexander and the ἀτολμία of Himerios. However, as Byzantine court etiquette demands that appearances are always kept up, neither Alexander (the co-emperor) nor Himerios (the admiral) could be identified by name. Fortunately for our cunning poet, Xenophon's *Anabasis* provided a suitable alibi and suitable aliases – a whole masquerade, the purpose of which was to say by implication what could not be said openly. Therefore, far from displaying Byzantine “inscitia” and “stupor”, as Hug assumed, the epigram cleverly addresses contemporary anxieties and fears without being painfully explicit. It is a masterpiece of disguise.

³⁹ See S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People*. Leiden 1997, 186–189.

Chapter Seven

EPITAPHS

In letter no. 60, which he wrote when he was recuperating from a serious illness, Ignatios the Deacon tells his good friend Nikephoros in jest that, had he died, his friend would have been obliged to compose poems in his honour: “(...) for then you would have had to scan for me a funerary elegiac poem and fashion epic verses in hexameter, and weave the major ionic in due measure with the minor, and so sing to me a burial song. Even as I was near Hades I was hoping that you were devoting to such matters your friendship toward me. But complete thanks be to God who (...) has spared your fingers from the toil of composing verses for a dead man”¹. In his commentary on the passage, Mango writes: “The enumeration of three types of meter (elegiac, hexameter, ionic) is merely for effect, and the third, in any case, was hardly ever used in the Byzantine period, except in the refrain of anacreontics”². It is certainly true that Ignatios is often quite pedantic and likes to show off his metrical expertise, as any reader of the *Life of Tarasios* will know: there he wants us to believe that the patriarch “initiated (him) in the best examples of the trimeter and the tetrameter, both trochaic and anapestic, and in dactylic verse”³. But is what he says in his letter to Nikephoros “merely for effect”? Or does he in fact allude to certain conventions of the funerary genre?

Let us look at the Greek text: ἡ γὰρ ἂν ἐπιτυμβίους ἐλέγους ἡμῶν ἐπεμέτρησας καὶ στίχον ἐπικὸν ἐξάτονον ἔτεμες <καὶ> ἰωνικῷ μείζονι συμπλέξας ἐμμέτρως ἐλάττονον μέλος ἥσας ἡμῖν ἐπιτάφιον. The sentence is divided into three main clauses. In the first clause Ignatios the Deacon mentions a certain funerary genre: the sepulchral elegy. In the second clause he refers to a particular meter: hexametric verse. In the third clause he first refers to the anacreontic, and he then mentions another kind of funerary poetry: the burial song. The first two clauses form a sort of *hendiadys* (“genre and meter”), just as the latter part of the sentence is divided into a participle construction (“meter”) and a main clause (“genre”). What we have here is a chiasmic figure: “genre and meter” versus “meter and genre”. As the manuscript in which the letters of Ignatios

¹ MANGO 1997: 146–147.

² MANGO 1997: 202.

³ MANGO 1997: 8.

are found, Athous Vatop. 588 (s. XI), offers many incorrect readings (see, for instance, the connective καὶ which the editor rightly supplements), I would suggest to read: (...) ἡμῖν ἐπιμετρούσας στίχον (...). Whatever the case, there can be little doubt that Ignatios the Deacon does not “enumerate three types of meter” as Mango affirms, but two kinds of funerary poetry: sepulchral elegies and burial songs.

Ignatios’ remarks are certainly not pedantic humbug. For we have three sepulchral elegies and one burial song from his pen, and these poems follow the generic rules he laid down in his letter to Nikephoros.

The burial song is a monody on the death of a young man by the name of Paul, who may have been one of Ignatios’ students⁴. The poem is written in Byzantine anacreontics: the stanzas in the ionic dimeter, the *koukoulia* in the ionic trimeter. As I shall explain in the second volume of this book, the oldest Byzantine monodies to have come down to us, such as those by Sophronios of Jerusalem, Ignatios the Deacon, Constantine the Sicilian and Leo Choirosphaktes⁵, invariably make use of the anacreontic meter. Thus we see that Ignatios, far from being a stuffy old schoolmaster, in fact states what was obvious to his contemporaries: for the composition of a burial song (that is, a monody) the anacreontic is the appropriate meter.

The generic term “sepulchral elegies”, which Ignatios the Deacon uses in his letter to Nikephoros, is not a piece of pedantic humbug either. In fact, Ignatios’ own collection of epitaphs is similarly entitled: ἐπιτύμβιοι ἔλεγχοι. The collection itself is lost, but the *Souda* provides the title and the Greek Anthology contains three epitaphs that derive from it (*AP* XV, 29–31)⁶. These three epitaphs are all in elegiac, but it cannot be excluded that the collection contained epitaphs in hexameter as well, for the term ἔλεγχος does not refer to the meter itself (which is called ἐλεγγεῖον in Byzantine Greek), but to the genre. Anyway, the Byzantine elegiac and the Byzantine hexameter are not substantially different. They both belong to the category of the dactylic meter and they both make use of pseudo-Homeric gibberish.

In his letter to Nikephoros, Ignatios the Deacon clearly distinguishes two kinds of funerary poetry: the “sepulchral elegy” in dactyls⁷ (either the elegiac or the hexameter) and the “burial song” in anacreontics. The former is written on the tomb, the latter is performed during the burial rites. This is really a

⁴ Ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 42–55.

⁵ Sophronios no. 22: ed. GIGANTE 1957; Constantine the Sicilian: ed. MONACO 1951; Leo Choirosphaktes no. 1: ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a.

⁶ See chapter 3, pp. 111–112.

⁷ Notice the pun in the phrase: “God who (...) has spared your fingers (δακτύλους)”, which obviously refers to the dactylic poetry Nikephoros (“thanks be to God”) did not have to write.

crucial difference. It is for this reason that the genre of the “burial song”, or monody, will be treated elsewhere (in the second volume of this book). This chapter deals with the “sepulchral elegy”, that is, the epitaph.

Despite the inscriptional connotation of terms like ἐπιτύμβιος or ἐπιτάφιος, it is often difficult to determine whether an epitaph was really inscribed on a tomb or not. Only a few epitaphs have been discovered *in situ*. In sharp contrast to the urban civilization of antiquity with its thousands of epitaphs in prose and verse, Byzantium appears to have been a society with little public interest in memorials and written records of death. The reason for this dearth of epigraphical material is a combination of widespread illiteracy and upper-class snobbery. As the majority of the Byzantine population was illiterate, it is hardly surprising that most cemeteries provide little material evidence⁸. Furthermore, the few people who could read, the Byzantine upper classes, did not find the epitaphs commemorating the deaths of their peers in public cemeteries, but in private burial sites that were located inside monasteries or churches founded by illustrious Byzantine families⁹. Regrettably, most of these private burial sites have been destroyed along with the monasteries or churches where they were once to be found¹⁰. It is reasonable to conjecture that some of the epitaphs we find in literary sources originally served as verse inscriptions for these private burial sites. Some epitaphs clearly do not. And a third category may or may not have been inscribed. In order to determine whether an epitaph is a genuine inscription or not, one can only rely on common sense, intuition and intelligent reading.

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The Voice of the Dead

Epitaphs can be divided into three types: epitaphs that make use of the first, the second, or the third person¹¹. In a first-person epitaph, the deceased usually confesses his sins, professes his sincere regrets and expresses his hope that God may forgive him. In the case of the second person, the epitaph is

⁸ On the lack of funerary inscriptions, see MANGO 1991: 239–240.

⁹ On private burial sites, see MANGO 1995.

¹⁰ See, for instance, the sixteenth-century list of tombs and epitaphs in the Pammakaristos (nowadays Fethiye Camii): ed. P. SCHREINER, *DOP* 25 (1971) 217–248. These tombs and their epitaphs no longer exist.

¹¹ See PAPADOGIANNAKIS 1984: 70–88.

usually a lament that expresses the sentiments of bereavement the next-of-kin experience. And if the epitaph makes use of the third person, it usually commemorates the excellent virtues and qualities of the deceased. In the following I shall discuss these three types of the epitaph, beginning with the ones that say: “I”.

In the San Giorgio in Velabro, a beautiful church in Rome, we find two marble slabs which once belonged to the same sepulchre. These two slabs are inscribed with an epitaph in acrostic; the first slab even bears a heading that points out what the inscription is about: “birth and life of John the Archipresbyter in acrostic”¹². As far as the text is still legible, John indeed speaks about his “birth and life”. He was born during the papacy of John VIII (872–882) and was educated by his wise and learned father, he passed on to others the knowledge he had acquired, and his mother was called Theodoule. At the bottom of the second slab, where the text unfortunately becomes rather fragmentary, he prays to God that He may please forgive him for his many wrongdoings. In the preceding verses he probably confessed to having fallen prey to really awful sins: “living (...)”, “sluggish (...)”, “defiling (...)” and “lusting, woe’s me (...)”.

There are more verse inscriptions written in the first person, in which the deceased confesses his sins from beyond the grave: for instance, the epitaphs commemorating the deaths of Eustathios the Tourmarch and Thomas. The epitaph to Eustathios begins as follows: “Knowing but all too well, poor me, that man is puffed up (by pride) and then is laid to rest (in the grave), I call upon thee, creator of all things: Save me from the burden of my transgressions, O thou who art immaculate and hast the power to loosen thine ordinances and to pardon my numerous sins”¹³. In the epitaph to Thomas we read the following plea to God:

λύσον τὰ δεσμὰ τῶν ἐμῶν ὀφλημάτων
 ἃ μοι προσῆξεν ἡ δεινὴ κακῆξία
 καὶ ἡ τοῦ βίου ὀλεθροτόκος ζάλη
 καὶ σύνταξόν με χορῶ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν σου.

“Release the bonds of my sins which the force of my evil disposition and the ruinous storm of life have imposed upon me, and join me to the band of your

¹² Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 115 and no. 116. The two acrostics read: *ιωαννου αρχιπρεσβ* and *τυμβος ιωαννου αρχιπρεσβ*. Acrostic is not an uncommon feature of funerary verse inscriptions: see Appendix VIII, nos. 85 (*ευσταθιος τουρμαρχης*) and 95 (*θεοπεμπτου*); see also Theod. St. 117 (*ειρηνη πατρια ταδε*). I suspect that the first seven verses of Theod. St. 116 also form an acrostic: *ειρηνη*; see v. 4, where Theodore of Stoudios tells us that the deceased was “rightly” (*ειζότως*) called Eudokia.

¹³ GRÉGOIRE 1927–28: 450.

chosen ones”¹⁴. The “storm of life”, ζάλη, is a *topos* in Byzantine poetry (see, for instance, *AP* I, 118 and Geometres, Cr. 293, 8, 293, 24 and 314, 18). It refers to the soul’s passage over troubled waters. The soul is a steersman guiding the body, its vessel, through the billowing tides of life to the safe haven of God. But alas, the waters are turbulent, the vessel is shipwrecked and the soul reluctantly drifts from its final destiny. The treacherous shoal on which the ship and its steersman run aground is sin, of course.

In the hermitage of Symeon, a monk who lived and died in tenth-century Cappadocia, we read a rather unusual epitaph: “I was created a child in the belly of my mother; for nine months I had no need of food, but was fed with maternal juices. From the moment I hastily rushed from (the womb of) my own mother, I came to know the world and recognized its creator. I was instructed in the divine writings and understood the [...] to me; [...] I came forth from Adam the first-created, (who I know) to have died, as did all the prophets. When still alive, I prepared for myself a rough-hewn tomb; receive me too, o grave, like the Stylite”¹⁵. The “Stylite” is doubtless Symeon the Stylite, with whom his namesake, Symeon the Hermit, will have identified himself. The description of the foetus and its nine-month existence within its mother’s womb is quite unique in Byzantine epitaphs¹⁶, but it goes back to a passage in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (7: 1–7), where we read: “Like everyone else I am a mortal man and descend from the earth-born first-created one. In the womb of my mother I was moulded into flesh, within the period of ten months, compacted with blood, from the seed of man and the pleasures of bed. When I was born I inhaled the air we all breathe (...). All men have the same entrance into life and pass through the same exit. Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given to me; I implored, and the spirit of wisdom came to me”. Here, just as in the epitaph of Symeon, Solomon sketches the pedigree of sin, which starts with Adam, then passes on from generation to generation, and inevitably leads up to his own conception. He knows that he is born a sinner. He also knows that

¹⁴ Edition and translation by DREW-BEAR & FOSS 1969: 75 (vv. 4–7). The inscription reads καχεξία instead of καχεξία; ὀλεθροτόκος is a rare, poetic word: see, ibidem, p. 82: καὶ τὸ ὀλεθροτόκον ἐλύετο πῆμα (Niketas David Paphlagon), and see *Lampe*, s.v.

¹⁵ Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 2, 580 (no. 111). The inscription reads ἐξονυστρησα in v. 4. Grégoire, ibidem, suggests the reading: ἔξω λύστρησα, a hapax which he connects with the Modern Greek verb γλυστράω, “to glide”; I would suggest to read: ἔξ οὗ οἴστρησα [οι and υ are pronounced the same, /y/ until the tenth century, /i/ after c. 1000; οἴστρω (intransitive) is rare, but it is at least recorded (whereas Grégoire’s λυστρω is not); ἐξον instead of ἐξον may be a mistake of the stonemason or Jerphanion himself].

¹⁶ But see a prose epitaph found in Bithynia: ἐκ σποράς ἐν μήτρᾳ μία γλυφέντες ἔξ παίδες σὺν ἀδελφῇ (...): ed. F.K. DÖRNER, Bericht über eine Reise in Bithynien ausgeführt im Jahre 1948 im Auftrage der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vienna 1952, 27, no. 40.

he has to die like all mortals. But knowing all these things, aware of his own mortality and sinfulness, he acquires from God prudence and wisdom. Symeon, too, recognizes that he descends from Adam, the ancestor of mankind, who was the first to sin and the first to die. As he acknowledges his own sinful mortality, Symeon prepares himself for death by constructing his own tomb and by writing his own epitaph¹⁷.

In Byzantine poetry, such as catanyctic alphabets and poems “to oneself”, the use of the first person usually entails a confession of sins. True enough, there are some exceptions to this rule, but in general one may say that the first person is the voice of the repenting sinner in Byzantium. This is why most of the epitaphs in which the deceased speaks to us in the first person, are poems of contrition. Among Ignatios the Deacon’s sepulchral elegies, for instance, we find an epitaph, entitled “on himself”, which is an almost classic example of the genre:

Ἰγνάτιος πολλῇσιν ἐν ἀμπλακίῃσι βιώσας
 ἔλλιπον ἡδυφασοῦς ἡελίοιο σέλας·
 καὶ νῦν ἐς δνοφερόν κατακεύθομαι ἐνθάδε τύμβον,
 οἷμοι, ψυχῇ μου μακρὰ κολαζόμενος·
 ἀλλὰ, κριτὰ (βροτός εἰμι, σὺ δ’ ἄφθιτος ἡδ’ ἐλεήμων),
 ἴλαθι, ἴλαθί μοι ὀμματι εὐμενεί.

“I, Ignatios, who lived in many sins, have left the brightness of the sweet sunlight, and here I am hidden in a dark tomb, my soul enduring, alas! long punishment. But, O Judge (I am a mortal and thou eternal and merciful), look on me graciously with benignant eye”¹⁸.

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The Voice of the Next-of-Kin

The use of the second person is not a common feature in funerary inscriptions. One of the few examples I know of can be found in Rome, in the church of San Giorgio in Velabro. It is an epitaph to a certain Theopemptos, which dates from the ninth or tenth century. The epitaph begins as follows: “I write a [...] lament on your tomb, showing the sorrows of life [...]; for nothing in this

¹⁷ Other Byzantines, too, built their own tomb and wrote their own epitaph: see, for instance, the funerary verse inscription in Carpignano, ed. A. JACOB, *RBSN* 20–21 (1983–1984) 103–122: τύμβον ὥρυξα πρὸς ταφὴν καὶ κηδείαν τοῦ σώματός μου τοῦ γηϊνοῦ πλαιοθέντος.

¹⁸ *AP* XV, 29; translation by PATON 1918: vol. V, 137.

life is without sorrow; but he who clings to the commandments of God, [...]”¹⁹. The rest of the inscription is too fragmentary to make any sense, but it is reasonable to assume that the poem continued with the reassuring promise that the person who “clings to the commandments of God”, may eventually overcome “the sorrows of life” and reach the safe haven of paradise. Life is transient and full of sorrow, but if you abide by the ethical rules laid down by God in His ten commandments, there is surely hope that you, like Theopemptos, may enjoy the pleasures of heavenly beatitude. It is interesting to note the technical term employed by the lyrical subject to indicate the type of epitaph he has written on Theopemptos’ tomb: *θρῆνος* (“lament”). This term is normally used for the monody, the funerary dirge at the tomb, in which the poet or one of the relatives directly addresses the dead in a highly emotional fashion. Given the fact that the use of the second person is exceptional in epitaphs, but quite normal in monodies, it is reasonable to assume that the few epitaphs that address the dead in the second person derive this unusual feature from the genre of monody.

In Byzantine monodies the relatives occasionally ask the deceased person not to forget them in the hereafter and to visit them in dreams²⁰. In a few epitaphs we find a similar request to the dead: nocturnal appearances are not mentioned, but the next-of-kin do express their desire to be remembered. I will quote three examples. In an epitaph found in Rome we read: “John, remember [...] your loving [...], now that you have joined the choirs of the [...]”²¹. In the corpus of poems by the Anonymous Italian (c. 900), there is an epitaph to Sabas which ends with the desperate plea: “O father, remember your son, remember your child, now that you walk in the pastures of heavenly life”²². And Theodore of Stoudios begs his sister not to forget him in the epitaph he wrote in her honour: “Do not forget me and if you can speak to God, <pray> that I may pass through this unstable life with the help of Christ”²³. Whereas the highly emotional word *μνήσο* in the epitaphs to John and Sabas emphasizes that the ties of blood and the bonds of love have not been cut off by death, Theodore of Stoudios asks for much more than simple remembrance. He desires his sister’s intercession on his behalf. Since the power to intercede at the heavenly court is normally reserved for figures of saintly stature, this is a

¹⁹ Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 118. The first verse of the inscription reads: *θεογῶον θρῆνον προσγράφω σοι τῷ τάφῳ*. *Θεογῶον* is nonsensical; should we emendate this into *θέσμιον*?

²⁰ See, for instance, Leo Choirosphaktes’ monody, vv. 13–14: ed. CICCOLELLA 2000a: 68; and the second monody on Christopher Lekapenos, vv. 45–46: ed. STERNBACH 1898–99: 17.

²¹ *CIG* 9865, vv. 11–13. The date of the inscription is not known.

²² Ed. BROWNING 1963: 306 (no. 29, vv. 5–6).

²³ Theod. St. 105f, vv. 7–8, ed. SPECK 1968: 275. There is probably a lacuna between verses 7 and 8.

rather unusual request – unless we assume that Theodore of Stoudios truly hoped for his sister’s future canonization.

Geometres’ lament on the death of his father is a masterpiece of Byzantine poetry. The epitaph reads as follows:

Ὅς καὶ νοσοῦντα χερσὶν ἡγκαλιζόμεν,
 ὃς καὶ θανόντα σὰς περιστεύλας κόρας
 ἔλουσα λουτροῖς ἐσχάτοις, τὰ θρέπτα σοι,
 καὶ φόρτον ἡδὺν μῆνα βαστάσας ὅλον
 μακρᾶς σε γῆς ἤνεγκα μυρίοις πόνοις
 καὶ συζύγῳ δέδωκα καὶ τῇ πατρίδι,
 ἔκρυσα καὶ τύμβῳ δὲ καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ,
 Ἰωάννης, σῶν φιλάτων νεώτατος,
 ἔγραψα καὶ νῦν τῷδε τῷ τύπῳ, πάτερ·
 πάτερ, γλυκεῖα κλησὶς, ὄψις ἡδίων,
 μικρὸν παρηγόρημα τοῦ πολλοῦ πόθου²⁴.

“I who held you in my arms when you were ill, I who closed your eyes when you had died, I who washed your body for the very last time -the debt I owed you-, I who, carrying your sweet burden for a whole month, returned it to your wife and your native soil, I who buried you in your tomb as well as in my heart, I, John, the youngest of your beloved children, portrayed you now also in this picture, father; O father, a name so sweet, but a sight even sweeter, a small consolation for a great loss”. The precise meaning of the first six verses is elucidated by three other epitaphs (Cr. 280, 14; 280, 22; and 280, 26), in which Geometres recounts how he and his elder brother brought home the body of their father who had died somewhere far away in Asia Minor, where he carried out some civil or military duties as the “ready servant of the emperor”. The last three verses of this beautiful epitaph doubtless refer to some sort of picture, painted or in mosaic, that could be found inside the arcosolium where the body of Geometres’ father was laid to rest. In aristocratic burial sites in Byzantium, such as monasteries, it was customary to put the coffin inside a richly decorated arcosolium (a vaulted niche in a wall, usually that of the narthex) and to portray the deceased person above his tomb. It was also

²⁴ Cr. 329, 2–12. In v. 3 the ms. reads τὰ θρέπτα σοι (without accent); Cramer prints: τὰ θρεπτά σοι. The word is τὰ θρέπτα, cf. τὰ θρέπτρα (with phonetic dissimilation of the rho). Should we print τὰ θρεπτά σοι? At the verse ending of dodecasyllables we often find secondary accents on paroxytone words followed by enclitic personal pronouns (ἐνοπαρέντά μοι, λαχόντά σε: see KOMINIS 1966: 67, n. 2); the same phenomenon can be observed in prose, see: Annae Comnenae Alexias, rec. D.R. REINSCH & A. KAMBYLIS. Berlin–New York 2001, 40* (ἀποσταλέντά οἱ, etc.). For the last line, cf. Niketas Choniates, poem XVII, v. 7: μικρὸν παρηγόρημα τῶν μακρῶν πόνων (ed. C.M. MAZZUCCHI, *Aevum* 69 (1995) 213).

customary to inscribe epitaphs on these arcosoliums, either inside the niche itself or around it²⁵. It is reasonable to assume that Geometres' epitaph was inscribed near the funerary portrait of his beloved father, whose memory it so eloquently and so poignantly evokes: see τῷδε in v. 10, "in *this* picture". Here, then, we have one of the few examples where an epitaph in the second person that we find in a literary source (in this case: the collection of Geometres' poems), was actually inscribed on the tomb of the dead person it addresses. For the majority of the epitaphs that make use of the second person are not authentic verse inscriptions, but purely literary compositions²⁶.

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Commemorating the Dead

Isaac, the military governor of the exarchate of Ravenna, died on the battlefield in late 642 or early 643 while defending the empire against the frequent attacks of the Lombards, who only one year later, in 644, succeeded in conquering Liguria. He was laid to rest in Ravenna. The original sarcophagus itself is lost, but the marble lid that covered the tomb can still be admired in the church of San Vitale. It bears the following inscription:

Ἐνταῦθα κεῖται ὁ στρατηγῆσας καλῶς
 Ῥώμην τε φυλάξας ἀβλαβῇ καὶ τὴν δύσιν
 τρις ἔξ ἑνιαυτοῖς τοῖς γαλιηνοῖς δεσπότηαις
 Ἰσαάκιος, τῶν βασιλέων ὁ σύμμαχος,
 ὁ τῆς ἀπάσης Ἀρμενίας κόσμος μέγας·
 Ἀρμένιος ἦν γὰρ οὗτος ἐκ λαμπροῦ γένους.
 τούτου θανόντος εὐκλέως ἡ σύμβιος,
 Σωσάννα σώφρων, τρυγόνος σεμνῆς τρόπῳ
 πυκνῶς στενάζει ἀνδρὸς ἐστερημένη,
 ἀνδρὸς λαχόντος ἐκ καμάτων εὐδοξίαν
 ἐν ταῖς ἀνατολαῖς ἡλίου καὶ τῇ δύσει·
 στρατοῦ γὰρ ἤρξε τῆς δύσεως καὶ τῆς ἕω.

²⁵ For numerous examples, see MANGO 1995. Apart from the epitaphs Mango adduces as evidence, see also Geometres, Cr. 327, 22 and 26; Arethas, *AP* XV, 33. 13–14; and the epitaph to Bardas, ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 191, vv. 11–12 (cf. Ševčenko's comments on p. 192).

²⁶ For instance, Geometres, Cr. 280, 22; 299, 2; and 312, 24 ff. The second-person epitaph to Gregoria Skleraina (Cr. 266, 1), however, appears to be an authentic verse inscription: cf. Cr. 327, 14.

“Here lies the brave general, who, during eighteen long years, preserved Rome and the West intact for his serene sovereigns, Isaac, the ally of the emperors, the great ornament of whole Armenia – for he was an Armenian, from a noble family. Now that he has died with honour, his wife, chaste Susanna, sorely wails like the virtuous turtle-dove, bereaved of her husband, a husband famous for his exploits in East and West – for he commanded the armies of the West and the East”²⁷. This is probably the last epitaph ever written in the iambic trimeter: whereas later Byzantine epitaphs make use of the dodecasyllable, this one still has a few verses consisting of thirteen and even fourteen syllables²⁸. The verses are prosodically correct, but the two instances of hiatus in verses 1 and 9 and the absence of a caesura in verse 4 are quite serious metrical flaws. The style is simple, the language unadorned – except for the pretentious word ἐνιαυτός (instead of the more familiar word ἔτος). The epitaph is neatly divided into two periods, each consisting of six verses and each ending with a causal clause headed by the connective γάρ.

The epitaph begins with the standard phrase: “here lies (...)”. A classic *topos*, of course, but the poet immediately dashes our expectations by cleverly postponing the revelation of the deceased’s identity until the fourth verse. Instead, he explains why the unnamed person lying in the grave deserves to be commemorated: he was an excellent general, he served the emperors for no less than eighteen years, he protected their interests and defended Rome and Italy on the battlefield. Only then does he tell us who this hero is: Isaac, the ally of the emperors. The term σύμμαχος is rather unusual, for it implies that Isaac assisted the emperors as an ally and not as an ordinary general in their service. However, seeing that so many exarchs revolted in the seventh century and after, it is fair to say that the exarchate was a virtually autonomous province and that the exarchs, even if they sided with the reigning emperors, acted more or less independently. Then the poet adds another detail worthy of commemoration to the portrait of Isaac: he was an Armenian, the pride of his country. Despite the notoriously bad reputation of the Armenians in Byzantium, it is not surprising at all that the poet glorifies Isaac’s ethnic roots and considers them worth mentioning. For the Armenians held high functions in the military as well as in the civil administration: the reigning dynasty of Herakleios was of

²⁷ Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 109; see HÖRANDNER 1998: 313.

²⁸ Thirteen syllables: vv. 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12, fourteen syllables: v. 4. In the poetry of Pisides and his contemporaries, metrical resolutions are still allowed; but the number of resolutions in this particular verse inscription is exceptionally high [the poem on the Labours of Hercules (ed. B. KNÖS, *BZ* 17 (1908) 397–429), too, has many resolutions; but I would date that poem to the sixth, rather than to the seventh century]. Unusual is also the oxytone verse ending (in v. 1), a rhythmical pattern Pisides starts to avoid after ca. 620.

Armenian origin and the most influential general at the time, Valentinus Aršakuni, was an Armenian as well. Finally, in line six, at the end of the first sentence, we read that Isaac was born into a noble family. This element of praise recurs in numerous epitaphs to Byzantine aristocrats. Death is the great equalizer, of course; but some people are more equal than the rest, especially if they descend from a rich family and can afford the comfort of a luxurious tomb with a neatly written epitaph.

In the next six lines, in the second half of the epitaph, we first read that Isaac died honourably, on the battlefield, as is only appropriate for such a valiant general. Then we are told who commissioned the construction of the sarcophagus in which Isaac's body was laid to rest: his wife, Susanna. She is called σόφρων, "chaste", not only because of the biblical figure by the same name who was renowned for her chastity, but also because all Byzantine widows are chaste and never remarry (at least, if we are to believe Byzantine epitaphs)²⁹. Her virtues are compared to those of the turtledove, a female bird which, according to legend, remains faithful to her spouse even after his death and never again builds a nest³⁰. Then we have the sentimental part of the epitaph: chaste Susanna bewails the death of her loved one because she misses him so dearly. Isaac was someone special, the poet resumes, for he achieved fame both in the regions where the sun rises and the regions where the sun sets: in the East and the West. Solar symbolism is a common feature of panegyrics celebrating the emperor, especially when he is praised for his military feats: in Cr. 289, 15, for instance, Geometres writes that the emperor (probably Nikephoros Phokas) is so valiant a warrior that he outshines the sun with his brilliance and moves from East to West more swiftly than daylight itself. In the last verse the poet explains that Isaac commanded the troops not only in Italy, but also in the eastern part of the Byzantine empire. In other words, before his appointment as exarch in 625, Isaac held the function of *magister militum per Orientem* or possibly *per Armeniam*.

Epitaphs in the third person, such as the one I have just discussed, are always commemorative and praise the dead. The few texts that are not encomiastic, do not at all contradict this rule, but actually confirm its validity: see, for instance, Cr. 293, 2:

Ἐνθάδε τὴν μαρὰν κεφαλὴν κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει,
ἄρρενα καὶ θῆλυν, εἰς τέλος οὐδέτερον.

"Here the earth covers a despicable figure, both male and female, but, in the end, neither of the two". In this epitaph, "on a eunuch" as the lemma

²⁹ See, for instance, Pisides St. 49, Theodore of Stoudios 117, vv. 5–10, and Arethas, AP XV, 33. 5–8.

³⁰ See PAPADOGIANNAKIS 1984: 103–104 and 220–221, n. 55.

correctly states, Geometres subtly inverts the rules of the genre by turning what should have been an encomium into its exact opposite, a lampoon. Geometres paraphrases a well-known epitaph to Homer (*AP* VII, 3), which begins as follows: ἐνθάδε τὴν ἱερὴν κεφαλὴν κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει, “here the earth covers the sacred man”. This is a brilliant example of parody. Of course, it is the sort of literary parody that can only be savoured by the few; but we can be certain that the select group of intellectuals who were familiar enough with the classics to recognize the source immediately, will have roared with laughter. In the second line of this mock epitaph Geometres delivers another pun, which, once again, presupposes some familiarity with the school curriculum. For, when he mockingly refers to the ambiguous sexual identity of eunuchs (is a castrate a man, a woman, or neither?), he makes use of the grammatical terms that indicate gender: masculine, feminine and neuter³¹. The words εἰς τέλος form another pun. I know that good jokes are spoiled when you try to explain them, but anyway, here is the double entendre: in the end, “when you come to think about it”, a eunuch is neither male nor female; in the end, “when he has died”, a eunuch turns out to be neither of the two.

Byzantine epitaphs make use of stock motifs and clichéd metaphors. Generals are always courageous. Intellectuals are always learned. Monks are always pious. Women are always chaste. Children are always tender. In his excellent study of the epitaphs of Manuel Philes, Papadogiannakis sums up all those standard motifs: the wives as monogamous as the chaste turtledove; the children cut down prematurely like new shoots harvested before their time; the men, brave or wise, receiving their crowns from God above after their deaths; envious Charon, insatiable Hades; death as the debt that all must pay; etcetera³². It is rather surprising to see that in the early fourteenth century Philes uses exactly the same metaphors as Geometres, Pisides and other poets who were active before the year 1000. It is as if the rhetoric of death remains unaltered throughout the thousand-year history of Byzantine poetry. But when one reads between the lines and tries to retrieve the original contexts, it becomes clear that the funerary genre is not as static as it would appear at first sight. In fact, there are some subtle changes and some new concepts, by which we can gauge the gradual developments of the genre of the epitaph³³. These changes are related either to new burial customs (for example, the arcosolium in private

³¹ Note that οὐδέτερον does not agree with κεφαλὴν; rather than thinking of a *constructio ad sensum* (with an implied noun τὸν εὐνοῦχον), I would say that it refers to the grammatical term for “neuter”.

³² See PAPADOGIANNAKIS 1984: 96–126 and 212–239.

³³ The study by LAMBAKIS 1989, on the “socio-political” dimension of Byzantine epitaphs, is rather disappointing because he does not pay enough attention to changes in mentality and social constructs.

religious foundations versus the sarcophagus in churches open to the general public), new ethical ideas (for example, the popularity of monastic ideals in Byzantium after c. 800, which explains why so many laics adopted the monastic habit on their death-bed), or new political ideologies (for example, the emphasis on martial qualities in the tenth century, when Byzantium went on the offensive in its struggle against the Arabs and the Slavs).

Let me give an example. If we compare the funerary inscription on the tomb of Isaac with the tenth-century epitaph to Bardas³⁴, we may notice some striking similarities, but also some important differences. Bardas died from a serious illness on the island of Crete where he served in the military, either during the famous campaign of 961 or shortly afterwards when the island had been reconquered. His wife carried his dead body to Constantinople, washed it with her tears and then buried it in a painted arcosolium. And there he awaits the last trump that will sound on the Day of Judgment. In both these epitaphs, to Isaac and to Bardas, the wives play a prominent role: Isaac's wife, Susanna, "sorely wailed like the virtuous turtledove"; Bardas' wife "lit a torch of distress and washed him with her tears". But whereas chaste Susanna only laments, the wife of Bardas plays a much more active role by bringing his body home and burying him. Another fundamental difference is the burial site: Isaac is laid to rest in a sarcophagus, Bardas in an arcosolium. His arcosolium was decorated with "the venerable types of the images", which form "a symbol of salvation". In other words, the holy images depicted on Bardas' grave are supposed to intercede on his behalf and to save his soul from eternal damnation. In the epitaph to Isaac, on the contrary, the holy images and the concept of blessed salvation do not play any significant role. This is the difference between a pre-iconoclastic and a post-iconoclastic burial site. And thirdly, while both epitaphs stress that Isaac and Bardas were valiant soldiers, we may spot a significant difference: whereas Isaac defended the empire against its enemies, Bardas "fought against the barbarians and the passions". The "barbarians" are the Arabs, the "passions" are Bardas' basic instincts. Thus his fight is not directed only to an external threat, but also to something, equally threatening, which resides within himself: his own dire passions. Bardas is more than just a courageous soldier fighting the enemy. He is a Christian hero. That is why he eagerly awaits the "sound of the last trump" in his tomb, confident that he will enter paradise when the archangel blows the trumpet on the Day of Judgment.

This christianization of military virtues, which we find in the epitaph to Bardas, inevitably leads to the concept of "holy war", a martial ideal which the

³⁴ Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 191. The epitaph was probably composed by John of Melitene: see Appendix III, p. 314.

church officially rejected, but which, nonetheless, appealed to many soldiers – especially in the tenth century when the Byzantines began to reconquer former parts of the empire at the expense of the Muslims and other infidels³⁵. See, for instance, the epitaph to Katakalon, the strategos of Thessalonica, who died on the battlefield in 945–946 when he was fighting against the Magyars:

Τὸ Θετταλῶν φῶς, μάρτυς ἢ στρατηλάτης,
ὁ Κατακαλὼν, εἰ πάλιν τις σαλπίσσι,
ἔτοιμός ἐστι προοβαλεῖν ἐναντίοις·
τοσοῦτον ἦν πρόθυμος ἐχθρῶν εἰς μάχην.
εἰ δ' αὖ βραδύνει, τύμβον αἴτιον νόει,
μένοντα τὴν σάλπιγγα τὴν ἀρχαγγέλου.

“If one sounds the trumpet, Katakalon, the light of the Thessalians, general or martyr, is ready to attack the adversaries anew – so eager was he to fight the enemy. But if he is slow to respond, blame it on the tomb, which awaits the trumpet of the archangel”³⁶. The poet of this epitaph, the Anonymous Patriarchian, plays with the ambiguous sense of the word σάλπιγξ, which denotes both the war-trumpet to which Katakalon was ever so quick to respond, and the last trump which he, like Bardas, awaits lying in his grave. In order to exonerate Katakalon from the blemish of possible slackness in responding to the sound of the war-trumpet, the poet says that it is the fault of the tomb if he does not show up. Note that the poet, so as to make his message clear and avoid any misunderstandings, writes that it is the tomb (and not Katakalon himself) which awaits the last trump – a splendid example of metonymy, of course. However, the most noteworthy feature of this epitaph is doubtless the cursory reference to Katakalon’s martyrdom in the first line. The poet obviously tries to avoid problems with the establishment by not passing a final verdict on the subject (was Katakalon just an ordinary στρατηλάτης, or was he in fact a μάρτυς?), but it is quite interesting that he poses the question. For, of course, this is the very same question Emperor Nikephoros Phokas attempted to answer when he suggested to the Church that soldiers fighting for the empire and the true faith should be declared martyrs if they died on the battlefield³⁷. Polyeuktos the Patriarch adamantly rejected the proposal, as we all know; but vastly more important than this official rejection of the idea of the “holy war”,

³⁵ For the controversial concept of “holy war” in Byzantium, see A. KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, ‘Ο βυζαντινὸς “ἱερὸς πόλεμος”. Ἡ ἔννοια καὶ ἡ προβολὴ τοῦ θρησκευτικοῦ πολέμου στὸ Βυζάντιο. Athens 1991; T.M. KOLBABA, *Byz* 68 (1998) 194–221; and J. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204*. London 1999, 13–33.

³⁶ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 54, 12–17; cf. MERCATI 1927: 419. For Katakalon and the historical context of this epitaph, see Appendix IV, p. 321.

³⁷ See KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, ‘Ο βυζαντινὸς “ἱερὸς πόλεμος”, 132–141.

which was only to be expected because of its blatantly unorthodox nature, is the fact that the question was posed at all. For it means that some people at least played with the idea that dying in combat would secure a place in heaven³⁸. In tenth-century sources, such as the *Taktika* of Leo VI and the liturgical hymn commemorating “generals, officers and soldiers dying in combat or in captivity”³⁹, there is a clear tendency (although it is hardly ever expressed openly) to turn dead soldiers into martyrs who died for their faith. What we see in the tenth century, and this in sharp contrast to earlier periods, is a sort of warrior culture in military circles, especially amidst the powerful and belligerent clans of central Anatolia. Bellicose actions are good. Fighting the infidels is laudable. And killing Arabs is a definite plus. It is against this background of martial ideals that we should view the possible martyrdom of Katakalon, who died on the battlefield fighting the pagan Hungarians. He died fighting for the emperor, he died fighting for Christianity. Is such a hero not a martyr? Or is he just a general like all the other generals fighting for the empire? The poet does not provide an answer⁴⁰, but the mere fact that the question is put forward indicates an uncertainty typical of tenth-century Byzantium, when the canonical ideas about warfare clashed with certain “grassroots” sympathies for the army and its brilliant accomplishments against the infidel. The epitaph to Katakalon is very much a product of its time, for it raises a question typical of tenth-century Byzantium at war: does death on the battlefield amount to martyrdom or not? The official answer is: no. The unofficial answer is: possibly.

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³⁸ *Pace* N. OIKONOMIDES, in: *Peace and War in Byzantium*, eds. T.S. MILLER & J. NESBITT. Washington, D.C., 1995, 63–68.

³⁹ For the *Taktika*, see G. DAGRON & H. MIHAESCU, eds., *Le traité sur la guérilla (de velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)*. Paris 1986, 284–286; for the hymn, see TH. DÉTORAKIS & J. MOSSAY, *Le Muséeon* 101 (1988) 183–211.

⁴⁰ In another epitaph to Katakalon, however, the poet is less cautious and makes no secret of what he thinks: there he urges other generals “to fight for the faith of the Christians” and to follow the example of Katakalon, “the glorious martyr of God”, whose courage earned him “a myriadfold wreath” (ed. LAMBROS 1922: 54, 1–4 and 7–8, cf. 53, 27–29). This “heretical” epitaph was certainly not inscribed on the tomb of Katakalon (in contrast to the more cautious version, the epitaph treated in the main text, which probably was).

The Hereafter

There is no comprehensive study of death in Byzantium⁴¹. After hundred-odd years of Byzantinology, we still know remarkably little about burial customs, funerary rites, death-related mentalities, etcetera. This is strange because, as we all know from personal experience, death marks a significant turning point in the lives of all human beings. For it belies our trivial expectations, derides our self-image, and undermines the bonds of love and friendship we cherish. It is the moth eating into the garment of our earthly existence.

It is neither my purpose nor within my competence to cover the tremendous gaps in our knowledge of the subject of death in Byzantium. But it is perhaps useful to show what Byzantine poets thought about the hereafter⁴². What precisely happened to the departed of blessed memory?

In ms. Vat. Pal. gr. 367, immediately after an epitaph to Bertha of Provence († 949), we find a text entitled: ἄλλα παραινετικά⁴³. There we are told that if you look at a corpse, it is obvious that beauty and riches do not count for much, because in death we are all alike. As the poet tells us in vivid detail, every bit of the human body putrefies in the grave: bones, joints, sinews, arteries, tendons, muscles, flesh and blood, curls and brows, eyes, nose and mouth. It all inevitably decays. “It is just dust, soil, rot – until man as a whole resurrects at the Last Judgment. For then he shall arise from the earth [his grave] and be united to the earth [his body]; he [that is: his soul and his body] shall be lifted from the earth and run to heaven; and in the end, he shall be deified, turning to God only. For, at the sound of the last trump, the dead shall come to life again; bones shall be joined to bones, sinews to sinews (...)”. In the rest of the poem, the poet maintains that the pleasures of this world are ephemeral and admonishes the faithful to prepare themselves for death and to try to live a pious life. However, vastly more important than the moralistic lesson to be learned from a ghastly excursion to the churchyard, is the poet’s

⁴¹ For a select bibliography, see *ODB*, s.v. Death. What we need in the field of Byzantinology are studies like those of J. HUIZINGA (*Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*. Leiden 1919), A. TENENTI (*Il senso della morte e l’ amore della vita nel Rinascimento* (Francia e Italia). Turin 1957) and P. ARIÈS (*Essais sur l’ histoire de la mort en Occident du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris 1975; *L’ homme devant la mort*. Paris 1977). The last issue of *DOP*, no. 55 (2001), dedicated to the topic of death in Byzantium, forms a promising start, but we urgently need to know more about what death meant to the Byzantines and about how it was represented in art and literature.

⁴² For the theological implications of the issue of the life hereafter, see M. JUGIE, *EO* 17 (1914) 5–22, 209–228 and 401–421; *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, s.v. Jugement, cols. 1782–1793; H.G. BECK, *Die Byzantiner und ihr Jenseits. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte einer Mentalität*. Munich 1979; and N. CONSTAS, *DOP* 55 (2001) 91–124.

⁴³ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 41, 19–42, 19; see the corrections by MERCATI 1927: 408–409. Read ληθέν in 42, 4 (not ληθείς), cf. νεῶν in 42, 6: the subject is πᾶν τὸ πλάσμα (42, 3).

upbeat description of the fate of mankind when the trumpets shall sound on Judgment Day. Then man shall become whole again, body and soul united, just as he was before he died. However, there is one significant difference: he will be “deified” (θεοῦται). Deification means that man regains the purity and fullness of his humanity, which he once possessed in paradise before he committed the primal sin. He becomes “like God”, because man is created after His image and likeness. Of course, this blessed deification is granted to the righteous only, and not to those who persist in their acts of sinfulness, as the poet implicitly tells us by his admonition to live a pious life. When the last trump has sounded, the just shall rise from their graves, body and soul, and ascend to heaven to meet their divine Creator.

All this is perfectly orthodox. It is beyond doubt, however, that apart from the Last Judgment which will take place at the end of all time, there is also a provisional tribunal at which the souls of the departed will be judged immediately after their death. For there are numerous texts, such as hymns, hagiographic tales and epitaphs, that plainly state that the dead already reside in heaven or hell. See, for instance, the epitaph to Theophylaktos Magistros, which begins as follows: “The tomb holds the mortal part of Theophylaktos, but Christ above holds Theophylaktos himself. Here he rests, delivered from his illnesses, while he waits for the sound of the trumpet of resurrection”⁴⁴. This epitaph combines two conflicting views on the hereafter, referring on the one hand to the last trump, the resurrection and the dead corpse in the grave, and emphasizing on the other hand that Theophylaktos, or at least his soul, already resides in the kingdom of heaven before the last trump has sounded. In numerous other Byzantine epitaphs, too, we read that the dead have joined the heavenly choirs where they dance and rejoice, certain of the redemption of their souls, even though the Last Judgment has yet to take place. Ignatios the Deacon, for example, writes in his epitaph to Samuel, deacon of the Great Church: “Here lies Samuel hidden in the womb of earth, having left all the possessions he had to God; and now he has entered the bright court of the pious to receive glory for his great labours”⁴⁵. In his epitaph to Photios, Leo Choirosphaktes states with confidence that the patriarch’s soul dwells in heaven: “(Photios) whose body the tomb, but whose spirit the heaven bears”⁴⁶. And in his epitaph to Stephen, Photios’ successor as patriarch, Leo Choirosphaktes uses almost the same reassuring phrase: “(Stephen) whose body the tomb, but whose soul the heaven holds”⁴⁷. Stephen had been appoint-

⁴⁴ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 42, 20–43, 3; cf. MERCATI 1927: 409. See Appendix IV, p. 318.

⁴⁵ *AP* XV, 31. Translation by PATON 1918: V, 139.

⁴⁶ Leo Choirosphaktes, ed. KOLIAS 1939: 130 (no. 1, v. 12).

⁴⁷ Ed. KOLIAS 1939: 131 (no. 2, v. 11). Read αὐτόν, “himself” (not αὐτόν, “him”) in v. 7; replace the question mark in v. 6 with a comma, and put the question mark after v. 8.

ed to the post by his brother, Leo VI, for purely political reasons. He died at the age of twenty-five and had accomplished absolutely nothing worth commemorating in the few years he played the part of patriarch. While no one, not even his catholic opponents, will question that Photios played an important role in the history of the Church, Stephen is so insignificant that there is no reason why he should have been granted entrance to the kingdom of heaven before the end of time. And yet, “the choirs of the redeemed rejoice” at his arrival in heaven, “because he sees the triune light of the Lord” (vv. 15–16). Of course, this is exactly what the Macedonian dynasty wanted to hear from the poet, but the fact that Choïrosphaktes could say it openly, indicates that no one at court apparently objected to the idea of Stephen’s premature admittance to heaven. In fact, most Byzantines went straight to heaven after their demise, at least if we are to believe the eulogies written in their honour. Although the orthodox church never developed a systematic theory on the life hereafter, except for the belief in the Last Judgment which goes back to the gospels and other texts of early Christianity, it is obvious that most Byzantines, rightly or not, assumed that God would pass judgment on them as soon as they had died.

The destiny of the departed soul prior to the Last Judgment is an intriguing secret, not only to us, but also to the Byzantines themselves. It is a mystery the Church never ventured to solve officially, but which was obviously of great concern to ordinary believers. Since there is no official doctrine, we find all sorts of popular beliefs in Byzantine sources: the soul passing through various “toll-houses” in its ascent to heaven; angels guiding the soul to its final destiny; the soul dwelling in the limbo of Hades; and so on. Since the epitaph is a rather traditional genre with a long history stretching back in time all the way to archaic Greece, it is not surprising at all that Byzantine poets make use of certain concepts that do not seem particularly orthodox⁴⁸. Take, for example, the separation of body and soul. The Church accepts this idea, but with the proviso that the separation is only temporary, for body and soul will be reunited at the Last Judgment. In many epitaphs, however, there is no indication whatsoever that the separation of body and soul will be undone at some moment in the future: the body sinks into the grave, the soul ascends to heaven, and that is the end of it⁴⁹. This idea borders on heresy. It is a concept that ultimately goes back to the Platonic dichotomy of body and soul. But since it was expressed in so many ancient and late antique epitaphs, Byzantine poets felt no scruples in using the pagan idea of an eternal separation. Geome-

⁴⁸ See R. LATTIMORE, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*. Urbana, Illinois 1942, 301–340, and KEYDELL 1962: 554–559.

⁴⁹ See REINSCH 1998.

tres' epitaph to Empress Helen, for instance, reads: "Whereas the sun hides the moon with its brightness, the tomb has now hidden Helen with its gloom. But Charon will not prevail for long! For while her lifeless body inevitably gravitated downward beneath its burden, she herself turned to the spiritual Sun and radiated her light towards Him, like the moon towards the skies above"⁵⁰. Just as emperors are compared to the sun, so empresses are likened to the moon: the moon receives its light from the sun, and the empress her imperial splendour from her spouse. But there is a "spiritual sun" that outshines his royal majesty with its splendid beams of divinity: God above, to whom Helen after her earthly demise ascends, displaying all the splendour of her imperial moonlight. While her soul is beamed up to the abodes of divine brightness, her lifeless body -alas!- sinks into the grave because of the laws of nature. Will the two, body and soul, ever be reunited? Geometres is silent on the subject. He probably kept silent about this difficult question, because he, like all other Byzantines, did not know the answer. Where does the soul go to after it departs from the body? If you play it safe, the answer is: to the tomb or to Hades. If you venture to make a guess, you will say: to heaven, or possibly: to hell⁵¹. But what about the Last Judgment? When will body and soul resurrect together? Since the Last Judgment looked more and more like a thing of the distant future as time went by, many Byzantines understandably viewed the separation of body and soul either as a quasi-permanent condition stretching to infinity or at least as a deplorable situation that would last for many aeons to come. And since neither the dead nor the living can wait for ever, the need arose to turn the intermediate period between death and resurrection into something more than a mere waste of time; it had to become part of the divine scheme of things, a stage of redemption or damnation before the last trump would sound. This is why in Byzantine epitaphs so many souls dwell in heaven, near their divine Creator, although the Last Judgment has not yet taken place. Is this impatience? Perhaps, but it is human. For it is an understandable longing to make sense of senseless death.

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⁵⁰ Cr. 327, 14–20. Read *στροφῆσα* in line 4; cf. Cr. 266, 15–19. Empress Helen is either the wife of Constantine VII (she died in 961) or possibly the wife of Constantine VIII (she died in the 980s).

⁵¹ For the latter option, see John of Melitene, ed. HÖRANDNER 1970: 115, where we are told that Emperor John Tzimiskes burns in hell because he has murdered his predecessor on the throne.

Epitaphs to Emperors

There are a few epitaphs, mostly fictitious, to empresses and other people of imperial lineage: the famous elegy to Constantina, the wife of Maurice⁵²; the epitaph to Stephen the Patriarch, the brother of Leo VI, which I mentioned above; an epigram commemorating the saintly death of Theophano, the wife of Leo VI⁵³; an epitaph to Bertha of Provence / Eudokia, the first wife of Romanos II⁵⁴; the verses on the death of Empress Helen translated above; and an epitaph in which Stephen, the son of Romanos I, confesses his sins from beyond the grave⁵⁵. There are also a number of epitaphs to emperors: two fictitious epitaphs to Nikephoros Phokas, an equally fictitious epitaph to John Tzimiskes, and two funerary verse inscriptions commemorating Tzimiskes and Basil II, respectively⁵⁶.

The number of imperial epitaphs is fairly restricted. Whereas there are dozens of epitaphs to Byzantine aristocrats and even to people of lower social status, the emperors and their next-of-kin apparently do not need to be officially commemorated in metrical eulogies. The reason for this is that in the two mausoleums built next to the church of the Holy Apostles, where until the year of 1028 most of the emperors and their relatives were buried, it was not customary to inscribe epitaphs on the tombs⁵⁷. As the Byzantines were able to identify the graves⁵⁸, it is beyond doubt that the imperial tombs bore texts indicating who was buried where; but these texts were obviously not in verse, for otherwise we would expect to find numerous epitaphs to emperors in

⁵² Ed. STERNBACH 1900: 293–297; see also CAMERON 1993: 215–216. As the epitaph is fictitious, it does not necessarily date from the early seventh century. The text was known to writers of the second half of the tenth century: see Nikephoros Ouranos, letter 18 (ed. J. DARROUZÈS, *Épistoliers byzantins du X^e siècle*. Paris 1960, 226): ἀντὶ μέντοι τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ Μαυριζίου συζύγῳ καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ παισὶν ἐλεγείων (...), and John Geometres, Cr. 326, 5–6: ἔρνος ἔμὸν (...) ὄλεο Θρηζικίων ἐξ ἀνέμων ἀπίνης (=ἐξαιπίνης), cf. line 12 of the epitaph: ῥίζα γὰρ ἐκλάσθη Θρηζικίους ἀνέμοις.

⁵³ Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1978: 127.

⁵⁴ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 41. See Appendix IV, p. 318.

⁵⁵ Ed. VASIL'EVSKIJ 1896: 577–578.

⁵⁶ For the fictitious epitaph to Tzimiskes, see above, footnote 51. For the other epitaphs, see below, the main text. In LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 360, I assumed that Geometres' epitaphs to Constantine (Cr. 303, 18 ff.) were written for Constantine VII, but I was mistaken; these texts deal with a civil servant.

⁵⁷ See MANGO 1995: 115–116. As Mango points out, the epitaph to Emperor Julian was not to be found in the church of the Holy Apostles, but in Tarsos, where Julian was buried before his corpse was brought to Constantinople; and the metrical text inscribed on the tomb of Maria, the daughter of Theophilos, was not an epitaph, but an imperial edict granting asylum to those who fled to her tomb (see Theophanes Cont. 108).

⁵⁸ See the list of imperial tombs in: P. GRIERSON, *DOP* 16 (1962) 1–63.

Byzantine sources. As we shall see below, the only two imperial epitaphs that were definitely inscribed, those commemorating Tzimiskes and Basil II, were not located in the church of the Holy Apostles, but in private burial sites.

If only for this reason, the interpolated text in Skylitzes (282, 62–63) stating that the tomb of Nikephoros Phokas in the church of the Holy Apostles bore a verse inscription looks rather suspect, for it would be the only instance known to us of an epitaph in the Holy Apostles. In fact, there are more reasons for discrediting this story as untrustworthy. In the *History* of Leo the Deacon (91, 8–13; cf. Skylitzes, 281, 52–55) we read that the decapitated corpse of Phokas was buried in stealth and without the proper ceremonies in one of the sarcophagi at the Mausoleum of Constantine. It is highly unlikely that after such an ignominious burial, the imperial court or the staff of the Holy Apostles would have put an official verse inscription on the tomb where Nikephoros Phokas had been disposed of in secret. As the epitaph refers in plain terms to the slaughter of Phokas, it is out of the question that his murderer, John Tzimiskes, would have given permission for such a text to be inscribed inside an imperial monument, unless he wanted to be regularly reminded of the crime he had committed. Similarly, the epitaph cannot have been inscribed on the tomb of Phokas after the reign of Tzimiskes, for it openly criticizes Theophano, the mother of Basil II and Constantine VIII, and these two would never have allowed a text which informed the rest of the world that their mother was the equivalent of an evil monster.

If we read the text of the epitaph carefully, it is clear that it was not composed straight after the murder of Phokas, but twenty years later, in 988–989. The following translation of the epitaph is based upon the edition I provide in Appendix III, pp. 308–309: “He who used to be sharper than a sword to other men, succumbed to a woman and a sword. He who through his power used to wield power over the whole earth, settled for a tiny part of the earth as if he were tiny himself. Even animals, I think, once stood in awe of him; but his wife, supposedly his other half, killed him. He who did not allow himself even a short moment of sleep at night, now sleeps the long sleep in the grave. What a bitter sight! But now, my emperor, stand up and marshal the infantry, the cavalry, the archers, the phalanxes, the troops – your own soldiers. For the Russian panoply rushes headlong at us, the Scythian tribes eagerly long for bloodshed, and the very persons who were once frightened when they saw your image depicted on the gates of Byzantium, are violently plundering your beloved city. Please do not overlook these wrongs, but throw off the stone that covers you, and chase away the beastly peoples with stones and provide us with rocks for our defence, an unbeatable stronghold. But if you do not wish to arise a little from your tomb, at least let the enemies hear your battle cry from the earth: maybe that will suffice to frighten them and scare them off. If this is not possible either, welcome us all in your tomb. For even

as a dead man, you are all that is needed to save all the folks of Christendom, O Nikephoros, victorious in all respects but defeated by a woman”.

The poet, John of Melitene⁵⁹, overtly states that Nikephoros was victorious (νικηφόρος) in all respects but his taste in women; he prevailed over all other men in combat, but he was no match for his cunning wife. Since “it is shameful for a commander and a ruler to be defeated by women”, at least according to Photios⁶⁰, this assessment can hardly be called a flattering compliment to Nikephoros Phokas – which, once again, indicates that this is not an authentic epitaph. It is interesting to note that Theophano gets all the blame for her husband’s murder. In contemporary sources, such as the poems of John Geometres, there is a tendency to exonerate Tzimiskes⁶¹ and to put the blame exclusively on Theophano. In his epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas, for instance, Geometres first sums up his splendid military feats and then writes that he “was slain inside the palace and did not escape the hands of (his) wife, oh wretched feebleness!” (Cr. 290, 10–11). And in his monody on the death of Tzimiskes (Cr. 267, 23), he portrays the murderer of Phokas as a valiant warrior who, alas, committed a tragic crime, which he felt ashamed of ever after: a righteous man after all, not a monster⁶². There is doubtless a strain of misogyny in the portrayal of Theophano as the sole perpetrator of the murder. It is treacherous Eve all over again, with Phokas and Tzimiskes in a double role as ingenuous Adam unable to resist her sex appeal.

In the epitaph to Phokas, the poet urges him to rise up from the grave and to defend his empire against its enemies. There are two interesting parallels to this remarkable appeal to a dead emperor to stand up and fight. The first is a poem by Geometres (Cr. 283, 16) dealing with the threat posed by the κομητόπουλος, that is: Samuel, the future tsar of the Bulgars, whose rise to power, according to Geometres, coincided with the appearance of a comet (κομίτης). Unfortunately, we cannot date this poem with any accuracy. Samuel became a threat to the empire after the death of Tzimiskes, and especially after the battle at Trajan’s Gate in 986, where he crushed the Byzantine armies⁶³; but since there are so many reports of ill-boding comets in this period (the most

⁵⁹ For this poet, see Appendix III. He should not be confused with John Geometres. For a different interpretation of the epitaph, see CRESCI 1995: 37–40.

⁶⁰ Epistulae, vol. I (ed. B. LAOURDAS & L.G. WESTERINK): no. 1, line 1043.

⁶¹ See E. PATLAGEAN, in: *Media in Francia. Mélanges K.F.Werner*. Paris 1989, 345–361, esp. 355–356.

⁶² In Cr. 295, 10, an *ethopoia* in which the dead emperor complains that his pictures have been removed from the palace, we read that “the lord of darkness seized power with his bloodstained hands”. This is the only passage in Geometres’ poems where Tzimiskes is openly criticized. But it is interesting to note that the words of criticism are put in the mouth of Phokas. The poet himself refrains from making any comment.

⁶³ See W. SEIBT, *Handes Amsorya* 89 (1975) 65–100.

famous one being Halley's Comet in 989)⁶⁴, it is impossible to establish a secure date for the poem. However, of one thing we can be absolutely certain: it cannot have been written before 976, and it may even be as late as 989. And yet, Geometres addresses a desperate plea to Nikephoros Phokas, an emperor long dead, to "arise a little from the grave and roar, O lion, so that the foxes [the Bulgarians] learn to stay on their rocks [the mountainous regions of the Balkans]". The second parallel is a passage in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes (ed. de Boor, 501), where we read that some soldiers, disappointed with the military failures of the iconophile establishment, broke into the tomb of Constantine V in the Holy Apostles in 813, which they did so craftily that the gates of the mausoleum appeared to open as if by a divine miracle. They then rushed to the tomb, crying out: "Arise and help the State that is perishing". They even spread the rumour that Constantine had mounted his horse and was setting out to fight the Bulgarians⁶⁵. In both sources, Geometres and Theophanes, we find an appeal to an emperor long dead to rise up from his grave and defend the empire against the threat of its enemies: in both cases, the Bulgarians (Krum in 813, Samuel in 976 or later). This strongly suggests that, in his epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas, John of Melitene does not address the emperor shortly after his death, but in fact calls for a miraculous resurrection long after his demise.

In corroboration of this, it suffices to read lines 12 to 16 attentively. There is a Russian threat, the Scythian tribes (the Bulgarians) are bloodthirsty, and the enemies are pillaging the holy city of Byzantium. In the traditional interpretation of the epitaph, based upon the interpolated passage in Skylitzes, only the Russian threat is accounted for: that is, Svjatoslav and the Rus', who invaded the Byzantine territories soon after the death of Nikephoros Phokas. But what about the Bulgarians? And what about the plundering enemies? As the Bulgarians had been annihilated by Svjatoslav's armies in 968–969, they could hardly have constituted a serious threat to the Byzantines. And neither the Bulgarians nor the Russians are reported to have been inside the city in 969 or shortly afterwards, causing havoc to the population of Constantinople. However, all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place when we look at the historical situation in 988–989. For in the years after 986, the battle at Trajan's Gate, the Bulgarians were certainly "eager for bloodshed", and in late 988 the Russians were inside the city of Constantinople. In 988 Basil II, facing the dangerous rebellion of Bardas Phokas, resorted to the desperate decision of calling on the belligerent Rus' for help, in reward for which he offered the hand

⁶⁴ See V. GRUMEL, *Traité d' Études Byzantines*. I. La Chronologie. Paris 1958, 472.

⁶⁵ The *Chronicle* of Theophanes Confessor, ed. C. MANGO & R. SCOTT. Oxford 1997, 684. See P. J. ALEXANDER, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*. Oxford 1958, 85–101. See also L.R. CRESCI, *Koinonia* 19 (1995) 77–82.

of his sister Anna to Vladimir, the Russian prince; this alliance was sealed by the baptism of the Rus'. In the year after, the Russian troops duly complied with the emperor's request and defeated Bardas Phokas, first at Chrysopolis and then at Abydos. While the help of the Russians may have secured the throne for Basil II, it is arguable whether the Byzantine population was very pleased with the presence of foreign soldiers in the streets of Constantinople⁶⁶. To many Byzantines, and especially to those who supported the cause of Bardas Phokas, the Russian mercenaries must have seemed a menace to their lives and possessions. Since John of Melitene writes that "the Russian panoply rushes headlong at *us*", there can be little doubt where he stands politically, namely, at the side of Bardas Phokas. This is hardly surprising since the revolt of Bardas Phokas began in Melitene, the city of which John was the metropolitan. By laying the blame for the murder of the emperor entirely on the mother of Basil II, Theophano, and not on Tzimiskes who was related to the Phokas clan, the poet clearly shows a bias against the Macedonian dynasty. And by invoking the vengeful spirit of Nikephoros Phokas to avert the onslaught of the Rus' and the Bulgars, the poet suggests that, had the Phokades been in power, such a catastrophic situation would never have occurred and that it is all the fault of Basil II, the son of evil Theophano. In short, what we have here is plain propaganda for the cause of Bardas Phokas. Since it canvasses support for the usurper by appealing to his imperial ancestor, the epitaph must have been written in the few months between the arrival of the Russian troops in Constantinople in the summer of 988 and the subsequent defeat of Bardas Phokas in April 989.

If we want to know what an imperial epitaph looked like, we should turn to texts that were most certainly inscribed on the tombs of emperors (and not to fictitious epitaphs, such as the one by John of Melitene). In the history of Pachymeres (ed. Failler, 175), we read that the soldiers of Michael VIII discovered the tomb of Basil the Bulgar-slayer in the dilapidated church of St. John the Theologian in the suburb of Hebdomon in 1260, shortly before Constantinople was reconquered. The soldiers were able to identify the tomb of Basil II because it bore an inscription. The text of this inscription can be found in a number of Byzantine manuscripts dating from the Palaeologan period:

Ἄλλοι μὲν ἄλλους τῶν πάλαι βασιλέων
αὐτοῖς προαφώρισαν εἰς ταφὴν τόπους·
ἐγὼ δὲ Βασίλειος, πορφύρας γόνος,
ἴσθημι τύμβον ἐν τόπῳ γῆς Ἑβδόμου

⁶⁶ For a splendid account of the events between 986–989, see A. POPPE, *DOP* 30 (1976) 211–224, who at p. 217 rightly states: "the behavior of foreign allied troops is always troublesome for the host country, and the visiting Russian warriors were no exception". Poppe is the first to have dated the epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas correctly.

καὶ σαββατίζω τῶν ἀμετρήτων πόνων
οὓς ἐν μάχαις ἔστειργον, οὓς ἐκαρτέρουν.
οὐ γὰρ τις εἶδεν ἡρεμοῦν ἐμὸν δόρυ,
ἀφ' οὗ βασιλεὺς οὐρανῶν κέκληκέ με
αὐτοκράτορα, γῆς μέγαν βασιλέα,
ἀλλ' ἄγρουπνῶν ἅπαντα τὸν ζωῆς χρόνον
Ῥώμης τὰ τέκνα τῆς νέας ἐρυόμην
ὅτε στρατεύων ἀνδρικῶς πρὸς ἐσπέραν,
ὅτε πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοὺς ὄρους τοὺς τῆς ἔω,
ἰστῶν τρόπαια πανταχοῦ γῆς μυρία.
καὶ μαρτυροῦσι τοῦτο Πέρσαι καὶ Σκύθαι,
σὺν οἷς Ἀβασγός, Ἰσμαήλ, Ἀραβ, Ἰβηρ.
καὶ νῦν ὄρων, ἄνθρωπε, τόνδε τὸν τάφον
εὐχαῖς ἀμείβου τὰς ἐμὰς στρατηγίας.

“The emperors of old allotted to themselves different burial-sites: some here, others there; but I, Basil the purple-born, erect my tomb in the region of Hebdomon. Here I rest, on the seventh day, from the numerous toils I bore and endured on the battlefield, for from the day that the King of Heaven called upon me to become the emperor, the great overlord of the world, no one saw my spear lie idle. I stayed alert throughout my life and protected the children of the New Rome, valiantly campaigning both in the West and at the outposts of the East, erecting myriads of trophies in all parts of the world. And witnesses of this are the Persians and the Scyths, together with the Abkhaz, the Ismaelite, the Arab and the Iberian. O man, seeing now my tomb here, reward me for my campaigns with your prayers”⁶⁷.

The epitaph is perhaps not a masterpiece of Byzantine poetry, but its message is so crystal clear that anyone will understand it immediately. At the risk of explaining what is perfectly clear as it is, I will still offer a few comments on the text. The verb σαββατίζω, “to rest on Sabbath’s day”, obviously refers to Basil II’s burial site in the suburb of Hebdomon: Sabbath is the seventh day of the week and the Hebdomon is the seventh district of Constantinople. It also refers to the concept that the emperor is Christ’s representative on earth: just as God, after a tiresome week of creating the universe, reposed from His labours, so does Basil II rest from the numerous toils he endured for the sake of the Byzantine empire⁶⁸. The idea that Basil II is following in the footsteps of

⁶⁷ Ed. MERCATI 1921b and 1922b; see also C. ASDRACHA, *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 47–48 (1992–93) 309–316 (no. 102).

⁶⁸ Cf. the famous passage in Theophanes (ed. de Boor, 327–328; the source is probably a lost panegyric by Pisides) stating that Herakleios returned to Constantinople in the seventh year, after six years of campaigning, in order to repose from his toils, just as God, having created the world, rested on the seventh day.

Christ, is elaborated upon in vv. 8–9, where we read that he became emperor, because God Himself appointed him to this elevated post. All the fighting that ensued, against the many enemies of the empire, Basil II carried out as God's own deadly weapon, ruthlessly but piously, because he merely did what he was asked to do. Since Basil II's relentless efforts to save the empire corresponded to God's merciful designs for the fate of Christianity, the visitor to Basil II's tomb is asked to show his gratitude by praying on his behalf. As he has done so much for the empire on God's orders, Basil II surely deserves to be redeemed in the hereafter. The fighting took place in the West and in the East. The enemies in the West were the Scyths (the Bulgarians) and in the East the Persians (perhaps the Buyids), the Arabs, the Ismaelites (the Kurds or the Turks?), the Abkhaz and the Iberians (the Georgians). Given the fact that, at the time of Basil II's death, the West had been pacified (albeit at the expense of many lives) whereas the East was still the scene of much turmoil and bloodshed, the emphasis on bellicose peoples at the Eastern borders hardly comes as a surprise. Interesting is also the verb μαρτυρῶ, which indicates that what we have here is the political "legacy" of Basil II, to which his conquered enemies "testify" by admitting their defeat and recognizing his overlordship.

But for the present purpose the most interesting feature of this text is doubtless the use of the first person for an imperial epitaph. As I explained above, first-person epitaphs are usually poems of contrition – poems in which the deceased confesses his sins to God and prays that he may be forgiven. This is clearly not the case here. Seeing that the visitor to the emperor's tomb is asked to pray for the salvation of his soul, it is obvious that Basil II has not yet entered the Kingdom of Heaven. However, it is interesting to note that Basil II does not do the pleading himself, but leaves it up to others to pray on his behalf. There is no humility on his part. And there is not the slightest trace of remorse either. On the contrary, Basil II proudly sums up his splendid victories, boasts about his military prowess and asserts that God has always been on his side, from the day of his investiture until the very moment of his death. The tone is already set in the first verses where we find a classic example of the *priamel*, a figure of speech that leads to a rhetorical climax. Of the emperors of old, some chose this, and others that resting place; but I, Basil II, preferred to be buried in the church of St. John the Theologian at the Hebdomon. In a *priamel*, the last option mentioned is always significantly better than the other possibilities, to which it implicitly is compared. In other words: even in the choice of his final resting place, Basil II was by far superior to all the emperors who had reigned before him. This is the voice of a proud man, self-assured, convinced of his own qualities and perhaps even certain of his posthumous fate. It is not the voice of a repenting sinner, although one would expect from an epitaph written in the first person that it would show more modesty and contain at least some signs of deep remorse.

However, the epitaph to Basil II is certainly not the only one of its kind. In the church of Christ Chalkites, built by Romanos I and reconstructed on a larger scale by John Tzimiskes next to the Chalke (the vestibule of the Great Palace), there used to be a verse inscription, of which an eighteenth-century traveller to Constantinople, a certain Thomas Smith, deciphered one line: κατὰ Σκυθῶν ἔπνευσας θεοῦ ἐν μάχαις⁶⁹. Since we know that Tzimiskes was buried in the church of Christ Chalkites, it is reasonable to assume that this is a fragment of the epitaph that once adorned his tomb, especially as it seems to refer to Tzimiskes' battles against Svjatoslav and the Rus' (the Σκύθαι)⁷⁰. It is beyond any doubt that Thomas Smith did not read the text of the inscription correctly, for the seventh metrical syllable is long (ἔπνευσας θεοῦ) whereas it should be short. It is out of the question that such a metrical error would have been permissible in an epitaph to an emperor, seeing that the imperial ideology of the Byzantines is based on the concept of continuity – continuity, not only of institutions, laws and customs, but also of the very ideal of *paideia*. This is why mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, stylistic register and metre are not allowed in texts written for the emperor, for such mistakes undermine the very basis upon which his imperial authority rests. Seeing that there is apparently something wrong with the text provided by Thomas Smith, the most easy solution is to assume that he mistook a darkish blot for a sigma and that we should read: κατὰ Σκυθῶν ἔπνευσα θεοῦ ἐν μάχαις, “I breathed fire in my battles against the Scythians”. Here then we have another epitaph written in the first person, in which a dead emperor brags about his heroic feats.

There is a third piece of evidence: a fictitious epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas composed by John Geometres, who used to be the poet laureate at his court and had therefore every reason to lament his untimely death. The epitaph is divided into two parts: an encomium of Phokas' glorious military achievements (vv. 1–8) and a moralistic meditation on the feeble nature of mankind, exemplified by the weakness Phokas displayed in dealing with his treacherous wife (vv. 9–12). As Phokas himself is the narrating voice, the reflection on man's feebleness which we find in the last four verses does not come as a surprise, for to confess one's sins is of course a feature typical of first-person epitaphs; besides, the less than heroic manner of Phokas' death at the hands of his wife (the role of Tzimiskes is passed over in silence) certainly called for some comments on the topic. In the first eight verses, however, just as in the epitaphs to Basil II and Tzimiskes, we find an enumeration of the emperor's heroic feats – and please note that it is Phokas himself who sums up, with

⁶⁹ See C. MANGO, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen 1959, 166–167.

⁷⁰ See MANGO 1995: 116.

obvious pride, what he has done for the empire. “During the six years that I held the reins of God’s people, this is what I did. I engaged the Scyths in fierce battle. I wholly devastated the cities of the Assyrians and the Phoenicians, and even subjugated unassailable Tarsos. I cleansed the islands and drove off the barbarian host from vast Crete and vaunted Cyprus. East and West shrunk back, bliss-giving Nile and rugged Libya fled before my threats” (Cr. 290, 2–9).

In this fictitious epitaph, just as in the two verse inscriptions on the tombs of Basil II and John Tzimiskes, we see that emperors are allowed to boast of their military prowess *propria voce*, speaking to us from beyond the grave. It is highly likely that the fictitious epitaph by Geometres and the two genuine verse inscriptions, all three of which present dead emperors bragging about their heroic feats, ultimately go back to a common source. In order to determine what this common source may have been, there are two important clues. Firstly, bragging emperors are not laid to rest in the mausoleums of the Holy Apostles, but in private burial sites. And secondly, the emphasis on military prowess presupposes not only that there are heroic feats to brag about, but also that there is an ideological climate in which such boasts receive a warm welcome: that is, the warrior culture of tenth-century Byzantium. Taken in conjunction, these two clues strongly suggest that we are dealing with the tomb of Emperor Romanos I, who was buried in 948 in the Myrelaion, a monastery he had rebuilt and designated as the final resting place for himself and his next-of-kin. It is reasonable to assume that there was an epitaph inscribed on the tomb of Romanos Lekapenos in the Myrelaion. And since no other tenth-century emperor, except for Lekapenos, Tzimiskes and Basil II, was buried in a private burial site instead of the church of the Holy Apostles, it is very likely that this epitaph was the hypothetical common source that Geometres and the two anonymous poets imitated.

Chapter Eight
GNOMIC EPIGRAMS

The ninth-century nun Kassia, who allegedly took part in the bride-show organized in 830 to find a suitable bride for the emperor¹, is best known for her hymns, especially her splendid troparion *Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἀμαρτίαις...* But she also wrote a number of interesting gnomic epigrams, which summarize Byzantine ethics in a few, well-chosen vignettes. Kassia's epigrams go back to an old and venerated tradition of moralizing in verse, with famous names such as Theognis, Euripides, Menander, Gregory of Nazianzos and Palladas, followed in the fifth century by the so-called *Sayings of Aesop* and in the seventh century by a monastic corpus of gnomic epigrams attributed to John the Syrian, Gennadios and others. It would be incorrect, however, to play down Kassia's contribution to the gnomological tradition by presenting it merely as new wine in old bottles. What Kassia did was, in fact, quite innovative. She combined profane and religious maxims into a sparkling amalgam of her own – an osmosis of ancient wisdom and monastic truth that represents the very essence of Byzantine ethics. She also understood that the old becomes new again if it is given a twist, not by changing the words, but by giving them a brand-new meaning. Thus Kassia revived the genre and turned it into something the Byzantines could relate to within the context of their own experience.

Gnomic epigrams are of great relevance to anthropologists and social historians, not because they describe the actual comportment of *homo byzantinus*, but because they prescribe how the average Byzantine is supposed to behave. The precepts that are hammered out in these pithy maxims clearly evince the spiritual anxieties of Byzantine society and express its desire to pursue the Christian ideal as far as humanly possible. Byzantine morality is concerned with the hereafter; it is a doctrine in which right and wrong symbolize a fundamental choice between heaven and hell, blessed salvation and eternal damnation. It tends to be negative about the pleasures of this life, which are considered to be an impediment to the soul's realization of heavenly bliss. The rigid abnegation of worldly pleasures, the duty of every Byzantine, culminates in the ethical ideals of monasticism. It is not surprising, therefore, that the precepts of Byzantine morality are to be found mainly in gnomological litera-

¹ See ROCHOW 1967: 3–31 and LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 391–397.

ture of monastic provenance, such as the epigrams of Kassia. Despite the obvious monastic overtones of this kind of literature, however, one should not be oblivious to the fact that gnomic epigrams address all Byzantines. The ideas and ideals are obviously monastic, but the implementation of these ethical codes is an arduous task every Byzantine, whether living in the cloister or not, has to undertake.

Gnomic epigrams are intended to be memorized and learnt by heart. They consist of one or more lines, usually not more than four; the metre is the dodecasyllable and the metrical pattern is based upon the concatenation of perfectly balanced hemistichs and whole verses (enjambment is avoided); and the logico-syntactical structure of the verses is governed by the rules of parallelism and antithesis². See, for instance, Kassia:

Μέγα τὸ μικρόν,	ἂν ὁ φίλος εὐγνώμων·
τῷ δ' ἄγνώμονι	σμικρότατον τὸ μέγα.

“A little is the most, if the friend is grateful; but to the ungrateful, the most is the least”³. The epigram consists of two lines, which express two clearly opposed ideas based on the logical theorem: if a, then b; if not a, then not b. Each of the four parts of the theorem is compressed into a densely constructed hemistich, and thus we have four independent colons, with a parallel number of syllables: 5+7 and 5+7. Kassia, however, changes the order of the arguments and uses instead a chiasmic figure: b, if a; if not a, not b. She also uses the rhetorical figure of amplification: τὸ μικρόν is μέγα if the friend is grateful; but if the friend is not grateful, τὸ μέγα is σμικρότατον (notice the superlative and the additional sigma used to hammer out the message). She also makes use of etymology: εὐγνώμων versus ἄγνώμων, binary antipodes: μικρόν versus μέγα, and alliteration: all the buzzing m-sounds. An epigram as skilfully constructed as this is easy to learn by heart, to remember and to reproduce at any appropriate moment whenever the topic of “gratitude” comes up. In fact, Kassia’s epigram literally begs to be memorized. It not only appeals to the ear, the heart and the mind with all its rhetorical pyrotechnics and sound effects, but it also tells something about the virtue of gratitude that most people will immediately recognize.

Is a gnomic epigram an ἐπίγραμμα in the Byzantine sense of the word? If the *gnomae* of Kassia and others are texts that are primarily intended to be learnt by heart, are we entitled to refer to them as “epigrams”? This is a difficult question, to be sure, but I think that the answer should be affirmative. First of all, there are quite a number of verse inscriptions that doubtless fall into the category of the gnomic epigram: *memento mori*’s written on the walls

² See, especially, MAAS 1901. See also MAAS 1903: 278–285 and LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 80–86.

³ KRUMBACHER 1897a: 357 (A 5–6); translation: TRIPOLITIS 1992: 107.

of cemeteries and protreptic verses inscribed on the entrances to the church and the altar space (see below). Secondly, as I stated on pp. 65–66, the poetry book of Pisides is neatly divided into two: “epigrams” first and “poems” at the end. Since we find a moralizing maxim on the malicious power of Envy (St. 28) among the “epigrams”⁴, it is beyond any doubt that either Pisides himself or an anonymous editor responsible for Pisides’ poetry book considered *gnomae* to be epigrams. And thirdly, as I explained in chapter 4, only a few of the various types of epigrammatic poetry practised by the ancients survived after c. 600: epigrams on works of art, book epigrams, epitaphs and gnomic epigrams. Seeing that the literary tradition of the gnomic epigram continued without interruption, it makes no sense to put different labels on the *gnomae* of Palladas and the *gnomae* of Kassia. One of her gnomic epigrams (I persist in using the term) almost literally plagiarizes a famous epigram by Palladas, which can be found in many Byzantine sources, such as the gnomology of Georgides⁵. If Palladas’ epigram is rightly called a “gnomic epigram”, why should we not use the same term for Kassia’s imitation of this very same text?

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Memento Mori

In the catalogue of the 1997 exhibition in Thessalonica, *Treasures of the Holy Mountain*, one finds a picture of a beautiful peacock clutching an almost rectangular orb from which acanthus leaves shoot forth. It is a marble slab, probably dating from the late tenth century, and now immured in the exterior wall of the monastery of Xeropotamos. The relief has a verse inscription along the bottom: μνήμη θανάτου χρησιμεύει τῷ βίῳ, “the thought of death is useful to life”⁶. The concept of *mneme thanatou* was a key element in the philosophy of Byzantine monastic authors, such as John Klimax, who in his *Heavenly Ladder* devoted a whole chapter to the subject, and who even defined the monk as “a soul in great pain, contemplating death with unremitting attention, whether

⁴ Pisides’ gnomic epigram is imitated by Kassia: ed. KRUMBACHER 1897a: 359 (A 40–42).

⁵ Ed. KRUMBACHER 1897a: 359 (A 71–73); cf. Palladas, *AP* X, 73. For the Byzantine sources, other than the Greek Anthology, see BOISSONADE 1829–33: II, 475 (where Palladas’ epigram is attributed to Basil the Great), F. CUMONT, *Revue de Philologie*, n.s., 16 (1892) 161–166 (ascription to Emperor Julian), and version Δ of the gnomology of Georgides, ed. ODORICO 1986: 266.

⁶ For the marble slab and its inscription, see below, Appendix VIII: no. 97. The epigram is erroneously attributed to Kassia by TRIPOLITIS 1992: 138 (line 3); see ROCHOW 1967: 63.

awake or asleep”⁷. It is also a concept that recurs in many gnomic epigrams inscribed on the walls of cemeteries and other sites where monks were buried. It is for this reason that I suspect that the Xeropotamou marble slab was originally found in or near a monastic graveyard, either in Constantinople or somewhere else. The peacock was often represented in Byzantine funerary art, not only as a purely decorative element but also as a symbol of the life hereafter, for it conjured up images of luxurious, paradisiacal gardens, majestic splendour and heavenly beatitude⁸. In fact, the figure of the peacock and the inscription in Xeropotamou express exactly the same ideas, the former in solid marble and the latter in simple words. By remembering each day that his body is mortal and that the shadows of death are closing in, the true monk learns to disregard transient matters and to place his faith in things above, which will ultimately secure him a place in heaven, in the garden of Eden.

As stated above, there is ample evidence that it was common for monastic burial sites to have verse inscriptions bearing out the message of “*memento mori*”. Theodore of Stoudios, for instance, writes in epigram no. 105e: “Let this site, an enclosure of tombs, remind you of your own destiny, O friend”. In no. 109, “on a grave-yard” (in a monastery founded by a certain Leo), he tells us at the end: “For every good man, if he keeps death in mind, escapes from darkness and shall see the light”. And in no. 110, “on the same”, where he says that the insatiable Tomb devours all mortals to the bone, leaving nothing but the deeds that will be judged by God Almighty, he warns at the ending: “Therefore, O man, take heed of what awaits you”. In the narthex of Dervish Akin in Selime (s. XI), where monks are buried, there is a long, still unedited inscription in prose, but obviously based on dodecasyllabic patterns, such as τί μάτην τρέχεις, ἄνθρωπε, ἐν τῷ βίῳ· ὀλιγόβιός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος οὗτος (“Why do you run in vain, O man, in this life? This world is of short duration”)⁹. In the Kale Kilisesi (s. X–XI) as well as the Eğri Taş Kilisesi (921–944), both in Cappadocia, we find the same gnomic verse inscription in the narthex, which served as burial site. The text can also be found on a marble slab (s. IX–XI) in Panion in Eastern Thrace. These three verse inscriptions offer many divergent readings which makes it impossible to reconstruct the “original” text. This is typical of gnomic epigrams. Since gnomic epigrams are meant to be learnt by heart and since all humans, including the Byzantines, are apt to make mistakes in the process of memorizing, subtle changes and variants unavoidably creep into the texts. The inscription in Panion begins as follows: μηδεὶς τυφλούτω τῇ

⁷ PG 88: 793–801 (chapter 6) and 633.

⁸ See A. WEYL CARR, in: *ODB*, s.v. Peacocks.

⁹ See Y. ÖTÜKEN, in: Suut Kemal Yetkin’e Armağan. Ankara 1984, 293–316, plate 16, and N. THIERRY, in: Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη. Athens 1991–1992, vol. II, 584, n. 14.

ὀρέξει τοῦ πλούτου· πολλοὺς λυμαίνει ἢ τοῦ κόσμου φιλία· ἡ σὰρξ γὰρ ταύτη χοῦς, πηλὸς, γῆ ὑπάρχει, “Let no one be blinded by the lust for riches. The love of worldly goods ruins many people. For this flesh of ours is dust, mud, soil”¹⁰. In the Cappadocian hermitage of Symeon the Stylite (s. X), who built his own tomb when he was still alive, there is a gnomic epigram that recurs twice (with slight variations): “Here the world is not welcome; the things of the world are over there. For (I know that) the fire of death catches us all and sends us naked to the next world”¹¹. The hermitage, the tomb and the various inscriptions we find there, all propagate the same message of mortification. Having said farewell to this world, Symeon the monk prepares himself for death by a daily regime of contemplation, prayer and abstinence, guided by the idea of *mneme thanatou*, which represents the quintessence of Byzantine monasticism.

In the cathedral of Bari, a Byzantine marble slab which already for many centuries is attached to the so-called “Throne of Archbishop Elias”, bears the following gnomic verse inscription (probably dating from the early eleventh century):

[Ἐκ]ο[υ]σίως στέρξασα τὴν ἀγνωσίαν
καὶ γνῶθι σαυτὴν καὶ δίδασκε τὴν φύσιν
[ἄτ]υφον εἶναι, τῇ φθορᾷ συνημμένην·
εἰ γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ καὶ τὰ σεμνὰ τοῦ βίου
[εἰς] χοῦν καταντᾷ καὶ τελευτᾷ πρὸς τέφραν,
πῶς ἐφρόνεις, τάλαινα, τῇ τέφρᾳ μέγα,
ᾧου δὲ σαυτὴν ὥσπερ οὐ θανουμένην;

“Since you have voluntarily embraced the knowledge-beyond-knowing, know yourself and admonish your nature not to take pride in itself, as it is bound to decay. For truly, if the splendour and glory of the world in the end turn to dust and ashes, how could you, wretched creature, think highly of a pile of ashes and regard yourself as if you would not die?”¹². Since an archbishop’s throne is hardly the proper place for a verse inscription addressing a woman (see all the feminine adjectives, pronouns and participles), it is beyond any doubt that this *memento mori* was originally inscribed somewhere else: according to Guillou, “dans un monastère de moniales grecques à Bari”. I fully agree

¹⁰ For the three inscriptions, see below, Appendix VIII: no. 99. Notice the medio-passive meaning of the active voice in τυφλούτω (the two other inscriptions have τυφλούσθω and τυφούσθω). Notice also the rare form λυμαίνω instead of the more usual λυμαίνομαι (the two other inscriptions have ἀπώλεσε/ἀπέλεσε).

¹¹ Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 573 (no. 106) and 575 (no. 110).

¹² Ed. GUILLLOU 1996: 160–161 (no. 144). The inscription is also found in two fifteenth-century manuscripts, Laur. LIX 45 and Ambros. B 39 sup.: see A. JACOB, *Quellen und Forschungen aus ital. Arch. und Bibl.* 73 (1993) 1–18.

(although I would not restrict the search for the original location to Bari), but I think that we can be a bit more precise. In the light of the evidence above, it is reasonable to assume that the epigram was inscribed in or near the cemetery of a convent. The first two lines of the epigram deserve some comment. First of all, here the famous Delphic saying γνῶθι σεαυτὸν unexpectedly turns up in a Christian context, as a piece of good advice to a nun. Secondly, the poet uses the word ἀγνώσια (literally, “ignorance”) in the Neoplatonic sense and appears to be familiar with the literary works of Ps. Dionysios the Areopagite, where contemplation of the ineffable and unknowable divinity is occasionally called an *agnosia*, transcending the knowledge of the human intellect¹³. Symeon the New Theologian, a contemporary of the Apulian poet, uses the adjective ἄγνωστος in the same sense: for instance, in *Hymn* 2, 94, where he calls the divine light “a light that is known without knowing” (φῶς ... γνωσζόμενον ἄγνώστως). God himself is unknowable, but a monk or a nun may acquire mystical knowledge by contemplating His divinity. In order to achieve the tranquillity of mind needed for contemplation, monks have to forsake the world and its turmoil. This is why the epigram states that the nuns of the convent where the text was inscribed must be aware that they are mortal and that it is detrimental to their spiritual ideals to think highly of themselves. What the text says is in fact an oxymoron: because the nuns strive to achieve the blessed state of not-knowing, they have to know who they are. Thus Delphi meets Dionysios the Areopagite. In this splendid *memento mori*, two fundamentally different philosophies coalesce into something new, something very Byzantine, a mixture of Apollonian wisdom and Dionysian mysticism.

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Protreptic Verse Inscriptions

In the Basilica of St. John in Ephesus, next to the entrance to the south aisle, the following verse inscription dating from the ninth century can be found:

Φόβῳ πρόσελθε πύλιν τοῦ Θεολόγου,
τρόμῳ λάμβανε τὴν θεῖαν κοινωνίαν·
πῦρ γάρ ἐστι, φλέγει τοὺς ἀναξίους¹⁴.

¹³ See *Lampe*, s.v. ἀγνώσια, sub 4. On the theological concept of ἀγνώσια in patristic and Byzantine literature, see VASSIS 2002: 159–160.

¹⁴ Ed. C. Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity: a Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City*. Cambridge 1979, 115.

“Approach the gate of [the church of] the Theologian in fear; receive Holy Communion tremblingly. For it is a fire, it burns the unworthy”. The last verse of this inscription recurs almost literally in an epigram by Theodore of Stoudios (44. 4): *πῦρ γὰρ τὸ δῶρον τοὺς ἀναξίους φλέγων*, “for the gift [the Eucharist] is a fire that burns the unworthy”. In this epigram, which was inscribed inside the church of the Stoudios monastery, Theodore warns his fellow monks that the βῆμα (the “altar space”, but also the “tribunal” of the Last Judgment) is a place of fear and dread, for only the chaste among them are entitled to participate in Holy Communion, whereas the rest, those who are not worthy, should not touch the Eucharist¹⁵. Both the verse inscription in Ephesus and Theodore’s epigram ultimately go back to a group of verses, entitled *προτρεπτικοὶ στίχοι*, which we find in the *Horologion*¹⁶. These “protreptic verses” are attributed to Symeon the Metaphrast, but given the ninth-century date of the inscription in Ephesus, this ascription is obviously incorrect. In the protreptic verses attributed to Symeon the Metaphrast we read: *μέλλων φαγεῖν, ἄνθρωπε, σῶμα Δεσπότης, φόβῳ πρόσελθε, μὴ φλέγῃς· πῦρ τυγχάνει and πλαστουργέ, μὴ φλέξῃς με τῇ μετουσίᾳ· πῦρ γὰρ ὑπάρχεις τοὺς ἀναξίους φλέγων*. It is beyond doubt that the Ephesus inscription imitates these particular verses: see the text in italics and notice also that the hemistich *πῦρ γὰρ ἐστὶ* in the Ephesus inscription lacks one syllable, which strongly suggests that the poet originally had the phrase *πῦρ γὰρ ὑπάρχει* in mind.

Similar protreptic verse inscriptions can be found in many Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches, at the entrance to the narthex, above the main gate leading to the nave, or else near the altar space¹⁷. These verse inscriptions invariably emphasize that whoever goes to church and intends to take Holy Communion, should enter the sacred precincts of the church in awe and even in terror, should refrain from thinking of worldly matters and should be chaste at heart and pure of mind. They prescribe the proper conduct for churchgoers and the proper sentiments when attending Mass. Their function is similar to those public signs in churches warning people to dress properly, respect the decorum, keep quiet and not disrupt the liturgy. The difference is the Byzantine protreptic verses address an audience of faithful (and not tourists of all sorts) and particularly emphasize what people should feel (rather than how they should behave). Apart from these obvious differences, however, the mechanism is the same: it is a way of preserving the sanctity of the church.

¹⁵ See the commentary *ad locum* by SPECK 1968: 195–197.

¹⁶ Ὁρολόγιον τὸ μέγα. Venice 1856 (repr. Athens 1973), 433–434, 443–444 and 446 (also in: *PG* 114, 224–225).

¹⁷ See below, Appendix VIII, nos. 102–105; Theodore of Stoudios, nos. 42–46 (ed. SPECK 1968: 192–198); HÖRANDNER 1997: 435–442; and W. HÖRANDNER, in: *Philellen. Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*. Venice 1996, 109–111.

There is only one protreptic verse inscription with a totally different function. It is a famous palindrome which can be found in many Byzantine sources, among which the Greek Anthology:

νῦσον ἀνομήματα, μὴ μόναν ὄψιν (*APL* 387c, v. 5),

“Clean the outside, cleanse the inside” (literally: “Do not only wash your face, but also your sins”). In Σ^* , a collection of epigrams that derives from the anthology of Cephalas, the palindrome is attributed to a certain Stylianos; the same ascription occurs in a few Palaeologan collections of palindromes¹⁸. Since Cephalas is the only source to call Stylianos $\kappa\upsilon\rho$, “sir”, which is obviously a sign of respect and deference, it is likely that Cephalas knew the author personally. The epigram of sir Stylianos is truly ingenious, firstly because it is the only Byzantine palindrome that makes some sense (the rest are totally nonsensical), and secondly because its palindromic shape is particularly suited for an inscription on a circular object, such as a cistern, a well or a water basin. In a number of Byzantine and post-Byzantine monasteries, such as the Blatadon monastery in Thessalonica, the palindrome is inscribed along the rim of the well in the courtyard¹⁹. According to some travellers who visited Constantinople under Ottoman rule²⁰, the palindrome was also inscribed on two majestic water vessels inside St. Sophia; but as the evidence is contradictory, we should not lend too much credence to these reports²¹. Whatever the case, it is reasonable to assume that Stylianos composed the palindrome as a verse inscription for a well or water basin, as is also suggested by the text itself and by its circular shape. The original setting of the palindrome must have been a church or monastery in ninth-century Constantinople (perhaps the church erected by Stylianos Zaoutzes, but this is mere speculation).

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Are Kassia's Epigrams the Work of Kassia?

It is not certain whether all the epigrams that go under the name of Kassia are actually hers. Let us look at the manuscript evidence: Krumbacher's edition of the epigrams of Kassia is based on three manuscripts: Brit. Mus.

¹⁸ See GALLAVOTTI 1989: 52–53, 57 and 64, and CAMERON 1993: 254–277, esp. p. 273.

¹⁹ See HUNGER 1978: II, 105, n. 26, and S. PÉTRIDÈS, *EO* 12 (1909) 88–89.

²⁰ See, for instance, G.-J. GRELOT, *Relation nouvelle d'un voyage de Constantinople*. Paris 1681, 160–161.

²¹ See MANGO 1951: 57.

Addit. 10072 (s. XV), Marc. gr. 408 (a. 1391–1404) and Laur. LXXXVII 16 (s. XIII ex.); Krumbacher calls these three collections A, B and C, respectively²². There are three more manuscripts: Par. Bibl. Mazarine P. 1231 (s. XV) [a copy of Laur. LXXXVII 16]²³, Sinait. 1699 (s. XIV)²⁴ and Metochion Panhagion Taphou 303 (s. XVI)²⁵. The manuscript of the Metochion collection (once in Istanbul, nowadays in Athens) contains some additional material edited by Mystakidis: epigrams nos. M 1–9²⁶.

The epigrams attributed to Kassia can be divided into three categories. (1) Monostichs starting with the word $\mu\sigma\omega$: Marc. gr. 408 has nos. B 1–27, Brit. Mus. Addit. 10072 has nos. B 1–2, 4, 8–9, 18 and 22–23 [=A 85–92] and Sinait. 1699 has nos. B 1–4, 7 and 21–27. (2) Epigrams, mainly monostichs, on monastic virtues, inc. $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\chi\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota, \mu\omicron\nu\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon \beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ or $\beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma \mu\omicron\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$: Laur. LXXXVII 16 has nos. C 74–94 and Metochion 303 has nos. C 74–78, 80–85, 90 and 92–94 as well as nos. M 1–9. (3) Various gnomic epigrams: Brit. Mus. Addit. 10072 has nos. A 1–84 and 93–160 and Laur. LXXXVII 16 has nos. C 1–73; these two collections have eight verses in common: A 134–135, 138–141 and 146–147 = C 23–24, 4–7 and 8–9.

It is surprising that no one has questioned the ascription of all these verses to Kassia, despite the obvious fact that the manuscripts, dating from the Palaeologan period and later, contain different collections of epigrams. The $\mu\sigma\omega$ series is found in three manuscripts, one of which offers 27 monostichs, whereas the other two have only 8 and 12 verses, respectively. Since the $\mu\sigma\omega$ category presents the same sequence of epigrams (albeit with substantial omissions) in the three manuscripts that contain it, it is reasonable to assume that these manuscripts ultimately go back to a common source; but we do not know whether this source contained all the $\mu\sigma\omega$ epigrams attributed to Kassia or merely a handful. The series of monastic epigrams is found in Laur. LXXXVII 16 and Metochion 303: the former manuscript contains 21 and the latter 24 epigrams; but Metochion 303, compared to the manuscript in Florence, omits six verses and adds nine others. Despite all these omissions and additions,

²² See KRUMBACHER 1897a: 357–368 and ROCHOW 1967: 60–61 and 62.

²³ See KRUMBACHER 1897a: 331 and ROCHOW 1967: 62.

²⁴ See ROCHOW 1967: 61.

²⁵ See ROCHOW 1967: 62.

²⁶ Ed. MYSTAKIDIS 1926: 317. His edition is rather confusing since he prints the epigrams in two columns, which should be read line by line, from the left to the right (and not column 1 from the top to the bottom and then column 2 again from the top to the bottom, as ROCHOW 1967: 64 understandably thought). The sequence of the epigrams is as follows: C 74–75, M 1–2, C 76–78, M 3, C 80–81, M 4, C 82, M 5–9, C 83–85, C 90 and C 92–94. The collection in Metochion 303 is introduced by a text consisting of ten verses and ends with a colophon text consisting of two verses [just like the collection in Laur. LXXXVII 16 concludes with three colophon verses, nos. C 95–97].

however, the two manuscripts appear to go back to a common source since they present the epigrams in the same order. But once again, we do not know whether this source contained all the monastic epigrams attributed to Kassia, or just the fifteen epigrams the two manuscripts have in common. As for the third category, that of the various gnomic epigrams, the manuscript evidence is hardly reliable, as the two manuscripts, Brit. Mus. Addit. 10072 (a collection of no less than 152 verses, A 1–84 and 93–160) and Laur. LXXXVII 16 (a collection of 73 verses, C 1–73), have only eight verses in common! The two manuscripts do not present these eight verses in the same order. Moreover, they also offer different readings: C 8–10 constitutes a better text than A 146–147, and the same is true for C 23–24 compared to A 134–135, but A 138–143 presents a more reliable text than C 4–7²⁷. Since the two manuscripts clearly do not go back to a common archetype, it is far from certain whether the ascription of all these gnomic epigrams to Kassia is justified or not.

In the margin of ms. Brit. Mus. Addit. 10072, next to epigrams A 33–34, 112–113 and 120–123, there are some references to a certain Michael: Μιχ(αήλ) and ὁρα Μιχ(αήλ). It is not clear whether this means that these verses were composed by Michael or derived from a gnomology compiled by Michael²⁸.

In a number of manuscripts we find a small collection of gnomic epigrams incorrectly attributed to Theodore of Stoudios²⁹, among which nos. A 54–55 and 71–73. The latter *gnome*, A 71–73, imitates a famous epigram by Palladas (*AP* X, 73), which can be found in many Byzantine sources. Seeing that the original text as well as its “translation” into Byzantine Greek were transmitted in many manuscripts under different names, it cannot be ruled out that the ascription of A 71–73 to Kassia is just as untrustworthy as the erroneous ascription to Theodore of Stoudios. The epigram may bear the name of Kassia simply because she was known to have composed similar *gnomae*. It is equally possible that some diligent scribe added the epigram in the margin to Kassia’s collection (perhaps even with an explicit ascription to another author) and that the epigram subsequently, in later manuscript copies, became incorporated into the main text as if it were the work of Kassia. In the collection of Kassia’s epigrams in Brit. Mus. Addit. 10072, for instance, a later hand added a gnomic epigram at the bottom of fol. 93^r. This epigram must have been quite popular, for it is not only quoted by Melissenos (Pseudo-Sphrantzes), but is also found on a wall in Apulia³⁰. It is reasonable to assume that if the texts of Brit. Mus.

²⁷ See A. LUDWICH, *Animadversiones ad Cassiae sententiarum excerpta*. Programm Königsberg 1898.

²⁸ See ROCHOW 1967: 60–61.

²⁹ Ed. C. GALLAVOTTI, *SBN* 4 (1935) 214–215. See SPECK 1968: 38–39.

³⁰ KRUMBACHER 1897a: 359 and 369. “Sphrantzes”, *Chronicon Maius*, ed. Bonn, 262. For the inscription, see GUILLOU 1996: 181 (no. 172) and HÖRANDNER 1998: 314.

Addit. 10072 had been copied in a later manuscript, the additional epigram would have become part of the collection of Kassia. And then no one would have seen the difference and no one would have guessed that the epigram is not the work of Kassia, but of another Byzantine author.

There is one epigram ascribed to Kassia, which is certainly not hers: no. C 1, φύσις πονηρὰ χρηστὸν ἦθος οὐ τίκτει, “an evil nature does not breed a righteous character”. This is the *epimythion* to a fable of Babrius, which is also found in the gnomology of Georgides. Whereas the Aesopic tradition offers a different reading, γνώμη πονηρὰ (...) οὐ τρέφει, Georgides and Kassia adhere more closely to the original, choliambic version of Babrius³¹. The source of “Kassia” is probably not Babrius himself, but rather Georgides or one of the many other Byzantine gnomologies.

Then there is the famous invective against the Armenians (C 33–42). Among the many epigrams attributed to Kassia, it is the only one that is definitely not gnomic – which perhaps indicates that she did write it, for why else should the invective have been ascribed to a poetess known to all and sundry for her *gnomae*? It is beyond any doubt, however, that Kassia, if she indeed held a grudge against the Armenians and inveighed against them in rather unpleasant terms, is only partially responsible for all the abuse in the invective. For the poem in its present state is clearly divided into two, namely, verses C 33–36 and C 37–42, without any organic link connecting the latter to the former part. The last six verses, C 37–42, constitute a later addition to the original invective. How much later, we can only guess, but as these verses clearly imitate an epigram found in the anthology of Cephalas (*AP* XI, 238)³², the second part of the invective cannot have been composed before the late ninth century. Credit where credit is due or, in this particular case, blame where blame is due. Kassia may or may not have written the truly appalling verses C 33–36, but she certainly cannot be blamed for all the abuse and scorn heaped on the poor Armenians in verses C 37–42.

Even when an epigram is found in two collections, it is not entirely certain whether it should be attributed to Kassia or not. See, for instance, verses 138–143 of collection A, the first four of which can also be found in collection C (verses 4–7). These verses are obviously modelled on the pattern of an epigram by Gregory of Nazianzos, no. I, 2. 22 (see the word δεινόν in the first verse, the rhetorical figure of climax, and the last verse which is almost the same in both texts). It is certainly possible that Kassia knew her Gregory of Nazianzos,

³¹ Georgides, ed. ODORICO 1986: no. 220. Babrii Mythiambi Aesopei, eds. M. J. LUZZATTO & A. LA PENNA. Leipzig 1986, pp. XLIII and LXXVI, n. 2.

³² See CAMERON 1993: 330–331. The epigram is also quoted by John the Lydian and the anonymous author of the treatise *De thematibus*: see CAMERON 1993: 295.

but seeing that this particular epigram of Gregory was imitated by many authors, such as Kallikles, Psellos and John Kamateros³³, we cannot be absolutely certain that poem A 138–143 (= C 4–7) goes back directly to Gregory’s epigram rather than to one of its many Byzantine imitations. Is Kassia the first to imitate Gregory of Nazianzos’ famous epigram and do authors like Kallikles and Kamateros follow her lead? Or is it the other way around? Is “Kassia” in fact an anonymous ghost-writer of the late Byzantine period, who imitates not Gregory of Nazianzos himself, but one of his many imitators? We simply do not know.

It is impossible to assess whether the epigrams that go under the name of Kassia are actually hers or not. Certain texts, such as the Babrian *epimythion* and the last six verses of the invective against the Armenians, are definitely not the work of Kassia; other texts, such as the literary imitations of Palladas and Gregory of Nazianzos, may or may not have been written by Kassia. The manuscript evidence is of very little help in sorting out what is Kassia’s and what is not, for the various collections that bear her name do not contain the same epigrams. If we search for more manuscripts and take a closer look at the gnomological tradition in Byzantium, we may perhaps detect a few more epigrams that are falsely attributed to Kassia. And yet, even if we manage to detect a number of false ascriptions, such an investigation into the wasteland of Byzantine gnomologies will not shed much light on the intricate and even insoluble problem of Kassia’s authorship. For I have the distinct impression that the name of “Kassia” is simply a label attached to a certain genre and that any gnostic epigram consisting of unprosodic dodecasyllables and encapsulating monastic wisdom in a few verses, whether hers or not, is attributed to Kassia. Of course, there must be a kernel of truth in all these various ascriptions to the legendary nun and there is no reason to doubt that Kassia wrote at least some of the gnostic epigrams attributed to her. But the problem is that we do not know which epigrams are hers and which are not. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that whenever I refer to Kassia in the following discussion, I only do so for the sake of convenience and not because I think that the problem of her authorship is by any means settled.

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³³ Some of these imitations go under the name of Gregory of Nazianzos himself: nos. I, 2, 20, 21 and 23, see H.M. WERHAHN, *Dubia und Spuria unter den Gedichten Gregors von Nazianz*, in: *Studia Patristica VII*, ed. F.L. CROSS, Berlin 1966, 342. Greg. Naz. I, 2, 21 is in fact the beginning of Kallikles’ poem no. 10, vv. 1–5: ed. ROMANO 1980: 85–86, and Greg. Naz. I, 2, 23 is attributed to Psellos in certain manuscripts: ed. WESTERINK 1992: 460 (no. 86). For the epigram of Kamateros, see WERHAHN, 342, n. 2.

Kassia and Aesop

The metre used by Kassia for the composition of her gnomic epigrams is the famous Byzantine dodecasyllable, a metre consisting of twelve syllables, with a strong caesura after the fifth or seventh syllable dividing the verse into two colons, an obligatory stress accent on the paenultima and less rigid rules of accentuation before the caesura. This metre, like almost all other Byzantine metres, adheres to the three following principles of versification: isosyllaby (the same number of syllables), stress regulation (at the verse ending and before the caesura) and isometry (avoidance of enjambment). The dodecasyllable is essentially an “accentual”, not a “prosodic” metre – although it ultimately derives from the ancient iambic trimeter. However, most Byzantine poets did their very best, with hardly any success in the end, to make their basically accentual dodecasyllables look like iambic trimeters by stubbornly clinging to the obsolete rules of prosody. The result is one of metrical ambiguity: the verses are seemingly prosodic on paper, but are actually accentual when one listens to them. The poets dutifully count their short and long syllables as if they were doing some tedious homework on algebraic formulas, but when it comes down to the essence of poetry, which is a matter of sense and sensibility, they know perfectly well how to measure their verses as regards syllables, colons and stress accents. Kassia is not a member of the club of classicizing versemongers. Her dodecasyllables are purely accentual and show complete disregard for prosody. Although the unprosodic type of the dodecasyllable represents the metre in its purest form, it is a verse form that is rarely encountered in Byzantine poetry before the year 1000. The unprosodic dodecasyllable can be found in a number of verse inscriptions (mostly dating from the dark ages) and a few religious poems (such as the *Hymns* of Symeon the New Theologian). Except for these rare instances, however, the unprosodic variant of the dodecasyllable is essentially a metre used for two genres only: gnomic epigrams, such as the ones by Kassia, and Aesopic fables “translated” into Byzantine Greek, such as the so-called *Metaphrases* and some of the *Tetrasticha* attributed to Ignatios the Deacon³⁴.

Gnomic epigrams and metrical fables are forms of Byzantine lowbrow literature. They make use of the “vulgar” unprosodic dodecasyllable. Their style is unpretentious, their language plain and unadorned. And their contents are easy to understand for any Byzantine with some breeding and a degree of literacy. Typical of lowbrow literature in the Middle Ages is the fact that texts are transmitted with so many variants and discordant readings that it is

³⁴ For the Babrian *Metaphrases* and the unprosodic *Tetrasticha* incorrectly attributed to Ignatios the Deacon, see the second volume of this book.

impossible to retrieve the “archetype”. There are no “originals”. There are only different “redactions” and different “versions”. In fact, each manuscript is unique in its own way and presents readings that cannot be found anywhere else. This phenomenon of an “open” text tradition (in contrast to the “closed” text tradition of highbrow literature, which is slavishly copied) is, of course, familiar to all who study Byzantine vernacular texts. However, the same phenomenon can be observed in a few literary texts written in more learned Greek, such as gnomic epigrams. There, too, we see that there are as many different versions as there are manuscripts and that the “original” texts, whatever they may have been like, are lost beyond retrieval. When we talk about “the epigrams of Kassia”, we are, in fact, referring to various manuscript collections containing different epigrams with different readings. The same holds true for the various fables transmitted in Byzantine manuscripts, where we notice that the text tradition is open to all sorts of alterations, additions and omissions.

These two genres, namely fables and gnomic epigrams, have a lot in common. They both express forms of popular wisdom, moral admonitions and every-day ethics. Fables are short, amusing stories that point out what is right and wrong by sketching the characteristic behaviour of animals and human beings; they usually end with an *epimythion*, the concise “moral” of the story. When these *epimythia* are put into verse, they are actually quite similar to gnomic epigrams – so similar, in fact, that the “moral” to a Babrian fable came to be attributed to Kassia (epigram no. C 1), without anyone noticing the error until the twentieth century. The ascription to Kassia is a mistake, of course, but there are few mistakes as understandable as this one, because the text of the Babrian *epimythion* differs little from the epigrams that go under her name. It is worth noting that some of the epigrams attributed to Kassia are more or less anecdotic, relating a short story about painful aspects of life: for instance, A 120–123, “a poor devil found some gold and grabbed it, but his life was at stake ever after; a lucky bastard, however, makes a profit and a lucrative business of anything he finds, even if it is a live snake”³⁵. Though it is debatable whether Kassia had a specific fable in mind when she wrote these lines, it is beyond doubt that both the pattern of thought and the narrative structure of the epigram demonstrate Kassia’s acquaintance with the Aesopic genre.

Further proof of this is the following epigram, which marvellously illustrates the curious peregrinations of Aesop and his fables throughout the centuries:

Ἀνὴρ φαλακρὸς καὶ κωφὸς καὶ μονόχειρ,
μογγύαλός τε καὶ κολοβὸς καὶ μέλας,
λοξὸς τοῖς ποσὶ καὶ τοῖς ὄμμασιν ἅμα

³⁵ For the second verse of this epigram, see MAAS 1901: 55.

ὕβρισθεις παρὰ τινος μοιχοῦ καὶ πόρνου,
 μεθυστοῦ, κλέπτου καὶ ψεύστου καὶ φονέως
 περὶ τῶν αὐτῷ συμβεβηκότων ἔφη·
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ αἴτιος τῶν συμβαμάτων·
 οὐ γὰρ θέλων πέφυκα τοιοῦτος ὅλως·
 σὺ δὲ τῶν σαντοῦ παραίτιος πταισμάτων·
 ἅπερ γὰρ οὐκ ἔλαβες παρὰ τοῦ πλάστου,
 ταῦτα καὶ ποιεῖς καὶ φέρεις καὶ βαστάζεις.

“A man bald, dumb, and with only one hand, short, swarthy, and with a speech impediment, bowed legged and with crossed eyes, when he was insulted by a certain adulterer and fornicator, drunk, thief, liar, and murderer, remarked on the accidents of fortune: “I am not responsible for my mishaps, for in no way did I want to be like this. But you are to blame for your shortcomings, for the things you did not get from the creator are the very things you do and bear and cling to”³⁶. In a postscript to his edition Krumbacher published some comments by Kurtz, one of which reads: “S. 360, 93 ff.: Offenbar Aesop”. Anyone familiar with the *Life of Aesop*, a text that was extremely popular throughout the Middle Ages, will immediately understand that Kurtz was right: the ugly but clever person whom Kassia describes is most certainly none other than the famous Aesop³⁷. True enough, the story told by Kassia is recorded nowhere else, but it is very similar to a number of anecdotic tales about Aesop we find in the *Life of Aesop* and other sources. For instance, in the *Life of Aesop* the hero tells the inhabitants of Samos who jeer at him because of his ugliness, that it is not his fault that he was born ugly and that they should consider not his appearance, but his prudent counsels. In the *Apophthegms of Aesop* we read: “When he was mocked for his deformities he said: “Do not mind my looks, but look at my mind” (μή μου τὸ εἶδος, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὸν νοῦν πρόσσεχε – a Byzantine dodecasyllable). And one of the metrical *Sayings of Aesop* has this to say: “Whoever laughs at a disfigurement, is a disgrace himself; for it is not a flaw of character, but a fault of fortune”³⁸. Whereas in the *Life of Aesop* the people laughing at him are respectable citizens, Kassia portrays the crook who makes fun of Aesop as a “fornicator, drunk, thief, liar and murderer”, a person who is hideous not because of his outward appearance, but on account of his evil nature. He alone is to blame for his horrible sins, for God created him, like the rest of mankind, in His image and likeness

³⁶ KRUMBACHER 1897a: 360–361 (A 93–103). Translation of vv. 1–5: TRIPOLITIS 1992: 117.

³⁷ See, for instance, the prologue to version G of the *Life of Aesop* edited by PERRY 1952: 34.

³⁸ *Life* and *Apophthegms*: ed. PERRY 1952: 62–63 and 248. *Sayings*: ed. MAAS 1903: 306 and ODORICO 1986: 190 (G 640).

and thus endowed him with an innate spiritual beauty, which he wilfully defiled by his evil deeds. By presenting Aesop's opponent like this, Kassia obviously tried to christianize an Aesopic tale, which originally had absolutely nothing to do with spirituality, creationism, free will or the fall of man. Kassia's epigram is a remarkable metamorphosis of the ancient Aesop: through a veil of Christian morality one perceives a glimpse of that mythical figure, the down-to-earth philosopher whose fables had a lasting impact on the imaginative mind of both the ancients and the Byzantines.

That we find traces of Aesop in the gnomic epigrams of Kassia is hardly surprising in the light of the so-called *Sayings of Aesop* (Αἰσώπου λόγοι), a collection of proverbs accompanied by explanations in verse. These explanatory distichs (ἐξηγηταὶ) are actually a sort of gnomic epigram. The collection can be found in a manuscript dating from the fourteenth century; it comprises 143 proverbs, but as the manuscript has a considerable lacuna, the collection must originally have consisted of more proverbs than it does nowadays³⁹. The collection of the *Sayings of Aesop* was already known to Georgides (c. 900), whose gnomology provides two of the proverbs, no less than twenty-three of the explanatory distichs, and a conflated version of a proverb and its explanation⁴⁰. The so-called *Florilegium Marcianum* (c. 850) has one proverb and one explanatory distich, and the *Corpus Parisinum* (8th C.), a gnomology of which only a small part has been edited so far, offers at least three distichs, but probably many more⁴¹. How old is the collection of the *Sayings of Aesop*? One of its proverbs is not a true proverb, but a literary quote from a homily of

³⁹ The manuscript is divided between two libraries: Dresden, Da 35, fol. 20 (ed. V. JERNSTEDT, *VV* 8 (1901) 115–130) and Mosqu. 239, fols. 227–233 (ed. K. KRUMBACHER, *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Munich 1900, 399–465). The most complete edition of the Αἰσώπου λόγοι is PERRY 1952: 265–286 (with useful references to Georgides on pp. 254–258; but add Georgides no. 640 [Αἰσώπου] and no. 887 [anonymous, but metrically and stylistically similar to the *Sayings of Aesop*]).

⁴⁰ Ed. ODORICO 1986 (G = Georgides). Proverbs: G 430 and 1018. Explanatory distichs: G 220, 313, 393–394, 396, 398, 419, 467, 519, 578–579, 581, 616, 638 and 1081–1082; plus nos. G 193, 238, 580 (cf. no. 958), 640, 886–887 and 1109, epigrams that cannot be found in the Dresden/Moscow manuscript. The explanatory distich no. G 519 belongs to proverb no. G 430. G 421 is a conflated version of a proverb and its explanation: PERRY 1952: 266, no. 9.

⁴¹ *Florilegium Marcianum* nos. 323 (= G 1018) and 103 (= G 313), ed. ODORICO 1986: 99 and 75. For the *Corpus Parisinum* see L. STERNBACH, *Photii patriarchae opusculum paraeneticum*. Appendix gnomica. Excerpta Parisina. Cracow 1893. On p. 80 of this edition we find Corp. Par. 16 = Flor. Marc. 103 = Georg. 313 = Sayings, PERRY 1952: no. 7; Corp. Par. 17 = Georg. 467 = Sayings, PERRY 1952: no. 10; and Corp. Par. 21, nowhere else attested (πολλοὶ θανόντας ἀμείβουσι τοῖς τάφοις, / οὗς τῷ φθόνῳ πρότερον ἤλγυναν ζῶντας). In the *Corpus Parisinum* these three distichs are attributed to Socrates, not to Aesop.

Gregory of Nazianzos⁴², which means the collection must have been compiled after c. 400 at the earliest. This is confirmed by the metre adopted for the composition of the explanatory verses, about which I shall say a few words. The metre is an unprosodic dodecasyllable, consisting of two colons divided by a strong caesura and perfectly isometric (enjambment is avoided). Of course, this is the same metre as used by Kassia and other writers of gnomic epigrams, but there is a fundamental difference between the verses of Kassia and those of “Aesop”: whereas Kassia’s verses, like all other Byzantine dodecasyllables after c. 600, invariably end with a stress accent on the penultimate, the *Sayings of Aesop* do not show any tendency to regulate the position of the stress accent at the end of the verse. Although there is no parallel for this particular verse form in other specimens of early Byzantine poetry⁴³, it does not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the rapid developments of Greek metre in the period of Late Antiquity. When prosody could no longer be heard by the public, it was replaced by isosyllaby: instead of measuring short and long, poets started to count syllables. The hexameter becomes holodactylic, the anacreontic turns into the octosyllable and the iambic trimeter, of course, evolves into a metre consisting of twelve syllables (resolutions are generally avoided). What you get when you read such a “dodecasyllabic” iambic trimeter without taking any notice of prosody, is precisely the sort of metre used by “Aesop”: neither prosodic nor accentual, but only isosyllabic. As this metre does not yet observe the rule of stress regulation at the verse ending, the *Sayings of Aesop* will have been composed long before the year 600, probably in the fifth or the early sixth century⁴⁴.

As we have seen, some of the metrical *Sayings of Aesop* can be found in Georgides and other Byzantine gnomologies, where they obviously serve an entirely different purpose from the original one since they are separated from the proverbs they are supposed to accompany. Detached from their original context, the metrical *Sayings* no longer serve as explanations to the proverbs,

⁴² *Sayings*, ed. PERRY 1952: 280 (no. 103) = Greg. Naz., Or. 2, PG 35, 1229B. The maxim is to be found in Flor. Marc. (no. 323) and Georgides (no. 1018), ed. ODORICO 1986: 99 and 234; also in the *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John of Damascus, PG 96, 397D [the source used by John of Damascus is not “Aesop”, but Gregory of Nazianzos himself]. See also C.E. GLEYE, *Philologus* 74 (1917) 473–474, who points out that Saying no. 4 (ed. PERRY 1952: 264) imitates Greg. Naz. I, 2, 32, v. 66 (PG 37, 921B).

⁴³ The iambic trimeters in the alchemistic corpus of Heliodoros, Theophrastos, Hierotheos and Archelaos (5th, 6th or 7th C.?) and in the poems of Dioskoros of Aphrodito (6th C.) are often as unprosodic as those of “Aesop”. But these authors at least intend to write prosodic iambs (admittedly, with little success); “Aesop”, however, does not. See MAAS 1903: 285–286, n. 3.

⁴⁴ See MAAS 1903: 280–286 and LAUXTERMANN 1999c: 69–86.

but assume a different role and obtain an autonomy of their own. In other words, they become gnomic epigrams – the *gnomae* of Aesop. And here we have the link with Kassia. For Kassia and her fellow Byzantines, Aesop was not only the author of amusing fables, but also of highly complex and highly interesting gnomic epigrams, which encapsulated the essence of human existence in two neatly wrought verses. The wisdom of Aesop was ancient wisdom, of course, but it had a direct bearing on the sentiments of the Byzantines. It was something they could relate to. That is why they copied Aesop's sayings in their gnomologies and that is why Kassia imitated Aesop and used him as a character in one of her own epigrams. Here are some examples of Aesop's profound wisdom:

Ἥθος τὸ πρᾶον	καὶ τὸ προσηνὲς ῥῆμα
μαλάττειν οἶδε	καὶ τοὺς ἄγαν λιθώδεις.

“A gentle character and a kind word know how to appease even a heart of stone”.

Βροτησίαν κακίαν	οὐ θῆρες κακοί,
ἀλλ' ἄνδρες νικήσουσιν	οἱ μᾶλλον κακοί.

“It is not cruel beasts, but even crueller humans that surpass the excesses of human cruelty”.

Ἐράσιμον ἄνθρωπος	καὶ ζῶον θεῖον·
αἰφνίδιον δ' ὄλλυται	θανάτῳ δοθεῖς.

“A living creature lovely and divine, that is what man is; but he suddenly perishes, a victim of death”⁴⁵. In the *Sayings of Aesop* there is really not a single thing that would have sounded peculiar to Kassia and her contemporaries, although the texts were written centuries earlier. Kind words and acts of gentleness perform miracles. People are even crueller than the cruellest animals. And life is a blessing, but it ends all too soon. If it were not for the rather unusual metre, these distichs could very well have been the work of Kassia or another Byzantine author of *gnomae*. What Aesop says, Kassia says. Style, diction, metre are entirely her own; but the ethical ideas she expresses in her epigrams usually are not.

Aesop appears to have been quite popular among Byzantine monks, to judge from the great number of manuscripts of fables or other texts attributed to Aesop that were copied in monastic scriptoria. Since each of the manuscripts contains a somewhat different version of this Aesopic material, the scribes

⁴⁵ PERRY 1952: nos. 10 (p. 266), 193 (p. 291) and 142 (p. 286); ODORICO 1986: Georgides nos. 467, 193 and 393.

should not be seen as slavish copyists, but rather as authors in their own right. They are all Aesop. But these Aesops live in monasteries, address an audience of monks and cling to moral values and philosophical ideas that are typical of Byzantine monasticism. In a rock-cut chamber above the narthex at Eski Gümüş, a monastic complex dating from the early eleventh century, we find seven depictions of Aesopic fables. These paintings are accompanied by texts: written above each depiction, the text of the corresponding fable; and written below each depiction, the text of the moral. Unfortunately, only a few fragments of these texts have so far been published: an *epimythion* to the tale of the Man bitten by the Ungrateful Snake (κακούς μὴ εὖ ποιεῖν, “do not do good to bad people”) and one line of the fable of the Wolf mocked by the Lamb on a Tower⁴⁶. In this fragment the offended wolf says to the lamb that jeers at him from high up: πύργος δ', [δ]ς ὀπλίζει σε πρὸς μέγα θράσος, “(you are not the one insulting me), but the tower, which arms you with great insolence”⁴⁷. Both this line and the *epimythion* mentioned above originate from the metrical metaphor of Babrian fables by Ignatios the Deacon⁴⁸. However, far more interesting than the literary source itself is the fact that metrical fables were inscribed in a Byzantine monastery. For it obviously implies that the secular wisdom of Aesop not only appealed to Byzantine monks, but was also interpreted in terms, ideas and values compatible with the monastic doctrine.

The Aesop mania in Byzantine monastic circles manifests itself not only in the poetry of Kassia, but also in many other sources⁴⁹. Nicholas the Patrician (c. 950), for instance, is the author of two metrical gnomes: the first of these two epigrams expressly addresses an audience of monks; the second one is an “Aesopic” fable⁵⁰. The fable relates how a donkey runs at full speed because he wants to become a horse. When he finally collapses, totally exhausted, a raven cries out mockingly: “now you know that it is bad to have pretensions”, at which the donkey replies: “indeed, of all good qualities συμμετρία is the best” (cf. the ancient saying πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον and Kassia A 83, μέγα τὸ κέρδος τῆς καλῆς συμμετρίας). The fable ends with a personal note: “so, my friend, do not

⁴⁶ Ed. M. GOUGH, *Anatolian Studies* 15 (1965) 164 and n. 18.

⁴⁷ GOUGH (see footnote above) prints: πύργος δ[ε] σ' ὀπλίζει (sic) πρὸς μέγα θράσος.

⁴⁸ Ed. MÜLLER 1897: 276 (no. 31, v. 4) and 271 (no. 17, *epimythion*).

⁴⁹ See, for instance, ms. Ivion 28 (s. XI ex.), fol. 269^r, where we find a gnomic epigram elaborating on the Aesopic fable of the Donkey donning a Lion's Skin: ed. P. SOTIROUDIS, *Ἰερά Μονὴ Ἰβήρων. Κατάλογος ἐλληνικῶν χειρογράφων. Τόμος Α' (1–100)*. Hagion Oros 1998, 53.

⁵⁰ Ed. STERNBACH 1900: 303–304. The author, Νικόλαος πατρίκιος καὶ κοιαίστωρ, can be identified with Nicholas the Patrician who wrote an official rapport on the rights of *paroikoi* in the reign of Constantine VII (*Peira*, XV, 3). In a later stage of his career he became eparch (*Peira*, LI, 31).

think too highly of yourself, lest you, lapsing into ἀμετρία like the donkey, learn the hard way what is good for you and what not; for you do not give in and you do not listen to reason". The other epigram by Nicholas the Patrician is not a fable, but a short anecdote. There he tells us about a racing accident he once witnessed: one day at the races, when everyone was having a good time, all of a sudden one of the Hippodrome staff⁵¹ slipped and fell down. His tragic death was a reminder to all those present that life is all too short and that worldly pleasures do not last: "therefore, brethren, let us be prepared for the unexpected end, lest we suddenly slide away from life and then cry in vain for not having saved our souls". This last sentence is once again an *epimythion*: it is the "moral" of Nicholas' story about the Hippodrome accident. Although the story is not a fable in the literal sense of the word, its narrative structure and its moralizing ending doubtless point in the direction of Aesop as the most likely literary source of inspiration for the epigram. In fact, the objective of this particular epigram is to cast a personal experience in the mould of Aesop's fables, to transform it into a moralizing story and to present it as a general lesson from which other people may benefit. In short, Nicholas the Patrician "aesopizes". And he is certainly not the only Byzantine author to do so. In the genre of the gnomic epigram we meet the mythical figure of Aesop time and again, usually without an explicit reference to him or his fables. But once we recognize the pattern, we cannot fail to see that in Byzantium "moralizing" is more often than not tantamount to "aesopizing".

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Monastic Wisdom

The epigrams of Kassia form a mixture of profane and monastic wisdom. On the one hand, there are epigrams that have nothing to do with monastic life, such as A 56–57:

Πλουτῶν πλήθυνον τοὺς φίλους ἐκ τοῦ πλούτου
ἵνα σου πτωχεύσαντος μὴ ἐκσπασθῶσιν.

"When you become wealthy, increase your friends with your wealth, so that if you become poor, they may not fall away". On the other hand, some of her epigrams are definitely Christian, such as C 25–27:

⁵¹ The epigram calls this member of the Hippodrome staff τὸν ἐπὶ σχοίνου: I am not familiar with this function. He fell down from the τροχὰ of the Hippodrome. For this term, see Herodianus, *Partitiones*, ed. J. BOISSONADE. London 1819, 234: τροχὰ δὲ ἡ σχοῖνος.

Καὶ μοὶ δοίη γε Χριστὸς συγκακουχεῖσθαι
 φρονίμοις ἀνδράσι τε καὶ σοφωτάτοις
 ἥπερ συνευφραίνεισθαι μωροῖς ἀλόγοις.

“May Christ grant that I endure adversity together with sensible and prudent men, rather than enjoy the company of irrational fools”⁵². In many respects the collection of Kassia’s epigrams resembles the so-called “sacro-profane” gnomologies, such as the one compiled by Georgides, where we find not only quotes from the Bible and the church fathers, but also sayings and maxims of pagan authors⁵³. Looking at the sources of Kassia, we can distinguish two categories, profane and religious: (a) some Menander, Palladas, a few verses by Euripides and Theognis (which she probably culled from a gnomology), and the Aesopic material treated above; (b) the Bible, Gregory of Nazianzos as well as a number of monastic epigrams (see below)⁵⁴. It is worth noticing that Georgides made use of almost the same range of sources⁵⁵. Georgides was a monk, just as Kassia was a nun. And like her, he will have composed his gnomology primarily for the monastic milieu he was living in. However, the large number of manuscripts that have come down to us also bears testimony to its rapid dissemination among laymen. The same can be said about most “sacro-profane” gnomologies, a genre that flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries: the authors are monks writing for monks, but their gnomologies are read by laics as well. The reason for this remarkable success is the fact that these compilations provide all sorts of *gnomae*, not only religious ones, but also texts that are of interest to people living outside the cloister.

Given the mixed character of these “sacro-profane” gnomologies, it is often difficult to establish whether a particular gnome should be interpreted in a Christian sense or not. In the poetry of Kassia, for instance, it is not always clear what the concept of *φιλία* stands for. Friendship, obviously, but what sort of friendship? Let us look at the following three epigrams:

Φύλον γνήσιον ἢ περιστάσις δείξει·
 οὐ γὰρ ἀποστήσεται τοῦ φιλουμένου.

“A crisis will reveal a true friend; for he will not desert the one he loves”.

Δύο φιλούντων τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ φιλίαν
 ἰσασμὸς οὐκ ἔνεστιν, ἀλλ’ ἔρις μᾶλλον.

⁵² Ed. KRUMBACHER 1897a: 359 and 365; translation (with some minor adjustments): TRIPOLITIS 1992: 118 and 126.

⁵³ See ODORICO 1986: 3–11.

⁵⁴ For the sources used by Kassia see KRUMBACHER 1897a: 341–344 and ROCHOW 1967: 240, n. 648, 649 and 652.

⁵⁵ See ODORICO 1986: 31–33 and 293–297 (the *index auctorum*).

“Between two people sharing a friendship in Christ, there is no equality but rather rivalry”.

Κρεῖσσον δὲ πάντως καὶ χρυσοῦ καὶ μαργάρων
ἕσμὸς φιλοῦντων πρὸς φιλοῦντας γνησίως.

“For true friends a swarm of friends is truly more valuable than gold and pearls”⁵⁶. The first epigram expresses a sentiment that is neither typically Christian nor typically Byzantine: in times of hardship one discovers who is truly a friend and who is not. The second epigram, however, obviously deals with the topic of monastic friendship. People living together in a secluded environment, such as a monastery, develop ties of friendship, especially when they strive to reach a common goal. However, if this common goal is more important than their being together, there is necessarily an element of competition, even among the best of friends, all of them trying to achieve the perfect life in Christ. The fact that monks share the same ideals and experience the same monastic regime, quite naturally creates a bond between them, but since men are not born equal, there are always different levels of saintliness. Only a few monks arrive at the top of the *heavenly ladder*; most drop out somewhere halfway up and some may not even reach the bottom rung. Monastic friendship is, by its very nature, competitive and not based on equality, as Kassia rightly observed⁵⁷. The third epigram is difficult to interpret. Does it simply mean that friendship is more precious than gold and pearls? Or does it have a more specific meaning? Does it refer to monastic friendship? If Kassia is referring to ordinary friendship, it is a trite maxim which we all understand and approve of, but which sounds clichéd. However, if the epigram held a particular significance for her fellow nuns, the text definitely becomes more interesting. Then it would refer to the fact that monks and nuns have to abstain from worldly possessions (“gold and pearls”) and try to achieve a level of spiritual love among themselves (the “swarm of friends”). The problem is that we do not always know what Kassia means by *φιλία*, a concept which in her poetry sometimes refers to friendship in general and sometimes to the bonds of friendship among monks. Since the poetry of Kassia is of a “sacro-profane” character and wavers between ancient wisdom and Christian experience, the concept of friendship is often rather ambiguous (as in the case of the third epigram).

⁵⁶ Ed. KRUMBACHER 1897a: 357 (nos. A 23–24, 1–2 and 16–17). For the translation of the first epigram, A 23–24, see TRIPOLITIS 1992: 109 (her translations of A 1–2 and 16–17 are incorrect).

⁵⁷ See also epigram A 49–51, where she prays to God that her fellow nuns may envy her for her piety (cf. Gregory of Nazianzos, I, 2, 30, v. 27).

The best way to understand Kassia and the ambiguities of her poetry is to look at the various sources she used and to see the metamorphosis of sacred and profane wisdom into something new and original. In the end, what really matters are not the sources themselves, but how she transformed these sources into something of her own. In the section above, where I treated the Aesopic material used by Kassia, I tried to make clear that she turned Aesop into a figure of Christian wisdom. However, she also made use of a monastic source which, as far as I know, is totally unknown to the scholarly world, despite the fact that most Byzantinists will be familiar with the gnomology of Georgides where these epigrams are to be found. Aesop and the monastic epigrams are not the only two sources Kassia imitated, of course; but they are most certainly the two sources least known to scholars interested in the poetry of Kassia and, if only for this reason, they deserve our full attention.

The gnomology of Georgides contains a number of gnomic epigrams reminiscent of monastic life: G 59, 108, 110, 137–141, 166, 177, 194, 415, 417, 445, 500, 529, 569–72, 631–32, 694, 729, 768, 798–99, 888, 1006–1007, 1009, 1017, 1030, 1032, 1034, 1037, 1089, 1091, 1111–1114, 1134–1135, 1159–60, 1165, 1205 and 1213⁵⁸. These epigrams are found nowhere else. They appear to date from the seventh century, firstly because some of the epigrams are literary imitations of monastic precepts found in the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimax⁵⁹, and secondly because the metre used for the composition of these epigrams is very similar to that of Pisides: prosodic dodecasyllables that display a marked tendency toward stress accent on the penultimate. The epigrams are attributed to a wide range of authors, namely John, Gennadios, George of Pisidia, Iosipos, Sextus, Menander and Babrius. The last three names, Sextus Empiricus, Menander and Babrius, are obviously incorrect. The verses attributed to Pisides (G 108, 110 and 194) could be fragments of panegyrics that have been lost, but it cannot be ruled out that we are dealing once again with a false ascription. Iosipos (Ἰώσηπος) cannot be the famous Jewish historian Josephus. Iosipos is probably none other than Aesop, whose name in Syriac is Iosip. The “fables of Iosip” were translated back into Greek by Michael Andreopoulos in the late eleventh century, but earlier translations may have existed, of which the epigram attributed to Iosipos, G 1009, is probably an example⁶⁰. Gennadios is the author of a number of epigrams dealing with the subject of excessive eating and drinking; he is otherwise unknown. John must have been an indus-

⁵⁸ Ed. ODORICO 1986. I have not taken into account monostichs because there is always a possibility that they happen to be sentences in prose which only by pure chance consist of twelve syllables with a pause in the middle; but see nos. G 11, 168, 232–234, 244, 483, 520, 639, 697, 700, 714, 726, 731, 796, 927, 1008, 1027, 1033, 1106, and O 25.

⁵⁹ See ODORICO 1986: 32.

⁶⁰ See H.G. BECK, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*. Munich 1971, 30.

trious and prolific writer, seeing that at least a third of all epigrams bear his name. He is variously identified as “John”, “John the Monk” or “John the Syrian”. The corpus of monastic epigrams was probably compiled in a monastery somewhere in Palestine or Syria, not only because John, the major contributor, is expressly identified as a Syrian, but also because of the Syriac rendering of the name of Aesop. What is more, all the gnomologies of the seventh and eighth centuries, such as the *Pandektes* by Antiochos of St. Sabas and the *Sacra Parallela* attributed to John of Damascus, were produced in monastic centres in the former eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

Georgides did not have access to the original, seventh-century collection of monastic gnomes, but used an enlarged version of it, which also contained a number of epigrams composed in unprosodic dodecasyllable: nos. G 185, 617, 910, 960, 1133, 1214–1215 and 1218. G 910 is attributed to John, G 960 to Gennadios; but since these two poets make use of the prosodic dodecasyllable, these ascriptions are obviously incorrect (as are the ascriptions to Menander, Diadochos of Photike and Aristotle in 185, 617 and 1133)⁶¹. Like the epigrams in the original collection, the unprosodic verses clearly treat monastic themes. See, for instance, G 910 (ascribed to John):

ῥαινόμενα δάκρυα	δι' ἁμαρτίας
τὸν οἰκτίρμονα Θεόν	πρὸς οἴκτον ἄγει.

“Tears that are shed on account of sins move the merciful God to mercy”. In monastic literature, such as the *Heavenly Ladder*, monks are advised to constantly consider their lapses into mortal sin and weep tears of contrition: lamentation befits the good monk⁶². It is almost impossible to date the additions to the original collection of monastic epigrams, but seeing that the eternal *lux ex oriente*, in this case the wisdom of eastern monasticism, moved to Constantinople around the year 800 along with a number of refugees from Palestinian monasteries, I would suggest that the enlarged version of the collection reached the Byzantine territory in approximately the same period – in which case the additions would date from the late seventh or the eighth century. Whatever the case, there are three decisive moments in the text tradition to take into consideration: the compilation of the original collection of monastic gnomes in the seventh century, the addition of a number of unprosodic epigrams (before the year 800?), and the selection of sixty-odd

⁶¹ According to MAAS 1903: 281–282 and 309, these unprosodic gnomie epigrams belong to the corpus of the *Sayings of Aesop*. I do not think he is right. In contrast to the *Sayings*, the epigrams treat monastic themes and have an obligatory stress accent on the penultimate.

⁶² See K.-H. UTHEMANN, *ODB*, s.v. Contrition.

gnomes, prosodic and unprosodic, by Georgides, which we find in his gnomology.

The monastic epigrams appear to address an audience of beginners, neophytes making their first tottering steps on the spiritual ladder which leads to heaven, young monks eager to ascend but prone to fall. Everyday problems are tackled. Petty vices are treated with great verve and portrayed in the darkest of colours. Do not eat too much. Do not drink too much. Do not talk too much. Pride is bad. Gossip is bad. Envy is bad. Taking oaths is bad. Sex is bad. And so on and so forth. In a paraenetic poem attributed to John Nesteutes monks are even warned not to cough in front of others, not to enter a cell without first knocking on the door and not to yawn ostentatiously⁶³. What these down-to-earth instructions teach us is that, despite the lofty theories about the ideal life in Christ put forward in Byzantine monastic treatises, most monks will have had little talent for the rigorous regime of the St. Anthonies and a healthy appetite for the pleasures of life they had forsworn on entering the monastery⁶⁴. Let me quote a few examples from the corpus of monastic epigrams:

Οἶνον κορεσθεῖς	καὶ τροφῶν ἀμετρίας
οὐκ ἂν κρατήσῃς	ἡδονῶν κακοσχόλων (G 799).

“When you’re sated with wine and too much food, you’ll not be able to resist frivolous desires”.

Πληρῶν ἀπαύστως	τὴν σεαυτοῦ γαστέρα
ῥῆλας παρέξεις	ἱατροῖς ἀεὶ φάγοις (G 888).

“By stuffing your stomach without ever stopping you’ll just feed the doctors who are always hungry”.

Ῥὺς σίδηρον	δαπανᾷ καθ’ ἡμέραν
καὶ μνησίκακον	ἢ πονηρίᾳ πλέον (G 529) ⁶⁵ .

“Rust eats into iron day after day; but not as much as malice eats up the spiteful”

Ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος	οὐκ ἔχει πολλοὺς λόγους·
τὸ γὰρ λαλεῖν περισσὰ	τῆς ἀγροικίας (G 141).

⁶³ Ed. PITRA 1864–68: II, 235–236.

⁶⁴ See also the five gnomic epigrams by Eustathios of Ikonion (late eleventh century) in Laur. LXX 20; ed. BANDINI 1763–70: II, 679–680 and COUGNY 1890: IV, no. 116 [the first of these epigrams is also found in a manuscript of the *Little Catechesis* by Theodore of Stoudios, Marc. II 60 (a. 1586), fol. 240].

⁶⁵ Cf. Antisthenes as quoted by Laert. Diog. VI 5: ὥσπερ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰοῦ τὸ σίδηρον, οὕτως ἔλεγε τοὺς φθονεροὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου ἥθους κατεσθίεσθαι.

“A prudent man does not use many words, for it is a sign of boorishness to chatter unduly”

Τὰ μικρὰ δαίμων	σμικρύνει τῶν πταισμάτων,
ὅπως κακούργως	εἰς τὰ μείζω προσβάλλῃ (G 1006).

“Just a minor error, says the devil when we err, for he wickedly aims at a major target”.

Χυμός, χολή καὶ φλέγμα	σὺν τῷ αἵματι
ψυχῆς ἔχουσιν δεσμὸν	ἀρρήτῳ λόγῳ (G 1112).

“Humour, bile, phlegm and blood mysteriously keep the soul imprisoned”.

In the last epigram of this series, an epigram remarkable for its explicit reference to the four bodily fluids of ancient medicine, we clearly see that body and soul are two opposite forces, which are constantly at odds with each other. It is up to human beings to decide which side they choose: the body and its material pleasures, or the soul and its spiritual bliss. But because of the frailties of human nature it is an unequal fight and therefore usually results in the soul's defeat: its entrapment by the diabolic ruses of the body, its capture mid-air as it is about to ascend to heaven, and its final imprisonment in the gaol of human existence. There is, however, a way-out for the soul: if man leads the perfect life in Christ and follows the ethical rules of monasticism, his soul may exit this human existence and transcend to the spheres of heavenly beatitude. The soul is confined to the body, to be sure; but it is no Alcatraz, the door is open if the soul tries hard enough to escape. It is strange, says the poet, that the soul remains imprisoned, for despite all those bodily fluids that keep it back, it can surely transcend the confines of human existence. In this “prison” epigram, as in all other monastic epigrams, there is a strong dichotomy between body and soul, which is an Evagrian concept typical of mainstream Byzantine monasticism. This dichotomy is neatly expressed in a superb epigram by a certain Niketas the Philosopher, who, I think, is none other than the famous tenth-century hagiographer and exegete Niketas David Paphlagon⁶⁶. This epigram, εἰς τὸ κοινὸν σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν (“on the vile body and the soul”), visualizes the abstract concepts of gluttony and abstinence as active combatants in the cosmic struggle between good and evil:

⁶⁶ For the vicissitudinous life of Niketas David Paphlagon, see R.J.H. JENKINS, *DOP* 19 (1965) 241–247 (repr. in: idem, *Studies on Byzantine history of the 9th and 10th centuries*. London 1970, no. IX). STERNBACH 1902: 83–85, equates Niketas the Philosopher with the subject of poem 100 by Christopher Mitylenaios (whom he believes to be the same person as Niketas of Synada celebrated in Chr. Mityl. nos. 27 and 43). See also KOMINIS 1966: 142–143.

Ἐρᾷ τροφῆς τὸ σῶμα·	τοῦτο καὶ κύνες·
ἀσιτίας τὸ πνεῦμα·	τοῦτο καὶ νόες.
ἐλοῦ τὸ κρεῖττον·	καὶ συναφθῆς ἀγγέλοις·
καὶ μὴ τὸ χεῖρον·	καὶ καταχθῆς εἰς κύνας.

“The body loves food, and so do dogs; the spirit loves abstinence, and so do angels. Choose what is better, for then you shall join the angels; and not what is worse, for then you shall go to the dogs”⁶⁷.

To return to Kassia, there can be little doubt that she was familiar with the corpus of monastic epigrams. See, for instance, A 156–158:

Ἀπαιδευσίας μήτηρ	ἡ παρρησία·
παρρησία λέγεται	παρὰ τὸ ἴσον·
πέρα γὰρ ἔστι	τοῦ ἴσου καὶ τοῦ μέτρου

“Freedom of speech (*parisia*) is the mother of rudeness. *Parisia* derives from *para to ison* (more than is right), for it exceeds the limits of what is right and proper”. Παρρησία, the right to speak, is a privilege granted by God Almighty to people of saintly stature, but it is a forbidden fruit for those who have just started their career in the monastery, for it easily leads to impertinence and wantonness. To warn her nuns of the dangerous pitfalls of παρρησία, Kassia makes use of a false *figura etymologica*: the word derives from *para to ison* (note the iotacism), because in an abusive sense it may constitute a licence to say things that are not allowed. In one of the monastic gnomes quoted above we find a similar warning to speak only when necessary: ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος οὐκ ἔχει πολλοὺς λόγους· τὸ γὰρ λαλεῖν περισσὰ τῆς ἀγραιοκίας (G 141). The word *περισσὰ* in this epigram must surely have been what Kassia had in mind when she provided her own fanciful etymology of the word παρρησία, which according to her indicates that it is *πέρα τοῦ ἴσου* to speak frankly. She felt the need to make one minor adjustment, however. Whereas the monastic gnome states that “it is a sign of boorishness (*ἀγραιοκία*) to chatter unduly”, Kassia is of the opinion that “freedom of speech is the mother of rudeness (*ἀπαιδευσία*)”. The terms *ἀγραιοκία* and *ἀπαιδευσία* have more or less the same meaning. According to Kassia, however, παρρησία is not the product, but the cause of boorish impertinence.

Thus we see that Kassia does not imitate the corpus of monastic epigrams slavishly, but introduces interpretations of her own whenever she feels that the source she is using presents the ethical concepts of Byzantine monasticism incorrectly or at least insufficiently. Her gnomes occasionally read as a learned commentary on the text of the monastic epigrams. In A 54–55, for instance, she explains how one should interpret the word *μνησίκακος* in one of the

⁶⁷ Ed. STERNBACH 1902: 85. In Laur. XXXII 19 the poem is incorrectly attributed to Theodore Prodromos: see MILLER 1855–57: vol. I, 449, no. CCLIII.

epigrams I quoted above: ἰὸς σίδηρον δαπανᾷ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ μνησίκακον ἢ πονηρία πλέον (G 529). In ancient and Byzantine epigrams dealing with the topic of envy one often reads that φθόνος is an evil force that is self-destructive: envy harms the person who envies, not the person who is envied⁶⁸. Although the monastic epigram no. G 529 expresses the very same idea, it does not make use of the word φθόνος or cognate terms like φθονερός or φθονέω, but instead uses the term μνησίκακος. Kassia's epigram (A 54–55) runs as follows:

Πᾶς μνησίκακος	καὶ φθονερός προδήλως·
γεννήτρια γὰρ	μνησικακία φθόνου

“All who bear malice are clearly envious as well, for spitefulness is the begetter of envy”. In this gnome Kassia explains that μνησικακία (malice, spitefulness) bears more or less the same meaning as φθόνος (envy), for one thing leads to another. If you bear a grudge against someone else because he has done you wrong, you want to hurt him out of spite; but this desire to retaliate inevitably leads to the less honourable feeling of envy. As Kassia rightly noted, envy is malicious and vindictive: it is the sentiment one feels when everything is lost beyond repair. It is pure bitterness. And as the ancients already knew, bitterness is far more harmful to the embittered themselves than to the objects of their bitter resentment.

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Byzantine Folly, Modern Folly

It is well known that many epigrams attributed to Kassia express a strong dislike of μωρία – a word that Krumbacher incorrectly translated as “Dummheit”, thus creating another myth about Kassia: that of the highly intelligent nun who scorned stupidity⁶⁹. But the word μωρία means “folly” – foolishness in the biblical sense of the word (cf. *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach* and many other texts in the Septuagint). See, for instance, the following epigram ascribed to Kassia:

Γνωσὶς ἐν μωρῷ	πάλιν ἄλλη μωρία·
γνώσις ἐν μωρῷ	κώδων ἐν ὧνι χοίρου (A 136–137),

⁶⁸ See, for instance, *AP* XI, 193 (also found *in situ*: GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 473); *AP* X, 111; *AP* I, 103; Greg. Naz. II. 1. 68, vv. 8–9; and GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 281 bis. See above, footnote 65.

⁶⁹ KRUMBACHER 1897a: 334–336.

“Wisdom in a fool is another form of folly; wisdom in a fool is a bell on a pig’s snout”. The word γνῶσις is another biblical term. It denotes spiritual wisdom. Γνῶσις is the exact opposite of μωγία, not only in the Bible, but also in Kassia. Whoever lacks divine *gnosis* is a fool. Even if the fool has access to the sources of *gnosis*, he still remains a fool with no insights and his supposed wisdom boils down to nothing: it is simply “another form of folly”, a worthless ornament “on a pig’s snout”. Reading this epigram one is reminded of the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. 3: 19): “the wisdom of this world is folly (μωγία) in God’s sight”.

There can be absolutely no doubt as to what Kassia meant by the word μωγία. It has nothing to do with intellect, but with spiritual wisdom or rather the lack of it. And yet, the blatantly erroneous interpretation of the term, Krumbacher’s *Dummheit*, is repeated time and again by generations of scholars as the sort of accepted wisdom that needs no further discussion. This is what Kassia would doubtless call “another form of folly”. Tripolitis translates the verses quoted above as follows: “Knowledge in a stupid person is further stupidity; knowledge in a stupid person is a bell on a pig’s nose”⁷⁰. Lipšić assumes that the epigrams on the topic of “stupidity” are all autobiographical and that they refer to the fact that Emperor Theophilos was so stupid as to turn Kassia down at the bride show⁷¹. Kazhdan first admits that μωγία should be interpreted in the biblical sense of the word, but then continues by speculating that Kassia is referring to the stupidity of the iconoclasts⁷². What these three cases of misinterpretation clearly demonstrate is that it is high time we discard all the romantic myths that obscure our picture of Kassia. She is a fairy-tale figure in the Byzantine chronicles, an author as elusive as Aesop in the manuscript tradition, and an almost mythical character in modern historiography. She deserves a better fate than this. Like any other Byzantine author, Kassia must be studied within the context of her time, her social milieu and the literary tradition to which she belongs. In order to redeem Kassia from the ghastly limbo of fiction and turn her into a figure of flesh and blood, we need to know more about her life, her literary works and her place in time. What we need are plain, simple, down-to-earth facts.

What are these facts? Fact number one: we actually know very little about the life of Kassia. What we read are mostly legendary accounts, romantic ramblings, feminist theories or orthodox mumbo-jumbo – and sometimes an unsavoury combination of all of the above. Kassia was born around 800 and died before 867. She was actively involved in the controversy over the cult of

⁷⁰ TRIPOLITIS 1992: 125 (in a section appropriately entitled: “Stupidity”).

⁷¹ E. LIPŠIĆ, *VV* 4 (1951) 135–148.

⁷² KAZHDAN 1999: 324; see also the last lines at the bottom of this page: “The interpretation of beauty/ugliness and *stupidity* in Kassia’s *gnomai* ...”.

the icons in her youth, but assumed a more moderate stance in the 820s. She founded a monastery during the iconoclast reign of Theophilos. She wrote many hymns and a number of gnomic epigrams. So much for the life of Kassia. Everything else is speculation. Fact number two: we should question the manuscript tradition. Not all epigrams that go under her name are hers. The problem is that we do not know which epigrams are hers and which are not. Let us not take for granted the ascription of certain epigrams to Kassia. For instance, rather than thinking of feminine self-hatred, we should consider whether the misogynist epigrams attributed to her (C 43–62) may have been written by a male author pretending to be Kassia. Fact number three: Kassia was a nun and practically everything gnomological in the middle Byzantine period was composed by monks for monks. What we find in Kassia and other gnomologies is monastic wisdom. The sources used by Kassia and other gnomic authors are sometimes monastic, sometimes biblical or patristic, and sometimes profane. But what Kassia and other authors try to do is to christianize the whole lot and turn it into something compatible with the ethical codes of Byzantine monasticism. And fact number four: despite the monastic provenance of most gnomologies, including Kassia's, it is reasonable to assume that these sources of monastic wisdom also appealed to ordinary Byzantines living outside the cloister. But these laics will have interpreted Kassia's gnomic epigrams in a different way than the nuns for whom she wrote her poetry. The concept of friendship, for instance, does not bear the same meaning for laics as it does for monks: the former think in terms of larger social networks, the latter look upon friendship from the viewpoint of their secluded environment. Since the interpretation of Kassia's epigrams is a matter of societal context, we need to address the question of readership when we try to interpret her poetry.

Chapter Nine

THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

During the dark ages the island of Samos was constantly under heavy attack. It was lost to the Arabs, reconquered, lost again – and when the tides of misfortune finally ebbed away, it must have been a desolate place. In the 830s emperor Theophilos reconstructed the citadel at Samos (Kastro Tigani)¹ and restored it to its former glory, as the following verse inscription tells us:

Πᾶς ὁ παριών	καὶ θεώμενος τάδε
καὶ τὴν πρώτην μου	γνωρίσας ἀδοξίαν
ἄξιως δοξάζει σε	τὸν εὐεργέτην
καὶ ἀπαύστως κραυγάζει·	πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη
Θεοφίλου δεσπότης	καὶ Θεοδώρας.
ὦ αὐτοκράτορ	πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης,
Θεόφιλε δέσποτα	χαῖρε Ῥωμαίων.
[...] δοξάσας	τὸ σκήπτρον καὶ τὸ στέφος
[ἐπα]ξίως λέγωμεν·	πολλοὶ σου χρόνοι.

“Whoever passes by and sees these things and knows of my former misery, rightly praises you as my benefactor and never ceases to exclaim: “Long live Lord Theophilos and Theodora! Oh Emperor of the whole world, Theophilos, Lord of the Romans, hail to you!” [...] praising your sceptre and crown, let us rightly say: “May your life be long!”².

The epigram is written in unprosodic dodecasyllables. In the dark ages, especially during the reigns of the great iconoclast emperors, Leo III and Constantine V, most verse inscriptions did not stick to the rules of prosody. This metrical laxity ceased as the cultural climate at the Byzantine court became imbued with the ideals of a nostalgic sort of classicism, which frowned on “stupid” prosodic errors. During the reign of Theophilos, however, there was a remarkable come-back of poetry in purely accentual metres, as indicated by numerous unprosodic verse inscriptions. Therefore, the Samos text should not be viewed as a provincial product lagging behind in comparison to the

¹ See E. MALAMUT, *Les îles de l’ empire byzantin*. Paris 1988, 140, 238 and 611.

² Ed. A.M. SCHNEIDER, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung* 54 (1929) 139, and KOUTRAKOU 1994: 143, n. 462.

cultural life of the capital. Another “old-fashioned” feature of the verse inscription at Samos is the use of the formula of the *polychronion*: “long live the emperor”, πολλά τὰ ἔτη (plus genitive) and πολλοί σου χρόνοι. Similar acclamations can be found in numerous prose inscriptions dating from the period of late antiquity and the dark ages³; but to my knowledge, they tend to disappear after the year 800. The phrase “πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης” in v. 6 more or less recurs in the famous inscription in Porto Torres on Sardinia commemorating the victory over the Langobards in c. 645, where Constans II is called δεσπότης τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης⁴. The Samos text adroitly makes use of phrases, slogans and metrical patterns typical of Byzantine inscriptions dating from the dark ages. This is a deliberate archaism, I think. It is an attempt to praise Theophilos in the same words and the same metre as adopted by earlier poets writing encomiastic verses in honour of the iconoclast emperors of the eighth century.

Let us try to imagine the impressions of the occasional passer-by, whom the verse inscription addresses. The first thing he will notice is, of course, the newly-built citadel, the place of refuge for the citizens of Samos in times of immediate danger – massive walls of stone and brick-work, constructed as a defensive stronghold against the frequent attacks of the Arabs. The second thing he will see as he approaches the main gate of the citadel, is the inscription itself: letters carved in solid stone, letters so skilfully wrought, so splendid and of such a magnitude that the text looks as if it cannot be effaced by the hand of man. And since the inscription looks as impregnable as the fortress itself, the viewer will understand its message, even if he cannot read. The third thing to draw his attention – that is, if he is not illiterate – is the text of the verse inscription, glorifying the mighty ruler of the Romans. Against the backdrop of frequent naval battles in the Aegean and repeated invasions of the island of Samos by Arab and Byzantine armed forces, the text reads as a bold statement of power and sovereignty, claiming that Samos rightfully belongs to the Byzantine empire (and not to the infidels) and that its legitimate ruler is Theophilos, the emperor of the whole world (and not some Abbasid caliph). The inscription is particularly interesting because it records how the ordinary citizens of Samos are supposed to respond to these territorial claims. They allegedly pay obeisance to Theophilos and Theodora by shouting the *polychronion*, and thus they are drawn into the cultural orbit of Constantinople, where such acclamations form part of the daily routine at the court.

Since the vast majority of the Byzantines were illiterate, inscriptions do not seem to be a very effective means of propaganda. The question is whether this is absolutely true. Writing involves two things: sign and signification. In

³ See, for instance, GUILLOU 1996: no. 119 and GRÉGOIRE 1922: nos. 79 and 114.

⁴ GUILLOU 1996: no. 230 (pp. 243–246).

literate cultures, the signified meaning is more important by far than the sign itself. In illiterate cultures, however, it is exactly the opposite: there sign prevails over signification. Writing is something magical to the illiterate. Hagiography tells us about miraculous apparitions of writings, amulets bear magical signs in the form of letters, many churches are adorned with incomprehensible Kufic script, and the “philosophers” of the *Patria* regard ancient inscriptions as encoded messages predicting the future⁵. It is also worth noting that after the year 1000 Byzantine epigraphy strives after a purely ornamental effect: the script becomes more calligraphic and less legible⁶. The reason for this change is that most Byzantines, being illiterate, did not read inscriptions, but simply gazed at them. This does not necessarily mean, however, that they were not able to grasp the meaning of inscribed agit-prop. True enough, most citizens of Samos will have been unable to decipher the text written on their citadel; but they witnessed the reconstruction of the fortress, noticed the presence of Byzantine officials, observed the stone-carver as he was doing his job, and also saw the final product: the inscription itself, which stood out on the gray surface of the citadel as a visible sign of the emperor’s omnipotence. The majestic letters of the inscription signalled to them the presence of a world they were not familiar with, an alien culture intruding upon their own, an ideology of empire stretching out even to the faraway island of Samos. The illiterate citizens of Samos may not have understood what the inscription said, but they knew perfectly what it meant: Byzantium is here and the new ruler is Theophilos. And they reacted accordingly -for they may have lacked education, but they certainly were not fools- by shouting: “Long live the Emperor!”.

The power of the written word manifests itself not only in what is said, but also in the visible form of the inscription itself. A splendid example is the text written above the famous apse mosaic in the Hagia Sophia (*AP* I, 1), propagating the triumphal restoration of the cult of the icons after many years of heresy. This iconophile message is visualized in the mosaic itself, of course. However, it is also spelled out to the illiterate with the visual aid of the script, which instills a feeling of awe by means of its majestic size and which impresses even the modern viewer with its sober, yet elegant characters set against a background of sparkling gold.

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⁵ See G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des Patria*. Paris 1984, 150, and MANGO 1991: 240–241.

⁶ See MANGO 1991: 245–247, and *ODB*, s.v. Epigraphy.

Writing in Gold

When in 814, shortly before Christmas, emperor Leo V removed the image of Christ from the Chalke, it was an unequivocal sign to all that iconoclasm had regained favour at the Byzantine court. It was here, at the same brazen gate of the Great Palace, that a similar sacrilegious act by Leo III in 726 had sparked off the famous controversy over the cult of the icons. When the iconophiles won the day in 787, one of their first public acts was to restore the image of Christ at the Chalke, so as to mark the end -temporarily, as it would turn out- of iconoclasm. And the final victory of the iconophiles in 843 once again led to the restoration of the image of Christ at the same spot. Thus the Chalke witnessed the major events of the struggle *pro* and *contra* the cult of the icons, marking the changes in imperial policy between 726 and 843 with every change in its decoration. The word “imperial” is crucial in this context, because, whatever theory on the issue of iconoclasm one may venture to put forward⁷, it is an undeniable fact that the Byzantine emperors played a decisive role in either abolishing or restoring the icons. While it is difficult to assess the amount of public support for the iconoclast cause in the early ninth century, the change in imperial ideology appears to have been caused by the predicaments of the Byzantine empire at the time. The Bulgars were laying waste the northern provinces, the Arabs steadily advanced from the south, and morale was low in the military as the troops had suffered defeat after defeat. Leo V’s motives for turning iconoclast must have been that the military disasters were proof of God’s great displeasure with the images. The Byzantines, consequently, needed to return to the policies of the great Isaurian emperors, whose reigns had always been victorious. In 815 a local council was held, which, with the help of John the Grammarian, provided theological arguments in support of the emperor’s decision to embrace iconoclasm once again.

Soon after this council, either in late 815 or early 816, Leo V placed the image of the holy and ever victorious cross above the gate of the Chalke and ordered four poets to compose epigrams celebrating the iconoclast creed⁸. The texts of these inscriptions can be found in a treatise by Theodore of Stoudios, the Ὑελεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή (*PG* 99, 435–478; henceforth: *Refutation*), which he wrote during his exile in Boneta in 816–818. In a letter to one Litoios⁹, Theodore of Stoudios provides some interesting background information on the

⁷ For a survey of publications on the topic of iconoclasm (until 1986), see P. SCHREINER, *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo*, 34. 1 (1988) 319–407.

⁸ The Ph.D. thesis by E.D. ΜΡΑΚΟΣ, *Βυζαντινὴ ποίησις καὶ εἰκονομαχικαὶ ἔριδες*. Athens 1992, was unfortunately inaccessible to me.

⁹ Ed. FATOUROS 1992: no. 356 (II, p. 490; cf. I, pp. 358*–359*).

composition of this anti-conoclastic treatise. The letter states that Theodore received the iconoclastic iambics from Litoios when he had already written a refutation of these texts. Although Litoios was not the first to send him the texts, Theodore felt much obliged to him for his assistance – but it meant a lot of work (κόπος). In his letter he proudly emphasizes that whereas the mesostich of the iconoclastic iambics is not correct, his own epigrams are faultless. Litoios should read and copy his treatise, and then send it back. It was not to fall into the hands of the iconoclasts. If someone detected logical or grammatical errors in the *Refutation*, he was to correct them or, better still, inform him of these mistakes, for his treatise was certainly not an innocent pastime, but contained much truth. Theodore's troublesome κόπος consisted either in copying the text for Litoios or in composing a reply in verse in addition to the refutation in prose which he had previously written. The latter option seems more plausible, seeing that Theodore stresses the importance of the correct use of the acrostic, and the somewhat diffident assertion: οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἔτυχεν ἔγραψά τι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολὺς λόγος ὁεῖ ἀληθείας, ὡς δοκῶ, ἐν αὐτοῖς, applies more to the ingeniously structured verses than to the serious theological refutation in prose.

The *Refutation* begins with the text of the iconoclastic epigrams Theodore will refute in detail; let's call it, for the sake of clarity, exhibit A. Theodore then adduces as counter-evidence his own impeccable verses: exhibit B. Then we have another series of iconophile epigrams by the same Theodore of Stoudios (τοῦ αὐτοῦ): exhibit C. This is followed by a detailed refutation of the iconoclastic iambics, in which Theodore, by means of an extensive commentary, demonstrates the falsity of the iconoclastic arguments and defends the cause of orthodox believers. After this passionate plea in defence of Christianity, with which the treatise could and should have ended, we find to our surprise another series of iconoclastic iambs: exhibit D. In some manuscripts of the *Refutation*, we find an iconophile response in verse to these texts¹⁰: this is exhibit E. This all sounds very confusing, I know. But thanks to various publications of Paul Speck¹¹, we may begin to understand the text history of the *Refutation* and view all these “exhibits” in their proper contexts.

As for exhibits A and B (*PG* 99, 436–437 and 437 & 440), the *Refutation* does not pose any problem. The former are the texts refuted by Theodore of Stoudios, the latter are the epigrams Theodore wrote in response to these iconoclastic texts (see his letter to Litoios). But what about C, D and E? What is their legal status? Although this is difficult to decide without a critical edition and a study of the manuscript evidence, it is reasonable to assume that C, D and E are “spurious”, for they are not immediately related to the dispute between

¹⁰ These iconophile epigrams were published by SPECK 1964a.

¹¹ Especially SPECK 1978: 606–619.

Theodore of Stoudios and the iconoclast poets. C and D ended up in the edition of the *Refutation*, because they were found in the personal papers of Theodore of Stoudios along with the original text of the treatise. E was added to it in a later stage of the text history.

Exhibit C (PG 99, 440–441) is a series of iconophile epigrams with a simple acrostic that runs through the first and last letters of the verses¹². The epigrams are by Theodore of Stoudios. Since the epigrams do not have the complicated acrostic Theodore brags about in his letter to Litoios (acrostic, telostich, and mesostich), he cannot have written these verses in response to the iconoclastic epigrams on the Chalke. Furthermore, as Theodore's epigrams explicitly state that the cult of the icons had recently been restored by the emperor, they obviously refer to the iconophile intermezzo of 787–815. In all likelihood they date from the reign of empress Irene (797–802), since the acrostic of the first epigram, Χριστοῦ ἡ εἰρήνη, obviously alludes to her name. The frequent use of adverbs of place ("here"), demonstrative pronouns ("this") and verbs of perception ("see", "look") strongly suggests that these epigrams were authentic verse inscriptions¹³. This is highly interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it means that the iconoclast poets in 815 and Methodios in 843¹⁴ were not the first Byzantines to write propaganda texts in verse on the Chalke; the practice goes back to the late eighth century, to Theodore of Stoudios and Irene¹⁵. Secondly, the iconoclast controversy apparently led to a vehement literary debate on the proper use of acrostic: in 797–802 a simple acrostic (iconophile!), in 815–816 a more complicated acrostic (iconoclast!!) and in 816–818 an ingeniously constructed acrostic (iconophile!!!)¹⁶.

In exhibit D (PG 99, 476–477) we find a number of iconoclastic epigrams not refuted by Theodore of Stoudios in prose or in verse. One of these epigrams is the text written on the picture of the cross at the Chalke: ἐχθρούς τροποῦμαι καὶ φονεύω βαρβάρους, "I put the enemies to flight and slaughter the barbarians"¹⁷.

¹² Migne does not decipher the acrostic of the fourth epigram (PG 99, 441b): ἐπη τάδε σῶα ἱερά.

¹³ See SPECK 1978: 612–617.

¹⁴ Ed. MERCATI 1920: 209–216.

¹⁵ If not earlier. P. SPECK, in: Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte. Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag. Amsterdam 1995, 211–220, esp. pp. 217–218, argues that Constantine V, not long after 754, inscribed iconoclastic iambs on the Chalke.

¹⁶ See chapter 4, pp. 139–140. In a paper presented at the International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Paris in 2001, Speck suggested that the iambs of Constantine V (see footnote above) may have had an acrostic as well.

¹⁷ P. SPECK, Artabasdos. Der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren. Bonn 1981, 376–378, argues that the same inscription could already be found on the Chalke cross erected by Leo III.

The three other texts we find at the end of the *Refutation* are an epigram by John (the Grammarian), another epigram by Ignatios (the Deacon), and an anonymous dedicatory epigram. These three texts are similar to the ones in exhibit A, where we also find verses by John and Ignatios as well as an anonymous dedication. What are we to make of this? What is the purpose of these reduplications? As we have seen, Theodore of Stoudios received the iconoclastic iambics twice, first from an unidentified source and then from Litoios. The question is: what did these two correspondents send to Theodore? The texts of the verse inscriptions on the Chalke? Or an iconoclastic pamphlet which contained these texts? There can be little doubt that Litoios and the unnamed iconophile did not copy the inscriptions on the Chalke *in situ*, but sent to their friend Theodore a recent publication, which contained a number of Chalke epigrams and in addition an iconoclast manifesto in prose. This manifesto is quoted and, of course, refuted by Theodore of Stoudios in his treatise (*PG* 99, 465–476). Since it is out of the question that the manifesto was inscribed on the Chalke, it follows that the manifesto and all the other iconoclastic texts circulated in manuscript form. When Theodore of Stoudios received this heretical publication, he decided to write a refutation of the epigrams that were actually inscribed on the Chalke (exhibit A) and a refutation of the iconoclastic manifesto. This is the original treatise. However, the Stoudite editors, who published Theodore's literary works shortly after 843, added an appendix to the treatise in which they published some of the iconoclastic texts Theodore did not refute.

A few manuscripts of the *Refutation* contain a poetic rebuttal of this last series of iconoclastic epigrams: exhibit E. The epigrams of "E" have precisely the same sort of acrostic and the same number of verses as those of the appendix: (no. 1) seven verses with a complicated acrostic: Χριστοῦ ἰνδαλμα εἶδος ὡς ᾔσαν (cf. the epigram by John: *PG* 99, 476b); (no. 2) seven verses with a less complicated acrostic: Θεοδώρω Χριστὸς αἰνεῖς (cf. the epigram by Ignatios: *PG* 99, 476c); (no. 3) a monostich: εἰδογραφοῦμαι κόσμον ἐξαίρων πλάνης (cf. the iconoclast monostich: *PG* 99, 476d); and (no. 4) a dedicatory epigram of six verses (cf. *PG* 99, 477a)¹⁸. These four epigrams are attributed to Theodore of Stoudios, but this ascription is certainly incorrect. It is just a hoax, an attempt to credit the great Theodore of Stoudios with the composition of a refutation in verse of the very iconoclastic epigrams he did not refute¹⁹. As the first two

¹⁸ Ed. SPECK 1964a: 36–37 (nos. I–III). The anti-iconoclastic texts nos. IV–V (ed. SPECK 1964a: 37–39), however, have no connection to the iconoclast epigrams on the Chalke. These two texts probably date from the late ninth century as well.

¹⁹ For a similar hoax, see Marc. gr. 573 (s. X), fol. 5, where we find three iconophile epigrams attributed to three major opponents of iconoclasm: the patriarchs Tarasios, Germanos and Nikephoros (ed. PITRA 1864–1868: II, 365). The first epigram (attributed to Tarasios) is in fact a poem by Pisides (St. 34).

epigrams can already be found in a tenth-century manuscript (Vat. gr. 1257), this literary forgery probably dates from the late ninth century.

Let us now return to the iconoclastic iambics inscribed on the Chalke in 815–816. There are six verse inscriptions in total: the monostich inscribed on the picture of the cross above the main entrance to the palace, a dedicatory epigram which was probably inscribed below this picture, and four epigrams with a complicated acrostic. These four epigrams were probably inscribed on bronze plates placed next to the gate: two on each side, left and right; in all likelihood, gold-plated letters were used for the acrostic²⁰. The acrostic runs through the beginning, the middle and the end of each verse; part of the acrostic is also a word in the centre of the third verse, a sort of transverse beam that intersects the mesostich in the form of a cross (for an example, see the epigram quoted below)²¹. The four epigrams with acrostic were composed by John, Ignatios, Sergios and Stephen. John is almost certainly the notorious John the Grammarian, the leader of the iconoclast movement in 815 and after²². Ignatios is the equally notorious Ignatios the Deacon²³. And Stephen is probably a certain Stephen Katepolites, who wrote a verse inscription on the Pyxites during the reign of Theophilos²⁴.

The first of these epigrams bears the acrostic: Χριστοῦ τὸ πάθος ἐλπίς Ἰωάννη, “the passion of Christ is the hope of John”. As the epigram is extremely difficult to interpret²⁵, I rely on Theodore of Stoudios’ commentary on the text (*PG* 99, 441–448); but I must confess that even with Theodore’s invaluable help, the precise meaning of the first three verses is still hard to grasp.

Χρυσογραφοῦσι χριστὸν οἱ θεηγόροι
 ῥήσει προφητῶν μὴ βλέποντες τοῖς κατ’
 ἴσηγόρων γὰρ ΕΛΠΙΣ ἡ θεοπιστίς
 Σκιογράφων δὲ τὴν πάλινδρομον πλάνην
 Τρανῶς πατοῦσιν ὡς θεῶν μισομένην
 Οἷς συμπνέοντες οἱ φθοροῦντες τὰ στέφην
 Ὑποῦσι φαιδρῶς Σταυρὸν εὐσεβεῖ κρῖσει

²⁰ See SPECK 1974a: 75–76 (n. 3).

²¹ See HÖRANDNER 1990: 13–15.

²² See E.E. LIPIŠIĆ, *Očerki istorii vizantijskogo obščestva i kultury VIII-pervaja polovina IX veka*. Moscow–Leningrad 1961, 325–326, and J. GOUILLARD, *REB* 24 (1966) 172.

²³ See LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 397–401.

²⁴ Theoph. Cont. 143, 8–15. See SPECK 1974a: 74–75 (n. 3) and LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 398.

²⁵ There are three modern commentaries: GERO 1973: 118–119, SPECK 1974b: 378–379, and CRISCUOLO 1994: 145–150. The first two commentaries contain many interesting observations. Criscuolo, however, misinterprets the text. He thinks that the θεηγόροι are iconophiles, interprets the verb πατῶ as “ricalcare”, “to adopt”, and translates οἷς συμπνέοντες as “in accordo con *quanto* qui detto”.

“They who speak about God write Christ in golden letters and visualize [Him], not with material [eyes] but rather with the speech of prophets, for faith in God is the hope of those who speak likewise. They trample openly upon the resurgent error of those who make images, as it is an abomination to God. In agreement with them, they who wear the crown gloriously raise high the cross with pious resolve”.

Whereas the last four verses are fairly easy to understand, the text of the first three verges on the nonsensical. The problem starts already with the first word, χρυσογραφοῦσι, a word that has not been properly described in any existing dictionary²⁶. Χρυσογραφῶ has four meanings: (1) “to write in gold”, especially used for the golden initials and titles in Byzantine manuscripts (cf. χρυσογραφία and χρυσογράφος), see the colophon texts of Lond. Add. 19352: χειρὶ γραφέν καὶ χρυσογραφηθὲν Θεοδώρου μοναχοῦ πρεσβυτέρου²⁷, and of the Gospel Book of Vani: ἐχρυσογράφη ἡ βίβλος αὕτη παρὰ Μιχαὴλ χρυσογράφου τοῦ Κορσεῖ²⁸; according to legendary tales, the Hebrew Bible which the seventy scholars translated into Greek (the Septuagint) was written in golden ink, see Aristeeas, 176: διφθέραις ἐν αἷς ἡ νομοθεσία γεγραμμένη χρυσογραφία Ἰουδαϊκοῖς γράμμασι and George the Synkellos, 328, 11: σὺν ταῖς ἱερᾶς βίβλοις ἐχρυσογραφημένας; (2) “to write in golden words”, a metaphor used by Niketas Byzantios in the introduction to his treatise against Islam (*PG* 105, 669): ποῦ γάρ μοι τοσαύτη χρυσέων ἐπὼν περιουσία, ὥς ἂν χρυσογραφήσαιμι τὰς (...) τῶν ἀρετῶν αὐτοῦ (sc. “of the emperor”) λαμπρότητας καὶ τερπνότητας; (3) “to paint in gold”, used for gold varnish, see Ps. Chrysostomos (*PG* 64, 30): χρυσογραφῇ τὸν ὄροφον²⁹; and (4) “to embroider with gold thread”, see Manganeios Prodromos: χρυσογραφοῦσα τοιγαροῦν τὴν πορφύραν, cf. idem: κάλυμμα χρυσόγραφον, “a gold-embroidered veil”³⁰. Meanings 1 and 2 refer to writing, meanings 3 and 4 to decorative designs³¹. It goes without saying that, within the iconoclastic context of the epigram quoted above, meanings 3 and 4 make no sense whatsoever. This is also made clear by Theodore of Stoudios, who interprets the

²⁶ I am most grateful to professors Trapp and Hörandner, the editors of *LBG*, for allowing me access to the lexicographical material they have collected until now (the autumn of 2001).

²⁷ See V. GARDTHAUSEN, *Griechische Palaeographie*. Leipzig 1911, vol. I, 214–217, esp. p. 217.

²⁸ See E. TAKAICHVILI, *Byz* 10 (1935) 659.

²⁹ This text is quoted by Photios, *Bibliotheca* 522, B 35 and *Amphilochia* no. 167, 42.

³⁰ Ed. E. MILLER, *Annuaire de l' Association pour l' Encouragement des Études Grecques en France*, 17 (1883) 39, 29 and 37, 25 (cf. 39, 13). See also *LSJ*, s.v. χρυσογραφής, “gold-embroidered”.

³¹ In the *Tale of Achilles*, v. 125, we read that Achilles’ shield bore χρυσογραμμές μεγάλες, either “great golden letters” or “great golden figures”.

verb χρυσογραφῶ as λογογραφῶ³². But what about the first two connotations of the term? I would say that meanings 1 and 2 are equally important for clarifying the sense of χρυσογραφοῦσι in the Chalke epigram. The term literally refers to the golden capitals of the acrostic on the bronze plates attached to the Chalke – an acrostic that spells out the name of Christ: *Χριστοῦ τὸ πάθος*, etc. But the term metaphorically refers to the golden words of the theologians speaking about Christ: they write in gold when they praise the Lord (just as Niketas Byzantios would like to “write in gold”, praising the emperor with “an abundance of golden words”). As Speck already argued³³, “writing in gold” also obliquely refers to the fact that the true theologians do not view Christ in His earthly presence, but envisage with prophetic eyes His divine majesty in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is made of gold and precious stones. In Byzantine texts the Heavenly Kingdom is often compared to one gigantic book, as in *Ps.* 103. 2, where it is said that God, when He created heaven and earth, stretched out the heavens like a parchment³⁴. As the Bible was written in golden ink according to widely-spread legends, and as the heavenly Jerusalem, according to equally popular beliefs, sparkled with gold, the equivalence of heaven and holy writ was self-evident to the Byzantines: see, for instance, *Ps. Chrysostomos*, who compares the heavenly realm to a χρυσογράμματος βιβλος, a book written in golden letters (*PG* 62, 752). Thus we see that the first word of the epigram, χρυσογραφοῦσι, refers to the golden letters of the acrostic, to the golden words of the theologians and to the golden book of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Χριστόν – note the strong alliteration: [xrysoγra'fusi xri'ston]. Θεηγόροι – as Theodore of Stoudios says that the “theologians” write Christ in gold because they have seen him “with their own eyes” and as he illustrates this by referring to 1 Joh. 1. 1, it is obvious that he is thinking of the evangelists and especially of John the Theologian. This is indeed the usual meaning of the word in Byzantine texts, see *Lampe*, s.v. It cannot be ruled out, however, that Theodore implicitly criticizes John the Grammarian for thinking that he, a heretic, has the right to theologize like his famous namesake, John the Theologian. In the epigram the word θεηγόροι probably refers to all those who speak about God, namely the evangelists, the church fathers and the iconoclast theologians, including John the Grammarian himself.

³² R. CORMACK, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and its Icons*. London 1985, quotes on the title page of his book a text by Theodore of Stoudios: “The gospels were writing in words, but icons are writing in gold”. I have been unable to find this passage.

³³ SPECK 1974b: 378–379. In his commentary he refers to Matth. 5. 8 and 1 Joh. 3. 2.

³⁴ See, for instance, the dedicatory epigram in the *Menologion of Basil II*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris*. Brussels 1902, pp. XXV–XXVI, vv. 13–14: ὥς ἄλλον ὄντως οὐρανὸν τεύξας βιβλὸν ἐκ δέροντων ταθεῖσαν.

Ῥήσει προφητῶν – ῥήσεις προφητῶν is a collocation in Byzantine Greek, it means “the sayings of the prophets” or, generally speaking, “the prophetic words of the Old Testament” (προφήται are not only the “prophets”, but also all biblical figures of great significance, like David, Abraham, Moses, etc.). The use of the singular is quite unusual and the dative case poses a problem: does it mean “with”, “through”, “in accordance with”? There can be little doubt, however, that the epigram refers to the biblical prohibitions against idolatry, not only laid down in the Ten Commandments, but also categorically stated in numerous other texts of the Old Testament. Μὴ βλέποντες τοῖς κάτω – the verb βλέπω is always transitive and cannot govern a dative: τοῖς κάτω cannot be the object of βλέποντες, but must be an adverbial modifier. In his commentary, Theodore of Stoudios writes that the “theologians” (that is, the evangelists) portrayed the figure of Christ not solely on the basis of what the prophets had said, but also of what they themselves had seen with their own eyes (οἰκεία αὐτοψία); and shortly afterwards, he paraphrases τοῖς κάτω as τοῖς κάτω ὀφθαλμοῖς. This is probably the correct interpretation of this strange adverbial phrase. Speck rightly sees a connection with the *Horos* of the Iconoclast Council of 754: εἴ τις (...) μὴ ἔξ ὅλης καρδίας προσκυνῇ αὐτὸν (sc. τὸν θεῖον τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου χαρακτῆρα) ὁμῆσαι νοεοῖς³⁵. In a poem dating from c. 874, Christopher Protasekretis warns a group of newly-converted Jews not to interpret the prophecies of the Old Testament in a literal sense: τῶν προφητῶν τὰς ῥήσεις σωματικῶς μὴ νόη (...) μηδὲ τοῦτο ἐκδέχου ὀφθαλμοῖς τοῖς σαρκίνοις θεάσασθαι ἐν βίῳ, “do not intend materially the sayings of the prophets (...), nor do expect to see <the divine kingdom> with your bodily eyes, in your life”³⁶.

Ἰσηγόρων – this is probably the most difficult word of the epigram. The verb ἰσηγορέω (or ἰσηγορέομαι) is a legal term, indicating that someone has an equal right to speak; the right to do so is called ἰσηγορία and the person who enjoys this right is an ἰσηγορός. In the *Life of Theodoros of Stoudios* we read that he and his followers were sent into exile because they had dared to speak out freely against the emperor: ἐπ’ ἰση τοῦ λόγου παρρησίᾳ, “because of an equal freedom of speech”³⁷. And in numerous other hagiographical texts we read that the saint enjoyed the privilege of παρρησία, “freedom of speech”, because he was so close to God. This idea of saintly παρρησία may account for the use of the term ἰσηγόρων to a certain extent, but it does not explain why the ἰσηγοροὶ have an *equal* right to speak. Equal to whom? In the word ἴσος and its various derivatives there is always a point of comparison. By definition, “to be equal”

³⁵ SPECK 1978: 619 (Mansi 336E). Cf. Mansi 352E–353A: πάντες νοερώς τῇ νοερᾷ θεότητι προσκυνούμεν.

³⁶ Ed. CICCOLELLA 2000b: 76 (vv. 3–4 and 9–12) and 80 (translation).

³⁷ Ed. V. LATYŠEV, *VV* 21 (1914) 269.

presupposes that there is someone just like you, who has the same rights, enjoys the same prerogatives, and shares with you many other things. In the iconoclastic *Horos* of 754, for instance, we read that the church fathers teach the same things as the divine apostles: τὰ ἴσα (...) ἐκδιδάσκουσι, namely the fact that images are not allowed in the church³⁸. And in his second *Antirrheticus*, Theodore of Stoudios triumphantly writes that his iconoclast opponent by “saying the same things as he does” (τὰ ἴσα λέγοντι) concedes that he is in the wrong (*PG* 99, 360). Therefore, as regards the noun ἰσηγόρων, the question is: who shares the iconoclasts’ views? Who speaks like they do? In the context of the epigram, the answer can only be: the prophets. In the first two verses we read that the θεηγόροι, they who *speak* about God, do not visualize Christ in a material sense, but spiritually, as they portray Him with the *speech* of prophets (ῥήσει προφητῶν). The “theologians” and the “prophets” allegedly share the same views on the cult of the icons. And this is why they speak with one accord and enjoy the same freedom of speech, a prerogative granted to them by God Almighty because they speak the truth.

Θεοπιστία – the word is practically a *hapax legomenon*, it can only be found in a homily by Timotheos of Antioch (*PG* 28, 1005). Note the anapestic resolution in θεο: resolutions are generally avoided in dodecasyllabic poetry after Pisides, but a few classicistic poets of the ninth century, such as Leo the Philosopher, occasionally write “iambic trimeters” consisting of thirteen syllables. Ἐλπίς and θεοπιστία – in Hebr. 11. 1 the apostle Paul avers: ἔστι πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις, “faith gives substance to our hopes”. In the third *Antirrheticus* by Theodore of Stoudios (*PG* 99, 433), we read that the iconoclasts often justified their heretical views by referring to another passage in Paul (2 Cor. 5. 7): διὰ πίστεως περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους, “faith is our guide and not the things we see”, cf. *Ps.* 39. 5 μακάριος ἄνθρωπος, οὗ ἔστιν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐλπίς αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐνέβλεψεν εἰς ματαιότητα καὶ μανίας ψευδεῖς. In iconoclast theology, true believers do not look at the things below nor at material images, but ascend, through their faith in God, into a sort of intellectual contemplation of the trinitarian divinity. It is easy to understand why the Epistles of Paul were among the favourite texts of the iconoclasts, for the apostle Paul stresses time and again the importance of “faith” and “hope” and emphasizes that believers can see the unseen if their faith is strong enough. See, for instance, 1 Cor. 2. 9–10: “Things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, all prepared by God for those who love Him, these it is that God has revealed to us through the Spirit”. The word ἐλπίς forms the central and, therefore, the crucial part of the acrostic: “the passion of Christ is the *hope* of

³⁸ *Textus byzantinos ad iconomachiam pertinentes*, ed. H. HENNEPHOF. Leiden 1969, no. 236 (Mansi 292D).

John". John the Grammarian places his hope in Christ's redemptive death on the cross – a divine mystery which he, a true Christian and knowledgeable theologian, does not visualize in the deceptive form of images, but renders visible, on a purely symbolic level, in the cruciform shape of the acrostic.

As the last four verses of the epigram do not pose any serious hermeneutic problem, it may suffice to comment on a few words only. Σκιαγράφος – a variant form of σκιαγράφος, literally "a perspective-painter" (someone who paints with shadows to create the illusion of distance): a term of abuse in the vocabulary of the iconoclasts, which they use to stigmatize painters as creators of illusion. Παλίνδρομον (πλάνην) – in his commentary Theodore of Stoudios rightly interprets this as an accusation of pagan idolatry, into which the iconophiles have supposedly lapsed. Πατέω – "to trample upon", a technical term for the so-called *calcatio colli*, an essential part of late antique and Byzantine triumphal ceremonies, in which the emperor tramples upon the necks of defeated enemies as a symbolic sign of their subjugation. In the Pantokrator Psalter we find an image of Patriarch Nikephoros and the Iconoclast Council of 815; in the epigram that describes this particular miniature, we read that he "tramples upon (πατοῦντα) the hostile head of Theodotos (...) and crushes the abominable neck of Leo"³⁹. Οἱ φοροῦντες τὰ στέφη – Leo V and his son Symbarios, renamed Constantine⁴⁰. Οἷς συμπνέοντες – in the *Horos* of 754, Constantine V and his fellow iconoclasts write that the testimonies of the evangelists and the church fathers concur with what they say themselves (συμπνέουσας ἡμῖν)⁴¹; in the epigram, however, it is the emperors who agree with what the Bible and the Church have to say. This may seem a slight difference, but it does suggest a change in attitude, from self-confident righteousness to pious deference and respect for the time-honoured traditions of God's own congregation of faithful – His divinely inspired prophets, evangelists, church fathers, saints and martyrs.

Since the iconoclastic iambs on the Chalke plainly served as propaganda, there is the unavoidable question of how successful the spin doctors of Leo V actually were in getting their message across. Intellectuals, such as Theodore of Stoudios, certainly had no problems in understanding what was being said. But were people with less education capable of grasping the subtle theological

³⁹ ŠEVČENKO 1965: 43, vv. 2–3 and 6–7. On the *calcatio colli* and the iconoclast controversy, see *idem*, pp. 49–51.

⁴⁰ WOLSKA-CONUS 1970: 351–359 and GERO 1973: 113–126 incorrectly date the iconoclast epigrams on the Chalke to the reign of Leo III and his son Constantine V; SPECK 1974a: 74–75 (n. 3) and 1974b: 376–380 irrefutably proves that the epigrams were written during the reign of Leo V and Symbarios / Constantine.

⁴¹ *Textus byzantinos ad iconomachiam pertinentes*, ed. H. HENNEPHOF. Leiden 1969, no. 233 (Mansi 280D).

arguments of John the Grammarian and his fellow iconoclasts? And what about the vast majority of the population, those who were ignorant of writing and reading? Did they understand the imperial propaganda when they looked at the Chalke and its iconoclastic verse inscriptions? The illiterate and those with little education will certainly have needed an interpreter, someone more knowledgeable than themselves, in order to fathom what John the Grammarian was actually saying. But even without this sort of basic guidance, they will have immediately grasped the essence of the iconoclastic propaganda at the Chalke just by looking at the golden letters and the cruciform shape of the acrostics. They saw golden-lettered crosses – what more did they need to understand that iconoclasm was back in town? Rational arguments, sophisticated words? No, not necessarily. For words and arguments speak to the mind, but writing in gold speaks to the heart.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

The Poems of John Geometres

The poems of John Geometres can be found in a splendid thirteenth-century manuscript, Par. Suppl. gr. 352¹. The first 150 folia of the manuscript contain various rhetorical texts and letters as well as Theodosios the Deacon's panegyric *The Capture of Crete*². The last 32 folia contain, apart from the *Sylloge Parisina* (a collection of ancient epigrams), the following literary works by Geometres: *Progymnasmata* VI and II, *Hymns* I–V, various poems and the *Metaphrasis of the Odes*. In this part of the manuscript there are three major lacunas: between fol. 150^v and 151^r, fol. 158^v and 159^r, and fol. 166^v and 167^r. Lacuna no. 1: at the bottom of fol. 150^v we find an anonymous text, entitled ἐγκώμιον γεωργίας, of which only the first line is still extant in the manuscript; at the top of fol. 151^r we read προσιθέμενον ὡς ὁμοῦ καὶ τῇ τάξει, etc., which is line 27, 17 of *Progymnasma* VI³. Lacuna no. 2: the iambic poem Cr. 278, 21 breaks off at the bottom line of fol. 158^v and is followed by an acephalous poem in elegiacs on fol. 159^r. Lacuna no. 3: at the bottom of fol. 166^v we find a poem, entitled τετραστάχα, consisting of only two lines, and at the top of fol. 167^r we find the last verse of a famous epigram on St. Mary of Egypt. The last 32 folia of Par. Suppl. gr. 352 constitute four quaternions:

[lacuna no. 1]

quaternion I [fols. 151^r–158^v]

fols. 151 ^r –152 ^v	<i>Progymnasma</i> VI, starting from line 27, 17
fols. 152 ^v –153 ^v	<i>Progymnasma</i> II
fols. 153 ^v –155 ^v	<i>Hymns</i> I–V
fols. 155 ^v –158 ^v	poems Cr. 266, 1 to Cr. 280, 3

[lacuna no. 2]

quaternion II [fols. 159^r–166^v]

fols. 159 ^r –166 ^v	poems Cr. 280, 5 to Cr. 314, 15
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¹ CRAMER 1841: 265–352.

² H. OMONT, Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits du Supplément grec de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris 1883, 42–43. See also CRISCUOLO 1979: V–VI.

³ See A.R. LITTLEWOOD, *The Progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres*. Amsterdam 1972.

[lacuna no. 3]

quaternion III [fols. 167^r–174^v]

fols. 167^r–174^v poems Cr. 314, 16 to Cr. 347, 19

quaternion IV [fols. 175^r–182^v]

fols. 175^r–176^r poems Cr. 347, 20 to Cr. 352, 2

fols. 176^r–179^r *Metaphrasis of the Odes*

fols. 179^r–182^v *Sylloge Parisina*

It is obvious that a number of quaternions have disappeared, but we are not able to estimate exactly how many: at least three (one at each lacuna), but possibly more. The last two lacunas already existed in the seventeenth century when Leo Allatius copied Geometres' poems from this very manuscript, which was in the Vatican library at the time (catalogued under number Vat. gr. 997)⁴. Allatius' copy can be found in his own hand-written anthology of Byzantine poems, Barb. gr. 74, fols. 46^r–77^{r5}. The first lacuna (between 158^v and 159^r) did not escape his notice, for he added the word ζήτη in the margin⁶; but he overlooked the second one (between 166^v and 167^r)⁷. There are also two other manuscripts by the hand of Allatius containing a small sample of Geometres' poems⁸, and Cr. 305, 16 can be found in his *Excerpta Varia* published in 1641⁹.

We can only guess which literary works by Geometres Par. Suppl. gr. 352 may originally have contained: almost certainly the other four *Progymnasmata*

⁴ See G. MERCATI, Note per la storia di alcune biblioteche romane nei secoli XIV–XIX. *StT* 164 (1952) 58, n. 2; and R. DEVREESE, Le fonds grec de la Bibliothèque Vaticane des origines à Paul V. *StT* 244 (1965) 56, 91, 129, 168, 197, 248, 300, 342 and 449. The ms. was looted by the French in 1797.

⁵ See the detailed description of the ms. in: V. CAPOCCI, Codices Barberiniani Graeci. Tomus I. Codices 1–163. Vatican 1958, 80–94. For the poems by Geometres on fol. 35^r, see below, n. 26.

⁶ On fol. 53^v: see CAPOCCI, 87. Par. Suppl. gr. 352, fol. 158^v, has the same marginal note by the hand of a later scribe (Allatius?).

⁷ See CAPOCCI, 91. On fol. 40^v Allatius copied the text of the famous epigram on St Mary of Egypt from Vat. gr. 1126 and attributed it to Prosouch without noticing that its last line could be found in the Geometres manuscript lying on his writing desk.

⁸ Barb. gr. 279, fol. 21^r, where we find Cr. 297, 2 and 315, 25, as well as a short biographical note by Allatius: ed. P. TACCHI-VENTURI, *Studi e Documenti di Storia e Diritto* 14 (1893) 161–162. Codex Allatianus 135 of the Vallicellana library, at the end of the ms. (see E. MARTINI, Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle biblioteche italiane, I. Milan 1893, 225).

⁹ L. ALLATIUS, *Excerpta varia graecorum sophistarum ac rhetorum*. Rome 1641, 399 (three epigrams on the Holy Cross by Nicholas of Corfu, Geometres and Philes). Athous Vatop. 1038 (a. 1768), fol. 101^v, which contains these same three epigrams, goes back to Allatius' edition.

and probably most of the poems found in other manuscripts, but since we do not know the exact size of the lacunas, we cannot fully reconstruct the collection of Geometres' miscellaneous works. The collection must have been compiled before the public's interest in the persons and the historical events Geometres describes had dwindled. As one of the poems dates from 996–997 and as Geometres probably died around the year 1000¹⁰, the collection of Geometres' literary works was published either at the very end of his life or posthumously. It is interesting to note that Par. Suppl. gr. 352 also contains another rare tenth-century text, the *Capture of Crete* by Theodosios the Deacon. As this panegyric was obviously of limited interest to later generations, it is not surprising that it is found in only one manuscript, Par. Suppl. gr. 352. It is reasonable to assume that the *Capture of Crete* and the collection of Geometres' miscellaneous works could be found together in an early eleventh-century manuscript, which is, either directly or indirectly, the source used by the scribe of Par. Suppl. gr. 352.

On fol. 167^r, immediately after the third lacuna, we read the line τὴν ζῶσαν ὡς ἄνθρωπον ὕλην μὴ γράφει (Cr. 314, 16). This is the last line of a famous epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, inc. ἔχει πάχος τι, found in many manuscripts and ascribed to various authors: Psellos, Prodromos, Michael Choniates, Prosouch and Philes¹¹. Since the epigram can be found in the collection of Geometres' poems, the problem of its author is settled. In some manuscripts the epigram is followed or preceded by two other epigrams on the same subject: inc. ὁ νοῦς τὸ σῶμα and τί δὴτα θάψει¹². These epigrams are also ascribed to various authors. Since Geometres often writes series of poems on the same subject, he is likely to be the author of these two epigrams as well.

In establishing which poems should or should not be attributed to Geometres, there is always a margin of uncertainty. Byzantine manuscripts contain a considerable number of poems ascribed to Geometres, but not found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352. Since there are two major lacunas between 158^v and 159^r and between 166^v and 167^r, it is possible that all these poems ultimately derive from

¹⁰ For the life of Geometres, see LAUXTERMANN 1998d. The poems in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 date from the second half of the tenth century. The latest poem is Cr. 282, 31, dating from 996–997, which constitutes the *terminus post quem* for the compilation of Geometres' collection.

¹¹ Psellos: WESTERINK 1992: XXXVI; Prodromos: HÖRANDNER 1974: 60–61, no. 178; Choniates: SP. LAMBROS, *NE* 16 (1922) 344; Prosouch: TREU 1893: 46; Philes: MILLER 1855–57: I, 438–439, no. 243 and STICKLER 1992: 220. Ed. TREU 1893: 46 and MILLER 1855–57: I, 438–439, no. 243.

¹² Ed. TREU 1893: 46 and MILLER 1855–57: I, 438–439, no. 243. A fourth epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, found in Laur. XXXII 19, inc. σκιάς σκιάς ἔγραψε, is definitely the work of Philes: see STERNBACH 1897: 158–159, n. 1.

the original collection of Geometres' literary works. Unfortunately, we cannot always be certain that the ascriptions are correct. This problem will be dealt with in Appendices II and III.

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Par. gr. 1630 (s. XIV)¹³, fols. 56^r–63^v and 127^r–138^v, contains a considerable number of Geometres' poems as well as his *Hymns on the Holy Virgin* and an excerpt of the *Sylloge Parisina*¹⁴. As an accurate description of this part of the manuscript does not exist¹⁵, I will present a detailed list of its contents before discussing its relation with Par. Suppl. gr. 352¹⁶. **56^r–63^v: fols. 56^r–61^r:** Cr. 305, 9–12; *Hymns* I–IV; **fol. 61^r:** Cr. 271, 27–30; 273, 31–32; 274, 11–13; 281, 2–3; 280, 26–29; 292, 8; **fol. 61^v:** Cr. 292, 10–18; 292, 20–22; 292, 24–27; 292, 28–29; 293, 5–6; 293, 2–3; 287, 15–288, 6; **fol. 62^r:** Cr. 288, 7–12; 288, 13–16; **fol. 62^v:** [top margin: Chr. Mityl. 108]; Cr. 288, 17; 302, 22–25; 304, 15–16; 304, 22–25; 304, 27–30; *Sylloge Parisina* (6 epigrams); [bottom line: anonymous gnome¹⁷]; [bottom margin: Chr. Mityl. 73]; **fol. 63^r:** Cr. 290, 15–16; 290, 17–18; 289, 10–11; 290, 20; 289, 13–14; [main text: Philes, inc. ἄρχαξ ὁ ληστής]; 285, 2; 286, 14; 286,

¹³ The manuscript's date, s. XIV, can be narrowed down to the years 1320–1337. The manuscript occasionally refers to Leo Bardales simply as “the protasekretis” without mentioning his name. This strongly suggests that the manuscript was written when Leo was still in active service. On the life of Leo Bardales, see I. ŠEVČENKO, *Byz* 19 (1949) 247–259.

¹⁴ For a description of the manuscript, see A. BANDURIUS, *Imperium Orientale seu Antiquitates Constantinopolitanae*, II. Paris 1711, 875–886; L.A. FABRICI *Bibliotheca graeca sive notitia scriptorum veterum graecorum*. Editio nova curante G.C. HARLES, vol. XI. Hamburg 1808, 566–576 (based on an earlier description by Steph. le Moyne, Leiden 1684, with critical annotations by I. Boivinus); H. OMONT, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, II. Paris 1888, 108–112; and M. TZIATZI-PAPAGIANNI, *Die Sprüche der sieben Weisen. Zwei byzantinische Sammlungen*. Stuttgart–Leipzig 1994, 68–73.

¹⁵ For a detailed, but still not entirely satisfactory description of this part of the manuscript, see C. DILTHEY, *De epigrammatum graecorum syllogis quibusdam minoribus*. Göttingen 1887, 12–25.

¹⁶ The numbers refer to the pages and the lines of Cramer's edition: for instance, 292, 10–18 indicates the poem that begins on page 292, line 10 and ends on the same page, line 18. Since Cramer often ignores the separation marks in the manuscript, the text of Par. gr. 1630 only apparently diverges from that of Par. Suppl. gr. 352: for instance, Cr. 273, 31–274, 13 consists of three separate epigrams (273, 31–32; 274, 1–10; 274, 11–13), of which Par. gr. 1630 contains the first and the last. The poems that do not derive from Par. Suppl. gr. 352 appear in square brackets.

¹⁷ Ed. E. LEUTSCH & F. SCHNEIDEWIN, *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum*, II. Göttingen 1851, 556 (Cent. 12, 58). See also W. LACKNER, *Byz* 44 (1974) 195–197.

16–17; 286, 10–12; 284, 25–30; 285, 4–5; 285, 7–12; 285, 13–15; 285, 17–18; [bottom margin: Leo Bardales 4]; **fol. 63^v**: Cr. 297, 9–16; 297, 18–19; 298, 21–23; 299, 7–11; 299, 12–15; 299, 16–17; 299, 18–19; 299, 20–21; 299, 22–23; 299, 24–26; 296, 7–8; 303, 12–13; 301, 10–14; 300, 4–8; 302, 3–5; 302, 7–9; 302, 10–11; 302, 12–14. **127^r–138^v**: **fols. 127^r–128^r**: Cr. 334, 23–336, 3; **fols. 128^r–131^r**: Cr. 336, 4–340, 19; **fol. 131^{r-v}**: *Hymn* V; **fol. 131^v**: Cr. 331, 12–332, 4; 289, 1–8; **fol. 132^r**: Cr. 288, 17–32; 314, 18–315, 2; **fol. 132^v**: Cr. 316, 24–26; 316, 27–317, 7; 320, 24–25; 320, 22–23; 316, 18–21; 316, 11–16; **fol. 133^r**: Cr. 312, 21–22; 314, 14–16; [main text: epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, inc. ὁ νοῦς τὸ σῶμα]; 312, 2–4; 312, 5–9; 316, 2–9; 309, 25–26; 309, 18–19; 309, 28–29; 310, 1–2; 310, 3–4; 310, 5–7; 271, 27–30; **fol. 133^v**: Cr. 310, 25–311, 3; 333, 24–26; 333, 27–30; 334, 1–2; 334, 3–4; 334, 5–6; 334, 7–11; 330, 6–9; 330, 10–13; 330, 14–17; **fol. 134^r**: Cr. 330, 18–21; 330, 23–26; 330, 27–30; 331, 1–4; 333, 15–17; 332, 26–27; 331, 6–10; 333, 7; 333, 8; **fol. 134^v**: Cr. 284, 15–16; 283, 10–14; 283, 28–284, 4; 281, 17–18; 281, 19–20; 282, 17–20; 281, 22–282, 15; 281, 14–15; **fols. 135^r–137^v**: *Sylloge Parisina* (40 epigrams); **fol. 137^v**: Cr. 334, 13–15; 334, 16–21; 326, 21–327, 9; **fol. 138^r**: Cr. 327, 11–12; [main text: Prodrornos 161, Chr. Mityl. 35, Prodrornos 160]; **fol. 138^v**: Cr. 309, 15–16; 310, 8–9; 301, 2–4; 301, 5–6; 301, 7–8; 318, 17–18. Then follows Basil Megalomytes' collection of riddles.

The order of the poems in Par. gr. 1630 is roughly the same as in Par. Suppl. gr. 352. The scribe leaves out all the historical poems: encomia, poems about political events, satirical poems, and so on. He brackets together poems on the same subject: for instance, Cr. 290, 15 and 290, 17, followed by 289, 10 (epigrams on St. Demetrios). He also brackets together clusters of poems that resemble each other in terms of genre: for instance, personal prayers, poems εἰς ἑαυτὸν and catanyctic poems on fols. 127^r–132^r. It is not clear why *Hymn* V does not follow immediately after *Hymns* I–IV; however, the scribe does note at the end of *Hymn* IV (on fol. 61^r): ἔτερος ὕμνος κατὰ στοιχείον τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐγράφη ἔμπροσθεν, that is, *Hymn* V on fol. 131^r. The scribe placed Cr. 305, 9 before *Hymns* I–IV because the upper margin of the page was still blank¹⁸.

Most scholars seem to agree, at least as regards the *Hymns* and the *Sylloge Parisina*, that Par. gr. 1630, fols. 56^r–63^v and 127^r–138^v, and Par. Suppl. gr. 352, fols. 153^v–182^v, are closely related. The editor of the *Hymns*, Sajdak, assumes that the two manuscripts go back to a common hyparchetype, without giving any reasons¹⁹. Most classical scholars postulate the same for the *Sylloge Parisina*, based on the argument that Par. gr. 1630 contains some

¹⁸ Berol. Phill. 1566, s. XVI, is a faithful copy of Par. gr. 1630, fols. 1^r–61^r (running until the end of *Hymn* IV): see WESTERINK 1992: XX. I do not know whether the manuscript contains Cr. 305, 9 before the text of *Hymns* I–IV.

¹⁹ SAJDAK 1931: 9.

additional ancient epigrams on fols. 192 and 195²⁰; but these derive from another source and the *Sylloge Parisina* should be studied in connection with the poems of Geometres, among which it is found²¹. The two manuscripts present almost the same readings; wherever the text of the *Hymns*, the *Sylloge Parisina* and the various poems by Geometres appears to differ in the two manuscripts, one observes that the scribe of Par. gr. 1630 misreads ligatures and abbreviations, supplements lacunas or attempts to “correct” the text of his exemplar. In fact, it is beyond any doubt that Par. gr. 1630 is a copy of Par. Suppl. gr. 352. On fol. 133^r we read the following verses: γηρῶν κατ’ ἄμφω καὶ φρένας καὶ τὰς τρίχας, / ὥς καινὸν εἶχες πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν καρδίαν / τὴν ζῶσαν ὡς ἄνθρον ὕλη μὴ γράφε (Cr. 314, 14–16). These verses are written down as if they formed one cohesive poem (sic). As stated above, the first two verses (Cr. 314, 14–15) can be found on fol. 166^v, and the last one (Cr. 314, 16) on fol. 167^r of Par. Suppl. gr. 352, that is, exactly where the manuscript has a major lacuna. Unless we assume that the source used by the scribe of Par. gr. 1630 lacked exactly the same folia as Par. Suppl. gr. 352, which would be an incredible coincidence, there can be only one conclusion: Par. gr. 1630, fol. 56^r–63^v and 127^r–138^v are excerpts copied directly from Par. Suppl. gr. 352, fol. 153^v–182^v.

The heading attached to *Hymn* I (on fol. 56^r) reads as follows: ὕμνος εἰς τὴν Θεοτόκον δι’ ἠρωελεγειῶν Γεωμέτρου τοῦ σοφωτάτου πάντως. The collection of Geometres’ literary works in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 no longer bears any heading because of the lacuna at the beginning (between fol. 150 and 151). As we have seen, when the scribe of Par. gr. 1630 copied Par. Suppl. gr. 352, the manuscript had already lost one or more quaternions between fol. 166 and 167. On fol. 61^r, the scribe jumps from Cr. 274, 11 to Cr. 280, 26 and 281, 2, which seems to indicate that the second lacuna of Par. Suppl. gr. 352, between fol. 158 and 159 (=between Cr. 280, 3 and 280, 5), already existed when he copied the manuscript. The word πάντως in the heading of *Hymn* I (“in fact, by...”, “actually, by ...”) strongly suggests that the scribe was making an intelligent guess when he ascribed the *Hymns* to Geometres. Since Geometres’ *Hymns* were quite popular in Byzantium, the scribe could easily have known to whom these texts, anonymous in the lacunose source he used, should be attributed πάντως. And from there it must have been only a small step for him to conjecture that the poems found after the *Hymns* in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 were also the work of Geometres. This is why the long catanyctic poem, Cr. 334, 23 (on fol. 127^r), immediately followed by *Hymn* V, bears the heading in the margin: τοῦ Γεωμέτρου. In other words, it is reasonable to assume that the three

²⁰ CAMERON 1993: 217.

²¹ As DILTHEY (see n. 15), 23 already noted a hundred years ago.

lacunas of Par. Suppl. gr. 352 (between fol. 150 and 151, fol. 158 and 159, and fol. 166 and 167) already existed in the fourteenth century when Par. gr. 1630 was written.

The scribe of Par. gr. 1630 added some epigrams in the margins of the manuscript and even in the main text: Christopher Mitylenaios 35, 73 and 108²²; Theodore Prodromos nos. 160 and 161²³; Manuel Philes²⁴; and Leo Bardales 4²⁵. It is somewhat surprising that he also added the epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, inc. ὁ νοῦς τὸ σῶμα, which was probably written by Geometres (see above, p. 289). The epigram can be found on fol. 133^r, immediately after Cr. 314, 14–15 and Cr. 314, 16 (the last line of the famous epigram on St. Mary of Egypt). It bears the lemma: εἰς τὴν αὐτήν, that is, on St. Mary of Egypt. The scribe recognized that the last verse of the nonsensical epigram he had copied (nonsensical because of the lacuna in his exemplar) referred to St. Mary of Egypt and then added another epigram he knew on the same subject.

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Vat. gr. 743 (s. XIV), fols. 98^r–102^r, contains several poems by Geometres. On the preceding folia (fols. 91^r–97^v) we find 65 quatrains of the *Paradeisos*. The following folia (fols. 102^r–106^v) contain a group of anonymous poems, which, to my knowledge, have not yet been edited (see below).

The manuscript contains the following poems: Cr. 287, 15; 288, 7; 288, 17; 289, 1; 289, 10; 289, 13; 289, 15; 290, 2; 290, 15; 290, 17; 290, 20; 290, 22; 292, 1; 292, 10; 293, 1; 293, 24; 294, 5; 295, 23. The poems are arranged in exactly the same order as in Par. Suppl. gr. 352. The scribe, or the source he used, left out a number of poems: namely, Cr. 291, 29; 292, 20; 292, 24; 292, 28; 293, 5; 293, 8; 294, 27; 295, 3; 295, 10. Vat. gr. 743 is not a copy of Par. Suppl. gr. 352. The manuscript offers many alternative readings and supplements a verse missing in Par. Suppl. gr. 352: πόντον ἐρισμάραγδον καὶ δέγματα μυρία γαίης (before Cr. 293, 24). Vat. gr. 743 clearly belongs to another branch of the

²² Chr. Mityl. 73 is acephalous in the edition of KURTZ 1903. Par. gr. 1630 provides the missing first verse: σφύσιο Παλάμηδες, εἰ μὴ τις φθόνος.

²³ See HÖRANDNER 1974: 55. The two poems can be found in: *PG* 133, 1416 and 1418.

²⁴ Inc. ἄρπαξ ὁ ληστής. In the ms. the lemma reads as follows: ἔτεροι εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν (that is, on the same subject as Cr. 289, 13) τοῦ Φιλῆ. Ed. MILLER 1855–57: I, 374, n. 1. See STICKLER 1992: 240.

²⁵ Ed. BOISSONADE 1829–33: I, 101, no. 4.

manuscript tradition. Since we do not know how many links in the chain leading back to the archetype are missing, it is pointless to draw up a stemma for only two manuscripts. Allatius copied four poems from Vat. gr. 743 in his anthology, Barb. gr. 74²⁶. In the following, I will present the variants of Vat. gr. 743, some of which are really excellent while others are less so:

Cr. 287, 15: τάλαν; κατέδυσ; 15 (footnote γ) ὤλεσεν, κήδεσ', οἶδα τί πέπονθας²⁷; 19 κακεργίας; 23 ὅσον; 25 περίκειται; 26 στοναχοῦ; 28 μούνοις; Cr. 288, 6 πάντα φέρεις χαλινά; 19 ὅσα; 20 λαλέων; 21 κατὰ θέσφατον; 22 πόλ'; 27 παθέσθαι; 31 ἀέρα; 32 χωροῦς; Cr. 289, 3 ἑσμοί; 6 ἀμαμακέτη; 7 τάλαν deest; 8 δοξολόγου, κἄν ὕποϊς; 13 πίστιν deest; 14 ἐξεμόχλευσεν; 16 μόνος deest; Cr. 290, 2 θεόφρωνος; 3 τόσσ' ἐφ' ἔτη; 5 ὑπὸ ζυγίην; 7 Κρήτην; 10 οὐδὲ γυναικός; 16 ἄοπλος; 17 lemma εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, 19 lemma εἰς τὸν πίνακα τ. ἁ. Π.; 24 χρόνοι; 26 μονὴν κεράσαι; 27 τορνώσαι; 28 πάντοθι; 29 ἄλλα τὲ; Cr. 291, 1 αἰείδρομα; 2 ἀπλανές τε, ἅ; 4 μῆνη; 6 ἦδ' ὑποκυσσαμένη; 7 οἶμος ἀπείρων; 9 ἀβράμους; 10 αὐτὸν ἀέρα; 15 ἐκστερεῖς, ἡγεμόνευες; 16 ἀκικυς; 17 ἐς στρατίας τε, μόθον; 22 κλίναις, λειήναις; 23 ποντίσαις; 24 Φαραῶ, ἀναιδέας; 25 μισοφόνους; 26 πῇ με φέροις; Cr. 292, 2 ἀπέτμαγεν, οἱ δέ μ' ἐσθλά; 4 ἐμὲ; 7 ἄεσθλα; 10 ἐς; 13 ἀνακτα Χριστόν; Cr. 293, 1 εἰς εὐνοῦχον ἄσωτον; 3 ἐς τέλος οὐδ' ἔτερον; 23 lemma ἐλεγεία; 25 περιδείδια; 26 πλοῦς; 28 περατός; Cr. 294, 1 χοὺς πάχος; 3 τηκεδάνα; 4 ἡδυβόρου; 5 lemma ἥρωελ; 5 πᾶσιν; 6 δυσαντέα, ἄτροπα; 7 λιλαιόμενοι; 8 σκοτοειδέες; 10 ἀμεμφής; 12 κύδεος; 13 ἐήν; 14 δεῖδω, γενύεσσι; 15 ῥιφθῶ; 18 μ' ἀναξ ἐλέαυρε; 19 δεξιτερῇ σῇ ποτ', θῶκος; 22 σοῦ κύδεος; Cr. 295, 23 ἔρνος; 26 δῶκεν; 27 ἐμπαίζονται; 28 ἐγρομένους.

The manuscript contains the following anonymous poems on fols. 102^r–106^v: (1) εἰς ἀστρονόμον, inc. ἀστρολόγων ὃχ' ἄριστος ἐὼν καλέεσθ' ἐπὶ δαῖτα, a satirical poem, 28 elegiac distichs (56 vv.); (2) ἱαμβος, inc. γραφαῖς πένης τις εἰσιτάτο πινάκων, a satirical poem, 58 iambs; (3) εἰς πίθηκον λαβόντα μεγάλην γυναιῖκα, inc. ὁ νυμφίος πίθηκος, ἡ νύμφη φύη, a satirical poem, 6 iambs²⁸; (4) εἰς τὸν ἄγιον Ἰάκωβον, inc. δεῦρ' ἴδε καὶ ἐνὶ χρώμασιν ἔμπνοον ἄλλον ἀγῶνα, an ephrastic poem, 35 dactylic hexameters; (5) εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν μάργυρα Βαρβάραν, inc. ἃ μερόπων δειλὸν γένος ἄγριον ἦδ' ἀθέμιστον, an epigram on a work of art, 10 dactylic hexameters; (6) εἰς τὰ λαιμία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου, inc. ὦ σοφίης Χριστοῦ θεοειδέος ἥμισυ μορφῆς, an epigram on a work of art, 2 dactylic hexameters; (7) εἰς τὸν χορὸν τῶν ψαλτῶν καὶ εἰς τὸν χειρονόμον, inc. ὄργανον αὐτοτέλεστον εὐθροον, ἃ μέγα θαῦμα, an encomiastic poem, 8 dactylic hexameters. I cannot recall having read these poems elsewhere and do not know who their author is. The literary quality of the verses is excellent, at least

²⁶ Barb. gr. 74, fol. 35^r; Cr. 290, 2; 290, 15; 290, 17; and 289, 10. See above, n. 5.

²⁷ At the beginning of poem Cr. 287, 15, the scribe of Par. Suppl. gr. 352 made an error which he himself corrected: see Cramer's footnote γ. The text of Vat. gr. 743 reads as follows: [lemma: εἰς ἑαυτόν] (287, 15a) θυμὲ τάλαν, τί πέπονθας; ὅλος κατέδυσ (read as in Par. Suppl. gr. 352: τί πέπονθας, ὅλος τ' ἔδυσ); ἄγριον οἶδμα / (287, 15b) ὤλεσεν ἀργαλέως κήδεσ' ἀνιστάμενον. / (287, 15c) οἶδα τί πέπονθας (read as in Par. Suppl. gr. 352: οἶδ' ἃ πέπονθας) καὶ ὅσα καὶ ὅσον οἶδμα μόγησας / (287, 16) εἰς χρόνον ἐξ ἥβης ἐς βιότοιο δύσιν, etcetera.

²⁸ Copied by Allatius: Barb. gr. 74, fol. 38^v.

in comparison to most Byzantine poems. If I had to guess, I would say, on purely stylistic grounds, that the poems date from the eleventh or the twelfth century.

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Cramer's *editio princeps* leaves much to be desired: the readings are often inaccurate and the punctuation is bizarre; typographical errors abound; and worst of all, the editor often ignores the separation marks in the manuscript and combines two poems into one. But Cramer's publication has one great advantage over the subsequent editions by Migne and Cougny: it contains *all* the poems by Geometres found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352. Migne (*PG* 106, 901–987) presents a bowdlerized version of Cramer's edition, skipping over no less than thirty-seven poems which he considered to be too profane. The edition by Cougny (Cougny 1890: *passim*) also goes back to that of Cramer, but he selected only those poems that vaguely resemble ancient epigrams. Since Cougny does not mention the name of Geometres in the headings attached to the poems, some Byzantinists, relying on his edition, publish poems by Geometres as if they were anonymous²⁹. The editions by Migne and Cougny correct certain errors of Cramer³⁰, but at the same time they add some of their own.

Some of the poems found in Par. gr. 1630 were edited by Boissonade in various publications³¹. His edition in the *Anecdota Graeca* had a curious fate. Since he omits to write to whom the poems should be attributed, and since the poems follow immediately after a poem by Leo the Philosopher (an author often confused with other Leo's), Krumbacher, Kominis and Trypanis ascribe

²⁹ For instance, Q. CATAUDELLA, *Sileno* 3 (1977) 189–199 and 4 (1978) 229–243, and H.G. THUMMEL, in: *Festschrift für K. Wessel*. Munich 1988, 283–301. See also the criticisms by P. SPECK, *Klio* 73 (1991) 279–280.

³⁰ In his edition Cougny incorporated the emendations proposed by N. PICCOLI, *Supplément à l' Anthologie Grecque, contenant des épigrammes et autres poésies légères inédites, précédé d' observations sur l' Anthologie et suivi des remarques sur divers poètes grecs*. Paris 1853, 129–154 and 238–244. For other conjectural emendations, see CATAUDELLA (footnote above), A. ΠΕΖΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *EEBS* 11 (1935) 421–448, and L.R. CRES- CI, *Atti dell' Accademia Pontaniana*, n.s., 45 (1996) 45–52.

³¹ BOISSONADE 1829–33: II, 472–478. P. Ovidii Nasonis *Metamorphoseon libri XV graece versi a Maximo Planude*, ed. J.FR. BOISSONADE. Paris 1822, 221. J.FR. BOISSONADE, *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi et autres bibliothèques* 10 (1818) 263. It is quite likely that more poems by Geometres can be found in other publications of Boissonade, which I have been unable to locate.

Geometres' poems in Par. gr. 1630 to Leo VI the Wise, Leo the Philosopher and Leo Choirosphaktes, respectively³².

Geometres' poems certainly do not deserve the sad fate of lingering forever in the editorial limbo of Cramer. The task of a future editor³³ will not be easy since there are basically only two manuscripts, one of which (Par. Suppl. gr. 352) is lacunose, whereas the other (Vat. gr. 743) only presents a small sample of Geometres' poems. As mss. Par. gr. 1630 and Barb. gr. 74 are mere copies, they are not of great value, although they may provide some interesting conjectural readings. The modern editions are equally of minor importance. The manuscripts that will be treated in Appendices II and III, unfortunately do not offer much material for the reconstruction of the original text. Only by way of an extensive metrical study of other poems by Geometres (the *Hymns* in elegiacs and the iambic *Metaphrasis of the Odes*), combined with a study of his sources (especially Homer, the Bible and Gregory of Nazianzos), may the editor establish a text more reliable than the often erroneous, if not nonsensical readings found in the edition of Cramer.

³² KRUMBACHER 1897b: 722. KOMINIS 1966: 129. TRYPANIS 1981: 472.

³³ More than thirty years ago A. Hohlweg announced that he would publish Geometres' poems. It is not known when this long awaited edition will finally appear. Unfortunately, professor Hohlweg did not answer my letter, d.d. 12-09-98, in which I asked him when we can expect his edition. Finding a copy of Hohlweg's *Habilitationsschrift* (dealing with Geometres' poetry) proved to be impossible.

APPENDIX II

The Poems of John Geometres Once Again

There are only a few manuscripts that contain poems by Geometres also found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352. Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII) has Cr. 273, 31 (see below), Athous Laura B 43 (s. XII–XIII) has Cr. 298, 14 (see below) and Laur. XXXII 40 (s. XIV) has Cr. 309, 21¹. The epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, of which only the last line is still extant in Par. Suppl. gr. 352, can be found in many manuscripts: see the list in Westerink 1992: XXXVI, to which one should add: Salamanca, University Library 2722, fol. 11^v (s. XII) and Athous 3798 (Dion. 264), fol. 337^v (s. XVII) [for these two manuscripts, see Appendix III].

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Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII), a manuscript renowned for its Byzantine poems², contains on fol. 118^{r-v}, after the poem on Lazarus and the Rich Man by Ignatios the Deacon, an anonymous collection of thirteen epigrams: nos. S. 1–3 on St. Eustratios and his companions; S. 4–8 on the Forty Martyrs; S. 9–12 on the Birth of the Holy Virgin; and S. 13 on the Holy Apostles³. S. 1 can be found in the collection of Geometres' poems and epigrams in Par. Suppl. gr. 352: no. Cr. 273, 31⁴. Sajdak maintains, on stylistic grounds, that the remaining twelve epigrams should be attributed to Geometres as well⁵. The epigrams do not offer any clues on their dates. S. 2 and 3 refer to a church built by a certain Basil Katakalon, whom I have not been able to identify. However, as the Katakalon family appears in historical sources as early as the tenth century, there is no reason to reject the attribution to Geometres.

¹ See BANDINI 1763–70: II, 202.

² See ROCHEFORT 1950 and see below, Appendix VI, pp. 329–333.

³ Ed. STERNBACH 1897: 154–160 and SAJDAK 1929: 195–198 (=S. 1–13).

⁴ See SAJDAK 1929: 191–193. The poem ends at Cr. 274, 10. The last three verses (Cr. 274, 11–13) are divided from the rest in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 and constitute a separate poem.

⁵ SAJDAK 1929: 192–194.

But the heading attached to S. 8 would most certainly seem to refute the attribution of these epigrams to Geometres: εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς (the Forty Martyrs): τοῦ μητροπολίτου Εὐχαΐτων. If Mauropous is the author of S. 8, the following epigrams (S. 9–13), and perhaps even the preceding ones (S. 2–7), cannot be the work of Geometres. The question is whether the lemma of S. 8 is correct. I do not think so. The ascription of S. 8 to Mauropous is highly suspect for the following two reasons. Firstly, the anthologist of Par. Suppl. gr. 690 extracts all the poems by Mauropous from the author's own edition of his literary works, which can be found in Vat. gr. 676 and a few other manuscripts⁶. On fols. 254^r–255^r we find nineteen poems by Mauropous, in exactly the same order as in Vat. gr. 676, and on fol. 249^r we again find some poems, four in total, which also occur in Mauropous' collection in Vat. gr. 676. These last four poems are followed by five anonymous monosticha: on the Holy Blood, the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross, the Spear, and the Cross⁷. These five monosticha are verse inscriptions on a reliquary containing the above-mentioned relics⁸. Given their poor literary quality (see, for example, the prosodic error in: ἥνοιξεν ὥς ἔνυξεν οὐρανούς λόγῃ), these five anonymous monosticha cannot be ascribed to an author as competent as John Mauropous. Thus we see that all the genuine poems of Mauropous in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 can be traced directly to the poet's personal collection. This makes the ascription of S. 8, an epigram not found in Mauropous' collection of poems, highly suspect. If the ascription were correct, it would mean that the anthologist not only perused Mauropous' collection of poems but also another source which contained poems and epigrams the poet himself had not included in his collection. True enough, in the verse prologue to the edition of his works, Mauropous states that he selected only the best of his literary works, excluding anything redundant or below par. But although some of the poems the poet himself had rejected may certainly still have circulated in unauthorized editions⁹, it would be quite remarkable if the epigram on the Forty Martyrs was one of the poems Mauropous had not included in his edition. There are only a few epigrams as popular as this one in Byzantium. Not only can the epigram be found in other Byzantine manuscripts¹⁰, but it was even used anew, as a verse inscription in the church at Asinou, on a fresco depicting the trial of the Forty Martyrs (d. 1105–6)¹¹. It is highly unlikely that Mauropous would have been so obtuse

⁶ On Mauropous' collection of literary works, see chapter 2, pp. 62–65.

⁷ Ed. STERNBACH 1897: 160–161. See also KARPOZILOS 1982: 68, n. 37.

⁸ Compare FROLOW 1961: 398, no. 473.

⁹ See R. ANASTASI, *SicGymn* 26 (1972) 112–116 and KARPOZILOS 1982: 68–70.

¹⁰ Cantabr. Bibl. Univ. Ll. IV. 12 (2192) [s. XIV ex.], fol. 29^r. Laur. XXXII 19 (s. XV), fol. 288^v. Par. gr. 2991a (a. 1420), fol. 372^r: see below, main text.

¹¹ See STERNBACH 1897: 157 and MAGUIRE 1996: 12–13. See also chapter 5, pp. 149–150.

as to reject the very epigram his fellow Byzantines appreciated so much. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the anthologist of Par. Suppl. gr. 690, faced with an elegant epigram transmitted anonymously, just made a rather hazardous guess. Secondly, the Anonymous Patrician (c. 940–970) obviously imitates epigram S. 8. In L. 49, 5–10 the words *πρόσσεγες* (v. 1) and *εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσεις* (v. 5) repeat the very words of S. 8: *προσσεχὼν ἀκούσεις* (v. 2) and *εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσεις* (v. 3)¹². The Anonymous Patrician clearly cannot have imitated Mauropous, for Mauropous was not even born when L. 49, 5–10 was written. But he certainly could have plagiarized Geometres, for Geometres had already started his poetical career in the 950s.

Sajdak's assumption that all the epigrams in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, fol. 118^{r-v} (S. 1–13), should be attributed to Geometres, is corroborated by a manuscript of which he was not aware at the time: Athous Laura B 43 (s. XII–XIII)¹³. On fols. 67^v–68^v we find a small sylloge entitled: *ἀνθολογικὸν ἐκ τῆς [sic: βίβλου?] τοῦ Γεωμέτρου Ἰω(άννου)*. Unfortunately, the heading attached to the sylloge proves to be incorrect, for most of the epigrams in it are not by Geometres, but are the work of various authors, such as Prodrornos, Mauropous and Kallikles¹⁴. Why does the sylloge bear this misleading title? And why are all these epigrams ascribed to Geometres? The first epigram of the sylloge provides the answer to this question: (*εἰς τὴν γέννησιν τῆς Θεοτόκου*) *γεννῶσιν ἄρτι τὴν σελήνην ἀστέρες / καὶ γὰρ σελήνη τέξεται τὸν φωσφόρον*. This is epigram S. 9 in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, which can be found immediately after the epigram incorrectly ascribed to Mauropous (S. 8). It does not need much imagination to reconstruct the error made by the scribe of Laura B 43 when he wrote the heading attached to the sylloge. The sylloge in Laura B 43 is probably a copy of an earlier source in which the epigrams were accompanied by headings mentioning the names of their authors. The scribe of Laura B 43 omitted these headings and attributed the whole sylloge to the author of the first epigram, namely, John Geometres.

If epigram S. 9 is indeed a poem by Geometres, as the title of the sylloge in Laura B 43 clearly suggests, then the whole series of epigrams in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, fol. 118^{r-v} (S. 1–13), must be attributed to Geometres. The first of the series of epigrams in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, S. 1 (=Cr. 273, 31), can be found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352 on fol. 157^v. As one of the major lacunas in Par. Suppl.

¹² See chapter 5, p. 169.

¹³ S. EUSTRATIADIS, *Κατάλογος τῶν κωδίκων τῆς μεγίστης Λαύρας τῆς ἐν Ἀγίῳ Ὁρει*. Paris 1925, and WESTERINK 1992: XXXII, assign the manuscript to the twelfth century. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1899: 67 dates it to the thirteenth century.

¹⁴ For a description of the sylloge and for the text of Prodrornos' epigrams in it, see LAUXTERMANN 1999b: 369.

gr. 352 follows soon after fol. 157^v, it is reasonable to assume that the remaining epigrams of the series in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, S. 2 to 13, were originally found in the currently missing quaternion(s) of Par. Suppl. gr. 352 between fols. 158^v and 159^r.

The sylloge in Laura B 43 contains, apart from the above-mentioned epigram S. 9, only one poem by Geometres: Cr. 298, 14. Nonetheless, as the sylloge is very interesting, I will describe it in detail:

fol. 67^v: after Nikephoros Ouranos' catanyctic alphabet (fols. 66^v–67^v) a zigzagging demarcation line, followed by the sylloge, title: ἀνθολογικὸν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Γεωμέτρου Ἰω(άννου), contents: (1) Geometres (S. 9); (2) Niketas the Philosopher, no. 2, vv. 3–4¹⁵; (3) εἰς τὴν γέννησιν τῆς Θεοτόκου, inc. στερῶσεως βλάστημα τῆς Ἀννης ἔφν, 4 vv.; (4) Prodromos, Tetr. 238a; (5) Prodromos, Tetr. 187a. [bottom margin: (5a) inc. πάντα γνε, χαῖρε, συλλαμβάνεις γὰρ τὸν λόγον, 2 vv.]

fol. 68^r: (6) Prodromos, Tetr. 190a; (7) Prodromos, Tetr. 211a; (8) Prodromos, Tetr. 215a; (9) εἰς τὴν μεταμόρφωσιν, inc. φρεῖξον, θεατά, τὴν ὀρωμένην θεάν, 6 vv.; (10) inc. βλέπει καὶ Μωσῆς τὴν χάριν σὺν Ἡλίᾳ, 4 vv.; (11) Prodromos, Tetr. 236a; (12) Maurourous 10, vv. 1–4; (13) εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν, inc. τὰς χεῖρας ἀπλοῖς, δημιουργε Χριστέ μου, 4 vv.; (14) inc. στένεις Σίμων σὺ πρὸς βάρος σταυροῦ βαίνων, 6 vv.; (15) Prodromos, Tetr. 229a; (16) inc. πάσχει Θεός· φρεῖττουσι τάξεις ἀγγέλων, 8 vv.; (17) Kallikles 7; (18) ἄλλοι, inc. ζωή, τί θνήσκεις; ὡς ἀθάνατος θάνῃ, 2 vv.; (19) εἰς τὴν ἀποκαθήλωσιν, inc. σὺ νεκρός, ἔμπνοι δ' οἱ λύοντες τοῦ ξύλου, 2 vv.; (20) Prodromos, Tetr. 262a; (21) inc. φησὶ μαθητῆς χαριτώνυμος φόβῳ, 7 vv.

fol. 68^v: (22) εἰς τὸν τίμιον ξύλον, inc. ξύλον στομωθὲν αἵμασι θεορρύτοις, 2 vv.; (23) inc. φθόνος ξύλῳ σε καὶ ξύλον τῷ θανάτῳ, 3 vv.; (24) τῆς Θεοτόκου ἐπὶ τῇ σταυρώσει, inc. σταυρὸν βλέπουσα καὶ κρεμάμενον λόγον, 4 vv.; (25) εἰς τὴν ἀνάστασιν, inc. παραβάσει θνήξαντα τῇ βρώσει ξύλῳ, 4 vv.; (26) Prodromos, Tetr. 231a; (27) Geometres, Cr. 298, 14; (28) εἰς Παῦλον, inc. πεσὼν ἀνέστης, ὃ στροφῆς τῶν πραγμάτων, 2 vv.; (29) εἰς Πέτρον, inc. Σίμων ὁ Πέτρος, Σαῦλος ἦν Παῦλος πάλαι, 4 vv.; (30) Kallikles 32; (31) Psellos 90; (32) inc. θάλασσαν ἢ γῆ· σὴ θάλασσα τῶν λόγων, 4 vv.; (33) inc. ὥσπερ σφαγεῖς ἔστηκας, οὐ τραφεῖς, μάκαρ, 2 vv. [bottom margin: ἄλλοι στίχοι κατὰ ἀλφάβητον, that is, the catanyctic alphabet by Symeon the Metaphrast on fol. 69^{r-v}].

The sylloge of Laura B 43 begins with the Birth of the Virgin (nos. 1 and 3). Then it presents various epigrams on the Feasts of the Lord, arranged more or less in chronological order, from the Hypapante to the Anastasis (nos. 2 and

¹⁵ Ed. STERNBACH 1902: 85. No. 2 consists of two separate epigrams: vv. 1–2 and vv. 3–4. In Laura B 43 Niketas' epigram (2, vv. 3–4) has two additional verses: ἐφήμερον γέννημα, γεννήτορ χρόνου, / κόσμου λύεις γέροντα, κόσμον δὲ πλάνης.

4–26), and concludes with several epigrams on the Apostles (nos. 27–31)¹⁶. The sylloge is a collection of epigrams with the potential to be used as inscriptions: see the second chapter, pp. 79–80.

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In Par. gr. 2991a (a. 1420), fol. 372^r, we find the following three poems without a heading indicating the author: Geometres' epigram on St. Mary of Egypt (Cr. 314, 16); the epigram on the Forty Martyrs (S. 8), attributed to Mauropous in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, but which Sajdak and I ascribe to Geometres; and an epigram on the Crossing of the Red Sea. The epigram on the Crossing of the Red Sea is quoted by Joseph Rhakendytes in a famous excursus on the dodecasyllable¹⁷. Rhakendytes writes that a good poet should avoid enjambment. He illustrates this as follows: instead of the syntactically loose verses εἰς τὴν ἐρυθρὰν ἀβρόχοις ποσὶ πάλαι / παρῆλθε Μωσῆς, ἡ δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων / φάλαγξ ὑποβρύχιος ἔνδον ἐκρύβη, the accomplished poet will write: Μωσῆς περὶ θάλασσαν ἀβρόχῳ δρόμῳ, / Αἰγύπτιος δὲ τοῖς κύμασιν ἐκρύβη¹⁸. All the verses quoted by Rhakendytes in his discussion of dodecasyllabic poetry can be identified as the work of famous authors. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the epigram, inc. Μωσῆς περὶ θάλασσαν, belongs to one of the major Byzantine poets. Since the distich is found in Par. gr. 2991a, together with two epigrams by Geometres, he seems to be the most likely candidate.

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¹⁶ Nos. 32 and 33, as well as the epigram on the Theotokos at the bottom margin of fol. 67^v (5a), appear to be additions by the scribe himself. No. 32 is an encomiastic epigram, either on the Holy Writ or on the writings of one of the church fathers (John Chrysostom?). I do not understand no. 33.

¹⁷ Ed. CH. WALZ, *Rhetores Graeci* III. Stuttgart 1832, 561. The second half of this excursus, including the text of the epigram on the Crossing of the Red Sea, is also found word for word in a treatise attributed to Gregory of Corinth: ed. D. DONNET, *Le traité Περι συντάξεως λόγου de Grégoire de Corinthe*. Brussels 1967, 322–323. See also D. DONNET, *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 37 (1966) 81–97 and W. HÖRANDNER, *BSI* 56 (1995) 287–288.

¹⁸ See LAUXTERMANN 1998b: 20–21 and 27.

The following manuscripts contain poems attributed to Geometres, but not found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352:

Vat. Pal. gr. 367 (s. XIV in.)¹⁹, fols. 140^r–140^v and 143^r–143^v, contains fourteen (mainly satirical) poems by Geometres: nos. Sa. 1–14²⁰. None of these poems can be found in Par. Suppl. gr. 352, but there is no reason to dispute Geometres' authorship. Not only does the manuscript explicitly ascribe the poems to Geometres, but there are also three poems that clearly refer to persons or historical events of the second half of the tenth century. Sa. 1 is a satirical poem Geometres wrote in the 990s, when his monastery, Τὰ Κύγου, was caught up in a legal dispute with a certain Psenas²¹. In Sa. 4 Geometres attacks a provincial judge by the name of Pegasios, who suffered from a speech impediment and could not pronounce the rho: as Pegasios is a very unusual name, I suspect that he is the Pegasios who served as lieutenant to Bardas Skleros in 976–979 and who fought under the command of Nikephoros Ouranos around the year 1000²². And in Sa. 5, a satirical poem on the general Keroularios, Geometres writes that if this “wax-seller” can become a general, anything is possible. One may even expect to see Chambdas (Sayf al-Dawla, emir of Aleppo) triumphantly enter Constantinople. In fact, one may even expect to see the day that corn is sold for the price of one nomisma per eight modioi. The regular price used to be twelve modioi for one nomisma, but at the end of the reign of Nikephoros Phokas, due to galloping inflation, the starving population of Constantinople were only able to buy two modioi of corn for one nomisma²³. The first of the two *adynata* indicates that the poem was written before 967 (the year that Sayf al-Dawla died) and probably after 962, when the city of Aleppo had been conquered by the Byzantines and the military power of the once formidable Sayf al-Dawla was definitely waning. Seeing that Sa. 1 dates from

¹⁹ The ms. is usually dated to the 13th century, but contains several letters dating from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century; see MERCATI 1917: 127, n. 8. The ms. was written on Cyprus: see S.G. MERCATI, *ROC* 22 (1920–21) 162–193 (repr. MERCATI 1970: I, 206–235).

²⁰ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 44–47 and SAJDAK 1930–31: 530–534 (=Sa. 1–14). The edition of Lambros (which was published after his death by K. Dyovouniotis) has attracted much attention. See A. CHATZIS, *NE* 18 (1924) 292–294, *NE* 19 (1925) 222–224, and *EEBS* 8 (1931) 316–317; CH. CHARITONIDIS, *NE* 19 (1925) 68–71; SAJDAK 1930–31: 521–530; E. PEZOPOULOS, *EEBS* 10 (1933) 438–449; and see, especially, MERCATI 1927: 310–412 and MERCATI 1970: I, 426–431.

²¹ See H. GRÉGOIRE, *Byz* 9 (1934) 795–799 and LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 378–380.

²² See Leo the Deacon, 170; Skylitzes, ed. THURN 1973: 323, 30–31; Yahya, *PO* 23 (1932) II, 466.

²³ Geometres writes “medimnos” instead of “modios”, but he is not the only Byzantine to confuse medimnoi with modioi: see E. SCHILBACH, *Byzantinische Metrologie*. Munich 1970, 96–98. On inflation in the 960s, see Leo the Deacon, 64, 1–10; Skylitzes, THURN 1973: 277–278; and G. OSTROGORSKY, *BZ* 32 (1932) 220–221.

the 990s, Sa. 4 from the late tenth century, and Sa. 5 from 962–967, there is no reason to question the ascription of these satirical poems to Geometres, whose poems and epigrams in Par. Suppl. gr. 352, as far as they can be dated, were written in the second half of the tenth century. For the poems on fols. 139^r–140^r, 140^v–143^r and 143^v–146^v of Vat. Pal. gr. 367, see Appendix IV.

Hauniensis 1899 (s. XIII), fol. 1^r, contains a polemic exchange of some supposedly comical insults between Geometres and a certain Stylianos²⁴. There cannot be any doubt about the ascription. Stylianos calls his opponent Ἰωάννης and one of the satirical poems attributed to Geometres is an adaptation of Cr. 331, 6. The closest parallel to these poems by Geometres and Stylianos is the exchange of malicious pleasantries in verse between Constantine the Rhodian and Theodore the Paphlagonian, also dating from the tenth century.

In Athous Dion. 60 (s. XIII) a well-known epigram on the Psalter (inc. σίγησον, Ὁρφεῦ· ῥίψον, Ἑρμῇ, τὴν λύραν, 10 vv.) is attributed to Geometres²⁵. The epigram is also found in four other sources: Aldus Manutius' edition of the Psalter (Venice, between 1496 and 1498)²⁶; Patmos 437 (s. XVI), fol. 8^v [only the first verse, on a miniature depicting David]²⁷; Par. gr. 2743 (s. XVI), fol. 3^r, copied by Diassorinos²⁸; and Leo Allatius, *De libris ecclesiasticis* (1645)²⁹. The epigram is anonymous in Aldus Manutius' edition of the Psalter, as well as in the three other sources [which perhaps derive the epigram from the Aldan edition]. Whether the ascription to Geometres is correct or not, is impossible to decide on the basis of one manuscript only. There can be no doubt, however, that the epigram dates from before the early eleventh century, given the fact that the third verse of a well-known epigram on Matthew the Evangelist (ὄθεν, πλάνος, σίγησον, Ὁρφέως λύρα), found in many manuscripts, the earliest of which dates from 1037, clearly imitates the first verse of the epigram on the Psalter³⁰.

²⁴ Ed. GRAUX 1880: 278–280.

²⁵ Ed. SAJDAK 1919–20: 43–44. See also FOLLIERI 1957: 102.

²⁶ See E. LEGRAND, *Bibliographie hellénique ou description raisonnée des oeuvres publiées en grec par des grecs aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles*. Paris 1885, 22, no. 11. For the date of the edition, see G. KOKKONAS, *Κατάλογος τῶν ἀρχετύπων τῆς Ἑθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος*. Athens 1983, 58, no. 98.

²⁷ See O. GRATZIOU, in: *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μ. Χατζιδάκη*. Athens 1991–92, I, 99–106.

²⁸ See A. LUDWICH, *BZ* 1 (1892) 297 and idem, *Apolinarii Metaphrasis Psalmorum*. Leipzig 1912, p. XXIV, n. 2.

²⁹ L. ALLATIUS, *De libris ecclesiasticis graecorum dissertationes duae*. Paris 1645 (repr. in: idem, *De libris et rebus ecclesiasticis graecorum dissertationes et observationes variae*. Paris 1646, 62–63).

³⁰ See SAJDAK 1919–20: 44 and FOLLIERI 1957: 103–105. The verse was also imitated by Philes, ed. AE. MARTINI, *Manuelis Philae carmina inedita*. Naples 1900, 140, no. 96, v. 71: σίγησον, Ὁρφεῦ, λῆρον εἰδὼς τὴν λύραν.

The first nine folia of Esc. R. III. 17 (s. XIV) contain various poems by Philes³¹. Then follows a small sylloge of poems: fols. 9^v–10^v (1) an epigram on St. Mary of Egypt, inc. ὁ νοῦς τὸ σῶμα (probably by Geometres, see Appendix I); (2) Prodromos, Tetr. 237a; (3) Pisides St. 61b (=Q. 8); (4) Chr. Mityl. 108; (5) Pisides St. 61c (=Q. 9); (6) Pisides St. 88; (7) an epigram on an image of John Chrysostom, attributed to Geometres; (8) an anonymous pattern-poem; (9) an anonymous poem; (10) Psellos 10; (11) – (12) two anonymous riddles; and (13) Chr. Mityl., a synaxarion distich³². Because the manuscript incorrectly ascribes nos. 1 and 3–4 to Prodromos, the heading of no. 7, τοῦ Γεωμέτρου, might be equally incorrect³³. Cougny attributes no. 8 to Geometres as well, but that is a mere guess³⁴.

For the two satirical poems attributed to Geometres in Athous Dion. 264 (s. XVII), fol. 337^v, see Appendix III, pp. 315–316.

³¹ See STICKLER 1992: 217–218.

³² Nos. 8–11 were edited by MILLER 1855–57: App. 51–54. For no. 13, see KURTZ 1903: XIX–XX.

³³ Ed. E. MILLER, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de la bibliothèque de l'Escorial*. Paris 1848 (repr. Amsterdam 1966), 47, and COUGNY 1890: III, 284.

³⁴ COUGNY 1890: III, 241. On this pattern-poem, see HÖRANDNER 1990: 39–40 and WESTERINK 1992: 295. Incidentally, the pattern-poem attributed to Psellos and edited by WESTERINK 1992: no. 27 can also be found under the name of Manuel Straboromanos: ed. P. GAUTIER, *REB* 23 (1965) 201 (vv. 11–12).

APPENDIX III

John of Melitene

The famous epitaph on Nikephoros Phokas by John of Melitene can be found in a number of Skylitzes manuscripts as well as in several other sources. Vasil'evskij was the first scholar to attribute this epitaph to John Geometres on stylistic grounds, and to assume that Geometres had been metropolitan of Melitene at a certain point in his life¹. Unfortunately, others soon followed his lead, with the result that most modern scholars confuse the two poets². However, as I explained in a recent paper³, John Geometres was never metropolitan of Melitene. In fact, he served in the military until 985 when he fell into disfavour with Basil II; he then became a monk at the Kyros monastery where he remained until his death (around the year 1000). True enough, there are some striking stylistic similarities between the epitaph and some of Geometres' poems⁴, but it cannot be ruled out that John of Melitene imitates John Geometres, nor that the stylistic affinities between the two are in fact characteristic of late tenth-century poetry in general.

If we study the manuscript tradition carefully, there is little doubt that the epitaph was already ascribed to John of Melitene in the archetype from which all manuscripts derive. There are two modern editions of the epitaph: Mercati 1921a: 255–256 and Thurn 1973: 282–283. Thurn basically follows the Bonn and Paris editions of Kedrenos (which are based on the unreliable readings of ms. C). Mercati's edition is much better. He relies not only on the Kedrenos / Skylitzes tradition, but also presents the readings of other manuscripts. Since the manuscripts often present divergent readings, an editor has to make choices. I think that Mercati made a fundamental mistake by preferring the readings of ARR¹. Mercati writes the following to justify his choice: "A chi la preferenza? Siamo stati perplessi nella scelta: infine abbiamo adottato il testo

¹ V.G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, Russko-vizantijskie otryvki. *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosvěščenija* 184 (1876) 162–178. Repr. in: idem, Trudy. St. Petersburg 1909 (Vaduz 1968²), II, 107–124, esp. pp. 112–115.

² See, for instance, MERCATI 1921a: 253, SCHEIDWEILER 1952: 307–309 and HÖRANDNER 1970: 110.

³ See LAUXTERMANN 1998d: 365–367.

⁴ See the critical apparatus to Mercati's edition: MERCATI 1921a. But see also M.V. BIBIKOV, Joan Militinskij i Joan Geometur, in: Bulgarsko Srednovekovie. Sbornik I. Dujčev. Sofia 1980, 65–66.

di ARR¹, perchè ci è parso che esso rivesta un carattere meno personale, e quindi sia più adatto per un' epigrafe, rispetto all' ὧς δοξῶ di CMOO¹ nel v. 5. Però se ὧς δοξῶ doveva trovarsi in origine nella poesia, come lascierebbe supporre il parallelo ἐν δοξοῦν del v. 6, sarebbe forse ARR¹ il rimaneggiamento della poesia fatto dall' autore o da altri al momento d' essere incisa, per meglio adattarla allo stile epigrafico?"⁵. However, as I explained on pp. 233–236, the epitaph on Nikephoros Phokas was never intended to be inscribed on his tomb, but instead circulated as a political pamphlet in 988–989. The divergent readings of ARR¹ should indeed be viewed as a "rimaneggiamento" by someone trying to turn the fictitious epitaph into a genuine verse inscription. The text as presented by ARR¹ is stylistically, grammatically and metrically superior to that of the other manuscripts; most probably though ARR¹ do not offer the text of the poet himself, but that of a clever emendator. Since texts usually get worse each time they are copied, it is quite understandable why Mercati based his edition on the readings of ARR¹. But at least some of the oddities and ramshackle constructions we find in the other manuscripts containing the text of the epitaph, go back to the archetype of the manuscript tradition and presumably to the poet himself.

As I cannot explain the above without going into great detail, I will re-edit the epitaph. For my edition I use Mercati's and Thurn's critical apparatus as well as some supplementary information found in other publications⁶.

The epitaph can be found in the following manuscripts: A = Vindob. Hist. gr. 35 (s. XII), fol. 106^r; C = Par. Coisl. gr. 136 (s. XII), fol. 101^v; M = Matrit. Vit. 26-2 (s. XII), fol. 157^r (in the margin of the page); N = Marc. XI 22 (s. XIV), fol. 87^v; O¹ = Vat. Ottob. gr. 361 (s. XV), fol. 168^v; R = Vat. Reg. gr. 166 (s. XV?)⁷, fol. 212^r; R¹ = Vat. Reg. gr. 86 (s. XV–XVI), fol. 122^r; O = Vat. Ottob. gr. 309 (s. XVI), fol. 168^r.

R and R¹ offer exactly the same readings as A, with only one difference in v. 5: βαρβάρους καὶ θηρίους, whereas A has βαρβαριχοῖς θηρίους. The three mss.

⁵ MERCATI 1921a: 255.

⁶ For the readings of N, see MERCATI 1923. See also HÖRANDNER 1970: 109–113. For the text of v. 23 in M, see ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 190, n. 11.

⁷ Mercati dates R to the fifteenth century, but the lemma attached to the epitaph in R [also found in O and in Hierosolym. 441 (see following footnote)] cannot have been written before 1543. According to the lemmatist, the tomb of Nikephoros II Phokas (he means: Nikephoros III Botaneiates) was to be found in the Peribleptos monastery, "which nowadays is called Sulumanastir and which the Armenians -alas!- are allowed to inhabit by God's dispensation". The Peribleptos monastery became the site of the Armenian patriarchate in 1543.

⁸ Ms. Hierosolym. Patr. 441 (s. XVII–XVIII), fol 155^r, also contains the epitaph on Phokas: see MERCATI 1921a: 254, n. 4 and MERCATI 1923: 257. To judge from the lemma and the incipit, the text in this ms. seems to be similar to that of O.

belong to the same branch of the manuscript tradition.

C and O usually offer the same readings, apart from some evident scribal errors, such as v. 10 τύπτε C (all other mss. τάττε), v. 10 πεζός O (all other mss. πεζούς), and so on.

M and O¹ nearly always have the same text, with the following exceptions: v. 6 ὄν O¹ (all other mss. ἐν), v. 13 σφίγγουσιν O¹ (all other mss. σφύζουσιν) and v. 22 O¹ μόνον (like N), whereas M has μόνου (and the other mss. μόνην).

N is very interesting. Most often it offers the same text as MO¹, but on two occasions it has the same variant readings as ARR¹. The first one is v. 10 λογγηφόρους (τοξοκράτας MO¹CO). The second one is v. 5 ὡς δοκῶ, καὶ βαρβάροις (ὡς δοκῶ, καὶ θηρίοις MO¹CO; βαρβάροις καὶ θηρίοις RR¹ and βαρβαρικοῖς θηρίοις A). As Mercati already suggested, ARR¹ appear to present an emendated version of the original text; but since N, a ms. which belongs to another branch of the manuscript tradition, has some of the variants of ARR¹, it would seem that the archetype of the manuscript tradition already contained these alternative readings, probably as supralinear glosses: λογγηφόρους as a legitimate variant of τοξοκράτας and βαρβάροις as an explanation of θηρίοις.

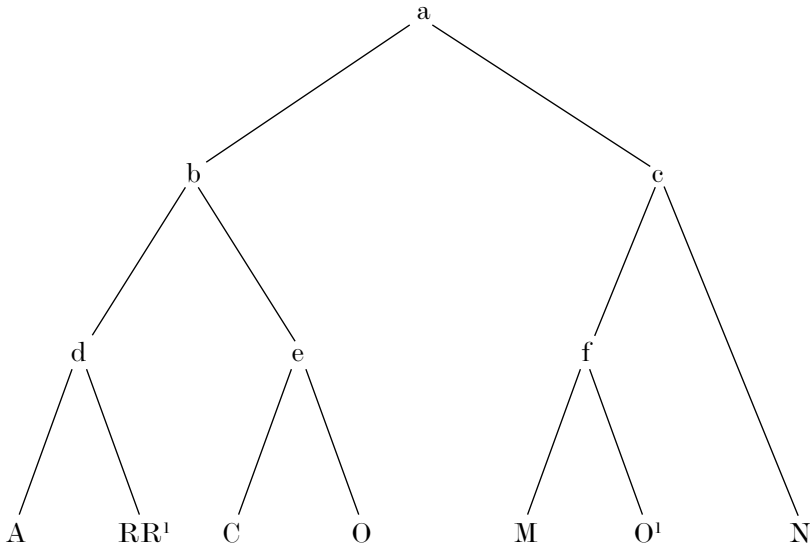
The text variants of v. 23 are of great relevance: ἴσως πτοήσει ταῦτα καὶ τρέψει μόνη MO¹, τρέψει τάχει N; ἴσως σκορπίσει ταῦτα καὶ τρέψει μόνος O, ἴσως σκορπίσει ταύτη καὶ τρέψει μόνη C. The text of MO¹ and N is not brilliant but it is satisfactory. The text of CO is obviously incorrect, for the second iambic foot is unprosodic (σκορπίσει) in CO and the fourth foot is equally unprosodic (ταύτη) in C. In ARR¹ v. 23 reads as follows: φωνὴ γὰρ εἰς φόβητρον αὐτοῖς ἀρκέσει. Although the text offered by ARR¹ is clearly superior to that of the other mss. from a purely stylistic viewpoint, it looks as if the diligent emendator of ARR¹ turned something bad into something good. The question is, why did he feel the urge to change the text of v. 23? What is the error he felt he needed to correct? Whereas the text of MO¹N is flawless, the text of CO is not. This is why I suspect that the exemplar used by the emendator of ARR¹ presented v. 23 in the unprosodic version of CO. If this supposition is correct, it follows that the (emendated) source of ARR¹ and the source of CO belong to the same branch of the manuscript tradition.

Then there is the problem of vv. 14–15: λεηλατοῦσι πᾶν ἔθνος τὴν σὴν πόλιν, / οὗς ἐπτόει πρὶν καὶ γεγραμμένου τύπος MO¹NCO. As the syntax of πᾶν ἔθνος ... οὗς is obviously incorrect (unless we interpret it as a harsh *constructio ad sensum*), verse 14 was “emendated” by AR¹ into ἐχθοῖ λεηλατοῦσι σὴν, μάκαρ, πόλιν⁹. This is an excellent example of how the emendator of ARR¹ operated.

⁹ R presents a scribal error: instead of the two verses 13–14 as presented in the version of AR¹, it has only one verse: Σκυθῶν ἔθνη σφύζουσι σὴν, μάκαρ, πόλιν.

Faced with an ungrammatical construction in his exemplar, he shuffled the words around, changed $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \xi\theta\nu\omicron\varsigma$ into $\xi\chi\theta\rho\omicron\iota$ and added the word $\mu\acute{\alpha}\chi\alpha\varsigma$ to fill up the verse. The version of ARR¹ often seems to offer better readings than the other mss., but all these superior readings are in fact mere conjectural emendations. Since the words $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \xi\theta\nu\omicron\varsigma$ are obviously incorrect, we have to assume that the source from which all manuscripts ultimately derive, the archetype, already presented a scribal error. As I find the emendation proposed by Stadtmüller: $\pi\alpha\nu\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$ ¹⁰, not only elegant but also convincing, I have adopted it in the following edition.

This brings us to the following stemma:



- Ὅς ἀνδράσι πρὶν καὶ τομώτερος ξίφους,
 πάρεργον οὗτος καὶ γυναικὸς καὶ ξίφους·
 ὃς τῷ κράτει πρὶν γῆς ὅλης εἶχε κράτος,
 ὥσπερ μικρὸς γῆς μικρὸν ᾤκησεν μέρος·
 5 τὸν πρὶν σεβαστόν, ὥς δοκῶ, καὶ θηρίοις
 ἀνεῖλεν ἢ σύγκοιτος, ἐν δοκοῦν μέλος.
 ὁ μὴδὲ νυξὶ μικρὸν ὑπνώττειν θέλων
 ἐν τῷ τάφῳ νῦν μακρὸν ὑπνώττει χρόνον.
 θέαμα πικρόν· ἀλλ' ἀνάστα νῦν, ἄναξ,
 10 καὶ τάττε πεζοὺς, ἱππότας, τοξοκράτας,
 τὸ σὸν στράτευμα, τὰς φάλαγγας, τοὺς λόχους.
 ὀρμᾷ καθ' ἡμῶν Ῥωσικὴ πανοπλία·

¹⁰ See T. PREGER, *Inscriptiones Graecae Metricae*. Leipzig 1891, 23.

- Σκυθῶν ἔθνη σφύζουσιν εἰς φονουργίαν·
 λεηλατοῦσι πανσθενῶς τὴν σὴν πόλιν,
 15 οὕς ἐπτόει πρὶν καὶ γεγραμμένος τύπος
 πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν σὸς ἐν πόλει Βυζαντίου.
 ναί, μὴ παρόψει ταῦτα· ῥῖψον τὸν λίθον
 τὸν σὲ κρατοῦντα, καὶ λίθοις τὰ θηρία
 τὰ τῶν ἔθνων δίωκε· δὸς δὲ καὶ πέτρας
 20 στηριγμὸν ἡμῖν, ἀρραγεστάτην βάσιν.
 εἰ δ' οὐ προκύψαι τοῦ τάφου μικρὸν θέλεις,
 κἄν ῥῆξον ἐκ γῆς ἔθνεσιν φωνὴν μόνην·
 ἴσως πτοήσει ταῦτα καὶ τρέψει μόνη.
 εἰ δ' οὐδὲ τοῦτο, τῷ τάφῳ τῷ σῷ δέχου
 25 σύμπαντας ἡμᾶς· καὶ νεκρὸς γὰρ ἀρκέσεις
 σφάζειν τὰ πλήθη τῶν ὄλων χριστωνύμων,
 ὧ πλὴν γυναικὸς τᾶλλα δ' αὖ Νικηφόρος.

1 ὁ ταῖς μάχαις πρὶν ARR¹, τὸν ἀνδράσι ... τομώτερον C; 2 πάρεργον ὧδε N, ὥφθη ARR¹; 3 ὃς τὸ κράτος γῆς πρὶν ὅλης εἶχε κράτει N; 4 ὡς τις ARR¹, μικρὸν γῆς MO¹N, ὥκησε MCOO¹N, οἰκεῖ νῦν ARR¹; 5 ὡς δοκῶ, βαρβάρους N; τὸν πρὶν δὲ φρικτὸν βαρβάρους καὶ θηρίους RR¹; βαρβαρικοῖς θηρίοις A; 6 σύζυγος N, μέρος N, ὃν δοκοῦν O¹; 10 τύπτε C, πεζὸς O, λογχηφόρους ARR¹N; 12 ὀργᾶ MO¹N; 13 σφίγγουσιν O¹, φονουργίας CO; 14 πανσθενῶς Stadtmüller, πᾶν ἔθνος MCOO¹N, ἐχθοῖ λεηλατοῦσι σὴν, μάκαρ, πόλιν AR¹; 13–14 Σκυθῶν ἔθνη σφύζουσι σὴν, μάκαρ, πόλιν R; 15 ἐπτόει νῦν MO¹; 16 Βυζαντίων MO¹, Βυζαντίδος N; 17 καὶ μὴν O, παρόψη O¹; 20 ἀρραγεστέραν MO¹, ἀρραγῇ στερεάν N; 22 ῥῖψον MO¹, εἰς ἔθνη ARR¹, μόνου M, μόνον O¹N; 23 τρέψει τάχει N, ἴσως σκορπίσει ταῦτα καὶ τρέψει μόνος O, ἴσως σκορπίσει ταύτη καὶ τρέψει μόνη C, φωνὴ γὰρ εἰς φόβητρον αὐτοῖς ἀρκέσει ARR¹; 25 ὁ νεκρὸς C; 26 τὸ πλήθος N; 27 τὰ δ' ἄλλα C, τᾶλλα γοῦν Νικηφόρε ARR¹.

We may now turn to the ascription of the epitaph to John of Melitene. Almost all the manuscripts of branch **b** attribute the epitaph to him: AR¹CO. AR¹C are interpolated Skylitzes manuscripts. They introduce the epitaph as follows: ἐν δὲ τῇ σωρῷ αὐτοῦ ὁ Μελιτηνῆς μητροπολίτης Ἰωάννης ταῦτα ἐπέγραφε. The lemma of O and R reads: “this text is to be found [these iambic verses were found: R] on the tomb [σωρῷ O, λάρνακι R] of emperor Nikephoros Phokas (who was buried in the Peribleptos monastery, etc.)”; the first part of the lemma attached to the poem in OR derives its information from the interpolated passage in AR¹C. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that hyparchetype **b** from which ARR¹CO are derived, was an interpolated Skylitzes manuscript¹¹.

¹¹ Hyparchetype **b** is probably identical to hyparchetype ϕ of Thurn's stemma of the Skylitzes mss.: see THURN 1973: XXXV.

As for the second branch of the manuscript tradition, hyparchetype **c**, things are a bit more complicated. The lemmata of M and O¹ do not mention the author. In N, however, the epitaph follows after a poem attributed to a certain Meles: τοῦ Μέλητος (see the following section), which appears to be a misreading of the original lemma: (Ἰωάννου) τοῦ Μελιτηνῆς¹². Though M and O¹ are Skylitzes manuscripts, it is hardly likely that hyparchetype **c** has anything to do with the text tradition of Skylitzes' *Chronicle*. M and O¹ do not have the introductory phrase that we find in AR¹C. Moreover, in M the epitaph is not written in the main text as in AR¹C, but in the margin. Below, on p. 314, I shall argue that the scribe of M acquired the epitaph and a few other poems from an anthology which no longer exists. It is very likely that N and O¹ obtained the epitaph from the same anthology used by the scribe of M.

As hyparchetype **b** (ARR¹CO) and hyparchetype **c** (MO¹N) attribute the epitaph to John of Melitene, undoubtedly it was already ascribed to him in the archetype (**a**). In other words, John of Melitene is the author of the poem. The manuscript evidence leaves no other conclusion. Although John of Melitene is not known to us from other Byzantine sources¹³, there is no reason to question his earthly existence, or to supplement the name of John Geometres instead.

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For the eight poems in N (Marc. XI 22 (s. XIV), fol. 87^v), see Hörandner 1970: 109–116, who proves that these eight poems have nothing to do with the rest of the manuscript (the corpus of Manganeios Prodromos). He identifies N 2–5 as Mauropous 10 and 12–14, and suggests that N 1 and 6–8 were written by one and the same author.

N 1, a satirical epitaph on John Tzimiskes, bears the title τοῦ Μέλητος (= τοῦ Μελιτηνῆς). N 6–8 are entitled τοῦ αὐτοῦ, that is, τοῦ μητροπολίτου Εὐχαΐτων, to whom N 2–5 are attributed. However, nos. 6–8 were not written by Mauropous¹⁴. N 8 is the epitaph on Nikephoros Phokas by John of Melitene. And N 6–7 cannot be found in Mauropous' collection of poems. N 6 is an epigram on the Deposition from the Cross; it is also found in three other

¹² See S.G. MERCATI, *BZ* 25 (1925) 45–46 (repr. MERCATI 1970: I, 314) and HÖRANDNER 1970: 112.

¹³ Except for Vat. Reg. gr. 166, where the sixth-century inscription found in the church of Sts. Sergios and Bakchos is attributed to John of Melitene; see SP. LAMBROS, *NE* 12 (1915) 370–371.

¹⁴ See KARPOZILOS 1982: 76.

manuscripts, but without an ascription. N 7 is an epigram on St. Jacob the Persian and is found nowhere else. Since N 8 is a poem by John of Melitene, it is reasonable to assume that the lemma τοῦ αὐτοῦ of N 6–8 refers to N 1 and not to N 2–5. What probably happened, is that the scribe read N 1 & 6–8 and N 2–5 in his exemplar, copied first N 1, then N 2–5 and finally N 6–8, but did not change the lemma τοῦ αὐτοῦ. The phenomenon of negligently copied headings is truly ubiquitous in Byzantine manuscripts (see, for instance, the numerous false ascriptions in the Palatine manuscript of the Greek Anthology¹⁵).

N 1 is a satirical epitaph on John Tzimiskes (also found in Laur. XXXI 37 (s. XV), fol. 167^v and Salamanca 2722, fol. 11^v, dating from the twelfth century¹⁶). Tzimiskes is called a “dwarfish ape” who has murdered a “sleeping lion”. The poet bluntly accuses Tzimiskes of having annihilated the cities by killing Nikephoros Phokas: ἔκτεινας ἄνδρα καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰς πόλεις. That seems a bit unfair. Tzimiskes was in fact an excellent general and his short reign boasted numerous victories over the Arabs and the Slavs. When Tzimiskes died in 976, the Byzantine empire had not only expanded, but had also consolidated its borders and regained its former glory. The poet also wishes Tzimiskes a pleasant stay in hell, for he seized the throne by unjust means, and now he is going to pay for it. Φεῦ πικρῶν βουλευμάτων!, as the poet exclaims at the end.

The epitaph on Tzimiskes, like the epitaph on Phokas, bears some stylistic similarities to the poems of John Geometres¹⁷. We may conclude, therefore, that John of Melitene was familiar with the poetry of his famous contemporary and intentionally imitated his style. It is interesting to note, however, that John Geometres and John of Melitene portray Tzimiskes from an entirely different angle. In his epitaph on Tzimiskes (Cr. 267, 23) Geometres portrays him as a truly tragic figure: a noble and valiant warrior who committed a hideous crime, regretted it sorely ever after and felt terribly ashamed of what he had done; basically a righteous man, who had blood on his hands, but who was torn apart by pangs of remorse. The epitaph by John of Melitene, on the contrary, shows unrelenting hatred towards Tzimiskes vented in very unpleasant language. This alone is proof enough that the two poets cannot be one and the same person.

¹⁵ See A.S.F. Gow, *The Greek Anthology: Sources and Ascriptions*. London 1958.

¹⁶ Salamanca, University Library 2722 (olim Madrid, Palácio Real 43) contains a Catena on Isaiah. The manuscript dates from the eleventh century, but fol. 11 was written by a twelfth-century hand. For the various poems on fol. 11, see ŠEVČENKO 1978: 117. Incidentally, the second text Ševčenko publishes on p. 127, is not an unedited ninth-century poem (as he avers), but a poem by Christopher Mitylenaios (no. 29).

¹⁷ See HÖRANDNER 1970: 112–113.

Since there can be no doubt that N 1 and 8 were written by John of Melitene, it is reasonable to assume that N 6–7 should be attributed to him as well. This makes John of Melitene the author of at least four poems. There are two other poems which can be ascribed to him with some degree of probability.

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The illuminated Skylitzes manuscript in Madrid, Vitr. 26–2 (M), copied in Palermo in the mid-twelfth century, contains eleven historical poems: M 1–11. These poems were written by the main scribe in the margin of the manuscript next to relevant miniatures after these had already been executed. The hotly debated issue whether the miniatures are original works of art from a Sicilian atelier¹⁸ or go back to a Constantinopolitan illuminated exemplar¹⁹, does not affect the problem of the poems' provenance. As the poems were only copied after the miniatures had been executed, the problem of the miniatures' origin is of no relevance. The question is, did the Palermitan scribe of M find the poems in the exemplar of Skylitzes he was copying or did he obtain these poems from a different source? Since at least one of the poems is a direct commentary on the miniature next to it (see below), it is beyond any doubt that the poem was composed by the scribe of the Madrid manuscript himself (for the miniatures, whatever their origin, were first and the poems were only added later). And if the scribe added this poem as his own contribution, it is reasonable to conjecture that he is also responsible for adding the other poems to the *Chronicle* of Skylitzes. In other words, the scribe of M did not find these poems in the Skylitzes exemplar he was copying, but got them from another source, probably some sort of anthology. That is also the opinion of Ševčenko who writes that the poems "were entered into our manuscript out of antiquarian interest, in the same city (sc. Palermo) where our very Madrid Skylitzes was being produced"²⁰.

M presents the following poems in the margin of the manuscript: (M 1–3) monodies on Leo VI, (M 4) a monody on Constantine VII by Symeon the Metaphrast, (M 5) a satirical poem on Theophano, (M 6) the epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas, (M 7–9) other epitaphs to Phokas, (M 10) a poem on Tzimiskes

¹⁸ See I. ŠEVČENKO, in: *Byzanz und der Westen. Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*. Vienna 1984, 117–130.

¹⁹ See N. OIKONOMIDES, in: *Εὐφροσύνη. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μανόλη Χατζιδάκη*. Athens 1992, II, 422–434.

²⁰ ŠEVČENKO (see footnote 18), 128. See also OIKONOMIDES (footnote above), 426–427.

and (M 11) an epitaph to a certain Bardas²¹. Despite their subject, not all these poems date from the tenth century. In M 10 John Tzimiskes is urged to fight the enemies, to abandon his “evil companion” and to fear God’s retribution. The enemies he is supposed to fight are probably Svjatoslav and the Rus’. Tzimiskes’ evil companion is, of course, Theophano, who was removed from the palace at the instigation of patriarch Polyeuktos. As is well-known, patriarch Polyeuktos assented to crown Tzimiskes only if he agreed to end his amorous liaison with Theophano. The obscure passage about God’s vengeance (vv. 6–8) probably refers to the same conflict with Polyeuktos, which ended when Tzimiskes publicly acknowledged the authority of the Church. The poem would seem to date, therefore, from January 970 when Tzimiskes was crowned emperor. This is also borne out by the miniature next to it showing the coronation of Tzimiskes. However, the second verse: (δεξιὰ) ἦν ἔχρανας αἵματι δικαίου πάλαι, firmly contradicts such a date. Even if we leave a margin for poetic licence, πάλαι cannot refer to an event that took place only a month earlier. The poem must have been written much later. It is reasonable to assume that it was written by the scribe / illuminator of M as a sort of caption neatly explaining the meaning of the miniature²². The scribe acquired all the references to historical events from the main text of Skylitzes’ *Chronicle* itself. Similarly, M 5 seems to comment upon the scene depicted in the miniature next to it. There we see Theophano secretly letting Tzimiskes and his accomplices into the palace. The poet addresses her directly and asks: “What pleasure did you have at the time of the murder?”. The answer, of course, is none, because she was deceived in thinking that she would benefit from the murder, and the liaison with Tzimiskes only caused her trouble. M 7–9 are too fragmentary to decide whether they are authentic tenth-century poems or the work of the twelfth-century scribe of M²³. The first verse of M 8: ὁ πλὴν γυναικὸς τᾶλλα δὲ Νικη[φόρος], repeats the last verse of the epitaph on Nikephoros Phokas. Since Byzantine poets often repeat themselves, John of Melitene may have been the author of M 8; but it is equally feasible that the scribe of M borrowed a phrase that appealed to him.

²¹ Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 194 (no. 1), 196–197 (no. 2), 201–203 (no. 3), 210–212 (no. 4), 189 (no. 5), 190 (no. 10) and 191 (no. 11). On p. 190 he publishes some lines of nos. 7–9, as far as he was able to decipher the manuscript. For some comments on the epitaph of Phokas (no. 6), see pp. 189–190, n. 11.

²² It is worth noticing that Byzantine poetry flourished in Palermo around 1150: see B. LAVAGNINI, *Parnassos* 25 (1983) 146–154.

²³ According to C. DE BOOR, *BZ* 14 (1905) 415, the various manuscripts that derive from M contain the poems as well. Since the text of the poems is sometimes almost illegible in M, it would be interesting to know what these copies have to offer.

M 1–4 ultimately originate from the archives of the Byzantine palace administration, for they are public monodies performed by the demes at the funerals of Leo VI and Constantine VII. The source of M 4 must have been a late tenth-century manuscript, for “whoever wrote the title of Poem IV knew that Symeon (the Metaphrast) was magister and stratiotikos “now”, and was thus aware of the latest moves on the bureaucratic and aulic ladder”²⁴. M 1–3, 6 and 11, however, do not bear such detailed lemmata and probably come from other sources. All things are possible, but it seems hardly likely that the Palermitan scribe of M thumbed through an infinite number of manuscripts to find a few appropriate tenth-century poems. It is more reasonable to assume that M 4, M 1–3, M 6 and M 11 (and possibly M 7–9), were to be found in an anthology of Byzantine poems. This anthology is the source from which three of the manuscripts of the epitaph of Nikephoros Phokas, MO'N (hyparchetype c), acquired the poem. Since N contains three poems by John Mauropous (N 2–5), the anthology cannot have been compiled before the late eleventh century.

M 11 is an epitaph on a certain Bardas who served in the military and died on the island of Crete from some disease; his corpse was brought home by his wife to be buried in a sarcophagus in a richly decorated arcosolium. The scribe of M supposed that this Bardas was the famous rebel Bardas Phokas who died at the battle of Abydos in 989, but that is of course impossible. The place of death, the cause of death and the fact that the Bardas of the epitaph left behind young orphans, whereas Bardas Phokas was ageing when he died – all this proves that the scribe of M did not make a very lucky guess. Bardas probably died during the Cretan expedition of 961, or afterwards when the island had been recaptured from the Arabs. The epitaph is vaguely reminiscent of Cr. 329, 1, a poem in which Geometres relates how he brought the corpse of his beloved father back to Constantinople, performed the funeral rites and buried him in an arcosolium. The style also resembles that of Geometres. If the epitaph were to be found close to other poems by Geometres, it would certainly have been reasonable to ascribe it to him. But M does not contain poems by Geometres. It has three monodies dating from 912 (M 1–3), a monody by Symeon the Metaphrast (M 4), two poems by the twelfth-century scribe (M 5 and 10), three poems that cannot be dated nor ascribed to a known author (M 7–9) and the epitaph on Phokas by John of Melitene (M 6). I would, therefore, suggest that the epitaph on Bardas be attributed to John of Melitene, a poet who, as we have seen, regularly imitates the style of Geometres.

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²⁴ ŠEVČENKO 1969–70: 192.

Athous Dion. 264 (s. XVII), fol. 337^v, contains the following poems: (A 1) στίχοι ἀρχαῖοι τοῦ Μελιτην^η εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν, (A 2) τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους μ', (A 3) τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ὁσιομάρτυρα Μαρίαν, (A 4) τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν Βαρβάραν, (A 5) τοῦ Γεωμέτρου εἰς προσμονάριον ἐκκλησίας; and (A 6) τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐρωτήσαντος τίς ἀνέγνω etc. On fols. 337^v–340^r two epigrams follow by Philes, one epigram by Xanthopoulos, and then a long sequence of poems by Philes²⁵.

Poem A 1 is an epigram on the Crucifixion. This epigram can also be found in Salamanca, University Library 2722 (s. XII), fol. 11^v and Vat. Urb. 120 (s. XIII ex.), fol. 2^v; it has recently been published by Maguire²⁶. Given the date of these two manuscripts the epigram must have been written before 1200 at the latest: στίχοι ἀρχαῖοι indeed, at least for a scribe working in the seventeenth century. In Dion. 264 the epigram (anonymous in the two other mss.) bears the following heading: τοῦ Μελιτην^η, which Lambros in his *Catalogue* renders as τοῦ Μελιπτινοῦ. I would suggest to read this lemma as (Ἰωάννου) τοῦ Μελιτηνῆς. This is also corroborated by the fact that Salamanca 2722, fol. 11^v, does not only contain A 1, but also N 1 (Marc. XI 22, fol. 87^v: see above, p. 311), the satirical epitaph on Tzimiskes, which was undoubtedly written by John of Melitene²⁷.

However, it is only fair to admit that Dion. 264 is not an entirely reliable source, for the lemmata of A 2 and A 3 are incorrect. A 3 is the famous epigram on St. Mary of Egypt by Geometres: Cr. 314, 16. A 2 is the equally famous epigram on the Forty Martyrs (S. 8), which is attributed to Mauropous in Par. Suppl. gr. 690, but which Sajdak and I ascribe to Geometres (see Appendix II, pp. 298–299).

Poems A 4–6 have not yet been published. A 4 is attributed to John of Melitene, A 5–6 to John Geometres. The literary quality of these verses is so poor that I hesitate to ascribe them to either of the two poets. If these satirical poems date from the tenth century, the καπνογένης mentioned in A 6 may be identified with Καπνογένειος ὁ Μαῖστωρ, a schoolmaster famous for his hair-splitting on orthography: ὁ τῶν λέξεων θηρατῆς καὶ τῶν τούτων ἀντιστοιχῶν ἀκριβῆς ὁρθογράφος²⁸. I am publishing the poems without any further comments and without emendations, though the manuscript contains some unmetrical or otherwise incorrect readings.

²⁵ STICKLER 1992: 213 does not mention the first two epigrams by Philes: (1) εἰς παναγιάριον. ἰδοὺ χρυσὴ τράπεζα καὶ θεῖα ψυχὴ ψυχῇ, δράμε, τράφηθι, πᾶν ζῆς ὡς κύων; (2) ed. MILLER 1855–57: II, 34 (no. F 75). The epigram by Xanthopoulos is probably still unedited: [τῷ] μαρμάρῳ μάρτυρες ἐστηριγμένοι / μαρμαρυγὰς πέμπουσι ἀστραπηβόλους / ὡς μάργαροι γὰρ ὥστρακώθησαν τάχα. For the rest of the poems by Philes, see STICKLER 1992: 213.

²⁶ MAGUIRE 1996: 21, n. 49. See also HORANDNER 2000: 77.

²⁷ See ŠEVČENKO 1978: 117.

²⁸ Souda, ed. ADLER 1928–38: I, 229 (s.v. Ἀνώγεων). The family name Kapnogeneios/Kapnogenes already existed in the ninth century: see Theophanes Cont. 208,12 and 250,9.

τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Βαρβάραν

[x] βάρβαρος νοῦς ἱστορεῖ τὴν Βαρβάραν·
 ἢ Βαρβάρα δὲ βαρβάρου μισεῖ τρόπους·
 οὐ Βάρβαρος γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ Βαρβάρα.

τοῦ Γεωμέτρου εἰς προσμονάριον ἐκκλησίας

δεῖ κηρὸν ἄπτειν· χεῖρας ἄπτειν οὐκ ἔχει·
 δεῖ σβεννύνειν [x]· ἔπνευσεν ἀπρακτίας.

τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐρωτήσαντος τίς ἀνέγνω ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου τὴν
 πρώτην ἀνάγνωσιν καὶ τίς τὴν δευτέραν, καὶ μαθόντος ὡς τὴν πρώτην ὁ
 μάγειρος, τὴν δὲ δευτέραν ὁ καπνογένης

πρῶτος μάγειρος, δεύτερος καπνογένης·
 οὗ γὰρ μάγειρος, καὶ καπνὸς παραινίκα.

* *
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To conclude, six poems in total can be ascribed to John of Melitene: the epitaph to Phokas and the three epigrams in N (Marc. XI 22) with absolute certainty; and the epitaph to Bardas in M (Matrit. Vitr. 26-2) and the epigram on the Crucifixion in A (Dion. 264) in all likelihood. John of Melitene lived in the second half of the tenth century. The epitaph to Bardas dates from 961 at the earliest, the satirical epitaph to Tzimiskes probably from 976 and the fictitious epitaph to Nikephoros Phokas from 988–989. The other three epigrams cannot be dated.

APPENDIX IV

Vat. Pal. gr. 367

Vat. Pal. gr. 367 (s. XIV in.), fols. 139^r–146^v, contains several poems dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries. Since the existing editions, as well as the scholarly publications dealing with these poems generally lack clarity, I shall describe the contents of this part of the manuscript and attempt to date the authors and their poems.

Before this part of the manuscript we find poems by two thirteenth-century poets, Makarios Kaloreites and Constantine Anagnostes (fols. 135^v–139^r)¹; and after this part of the manuscript we find two poems by Prodromos (fol. 146^v)² and several anonymous poems that cannot be dated (fols. 146^v–147^v)³. Fols. 139^r–146^v can be divided into five sections:

- (1) 139^r–140^r anonymous poems
- (2) 140^r–140^v poems attributed to Geometres (see Appendix II)
- (3) 140^v–143^r poems attributed to Michael the Grammarian
- (4) 143^r–143^v poems attributed to Geometres (see Appendix II)
- (5) 143^v–146^v poems attributed to Π^ο.

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Section (1), fols. 139^r–140^r, is a miscellany of various poems⁴. It is highly unlikely that these poems all derive from the same source. Lines 1–3 of the first poem, εἰς τὸν ψαλτῆρα, can be found in Ambros. gr. 783, fol. 193^r, a Psalter dating from the early tenth century; the whole poem can be found in Ambros. gr. 439, fol. 1^r, a thirteenth-century manuscript⁵. Poems 3, 4 and 11 (L. 40, 13;

¹ Makarios Kaloreites: ed. ANASTASJEWIČ 1907: 493–494 and N. BANESCU, *Deux poètes inédits du XIII^e siècle*. Bucarest 1910, 11–14. Constantine Anagnostes: ed. BANESCU, 14–18. See also S.G. MERCATI, *ROC* 22 (1920–21) 162–193 (repr. MERCATI 1970: I, 206–235).

² HORANDNER 1974: 47 (nos. 127 and 121). See also PAPAGIANNIS 1997: 18.

³ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 57, 8 – 59, 12 and MERCATI 1927: 423–425.

⁴ Ed. LAMBROS 1922: 39, 1 – 44, 4. See MERCATI 1927: 407–410.

⁵ See MERCATI 1927: 407.

40, 20; and 43, 20) can be found in the collections of riddles compiled by Psellos, Basil Megalomytes and others⁶; since Byzantine riddles cannot be dated, we do not know when these three poems were written. The miscellany also contains an epitaph on an empress Eudokia, whose untimely death was lamented by her husband Romanos (L. 41, 11). This is Bertha, daughter of Hugo of Provence, who was renamed Eudokia after her marriage to Romanos II: she died in 949⁷. There is also an epitaph on a certain Theophylaktos Magistros, whom I have not been able to identify, but whose title indicates that he probably lived in the tenth century (L. 42, 20). None of the other poems can be dated with any certainty.

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The third section, fols. 140^v–143^r, contains seven poems by Michael the Grammarian. Mercati published these poems as meticulously as always, but unfortunately he committed two errors that have led to some confusion⁸. First of all, Mercati published not only the seven poems by Michael the Grammarian found in Vat. Pal. gr. 367, but also two poems attributed to a certain Michael the Hieromonk, which he discovered in Vat. gr. 578 and Barb. gr. 41 and 551⁹. Mercati suggested that the two Michaels are actually one and the same person, because Vat. gr. 578 and Vat. Pal. gr. 367 were copied in the same scriptorium¹⁰. That is why his article is entitled: “Intorno a Μιχαήλ γραμματικὸς ὁ ἱερομόναχος”. Mercati’s argument does not justify the whimsical identification of two authors bearing the same name, but different titles. In fact, we are not even dealing with two, but three different authors: Michael the Grammarian and two others, both named Michael the Hieromonk. Michael the Hieromonk, who wrote no. II, a catanyctic poem, obviously enjoyed a solid education: he has a thorough knowledge of the classics, indulges in obsolete words (such as ἔλλοψ) and quotes the beginning of Euripides’ *Phoenissae*. The second Michael the Hieromonk, on the contrary, must have had no more than a simple monastic education: in his paraenetic alphabet, no. III, he uses ordinary words, standard phrases and hackneyed images.

⁶ See BOISSONADE 1829–33: III, 432 (Psellos’ collection, no. 10); N. VEIS, *Parnassos* 6 (1902) 109 (no. 8); BOISSONADE 1829–33: III, 442 (Basil’s collection, no. 16).

⁷ K. Dyovouniotis in LAMBROS 1922: 37, incorrectly identifies the subject of the epitaph as Eudokia Makrembolitissa (probably because of the word *συνανέστης* in Lambros’ edition, whereas the ms. reads *συνευνέτης*; see MERCATI 1927: 408).

⁸ Ed. MERCATI 1917: 115–117 and 128–135 (nos. I and IV–IX).

⁹ Ed. MERCATI 1917: 118–120 (nos. II–III).

¹⁰ See MERCATI 1917: 121–122.

Secondly, in the same year that Mercati was preparing his edition, Lambros also published the poems by Michael the Grammarian found in Vat. Pal. gr. 367¹¹. His edition is clearly inferior to that of Mercati, but it contains an interesting observation on the *floruit* of Michael the Grammarian. The first poem by Michael is a monody on a certain Lykoleon bearing the title βέστης. Lykoleon is an extremely rare name and, in my view, Lambros therefore rightly drew attention to a poem by Christopher Mitylenaios (no. 68) about an icon that had been illegally removed by a villain named Lykoleon¹². Mercati did not agree with Lambros because Michael's monody portrays Lykoleon as a noble and virtuous citizen, whereas Mitylenaios shows a strong dislike of him¹³. This again is not a convincing argument, for we all know that character judgments may vary from person to person. There are three arguments in favour of Lambros' dating of Michael the Grammarian. Firstly, as Mercati himself had to admit, "la relativa correttezza della versificazione lascia piuttosto supporre che il nostro giambografo non sia di molto posteriore al secolo X–XI"¹⁴. Secondly, Lykoleon's title, *vestes*, was only in use at the Byzantine court in the hundred years between the reigns of John Tzimiskes and Alexios Komnenos. Thirdly, the second poem by Michael the Grammarian (no. IV, vv. 20–21 in Mercati's edition) makes fun of an unnamed bishop of Philomelion who was born in a backward village where people pronounced *κρύον* as *κρίον* and *ξύλον* as *ξύλον*. Since the shift of /y/ (=v, oi) to /i/ took place in most dialects in the tenth to the eleventh centuries¹⁵, Michael's snobbery must be seen as the by-product of a period of transition in which some intellectuals still knew how the v used to be pronounced, whereas most people had long since forgotten the distinction between /y/ and /i/. There is little doubt, therefore, that Michael the Grammarian lived in the eleventh century. If Lambros' identification of Lykoleon is correct (as I am inclined to think), Michael's monody on Lykoleon must have been written after 1043–1045, the date of Chr. Mityl. 68¹⁶. This also implies that Michael the Grammarian must have been a contemporary of the three great eleventh-century poets: John Mauropous, Christopher Mitylenaios and Michael Psellos.

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¹¹ Ἐπιγράμματα ἀνέκδοτα Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Γραμματικοῦ. *NE* 14 (1917) 3–13.

¹² *NE* 14 (1917) 4.

¹³ See MERCATI 1917: 126.

¹⁴ See MERCATI 1917: 127.

¹⁵ See G. HORROCKS, *Greek. A History of the Language and its Speakers*. London / New York 1997, 205 and HÖRANDNER 1991: 418.

¹⁶ See OIKONOMIDES 1990: 2 and 11, n. 38.

Section (5) of Vat. Pal. gr. 367, fols. 143^v–146^v, bears the heading: τοῦ Π^{τε}, which Lambros interprets as: τοῦ Πατριζίου. Though I am not certain whether the abbreviation should be interpreted as Lambros does, I will henceforth refer to this author as the *Anonymous Patrician*. Since the Anonymous Patrician's poems follow immediately after section (4) containing Geometres, some scholars have suggested that these poems should in fact be attributed to John Geometres¹⁷. This is impossible for chronological reasons: as Geometres was born around 935¹⁸, he cannot be the author of poems dating from the 940s. Other scholars confuse the Anonymous Patrician with Christopher Mitylenaios, who was also a patrician, but lived some hundred years later. Although Kurtz already explained a century ago why Mitylenaios cannot have been the author of the poems in Vat. Pal. gr. 367¹⁹, this unfortunately is one of those scholarly errors that seem to persist.

The poems by the Anonymous Patrician were published by Lambros, except for those on fol. 144^r, of which he apparently had no photograph²⁰. Mercati published the poems on fol. 144^r and rectified many of the errors made by Lambros in his transcription of the other poems²¹. In the following, *L.* indicates Lambros' edition and *M.* Mercati's. The collection of the poems by the Anonymous Patrician contains the following 42 items: **(1–6)** epigrams on a Paraklesis donated by Constantine VII (L. 47, 10 – 49, 10; M. 415, 1–6)²²; **(7–15)** epigrams on mosaics donated by Romanos Argyros the Kensor (M. 415, 7 – 416, 48; L. 49, 13 – 50, 6)²³; **(16)** a riddle (L. 50, 7–10); **(17–31)** epigrams on images of the Archangels donated by Theophanes (L. 50, 11 – 52, 22)²⁴; **(32–33)** epitaphs to Joseph (L. 52, 23 – 53, 4); **(34)** epitaph to Bardas (L. 53, 5–9); **(35–36)** epitaphs to Katakalon (L. 53, 10 – 54, 17); **(37–38)** programmatic poems (L. 54, 18 – 55, 18); **(39–40)** satirical poems (L. 55, 19 – 56, 22); **(41)** epigram on an icon of female saints (L. 56, 23 – 57, 2); and **(42)** epigram on an icon of St. Theodore donated by Theodore (L. 57, 3–7).

¹⁷ See SAJDAK 1930–31: 527, n. 21 and HÖRANDNER 1970: 114

¹⁸ See LAUXTERMANN 1998d.

¹⁹ KURTZ 1903: XVIII–XIX.

²⁰ LAMBROS 1922: 47–57.

²¹ MERCATI 1927: 412–421.

²² Lambros' numbering is not correct: his no. 3 consists of two different epigrams (48, 21–24 and 49, 1–4).

²³ M. 415, 13–16 and 17–20 belong together. They form one epigram: see chapter 5, pp. 184–185, n. 87.

²⁴ Lambros unfortunately brackets together some of these epigrams. As MERCATI 1927: 417 pointed out, all these epigrams are quatrains. There are in total 15 quatrains: L. 50, 11–14; 15–18; 19–22; 23–25 (one verse lacking); 51, 1–4; 5–8; 9–12; 13–16; 17–20; 51, 21–22 and 52, 1–2; 52, 3–6; 7–10; 11–14; 15–18; 19–22.

The first six epigrams describe an image of the Virgin Paraklesis, which was donated by Constantine VII; since no. 5 imitates a well-known epigram by Geometres²⁵, who was born c. 935 and started to write his first poems in the 950s, these six epigrams obviously date from the last years of the reign of Constantine VII. No. 34 is an epitaph to Bardas, magistros and domestikos of the Scholae. This is the famous Bardas Phokas the Elder, who died in 969. The epitaphs to Katakalon (nos. 35–36) date from the years 945–946²⁶. The first epitaph states that Katakalon, ὁ σεργρός (...) Θεσσαλῶν στρατηλάτης, died on the battle-field, while fighting against the Huns (L. 53, 10–18). Katakalon showed exceptional courage in combat, not only because of his love for God, but also because he was much devoted to Emperor Constantine VII and his son Romanos II (L. 53, 13–16). Katakalon is known to us from various historical sources. He is mentioned in two documents in the archives of the Protaton of Athos dating from 942 and 943, in which he holds the following titles: βασιλικὸς πρωτοσπαθᾶριος and στρατηγός or στρατηλάτης Θεσσαλονίκης²⁷. There are also some tenth-century lead seals that can be attributed to him: Κατακαλῶ or Κατακαλῶν βασιλικῶ πρωτοσπαθαρίῳ καὶ στρατηγῶ Μακεδονίας²⁸. Katakalon probably died in a battle against the Magyars, who, starting from the thirties of the tenth century, frequently invaded the Byzantine territories. In 943 the Magyars once again made a raid into the Balkan peninsula. Though an official peace treaty was concluded in the same year, warfare between the Hungarian nomadic tribes and the Byzantine armies continued on an irregular basis for another three years until 946²⁹. Katakalon, the strategos of Thessalonica, must have died in one of these skirmishes, probably after April 945, because the reference to Romanos II seems to indicate that Romanos was co-emperor at the time of Katakalon's death.

The collection of the Anonymous Patrician's poems also contains fifteen epigrams on two unusual images of the Archangels donated by Theophanes.

²⁵ See pp. 169 and 299.

²⁶ N. BANESCU, *Bulletin de l'Academie Roumaine. Section historique*, 11 (1924) 27–29, identifies this Katakalon with the grandfather of the author Kekaumenos, who, he thinks, was related to the Katakalon family. However, Kekaumenos' grandfather was strategos of Larissa in the years 976–983 and thus cannot have died during the reign of Constantine VII. This mistake is repeated by A. SAVVIDIS, *Δίπτυχα* 4 (1986–87) 14, n. 5.

²⁷ Archives de l' Athos. VII. Actes du Prôtaton, ed. D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU. Paris 1975, nos. 4 and 6. See also G. ROUILLARD, *Byz* 8 (1933) 108–109.

²⁸ V. LAURENT, Documents de sigillographie Byzantine. La collection C. Orghidan. Paris 1952, 114, no. 211. G. ZACOS, Byzantine Lead Seals, II. Bern 1984, no. 931. N. OIKONOMIDES, A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals. Dumbarton Oaks 1986, 70–71, no. 65.

²⁹ See N. OIKONOMIDES, *Südost-Forschungen* 32 (1973) 3 (repr. in: idem, Documents et études sur les institutions de Byzance (VII^e–XV^e s.). London 1976, no. XXII).

Quatrains 17–23 describe a picture of the Archangel Michael, on which Christ, the Holy Virgin, John the Baptist and various martyrs were also represented. Quatrains 24–30 describe a picture of the Archangel Gabriel, accompanied by the same heavenly host. Quatrain 31, dealing with the Archangel Michael, implicitly informs us that these two pictures were to be seen in a monastery: ἔνοπλος εἰκὼν Μιχαὴλ πρωταγγέλου, καθὼς Ἰησοῦν, ῥωννύει μονοτρόπους (L. 52, 19–20). The epigrams are unfortunately silent on the precise nature of the pictorial composition. The verse ὁ Χριστὸς ἐγγὺς σὺν τεκούσῃ καὶ φίλῳ (L. 51, 19) may suggest some sort of Deësis and the verse πρὸς ὕψος ἥρθης ὡς μετάρσιος φύσιν (L. 50, 19) may indicate that the Archangels were represented hanging in mid-air. However, as I do not know of any iconographic equivalent, I have no idea how to visualize these two images. The epigrams emphasize the military role of the two Archangels. Theophanes, who commissioned these two images, repeatedly supplicates the Holy Virgin, John the Baptist and the Martyrs to ensure that Christ will send his two Archangels, Michael and Gabriel, to fight against the enemies. In Byzantine poetry the theme of military success is nearly always connected with the person of the emperor; even if a poem is composed to celebrate a great general (for instance, Katakalon), it seldom omits to mention the name of the reigning emperor for whom the general is fighting. However, in the Theophanes epigrams the name of the emperor is passed over in silence, although the emperor is ultimately, in the eyes of the Byzantines, the very embodiment of victory on the battle-ground. It is very likely, therefore, that Theophanes was not just an ordinary military commander, but a dignitary close enough to the emperor to assume prerogatives emanating from imperial power. The dedicatory epigram in the *Naumachika*, a treatise on naval warfare commissioned by Basil the Nothos in 959, constitutes an analogous case. It celebrates Basil's glorious victories on land and it expresses the hope that Basil may be equally victorious at sea (a reference to the impending Cretan expedition of 961)³⁰. Basil the Nothos is portrayed in the epigram as if he were the emperor, and his valour, wisdom and military experience are represented as virtues that are truly imperial. In 959 Basil the Nothos, the parakoimomenos of Constantine VII, was undoubtedly one of the most influential figures at the imperial court. More or less the same may be said of Theophanes. Between 940 and 970, the *floruit* of the Anonymous Patrician, there is only one Theophanes who really qualifies: the parakoimomenos of Romanos I, a powerful dignitary who enjoyed considerable influence between 925 and 944³¹. Theophanes' greatest military achievement was the crushing

³⁰ Ed. ST. KYRIAKIDIS, *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἑπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς ΑΠΘ 3* (1939) 281–288. For comments on this edition, see F. DÖLGER, *BZ* 40 (1940) 181–191. See also C. MAZZUCCHI, *Aevum* 52 (1978) 267–318.

³¹ See E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *BZ* 10 (1901) 166–181; H. GRÉGOIRE and P. ORGELS, *Byz* 24 (1954) 155–156; and CH. ANGELIDI, *Ὁ Βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Νέου*. Ioannina 1980, 146–164.

victory over the Rus' in 941 when he was in command of the imperial fleet. It is reasonable to conjecture that Theophanes commissioned the two pictures of the Archangels in order to celebrate the glorious victory of 941.

Some of the poems by the Anonymous Patrician deal with people who I have not been able to identify. Nos. 32–33 are epitaphs to a certain Joseph who died at a very young age; the lemma attached to no. 32 supplies the information that he was the brother of $\kappa\upsilon\sigma$ Συμεών. No. 42 is a dedicatory epigram on an icon donated by an unknown Theodore. In nos. 39–40 the Anonymous Patrician addresses an opponent who had attacked him and his monastery in verse, but had not revealed his name. Nos. 7–15 are dedicatory epigrams on a church decoration which had been donated by a certain Romanos Argyros, who is variously called “judge” and “kensor”: see M. 415, 15–16; M 416, 41–42; and L. 49, 16–17. Romanos' church decoration consisted of nine mosaics which depicted the images of the feast cycle³². The church where these mosaics could be seen was probably the katholikon of the monastery called the $\mu\omicron\nu\eta$ Ἀργυρῶν or the $\mu\omicron\nu\eta$ / οἶκος τοῦ Ἀργυροπώλου, which was situated in the city-quarter called Kynegion³³. Can we also identify its patron? Of course, the name of Romanos III Argyros immediately comes to mind, since we know his splendid career in the legal profession: beginning from the rank of quaestor to that of eparch³⁴. As Romanos III Argyros was born in 968, he cannot have held the function of kensor before the year 990, at the earliest. However, as the earliest poems by the Anonymous Patrician date from 941 (Theophanes) and 945–946 (Katakalon), it seems unlikely that the Anonymous Patrician was active as a poet after c. 990. Byzantium certainly knew its Methuselahs, but without solid evidence, we should not augment the number of Byzantine octogenarians just like that. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that we are dealing with an unknown member of the famous Argyros family, who was called Romanos (like his renowned namesake), held the legal function of kensor³⁵ and lived in the mid-tenth century.

The Anonymous Patrician cannot be identified either. Some of his poems (nos. 37–40) indicate that he was living in a monastery at some point, but there

³² On this feast cycle, see chapter 5, pp. 184–186.

³³ See JANIN 1969: 51. Chr. Mityl. 68 talks about an icon that had been taken away from its original church and placed in the οἶκος τοῦ Ἀργυροπώλου; vv. 9–10 supply the information that the monastery of Argyros was in the city-quarter called Kynegion. See also Balsamon, ed. HORNA 1903: no. 31.

³⁴ See J.-F. VANNIER, *Familles byzantines: les Argyroi (IX–XII^e siècles)*. Paris 1975, 36–38.

³⁵ The legal function of kensor was introduced sometime after the reign of Romanos I. It is recorded for the first time in the Escorial Taktikon of 971–975. See OIKONOMIDES 1972: 325 and N. OIKONOMIDES, *FM* 7 (1986) 187 (repr. in: *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade*. London 1992, no. XII).

is no reason to assume that he wrote all his poems in the monastery. Nos. 37–38 are programmatic poems which the Anonymous Patrician declaimed to his fellow monks as an introduction to the lecture of some edifying text (in the case of no. 37 the eighth ἀκρόασις of a *Life of John Chrysostom*). In nos. 39–40 the Anonymous Patrician defends himself and his monastery against the evil defamations of an unnamed opponent. The poems of the Anonymous Patrician unfortunately do not reveal more details about his life. All we know is that he wrote poems between c. 940 and 970 and that he probably belonged to the upper echelons of Byzantine society because he wrote poems for Constantine VII, Bardas Phokas, Theophanes the Parakoimomenos, Katakalon the strategos of Thessalonica and Romanos Argyros. The fact that we know so little about the Anonymous Patrician is much to be regretted, for, apart from John Geometres, there is no tenth-century poet who has left us so many poems and epigrams.

APPENDIX V

Two Anonymous Poets

Oxon. Bodl. Barocci 50, a manuscript of the first half of the tenth century, contains a collection of 29 poems at the end, on fols. 381^r–386^v. These poems were published by the late Robert Browning, with an extensive commentary and a thorough introduction¹. Browning established these poems to be the work of a single poet living around the year 900: that is, after the restoration of orthodoxy in 843 (the poet occasionally lashes out against the iconoclast doctrine) and before the manuscript was copied (the scribe is obviously not the author of these poems as he comments upon them and sometimes even comes up with conjectural emendations of his own)². In support of Browning's dating one may also add the following argument, based on the fact that the poet occasionally imitates the epigrams of Theodore of Stoudios (see below): since Theodore's poems were only published after 886 (see p. 70) and can hardly have been known to the general public before they circulated in manuscript form, the year 886 obviously constitutes the terminus post quem for the composition of some of the poems in Oxon. Barocci 50. According to Browning, "the manuscript is a product of the scholarly circles in Constantinople of the two generations after Photius". But the manuscript is, in fact, of Italian origin, as Irigoín has shown³. It is reasonable to assume that the anonymous poet also lived in southern Italy, not just because Oxon. Barocci 50 was copied there, but above all because one of the poems celebrates the building of a church in that part of the Byzantine empire. Poem no. 28 is headed: ἐν Ἰταλία εἰς τὸν ναὸν ὃν ᾠκοδόμησε τοῦ ἁγίου Βαρνάβα τοῦ ἀποστόλου Βαρνάβας τις μοναχὸς ἐξ ἀλλοδαπῆς χώρας παροικήσας ἐκεῖσε. It is interesting to note the words τις and ἐκεῖσε. The word τις obviously indicates that the Italian scribe was not familiar with Barnabas the monk. The word ἐκεῖσε implies that the church of St. Barnabas was situated somewhere far away, namely ἐν Ἰταλία. Ἰταλία is the name given to the Byzantine theme of Longobardia (modern Apulia and northeast Basilicata) in the second half of the tenth century, but it was already in use at a much earlier date⁴. It would seem, therefore, that the scribe himself

¹ BROWNING 1963. See also BALDWIN 1982.

² See BROWNING 1963: 291. See also BALDWIN 1982: 5–7.

³ See J. IRIGOÍN, *JÖB* 18 (1969) 50–51 and idem, *Scriptorium* 48 (1994) 3–17.

⁴ See V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, in: MARKOPOULOS 1989: 28.

did not live in Longobardia, but somewhere else in southern Italy, probably Calabria. As for the poet, since the only poem that can be geographically situated deals with a church in Longobardia (Ἰταλία), he probably lived in the same region. I refer to this poet as the Anonymous Italian.

The Anonymous Italian was a monk. Poem no. 19 celebrates St. Athanasios, a key figure in Byzantine monasticism; no. 23 is a tribute to ascetic life; no. 24 describes a picture of the monastic saints Anthony, Euthymios, Chariton and Sabas; and no. 29 is an epitaph to a man called Sabas, a popular name in monastic circles. The collection of the Anonymous Italian's poems can be divided into two parts: poems written for his own monastery (nos. 1–21) and poems written for others (nos. 22–29). This arrangement is similar to that of the collection of Theodore of Stoudios' epigrams, which is also divided into two separate parts: (i) poems written for the Stoudios monastery and its annexes (Theod. St. 1–103) and (ii) poems written for other pious foundations (Theod. St. 104–123). The Anonymous Italian occasionally imitates the epigrams of Theodore of Stoudios: compare Anon. Ital. 3 with Theod. St. 31; for the poetic device of icons that speak or listen (in Anon. Ital. 1–2, 4 and 7–8), see Theod. St. 35–39. This suggests that the monastery of the Anonymous Italian was in close contact with the Stoudite movement.

Oxon. Barocci 50 contains many poems that merit close study⁵. It is the oldest manuscript for some of the epigrams of Pisides⁶. On my last visit to Oxford, apart from two excerpts from the *Odyssey* and a few fragments of Gregory of Nazianzos' poems, I noticed on fols. 200^v–201^r some very unusual texts which I have not been able to identify: for instance,

† ἀρρώστου· πρὸς ἱατρόν †
 Ὡς ἐν παρέργῳ τὴν ἐμὴν σκοπεῖς φύσιν,
 ἀλλ' οὐ παρέργως ἡ νόσος κατατρύχει,
 ὅθεν δέος μοι δυσφόρητον ἐκφέρεις⁷
 μήπως νικηθεὶς ὡς παρεργάτης νόσῳ
 προπομπὸς ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἄδου φανῆς δόμοις.

* *
 *

⁵ Incidentally, it is not the only tenth-century Italian manuscript containing quite remarkable poems. For the various poems in Vat. gr. 1257, see LAUXTERMANN 1998a: 399–400 and CANART 2000: 150–152. For the poems in Patmos 33, copied in Reggio di Calabria in 941, see A. KOMINIS, *Σύμμεικτα* 1 (1966) 22–34 and idem, *Πατριακή Βιβλιοθήκη*. Athens 1988, I, 82–90.

⁶ On fol. 176^v we find Pisides Q. 7, Q. 4 and St. 108. The text of St. 108 and especially of Q. 4 differs strongly from that of the existing editions. In my forthcoming edition of Pisides' epigrams I will publish the readings of this manuscript.

⁷ I am not familiar with the construction ἐκφέρω δέος τινί, "to inspire fear in someone". Perhaps we should read εἰσφέρεις, cf. LSJ, s.v., I. 3.

Vat. gr. 753 (s. XI), fol. 4^{r-v}, contains a collection of anonymous poems, which were published by Sola in 1916⁸. His edition has not attracted much attention. This is much to be regretted because these poems deserve to be studied, not only for their aesthetic merits, but also because they contain some snippets of information that are of interest to (art) historians. Despite the misleading title of his edition, “Giambografi sconosciuti del secolo XI”, Sola assumed, on stylistic grounds, that these poems were the work of a single poet⁹. I see no reason to question this assumption. The poems have a homogeneous style and bear the hallmark of a gifted poet. The rules of prosody are the same in all poems, rhythm and metre are uniform and the vocabulary does not vary; but above all, if I am permitted to use a purely subjective argument, reading these poems I clearly distinguish the voice of an individual poet. I have to admit, though, that there is a slight chronological problem: as poem no. 3 dates from 980–992 and poem no. 6 from 1034–1040, it would seem that the Anonym of Sola lived to be quite old, for he must have been at least sixty-five when he wrote no. 6. Still, I think Sola is right in assuming that we are dealing with the poems of one and the same poet.

Vat. gr. 753 contains the following poems: Sola nos. 2, 5, 6, 1, 7 (which consists of seven short poems), 8, 3, an unpublished poem, and Sola no. 4. The poem not published by Sola reads: Τριάς, τριάς μου, τῶν φύλων τὴν τετράδα / σῶξοις φέρουσαν ἀρετῶν τὴν τετράδα. Though the order of the poems is different in the manuscript, for the sake of convenience I follow the numbering of Sola.

No. 3 is probably the earliest poem written by the Anonym of Sola. It celebrates the golden and silver decoration of an image of the Holy Virgin in the famous Blachernai bathhouse, the λοῦμα, where a therapeutic spring flowed. The epigram suggests that the holy water sprang forth from Her hands. The golden and silver plates attached to this miraculous image were donated by Patriarch Nicholas. This is undoubtedly Nicholas II Chrysoberges (980–992). The Patria, too, mention this decoration of the Blachernai bathhouse with gold and silver, but state that it was Emperor Basil II who commissioned the decoration¹⁰. As the epigram appears to be a dedicatory inscription, the Anonym of Sola is in this case a trustworthier source than the Patria.

No. 2 dates from 1028–1034. It is a dedicatory epigram celebrating the building of a pavement inlaid with porphyry and silver, which had been commissioned by Romanos III Argyros and his wife Zoë. The pavement was to be found in the church of Christ Antiphonetes. This is probably the same

⁸ These poems were also copied by Leo Allatius in Barb. gr. 74, fols. 35^r–37^r.

⁹ SOLA 1916: 19.

¹⁰ Ed. PREGER 1901-07: 283, 4–9.

church as the one built by Empress Zoë¹¹. No. 8 is an epitaph on Helen, the first wife of Romanos III, who was forced to retire to a monastery and to become a nun (renamed Maria) when her husband assumed power; she died in 1032. No. 6 is a dedicatory epigram celebrating the construction of a church dedicated to the Virgin Gorgoepekoos. Its two donors were Emperor Michael IV and Empress Zoë¹². No. 5 is, once again, a dedicatory epigram: it mentions a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin and built by Theoktistos the droungarios, who bore the titles *πατρίκιος*, *βέστης* and *πραιπόσιτος*. The latter title indicates that he was a eunuch. I have not been able to identify him, unless he is the general by the same name who went on an expedition in 1030; but this general, a confidant of Romanos III, was a *megas hetareiarches* and *protospatharios*¹³. None of the other poems can be dated.

The Anonym of Sola lived at a time we know little about and which has left us very little poetry¹⁴. When he started his literary career, Geometres was still alive; and when he laid down his pen, Mauropous and Mitylenaios had already begun writing. But apart from the prolific Symeon the New Theologian, the Anonym of Sola is the only poet we know to have been active in the first decades of the eleventh century.

¹¹ See K.N. SATHAS, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*. Athens 1872–94 (repr. Hildesheim 1972), VII, 163, 3–5. See also P. MAGDALINO, in: *Aetos. Studies in Honour of Cyril Mango*. Stuttgart–Leipzig 1998, 225–227.

¹² SOLA 1916: 151 suggests that the *νέος Μιχαήλ* mentioned in the epigram is Michael V Kalaphates. The four months of his reign are too short a period to rebuild a church from its fundamentals: *βάθρων ἀπ' αὐτῶν σοι νεουργοῦσι δόμον* (v. 4). Moreover, shortly after becoming emperor, Michael V removed Zoe from the palace.

¹³ See Skylitzes, ed. THURN 1973: 382, 66–71

¹⁴ See LAUXTERMANN 2003a.

APPENDIX VI

The Contents of Par. Suppl. gr. 690

For a great number of poems I discussed in this book, Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII) is the only manuscript to have come down to us; for many other poems it is by far the oldest text witness we possess. Thus, if only for its extraordinary value, Par. Suppl. gr. 690 deserves to be described in detail. Regrettably, most modern scholars rely on the description of the manuscript by Rochefort 1950 – a publication which may seem thorough, but is in fact neither exhaustive nor entirely reliable. I will give a few examples. Rochefort omits to mention that Pisides' poem *In Resurrectionem* can be found on fol. 46. He incorrectly ascribes anonymous poems to well-known authors: for instance, he attributes the monodies on Christopher Lekapenos to Symeon the Metaphrast (ignoring the lacuna between fol. 65 and fol. 68), the gnomology in verses at fols. 73–74 to Pisides (misunderstanding the Latin of its first editor, Sternbach), and so forth. He also ignores previous editions: for instance, the catanyctic alphabet by Kyriakos of Chonai at fols. 106–107, which he considers to be unpublished (in fact, edited by Anastasijewič 1907: 494–495).

Rochefort dates Par. Suppl. gr. 690 to 1075–1085 for palaeographic reasons that remain obscure. Most philologists (except those who follow Rochefort's inaccurate dating) assign a twelfth-century date to the manuscript. And most significantly, experienced palaeographers, such as Irigoín and Follieri¹, unanimously date the manuscript to the second half of the twelfth century.

The manuscript is badly damaged. It has no less than sixteen lacunas, which are also probably quite large: see the description below. The manuscript is made of parchment; blank paper pages have been added at a later date, probably by Minoïdes Mynas, to fill up some of the lacunas: fols. 1–13, 66–67, 77–78, 80–81, 84–85, 87–88, 91–94, 96, 114–115, 120–122 and 136–137. Nowadays the manuscript has only loose folia; it is impossible to discern the original quires. It is clear from the contents of certain poems and prose texts that a few folia are not in their original place: fol. 22 should be placed before fol. 21, fol. 39 between fol. 46 and 47, fol. 75 after fol. 124, and fol. 76 after fol. 119. To make matters worse, someone has cut away two strips of parchment, in the middle of fol. 46 and at the bottom of fol. 52.

¹ J. IRIGOÍN, *JÖB* 18 (1969) 49 and E. FOLLIERI, *I calendari in metro innografico di Cristoforo Mitileneo*, vol. I. Brussels 1980, 12, n. 48 and 69, n. 9.

With the great number of lacunas, the unrecognizable quires and the folia that have been misplaced, we must sadly conclude that we have absolutely no idea what the manuscript originally looked like. We do not know whether the series of poems and prose texts we find in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 correspond in any way to the original design of the anthologist. At the most, we might be able to establish how the present manuscript consists of separate text blocks of consequent folia, each divided from the next by a clearly distinguishable lacuna; but even then, it is impossible to be certain whether each separate text block stands where the anthologist intended it.

In the following description of the manuscript, I will comment only on those poems that are relevant for the subject of the present book; for further information, see Rochefort 1950. Due to the great number of lacunas, many poems or groups of poems lack lemmata mentioning the author; wherever possible, I have supplied the names. For the few attributions that may seem doubtful, I refer to the pages where I deal with the delicate problem of who wrote what: see the respective entries in the index.

14^r–31^v		various gnomologies
lacuna		
32^r–38^v & 40^r–45^v	Pisides	Hexaameron, vv. 143 ff.
45^v	anonymous	book epigram on the Hexaameron
45^v–46^r	Pisides	epigrams (Q. 1–7 and St. 108)
46^r–46^v	Pisides	In Resurrectionem, vv. 3–116b
lacuna		
39^{r-v} & 47^r–52^r	Geometres	De Panteleemone, vv. 120 ff.
52^v–53^r	Pisides	satirical poem on Alympios
53^r–54^r	Pisides	In Sanctae Crucis Restitutionem
54^r–56^v	Pisides	De Vanitate Vitae
56^v–57^v	Pisides	In Heraclium ex Africa redeuntem
57^v–59^r	Pisides	In Bonum Patricium
59^r–64^v	Pisides	Expeditio Persica I, II
64^v–65^v	Pisides	epigrams (St. 5–49)
65^v	Symeon the Metaphrast	catanyctic alphabet, vv. 1–28
lacuna		
68^{r-v}	anonymous	monodies on Christopher Lekapenos, beginning and end missing

	lacuna	
69^r–70^r	Christopher Mitylenaios	poems nos. 122 (vv. 30 ff.), 125–127, 134–135, 137
70^r–73^v	Psellos	poems nos. 17, 10
73^v	Ps. Psellos	poem no. 91
73^v	Julian the Apostate	epigram
73^v–74^v		gnomology: alphabetic, ends with the letter Ξ
	lacuna	
79^{r-v}		various short texts, the last one without its ending
	lacuna	
82^r–83^v		canon, acephalous
83^v	Kosmas the Melode	canon, end missing
	lacuna	
86^{r-v}	Kosmas the Melode	two canons, the first acephalous, the second without its ending
	lacuna	
89^r–90^v	Kosmas the Melode	canons, end missing
	lacuna	
95^{r-v}	Kosmas the Melode	two canons, the first acephalous, the second without its ending
	lacuna	
97^r–106^v	Kosmas the Melode, John of Damascus	canons
106^v–107^r	Kyriakos of Chonai	catanyctic alphabet
107^r–108^r	Ignatios the Deacon	poem on Adam and Eve
108^r	Eustathios Kanikles	riddle
108^r	anonymous	epitaph to the wife of Emperor Maurice
108^r	Leo the Philosopher	epigram
108^{r-v}	Nicholas the Patrician	two gnostic epigrams
108^v–109^r	Leo of Sardis, Parthenios, Theodore of Kyzikos	book epigrams on the Oktoechos
109^r–112^v	Geometres	Metaphrasis of the Odes
112^v–113^r	Ps. Psellos	poem no. 62

113^{r-v}	John Kommerkiarios	Life of St. Mary of Egypt, end missing
lacuna		
116^r–117^r	Pisides	epigrams, acephalous (St. 50–106)
117^{r-v}	Methodios	epigram on the Chalke
117^v	anonymous	epigram on a reliquary of the Holy Cross
117^v–118^r	Ignatios the Deacon	poem on Lazaros and the Rich
118^{r-v}	Geometres	epigrams (nos. S. 1–13)
118^v–119^v & 76^{r-v}		various prose texts
lacuna		
123^r–124^v & 75^{r-v}		Oneirokritika and fragments of the Old Testament
75^v	Niketas the Philosopher	five epigrams
125^r–132^v		Oneirokritika
lacuna		
133^r–135^v		religious prose texts, acephalous
lacuna		
138^r–223^v		various texts in prose and verse: Theophylaktos Simokattes, letters, acephalous; Lucian, Philogelos, Aesop, riddles, synaxarion verses by Christopher Mitylenaios, poems by Gregory of Nazianzos, commentary on Gregory of Nazianzos by Nonnos, and Maximos the Confessor
lacuna		
224^r–249^r		various texts: for instance, Patria, Batrachomyomachia, Phocylides
249^r	Mauropous	poems nos. 62, 42, 40, 41
249^r	anonymous	five monostichs on works of art
249^r–253^v		various texts in prose, the last one without its ending

lacuna

254^r–255^r	Mauropous	poems nos. 19 (vv. 6 ff), 20–22, 24–26, 32, 34, 37, 43–45, 53, 60–61, 65, 68–69
255^v–258^v		religious prose text

Almost all Byzantine poems can be found at the beginning of what is left of Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (fols. 14–118), with the exception of Christopher Mitylenaios' hexametric synaxarion verses (fols. 183^v–190^r), John Mauropous' poems (fol. 249^r and fols. 254^r–255^r), and Niketas the Philosopher's epigrams (fol. 75^v, following after fol. 124). But to repeat what I stated in the above, we cannot be absolutely certain that the present order of the folia corresponds to the original one. Of course, it is beyond doubt that each of the text blocks (divided by lacunas) presents the original order in which the texts were arranged, but unfortunately we do not know the exact position of these text blocks in the original manuscript. Neither can we establish with absolute certainty what is lost in the lacunas: a great deal, no doubt about that, but how much exactly? For instance, at fols. 69–70 we find an excerpt from the end of Christopher Mitylenaios' collection of poems (nos. 122, 125–127, 134–135 and 137). Although it is reasonable to assume that a great quantity of poems by Christopher Mitylenaios could once be found in the lacuna between fol. 68 and 69, it is impossible to establish with any accuracy the size of the lacuna and the number of poems it once contained.

Par. Suppl. gr. 690 is an extremely valuable manuscript. Without it, our picture of Byzantine poetry would certainly not be the same; but considering its present state and Rochefort's inaccurate description, caution is called for before one draws any facile conclusions.

APPENDIX VII

George of Pisidia

Pisides' short poems and epigrams have been published by Querci 1777 (Q.) and Sternbach 1891 and 1892a (St.)¹. Querci's edition presents only a small sample of poems, which he culled from various sources. Sternbach's edition is based on Par. Suppl. gr. 690 (s. XII), a manuscript of great value because it contains practically all the epigrams and short poems by Pisides that have come down to us, including those published by Querci. The manuscript also contains a considerable number of other texts by Pisides: see the description in Appendix VI.

Pisides' short poems and epigrams are found in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 in three separate sections, namely:

fols. 45^v–46^r: Q. 7, Q. 1, Q. 6, Q. 2, St. 108, Q. 3–5

fols. 64^v–65^v: St. 5–49

fols. 116^r–117^r: St. 50–59, 59b (=Q. 12), 60–61, 61b and c (=Q. 8–9), 62–78, 78b (=Q. 10), 79–84, 84b (=Q. 11), and 85–106.

The manuscript originally contained more epigrams than the 115 it contains nowadays. A considerable number of epigrams have been lost in a lacuna before fols. 116^r–117^r. And at the end of the first section, fols. 45^v–46^r, some barbarian has cut away a strip of parchment, which contained a text consisting of two verses².

The short poems on fols. 45^v–46^r follow right after the *Hexaemeron* (fols. 32^r–38^v & 40^r–45^v) and an anonymous book epigram praising Pisides for the composition of the *Hexaemeron* (fol. 45^v)³. These poems (minus St. 108) can also found in three other manuscripts, immediately before or after the *Hexaemeron*:

¹ The edition by TARTAGLIA 1998: 468–505 is based on those of Querci and Sternbach. Tartaglia arbitrarily changes the order in which the epigrams and short poems are arranged in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 and other mss.

² In the middle of fol. 46^r, lines 10–14 are missing: line 10 contained the two last verses of Q. 5; line 12 was a zigzagging demarcation line and line 13 the title of Pisides' *In Resurrectionem*; line 14 contained the first two verses of this poem. This leaves us with only one line unaccounted for: line 11 – that is, the space for two unidentified verses.

³ St. 107. Also found in Par. gr. 1302 (s. XIII), fol. 246^v. It is not an *eis heauton* poem by Pisides (as the ms. incorrectly states), but an anonymous book epigram on the *Hexaemeron*: see p. 199.

Vat. gr. 1126 (s. XIV), fol. 55^v⁴, Par. Suppl. gr. 139 (s. XIV), fol. 59^r–59^v, and Bodl. Thom. Roe 18 (a. 1349), fol. 460^r⁵. It is reasonable to assume that Par. Suppl. gr. 690 and the three other manuscripts ultimately go back to an edition of the *Hexaemeron*, in which these eight poems were included. Oxon. Barocc. 50 (s. X in.), fol. 176^v, contains three of these poems: Q. 7, Q. 4 and St. 108⁶. Q. 7 is also quoted in many Byzantine chronicles as a prediction of military success. Pisides is said to have made on the eve of Herakleios' first campaign against the Persians: "The dark-dyed shoe that you put on, you will tint red with Persian blood"⁷. This poem is also found in a number of other manuscripts: Mutinensis 42 (s. XIII), fol. 133^v, Par. Coisl. gr. 131 (s. XIV), fol. 213^v, Laur. V 10 (s. XIV), fol. 192^r and Vat. Ottob. gr. 309 (s. XVI), fol. 171^r.

The second and third groups of epigrams that we find in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 originate from one and the same source, which the scribe excerpted in two sessions, first on fols. 64^v–65^v and then again on fols. 116^r–117^r. The fact that we have two excerpts from one source is indicated by the duplications we find in the manuscript: poems that the scribe excerpted twice because he had evidently forgotten that he had already copied them. There are four doublets in total: St. 5 (after St. 81), St. 29 (after St. 50), St. 30 (after St. 52) and St. 32 (after St. 55). It is worth noting that St. 29, 30 and 32, on either of the two pages where they are copied, form part of a set of epigrams on images depicting the life of Christ: St. 29–34 and St. 50–59. These two groups of epigrams originally belonged together. They are correlated fragments of a cycle of epigrams on the life of Christ. The original order of this epigram cycle can easily be reconstructed: St. 50, 29, 51–52, 30–31, 53–55, 32–33, 56, 34 and 57–59. The cycle begins with the Magi and ends with the scene of the Chairete. The omission of the pictorial scene of the Nativity, which one would expect to find at the beginning, is either due to the lacuna in the manuscript at fol. 116 or to the scribe who did not copy all the epigrams, but just a selection. Whatever the case, it is beyond doubt that Par. Suppl. gr. 690, fols. 64^v–65^v and fols. 116^r–117^r, contains two substantial, partially overlapping fragments of a large collection of Pisides' epigrams.

⁴ This manuscript is the source from which Allatius copied the poems: see Allatius' collection of unedited Byzantine poems, Barb. gr. 74, fol. 40^v. He did not copy Q. 7 because it had already been published in various editions of Byzantine historians (see main text).

⁵ Lond. Add. 10014 (s. XV) is an apograph of Bodl. Thom. Roe 18: see HÖRANDNER 1974: 154. Pisides' short poems are found on fol. 221^r.

⁶ For more information on Oxon. Barocc. 50, see Appendix V, pp. 325–326, esp. n. 6. Oxon. Langb. 9 (s. XVII), fol. 51, contains the same three epigrams. It is a direct apograph of Oxon. Barocc. 50.

⁷ See L. STERNBACH, *De Georgii Pisidae apud Theophanem aliosque historicos reliquiis*. Krakow 1900, 47–53, and F. GONNELLI, *Prometheus* 22 (1996) 177–181.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct the original collection and estimate the total amount of epigrams it may have contained. There is only one epigram which we know could be found in the collection, although the scribe of Par. Suppl. gr. 690 did not copy it: *AP* I, 121 (=Q. 13). *AP* I, 120 and 121 are two verse inscriptions on the Blachernai church. The epigrams are anonymous in the *Palatine Anthology* because they were copied *in situ*. However, they are doubtless the work of Pisides: Par. Suppl. gr. 690 contains *AP* I, 120 (=St. 59b), and Par. gr. 1630 (s. XIV), fol. 166^r, contains both *AP* I, 120 and 121 in a sequence of epigrams by Pisides.

There are a great number of manuscripts that contain some of the texts found in the collection of Pisides' epigrams, namely:

Par. gr. 1630 (s. XIV), fol. 166^r, 192^r and 195^v: *AP* I, 120–121, St. 60, 72 and 84; St. 28, 15, 7–8, 26, 34 and 36; St. 84 and 88, respectively. Par. gr. 2831 (s. XIII), fol. 152^r: St. 61b, 61c, 78b and 84b. Esc. R. III. 17 (s. XIV), fol. 9^v: St. 61b, 61c and 88. Heidelb. Pal. gr. 23 (s. X), p. 63: *AP* I, 120–121. Marc. gr. 572 (s. X), fol. 5^v: St. 34. Ambros. B 25 inf. (s. XI–XII), fol. 170^v: St. 70. Barb. gr. 340 (s. X), fol. 14^r: St. 72. St. 10, 11.1 and 12.1 are found in three interrelated Italian manuscripts of the tenth century containing the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzos: Lond. Add. 18231, fol. 87^v, Laur. Conv. Soppr. 177, fol. 1^v and Vat. gr. 2061, fol. 2⁸. In the *Souda*, s.v. φθόνος, we find St. 28.

In Par. gr. 1630 (s. XIV), fol. 166^r, we find two anonymous poems immediately after some epigrams by Pisides⁹. The first poem is also found in Par. gr. 967 (a. 1377), fol. 299^r. In my forthcoming edition of Pisides' epigrams I shall place these two poems in the section of the *Dubia*.

Let us return once again to the poems and epigrams of Pisides in Par. Suppl. gr. 690. The anthologist gathered the material from two different sources: (i) a small sylloge of poems copied along with the *Hexaemeron* in certain manuscripts: Q. 1–7 and St. 108; (ii) a large collection of epigrams, of which we find two major excerpts in Par. Suppl. gr. 690 and some traces in the rest of the manuscript tradition: St. 5–106 and *AP* I, 121.

The small sylloge contains literary poems on various subjects. The large collection, on the contrary, consists mainly of epigrams written for a practical purpose, either as verse inscriptions on works of art or as book epigrams. The few poems that have no connection with Byzantine art or books, are the following four: St. 28, 48–49 and 106. St. 28 is a gnome on the malicious power of Envy. St. 48 is a laudatory poem which Pisides had once improvised when he was about to declaim one of his panegyrics in the presence of Constantine,

⁸ See SOMERS 1999: 550–552.

⁹ Ed. L. STERNBACH, *De Georgii Pisidae fragmentis a Suida servatis*. Krakow 1899, 87, n. 2.

the son of Herakleios. St. 49 is a fictitious epitaph in honour of a woman who loved her husband so dearly that she could not bear his death and died herself two days later. And St. 106 is a moralizing epitaph on a ruler who once used to wield power over peoples and nations, but now lies all alone and speechless in the grave. As St. 48 and 49 are to be found at the very end of the first excerpt on fols. 64^v–65^r and St. 106 at the very end of the second excerpt on fols. 116^r–117^r, we may infer that the original collection, after dozens of epigrams on works of art and books, concluded with these and similar “literary” poems¹⁰. Thus we observe that the collection differentiated between epigrams composed for a practical purpose, on the one hand, and literary poems on various subjects, on the other. On the implications and significance of this generic differentiation, see chapter 2, p. 66.

¹⁰ As for the presence of St. 28 among the epigrams, see pp. 242–243, where I point out that gnomes belong to the epigrammatic genre.

APPENDIX VIII

Verse Inscriptions

The following list of verse inscriptions presents the texts I have come across in the course of preparing this book. It is meant as a supplement to the present study. It is emphatically not an epigraphic survey. The list is by no means exhaustive; to repeat the words of Mango 1951: 52, “I can claim no degree of completeness as the material is very scattered and there are few bibliographical aids”. I am most grateful to Wolfram Hörandner, who is currently preparing a corpus of verse inscriptions, for allowing me access to his file cards and for checking the data of the following list. Needless to say, the responsibility for the remaining errors and omissions is entirely my own.

The list comprises not only inscriptions in stone or precious metals, but also texts on wall paintings, icons and miniatures. Inscriptions on lead seals are not mentioned because of the problems involved in establishing an accurate date for metrical seals. Epigraphical texts mentioned in Byzantine sources, which can no longer be found *in situ* (for instance, the verse inscriptions of the *Pege* [AP I, 109–114] or the epigrams inscribed on the door panels in the monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai [ed. Ševčenko 1998]), are not included. The list is divided into three parts that correspond with chapters 5, 7 and 8: epigrams on works of art, epitaphs and gnomic epigrams, respectively. In the brief bibliography attached to each entry I only mention the editions that were available to me, and I only refer to publications dealing with the inscriptions themselves. Occasionally I add some comments of my own: these are printed in small type. Page numbers between square brackets refer to the pages where a given verse inscription is discussed in more detail.

* *
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epigrams on works of art

For the sake of convenience the following list of verse inscriptions on works of art is divided into five sections: epigrams on churches and monasteries, city walls, other public constructions, small artefacts and miniatures.

churches and monasteries

- (1) Aphrodisias, church of St. Barbara and St. Anastasia, 9th–10th C. Inc. [...]δε ναὸν τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων, 2 vv, fragmentary. Ed. CH. ROUECHÉ, Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity. The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions including Texts from the Excavations conducted by K.T. ERIM. Leeds 1989, 165 (no. 108).
- (2) Behram (Assos), church of St. Cornelius, 9th–10th C. Inc. ναοῦ τὸ σαθρόν, 8 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 1.
- (3) Cappadocia, Göreme, New Church of Tokali Kilise, 953–963. Inc. σὸν ναὸν ἱερ[...], 20 vv, fragmentary. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 2, 304–307 (no. 34). For the date, see N. THIERRY, in: MARKOPOULOS 1989: 217–233. See V. GRUMEL, *EO* 32 (1933) 357–360, A. WHARTON EPSTEIN, Tokali Kilise. Tenth-century Metropolitan Art in Byzantine Cappadocia. Washington, D.C., 1986, 33, 36 and 79–80, and MAGUIRE 1996: 6–7.
- (4) Cappadocia, Göreme, Kiličlar Kilise, 10th C. Inc. ἐν γῇ κατελθόν, 9 vv. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 1, 229–230 and 603 (no. 26a).
- (5) Cappadocia, Hasan Dağı, Balli Kilise, 10th C. Inc. χαίροις Γαβριήλ, 4 vv. Ed. N. THIERRY, in: MARKOPOULOS 1989: 238–243. [pp. 165–166]
- (6) Cappadocia, Sinassos, church of the Holy Apostles, 10th C. Fragmentary inscription on a depiction of the Pentecost, inc. εβεν ἐπ' ὄλκαδος ἔνφυτος ὕπνος, probably six verses. This is a copy of a late antique verse inscription that was once to be found in the church of St. Basil in nearby Caesarea: *AP* I, 92. Ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, *Revue de l'Instruction Publique en Belgique* 52 (1909) 164–166. See R. CORMACK, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 30 (1967) 24. [pp. 92–93]
- (7) Cappadocia, Sinassos, chapel of St. Basil, 9th–10th C. Three verses (followed by prose). The first verse and the first half of the second verse are illegible. Verse 2, second half: τῆς ἐνδό[ξου] οἰκίας. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: II, 1, 109–110 (no. 141). See D.I. PALLAS, *Byz* 48 (1978) 210–211 and A. WHARTON EPSTEIN, in: Iconoclasm, eds. A.A. BRYER & J. HERRIN. Birmingham 1977, 106.
- (8) Colophon, church of the Holy Virgin, 959–960. Inc. δέξαι Δέσποινα, 3 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 95.
- (9) Hosios Loukas, katholikon, third quarter of 10th C. Two inscriptions. Inc. Χριστέ μοι δίδου, 3 vv, and inc. Λουκᾶ τρισμάκαρ, 4 vv. Ed. E. ΣΤΙΚΑΣ, *Τὸ οἰκοδομικὸν χρονικὸν τῆς μονῆς Ὁσίου Λουκᾶ Φωκίδος*. Athens 1970, 25.
- (10) Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, apse, 867. Inc. ἄς οἱ πλάνοι καθεῖλον, 2 vv. *AP* I, 1. Some letters still visible. Text also transmitted in mss. Ed. MERCATI 1922: 280–282. [pp. 32, 92, 94–97, 106 and 273]
- (11) Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, after the earthquake of 869. Four epigrams, two on the south tympanum and two on the north tympanum. Some traces

- discovered *in situ*. Texts also transmitted in mss. Inc. πατρὸς ἀκηράτου υἱέ, 3 vv; σοὶ τῷ κρατοῦντι, 3 vv; ἔργον ἀμίμητον, 3 vv; ἀψίδι χειρῶν, 3 vv. Ed. MERCATI 1922a: 282–286. For the date, see C. MANGO, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*. Dumbarton Oaks 1962, 63–66, and C. MANGO & E. HAWKINS, *DOP* 26 (1972) 37–41. [pp. 28 and 32]
- (12) Istanbul, Manganai district, church of Prophet Elijah, 867–886. The text is very fragmentary. Inc. (ὅς)περ καὶ γὰρ πᾶς, 8 vv. Ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, *ZRVI* 1 (1952) 10–15 (repr. in: *Byz* 32 (1962) 45–52).
- (13) Istanbul, monastery of Lips, 907. The fragmentary inscription is divided into three texts. Inc. [...] (ἐ)κ πόθου, 2 vv; μητρὶ Θεοῦ νεών, 4 vv; and ναὸς τὸ δῶρον, 2 vv. Ed. C. MANGO and E. HAWKINS, *DOP* 18 (1964) 300–301. [p. 164]
- (14) Iznik, church of the Koimesis, end 7th C. Inc. [...]ον ἐγείρω σοι, Παρθένε, 4 vv. Ed. C. MANGO, *TM* 12 (1994) 350–353.
- (15) Naxos, church of the Panagia, 8th–9th C. Inc. τὸν πρὶν βραχύν τε, 8 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 215bis. For the date, see P.G. ZERLENTHS, *BZ* 16 (1907) 285–286. V. RUGGERI, *Byzantine Religious Architecture (582–867): its History and Structural Elements*. Rome 1991, 260, doubts whether the date is correct.
- (16) Rome, S. Maria Antiqua, 7th C. On a fresco depicting the trial of the Forty Martyrs the following text can be deciphered: [...] τῆς γραφῆς τῆς εἰκόνοσ / αἰτῶν βρω[...]. Ed. P.J. NORDHAGEN, *Studies in Byzantine Art and Early Medieval Painting*. London 1990, 220.
- (17) Skripou, church of the Koimesis, 873–874. Inc. οὐ φθόνος, οὐδὲ χρόνος, 12 vv. Ed. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ 1994. [pp. 119–120]
- (18) Thebes, church of St. Gregory, 872–873. Inc. τέρεμνον ὄνπερ, 5 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8686. See Σπ. ΛΑΜΠΡΟΣ, *NE* 11 (1914) 326–327 and Γ.Α. ΣΩΤΗΡΙΟΥ, *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερὶς* 1924, pp. 1–3.
- (19) Thessalonica, church of St. Demetrios, c. 630. Two inscriptions. Inc. ἐπὶ χρόνων Λέοντος, 2 vv, and inc. κτίστας θεορεῖς, 4 vv. Ed. J.M. SPIESER, *TM* 5 (1973) 155–156 (nos. 6 and 7). See C. ΜΠΑΚΙΡΙΤΖΗΣ, *Βυζαντινά* 13, 2 (1985) 1055–1058.

city walls

- (20) Ankara, c. 859. Inc. δόξαν μεγίστην, 10 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1927–28: 437–439.
- (21) Ankara, c. 859. Inc. πένθει φθαρεῖσα, 15 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1927–28: 439–442. [p. 161]
- (22) Antakya, end 10th C. Inc. περιτρέχων (...), 3 vv, fragmentary. Ed. G. DAGRON & D. FEISSEL, *TM* 9 (1985) 459 (no. 4).

- (23) Antalya, 909–910. Inc. ἄστοι πόλεως, 8 vv, with acrostic: *αυαστακτ* (Ἀβάστακτος), the family name of the Lekapenoi). Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 304. See G.E. BEAN, *Belleten* 22 (1958) 44–45.
- (24) Antalya, 911–912. Inc. ἀεὶ προνοία, 14 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 302. [p. 115]
- (25) Antalya, 915–916. Inc. ἀεὶ προνοία, 12 vv. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 303.
- (26) Bosuk Mesarlik, Phrygia, first half 10th C. Inc. *τείχη φθαρέντα*, 4 vv. Ed. W.M. CALDER, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, vol. I. Manchester 1928, 139, no. 259. See H. GRÉGOIRE, *Byz* 4 (1927–28) 699.
- (27) Istanbul, 813–820. Inc. Λέων σὺν Κωνσταντίνῳ, 2 vv. Ed. VAN MILLINGEN 1899: 98; B. MEYER-PLATH & A.M. SCHNEIDER, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel*. Berlin 1943, 130 (no. 24, cf. nos. 7 and 18). For the date, see MANGO 1991: 243.
- (28) Istanbul, 829–842. Inc. σὲ Χριστὲ *τείχος*, 6 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8672 and VAN MILLINGEN 1899: 183. See MANGO 1951: 56, no. 31.
- (29) Istanbul, 856–866. Inc. [...]ων κραταιῶς δεσποσάντων τοῦ σ[...], 6 vv, fragmentary. Ed. VAN MILLINGEN 1899: 185 and C.G. CURTIS & S. ARISTARCHIS, Supplement to *ΕΦΣ* 16 (1885), no. 136. See MANGO 1951: 56, no. 27.
- (30) Istanbul, 856–866. Inc. [ὑπ]ηγετοῦντος, fragment. Ed. *CIG* 8692. See MANGO 1951: 56, no. 27.
- (31) Istanbul, 843–867. Inc. [...] τὸ πρὶν ἡμιαυρῳ[μένον], 4 vv, fragmentary. Ed. C. MANGO, *Studies on Constantinople*. Aldershot 1993, no. II, pp. 317–323.
- (32) Istanbul, 867–886. Inc. ὃν τῆς θαλάσσης, 4 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8687 and VAN MILLINGEN 1899: 186. For the date, see MANGO 1951: 56, no. 16.
- (33) Istanbul, date: reign of Constantine VII or VIII. The text is fragmentary: [...] σὲ πῦρ τὸ θεῖον προσκυνῶν δὲ Χ(ριστ)έ [...] λάβοι τὸ κύρος γῆς ὅλης Κωνστα[ντίνος] [...]σε καὶ νόες. Ed. C. MANGO, in: *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*. Princeton 1995, 645–657, esp. p. 648.
- (34) Kavalla, 926. Inc. τὰ πρὶν φθαρέντα, 6 vv. Ed. S. REINACH, *BCH* 6 (1882) 267–275. See P. LEMERLE, *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine*. Paris 1945, 141.
- (35) Nesebur (Mesembria), 879–886. Inc. τήνδε τὴν πόλιν, 4 vv. Ed. N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, *BS/EB* 8, 11 & 12 (1981, 1984 & 1985) 269–273.

other public constructions

- (36) Bari, construction of fortress, 1011. Inc. κόπῳ τε πολλῷ, 15 vv. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 143, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 313.

- (37) Near Chalkis, repair of the road from Chalkis to Eretria, end 9th C. Inc. κύτος χαλινοῖ, 6 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8801 and COUGNY 1890: III, no. 259. For the date, see *ODB*, s.v. Chalkis in Greece. See E. MALAMUT, *Les îles de l'empire byzantin*. Paris 1988, I, 222.
- (38) Istanbul, Hippodrome, restoration of the "Colossus", 945–959. Inc. τὸ τετράπλευρον θαῦμα, 6 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8703. See A.H.M. JONES, in: *Preliminary Report upon the Excavations carried out in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1927*, ed. S. CARSON. London 1928, 43–45. O. WULFF, *BZ* 7 (1898) 321, suggests that the author is Constantine the Rhodian.
- (39) Karacaköy, Thrace, reign of Basil II. Inc. θαυμαστὸν ἔργον, 8 vv. Ed. ASDRACHA 1989–91: 306–309 (no. 89). It is not known what sort of building the "admirable work" Basil II ordered to repair may have been: a tower, a rampart, an aquaduct?
- (40) Padua, on a marble slab brought from the Peloponnesos, reign of Leo V or VI. Inc. ἀνάξ Λέων ἔστησε, 2 vv. Ed. D. FEISSEL & A. PHILIPPIDIS-BRAAT, *TM* 9 (1985) 299–300 (no. 41), and GUILLOU 1996: no. 43, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 309. The text refers to a light beacon (used as a military warning system): see LEMERLE 1971: 154–155 and 156, n. 31.
- (41) Samos, Kastro Tigani, reconstruction of the fortress, reign of Theophilos. Inc. πᾶς ὁ παριῶν, 9 vv. Ed. A.M. SCHNEIDER, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung* 54 (1929) 139 (no. 12), and KOUTRAKOU 1994: 143, n. 462. See E. MALAMUT, *Les îles de l'empire byzantin*. Paris 1988, I, 238. [pp. 271–273]
- (42) Silivri (Selymbria), reconstruction of a tower, 9th–11th C. Inc. κάλλιστον ὄντα, at least 12 vv. Ed. ASDRACHA 1989–91: 280–283 (no. 75). Given the title of the person responsible for the reconstruction of the tower, *spatharokandidatos*, a ninth-century date seems the most likely.

reliquaries, ivories, icons and other small artefacts

- (43) Arezzo, reliquary of the head of Symeon the Stylite, mid 10th C. Inc. στῦλος πυρὸς πρίν, 6 vv. Ed. E. FOLLIERI, *Byz* 35 (1965) 62–82 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 16, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 309. See BOURA 1989: 407–409.
- (44) Berlin, scepter top, 886–912. Several prose inscriptions and one verse inscription: λιταῖς φοιτητῶν, Χριστέ, ἡγοῦ σὺ δούλω. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 88. See A. ARNULF, *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 32 (1990) 79.
- (45) Chambéry, ivory diptych, 10th C. Inc. ἐν ἀγκάλαις σε, 10 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 222a–d. See the catalogue of the

exhibition: Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections françaises. Paris 1992, no. 174.

As for the date, the Chambéry diptych is similar to the Warsaw diptych (see no. 71), which is now dated to the tenth century.

- (46) Cîteaux, reliquary of the arm of John the Baptist, 957. The reliquary is lost. Inc. ἦν βάρβαρος χεῖρ, 5 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8786 and MERCATI 1970: II, 271–272.
- (47) Cortona, staurotheca, date: perhaps the reign of Nikephoros II, but probably the reign of Nikephoros III. Inc. καὶ πρὶν κραταῖ, 4 vv. Ed. FROLOW 1961: 239–241 (no. 146) and GUILLOU 1996: no. 15. For the date of the inscription, see A. CUTLER, in: *Scrittura, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio*. Spoleto 1991, II, 657–659. See also N. OIKONOMIDES, in: *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of G.T. Dennis*. Washington, D.C., 1995, 77–86, and HÖRANDNER 2003–04.
- (48) Crete, reliquary of the head of St. Stephen, before 959. The reliquary is lost. Inc. τὴν σὴν κάραν πρώταθλε, 8 vv. Ed. FOLLIERI 1964a: 455–464. See V. LAURENT, *EEBS* 23 (1953) 193–196, and BOURA 1989: 407. [pp. 163–165]
- (49) Dresden, ivory slab, mid 10th C. Inc. σκεῦος θεουργόν, 2 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 45. The same text can be found on an ivory in Venice: see no. 67.
- (50) Eregli (Herakleia in Thrace), reliquary of St. Glykeria, late 9th C. Decorated rectangular marble slab, probably the lid of a sarcophagus. Inc. ὁ τερπνὸς οὔτος, 8 vv. Ed. ASDRACHA 1989–91: 274–277 (no. 71) and fig. 105b. See also TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST, *BZ* 6 (1897) 96–99.
- (51) Geneva, cross of Leo Damakranites, end 10th or beginning 11th C. Inc. ἔργον φέριστον, 6 vv. Ed. A. BANK et al., *Geneva*, n.s., 28 (1980) 97–124. See L. BOURA, in: *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, eds. M. MULLETT & R. SCOTT. Birmingham 1981, 179–187; J.-M. CHEYNET, *BSI* 42 (1981) 197–202; and especially W. SEIBT, in: *Byzantios. Festschrift H. Hunger*. Vienna 1984, 301–310.
- (52) Limburg-an-der-Lahn, staurotheca, two inscriptions: one on the cross inside, date: 945–959, and another on the staurotheca itself, date: after 963. Inc. Θεὸς μὲν ἐξέτεινε, 9 vv. and inc. οὐ κάλλος εἶχεν, 8 vv. Ed. FROLOW 1961: 233–236 (no. 135). The text that runs around the borders of the staurotheca (οὐ κάλλος εἶχεν) should be read in the same order as most other Byzantine inscriptions: that is, top-right-left-bottom, see FOLLIERI 1964a: 447–455 and ŠEVČENKO 1998: 286. For a radically different opinion, see J. KODER, *Archiv für mittelhochdeutsche Kirchengeschichte* 37 (1985) 11–31 as well as J. KODER, in MARKOPOULOS 1989: 165–184. See also BOURA 1989: 410–434 and HÖRANDNER 2003–04.
- (53) Lorch, staurotheca, 10th C. Inc. ὕλη τὸ λαμπρόν, 10 vv. Ed. *CIG* 8807 and FROLOW 1961: 229 (no. 126). [p. 164]

- (54) Monte Cassino, staurotheca, 10th C. Inc. ξύλον τὸ λῦσαν, 3 vv. Ed. FROLow 1961: 266–267 (no. 205) and GUILLOU 1996: no. 25, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 309. See H.M. WILLARD, *DOP* 30 (1976) 55–64 and HÖRANDNER 2003–04.
- (55) Padua, ink pot, 10th C. Two inscriptions. Inc. βαφῆς δοχεῖον, 1 v., and Λέων τὸ τερπνόν, 1 v. Ed. P. TOESCA, *L'Arte* 9 (1906) 34–44 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 45, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 309. See HÖRANDNER 1989: 150–151 and MAGUIRE 1994: 112–114.
- (56) Paris, triptych, mid 10th C. Inc. ὡς σὰρξ πέπονθας, ὡς Θεὸς παθὼν λύεις, 1 v. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 39.
- (57) Pavia, icon of St. Peter, date: 7th C.? The icon no longer exists. Inc. [...] τὸν Θεὸν λόγον, at least 3 verses. Ed. *CIG* 8816 and *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores*, ed. I.B. DE ROSSI. *Voluminis secundi pars prima*. Rome 1888, 33 (no. 82).
- The text can be found in the famous collection of inscriptions in the codex Einsiedlensis 326 (s. IX–X); this collection was probably put together around the year 800 by a monk of the monastery of Reichenau, who copied most of the inscriptions in Rome, but also a few (nos. 78–82) in Pavia (on his return voyage to Reichenau): see De Rossi, 9–17. The icon could be found in the church of St. Peter *in caelo aureo* in Pavia, a church that already existed in the early seventh century (the time of king Agilulf) and that was magnificently restored by the largesse of king Liutprand (712–744): see De Rossi, 33. The epigrapher, who very probably did not understand Greek, read the text as follows: Ded(icatio) in igona S(an)c(t)i Petri TONΘEONAOΓONΘENΞE-XPYCTHNEOTAYITTONPIETPANENHBEBHKΩΣ OYKONOYM (which A. Kirchhoff (the editor of *CIG*), following Mabillon, *Vetera Analecta*, IV, 505 (not available to me), prints as follows: [...] τὸν Θεὸν λόγον / θεᾶσθε χρυσῷ τὴν θεόγλυπτον πέτραν, / ἐν ἧ βεβηκώς οὐ κλονοῦμ[αι]). The study by M.P. BILLANOVICH, *Atti dell' Istituto Veneto* 151 (1992–93) 1103–1128, was not available to me; see *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 43 (1993) 228 (no. 672).
- (58) Rome, Palazzo Venezia, ivory box, 9th C. Two inscriptions, the first badly damaged. Inc. θησαυρὸς δώρων, 5 vv. (in its present state, but originally probably 6 vv.) and inc. χρυστευλόγητον, 2 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: I, no. 123 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 49. A. CUTLER & N. OIKONOMIDES, *The Art Bulletin* 70 (1988) 77–87, propose a date around 900; H. MAGUIRE, *The Art Bulletin* 70 (1988) 89–93 and I. KALAVREZOU, in: MARKOPOULOS 1989: 392–396, suggest that the box was manufactured during the reign of Basil I.
- (59) Rome, Palazzo Venezia, ivory triptych, mid 10th C. Five inscriptions. Inc. ὡς ἡπόρει χεῖρ, 6 vv; ἄναξ ὁ τεύξας, 2 vv; ἰδοῦ, πάρεστιν, 2 vv; μάργυς συναφθεῖς, 2 vv; and ἀρχιερεῖς τρεῖς, 2 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 31, and GUILLOU 1996: no. 50.
- (60) Rome, Vatican, staurotheca, date: reign of Romanos I, II, III or IV. Inc. ὠραῖον εἰς ὄρασιν, 8 vv. Ed. FROLow 1961: 231–233 (no. 134) and GUILLOU 1996: no. 52. See MERCATI 1970: II, 425–457. As for the identification of

- the emperor, Frolov assigns the inscription to the tenth century, but Guillou asserts that the script dates from the eleventh century.
- (61) Sinai, monastery of St. Catherine, icon, 9th C. Inc. τίς οὐ κλονεῖται, 4 vv. Ed. K. WEITZMANN, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons. I. From the Sixth to the Tenth Century*. Princeton 1976, 82–83 (read (νε)κρόν in v. 2 and σκεπ(όμενον) in v. 4). See K. CORRIGAN, in: *The Sacred Image East and West*, eds. R. OUSTERHOUT & L. BRUBAKER. Urbana 1995, 45–62.
- (62) Sinai, monastery of St. Catherine, niello cross, first half of the 9th C. Two verse inscriptions: inc. ἐν τῇ δυνάμει, 2 vv. and inc. κύριε ἄναξ, 2 vv. Ed. G. GALAVARIS, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 41 (1999) 171–189, and HÖRANDNER 2003–04. [p. 44]
- (63) Stuttgart, ivory box, 10th C. Inc. ὁ μὴ μερισθεῖς, 3 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT-WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 24.
- (64) Venice, staurotheca, 10th C. Inc. ὡς οἷα ποιεῖ, 4 vv. Ed. FROLOW 1961: 425–426 (no. 528) and GUILLOU 1996: no. 77, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 310. The donor can probably be identified with Constantine Lips.
- (65) Venice, reliquary of the Holy Blood, date: 10th C. Two inscriptions. Inc. τερπνὸν δοχεῖον, 2 vv. and inc. ἔχεις με φρουρόν, 1 v. Ed. PASINI 1885–87: 24–25 and 84, and GUILLOU 1996: no. 78, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 310. For the text of the first inscription and the order in which it should be read, see HÖRANDNER 1989: 151.
- (66) Venice, reliquary of the arm of St. George, 10th C. Inc. Γεωργίου λείψανον, 2 vv. Ed. PASINI 1885–87: 43–44 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 101, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 312. For the date, see HÖRANDNER 1989: 152–153.
- (67) Venice, ivory slab, mid 10th C. Inc. σκεῦος θεουργόν, 2 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 43 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 76, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 310. The same text can be found on an ivory in Dresden: see no. 49.
- (68) Venice, chalice of Sisinnios, 962–963. Inc. Χριστὸς δίδωσιν, 1 v. Ed. PASINI 1885–87: 59 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 72. See M.C. ROSS, *GRBS* 2 (1959) 5–10; HAHNLOSER 1971: 67 (description by A. GRABAR); and HÖRANDNER 1989: 151–152.
- (69) Venice, paten, 963–985. Inc. πιστῶς καθαρθεῖς, 4 vv. Ed. PASINI 1885–87: 45 and GUILLOU 1996: no. 74. See HAHNLOSER 1971: 71–72 (description by A. GRABAR), M.C. ROSS, *Archaeology* 11 (1958) 271–275, and BOURA 1989: 409–410. [p. 155]
- (70) Vienna, ivory slab, mid 10th C. Inc. ὡς ἀντάδελφοι, 2 vv. Ed. GOLDSCHMIDT & WEITZMANN 1930–34: II, no. 44.
- (71) Warsaw, ivory diptych, date: 10th C. Two inscriptions. Inc. ὁρᾷς ὅπως τὰ φοικιτά, 4 vv. and ἐκ τοῦ τεχνίτου, 4 vv. Ed. P. RUTKOWSKA, *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 6 (1965) 92–115. For the date, see A. CUTLER,

The Hand of the Master. Craftmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries). Princeton 1994, 201 and 235–236. [p. 169]

miniatures

- (72) Athos, ms. Pantokrator 61 (second half of the 9th C.). A marginal psalter with several miniatures, one of which depicts the iconoclast council of 815; next to this particular miniature a violently anti-iconoclastic poem can be found. The epigram is acephalous: inc. ἐστῶτα πύργον, 14 vv. Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1965. [p. 283]
- (73) Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, ms. W 524 (early 10th C.). Illuminated Gospels. Two captions that are meant to accompany the portraits of Mark listening to Peter and of Luke listening to Paul: inc. Πέτρου μνηθεῖς, 5 vv., and inc. τρίτος δὲ Λουκᾶς, 5 vv. Ed. SODEN 1902: 379 (nos. 10 and 11) and KOMINIS 1951: 268 (no. 7) and 271 (no. 4); see NELSON 1980: 76–78. Since the ms. has suffered some mutilation and lost some of its pages, the epigrams on Matthew and John are missing.
- (74) Florence, ms. Laur. V 9 (late 10th C.): the so-called Bible of Niketas. The ms. contains the texts of the four Major Prophets, plus an extensive commentary in the form of a catena. Each of the four books had a miniature depicting the respective prophet, but unfortunately only the portrait of Jeremiah is still extant. The epigrams that accompany the miniatures are the following four: inc. ἡ τῶν προφητῶν, 12 vv; inc. θρηνῶν προφήτα, 12 vv; inc. ψυχῆς τὸ λαμπρόν, 12 vv; and inc. ἄφραστος ἡ πρόνοια, 12 vv. Ed. BANDINI 1763–70: I, 19–21. See H. BELTING & G. CAVALLO, *Die Bibel des Niketas*. Wiesbaden 1979, and J. LOWDEN, *Illuminated Prophet Books. A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets*. University Park, Pennsylvania 1988, 19–20 and 85.
- (75) Paris, ms. Par. gr. 510 (date: c. 880–883). Illuminated manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos. Caption to a (badly damaged) miniature representing Basil I, Elijah and the archangel Michael: inc. [...] ἐμφανῶς [...], 4 vv. Caption to a miniature depicting Basil's wife, Eudokia Ingherina, and their sons: inc. εὐκληματοῦσαν, 4 vv. Ed. I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden 1976, 96–99. See S. DER NERSESSIAN, *DOP* 16 (1962) 197–208, I. KALAVREZOU-MAXEINER, *JÖB* 27 (1978) 19–24, and L. BRUBAKER, *DOP* 39 (1985) 1–13.
- (76) Paris, ms. Coisl. gr. 195 (10th C.). Illuminated Gospels. The ms. contains the following four captions: inc. γράψε Θεοῦ σαρκώσιος, 2 vv. (Matthew); οὐ κατ' ἐποννυμίην, 2 vv. (Mark); ἀθανάτου βίοτιοι, 2 vv. (Luke); and ἀρχιερεὺς Ἐφέσιοι, 2 vv. (John). These epigrams can be found in the Greek Anthology: *AP* I, 83, 85, 84 and 80. They are also to be found in

- another illuminated Gospel Book: Laura A 12 (s. XI). See NELSON 1980: 78, 88, n. 16 and n. 17 [pp. 357–358].
- (77) Patmos, monastery of St. John the Theologian, ms. 33 (a. 941). Italian manuscript (copied in Reggio di Calabria): it contains the *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzos; see A. ΚΟΜΙΝΗΣ, *Σύμμεικτα* 1 (1966) 22–34, and idem, *Πατμιακή Βιβλιοθήκη*. Athens 1988, I, 82–90. Fol. 4^r: picture of a cross ornamented with leaf-shoots, peacocks, and so forth; the cross itself is inscribed. The inscription is an epigram of 15 vv.: inc. οἱ σταυρὸν ἀσπάζοντες. Ed. I. ΣΑΚΚΕΛΙΩΝ, *Πατμιακή Βιβλιοθήκη*. Athens 1890, 20.
- (78) Princeton, Univ. Libr. cod. Garrett 1 (late 9th C.). Illuminated Gospels. Description of the ms. by B.A. VILEISIS, in: G. VIKAN, *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections. An Exhibition in honor of Kurt Weitzmann*. Princeton 1973, 56–57. On fig. 2, the portrait of Luke bears an inscription: 4 vv., inc. μέγας [...ἰ]ατρὸς καὶ ζωγράφος. According to NELSON 1980: 95, the miniatures of the three other evangelists also have metrical captions.
- (79) Rome, ms. Vat. gr. 1522 (second half of the 10th C.). Illuminated lectionary. On fols. 2^r–3^v, fol. 197^r and fol. 197^v we find three epigrams: σαφῶς ὁ Μωσῆς, 22 vv.; ὁ τετραμόρφους, 8 vv.; and οὗτος παλαιός, 5 vv. All three epigrams are written in gold uncial letters and are framed by two arches, adorned with images of birds (mainly eagles) and flowers. The second and third epigrams were edited by C. GIANNELLI, *Codices Vaticani Graeci* (cod. 1485–1683). Vatican 1950, 69; the first one was edited by B. DE MONTFAUCON, *Palaeographia Graeca*. Paris 1708, 228 (on the basis of Par. gr. 278, a ms. that is similar to Vat. gr. 1522). For a new edition of the three epigrams (based not only on Vat. gr. 1522 and Par. gr. 278, but also on Vat. gr. 1145), see F. D'AIUTO & A. SIRINIAN, *RSBN*, n.s., 36 (1999) 121–169. For the date of the manuscript, see P. CANART, in: *I manoscritti greci tra riflessione e dibattito. Atti del V Colloquio Internazionale di Paleografia Greca*, vols. I–III, ed. G. PRATO. Florence 2000, 681. See also NELSON 1980: 28–29 and 48, n. 69–75, and G. GALAVARIS, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels*. Vienna 1979, 92–93 and 124.
- (80) Rome, ms. Vat. gr. 1613 (date: after 979): the so-called Menologion of Basil II (though it is in fact a version of the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*). The ms. has hundreds of miniatures. For some unknown reason the illuminators of the ms. did not produce the full-page miniature which the dedicatory epigram on page A describes in great detail and which should have been painted on the next page: see I. ŠEVČENKO, *DOP* 19 (1962) 271–274 (repr. in: idem, *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World*. London 1982, no. XI). Inc. ἐνταῦθα νῦν σκόπησον, 28 vv. Ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad*

Acta Sanctorum Novembris. Brussels 1902, pp. XXV–XXVI. For the date, see S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Byz* 15 (1940–41) 104–125. [p. 280]

- (81) Rome, ms. Vat. Reg. gr. 1 (c. 940–950): the so-called Bible of Leo Sakellarios. The ms. is renowned for its full-page miniatures that serve as frontispieces to the books of Genesis through Psalms. Epigrams are written on the frames of these miniatures. There are three dedicatory epigrams: one book epigram (see next appendix: no. 13) and two captions to miniatures, inc. ἄλλοι μὲν ἄλλως, 7 vv. (fol. 2^v) and inc. νίκος λαοῦ μοχθηρᾶς, 6 vv. (fol. 3^r). Furthermore, there are thirteen epigrams that refer to the scene portrayed in the miniature they accompany: inc. τὸν χοῦν ὁ τῆς γῆς, 6 vv. (fol. II^r); inc. ἔδειξεν Μωσῆς, 4 vv. (fol. 46^v); inc. οἱ τῆς παλαιᾶς, 6 vv. (fol. 85^v); inc. Μωσῆς ἀριθμῶν, 6 vv. (fol. 116^r); inc. ἔδειξεν ἡμῖν, 4 vv. (fol. 155^v); inc. Θεὸς καρτὰς δίδωσιν, 6 vv. (fol. 206^r); inc. ὁ μικρὸς ὄντως, 6 vv. (fol. 263^r); inc. ἐξ ὁσφύος μου, 6 vv. (fol. 281^v); inc. πόλον ὁ κλείσας, 6 vv. (fol. 302^v); inc. σκόπει τὸ λύττρον, 6 vv. (fol. 383^r); inc. τῶν Μακκαβαίων, 6 vv. (fol. 450^v); inc. γυμνὸν τὸν Ἰώβ, 4 vv. (fol. 461^v); and inc. τίς σοῦ φράσαι, προφῆτα, 6 vv. (fol. 487^v). Ed. MATHEWS 1977: 124–132. For the identification of the donor and the date of the manuscript, see MANGO 1969. See also: Die Bibel des Patricius Leo. Codex Reginensis Graecus 1 B. Einführung von S. DUFRENNE & P. CANART. Zurich 1988 (on p. 66 they argue that the ms. was not written in the 940s, but some twenty to thirty years earlier). For some interesting comments on the epigrams, see OLSTER 1994.

The edition by Mathews is unreliable. Cyril Mango has announced that he is preparing a new edition, which will be published, together with contributions by P. Canart, S. Dufrenne and I. Hutter, in a volume dedicated to the Leo Bible. As long as this new edition is not yet on the market, we have to make do with Mathews' idiosyncratic readings. To give an example, on pp. 132–133 he prints γεννήτωρ ἀγράφοντες (sic) and translates "ancestor (...), we who do not write (...)": read γεννήτορα γράφοντες and translate "we who depict the ancestor (...)".

[pp. 44–45 and 191–196]

- (82) Sofia, ms. Dujčev gr. 272 [Kosinitza 115] (9th C.). Illuminated Gospels. Inc. Ματθαῖος ἐστίν, 3 vv. (originally 4 vv., but the last line has been cut away). Ed. A. DŽUROVA, *BollGrott* 44 (1990) 191 and pl. 6. See also A. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ-ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ, Supplement to *ΕΦΣ* 17 (1886) 27.
- (83) Venice, ms. Marc. gr. Z 17 (1001–1005): the so-called Psalter of Basil II. A poem on fol. II^v that corresponds with a miniature on fol. III^r (depicting Basil II, archangels, military saints, and Christ above): inc. τὸ θαῦμα καινόν, 11 vv. Ed. I. ŠEVČENKO, *DOP* 19 (1962) 271–272 and n. 92 (repr. in: idem, *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World*. London 1982, no. XI) and CH. WALTER, in: *L'art byzantin au début du XIV^e siècle*. Belgrade 1978, 193–195 (repr. in: idem, *Prayer and Power in Byzantine and Papal Imagery*. London 1993, no. IV). For the date, see

A. CUTLER, *Arte Veneta* 30 (1976) 9–19 and 31 (1977) 9–15 (repr. in: idem, *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art*. London, 1992, no. III). See also A. CUTLER, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*. Paris 1984, 115–119.

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epitaphs

- (84) Afyon, 8th–9th C. Inc. τὸ τρισήμιον, 17 vv. Ed. DREW-BEAR & FOSS 1969. For the date, see MANGO 1991: 245. [pp. 216–217]
- (85) Ankara, 9th–10th C. Inc. ἐπιστάμενος, 19 vv, with acrostic: ευσταθιος τουρμαρχης. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1927–28: 449–452. [p. 216]
- (86) Aphrodisias, 10th C. Some fragments of a metrical epitaph. The text cannot be reconstructed. Ed. CH. ROUECHÉ, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity. The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions including Texts from the Excavations conducted by K.T. ERIM*. Leeds 1989, 159 (no. 99). The fragment “ἀγγέλων πρωτοστάτης” refers to the Orthodox belief that angels guide the soul to the heavenly abodes: see DREW-BEAR & FOSS 1969: 81. Νεκρῶν in the fragment “σῶμα νεκρῶν τῷ βίῳ” is not a gen. pl. of νεκρός, as Roueché thinks, but a part. praes. act. of the verb νεκρώω: cf. GUILLOU 1996: no. 191, v. 5: καὶ σῶμα νεκρώσαντα καὶ πρὸ θανάτου.
- (87) Cappadocia, Zelve, Hermitage of Symeon, early 10th C. Inc. βρέφος ἐπλάσθη, 11 vv. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 2, 580 (no. 111). [pp. 217–218]
- (88) Erenköy (on the Asiatic shore, not far from Fenerbahçe): probably the site of the monastery of Galakrenai. Date: 901–907 or 912–925. Inc. τύμβος ἐγὼν προλέγων, 7 vv. Ed. ŠEVČENKO 1987. [p. 120]
- (89) Istanbul, chapel of Christ Chalkites, 976. Epitaph of John Tzimiskes, at least one verse of which was still visible in the early 18th C.: κατὰ Σκυθῶν ἔπνευσας θερμὸν ἐν μάχαις. Ed. TH. SMITH, *Opuscula*. Rotterdam 1716, 121. See C. MANGO, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen 1959, 166–167, and MANGO 1995: 116 and n. 46. [pp. 239–240]
- (90) Istanbul, monastery of Myrelaion, 9th–10th C. (according to the editor, but possibly slightly later). Two tiny fragments that belong together: μνην εσ[...]δε τὴν σεβασμίαν / [...]ως καὶ ἔσχεσ αλ[...]ν χούν καὶ μόνον and τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ γὰρ χεὶρ φέρει τοῦ δεσπότου. Ed. W.H. BUCKLER, *Byz* 8 (1933) 175–176: nos. 1 and 3. See D. TALBOT RICE, *Byz* 8 (1933) 153.
- (91) Ravenna, between 625 and 642–643. Inc. [...]εν σῶμα κρύπτεται κάτ[ω], 11 vv. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 108, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 312–313.
- (92) Ravenna, S. Vitale, 642–643. Inc. ἐνταῦθα κεῖται, 12 vv. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 109, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 313. [pp. 221–223]

- (93) Rome, S. Giorgio in Velabro, first half 10th C. Inc. Ἰωάννου πατριαρχοῦντος, 19 vv, with acrostic: ιωαννου αρχιπρεσβυτε, and with a heading attached to the poem (!): Ἰω(άννου) ἀρχιπρ[εσβυτέρου γέν]να καὶ βίος ὑπὸ ἀκροσ(τί)χ(ων). Only the first seven verses can still be read. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 115, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 313. [p. 216]
- (94) Rome, S. Giorgio in Velabro, first half 10th C. The inscription is almost illegible. Inc. τα[...], 21 vv, with acrostic: τυμβος ιωαννου αρχιπρεσ. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 116. See also G. COZZA-LUZI, Velabrensia. *Bessarione* 6 (1899–1900) 58–95, at pp. 87–89, who deciphers more letters than Guillolou does. [p. 216]
- (95) Rome, S. Giorgio in Velabro, 9th–10th C. Four fragments. Fragments I and II are almost intact. Fragments III and IV are the left side and the right side of the bottom part of the inscription, respectively; circa 5 letters of each line are lost in the gap between frs. III and IV. Inc. θεσγῶν (?) θρηῖνον, 10 vv, with acrostic: θεοπεμπτου. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 118, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 313. For the date, see MANGO 1991: 243. [pp. 218–219]
- (96) Wondrous Mountain (Saman Daği), near Antioch, monastery of St. Symeon the Stylite the Younger, at the east end of the so-called *Martyrium* (to the south of the main church). The epitaph dates from the 8th C. or later. Inc. πεισόντα δεῦρο, 2 vv. Ed. J.P. REY-COQUAIS, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 52 (1991–92) 214–216 (no. III). For the date, see D. FEISSEL, *REG* 109 (1996) 646–647 (no. 470). See also J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, Itinéraires archéologiques dans la région d'Antioche. Recherches sur le monastère et sur l'iconographie de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune. Brussels 1967, 127–128.

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gnomic epigrams (memento mori)

- (97) Athos, monastery of Xeropotamos, a marble slab dating from the late 10th century, which shows a peacock clutching an almost rectangular orb from which acanthus leaves shoot forth. The marble slab bears a verse inscription along the bottom: μνήνη θανάτου χρησμεύει τῷ βίῳ. See Θεσσαλονικῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους. Thessalonica 1997, catalogue number 6. 5, pp. 241–242 (description by Θ.Ν. ΠΑΖΑΡΑΣ). Above the slab there is another inscription, which commemorates Andronikos II. However, as Hörandner points out (in an e-mail, d.d. 10-10-2000), “es sieht so aus, als wären die beiden Inschriften gar nicht auf einem und demselben Stein angebracht (...). Die obere Inschrift (...) scheint, dem Photo nach zu schließen, auf einer anders-

farbigen, darunter liegenden Platte angebracht zu sein". The epigraphic script of the inscription at the bottom appears to date from the tenth century (despite the supra-script tau in τῷ): capital letters without accents or breathings, but with extensive use of serifs; an "archaic" square epsilon, but also a slender oval one with the horizontal stroke above the middle of the letter; a similar oval theta; a beta with the two loops separated, but without an extended horizontal bar at the base; for the rather unusual form of the alpha as well as for most of the letters, see the verse inscription on the relic of St. Symeon in Arezzo dating from the mid tenth century (no. 43). The marble slab can now be found on the exterior wall of the monastery; its original location is not known. The gnomic monostich is also known to have been inscribed in Palaeologan times on the Xyloporta (Odun Kapsi) in Constantinople: see MANGO 1951: 57 (no. 3); see also TH. PREGER, *BZ* 21 (1912) 469 and S.G. MERCATI, *Bessarione* 26 (1922) 219.

[pp. 243–244]

- (98) Bari, Cathedral, early 11th C. Inc. [ἐκ]ο[υ]σίως στέρξασα, 7 vv. Ed. GUILLOU 1996: no. 144, cf. HÖRANDNER 1998: 313. See M. MATHIEU, *Byz* 23 (1953) 129–130. [pp. 245–246]

- (99a) Cappadocia, Ihlara, Eğri Taş Kilisesi, 921–944. Inc. μηδεις τυφλούσθω. The text is fragmentary and difficult to decipher. Number of verses: 10 to 12. For the text of the inscription, see N. & M. THIERRY, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce*. Paris 1963, 68–69 and pl. 37. For the date of the Eğri Taş Kilesesi, see N. OIKONOMIDES, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983) 501–506 and I. BALDICEANU-STEINHERR, *JÖB* 38 (1988) 395–420.

The text edited by the Thierry's on pp. 68–69 differs somewhat from what I read on pl. 37 (that is, as far as I can decipher the inscription).

- (99b) Cappadocia, Selime, Kale Kilisesi, 11th C. Inc. μηδεις τυφούσθω. The text is fragmentary and hard to decipher. Number of verses: 10. For the text of the inscription, see J. LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE, in: *Zetesis. Festschrift E. de Strycker*. Antwerpen-Utrecht 1973, 742, and L. RODLEY, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia*. Cambridge 1985, 73–74.

- (99c) Panion, Thrace, a marble plaque (lost), 9th–11th C. Inc. μηδεις τυφλούτω, 6 vv. Ed. ASDRACHA 1989–91: 286–287 (no. 78).

Inscriptions 99a, 99b and 99c present many divergent readings. See, for instance, the first three verses: (99a) μηδεις τυφλούσθω τῇ ὀρέ[ξ]ει τοῦ πλούτου· πολλοὺς γὰρ ἀπώλε[σε φ]ύλ[α]ργυρία· ἡ σάρε[ξ] ταύτη χοῦς, πηλὸς καὶ [...]; (99b) μηδεις τυφούσθω τῇ ὀρέξει τοῦ πλ[ούτου]· πολλοὺς γὰρ ἀπέλεσεν ἡ φιλαργυρία· ἡ σάρεξ γὰρ ταύτη χοῦς, πηλὸς καὶ [...]; (99c) μηδεις τυφλούτω τῇ ὀρέξει τοῦ πλούτου· πολλοὺς λυμαίνει ἡ τοῦ κόσμου φιλία· ἡ σάρεξ γὰρ ταύτη χοῦς, πηλὸς, γῆ ὑπάρχει.

[pp. 244–245]

- (100) Cappadocia, Zelve, Hermitage of Symeon, early 10th C. The same text is inscribed in two different places. Inc. ὡς ὧδε κόσμος, 3 vv. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 2, 573 (no. 106) and 575 (no. 110). [p. 245]

- (101) Cappadocia, Zelve, Hermitage of Symeon, early 10th C. Inc. ὁ Χριστὸς ἔστιν, 2 vv. Ed. JERPHANION 1925–42: I, 2, 574 (no. 109).

gnomic epigrams (protreptic)

- (102) Akhissar (the ancient Thyateira), 9th C. Inc. τρόμφ πρόβλεπε, 1 v. Ed. GRÉGOIRE 1922: no. 328. For the date, see C. FOSS, *Ephesus after Antiquity: a Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City*. Cambridge 1979, 115, n. 39.
- (103) Fetoka, Pontos region, church of the Holy Virgin, 933–934. Inc. [...] φρίττων εἰσπορεύου ἐνθάδε, 5 vv. Ed. A. BRYER and D. WINFIELD, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*. Dumbarton Oaks 1985, vol. I, 330. See S. BALLANCE, *Anatolian Studies* 10 (1960) 167–169 and A. BRYER, *BMGS* 9 (1984–85) 213.
- (104) Little Prespa Lake, church of St. Achilleios, late 10th C. (according to some scholars; but the date is disputed), and Thessalonica, Panagia Chalkeon, not long after 1028. Inc. ὁρῶν τὸ βῆμα, 5 vv. Ed. N. RADOŠEVIĆ-MAKSIMOVIĆ, *ZRVI* 12 (1970) 9–13 and HÖRANDNER 1997: 437–439. See P. SPECK, *Hell* 20 (1967) 418–421. The epigram can also be found in several other Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches, often with considerable text variants: see the above-mentioned publications.
- Given the date of the Panagia Chalkeon and given the immense popularity of the text and the fact that it can be found all over the Byzantine empire, there can be little doubt that the original epigram was composed well before the year 1000. Moreover, in the light of the epigram's popularity it seems very likely that it was originally inscribed in a monastic site or cult centre of great renown, from which it radiated and spread right across the Byzantine empire.
- (105) Selčuk, Basilica of St. John, early 9th C. Inc. φόβῳ πρόσελθε, 3 vv. Ed. C. FOSS, *Ephesus after Antiquity: a Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City*. Cambridge 1979, 115. See N. ΒΕΗΣ, *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερὶς* 1953–54, pp. 273–274. [pp. 246–247]

APPENDIX IX

Dedicatory Book Epigrams

The following appendix comprises a list of dedicatory book epigrams written before the year 1000. The list is not exhaustive. It only contains the texts I have come across in the course of preparing this book. Like the list of verse inscriptions (Appendix VIII), it merely aims to provide a useful supplement to the present study.

The list of dedicatory book epigrams does not include dedicatory colophon verses – epigrams found at the beginning or the end of Byzantine manuscripts, in which the scribes express their gratitude for having finally completed their work and kindly ask future readers to pray for their spiritual salvation. Many interesting colophon verses of the ninth and tenth centuries can be found in: Φ. ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΑΤΟΥ-ΝΟΤΑΡᾶ, *Σημειώματα ἑλληνικῶν κωδίκων ὡς πηγὴ διὰ τὴν ἔρευναν τοῦ οἰκονομικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ βίου τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἀπὸ τοῦ 9ου αἰῶνος μέχρι τοῦ ἔτους 1204*. Diss. Athens 1978: see the epigrams on pp. 161, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 182, 184, 186, 187 and 189.

The majority of the book epigrams in Byzantine manuscripts are not dedicatory, but refer to the authors of the literary texts these manuscripts contain: see, for instance, the many epigrams on the evangelists we find in Byzantine Gospel Books. The reason I have decided not to compile a list of these (non-dedicatory) book epigrams is that such a list, however much effort is put into it, would always be incomplete and inaccurate due to the very nature of the manuscript evidence. To give an example, epigrams on the evangelists found in Gospel Books of the Palaeologan period may well have been composed in the ninth or the tenth century; the dates of the surviving manuscripts only provide a *terminus ante quem*, not a *terminus ad quem*. Similarly, a book epigram on, say, St. Gregory, which we find in a tenth-century manuscript, may have been composed well before that date. Metre, language and style often provide important chronological clues; but not always, and I do not think that a list of arbitrarily dated book epigrams serves any practical purpose.

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There are all sorts of dedicatory book epigrams: epigrams in which the author, the compiler or the translator presents his work, epigrams celebrating the emperor under whose patronage the edition of a literary text was undertaken, and epigrams written in honour of the owner or the donor of a specific manuscript. In the following list I first provide the name of the Byzantine individual who wrote, commissioned, donated or owned a given literary work. I then explain his connection to the literary work, be it author, patron, ktetor, or other. Finally I mention the literary work which the dedicatory book epigram accompanies, and the probable date of the epigram. Page numbers between square brackets refer to the pages in which I treat the book epigram.

- (1) Basil Lekapenos, patron, *Naumachika*, 959. Inc. Αὐσονίων σοφίης, 12 vv. Ed. ΣΤ. ΚΥΡΙΑΚΙΔΗΣ, *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς ΑΠΘ* 3 (1939) 281–288. For comments on this edition, see F. DÖLGER, *BZ* 40 (1940) 181–191. See also C. MAZZUCCHI, *Aevum* 52 (1978) 267–318. [p. 322]
- (2) Basil Lekapenos, ktetor, Epistles of St. Paul, 985. Inc. [τὸ θεομὸν ὄντως] πίστεως Βασιλείου, 20 vv. Ed. H. BELTING & G. CAVALLO, *Die Bibel des Niketas*. Wiesbaden 1979, 25 and BOURA 1989: 404.
- (3) Constantine VII, patron, *Historical Excerpts*, before 959. Inc. αἰὼν ὁ μακρός, 15 vv. Ed. TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST, *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis. Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti*, vol. II, 1. Berlin 1906, 3. See LEMERLE 1971: 280. [p. 207]
- (4) Constantine VII, patron, Ps. Aristotle's *De Natura Animalium*, before 959. Inc. ζῶων ἔθῃ νομάς τε, 4 vv. Ed. Sp. LAMBROS, *Excerptorum Constantini de natura animalium libri duo. Supplementum Aristotelicum I*, 1. Berlin 1885, 1. See LEMERLE 1971: 296–297.
- (5) Constantine VII, patron, Pythagoric treatise on Music, before 959. Inc. τῆς μουσικῆς ἔλεξε, 8 vv. Ed. A. CAMERON, *Phoenix* 38 (1984) 256–260. [p. 207]
- (6) Constantine (VII?), patron, Menologion. Inc. ἔκπαλ' ἠθροῖσε, 10 vv (?). Ed. A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*. Leipzig 1936–39, I, 2, 709 (cf. p. 493, n. 5).
The text is written in prose, but clearly contains dodecasyllabic fragments. The text states that emperor Constantine the Younger commissioned the compilation of a collection of saint's lives. As the manuscript dates from the twelfth century, it is not clear whether Constantine VII, VIII or IX is meant. Neither can it be proved that the epigram refers to a pre-Metaphrastic compilation. See LEMERLE 1971: 293–294.
- (7) Genesios, author, *History of Emperors*, 945–959. Inc. τὴν ἐξ ἱστορίας, 4 vv. Ed. A. LESMÜLLER-WERNER & I. THURN, *Iosephi Genesii regum libri quattuor (CFHB 14)*. Berlin 1978, 3. Genesios dedicates his *History* to Constantine VII.

- (8) John the Monk, translator, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, 748. Two epigrams: inc. γάνυται πᾶς ὁ ἐντυγχάνων τῇ βίβλῳ, 33 vv. [with acrostic: Γρηγορίου βίβλος Ζαχαρίου πατριάρχου], and ἰδὼν δὲ τὸν ζῆλον τοῦ ἱεροῦ τούτου, 14 vv. [with acrostic: Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ]. Ed. MERCATI 1919: 165–173.

In 748 pope Zacharias made the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great available in Greek translation. This translation is introduced by two epigrams. The first epigram celebrates the wisdom of Gregory the Great and the religious zeal of Zacharias; the second one states that John the Monk wrote the text of the translation. Although the first epigram states that Zacharias “translated” the *Dialogues* (ὄλην τὴν βίβλον τῇ Ἑλληνίδι γλώττῃ ὑφήγησάτο τοῖς πᾶσιν ἑρμηνεύσας), it is reasonable to assume that it was John the Monk who did the actual translating, and not the pope who will have had more important matters to attend to. Here the active voice, ἑρμηνεύσας, indicates that Zacharias “had (the *Dialogues*) translated”.

[p. 29]

- (9) John the Stoudite, author, epigram on Naukratios, 9th C. Inc. ἀλλ’ ὃ Θεοῦ δώρημα, 6 vv. Ed. E. AUVRAY, *Sancti patris nostri et confessoris Theodori Studitis praepositi Parva Catechesis*. Paris 1891, LXVI.

For the sake of clarity, John the Stoudite wrote this dedicatory epigram to accompany another epigram of his, inc. Ναυκρατίου μεγάλου, 6 vv. (ed. AUVRAY, p. LXVI), which he had written in honour of Naukratios. In other words, this is an epigram on an epigram.

- (10) Leo VI, ktetor, Ourbikios' *Strategikon*, 886–912. Inc. βίβλου τησδ’ ἐπέεσσι, 5 vv. Ed. R. FÖRSTER, *Hermes* 12 (1877) 467–471. See A. DAIN, *REB* 26 (1968) 125 and CAMERON 1993: 149–150.
- (11) Leo VI, ktetor, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, 886–912. Inc. οὐδέν τι τερπνόν, 30 vv. Ed. A. HUG, *Commentatio de Xenophontis Anab. codice C* i.e. Parisino 1640. Zürich 1878, 1–2 and MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 195. For a thorough commentary on the epigram, see MARKOPOULOS 1994a: 193–198. [pp. 208–212]
- (12) Leo the Patrician and Logothetes, ktetor, *Homilies* of John Chrysostom, 10th C. Inc. ἀνενδεῆς ὢν, 30 vv. Ed. Ἰ. & Ἀ. ΣΑΚΚΕΛΙΩΝ, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἑθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος*. Athens 1892, 40–41. The ms., Athens 212, dates from the tenth century. I have not been able to identify the ktetor. The only tenth-century logothetes tou dromou by the name of Leo (Rhabdouchos) listed in: D.A. MILLER, *Byz* 36 (1966) 469–470, holds the title of magistros. Cf. *De administrando imperio*. Commentary by F. DVORNIK, R. JENKINS and others. London 1972, 135.
- (13) Leo Sakellarios, donor, *Bible*, c. 940–950. Inc. τοῦ παντάνακτος, 60 vv. Ed. MATHEWS 1977: 124–126. For more information, see Appendix VIII: no. 81.
- (14) Niketas, patron, Apollonios of Kition's *Commentary on Hippocrates' Joints*, c. 900. Three dedicatory epigrams: inc. Ἰππόκρατές τε, 34 vv.; πονεῖ μὲν ἡ μέλισσα, 33 vv.; and Ἰππόκρατες, σκίρτησον, 24 vv. Ed. H. SCHÖNE, Apollonius von Kitium. *Illustrierter Kommentar zu der hippokratischen*

- Schrift *περὶ ἄρθρων*. Leipzig 1896, XII–XIV. See also T.S. MILLER, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*. Baltimore 1983, 180–182. [pp. 206–208]
- (15) Peter the Patrician, donor, Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Cure of Pagan Maladies*, 886–912. Inc. καὶ τοῦτο τῆς σῆς, 20 vv. Ed. P. LAMBECK, *Commentariorum de Augustissima Bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonensi liber IV*. Editio altera studio et opera A.F. Koller. Vienna 1776, 399–402 and MARKOPOULOS 1994b: 33–34. For a thorough commentary on the epigram, see MARKOPOULOS 1994b: 34–40. [pp. 29 and 137]
- (16) Romanos I, legislator, Novel no. 5, 920–44. Inc. νέον νόμον τίθησι, 2 vv. Ed. J. and P. ZEPOS, *Jus Graecoromanum*, I. Repr. Darmstadt 1962, 206 (Coll. III. Nov. V).
- (17) Sisinnios of Laodikeia, ktetor, *Homilies* of John Chrysostom, c. 870–880. Inc. τὸν χρυσόγειθρον, 102 vv. Ed. G. MEYER & M. BURCKHARDT, *Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel*. Abt. B. Theologische Pergament-handschriften, I. Basel 1960, 150–169 (B II 15). See also L. PERRIA, *RSBN* 26 (1989) 125–132. [pp. 31 and 137]
- (18) Theodore, patron, collection of alchemistic texts, 10th c. Inc. τὴν βίβλον ὄλβου, 28 vv. Ed. M. BERTHELOT, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*. London 1963, pp. 3–4 of the “Texte grec”; cf. pp. 3–4 of the “Traduction” and pp. 174–179 and 203 of the “Introduction”.
Theodore is otherwise unknown; in v. 25 he calls himself “a faithful assistant of the emperors”.
[p. 207]
- (19) Theodosios the Monk, author, Letter to Leo the Deacon on the Fall of Syracuse, 878. The letter to Leo is accompanied by a dedicatory epigram. The epigram exists only in Latin translation: inc. fructus laborum, 6 vv. Ed. GALLAVOTTI 1987: 58. See B. LAVAGNINI, *Byz* 29–30 (1959–60) 267–279.
- (20) Theodosios the Monk, author, Anacreont on the Fall of Syracuse, 878. The anacreont is accompanied by a dedicatory epigram. The epigram exists only in Latin translation: inc. Theodosius suavibus, 4 vv. Ed. GALLAVOTTI 1987: 57–58. See B. LAVAGNINI, *Diptycha* 1 (1979) 291–299.
- (21) Theognostos, author, *On Orthography*, 813–20. Inc. τῷ δεσπότῃ μου, 7 vv. Ed. K. ALPERS, *Theognostos. Περί ὀρθογραφίας*. Überlieferung, Quellen und Text der Kanones 1–84. Hamburg 1964, 68 (cf. pp. 61–64). Theognostos dedicates his work to Leo V.

APPENDIX X

AP I, 37–89

The first book of the Palatine Anthology devoted to Christian themes has understandably attracted the interest of many Byzantinists, especially those specialised in art history. However, the central core of this book, the group of epigrams found at *AP I, 37–89*, has not drawn much attention. To my knowledge, there is only one art-historical study of these epigrams, namely Salač 1951; some problems related to Byzantine theology are discussed by Bauer 1960–61; and a few cursory remarks on metre and style can be found in Baldwin 1996. The corpus of epigrams at *AP I, 37–89* appears to be a cohesive whole because they are all hexametric or elegiac distichs (with two exceptions). But if one examines the manuscript evidence closely, it becomes clear that a number of epigrams are later additions to the original corpus. In the following I shall explain why I think that nos. 50–51 and 78–89 are later additions to the corpus of epigrams, and I shall also try to establish the date of the original epigram cycle consisting of nos. 37–49 and 52–77. For a detailed analysis of this epigram cycle, see chapter 5, pp. 187–190.

The series of epigrams at *AP I, 37–89* consists of distichs. There are two exceptions: 51 (one verse) and 88 (three verses). No. 88 is a late antique book epigram on St. Dionysios the Areopagite, which can also be found in other manuscripts¹. The monostich, no. 51, was taken from a poem by Gregory of Nazianzos (I. 1. 23, v. 9). These two epigrams clearly do not belong to the original corpus.

Nos. 49–51 are epigrams on the Raising of Lazarus. No. 49 belongs to the epigram cycle; nos. 50–51 do not. No. 51 is the monostich from a poem by Gregory of Nazianzos. No. 50 bears the lemma: “On the same. In Ephesus”. Seeing that none of the epigrams at *AP I, 37–89* bears a lemma stating its provenance, there can be no doubt that no. 50 is a later addition to the original corpus. And as Gregory of Kampsas is known to have copied verse inscriptions in Ephesus, it is reasonable to assume that it was Cephala who added no. 50.

There are more additions to the original epigram cycle. The epigrams on the four evangelists, *AP I, 80–85*, do not belong to the corpus. Nos. 80 and 83–85 (on John, Matthew, Luke and Mark, respectively) can be found next to

¹ See STADTMÜLLER 1894–1906: ad locum.

miniatures portraying the evangelists in Par. Coisl. gr. 195 (s. X) and Laura A 12 (s. XI)². Since epigrams on the evangelists do not appear in illuminated Gospel Books before the year 800, nos. 80 and 83–85 will have been written in the ninth century³. Nos. 81–82 are literary imitations of no. 80. These two epigrams also date from the ninth century, because they must have been composed after no. 80 had been written (c. 800 at the earliest) and before they entered the anthology of Cephalas (c. 890–900).

Nos. 78–79 (on St. Peter and St. Paul) and 86 (on St. Basil) are book epigrams. Since they do not describe images, they clearly do not belong to the original epigram cycle. These three epigrams cannot be dated.

Seeing that nos. 78–79 and 86 (book epigrams), nos. 80 and 83–85 (ninth-century epigrams on miniatures), nos. 81–82 (literary imitations of no. 80) and no. 88 (a three-line book epigram on St. Dionysios) are later additions to the corpus, it is reasonable to assume that the corpus ended where most of the additions start, namely at no. 77. If this is the case, nos. 87 and 89 are Cephalan additions as well. The former deals with St. Polycarp (no. 87), the latter with St. Polycarp and St. Nicholas (no. 89). The text of the second epigram reads: “Polycarp has Nicholas near him because the hands of both were ever most prompt to deeds of mercy”. Here the famous St. Nicholas plays second fiddle to St. Polycarp. The cult of St. Nicholas is relatively young. It manifested itself outside Lycia in the sixth century when Justinian built the church of St. Priscus and St. Nicholas in Constantinople. In this church, as in the two epigrams on St. Polycarp, the devotional status of St. Nicholas was secondary to that of St. Priscus. The cult of St. Nicholas gradually spread between c. 500 and 800. It was not until the ninth century that the local saint of Myra achieved great prominence. St. Nicholas suddenly ranked among the major Byzantine saints, was venerated throughout the empire and became a popular subject in Byzantine art⁴. It is reasonable to conjecture that the two epigrams dedicated to Polycarp and Nicholas date from before the year 800, when the cult of St. Nicholas had not yet reached its peak.

According to Salač⁵, the epigram cycle originates from two different sources: a collection of hexametric couplets and a collection of elegiac distichs. The

² See Appendix VIII, no. 76.

³ The epigrams on the evangelists obtain their information from the prefaces to the Byzantine Gospel Book. As these prefaces “are not a feature of the earliest manuscripts, but appear only in the early ninth century”, the epigrams found in Byzantine Gospels cannot have been composed before the year 800: see NELSON 1980: 97.

⁴ See G. ANRICH, Hagios Nikolaos. Leipzig 1913–17, II, 441–466 and N. PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*. Turin 1983, 18–22.

⁵ SALAČ 1951: 1–9. So also A. ARNULF, *Versus ad picturas. Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*. Berlin 1997, 141–145.

reason why Salač divides the corpus into two is that he thinks that a series of inscriptions should be composed in the same metre. But is this presupposition justified? Firstly, as epigrams nos. 80 and 83–85 prove, Byzantine captions to miniatures can be composed in different metres: nos. 80 and 85 are written in elegiac distich, nos. 83 and 84 in hexameter. Secondly, as I explained in chapter 5, pp. 187–188, epigrams nos. 37–49 and 52–77 are not authentic verse inscriptions, but form a literary response to Byzantine art. Let us look at the evidence. The hexametric couplets are nos. 40–47, 49, 52 and 56; all these epigrams deal with the New Testament. The elegiac distichs are nos. 37–39, 53–55 and 57–77; these epigrams deal with the New Testament (37–39, 53–55 and 74–76) and the Old Testament (57–73 and 77). If Salač were right, we would have to suppose that the NT epigrams in elegiac were added to the NT epigrams in hexameter at some later stage. This would mean, for instance, that the elegiac distichs on Easter and the Crucifixion (nos. 53–55) were composed in order to fill the gap between the hexametric epigrams on Palm Sunday (no. 52) and the Anastasis (no. 56). This all sounds needlessly complicated. In fact, I cannot see any good reason, either metrical, lexicological, literary or art-historical, for carving up the epigram cycle into small fragments and for assuming that it had been pieced together from two different sources.

For the epigram cycle at *AP* I, 37–49 and 52–77, Cephalas made use of an old manuscript, which must have been damaged in certain places. At no. 48 the lemma reads: εἰς τὴν μεταμόρφωσιν (“on the Transfiguration”), and the text reads: Ἀδὰμ ἦν ζο[φερ...] (“Adam was [in] mu[rky] ...”). There is evidently something wrong with the text, for Ἀδὰμ ἦν does not fit into any dactylic metrical pattern (unless we assume that the poet measured the two alphas as long, but see no. 46. 1). The lemma, too, appears to be incorrect, for it is reasonable to assume that the epigram refers to an Anastasis (with “Adam” waiting to be rescued from “murky” Hades)⁶.

The epigram cycle (nos. 37–49 and 52–77) can be dated on the basis of the following three chronological clues:

(a) The epigram on the Anastasis (no. 56) dates from the late sixth or the early seventh century at the earliest. In chapter 5, pp. 181–182, I discussed the iconographic type of the Anastasis in connection with certain epigrams of Pisides. There I stated that these epigrams prove without doubt that the iconography of the Anastasis had already been introduced in Byzantine art in the first half of the seventh century. However, as the epigrams of Pisides constitute the earliest datable evidence for the Anastasis and as the oldest pictures of the Anastasis date from the early eighth century, it is reasonable to assume that this iconographic type was invented not very long before the time of Pisides.

⁶ See WALTZ 1925: 318–319.

(b) The second verse of no. 49, ἀυαλέφ μυκτῆρι παλίνσοον ἄσθμα κομίζων, imitates Nonnos, *Dionys.* 25, 530 and 535 (cf. 37, 295). Nonnian epic verses were extremely popular in late antiquity up to Pisides, on whose literary works (notably his *De Vita Humana*) Nonnos' poems exerted considerable influence⁷. After the time of Pisides, however, Nonnos passed into oblivion and his poetry was no longer imitated. The Byzantines appear to have 'rediscovered' Nonnos only after the year 900⁸. Therefore, unless our picture of the influence of Nonnos' poetry is incomplete due to missing literary evidence, it follows that epigram no. 49 must have been written before c. 630–640⁹.

(c) The literary quality of the epigrams is rather poor and the metre does not follow the Nonnian rules of versification. Hiatus is ubiquitous, especially after καὶ and at the caesura; elision and epic correption, also of verb and noun endings, are found in almost all verses; Hermann's Bridge is not observed in 39. 1, 42. 1 and 68. 1; there is no caesura in 39. 1, 42. 1 and 64. 1; masculine caesuras are almost as frequent as feminine ones; at the caesura and the line-end the Nonnian rules of accentuation are not observed; the number of contractions (also in the fifth foot: 42. 1 and 56. 1) is exceptionally high; and word-end after contracted fourth biceps (56. 1, 59. 1, 77. 1) also constitutes a serious metrical flaw¹⁰. In late antiquity the Nonnian rules of versification are generally adopted by the literati, but are quite often neglected by poets who do not strive to achieve the elegance of highbrow poetry. In the dark ages, after Pisides, the dactylic metre falls into disuse. In poetry written after the year 800 the dactylic hexameter and the elegiac are essentially artificial metres – classicizing forms of poetry which do not obey to any metrical rule, but are replete with Homeric gibberish. This leaves us with two options. The epigrams were either written by a less competent late antique author, or by one of the classicizing poets of the ninth century. It is not hard to choose between these two options. Although on the whole the verses are prosodically correct, with only a few venial slips (see, for instance, 59. 1), the epigrams do not show any tendency to classicize. The poet does not have any literary pretensions. He simply wants to

⁷ See L. STERNBACH, in: *Analecta Graeco-latina philologis Vindobonae congregatis obtulerunt collegae Cracovienses et Leopolitani*. Krakow 1893, 38–54, and GONNELLI 1991: 118, 131 and commentary *ad locum*.

⁸ See ŠEVČENKO 1987: 462.

⁹ SALAČ 1951: 5–7 proposes to athetize this verse because it is impossible for a painter to show how Lazarus "recovered the breath in his dry nostrils". Byzantine epigrams, however, often describe things that are not visible to the eye; in fact, most of the times they do not describe, but elaborate on an iconographic theme.

¹⁰ For a metrical study of late antique Christian poetry, see G. AGOSTI & F. GONNELLI, *Materiali per la storia dell' esametro nei poeti cristiani greci*, in: *Struttura e storia dell' esametro greco*, eds. M. FANTUZZI & R. PRETAGOSTINI. Rome 1995, I, 289–434.

describe what he sees and what he feels when he looks at images depicting New Testament and Old Testament scenes. He has no desire to show off. He writes the sort of dactylic poetry everybody else writes – not too sophisticated, not quite elegant and, in fact, with a lot of metrical errors, but still lofty enough to praise God Almighty for His wondrous deeds.

Taken in conjunction, the above data strongly suggest that the epigram cycle, *AP* I, 37–49 and 52–77, was composed around the year 600: the pictorial scene of the Anastasis (after the late sixth century), the borrowing of a Nonnian phrase (in the time of Pisides at the latest) and the poor literary quality, but non-classicizing style of the epigrams (before the dark ages). This means that the epigrams date from the very end of moribund late antiquity, or to put it otherwise, from the very beginnings of early medieval Byzantium.

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